

企鹅经典：小黑书

中英双语（全5辑）



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第一辑

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薄伽丘

文铮 王金霄 / 译

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

N° 01

贝尔科洛蕾夫人与神父

中信出版集团

贝尔科洛蕾夫人与神父

企鹅经典：小黑书 第一辑

[意] 薄伽丘/著

文铮 王金霄/译



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Mrs Rosie and the Priest

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“当男人们不在家时，
他就去看望他们的女人，
比以往任何一任神父
都要热切 ……”



PENGUIN
LITTLE BLACK
CLASSICS

*此中文译本译自意大利语原文

*书名翻译说明：

意大利语原文中，女主角的名字Belcolore，音译为贝尔科洛蕾，意为“漂亮的颜色”。在本书的英文译本中，想要保留这层意思，于是选择用Rosie Hues来表达。Rosie本身有“多彩的，玫瑰花般的”意思，而Hues是颜色的意思。本蒂韦尼亚·德尔·马佐的名字Bentivegna del Mazzo直译过来的意思是“欢迎疯男人”，英文版译为Willy Welcome，Willy是William（威廉姆）的简称，这个名字本身带着一些疯癫和幽默的味道，姓氏则直接选择了Welcome（欢迎）这个词，组成一个完整的名字。

一个叫安德鲁奇奥的佩鲁贾人在那不勒斯的历险故事 [1]

据说，在佩鲁贾有位名叫安德鲁奇奥·迪·皮耶特罗的小伙子，靠贩卖马匹为生。听说那不勒斯的马卖得非常实惠，他便带了五百枚佛罗林金币 [2]，与其他商贩一起奔赴那不勒斯了。这是他第一次离开家。周日晚上，将近晚祷的时候，安德鲁奇奥到达了目的地。他从旅馆老板那里打听到，第二天早晨就会有一个马市。马市上果真有许多马匹，安德鲁奇奥也看中了好几匹，就上前去跟商贩们讨价还价。为了让对方知道自己能买得起这些马，他就像那些土里土气的乡下人一样，每当有人经过，就把金币从包里掏出来显摆一下。但最终价格并没有谈好，所以他连一匹马都没有买到。

在商量价钱时，他的钱袋子吸引了旁边一位西西里女人的注意。虽然她长得漂亮，但是非常轻浮，为了几个小钱就能把自己随随便便交付给一个男人。趁安德鲁奇奥不注意，她偷偷地靠近了这个小伙子，偷瞄了一眼他的钱袋，心想：“要是我有了这些钱，谁还能比得上我呢？”然后，她就悄悄走开了。有一位老妇陪伴在这个女人的身边，她也是西西里人。当看到安德鲁奇奥后，老妇立刻激动地跑过去拥抱这位同乡，完全没有注意到女主人的离开，原来他们早就相识。安德鲁奇奥转脸看到老妇，热情地和她打了招呼，还邀请她有空去自己下榻的旅馆做客。两人没说几句话就各忙各的去了，但是那个女人却躲在一旁，偷听了这两位同乡的对话。

安德鲁奇奥继续逛马市，但始终没有买到马。那女人见他带了那么多钱，又看到他跟自己手下的老妇如此熟络，就仔仔细细地询问老妇关于安德鲁奇奥的情况：他是谁，从哪里来，到这里做什么，他们是如何认识的，一五一十地统统问了个遍，以便设计陷阱把他的钱弄到手。能把他所有的钱都弄到手自然是好，如果不行，能拿到一部分也是不错的。老妇一五一十地回答了主人的问题，事无巨细，就像是安德鲁奇奥本人在回答似的。老妇之所以如此了解安德鲁奇奥，是因为早年在西西里的时候，她曾在他父亲的手下干活，后来又跟他们一起去了佩鲁贾。她还把安德鲁奇奥住的地方以及他来那不勒斯的原因一并告诉了主人。

那女人掌握了安德鲁奇奥所有的信息，连他家人的名字都一清二楚。如此一来，她就能对安德鲁奇奥行骗，满足自己的贪心了。回家以后，她给老妇安排了很多工作，让她忙得一整天都出不了门，根本

没办法找安德鲁奇奥叙旧，她又派手下一名深谙此道的女佣，在晚祷时去安德鲁奇奥住的旅馆找他。

女佣在旅馆门口看到一名男子，便上前打听安德鲁奇奥的情况。碰巧的是，这名男子正是安德鲁奇奥。女佣把他拉到一旁，对他说：“先生，有位美丽的姑娘想见您一面，不知您何时方便。”安德鲁奇奥听了以后，上上下下打量了自己一番，觉得自己的确是个美男子，也许整个那不勒斯再也找不到一位如此英俊的小伙子了。他认为那位姑娘肯定是爱上他了。想到这里，他立刻跟女佣说自己随时都可以过去，便问她那姑娘想什么时候和他交谈。

女佣回答道：“先生，无论您何时过去，她都会在家恭候您。”

安德鲁奇奥一听这话，没有和旅馆打声招呼就对女佣说：“你在前面带路，我现在就跟你去见她。”

那女人家门前的道路叫“魔窟街”，一看这个名字，就知道这条街上的居民有多么“善良”了。但是安德鲁奇奥并不知道真相，也没有半点疑虑。他相信，在这片美好的土地上，他要找的那位姑娘一定天真而纯良。于是他跟着女佣走进了姑娘家。上楼时，女佣对女主人说：“安德鲁奇奥来啦！”安德鲁奇奥也看到了那位在楼梯口等他的姑娘。

她正值青春，身材修长，面容姣好，穿着优雅而得体。看到安德鲁奇奥来了，女人连忙下楼迎接。她张开双臂，紧抱住他的脖子，欲言又止，激动得说不出话来。随后，她潸然泪下，亲吻了他的额头，用近乎沙哑的声音对他说：“我的安德鲁奇奥啊！你知道我有多想见到你吗？！”

安德鲁奇奥没有料到会受到如此热烈的欢迎，一时惊讶不已，只好顺着姑娘的话回应道：“天哪！我也很想见到您！”

于是姑娘走到他身旁，牵起他的手，一句话也没有说，就带他走进了自己的闺房。她的房间里洋溢着玫瑰、橘子花和各种香料散发出的芬芳气息，闺床装饰华丽，床架上挂着许多华美的服装，还有很多精致的摆设。安德鲁奇奥还是第一次看到这些东西，这使他更加相信面前这个女人一定是位出身高贵的小姐。

女人请他坐在床边的一个箱子上，开口说道：“安德鲁奇奥，我知道我的热情和激动肯定吓着你了，毕竟你从未见过面，你也没有听说过我这个人。但听完我接下来给你讲的这件事，你一定会更加惊讶——我可是你的亲姐姐啊！谢天谢地，让我在死前还能亲眼看到我的弟弟！我是多么想见一见我的亲弟弟啊！不然我死也不会瞑目！你好像不知道这回事，那就让我来告诉你吧。我们的父亲皮耶罗曾在巴勒莫住过很长一段时间，我相信你肯定知道这事吧。他和蔼善良，所

以周围的人都十分爱戴他，直到今天也都很惦念他，其中最爱他的那个人就是我的母亲。我的母亲出身高贵，但当时正在守寡。她不顾父兄的威胁恐吓，放弃了自己的尊荣，选择与我们的父亲在一起。后来，我，也就是你面前的这个人，就出生了。再后来，由于突发情况，父亲离开了巴勒莫，去了佩鲁贾。当时我还只是个小女孩，他就抛弃了我们母女二人。我总觉得，他走后就把我们忘得一干二净了！如果他不是我的生身父亲，那我眼看着他如此对待我母亲，一定会怪他冷酷无情！怎奈是他生了我！抛开他辜负了我母亲的一片真情不说，我好歹也是他的女儿啊！更何况我母亲既不是有损他颜面的无知少女，也不是放荡轻浮的风尘女子。她对父亲一片痴心，但却没有看清他的本来面目，就把自己的一切都托付给他了。可是这换回了什么呢？往事说起来容易，但却很难挽回，何况事情已经这样了。他在巴勒莫抛弃我们时，我年龄还小，后来我慢慢长成了现在的模样。我的母亲毕竟是贵族出身，所以把我嫁给了杰尔真蒂 [3] 那边一位家境富裕的绅士。他深爱着我，也敬重我的母亲，所以搬到了巴勒莫与我们同住。他坚决拥护教皇派 [4]，所以和西西里的查理国王交往甚密。但腓特烈国王察觉了这一切，于是我们只好逃离西西里。那时，我马上就要被封为女骑士了，这种事在西西里岛上还是头一遭。于是我们带着不多的行李——即便‘不多’，其实也不少，只是就那时的家境而言‘不多’罢了，我们离开了那片土地，离开了我们的宫殿，逃到了这里。查理国王感念我们的笃诚，在那不勒斯给了我们田地和房产作为补偿，还一直寄很多钱给我丈夫，也就是你姐夫，这你以后就会看到的。就这样，我在这里住了下来。幸亏天主保佑，而不是拜你所赐，我才又见到了你，我的弟弟。”

说完，她又紧紧地抱住了安德鲁奇奥，亲吻他的额头，眼睛里充满了泪水。

安德鲁奇奥听完这个故事，觉得一切是那么合情合理，而且这个姑娘在讲故事时也没打一个磕巴。他又想起自己的父亲的确在巴勒莫住过一段时间，那时的父亲和自己现在一样年轻，当然也会贪恋女色。再看看面前姑娘眼含热泪，想想她的拥抱和那些真诚的亲吻，安德鲁奇奥将她说的话信以为真。等她不说话了，安德鲁奇奥开口说道：“您应该料到了我会大吃一惊。我的父亲从未提及过你们母女，或者说他曾经提起过，但我没有听到，所以我并不认识您，也不知道您的存在。然而能在那不勒斯找到姐姐，的确出乎我的意料，让我十分开心。没有哪位男士不想与您亲近，无论他的地位有多高，更何况是我这个小商贩。但是请您告诉我一件事情，您是怎么知道我在这里的呢？”

那女人答道：“是今天早上一个经常来我家的穷老太太告诉我的，也是她说起了我们的父亲。她告诉我，父亲在巴勒莫和佩鲁贾

时，自己一直在他家里做事。我听了这些话，早就想去找你了，可是我一个女人去陌生男子的住处有失体统，所以就把你叫到了这里。”

说完这些，她又询问起了家人的近况，还说出了他们的名字。安德鲁奇奥一一作答，并且越发相信她说的话了——尽管他不该相信。

他们就这样聊了很久。女人让下人端来了白葡萄酒和蜜饯，请安德鲁奇奥享用。安德鲁奇奥喝完酒，看着晚饭时间快到了，便起身告辞。姑娘却无论如何也不答应，还装作生气的样子，抱住他说：“哎呀！你走吧！我算是明白了，你根本就没把我当亲人！我怎么也想象不到，你刚刚见到了从未谋面的姐姐，还在她的家里，却要回旅馆吃饭！对，我的丈夫是没在家，我也很遗憾他不能陪你用晚餐，但我知道作为一个女人该如何招待你。”

听了这些话，安德鲁奇奥不知该如何回答，只好说：“我是把您当亲人的，就像您对我一样。但是如果我不回去，旅馆的人要等我一晚上才能吃饭，这未免失礼啊。”

女人这时说：“天哪！难道我就不能派家里的用人去趟旅馆，告诉他们不用等你了吗？既然你这么懂得礼数，那就该把旅馆的朋友叫来一起用晚餐。那样吃完饭后，你还可以和他们一起回去。”

安德鲁奇奥说，今晚不想请朋友来，但他非常愿意留下。于是女人假装派人告诉旅馆老板他不回去吃饭的事，又与他聊了很长时间，才吩咐用人上晚餐。晚餐十分丰盛，女人也故意拖延时间。直到夜幕降临，安德鲁奇奥起身告辞时，她仍旧坚持不让他走，说是因为在那不勒斯晚上不能出门随便走动，尤其是一个外地人。她还说，刚刚让人跟旅馆说他不去吃饭时，也交代过他不回去过夜了。安德鲁奇奥觉得这些话有道理，而且他很想和姑娘在一起，所以就又被她骗了。他们接着聊了好一阵——这当然也是女人故意而为的。夜深了，她让安德鲁奇奥到自己的卧室睡下，又留下了一个侍童伺候，看他不再需要什么了，便带着侍女们去了另一个房间。

天气十分炎热，安德鲁奇奥看房间里只剩他一个人了，就把裤子、袜子和内衣全部脱掉，放在了床头。过了一会儿，他想去方便，就问侍童厕所在哪里。侍童指着一扇门说：“进去吧，这里就是。”安德鲁奇奥毫无戒备地走进了那扇门，不料踏到了一块架空的木板上，连人带板一起摔了下去。幸亏天主保佑，虽然从很高的地方摔下，但他并没有受伤。只是掉下去的地方满是污秽，所以他浑身散发着恶臭。为了让你们明白我刚刚讲的内容，也为了方便你们理解接下来发生的事，我得在这里啰唆几句。他掉下去的那个地方其实在一个小巷子里，就像我们经常可以看到的那样：人们在对着的两个窗户间搭上两根细细的木棍，然后在木棍上架一块木板，人就坐在木板上方便。

安德鲁奇奥就是从这样一块木板上掉下去的。

安德鲁奇奥摔得很疼。他发现自己掉到了小巷子里，就连忙喊侍童。然而侍童一听到他掉下去的声响，就跑到女人那里报信去了。那女人赶紧去他房间，看他的衣服在不在。找到衣服后，从里面翻出了安德鲁奇奥的钱。原来他不放心把钱放到别处，都是随身带着。这位“巴勒莫的贵妇”，这位“佩鲁贾小伙子的姐姐”，拿到钱之后，就再也不管安德鲁奇奥的安危，关上了他方才走出去的那扇门。

安德鲁奇奥看待童没有回答他，就更大声地喊叫，但已然没有用了。这时他才感觉到有些不对，可是为时已晚。安德鲁奇奥翻过一道矮墙，到了大街上。他认识姑娘的家门，便过去不停地敲打，不停地叫喊，但还是没人理睬他。这时他才知道自己被骗了，哭着说：“哎呀！才这么一小会儿，我就丢了五百个金币和一个姐姐啊！”

哭了一阵子后，他又开始敲门喊人。邻居们受不了他的闹腾，纷纷起身。那家的一个女佣装作被吵醒的样子，朝窗外怒吼：“谁在下面敲门呢？”

“喂！”安德鲁奇奥说，“你不认识我了？我是安德鲁奇奥啊，菲奥达莉索夫人的弟弟！”

女佣回答他说：“你这个人！如果你喝多了，就先睡一觉，明早再过来吧！我既不认识安德鲁奇奥，也听不懂你说的话。请你走吧，让我们好生休息，拜托了！”

“怎么会？”安德鲁奇奥说，“难道你不知道我说的是什么吗？你绝对知道！就算你们西西里人对待亲戚都是转脸就忘，但至少让我把留在你们家的衣服拿走吧！我拿了衣服会立刻走人！”

女佣快要笑出声来了，说：“我看你这人是在梦游吧！”边说边缩回身子，关上了窗子。

安德鲁奇奥这才恍然大悟，原来自己被骗了，他气得快要发疯。但现在光靠嘴已经拿不回想要的东西了，于是他拿起一块大石头使劲砸门。他的动静更大了，吵醒了更多的邻居，惹得他们十分反感。邻居们相信他就是个骗子，编这些谎话来骚扰那位善良的夫人。于是他们都到窗边责骂安德鲁奇奥，就像是满街的狗对着一只新来的狗狂吠一样。“你这个时候来人家姑娘家，说这些不三不四的话，实在无礼！”“天哪！你走吧，好孩子，让我们睡觉吧，求你了！”“你要是真有事找她，就明天再来吧，今晚就别烦我们了！”

那位“好姑娘”的家里还住着一个恶棍。不过安德鲁奇奥在她家时既没有看到他，也没有听到他说话。听到邻居们这么说，恶棍放心了，于是走到窗前，粗声粗气地吼道：“是谁在下面？”

安德鲁奇奥听到这吓人的声音，抬起头来，隐隐约约地瞧见这个满脸黑胡子的人，看样子很厉害。只见他伸着懒腰，打着呵欠，像刚从床上爬起来似的。安德鲁奇奥见状，不免有些害怕地回答道：“我是这家女主人的弟弟。”

然而那人没等他说完，就打断了他，语气比之前还要凶：“我不知道我为什么还站在这儿，而不是下去给你一通乱棍，把你打到不能动弹为止。你这个醉鬼，你这个烦人的蠢驴，今天晚上因为你谁都睡不成觉了！”说罢便缩回身子，锁上了窗户。

一些邻居知道这个人的脾气，就低声劝安德鲁奇奥说：“求你了，好孩子，走吧！你不想今晚被他打死吧！走吧，这是为你好。”

安德鲁奇奥害怕那个恶棍，又被邻居们这么一劝，觉得他们也是好心，就离开了。一想到自己再也拿不回那些钱，他非常难过。安德鲁奇奥不知道去哪里，只好沿着女佣带他来时走过的路回旅馆。但是他身上很臭，想去海里洗一洗，就在路口往左拐，走进了一条叫作“卡塔拉纳”的街。他顺着坡往上走，突然看见两个提着灯笼的人向自己走来。安德鲁奇奥担心对方是巡警，也害怕又遇到坏人，于是看旁边有个小破屋，就悄悄地躲了进去。然而那两个人像是提前商量好了似的，径直走进了这间破屋子。其中一个人把背在肩上的铁家伙放了下来，和另一个人一起一一查看。

突然，其中一个人说：“怎么回事？我闻见了一股臭味，之前好像从来没在这儿闻见过。”他说完便举起灯笼，看到了可怜的安德鲁奇奥。这人吓了一跳，问道：“谁在那里？”

安德鲁奇奥没有出声，于是那两个人拿着灯笼走近了他，问他一身脏臭的在这里干什么。安德鲁奇奥就把事情的来龙去脉一五一十地告诉了他们。他们想了一下这件事发生的地方，自言自语地说：“那是布塔福科家，就是那个黑社会的小头目。”

其中一个人对安德鲁奇奥说：“可怜的家伙，虽然你把钱丢了，但你还算是万幸，因为你幸亏摔了下来，没再进那座房子。要是你没有摔下去，他们肯定等你一睡着就把你杀了，那样你连钱带命就都丢了。你现在哭有什么用呢？想拿回一分钱，比从天上摘星星还要难呢。而且，他们要是知道你把这件事说了出去，可能还会来杀你。”

他说完后，两个人商量了一会儿，又对安德鲁奇奥说：“你看，我们很同情你。现在我们正要去办点事情，如果你加入我们，那我们保证你能赚到比你丢掉的那五百个金币更多的钱。”

正走投无路的安德鲁奇奥立刻答应了。

原来那天是那不勒斯大主教菲利波·米努托洛神父下葬的日子。他

穿的华服上有许多价值连城的饰品，手上还戴着一枚红宝石戒指。光是那块红宝石就值五百多佛罗林，而那两个人想偷的也正是它。就这样，他们把计划告诉了安德鲁奇奥。

安德鲁奇奥的欲望战胜了理智，便和他们一起上路了。在去往主教堂的路上，安德鲁奇奥仍然一身臭气，于是他们中的一人说道：“我们不能找个地方让他稍微洗洗吗？免得他这么臭。”

另一个人回答说：“对，这附近有一口井，井辘轳上一直挂着个大木桶。我们赶紧去那里让他洗一洗吧。”

到了井边，他们发现绳子还在，但是木桶被人拿走了。于是那两人想着用绳子拴住安德鲁奇奥，让他下井清洗一下，洗好了晃绳子，他们再把他拉上来。就这样，安德鲁奇奥下井了。

他刚下去，就来了几个巡警。因为天气炎热，又刚刚追捕了一个犯人，所以他们口渴难耐，就来井边找水喝。那两个人一看到巡警来了，撒腿就跑，所以巡警并没有看到他们。

安德鲁奇奥在井底洗好后晃了绳子。看到绳子晃了，那两个口渴的巡警以为桶里的水满了，就把手里的木盾、武器和披风放在地上，往上拉绳子。安德鲁奇奥看到井沿后，就抓着井沿跳了上来。巡警看到从井里跳出来了一个人，吓得魂飞魄散，立刻松开了绳子，跑得要有多快有多快。安德鲁奇奥自己也大吃一惊，要不是抓住了井沿，他就可能摔到井底，也就可能受伤乃至丢了性命。他又看到了井边的武器，便更加疑惑了，因为他记得那两个同伴并没有带什么武器。

他心存疑虑，不知道发生了什么事情。于是什么都没碰，离开了那个地方，但又不知道去哪里。就这样走着走着，他突然碰见了之前的两个同伴。原来，他们想回去把安德鲁奇奥拉上来。看到安德鲁奇奥后，同伴们也十分惊讶，连忙问是谁把他拉上来的。安德鲁奇奥说自己也不知道，只把从井里上来的经过告诉了他们。两人相视一笑，明白了怎么回事，向安德鲁奇奥解释了他们为什么逃走，又是谁拉他上来的。这时夜已过半，所以大家就没有再多说什么，直接去主教堂了。他们很顺利地进了教堂，来到了大主教的棺材旁。这口棺材很大，而且是用大理石做的。他们用随身带的铁棍撬起了沉重的棺材盖，然后找东西撑住，留出来够一个人出入的空隙。

做好后，他们其中一人说：“谁进去？”

另一个人回答：“我不去。”

“我也不去，”那个人说，“安德鲁奇奥，你去。”

“我不会去的。”安德鲁奇奥说。

听了这话，那两人对安德鲁奇奥说：“你为什么不去？苍天在上，要是你不进去，我们就用这根铁棍打你的头，直到打死你为止。”

安德鲁奇奥很害怕，只好进去。他一边往里爬一边想：“他们让我进来，无非是想骗我。等到我把东西给了他们，要往外爬时，他们就会自顾自地跑了，而我什么也得不到。”因此他决定先把自己那份弄到手。安德鲁奇奥想起他们之前说的话，就把那枚昂贵的戒指从大主教手上摘了下来，戴在了自己手上。然后他把主教的权杖、僧帽、手套给了那两个人，跟他们说里面什么也没有了。的确，当时的主教身上只剩一件衬衣了。那两个人确定里面有一枚戒指，就让安德鲁奇奥再好好找找。安德鲁奇奥假装努力地找，一直跟他们说没有找到，让他们在外面等。谁知那两个人比安德鲁奇奥还要狡猾，不停地说他再找找，却趁机拿掉了撑着棺盖的东西，逃了出去，把安德鲁奇奥一个人留在了棺材里。我们应该可以想象出安德鲁奇奥当时的心情吧。

他用头和肩膀顶棺盖，尝试了许多次，但始终没有顶开。一阵绝望袭来，安德鲁奇奥昏倒在了大主教的尸体上。要是有人看见这一幕，一定分不清到底哪个是死人，也分不清谁是大主教，谁是安德鲁奇奥。醒来后，安德鲁奇奥不禁号啕大哭。他预料到，自己只会有两种结局：如果没有人来打开棺材，那他只能在这里面，在一堆蛆虫中饿死，或者被尸体腐烂的臭味熏死；如果有人来开棺，那么他就会被当作盗墓贼绞死。

就在悲痛万分地思考这些事情时，安德鲁奇奥突然听到有很多人边说话边走进了教堂。他认为这些人来这里，也要干那两个人干过的勾当。于是他更害怕了。但是等他们打开了棺盖，撑好之后，也遇到了派谁进去的问题。他们谁都不想进去，吵了很长时间以后，一位神父说：“你们有什么好怕的？觉得他能吃了你们？死人是不会吃人的。来，我进去。”说罢，神父把胸脯抵在棺材沿上，脸向外，将腿伸了进去。安德鲁奇奥一看到他，就马上站了起来，抓住他的一条腿，装作要把他拉下来的样子。神父感到有东西在拽自己，吓得大叫起来，立刻爬出棺材逃走了。其他人看到这番情形也都吓坏了，没把棺材盖合上就撒腿跑了，好像身后有千万个魔鬼在追赶他们一样。

安德鲁奇奥看到这些后喜出望外，赶紧爬了出来，沿着来时的路走出了教堂。天快亮了，安德鲁奇奥戴着那枚历经千难万险才得到的戒指，走到了海边，然后回到了旅馆。旅馆的店主和他的朋友们为他担心了整整一宿。安德鲁奇奥把这一夜发生的事情告诉他们后，店主建议他赶紧离开那不勒斯。于是他立刻出发，回佩鲁贾去了。安德鲁奇奥原本打算拿了五百枚金币买马，结果马没买成，却换来了一枚戒

指。

[1] 本书中的四个故事均节选自《十日谈》，故事标题为英文译者根据故事内容所起，并非原有标题。本书译文是根据1980年艾奥迪（Einaudi）出版社出版的新版《十日谈》翻译的，主编是维托雷·布兰卡（Vittore Branca）。本篇故事原标题为“第二天第五则故事”。（说明：书中脚注均为译者注。）

[2] 佛罗林是当时在佛罗伦萨流通的金币。

[3] 即今天西西里岛的阿格里琴托城。

[4] 12—13世纪，意大利中部和北部分别支持教皇和神圣罗马帝国，因此分为教皇派与皇帝派两派。双方的纷争在意大利一直持续到15世纪。

里卡尔多·钦齐卡失去了他的妻子 [1]

从前，在比萨有一位法官大人，名叫里卡尔多·迪·钦齐卡，虽然体力衰弱，但却十分聪明。法官很富有，想找一位年轻美丽的妻子。他觉得，对待妻子只需要拿出做学问的精力就可以了。他找得很慢，心想，如果帮自己拿主意也像帮别人拿主意一样简单，那他早就选好妻子了。最后，他如愿以偿地找到了一位年轻貌美的妻子——洛托·瓜兰迪先生把自己的女儿许配给了他。这位姑娘叫巴尔托洛梅娅，是比萨最美丽可人的姑娘之一。在比萨，毕竟没有几个人长得比吃虫子的蜥蜴更好看。法官举行了盛大的庆典迎娶姑娘，婚礼豪华而又隆重。新婚之夜，为了遵守惯例，他勉强与妻子做了一次爱，但是很快就招架不住了。第二天早上，本就瘦弱的他已然筋疲力尽，只能靠干白葡萄酒、滋补蜜饯和其他补品来恢复体力。

现在这位法官大人比之前更清楚自己的能力了，于是开始教妻子读一本历书。这本历书好像是在拉文纳出版印制的，很受孩子们的喜爱。 [2] 根据这本历书上的标注，每一天都会纪念一位圣人，甚至在一天之内要纪念好几位圣人。法官用了很多理由向妻子解释说，为了表示崇敬之心，男女在这些日子里都要禁欲，不能行房事。除了历书上规定的节日以外，他还增加了斋戒日、四季小斋、圣徒斋戒日，还有纪念千余位圣人的斋戒日，又添上了礼拜五、礼拜六和献给天主的礼拜日。除此之外，禁欲的日子还有整个四旬斋期间。里卡尔多还规定了上百个方位，一旦月亮移动到这些位置，男女就不可行房。此外，在其他一些特殊情况下，夫妻也要禁欲。他觉得，对待同床的女人，就像应对法律案件，没什么不同。这么一来，他的太太要吃不少苦头。里卡尔多一个月只碰她一次，而且把她盯得死死的，以防有人像自己教她什么是节假日那样教她什么是工作日。

夏天到了，天气炎热，里卡尔多大人想带妻子一起去蒙特内罗附近的庄园里住几天，避暑消遣。这一天，里卡尔多为了让太太开心，便带她去海上钓鱼。他和渔夫坐在一只船上，妻子和侍女们坐在另一只船上。大家一时兴起，一直驶向了深海，驶出了好几海里还未曾察觉。大家要么专心致志地钓鱼，要么聚精会神地观看。就在这时，突然驶来一艘大船，那是当时远近闻名的海盗帕伽尼诺的船。看到两只小船，帕伽尼诺径直地驶了过去。小船只能拼命地逃，但是海盗还是追上了法官太太坐的船。帕伽尼诺看到船上美丽的夫人，就想也不想要地要把她掳走了。这时的里卡尔多已经上岸，只能眼睁睁地看着海盗把

他夫人带上船，消失在茫茫大海上。法官本就心胸狭窄，连空气都要嫉妒，现在看到这一幕有多恼火，就不必我多言了吧。他到比萨控诉海盗的恶行，又去了其他地方，但最终也没能得知是谁抢走了妻子，又把她带到了哪里。

帕伽尼诺看巴尔托洛梅娅如此美丽，不禁心动。再加上他本就没有妻室，所以就想和她永远生活在一起。巴尔托洛梅娅大哭不止，帕伽尼诺就温柔地安慰她。夜幕降临，他解开了她的腰带。那本历书刚好从腰带上掉了下来，与此同时，每一个节日和节假日都从她的脑海中消失了。帕伽尼诺觉得实际行动比话语有效，就一直用行动安慰她。就这样，还没到摩纳哥，巴尔托洛梅娅就把法官和他的规定忘得一干二净，和帕伽尼诺过上了天下最快活的日子。帕伽尼诺把巴尔托洛梅娅带到摩纳哥后，不仅日夜宽慰她，还像对待妻子一样善待她。

过了一段时间，里卡尔多大人打听到了太太的下落，便迫不及待地想去找她。他觉得没有人知道该怎么做，于是亲自去找夫人，并且决定无论花多少钱都要赎回她。他乘船去了摩纳哥，见到了巴尔托洛梅娅。巴尔托洛梅娅也看到了里卡尔多，当晚就告诉了帕伽尼诺这件事，并且向他表明了自己的想法。第二天早上，里卡尔多看到帕伽尼诺后就过去和他套近乎。没过多长时间，两人就成了亲密的好友。其实帕伽尼诺认识他，并且知道他想做什么，只是没有表现出来。里卡尔多见时机成熟，就委婉地向帕伽尼诺解释了自己来这里的缘由，接着又央求帕伽尼诺，只要把妻子还给他，不管多少赎金他都会照付。

帕伽尼诺和善地回答道：“法官阁下，我很欢迎您的到来，所以我向您简单地解释一下，我家的确有位年轻的姑娘，但我并不知道她是您的太太还是其他人的太太。我不晓得您是谁，对她也不太了解，因为她住在我家没多长时间。我看您是位正直的绅士，就带您去见她吧。如果真如您所说，那她肯定认识您。如果她说的和您一致，并且想和您回去，看在您如此友善的分儿上，无论您给我多少赎金我都会放她走；如果她说的和您不同，那您就是存心来我这里抢她了。我是个年轻的男子，和其他人一样，也会保护自己的女人，尤其是她，因为我从未见过如此可爱的姑娘。”

里卡尔多说：“她绝对是我的妻子，你只要带我去见她就知道了。她一见我，就会立刻勾住我的脖子。你提的意见很好，我非常同意。”

“那么，”帕伽尼诺说，“我们走吧。”

于是两人来到了帕伽尼诺家，在客厅就座。这时，帕伽尼诺派人叫巴尔托洛梅娅过来。她穿戴整齐，从房里走出，来到了里卡尔多和帕伽尼诺所在的客厅。但她见了里卡尔多后，就像见了帕伽尼诺带回

家的一位陌生客人似的，只是打了声招呼，并没有多余的举动。法官原想着巴尔托洛梅娅见了自己会非常开心，所以看到这一幕后十分惊讶，自言自语道：“可能是我失去她后，太过悲伤痛苦，所以面容憔悴，以至于她认不出我了。”

于是他说：“夫人，带你去钓鱼让我付出了多么昂贵的代价啊！我从来没有像失去你之后这样痛苦过，而你却疏远我，好像不认识我了。你没看见吗？我是你的里卡尔多啊！我来这里是要带你回去，不管这家的主人要什么我都会给他。他也很慷慨，无论我付多少赎金都会把你还给我。”

夫人转向他，面带微笑地说：“先生，您是在对我说话吗？您仔细看看，不要把我认成别人了，因为我不记得曾经见过您。”

里卡尔多说：“瞧你说的什么话，你好好看看我，你要是愿意仔细回想一下的话，就会知道我是你的丈夫里卡尔多·迪·钦齐卡。”

夫人说：“先生，请您原谅我，按您说的，我仔细地看了看您，这好像不大礼貌，但不用仔细看，我也知道自己从未见过您。”

里卡尔多又想，她是因为害怕帕伽尼诺，才不敢在他面前承认认识自己。所以过了一会儿，他恳求帕伽尼诺，让他们两人单独在一个房间里谈一谈。帕伽尼诺说可以，前提是里卡尔多不能强行亲吻她。帕伽尼诺让巴尔托洛梅娅跟着里卡尔多去里屋，听听他想说什么，想怎么回答就怎么回答。

于是他们二人单独去了一间屋子里。一坐下来，里卡尔多就说：“啊！我的心肝，我的魂，我活下去的希望啊！现在你不认识爱你胜过爱自己的里卡尔多了吗？怎么能这样呢？我的样子变了那么多吗？啊，你美丽的眼睛啊，看看我吧，哪怕只看一小会儿也行啊。”

巴尔托洛梅娅开始大笑，没有让他再说下去：“您明明知道我没有失忆！我并非不知道您是我的丈夫里卡尔多·迪·钦齐卡大人，但是当我和您在一起时，您没有真正地理解过我。如果您像自己以为的那般聪明，那您就应该明白，我年轻活泼，朝气蓬勃，所以和其他少妇一样，除了吃穿外，还会想要别的东西，尽管我害羞说不出口。而您是怎么做的，您自己清楚。如果比起妻子，您更喜欢研究法律的话，那您就不应该娶亲。但我觉得您根本就不是什么法官，只是那些节日和斋戒日的鼓吹者罢了。我跟您说，如果您也让给您种地的农民们过您规定的那些节日，让他们也像您耕种我这块田地一样种田的话，那一粒粮食也收获不到。上帝看我年轻，怜悯我，让我遇到了他。我和他就睡在这间房里。在这里，没有人知道节日是什么。我指的节日就是您平时过的那些纪念日。您对上帝的虔诚超越了您对女人的爱。在这扇门里，我们没有礼拜五和礼拜六，没有斋戒日，没有四季小

斋，也没有那漫长的四旬斋。相反，我们从早到晚都在‘劳作’，把毯子都扯破了。今天一大早，我还爬到他身上了呢。我愿意和他在一起，趁着年轻好好‘劳作’。那些节日、朝觐和斋戒就留给我的晚年吧。我为您祝福，但请您赶紧离开吧，能多快离开就多快离开。没有我在身旁，您想过多少节日就过多少节日吧。”

里卡尔多听到这些话，感到一阵难以忍受的痛苦，看她停了下来，才说：“啊，我的魂啊！你说的这叫什么话？你现在就不能考虑一下你家人的声望和你的名誉吗？你情愿道德败坏地在这里做他的姘妇，也不想回比萨做我的太太吗？这个男人，当他对你厌烦时，会对你恶语相加，把你赶走的。而我会永远爱你，哪怕我死了，你也会是我家的女主人。为了这点荒淫的肉欲，你就要抛弃你我的名誉，抛弃爱你胜过爱自己生命的我吗？啊，我的亲爱的，我的希望啊！不要再这么说了，跟我回去吧。我知道你的欲望了，从今往后我会努力的。我的美人儿，你就改变主意，跟我走吧！我从来没有像你离开我之后那么伤心。”

巴尔托洛梅娅回答他说：“我的名誉只能把握在我自己手里，容不得他人说三道四。我再也不会像从前那般温柔恭顺了。如果能回到我父母把我嫁给你的那天，该有多好啊！当时他们没有顾及过我的名誉，现在我也不考虑他们的声望。如果我现在是个罪恶的‘白’，那您就是个没用的‘捣槌’。我已经不爱您了。我还要告诉您，在这里，我觉得自己是帕伽尼诺的妻子，而在比萨，我却觉得是您的姘妇。我要想着月亮的方位，研究几何学的规则，才能将我们的‘星体’结合在一起。但在这里，帕伽尼诺每晚都搂我入怀，紧紧抱着我，轻轻地咬我。他是怎么对待我的，就请天主替我告诉您吧。您还说您会努力，可您会努力做什么呢？您能在做完三次后，还能随时坚挺得像个鱼竿似的吗？我知道，在我不在您身边的这些日子里，您已经荣升为骑士了。所以您还是走吧，还是努力地活下去吧。我看您体弱多病，觉得您应该活得很累吧。我再跟您多说一句，即便那人离开了我——不过我觉得不会的，只要我想和他在一起的话——我也永远不会回到您的身边，因为不管我怎么挤，也不能从您身上挤出一滴‘汁液’。在您那里，我承受了惨痛的损失，现在我要在另一个地方收获利润。我再向您重申一遍，这里没有节日，也没有斋戒日，所以我想留在这里。您赶紧走吧，不然我就叫了，说您要强暴我。”

里卡尔多看情况不妙，只好痛苦万分地走出了那间屋子。直到那时他才明白自己有多无能，而娶一个年轻的妻子又是一件多么荒唐的事情。他又和帕伽尼诺说了很多话，但却无济于事。最后，他什么事也没做成，只能离开妻子，回比萨去了。由于太过悲痛，他已经神智不清，在比萨街头到处游走。无论谁向他打招呼，或者询问事情，他都只会回答说：“坏人是不过节的。”不久之后，他就一命呜呼了。

帕伽尼诺知道巴尔托洛梅娅对自己的爱，就娶了她，让她做了自己的合法妻子。他们从不理会节日和斋戒日，也不过四旬斋，只要腿还能动，就每夜“劳作”。

[1] 原标题为“第二天第十则故事”。

[2] 据说，一年中有多少天，在拉文纳城中就有多少座教堂。每天都是纪念圣人的节日，都要休假，所以孩子们很喜欢这本历书。

贝尔科洛蕾夫人与神父 [1]

正如你们中的一些人知道，或是曾经听说过的那样：在瓦尔隆戈，也就是离这儿不远的村子里，有一个身强体壮的教士，在服务女人时很能干。尽管学识浅薄，他每逢礼拜日都会在村里的榆树下，说很多好听的善言善语，让村民们开心。当男人们不在家时，他就去看望他们的女人，比以往任何一任神父都要热切，给她们带些宗教节日上的礼品，有时还把圣水和蜡烛头带到家里为她们祈祷。人们还从未见过像他这样的教士呢。

事情是这样的。在之前爱慕过的众多农妇中，他最喜欢的那人名叫贝尔科洛蕾，是农民本蒂韦尼亚·德尔·马佐的妻子。贝尔科洛蕾神采奕奕，的确是个讨人喜爱的农妇。她皮肤黝黑，健壮有力，推起磨来比其他女人更有劲。她还会敲铃鼓，唱《水流深谷》，跳力达舞和巴隆基奥舞，兴起时还会从手边拿起一块精致的小手绢舞动，十分俊俏美丽。教士大人喜欢这一切喜欢得不得了，对她着了迷。为了看她，教士整日在村子里逛来逛去。周日早晨，如果见她来了教堂，他就会在唱《慈悲经》和《三圣颂》时特别卖力，来表现自己优秀的歌唱才能，尽管他的声音像驴叫一样难听；如果没有看到她，他就唱得有气无力。尽管知道教士歌声的变化，本蒂韦尼亚·德尔·马佐却丝毫没有察觉到教士对妻子的喜爱，就连他身旁的贝尔科洛蕾也没有意识到这回事。为了和贝尔科洛蕾更亲近些，教士时不时地送她礼物：有时是一把新鲜的大蒜，那是他亲手在菜园里种出来的，也是这片教区中长得最好的蒜；有时是一小筐豆子；有时是一小束五月葱或是一小把斯卡洛尼葱。一有时机，他就用眼神和她打情骂俏。但贝尔科洛蕾对教士很冷漠，举止十分端庄，每次都假装没有看到他，所以教士始终不能如愿以偿。

有一天的正午时分，教士在教区里东走西逛，突然看到本蒂韦尼亚·德尔·马佐赶着一驾驴车迎面而来，车上载满了东西。于是教士过去和他打招呼，问他要去哪里。

本蒂韦尼亚回答他说：“尊敬的神父，我要去城里办点事情，把这些东西送给博纳科里·达·吉内斯特雷托大人。不知道为什么，一位刑事法官让手下的检察官发了张诉状，里面竟然提到了我。这件事刻不容缓，我想请吉内斯特雷托大人帮帮忙。”

教士高兴地说：“孩子，好好做！带上我的祝福出发吧，快去快

回。如果碰到拉普乔或者纳尔迪诺，别忘了跟他们说把我打谷棒上的皮带还给我。”

本蒂韦尼亚答应了他，就朝着佛罗伦萨的方向走了。教士想，是时候去找贝尔科洛蕾碰碰运气了，于是大步向她家走去。他边进门边说：“求天主为这家人赐福！家里有人吗？”

贝尔科洛蕾当时在阁楼里，听到教士的声音，答道：“神父，欢迎您！这么大热的天，您来这里做什么呢？”

教士回答说：“天主赐福于我，我看到你丈夫去城里了，所以过来和你待一会儿。”

贝尔科洛蕾从阁楼下来，坐下收拾丈夫刚打下来的卷心菜种子。教士开口说道：“你看，贝尔科洛蕾，你总是这个样子，是想急死我吗？”

贝尔科洛蕾笑了，说：“我对您做什么了呀？”

教士说：“你什么都没做，可是你不让我做我想做的事。那件事也是天主让我做的。”

贝尔科洛蕾说：“啊！您清醒一点，教士还做这种事吗？”

教士答道：“我们也做啊，为什么不做呢？我还告诉你，我们的功夫比别的男人还要好。你知道为什么吗？因为我们很少干这事，所以干起来更有劲。说实话，只要安安静静地让我施展，你是会占便宜的。”

贝尔科洛蕾说：“我能占什么便宜呢？你们这些比小气鬼还小气的人！”

于是教士说道：“我不知道你想要什么，所以你自己说吧。你是想要双鞋呢，还是想要个顶圈？或者是一块上好的羊毛料子？你想要什么都可以。”

贝尔科洛蕾回答道：“神父，您说得倒好听！这些东西我都有。但是，如果您真的喜欢我，就帮我个忙吧！帮了我的忙，您想做什么，我就让您做什么。”

于是教士说：“你想让我做什么就直说吧，我很愿意帮你。”

贝尔科洛蕾说：“周六，我要去趟佛罗伦萨，把我织好的羊毛交给别人，还要修一下我的纺车。如果您借我五里拉，我就能从放高利贷的人手里赎回我那片紫黑色的裙子，还有我那条当嫁妆带过来的腰带。要是没有裙子和腰带，我什么好地方都去不了，也不能去教堂了。我知道，您是有这个钱的。您要是借给我钱，让我做什么我都会做的。”

教士回答说：“求天主祝福我！我今天没有带那么多钱，但你相信我，周六之前我会给你的。”

“是吗！”贝尔科洛蕾说，“你们个个都是耍嘴皮子的，却从不履行诺言。您还想用对待毕廖扎的方式对待我，让我所有的期待都落空，然后灰溜溜地离开吗？毕廖扎因为这件事，还沦落成了妓女。我对天发誓，我是不会让您得逞的。所以，如果没有钱，那您就走吧。”

“啊！”教士说，“别让我现在回家拿钱了。你看，我难得那么走运，赶上你家里没人的好时候。要是我回家一趟，等我再回来时，可能就会有人打扰我们了。现在这么好的机会，我不知道要等到什么时候才能再碰上一回。”

贝尔科洛蕾说：“说得好听。如果您想回去拿钱，那就回去，不然您就忍着吧。”

教士看这样子，觉得如果不押给她点东西，她就不会让他做自己想做的事情，于是说道：“你看，你不相信我会给你钱，那我把这件深蓝色的披风押在你这里。这回你相信我了吧。”

贝尔科洛蕾抬头看了一眼说：“哦，这件披风啊。一件披风能值多少钱呢？”

教士说：“值多少钱？我要让你知道，这可是第戎 [2] 料子，甚至是‘第戎中的第戎料子’，还有人说它是‘特等第戎料子’呢。我从旧货商洛托那里花了整整七里拉才把它买下来，买回家还不到十五天。你知道，洛托最懂这种料子了，他还说我占了五索尔多 [3] 的便宜呢。”

“哦，这样吗？”贝尔科洛蕾说，“天主保佑，我之前真不敢相信一件披风居然值这么些钱。但是你得先把它给我才行。”

教士大人感到弓已上弦，实在忍不住了，于是急忙把披风脱下来给了她。贝尔科洛蕾把它放好后，对教士说：“大人，请您来棚屋里，这儿不会有人来的。”于是他们去了棚屋。

在屋里，教士给她世上最甜蜜的吻，让她快活得飘飘欲仙。他从贝尔科洛蕾家离开时，像刚为别人主持完婚礼似的，只穿了教士袍，没有穿披风。

回到教堂后，教士想，就算收上整整一年的蜡烛头，连五里拉的一半都赚不到。于是他觉得自己做了件错事，后悔把披风留给了她，开始琢磨该怎么不费分文地把披风要回来。教士这人本来就挺狡猾，所以不一会儿就想出了要回披风的办法。正好第二天是个节日，教士就让邻居家的孩子去贝尔科洛蕾家，问她愿不愿意把石臼借给他，因为宾古焦·达尔·波焦和努托·布列蒂要和他一起用午餐，所以他想用石臼捣些酱汁。于是贝尔科洛蕾把石臼给了那孩子。

到了用午餐的时候，教士偷看到贝尔科洛蕾和丈夫本蒂韦尼亚·德尔·马佐在一起吃饭，便叫来手下的人，对他说：“你把这个石臼还给贝尔科洛蕾，然后跟她说‘大人非常感谢您，请您把那孩子上午押在您这里的披风还给大人。’”那人来到贝尔科洛蕾家，看到她正和丈夫一起吃饭，就放下了石臼，把教士交代的话说了一遍。

那贝尔科洛蕾听完正想回嘴，不料本蒂韦尼亚脸色阴沉地看着她说：“你敢拿神父大人的东西？我向基督发誓，我真想狠狠地揍你一拳。你这个混账娘们儿，赶紧把东西还回去！听着，无论神父大人要什么东西，哪怕是咱们家的驴，你也不能对他说一个‘不’字。”

贝尔科洛蕾嘟哝着站了起来，从床下的箱子里拿出披风，给了那个人，并且对他说：“你替我告诉大人：‘贝尔科洛蕾向天主祈祷，希望您再也不要再在她的“臼”里捣“酱汁”了。在这件事上，您已经失去了她的信任。’”

那人带着披风回去了，并且向教士转告了贝尔科洛蕾的话。教士听了后笑着说：“下次你见到她，就跟她说，她不借给我‘臼’，我还不借给她‘捣槌’了呢。一报还一报吧！”

本蒂韦尼亚听了这些话，还以为神父大人在责怪自己，就没往那件事上想，但贝尔科洛蕾对教士却是爱搭不理。直到收获葡萄的季节 [4]，教士恐吓她，如果再不理他，她会被魔王撒旦吃掉。贝尔科洛蕾很害怕，就在酿葡萄酒和炒栗子的季节 [5] 里，表面上与他和解了。后来，他们又一起寻欢作乐了很多次。为了补偿那五里拉，教士给她的铃鼓换了张新皮，又系了一个铃铛。贝尔科洛蕾这才开心了。

[1] 原标题为“第八天第二则故事”。

[2] 第戎是一座法国城市，盛产羊毛制品。

[3] 索尔多是意大利当时的流通货币之一，一里拉等于二十索尔多。

[4] 即夏季。

[5] 即秋季。

耐心的格里赛尔达 [1]

很久以前，桑卢佐有一个侯爵世家。家中的主人很年轻，名叫瓜尔蒂耶里，尚未娶亲。而且他每天只管打鸟狩猎，根本没有娶妻生子的念头。尽管人们都十分尊敬侯爵，觉得他机智过人，但他手下的人却颇有微词。他们几次三番求他成家，不然侯爵将后继无人，他们也就没有了主公。此外，他们还给侯爵找了许多与他们当户对的姑娘，希望他能喜欢。

侯爵对下属们说：“朋友们，你们逼我做的事，偏偏是我从来都不想做的事情。你们想一想，娶一位和自己志趣相投的妻子有多困难，而娶一个跟自己合不来的女人却是大有可能。要是娶了这么一个女人，日子该多不好过啊！你们真蠢，竟然以为，只要摸清姑娘父母的品性，就能找到让我满意的妻子。我不知道你们如何认识了她们父亲，也不知道你们如何窥探到了她们母亲的隐私。就算你们明白了姑娘父母的情况，又怎么保证她和父母一模一样呢？但既然你们执意要给我套上这道枷锁，我只能欣然接受。不过，我要自己选择妻子。就算之后事情进展得不顺利，我也用不着怪罪别人。我还要告诉你们，不管我最后选了谁，你们都要尊敬她。要是我按照你们的意愿，娶了一个自己不喜欢的女人，那我有多不爽快，就会让你们吃到多大的苦头。”他那些精明的手下立刻回答说，只要侯爵肯娶亲，无论娶谁，他们都会高兴的。

在附近的村子里，住着一个出身贫寒的姑娘。侯爵欣赏她的品性已经有很长一段时日了。而且他也十分欣赏姑娘的美貌，觉得与她一起生活应该会很开心。于是他就不再物色别人，直接挑明要娶她。侯爵派人把姑娘的父亲叫了过来，向他表明了心意。姑娘的父亲十分贫穷，所以立刻答应了这门婚事。

办完这些事后，瓜尔蒂耶里侯爵把辖区内所有的居民都召集过来，对他们说：“朋友们，我知道你们很想让我娶亲，我也马上就要结婚了。但我成亲，多半是为了让你们开心，并非我自己所想。你们答应过我，无论我娶谁回家都会同意，而且都会尊敬她。现在，是时候让我来履行我对你们许下的诺言，也是时候让你们兑现承诺了。我按照自己的心愿找到了附近的一位姑娘，不日就会和她在府里成婚。所以，你们要想一想，该如何办一场热闹的婚礼，又该如何迎娶她。这样一来，你们让我高兴，我也会让你们满意。”

大家听到这个消息后都很兴奋，回答说，无论侯爵想要娶谁，他们都会欣然接受，并且在任何时候都会尊敬她，视她为自己的女主人。那之后，大伙很快就投入到这一庆典的准备当中，瓜尔蒂耶里本人也参与了筹备过程。侯爵让他们把婚礼办得豪华隆重，还邀请了所有亲朋好友以及周边地区的上层人士来参加庆典。此外，他还找来了一位与新娘身材差不多的姑娘，按照她的尺寸做了很多华丽的衣服，又置办了几条腰带、一枚戒指和一顶漂亮的王冠。总之，只要是新娘会用到的东西，他都准备好了。

到了婚礼那天，瓜尔蒂耶里一大早就上了马，要和他一起迎娶新娘的人也都到齐了。一切安排妥当后，手下人对侯爵说：“大人，是时候去接新娘了。”于是，侯爵在其他人的陪同下，朝着那个小村子出发了。到了之后，他们看到姑娘抬着刚从井里打来的水，急急忙忙地往家赶，周围还有几个同行的姑娘，大概是为了来看一眼侯爵的新娘。瓜尔蒂耶里看到她后，知道她名叫格里塞尔达，就叫了她一声，问她父亲在哪里。姑娘羞答答地回答道：“大人，他在家里呢。”

于是瓜尔蒂耶里下了马，让众人在外面等着，自己一个人走进了那个简陋的房子。见到姑娘的父亲贾努科雷后，侯爵对他说：“我来娶格里塞尔达回府，但是在此之前，我想当着你的面问她几个问题。”于是侯爵问格里塞尔达，结婚之后不管自己说什么话，做什么事，她会不会始终顺从于他，讨好于他。姑娘回答“会”。他又问了很多诸如此类的问题，格里塞尔达都做出了肯定的回答。

听到格里塞尔达的回答后，侯爵便牵起了她的手，把她带到了屋外，吩咐手下的人将她的旧衣裳脱掉，换上他备好的华服。很快，他们就打扮好了新娘，还梳理了她原本蓬乱的头发，为她戴上了王冠。在场的每一个人都为这一幕惊叹不已。于是侯爵说：“诸位，只要这位姑娘同意，她就是我要娶的妻子了。”接着他转过身来问姑娘：“格里塞尔达，你愿意让我做你的丈夫吗？”

格里塞尔达还是那么羞涩，不敢相信这是真的，怯生生地回答道：“大人，我愿意。”

于是侯爵说：“我也愿意让你做我的妻子。”就这样，侯爵在所有人的见证下娶走了她。他将她扶上一匹小马，风风光光地回了侯爵府。在府里，他们举行了盛大的仪式。就算是法国公主出嫁，也不过如此了。

换上新衣服后，年轻的新娘就像变了个人似的。我们刚才说过，她本就貌美如花，温柔贤淑，再经过这么一番打扮，就更加惹人喜爱了。现在的她宛若一位大家闺秀、贵族小姐，根本不像是农民贾努科雷的女儿，更不像是个放羊的姑娘了，这让之前认识她的人都惊讶万

分。而且她对丈夫也十分恭顺，时刻让他感到自己是世界上最快乐、最有福气的男人。除此之外，她对丈夫手下的人也非常和蔼宽厚。每个人都衷心地爱戴她，尊敬她，祈祷她身体健康，事事顺意。有些人之前说瓜尔蒂耶里娶这个女人是犯了糊涂，现在就连他们也说，瓜尔蒂耶里料事如神，是天下最聪明的男人，因为再也没有人能像他一样，透过乡下女子的粗布衣衫，窥探到如此高尚的品德。不久，格里塞尔达的名声不仅传遍了整个侯爵领地，还传到了其他各个地方。她证明了自己的价值和品德，也让之前反对侯爵娶她的人改变了主意。

和瓜尔蒂耶里一起住了没多久后，格里塞尔达就怀孕了。几个月后，一个女婴呱呱坠地。瓜尔蒂耶里十分高兴，然而没过多长时间，他心里就萌生了一个奇怪的念头。他想用一些常人无法忍受的事考验妻子的耐心，而且要考验她很长时间。瓜尔蒂耶里先是用语言打击她。他装出心神不宁的样子，对夫人说因为她出身寒微，所以下属们对她很不满意。特别是当她生孩子时，大家一看是个女孩，都很不高兴，一直在嘀咕。

听到这些话后，夫人镇定自若，连一点多余的举动都没有。她说：“大人，您想对我做什么就做什么吧。只要能对您的名誉有利，能令您高兴，那您对我做什么，我都会心甘情愿地接受。我知道，我没有您的下属重要，而且我本就配不上您对我的尊重。”这个回答很合瓜尔蒂耶里的心意，因为他从这些话里听出，妻子并没有因为自己和他人的尊敬而骄傲自大。

没过多长时间，瓜尔蒂耶里又向妻子暗示，下属们容不下她生的这个女儿。然后，他又叫来府上一个仆人，派他去夫人那里做件事。到了格里塞尔达面前，仆人面露难色地对她说：“夫人，我要是不按大人吩咐的做，大人就会杀了我的。他让我把您的女儿带走，让我……”他说到这里，就没再说下去了。

格里塞尔达听了这话，再看看这个仆人的脸色，想起侯爵之前说的话，便明白了丈夫是派他来杀女儿的。尽管心里悲恸欲绝，但她仍然面不改色，立刻把女儿从摇篮里抱了起来，在一番亲吻、祝福之后，把孩子给了仆人，对他说：“带她走吧！既然你的主人要你这么做，那你按他的命令照做就是了。但请你别让鸟兽吃掉孩子的尸身，除非大人命令你必须这么做。”仆人抱着孩子，把夫人说的话重复给了侯爵听。妻子坚强的意志让他感到十分惊讶，于是，他把女儿送到了博洛尼亚的一位亲戚那里，请亲戚悉心照料教导她，但永远不要让孩子知道自己的身世。

不久，夫人又怀孕了，这次生下了一名男婴。瓜尔蒂耶里十分喜欢这个孩子，但觉得之前做的还不够，想用更大的打击来考验妻子。一天，他又装作心绪不定的样子对妻子说：“夫人，自从你生了这个

儿子，我手下那些人知道我死以后，贾努科雷的外孙要做他们的主公，就一直闹得不可开交。我实在受不了他们了。要想不被他们推翻，我恐怕还得再对儿子做一次上次对女儿做的事情，不然最后还得离开你，再娶一个女人。”妻子耐心地听他讲完，只是回答说：“大人，请您按自己的意愿行事。您只管让自己开心就好，不用考虑我。因为如果看到您不开心，我做什么事情都不会开心的。”

没过几天，瓜尔蒂耶里又像当年送走女儿一样，送走了儿子。和上次一样，他假装把孩子杀掉，但其实还是送到了博洛尼亚抚养。而夫人也和上次送走女儿时一样，没流露出一丝多余的神情，也没说一句多余的话。瓜尔蒂耶里看到后震惊了，越发确信没有女人可以做到她这般隐忍。如果不是亲眼看到格里塞尔达与自己一样疼爱孩子的话，他还以为妻子根本没把孩子放在心上呢。而格里塞尔达也很聪明，让丈夫看出了自己对孩子的爱。侯爵的下属们以为他真的把两个孩子杀了，于是都强烈地谴责他，觉得他是个残忍无情的人，也都对夫人表现出了极大的同情。别人家的夫人看她失去了孩子，过来安慰她。但她只是说，如果孩子的亲生父亲想这么做，那么她也愿意这么做。

女儿长大后，瓜尔蒂耶里觉得考验妻子忍耐力的最终时刻到了。当着众多下属的面，瓜尔蒂耶里宣称，他再也忍受不了夫人了，还说当初娶她是因为年少无知，所以想请求教皇特许，让他离开格里塞尔达，再娶新人。很多下属反对他，但他却说自己只能这么做。夫人听说这件事后，想到自己要回娘家，像从前那样终日放羊，还要看着另一个女人与自己心爱的丈夫在一起生活，心里十分难过。然而，就像以前接受不公的命运时一样，这次她仍然隐忍不发，听从命运的安排。

没过多久，瓜尔蒂耶里就派人从罗马寄回几封伪造的信，让手下的人看到，教皇已经在信中特许他休掉格里塞尔达，另娶他人。接着，他派人把格里塞尔达叫来，当着众人的面对她说：“夫人，我获得了教皇的特许，可以把你休掉再娶了。我的祖上都是这里的达官贵人，而你家世代都是农民，所以我不想让你做我的妻子了，但你可以带着嫁妆回贾努科雷家。我也已经找到了一位适合我的妻子，过几天就会把她娶来。”

夫人听到这些话后，费了好大的劲才克制住女人的天性，把眼泪咽到肚子里，回答道：“大人，我知道自己出身卑微，配不上高贵的您。多亏了上帝的恩赐和您的宠爱，我才能和您在一起。尽管您给了我尊位，但我始终不敢把自己当成侯爵夫人，只觉得自己沾了您的光。既然您想收回送给我的东西，那么我也愿意将它们还给您。这是您娶我时用的戒指，请您收下吧。至于您让我把带过来的嫁妆带走，

这既不用您花钱找人来搬，也不用我叫牲口来驮，因为我还没有忘记，我嫁给您时，什么也没有带过来，连身上穿的衣服都是您给的。如果您觉得可行的话，我也可以赤裸着走出去，让大家都看看我这为您生了两个孩子的身子。但我是带着童贞过来的，现在已经带不走了，所以我求求您看在这分儿上，除了本就不存在的嫁妆之外，至少让我再穿走一件衣服吧。”

瓜尔蒂耶里感动得直想哭，但仍然板着脸说：“那你就穿件衣服吧。”

周围的人都求侯爵再给夫人件衣裳，别让相伴十三年的妻子只穿一件内衣，走得那么寒酸，那么不光彩。但他们怎么求侯爵都没有用，夫人还是辞别了众人，摘去头饰，身穿一件单衣，赤足走出了侯爵府，回到了父亲家。所有看到这一幕的人无不痛哭流涕。而贾努科雷从未相信过瓜尔蒂耶里是真心实意要娶女儿为妻，所以每时每刻都在等待这一天的到来。他还一直留着瓜尔蒂耶里娶亲时，女儿脱下来的衣服，等女儿回娘家时再给她继续穿。回家后，格里塞尔达还是像之前一样干些杂务活。尽管命运多舛，她还是凭借顽强的意志忍耐了下来。

瓜尔蒂耶里做完这些事后，便对他手下的人说，自己看中了帕纳戈一位公爵的女儿，让他们好好筹备婚礼，又派人把格里塞尔达叫来。格里塞尔达到了后，侯爵对她说：“我新看中了一个姑娘，想让她第一次进我家门时风光一番。你知道，办这么一场婚礼，需要有人收拾屋子，处理许多杂务，而我府上没有一个女佣能担得起这差事。你比其他任何人都熟悉这些事务，所以我派你来主持工作。除此之外，你还要把这附近该邀请的太太都请过来，最后像迎接女主人一样，迎接我的新婚妻子。办完这些事后，你就可以回娘家了。”

这些话就像刀子一样扎在格里塞尔达心上。曾经的好运让她拥有了深爱丈夫的权利，现在她已然失去了这份权利，但实在不忍心割舍这份感情。然而，她只是回答说：“大人，我准备好了。”于是她穿着粗布衣衫，又走进了那座不久前身穿单衣离开的府第，开始布置房间。她在床头挂上装饰品，给客厅铺好地毯，又收拾了厨房。事无巨细，她都亲自动手，就像一个卑贱的女佣。直到把所有东西都布置妥当，又以侯爵的名义邀请完附近府上的夫人之后，她才停下歇了歇，等待婚礼的到来。到了婚礼那天，她面带笑容，迎接了所有的女宾。尽管穿着破衣旧衫，但她举止大方，谈吐得体，如同一位贵族夫人。

侯爵之前把孩子送给了博洛尼亚的亲戚抚养，而亲戚的丈夫正是帕纳戈的伯爵。现在，瓜尔蒂耶里和格里塞尔达的女儿已经长到了十二岁，出落得亭亭玉立，宛若仙女一般。他们的儿子也已经六岁了。瓜尔蒂耶里写信给亲戚，请他把女儿和儿子送回桑卢佐，还拜托他派

阵势浩大的随从护送他们，告诉所有人，女儿将会嫁给瓜尔蒂耶里侯爵，但不要告诉任何人她的真实身份。这位亲戚按照侯爵的请求一一照做，带着姑娘、弟弟和随从们出发了。几天后，他们在午餐时分到达了桑卢佐。当地所有村民，以及附近村子里的人都在桑卢佐等候瓜尔蒂耶里侯爵的新娘。女宾们把姑娘迎到了府上，而在布好筵席的客厅里，格里塞尔达像往常一样，兴高采烈地迎上去说：“欢迎夫人！”其实女宾们早就求瓜尔蒂耶里，让格里塞尔达待在另一个房间里，或者给她些衣物，别让她在客人面前出这么大的丑，但瓜尔蒂耶里不答应。这时，她们只好就座，等待婚礼开始。每个人看了那姑娘后，都说瓜尔蒂耶里换夫人换得好，格里塞尔达也对姑娘和她弟弟赞不绝口。

瓜尔蒂耶里看到所有这些场景，觉得对夫人耐心的考验已经足够了。他看到格里塞尔达从不改变态度，始终恭顺谦卑，又知道她很聪慧，并不是由于智力缺陷才会如此，所以认为是时候解除她所有的痛苦了。他还知道，尽管她没有把这些痛苦表现在脸上，但一定藏在了心里。于是，瓜尔蒂耶里把格里塞尔达叫来，当着所有人的面，微笑着问她：“你觉得我的新娘怎么样？”

“大人”，格里塞尔达回答说，“我觉得她非常好，既美丽又聪慧。我觉得，您和她一起生活，一定会成为世上最快乐的人。但我求求您，不要像对待您上一位妻子一样对待她，叫她受到那么多伤害。您的前妻自小就饱受苦难，所以并无大碍；而她一向被娇生惯养，是忍受不了这些挫折的。”

瓜尔蒂耶里看到格里塞尔达如此坚信自己会娶这姑娘为妻，而且没有一句抱怨的话，于是让她坐在自己身边，对她说：“格里塞尔达，你忍耐了这么长时间，是时候让你得到回报，也是时候让那些说我残酷不义的人知道我这么做的目的了。我之所以这么做，是想要教会你该如何做一个妻子，并且让大家知道该如何对待我的妻子，好让我们的生活永远平安顺利。刚娶你时，我非常害怕你会不听我的话，所以才想方设法地试探你，甚至伤害你。然而，你说的每句话都顺我的心，做的每件事都合我的意。我觉得拥有你，就等于拥有了我期盼的所有宽慰和欣喜。现在，我想一次性弥补之前对你的亏欠，用我全部的温柔抚慰你受伤的心。来，高高兴兴地牵起这姑娘和这男孩的手吧，因为你相信我要娶的这位姑娘就是我们的女儿，而这男孩就是我们的儿子。他们两人就是你们以为被我残忍杀害的孩子。而我，是你的丈夫，我爱你胜过世间万物。我相信，现在我可以自豪地说，没有人能够像我一样，对自己的妻子如此满意。”

说罢，他拥吻了妻子。格里塞尔达喜极而泣，和丈夫一起站起来，向女儿走去。他们的女儿听完这些事情后又惊又喜，在场的众人

到这时也才明白了侯爵的所作所为。格里塞尔达温柔地拥抱了女儿，又抱住了儿子。女宾们也非常欣慰，纷纷起身祝贺格里塞尔达，然后和她去里间，帮她脱下了那身粗布衣裳，换上了一身她之前穿的华服，将女主人迎回客厅。其实，就算穿着方才那身衣服，她看起来仍像是府上的女主人。格里塞尔达和孩子们都欣喜若狂，大家也都兴奋不已，于是一连庆祝了好几天。大家虽然觉得瓜尔蒂耶里对妻子做的事不近人情，但都夸他聪明绝顶，对格里塞尔达的智慧更是赞不绝口。

几天后，帕纳戈伯爵回到了博洛尼亚。瓜尔蒂耶里也把丈人贾努科雷接到了府里，让他不必再劳累度日，以安享晚年。他又把自己和格里塞尔达的女儿嫁给了一个富贵人家，而他自己则和格里塞尔达幸福地生活了一辈子。

现在，我们能说什么呢？高尚的灵魂也会降临到穷人家里，正如一些为人主公的贵族子弟只配去喂猪一样。除了格里塞尔达以外，还有谁能像她一样，在自己的丈夫做了那些残忍无比的事情后，不仅可以忍住不哭，还能面带笑意呢？如果换成另一个女人穿着单衣，被瓜尔蒂耶里赶出家门的话，那她就会去找别的男人，让他再给自己一身漂亮的新衣服。这听起来好像也没什么不对的。

[1] 原标题为“第十天第十则故事”。

Giovanni Boccaccio

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

Mrs Rosie and the Priest

N° 01

‘When the
men were off
somewhere,
he would come
visiting their
wives more
solicitously than
any priest they’d
had before . . .’

Andreuccio da Perugia's Neapolitan adventures

I was told some time ago about a young man from Perugia called Andreuccio, the son of a certain Pietro and a horse-dealer by trade. Having heard that horses were trading well in Naples, he put five-hundred gold florins in his bag and went off there with some other merchants, never having previously been away from home. He arrived on a Sunday evening, about vesper time, got the necessary information from his innkeeper and was in the market square early the next morning. He saw a lot of horses, many of which met with his approval, and did a good deal of bargaining without being able to agree a price for any of them. But he was keen to show that he was there to do some buying and naively and imprudently pulled out his bag of florins several times before the eyes of people coming and going past him. It was while he was negotiating, with his bag in full view, that a young Sicilian woman walked past. She was very beautiful, but ready to give any man what he wanted for a small payment. He didn't see her, but she saw his bag and immediately said to herself, 'Wouldn't I be a lucky one if that money were mine?' Then she went on her way.

There was old woman with her who was also Sicilian. As soon as she saw Andreuccio, she let the girl go on and hurried over to give him an affectionate hug. The young woman noticed and, without saying anything, stopped and waited for her on one side. Andreuccio, who had turned round and recognized the old woman, greeted her with great warmth. She promised to come and see him at his inn, but didn't keep him talking for too long just then and soon left. Andreuccio went back to his bargaining, though he made no purchases that morning. After seeing first the bag and then the intimacy with the old servant, the young woman began to wonder if she might get hold of some or all of the money. She asked a few cautious questions about who the young man was, where he was from, what he was doing there and how she came to know him. The old servant gave her all the information she wanted, almost in as

much detail as Andreuccio might have supplied himself, being able to do this because she had spent a long time with his father first in Sicily and then in Perugia. She likewise told her where he was lodging and why he had come to Naples.

Once the young woman was fully informed about his family and their names, she had the basis for playing a clever trick that would bring her what she wanted. Back at her house she made sure that the old woman was busy all day so that she couldn't go and see Andreuccio. She had a much younger servant- girl to whom she had given a very good training in the sort of work she had in mind, and towards evening she sent her to the inn where Andreuccio was staying. When she arrived, she found him by chance standing alone in the doorway. She asked for Andreuccio and he said that he was the very man. At which she drew him to one side.

'Sir,' she said, 'there is a noble lady in this town who would appreciate a conversation with you, if you were so inclined.'

Andreuccio thought carefully for a moment when he heard this. He decided that he was a good- looking lad and deduced that this lady must have fallen for him, as if there were no other fine young men in Naples just then apart from himself. He quickly said that he was up for it, and asked where and when this lady wanted to have a talk with him.

The young servant- girl replied, 'She's waiting for you in her house, sir, whenever you feel like coming along.'

'Well, you lead the way and I'll follow on,' said Andreuccio immediately, with no thought of letting anyone in the inn know.

So the girl led him to the Sicilian woman's house, which was in a district called Malpertugio, a name meaning Bad Passage, which gives a clear idea of just how respectable a district it was. But Andreuccio, knowing nothing of this and quite unsuspecting, thought he was going to a most respectable house to see a lady of some standing, and confidently followed the girl into the house. As they were climbing the stairs, she called out to her mistress, 'Here's Andreuccio', and he saw her appear at the top, waiting for him.

She was still young, with a full figure and a lovely face, and her clothes and jewellery were tastefully ornate. When Andreuccio was closer, she came down three steps towards him, her arms wide, and,

flinging them round his neck, stayed like that for a while without saying a word, as if too overcome to speak. Then she tearfully kissed his forehead and said in a broken voice, 'O my precious Andreuccio, welcome to my house!'

Such a heartfelt reception amazed Andreuccio, and he replied quite dazed, 'Well, it's wonderful to meet you, my lady!'

After this she took him by the hand and led him into the main room, and from there, without saying another word, into her private chamber, which was redolent with the scents of roses, orange blossom and other flowers. Andreuccio noticed a splendid curtained bed, and an abundance of beautiful dresses arranged on hangers in the south Italian way, and many other fine and costly items. In his inexperience he was fully convinced by all this that the woman could be nothing but a great lady. Once they were seated together on a chest that was at the foot of her bed, she embarked on the following speech.

'I am quite certain, Andreuccio, that you are startled at being embraced and wept over by me in this way. After all, you don't know me and may never have heard my name mentioned. But in a moment you are going to hear something which will perhaps amaze you even more. The fact is, I am your sister. And I can tell you that, since God has granted me the enormous grace of letting me see one of my brothers before I die – though of course I want to see all of you – I shall not die unconsolated. Perhaps you have never heard a word of this. So I shall happily tell you all about it.

'As I think you may have been told, Pietro – that is, your father and mine – lived for a long time in Palermo. Thanks to his native goodness and appealing character he gained the affections of those who came to know him and still has a place in their hearts. But, among those most attached to him, there was someone who loved him more than anyone else, and that was my mother, who was a noble lady and recently widowed. She loved him so much that she put aside all fears of her father and brothers and any concern for her honour, and entered into intimate relations with him. As a result I was born into the world and am now the person you see before you.

'A little later, when a reason arose for Pietro to return to Perugia, he left me, still a very little girl, with my mother. From

everything I heard, he never gave me or her another thought. If he had not been my father, I would be very critical of him, considering the ingratitude he showed to my mother – and let's leave aside the love he should have felt for me his daughter, and not by a servant-girl or some woman of easy virtue either. My mother was inspired by the truest form of love when knowing nothing of who he was, she put herself and everything she had in his hands. But there you are Wrongs of long ago are more easily criticized than pu right.

‘So he left me a little girl in Palermo. When I had grown into more or less the woman you see before you, my mother, who was a rich lady, married me to a man from Agrigento, an upstanding man of noble rank. Out of love for myself and my mother he moved to Palermo, and there, being very much on the Guelf side, he became involved in plotting with our King Charles. King Fred erick got wind of the plot before any of our plans could be acted on, and so we had to flee Sicily just at the moment when I was expecting to become the finest lady there had ever been on the island. We took with us wha few things we could – I mean few in comparison to al the possessions we had – and, leaving our lands and man sions behind, escaped to this city. We found King Charles very grateful. He partially compensated us for the losses we had suffered on his behalf. He gave us lands and houses, and he still gives my husband, your brother- in- law a substantial pension, as you'll soon be able to see. So that is how I came to be here, and how, thanks to God's grace, though not at all to you, I now see you before me my sweet brother.’

With this she clasped him to her again and kissed his forehead, still weeping tenderly.

She told her cock- and- bull story in a supremely coherent and convincing way, with not a hesitation or stutter. Andreuccio recalled that his father really had been in Palermo and he knew from his own experience what young men are like, and how prone they are to falling in love. What with the tender tears, embraces and decidedly unamorous kisses, he was convinced that what she said was more than true. When she finished, he made the following reply.

‘My lady, you must not be shocked by my own amazement. To be candid, either my father for some reason of his own never spoke

about you and your mother, or if he did speak of you, not a whisper reached my ears. So I had no more knowledge of you than if you had never existed. But it's all the more precious to me to have found you, my sister, in this place, because I'm here all alone and this was the thing I least expected. And to tell the truth, I can't imagine your not being precious to the grandest businessman I can think of, let alone to a small- scale merchant like myself. But please, explain one thing for me. How did you come to know I was here?'

'I was told this morning,' she replied. 'And the person who told me is a poor woman who spends a lot of time here with me, the reason being that, from what she says, she was with our father for a long time in both Palermo and Perugia. If it hadn't seemed to me more honourable for you to come here to what is your house than for me to come and see you at someone else's, I would have been with you ages ago.'

After this she started putting precise questions to him about his relatives, identifying each one by name Andreuccio told her about them all, becoming more and more willing to believe what he should not have believed at all.

Since they kept on talking for a long time and it was very hot, she called for white wine and sweetmeats, and ensured that Andreuccio was duly served. He made to leave after this since it was now dinnertime, but she wouldn't allow it. Looking deeply distressed, she flung her arms round him, saying, 'Oh, poor me, I can tell I don't really matter to you! To think that you're here with a sister you've never seen before, in her house, where you should have come and stayed when you arrived, and you want to go off and have your dinner in an inn. No, you'll dine with me, and though my husband is not here, I'm very sorry to say, I'll do what little a lady is capable of to see you are treated with some degree of honour.'

Andreuccio could only come up with one reply.

'You do matter to me,' he said, 'as much as any siste should. But if I don't go, I shall keep them waiting fo me for dinner all evening, which would be really churlish.'

'Lord in heaven,' she said, 'do you think I've nobody in the house I can send to tell them not to expect you? Though you would

be doing a finer thing, not to say your duty, if you sent a message to your friends inviting them to come and dine here. Then afterwards, if you were set on leaving, you and all the rest could go off in one big party.'

Andreuccio replied that he had no wish to see his friends that evening, and that, if this was how she felt, she should treat him as she pleased. She then made a show of sending a message to the inn telling them not to expect him for dinner. After this they talked on for a long time before sitting down to eat. They were served in a splendid fashion with a series of dishes, the woman cunningly prolonging the dinner well into the night. When they got up from the table, and Andreuccio expressed a desire to leave, she said that she could not possibly allow it. Naples was not a city for anyone to walk through at night, especially a stranger. She had sent a message to say he should not be expected for dinner and then she had sent another regarding where he was staying. He believed everything she said, and was delighted, in his deluded state, to stay on.

At her instigation conversation after dinner was prolonged and varied. Late into the night she left Andreuccio in her own chamber, with a young servant- boy to show him anything he needed, while she herself went off to another room with her maids.

It was very hot and as soon as he saw he was alone Andreuccio removed his jacket and peeled off his leg gings, which he left over the bedhead. Feeling nature calling him to lighten his stomach of the excess weigh within it, he asked the servant where one did that sort o thing. The boy pointed to a door in a corner of the room

'Go in there,' he said.

Andreuccio went insouciantly though the door. By chance he brought one of his feet down on a board, the other end of which was no longer attached to the joist on which it was resting. The result was that the board swung up in the air and then crashed downwards, taking Andreuccio with it. God was kind to him and he did him self no harm in the tumble, although he fell from a considerable height, but he was thoroughly covered in the horrible filth that the place was full of. To explain the arrangement in order to give you a clearer picture of wha I've just said and what follows, two narrow beams had been fixed over the sort of narrow alleyway we often see separating two houses, with some boards nailed to

them and a place to sit on fitted. It was one of these boards which had fallen with Andreuccio.

When he found himself down below in the alleyway he was extremely upset at what had happened and began calling out to the boy. But, as soon as he had heard him fall, the boy had rushed to tell his mistress. She in her turn rushed into the bedroom, quickly looked to see if his clothes were there and found them. With them was the money, which, crazily, the ever suspicious Andreuccio always carried on his person. The Palermo tart, who now had what she had schemed for by turning into the sister of the visitor from Perugia, couldn't care less any more about Andreuccio. She went promptly over to the door which Andreuccio had passed through when he fell, and closed it.

When the boy didn't reply, Andreuccio started calling more loudly, but to no avail. He was now becoming suspicious and beginning, somewhat late in the day, to have an inkling of the trickery. He climbed on to the low wall separating the alleyway from the street and, once down on the other side, found his way to the door of the house, which he easily recognized. He stood there for a long time, vainly calling out and shaking and banging on the door. He could now see the full extent of his misfortune quite clearly, which reduced him to tears.

'Oh, poor me,' he began saying. 'How little time it's taken for me to lose five- hundred florins and a sister too!'

After a lot more of this he began again beating on the door and calling out. The result was that many people living nearby woke up and then, when the din became unbearable, got themselves out of bed. One of the lady's female servants appeared at a window, looking all sleepy, and called out in an irritated voice, 'Who's banging away down there?'

'Oh, don't you know me?' said Andreuccio. 'I'm Andreuccio, the brother of Lady Fiordiliso.'

The servant replied, 'My good man, if you've had too much to drink, go and sleep it off and come back in the morning. I don't know anything about any Andreuccio or anything else you're gabbling on about. Do us a favour please go away and let us get some sleep.'

‘What?’ said Andreuccio. ‘Don’t you really know wha I’m saying? Oh, you must do. But if family relations in Sicily are like that and get forgotten as quickly as this at least let me have back the clothes I left with you and I’ll be glad to go on my way with only the Lord for company.’

The servant almost broke out laughing.

‘Good man,’ she said, ‘I think you’re dreaming.’

And even before she finished speaking, she was back inside with the window shut.

Andreuccio was now fully aware of his losses and the pain of the realization made him so angry it almost drove him wild. He could not recover what he had lost through words and he resorted to physical violence. He picked up a big stone and began savagely beating at the door again only now with much more force. At this many of the neighbours who had been woken up and were out of thei beds started thinking that he was some no- gooder who was inventing the whole palaver to bother the good woman. When the banging got too much for them, they started calling out from their windows, as if they were the neighbourhood dogs barking all together at some stray intruder.

‘It’s an outrage,’ they said, ‘coming at this hour of night to respectable women’s houses with all this claptrap. Oh, go away, for God’s sake, and please let us sleep. If you have anything to sort out with her, you can come back tomorrow. Just don’t be such a blasted nuisance tonight.’

What they were saying perhaps encouraged the good Sicilian woman’s pimp, who was inside the house, though he had not been seen or heard till now by Andreuccio. He came to the window and in his best horrible and savage voice called out loudly, ‘Who’s that down there?’

Andreuccio looked up when he heard this and saw someone who, so far as he could tell (which was not much), had the air of a man to be taken seriously. He had a thick black beard and was yawning and rubbing his eyes, as if he’d just awoken from deep sleep.

‘I’m a brother of the lady of the house,’ replied Andreuccio nervously.

The man did not wait for him to go on.

'I can't think,' he said in an even more intimidating voice than before, 'why I'm stopping myself from coming down there and giving you such a thrashing you won't ever move again. An irritating drunk of a donkey, that's what you must be, not letting anyone round here get any sleep tonight.'

With that he turned back inside and bolted the window.

Some of the neighbours knew what sort of a man he was and whispered a few fearful words of advice to Andreuccio.

'For God's sake,' they said, 'go away, good man, don't get yourself murdered down there. Go away for your own good.'

Being already terrified by the ruffian's voice and appearance, Andreuccio saw every reason for accepting this advice, which he felt was motivated by simple goodwill. He was now as dejected as anyone could be and despaired of recovering his money. He set off towards the part of the city he had come from following the servant-girl earlier that day, aiming to get back to his inn, but with no idea of the way. Then, since the stench he could smell coming from him was disgusting, he decided to go towards the sea in order to wash himself down. But he turned leftwards and headed up a street called the Ruga Catalana, or Catalan Way. This was taking him to the higher part of the city, when he happened to see in front of him two figures coming towards him with a lantern. He was afraid they might be part of the official watch, or else just up to no good. He noticed an open building nearby and quietly crept in to try to avoid them. But it was as if they had been directed precisely to that spot. They too entered the building. One was carrying various tools round his neck, which he unloaded, and the two of them began looking the tools over and commenting on them.

At a certain point in their conversation, one of them said, 'What can it be? I can smell the worst stink I've ever smelt.' And then, lifting up the lantern a bit, they saw the miserable Andreuccio.

'Who's that there?' they asked, astounded.

When Andreuccio said nothing, they came over to him with the light and asked him what he was doing there in such a repulsive state. Andreuccio told them the whole story of what had happened

to him. They guessed where it could have been and said to each other, 'It must have all happened at that villain Buttafuoco's.'

'My good lad,' said one of them, turning to Andreuccio, 'you might have lost your money, but you have plenty reason for praising the Lord that you happened to have that fall and then couldn't get back into the house. If you hadn't fallen, you can be sure that you'd have been murdered as soon as you dropped off to sleep, and then you'd have lost your life as well as your money. But what's the point of crying over it at this stage? You've as much chance of getting a penny back as of picking stars from the sky. You're likely to end up dead if that villain hears you've been blabbing away.'

Then, after some conferring together, they put a proposal to him.

'Look, we feel sorry for you,' they said. 'So, if you want to join us in a certain project we are en route to perform, we are of the definite opinion that your share of the profits will amount to much more than what you have lost.'

Andreuccio, in his desperate state, replied that he was ready and willing.

That day had seen the burial of a certain Archbishop of Naples called Messer Filippo Minutolo. He had been buried in elaborate finery with a ruby ring on his finger worth over five hundred gold florins. The two of them had in mind to detach it. They explained the scheme to Andreuccio, who let greed override good sense, and the three of them set off.

Andreuccio was still giving off a strong smell as they proceeded towards the cathedral.

'Can't we find a way,' said one of the two at a certain point, 'for this companion of ours to have a wash some where to stop him stinking so horribly?'

'Yes,' said the other, 'we're near to a well now. It's always had a pulley and a big bucket. Let's go over and give him a quick wash.'

When they reached the well, they found the rope was there but the bucket had been removed. So they decided to tie Andreuccio to the rope and lower him into the well. Once at the bottom, he would

wash himself, and then when he had done, he would give the rope a shake and they would pull him up.

So they moved into action and lowered Andreuccio into the well. But it so happened that some of the night watch were feeling thirsty because of the heat and also because they had been chasing after someone. They were coming towards the well to get a drink when the other two saw them, and at once took to their heels, without any of the company coming after water seeing them. Down in the well, Andreuccio, having finished washing, shook the rope a few times. The thirsty watchmen, who had now unstrapped their bucklers, their weapons and their surcoats, began pulling on the rope, believing that it was attached to a big bucketful of water.

As soon as Andreuccio saw he was near the rim of the well, he let go of the rope and grabbed hold of the rim in his hands. The sight was enough to terrify the watchmen, who immediately, without a word, let go of the rope and ran off as fast as they could. Andreuccio was profoundly startled. If he had not kept a firm hold, he would have fallen back into the well and perhaps have hurt himself badly, or even finished up dead. Once he was finally out of the well, he found the abandoned weaponry, which he knew his companions had not been carrying, and was even more amazed. Nervous, unclear what was going on, bemoaning his misfortune, he decided to take himself off without touching anything and wandered away with no idea of where he was heading. He was going along like this when he bumped into his two companions, who were coming back to pull him up out of the well. They were astonished and asked him who had actually done that. Andreuccio replied that he did not know, but gave them a full account of what had occurred and of what he had found by the well.

His companions realized what had happened and explained, laughing, why they had run away and who the people were who had pulled him up. Then, without wasting any more words since it was already midnight they all went off to the cathedral. They got in quite easily and reached the tomb, which was marble and very large. They used their irons to lift the cover, which was enormously heavy, raising it just enough for a single man to get inside, and then they propped it up.

When this was done, one of them asked, 'Who's going to go

inside?’

‘Not me,’ said the other.

‘Nor me either,’ said the first. ‘But let Andreuccio go in.

‘I’m not doing that,’ said Andreuccio.

Both of them turned on him.

‘What do you mean you won’t go in?’ they said. ‘By God, if you don’t go in, we’ll give you a bashing round the head with one of these iron poles and that’ll be the end of you.’

This put the wind up Andreuccio. He went inside thinking to himself as he did so, ‘These two are making me enter the tomb in order to trick me. When I’ve passed them everything and am getting myself out again, they’ll be off and I’ll be left with nothing.’

He decided first and foremost to pocket his own share. He remembered the precious ring he had heard them discussing and, as soon as he was in the tomb, he took it off the Archbishop’s finger and put it on his own. Then he passed them the crozier, the mitre and the gloves and stripped the body down to the shirt, passing them each item, saying that was all there was. They protested that the ring must be somewhere and told him to look everywhere. He replied that he couldn’t find it and pretended to go on looking, keeping them waiting for some time. But they were as canny as he was. They continued telling him to keep looking and then, picking their moment, they pulled away the prop supporting the lid of the tomb and ran off, leaving Andreuccio enclosed within. Anyone can guess how Andreuccio felt when he heard the lid fall.

He tried many times to push up the lid with his head and shoulders, but his efforts were useless. He was so overcome with the anguish of it all that he passed out, collapsing on the Archbishop’s dead body. And anyone who had seen the two of them would have had difficulty deciding which was the more lifeless, the Archbishop or Andreuccio. When he came to his senses, he broke into a flood of tears, foreseeing that he could not avoid one of two ends. If no one came to open the tomb, he was doomed to die of hunger and the stink among the worms from the corpse. Or else, if people came and found him inside the tomb, he would be hung as a thief.

With these bleakly distressing thoughts going round in his

head, he heard movement in the church and many people talking. They were, he gathered, going to do what he and his companions had already done. This sharply increased his terror. But when they had opened the tomb and propped up the lid, they began to argue about who should go inside, which none of them wanted to do. At last, after much dispute, a priest said, 'What are you frightened of? Do you think he's going to eat you? The dead don't eat people. I'll be the one to go in.' With this he leaned over the edge of the tomb, turned his head outwards and swung his legs inside in order to lower himself down. Andreuccio saw what was going on jumped up and seized the priest by one of his legs and made as if to pull him down inside. When the priest felt himself being pulled, he let out an enormous shriek and scrambled out of the tomb as fast as he could. This terrified the rest of them. Leaving the tomb open, they took off as if they were being chased by a hundred thousand devils.

Seeing them go, Andreuccio clambered out of the tomb, happier than he could have hoped, and left the church by the way he had come in. It was almost daylight as he walked off, trusting to luck, with the ring on his finger. But he reached the seafront and finished up some how at his inn, where he discovered that the merchants he had come with and the innkeeper had been worrying about him all night. He told them what had happened to him and they all opined that he should take the inn keeper's advice and leave Naples immediately. He quickly did so and returned to Perugia, with his funds now invested in a ring, after having set out to do some horse- trading.

Ricciardo da Chinzica loses his wife

There was once a judge in Pisa with more brains than muscle called Messer Ricciardo da Chinzica, who may have thought that what worked well with his studies would satisfy a wife too. Being very rich, he was able to devote considerable time and effort to searching for a good- looking young lady to marry, whereas, if he had been able to give himself the sort of professional counsel he gave to others, good looks and youth were just what he should have run away from. And he managed it: Ser Lotto Gualandi gave him one of his daughters in marriage. She was called Bartolommea and she was one of the best- looking and most fanciable girls in Pisa, though admittedly there aren't many there who don't look like hairy spiders. The judge took her home with great razzmatazz, and the marriage- feast was magnificent.

When he finally geared himself up for the actual consummation, he just about brought it off. But being scrawny, wizened and not exactly spunky, next morning he had to have a glass of fortified wine, some sweet biscuits and other pick- me- ups before he could re- enter the world of the living. The experience gave the judge a better idea of his capabilities than he had had before, and he began teaching his wife a calendar of saints' days of the kind that schoolboys pore over looking for holidays which might have been made in Ravenna. As he now showed her, there wasn't a day that wasn't a saint's day or rather every day had a multitude of them. Reverence for these demanded, as he demonstrated on various grounds, that man and woman should abstain from acts of congress. Then he threw in fasts, the four Ember days evening vigils for the Apostles and hundreds of other saints, Fridays, Saturdays, the Lord's Day, the whole of Lent, certain phases of the moon and endless other special cases, no doubt assuming that the breaks from court- work he enjoyed from time to time applied just as much to women in bed. So this was how he managed things for a long time, with his wife becoming seriously depressed from being given at best a monthly treat, while he always kept a watchful eye on her just in case someone else gave her

lessons about working days like the ones he had given her about saints' days.

Since the next summer was very hot, Messer Ricciardo found himself wanting to go off to a beautiful property he had near Monte Nero, where he could relax and enjoy the air for a few days. With him he took his lovely wife To give her some entertainment while they were there one day he organized a fishing trip. The two of them sailed out on small boats to watch the spectacle, he on one with the fishermen, she on the other with some ladies. They were so captivated that they drifted several miles along the coast almost without realizing it. But while they were gazing in rapt attention, a sloop suddenly came on the scene, belonging to Paganino da Mare, a celebrated corsair of the time. Once it sighted the boats, it set a course straight for them. They were unable to get away fast enough and Paganino caught up with the boat with the ladies in it. As soon as he laid eyes on Messer Ricciardo's beautiful wife, he stopped wanting any other booty, and whisked her into his sloop under the eyes of her husband, who was now on shore, and sailed away.

It doesn't take much to imagine how upset the judge was by the sight, given that he was so jealous he was fearful of the very air she breathed. In Pisa and elsewhere, he started fruitlessly complaining about the criminal behaviour of corsairs, but without discovering who had carried off his wife, or where they had taken her.

When Paganino took in how beautiful she was, he felt that he was on to a good thing. Not having a wife, he thought he might hang on to her permanently and began gently soothing her tears, which were copious. He had long ago thrown away saints' calendars and forgotten all about feast- days and holidays. That night he consoled her with some action, on the grounds that words had not helped much during the day. His consolations were so effective that the judge and his rules had gone entirely out of her head before they reached Monaco, and she began to have the time of her life with Paganino. And once he had got her there, he not only consoled her day and night, but honoured her as his wife.

After a while Messer Ricciardo got wind of the whereabouts of his good lady. Ardently desiring to do something and believing that no one else could manage to do what needed to be done, he made

up his mind to go and get her himself, being prepared to pay out any amount of money to recover her. So he set to sea and sailed to Monaco. Once there he caught sight of his wife, and she caught sight of him, as she reported back to Paganino that evening, also informing him what his intentions were. When Messer Ricciardo saw Paganino the next morning he went up to him and quickly started an easy, friendly conversation with him, while Paganino pretended all the while not to recognize him and waited for him to get to the point. When he judged the moment had arrived deploying his best abilities in the most ingratiating way possible, Messer Ricciardo disclosed the reason why he had come to Monaco, begging Paganino to take as much money as he wanted and give him back the lady.

‘Sir,’ replied Paganino with a cheerful expression on his face, ‘you are very welcome here. My reply in brief is as follows: it is true I have a young woman in my house though I don’t know whether she’s your wife or someone else’s. I don’t know anything about her except what I’ve gathered from her during her stay with me. If you are the husband as you say, I’ll take you to her since you seem to me a likeable gentleman and I’m sure she’ll recognize you very well. If she says that the situation is as you say and wishes to go away with you, then, since I do love a likeable man such as you, you can give me the amount you yourself decide on for a ransom. But if the situation should be different, it would be indecent for you to try to take her from me, since I’ve got youth on my side and can hold a woman in my arms as well as any man, particularly one who is more attractive than any other girl I’ve ever seen.’

‘She certainly is my wife,’ said Messer Ricciardo, ‘as you’ll soon see if you take me to where she is. She’ll fling her arms round my neck straight away. So I won’t ask for the terms to be different from those you’ve thought up yourself.’

‘Let’s go then,’ said Paganino.

So they walked off to Paganino’s house and went into a reception-room, from where Paganino sent for her. She appeared from a chamber properly and neatly dressed and went over where Messer Ricciardo was waiting with Paganino. There she addressed only the sort of remarks to Messer Ricciardo that she might have made to any other stranger who had come with Paganino to his

house. The judge, who was expecting to be given a rapturous welcome, was amazed.

‘Could it be,’ he began to wonder, ‘that depression and my protracted sufferings ever since I lost her have altered me so much that she doesn’t recognize me?’

‘Lady,’ he said, ‘taking you fishing has cost me dear No one has suffered as much as I have since I lost you and here you are seeming not to recognize me, given the unfriendly way you’re talking. Can’t you see that I’m your Messer Ricciardo, who’s come here to pay whatever sum is demanded by this fine gentleman in whose house we find ourselves, so that I can have you back and take you away from here? He’s being kind enough to restore you to me for a sum of my own choosing.’

The lady turned to him and gave him a faint smile.

‘Are you addressing me, sir?’ she asked. ‘You should check you’ve not mistaken me for somebody else. As far as I’m concerned, I don’t recall ever seeing you before.’

‘It’s you who should check what you’re saying,’ said Messer Ricciardo. ‘Look at me properly. If you’re willing to do a little serious recalling, you’re bound to see that I’m your very own Ricciardo da Chinzica.’

‘Sir, you’ll forgive me,’ said the lady, ‘but it’s not as right and proper as you imagine for me to give you a lengthy looking-over. All the same, I’ve looked at you enough to know that I’ve never seen you before.’

Messer Ricciardo imagined that she was acting in this way out of fear of Paganino and did not want to admit to knowing him in his presence. So, after a few moments he asked Paganino if he would be so kind as to let him speak with the lady alone in her chamber. Paganino said that he was happy to do so, on condition that he didn’t start kissing her against her will. Then he told the lady to go with him into the chamber, listen to what he wanted to say and give him whatever reply she felt like.

Once the lady and Messer Ricciardo were in the chamber by themselves and had sat down, Messer Ricciardo began entreating her. ‘Oh, heart of my life, my own sweet soul, my one hope, don’t you recognize your Ricciardo, who loves you more than he loves

himself? How can it be? Have I altered so much? Oh, lovely darling girl, at least give me a little look.'

The lady broke out laughing and wouldn't let him go on. 'You are very well aware,' she said, 'that I've not such a bad memory that I don't know you are Messer Ricciardo da Chinzica, my husband. But you made a poor show of knowing me as long as I was with you. You're not as wise as you want people to think you are, and you never were. If you had been, you really should have had the wit to see that I was young, fresh and frisky, and then have consequently acknowledged that young ladies require something else apart from food and clothing, though modesty forbids them to spell it out. But you know how you managed all that.

'You shouldn't have married, if you liked studying law more than studying your wife. Not that I thought you were much of a judge. You seemed more like a crier calling out holy days and feast-days, you knew them so well, not to mention fast-days and overnight vigils. Let me tell you that if you had given as many days off to the labourers working your lands as you did to the one who should have been working my little plot, you'd not have har vested one grain of corn. By chance I've met with this man here, chosen by God, because he shows a compas sionate concern for my young age. And I stay with him in this chamber, where no one knows what a feast-day is I mean those feast-days that you celebrated one after another, piously serving the Lord in preference to the ladies. Saturdays don't pass through that door, neithe do Fridays, vigils, Ember days or Lent, which just goes on and on. No, it's all work, day and night, banging away all the time. As soon as the bell rang for matins this morn ing, there we were back at it, doing the same job again and again, as I know very well. So I intend to stay and work with him while I'm young, and keep feast-days and penances and fasts for when I'm old. Get out of here as soon as you can and good luck to you. Go and keep you saints' days as much as you like without me.'

Messer Ricciardo's distress at hearing her speak like this was unbearable.

'Oh, sweet soul of mine,' he said, when he realized she had finished, 'what are you saying? Aren't you bothered at all about your family's honour or your own? Do you want to stay here as this

fellow's tart, living in mortal sin rather than be my wife in Pisa? He'll get fed up with you and throw you out in total disgrace. But I'll always hold you dear and you'll always be the lawful mistress of my house, even if I didn't want to be your husband. Oh please listen. Are you going to let this unbridled, immora lust make you forget your honour and forget me, when I love you more than my very life? Please, my dear love, don't say things like that any more, just come away with me. Now that I know what you want, I'll really make an effort from now on. So, sweetheart, change your mind, come away with me. I've been so miserable since you were carried off.'

'Now that there's nothing to be done about it,' said the lady, 'I don't see how anyone apart from me can be squeamish over my honour. I just wish my family had been a bit more squeamish when they gave me to you! But since they didn't bother about my honour then, I don't intend to bother about theirs now. If my sin's a mortar one, I'll stay stuck in it like a pestle. So don't you worry about me. And what's more, let me tell you that I feel like Paganino's wife here, while I felt like your tart in Pisa, what with lunar charts and geometric squarings having to align your planet and mine, while here Paganino has me in his arms all night, squeezing me, biting me, and the state he leaves me in God alone can tell you. Then you say you'll make an effort. Doing what? Waiting for something to happen? Straightening it by hand? I can tell you've turned into a redoubtable knight since I saw you last! Go on, do your best to come to life. But you can't manage it. I don't think you belong in this world, you look such a wasted, miserable little wimp. And another thing. If he leaves me – which I don't think he's inclined to do as long I want to stay with him – I've no intention of ever coming back to you. Squeeze you til you squeaked, and you still wouldn't produce a spoonfu of sauce. That meant that when I was with you I just los out and paid out. I'm after better returns somewhere else To go back to where I started, I tell you there are no feast- days and no vigils here, where I intend to stay. So leave as quickly as you can, and the Lord be with you. I you don't, I'll start shouting that you're forcing yoursel on me.'

Messer Ricciardo saw that the game was up, recogniz ing there and then the folly in marrying a young wife without the appropriate wherewithal. He left the chamber in a saddened, suffering state and

spoke a lot of waffle to Paganino, which got him nowhere. In the end, he left the lady and returned empty-handed to Pisa. The blow affected his mind and, when he was walking around the city, if someone greeted him or asked him a question, he would only reply, 'A horrid hole hates a holy day.'

It wasn't long before he died. When Paganino heard knowing how much the lady loved him, he took her as his lawful wedded wife. Thereafter, with no thought for holy days or vigils or Lent, they worked their patch as much as their limbs would let them, and had a wonderful time together.

Mrs Rosie and the Priest

So, to begin, there's a village not far from here called Varlungo, as every one of you knows or will have heard from other people. It had once a valiant priest, a fine figure of a man who served the ladies well. He was not much of a reader, but every Sunday he would spout wholesome holy verbiage beneath the churchyard elm to refresh the spirits of his parishioners. When the men were off somewhere, he would come visiting their wives more solicitously than any priest they'd had before, sometimes bringing religious bits and pieces, holy water or candle-ends into their houses, and giving them his blessing.

Now among the women of the parish he took a fancy to, there was one he particularly liked, called Mrs Rosie Hues. She was the wife of a labourer by the name of Willy Welcome, and she really was a lovely ripe country-girl, tanned, sturdy, with lots of grinding potential. She was also better than any girl around at playing the tambourine, singing songs like 'The water's running down my river', and dancing reels and jigs, when she had to, waving a pretty little kerchief in her hand. With all these talents, she reduced the good priest to a quivering wreck. He would wander round the village all day trying to catch sight of her. When he realized she was in church on a Sunday morning, he would launch into a Kyrie or a Sanctus and struggle to come over as a virtuoso singer, though he sounded more like an ass braying, whereas, when he didn't see her there, he barely bothered to sing at all. At the same, he was clever enough not to arouse the suspicions of Willy Welcome or any neighbours of his.

From time to time, he would send Mrs Rosie presents in an effort to win her over. Sometimes it was a bunch of fresh garlic, since he grew the best in the region in a vegetable garden he worked with his own hands, sometimes it was a basket of berries, and now and then a bunch of shallots or spring onions. When he saw his chance, he would give her a hurt look and mutter a few gentle reproaches, while she acted cold, pretending not to notice and

looking all supercilious. So the estimable priest was left getting nowhere.

Now it happened one day that the priest was kicking his heels in the noontime heat out in the countryside with nothing much to do, when he bumped into Willy Wel come driving an ass loaded up with a pile of things on it back. He greeted him and asked him where he was going

‘To tell the truth, Father sir,’ replied Willy, ‘I’m off to town on a bit of business. I’m transporting these materials to Mr Notary Bonaccorri da Ginestreto to get him to aid and assist with a fiddle-faddle on the legal side that the assessor is officializing to put the whole house in order at last.’

‘That, my son, is a good thing to do,’ said the priest, full of glee. ‘Go with my blessing and come back soon. And if you should happen to see Lapuccio or Naldino, don’t let it slip your mind to tell them to bring me those straps for my threshing flails.’

Willy said he would do that and went off towards Florence, while the priest decided the time had come for him to go and try his luck with Rosie. He strode out vigorously and did not stop until he reached her house. He went in, calling out, ‘God be with us! Is anyone here?’

Rosie was up at the top of the house. Hearing him, she shouted, ‘Father, you’re very welcome. What are you doing all fancy free in this heat?’

‘God help me,’ said the priest, ‘I’ve come to spend a little time with you, having just met your man on his way to town.’

Rosie was downstairs by now. She sat and began cleaning some cabbage seeds her husband had sifted out a short time before.

‘Well, Rosie,’ said the priest, ‘must you go on being the death of me like this?’

Rosie began to laugh.

‘Well, what am I doing to you?’ she said.

‘You’re not doing anything to me,’ said the priest, ‘but you don’t let me do what I’d like to do to you, which is love my neighbour as God commanded.’

‘Oh, get on with you,’ said Rosie. ‘Do priests do thing of that sort?’

‘Yes,’ said the priest, ‘and better than other men. And why shouldn’t we? I tell you, we do a much, much better job. And do you know why? It’s because we let the pond fill up before the mill starts grinding. And truly I can give you just what you need, if you’ll only stay quiet and let me do the business.’

‘What do you mean, just what I need?’ said Rosie. ‘You priests are all tighter-fisted than the devil himself.’

‘I don’t know,’ said the priest. ‘Just ask me. Maybe you want a nice little pair of shoes, or a headscarf, or a pretty woollen waistband, or maybe something else.’

‘That’s all very well, Brother Priest,’ said Rosie. ‘I’ve enough of that stuff. But if you’re that keen on me, you can do me a particular favour, and then I’ll do what you want.’

‘Tell me what you’re after and I’ll be glad to do it,’ said the priest.

‘I have to go to Florence on Saturday,’ said Rosie, ‘to give in the wool I’ve been spinning and get my spinning wheel mended. If you let me have five pounds (which I know you’ve got), I’ll get the pawnbroker to give me back my purple skirt and the decorated Sunday belt I wore when I got married. You know not having it has meant I can’t go to church or anywhere respectable. And after that I’ll be up for what you want for evermore.’

‘God help me,’ said the priest, ‘I haven’t the money on me. But trust me, I’ll make sure you have it before Saturday.’

‘Oh yes,’ said Rosie, ‘you’re all great at making promises. And then you don’t keep any of them. Do you think you can treat me the way you treated Nell the Belle, who was left with just a big bass tum to play with? You’re not going to do the same to me, by God. She ended up on the game because of you. If you haven’t got it here, go and get it.’

‘Oh, please,’ said the priest, ‘don’t make me go all the way back to the house. You can tell my luck is up, and there’s no one about. It could be that when I came back someone would be here to get in our way. I don’t know when it might next stand up as well as it’s

standing up now.'

'That's all very fine,' she said, 'but if you're willing to go, go. If not, you'll just have to manage.'

He saw that she was only going to agree to his wishes when a contract was signed and delivered, whereas he was hoping for a bit of free access.

'Look,' he said, 'you don't believe I'll bring you the money. What about if I leave you this blue cape of mine as a guarantee? It's a good one.'

Rosie gave him a haughty look.

'This cape,' she said, 'how much is it worth?'

'What do you mean, how much is it worth?' said the priest. 'Let me tell you it's Douai cloth, double ply, maybe triple ply, and there are even people here who say it's got some foreply in it. I paid seven pounds at Lotto's second- hand clothes shop less than two weeks ago. It had five shillings knocked off, so it was a bargain, according to Bulietto d'Alberto, who you know is a bit of an exper in blue cloths.'

'Oh yes?' said Rosie. 'God help me, I'd never have believed it. But give it to me first.'

The good priest, who was feeling hard- pressed by his loaded weapon, unfastened his cape and passed it over.

'Well, Mr Priest,' she said, when she'd put it away, 'let'go down here to the shed. It doesn't get visitors.'

So off they went. And there he covered her in the slop piest kisses in the world, introduced her to God's holy bliss and enjoyed himself generally with her for a good while. He finally left in the uncaped state priests normally appear in only at weddings and went back to the church

There he reflected how all the candle- ends he picked up from his parishioners in the course of a year weren'tworth half a fiver, and felt he had made a mistake. Now regretting leaving the cape behind, he started thinking about how to get it back at no cost to himself. Since he was quite crafty- minded, he figured out a good way o doing so. And it worked.

The next day being a feast- day, he sent the son of a neighbour of his to Rosie Hues's house, with a request for her to be so kind as to lend him her stone mortar since Binguccio del Poggio and Nuto Buglietti were dining with him that morning and he wanted to make a sauce. Rosie sent it back with the boy. When it got to round lunchtime, the priest guessed Willy Welcome and Rosie Hues would be eating. He called his curate and said to him, 'Pick up that mortar and take it back to Mrs Rosie. Tell her, "The Father is immensely grateful and would like to have back the cape the boy left with you as a guarantee."' '

The curate went to Rosie's house with the mortar and found her with Willy at the table eating their meal. He set down the mortar and gave them the priest's message.

Rosie was all set to give her reply to this request for the cape. But Willy's brow darkened.

'So you need guarantees from our estimated father, do you?' he said. 'I swear to Christ, I could really give you a clout up the bracket. Go and fetch it right now, and get yourself cankered while you're at it. And watch out for him wanting anything else of ours. He'd better not be told no, whatever it is. Even if it's our donkey, our donkey he gets.'

Rosie got up grumbling to herself and went over to the linen-chest. She took out the cape and passed it to the curate.

'You must give that priest a message from me,' she said, 'Say, "Rosie Hues vows to God that you'll never again be sauce- pounding in her mortar. That last time you didn't do yourself any credit."' '

The curate went off with the cape and relayed Rosie's message to the priest, who burst out laughing.

'You can tell her next time you see her,' he told him 'that if she won't lend out the mortar, I won't lend her the pestle. The one goes with the other.'

Willy believed that his wife had spoken as she did because he had told her off and gave the matter no further thought. But coming off worst made Rosie fall out with the priest, and she refused to speak to him until the grape- harvest, when he terrified her by threatening to have her stuffed into the mouth of the biggest devil in hell. She made her peace with him over fermenting mus and

roasting chestnuts, and after that the two of them had a good guzzle together on various occasions. To make up for the five pounds, the priest had her tambour ine re- covered and a dinky little bell attached, which made her very happy.

Patient Griselda

Years ago a young man called Gualtieri inherited the marquissate of Saluzzo as the eldest son of the family. Being unmarried and childless, he spent all his time hunting birds and beasts, without giving a thought to marriage or future offspring. He should have been considered a very wise man, but his subjects disapproved. They kept begging him to get himself a wife so that he should not die without an heir and they should not be left without a lord. They kept offering to find him one with a suitable father and mother, who would satisfy their hopes and who would make him very happy.

Gualtieri's response was as follows: 'My friends, you are forcing me into something I had been completely set on never ever doing, given how difficult it is to find someone with the right character and habits, how plentiful are the inappropriate candidates, and how hard life becomes for the man who ends up with someone he doesn't get on with. You claim you can tell the daughters' characters from how the fathers and mothers behave, and argue on that basis that you can provide me with a wife I'll be pleased with. That is rubbish. I don't see how you can know the fathers properly, or the mothers' secrets for that matter. Besides, even if you could, daughters are very often unlike their fathers and their mothers. But since you like the idea of tying me up in these chains, I'll try to satisfy you, and, in order not to end up blaming anyone but myself if things should go wrong, I want to do the finding myself. But I tell you that if you don't honour and respect whoever I choose, you'll learn to your cost how hard it's been for me to take a wife against my will just because you begged me to.'

His valiant subjects replied that they would be happy just so long as he could bring himself to get married.

Gualtieri had been impressed for a good while by the behaviour of a poverty-stricken young woman from a village near his family home. Since he also judged her to be beautiful, he calculated that life with her could be very pleasant. He looked no

further and made up his mind to marry her. He had the father summoned and entered into an agreement with this complete pauper to take the girl as his wife.

That done, he called together all his friends in the area he ruled.

‘My friends,’ he said to them, ‘you have been eager for me to make my mind up about a wife for some time. Well I have made a decision, more out of wanting to comply with your wishes than from any desire to be married on my part. You know what you promised me – that is, to be content with the woman I chose, whoever she was, and to honour her as your lady. The time has come when I am about to keep my promise to you, and when I expect you to keep yours to me. I have found very near here a young woman after my heart. I intend to make her my wife and to bring her into my house in a few days. So arrange for the marriage-feast to be a fine one and to give her an honourable welcome. In that way I shall be able to say I am happy with how you have fulfilled your promise, and you will be able to say the same about me.’

His trusty subjects all replied that they were happy with this and that, no matter who she was, they would treat her as their lady and would honour her as such in every way. Then they all set about organizing a suitably grand and joyous celebration. And Gualtieri did his part too, arranging for a sumptuous and splendid marriage-feast, to which he invited a multitude of friends, relations, great nobles and other people from the surrounding area. In addition he had beautiful, expensive dresses made to fit a young woman who, he judged, had the same measurements as the girl he had decided to marry. Not only that, but he ordered belts, rings and a lovely, costly tiara, plus everything else a new bride should have.

Soon after sunrise on the day appointed for the wedding, Gualtieri mounted his horse, and all those who had come to honour him did the same. Everything needed was now in order, and he called out, ‘Gentlemen, it is time to go for the new bride.’

After which he set off along the road to the village with the whole company. When they reached the girl’s father’s cottage, they found her hurrying back from the spring with some other women in the hope of catching sight of Gualtieri’s bride. When he saw her, he

called out to her by her name – that is, Griselda – and asked her where her father was.

‘My lord,’ she replied bashfully, ‘he is in the house.’

Gualtieri dismounted and, telling everyone to wait entered the poor cottage. Inside he found the father, a man called Giannucolo, to whom he said, ‘I have come to make your Griselda my wife, but first I want to learn something from her own lips in your presence.’

What he asked her was whether, when he took her as his wife, she would do everything she could to please him would not be upset by anything he might say or do, and would be obedient, together with many other questions of this sort. She replied yes to everything. Then Gualtier took her by the hand and led her outside, where, in the presence of his whole company and everyone else, he had her stripped naked. He ordered the clothing he had had made to be brought and immediately had her dressed and shoes put on her, and a tiara placed on her hair unkempt though it was. Everyone was amazed.

‘Gentlemen,’ he said, ‘this is the person I intend should be my wife, if she wishes to have me for her husband.’

Then he turned to her, standing there bashful and awkward, and said, ‘Griselda, do you want me for your husband?’

‘Yes, my lord,’ she replied.

‘And I want you for my wife,’ he said.

With that, before everyone present, he formally married her. Then he had her set on a charger, with attendants to do her honour, and took her home. The marriage- feast was grand and fine, and the festivities no different from what they would have been if he had married the daughter of the king of France.

The young wife’s character and behaviour seemed to change with her change of clothing. As I said earlier, she had a lovely face and figure. And now to her natural good looks she added enough charm, attraction and refinement to make you think she could not possibly have been Giannucolo’s daughter and a shepherd- girl, but the daughter of some noble lord. Everyone who had known her before was astounded. What is more, she was so ready to obey and serve her husband that he considered himself the most contented

and satisfied man in the world. She was similarly so gracious and kindly towards her husband's subjects that every one of them loved her wholeheartedly and spontaneously honoured her in every way, asking God in their prayers to give her health, prosperity and greater glory still. If they used to say that Gualtieri had acted ill-advisedly in taking such a wife, now they said he was a paragon of wisdom and insight, arguing that no one else could have perceived the exceptional virtues concealed beneath the poverty of her peasant dress. Al in all, before much time had passed, she had people speaking of her good qualities and virtuous deeds throughout the marquisate and beyond, and completely turning round any negative comments about her husband that had been made when he married her.

She had not been with Gualtieri very long when she became pregnant, and in due course she gave birth to a little girl, much to Gualtieri's delight. But a little later a strange idea came into his head. He felt a need to test her patience by inflicting unbearable torments on her over a prolonged period of time. First of all he made cutting remarks, and gave an impression of being angry with her. He said that his men were badly put out by her low-class origins, all the more now that she was having children. The girl-child was a particular source of resentment, and they wouldn't stop muttering about her.

When his lady heard this, she kept her composure and gave no sign of being thrown off the virtuous course she had set herself.

'My lord,' she said, 'treat me in the way that most accords with your honour and your happiness. I shall be content with anything. I am aware I'm less than they are and that I didn't deserve the honour you have had the generosity to bestow on me.'

Her response was warmly received by Gualtieri, who recognized that any honour that he or anyone else had paid her had not made her feel in the slightest bit superior.

A little while later, after giving his wife the general impression that his subjects couldn't stand the little girl she had borne him, he had a word with one of the household staff and sent him to her. The man addressed her with a distressed air.

'My lady,' he said, 'I am obliged to do something my lord

commands me to do, if I do not wish to die. He has ordered me to take this daughter of yours and . . .’

He stopped there. Hearing his words and seeing his face, the lady recalled what her husband had been saying and deduced that he had orders to kill the child. She quickly took her from her cradle, kissed her and blessed her. For all the immense pain in her heart, she again kept her composure and put the child in the man’s arms.

‘Take her,’ she said, ‘and carry out to the letter what your lord and mine has ordered you to do. Only do not leave her for animals and birds to devour, unless he told you to.’

The servant took the child away and passed on what his wife had said to Gualtieri, who was astounded by her constancy. He then sent the servant off with the child to a female relative of his in Bologna, with a request to bring her up and educate her with the utmost care, but not to let anyone know whose daughter she was.

The next thing to happen was that the lady became pregnant again. In due course she gave birth to a male child, which pleased Gualtieri immensely. But what he had done already was not enough for him. His criticisms became sharper and sharper, and one day, his face contorted with rage, he said this to her:

‘My lady, ever since you had this boy child, I haven’t been able to live with these men of mine. They are bitterly against some grandson of Giannucolo ending up their lord after me. If I don’t want to be hounded out of here I’m afraid I’m going to have to do what I did the other time, and then in the end I’m going to have to leave you and take another wife.’

The lady heard him out without flinching.

‘My lord,’ was all she replied, ‘think only of contenting yourself and following your own inclinations, and don’t worry at all about me. Nothing matters to me except whatever I see pleases you.’

A few days later Gualtieri sent someone for his son much as he had done as regards his daughter. After a similar show of having him murdered, he dispatched him to Bologna to be brought up there, like the little girl. What the lady said and showed in her face was no different from before, which stunned Gualtieri. He declared to himself that there wasn’t a woman anywhere capable of behaving like that. If he hadn’t seen her visceral attachment to the children as

long as she had his approval, he would have thought she was glad to see the back of them, but he knew that there was sense and wisdom in her.

His subjects, believing he had had his children killed strongly condemned him for his cruelty and felt nothing but compassion for the lady. When other ladies sympathized with her for having lost her children in this way, she said only that what pleased her was precisely what pleased the man who had fathered them.

Some years after the little girl's birth, Gualtieri decided it was time to put her capacity for endurance to the ultimate test. He told many of his men that he just could not bear Griselda being his wife any more, and that it was clear to him that marrying her had been a bad juvenile error; he was now going to do all he could to obtain special dispensation from the Pope to take another wife and leave Griselda. Quite a few of his better men took him to task, but he only replied that that was how things had to be. When his lady heard the news, she found herself having to face the idea of going back to her father's house, and perhaps tending the sheep as she had done in the past, with the added prospect of some other lady taking possession of the man to whom she had given all the love she had. She was devastated. But she had borne all the other wrongs that fortune had done her, and she set herself to bear this one with similar fortitude.

A little later Gualtieri arranged for some counterfeit letters to be sent from Rome and gave his subjects to believe that in these the Pope had given him dispensation to marry again and leave Griselda. He had her summoned and addressed her before a crowd of onlookers.

'My lady,' he said, 'thanks to a special concession granted me by the Pope, I can take another wife and let you go. Since my ancestors were from the high nobility and the lords of these lands, whereas yours have always been labourers, I intend that you should no longer be my wife and should go back to Giannucolo's house with the dowry you brought me. After that I shall marry someone I've found who will be appropriate for my station.'

Hearing this, the lady had to make an immense effort one beyond women's natural capacities, in order to keep back her tears.

‘My lord,’ she replied, ‘I always knew my lowly origin in no way accorded with your own nobility. I was glad to attribute to God and to yourself the position I have enjoyed with you. I have never thought it something I had been given, or treated it as anything more than a loan. Your wish is to recover it. I must make it my wish to let you have it, and I am happy to do so. Here is the ring with which you married me. Take it. You order me to carry away with me the dowry I brought you. That’s not something for which you’ll need a banker, or for which I’ll need a bag or a packhorse. It does not escape me that you took me in naked. If you consider it decent for that body in which I carried the children you fathered to be seen by all and sundry, I shall go away naked. But I beg you that you let me have some payment for the virginity that I brought here and do not take away again by allowing me, over and above my dowry, to have a single shift to wear.’

Gualtieri wanted to weep more than anything else. But his face stayed as hard as ever.

‘So you go off with a shift then,’ he said.

Everyone round him begged him to make her the gift of a robe, and not let the woman who had been his wife for thirteen years or more be seen leaving his house penniless and utterly humiliated, which was what leaving in just a shift would mean. But their requests came to nothing. So it was in a shift, barefoot and bareheaded, that the lady commended them to God’s care, and walked out of her husband’s house and back to her father’s, amid the weeping and wailing of all who saw her.

Giannucolo had never been able to believe that Gualtieri really wanted his daughter as his wife, expecting every day something like this to happen, and had kept the clothes she was wearing on the morning Gualtieri married her. He brought them out and she put them on. Then she gave herself over to the menial tasks around her father’s house that she used to do in the past, valiantly bearing the savage assault that hostile fortune had inflicted on her.

Gualtieri’s next step was to pretend to his subjects that he had got himself a daughter of one of the Counts of Panago. In the course of the grandiose preparations for the marriage ceremony, he sent for Griselda to come and see him.

‘I’m bringing here as my bride,’ he said to her when she arrived, ‘this lady I’ve very recently promised to marry. My intention is to receive her with due honour when she comes here for the first time. You’re aware that I don’t have ladies in the house who can spruce up the rooms and do all the things required for a festive occasion of this sort. Since you know better than anyone else how this house works, sort out what needs to be done, and also invite a welcome party of ladies you think suitable, and receive them as if you were the lady in charge. Then once the marriage-feast is over, you can go back to your own house.

His words were so many knives in Griselda’s heart. She had never been able to abandon the love she felt for him in the way she had let go of her good fortune.

‘My lord, I am willing and ready,’ she said.

And so, in a makeshift dress of thick, rough cloth, she went back into the house she had left in just her shift no long before, and began sweeping the chambers and tidying them up, fixing hangings and drapes in the halls, and getting the kitchen ready, doing every single thing with her own hands as if she were nothing but a mere servant-girl. Nor did she stop till she had everything as neat and orderly as the occasion required.

Once she had had invitations sent out on Gualtieri’s behalf to all the ladies in the area, the only thing left for her to do was to await the coming festivities. When the day of the wedding-feast arrived, in spite of the poor clothes she had on, she gave every one of the ladies who came a joyful and dignified welcome.

Gualtieri had taken care the children should be properly brought up in Bologna by his female relative, who had married into the house of the Counts of Panago. The girl was now twelve and the prettiest creature ever, and the boy was six. Gualtieri had written to the relative’s husband, asking him to be so good as to bring his daughter and son to Saluzzo, accompanied by an appropriate guard of honour, and to tell everyone that he was bringing the girl to be Gualtieri’s wife, with no hint to anyone of who she really was.

This gentleman did as the Marquis asked and set off with the girl, her brother and the guard of honour. After some days, around the time of the morning meal, they arrived in Saluzzo, where they

found all the local people and many others from round about waiting for this new bride of Gualtieri. The girl was greeted by the ladies and entered the hall where the tables were laid out. Griselda, dressed just as she was, went towards her happily enough, saying, 'My lady is welcome.'

The other ladies, who had repeatedly but fruitlessly begged Gualtieri either to let Griselda stay in one of the chambers or to lend her one of the robes that were once hers, so that she would not appear before the visitors looking as she did, were now assigned their places at the tables and began to be served. The girl was the object of everybody's attention and the general view was that Gualtieri had made a good exchange. One of those who was most lavish with her praises, both of the girl and of her little brother, was Griselda.

Gualtieri thought he had now had all the proof he could want of the patience of his lady. He could tell that it was not at all affected by events, no matter how bizarre they were, and, given the wisdom he knew was in her he was sure that dullness of mind was not a factor. He decided it was time to release her from the tortures he judged she must be suffering beneath her calm and steady exterior. He had her come forward and, before everyone who was there, gave her a smile and asked:

'What do you think of our bride?'

'My lord,' replied Griselda, 'I can only think very well of her. If her good sense is equal to her beauty, as I believe it must be, I have no doubt that living with her will make you the most most contented lord in the world. But I beg you with all my heart not to inflict on her the sort of wounds you inflicted on the other one, the one who was your wife before. I can't really believe that she could stand it. She's younger, and what's more she's been brought up in luxury, whereas the other had spent her childhood doing hard physical work.'

Gualtieri could see that she firmly believed that the girl was going to be his wife and yet still said nothing he could disapprove of. He sat her down at his side and then spoke

'Griselda,' he said, 'it is now time for you to taste the fruit of your steadfast patience and for those who judged me cruel, unjust

and inhuman to acknowledge that what I did had a deliberate purpose. I wanted to teach you to be a wife, to teach my critics how to take a wife and to keep one, and to bring about for myself unbroken peace and quiet for as long as my life with you might last. This was something I was very afraid wouldn't happen when I first took a wife. It was to test if it were possible that I inflicted on you the wounds and torments you are all too aware of.

'Since I have never perceived you going against my wishes in anything you have said or done, I judge that I do indeed have from you the contentment I desired. I therefore intend to restore to you in one single moment what I took from you over the years, and to apply the sweetest possible medicine to the wounds I inflicted. So now, with joy in your heart, receive this girl you think is my bride, and her brother too. These are our children that you and many others have long thought I had brutally murdered. And I myself am your husband, who loves you more than anything else. I think I can rightly and honestly boast that no other man alive can be as happy with his wife as I am.'

After this speech he put his arms round her and kissed her. He then raised her to her feet and led her, weeping for joy, over to where their daughter was sitting, astounded by what she was hearing. They tenderly embraced the two children, and then told the girl and many other people there the truth of the situation. The ladies were delighted to get up from the tables and go with Griselda into one of the chambers. Expressing hopes of a better outcome this time, they helped her out of her rough clothing and dressed her in one of her noble robes. Then they led her back into the hall a courtly lady, which even in her rags she had retained the air of being. There followed a moment of marvellous celebration with the children, and everyone showed their joy at the way things had turned out. Then they plunged into fun and merrymaking, which went on for days.

Everyone judged Gualtieri to have shown great wisdom, though they judged the tests inflicted on his lady to have been too severe, indeed intolerable. Griselda they held to have shown more wisdom than anyone.

After some days the Count of Panago returned to Bologna and Gualtieri took Giannucolo away from his work. From then he was

treated as a proper father-in-law, and lived very happily and much respected until a ripe old age. After finding a noble husband for his daughter, Gualtieri himself lived a long and happy life with Griselda and treated her with all possible honour.

What can be said here except that divine spirits descend from heaven even into poor houses and into royal houses come spirits which deserve more to look after pigs than be lords over men? Who else but Griselda could have borne the callous, unprecedented tests Gualtieri subjected her to, not just without tears but with what looked like cheerfulness? Perhaps it would have served him right if the woman he happened to pick had let another man shake her muff when she was driven from home in the shift, and that way got herself a decent dress.



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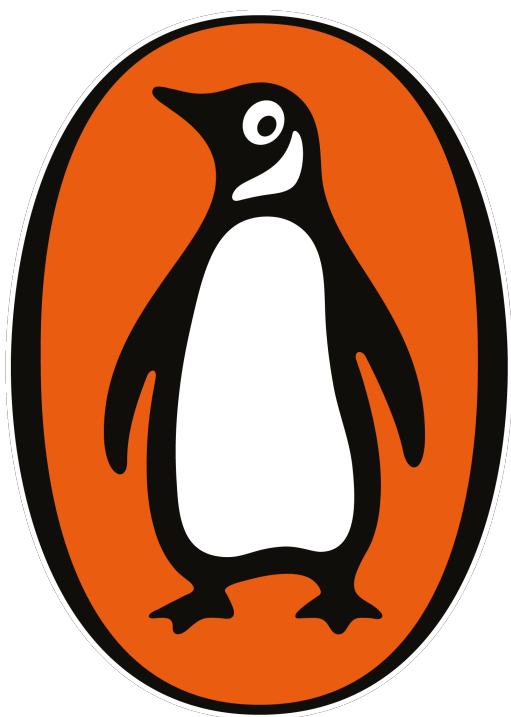
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从灵魂深处发出的
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泄密的心

对！神经质，我一直都患有严重的神经质；但是你们为什么要说我疯了呢？我的病并没有摧毁我的感觉力，没有使它变得迟钝，而是使它更加敏锐。尤其是听力异常地敏锐。我听得到天上和地下的所有声音。我听到地狱里的许多事情。试想，我怎么会是疯子呢？听吧！我来给你们把事情的来龙去脉讲一讲，看我讲得多么有条有理，心平气和。

不知道这个念头是什么时候钻进我的脑子里的；可是一旦形成，它就日没夜地缠着我。说起来没有任何目的，也没有任何冲动的情感。我喜欢那个老头儿。他从来没有亏待过我，从来没有侮辱过我。我也不贪图他的财富。我想是他的眼睛！对，就是这个！他有一只眼睛很像兀鹰的眼——一只浅蓝色的，上面蒙着一层薄翳的眼睛。每当这目光一落到我身上，我浑身的血液就变得冰凉；因此我渐渐地很慢很慢地下定了决心，要干掉那个老头儿，从而永远摆脱那只眼睛。

要害就在这里。你们以为我疯了。疯子什么都不知道。可是你们没看到我是怎么做的。你们没看到我干得多么漂亮！那样地小心谨慎、深谋远虑，那样巧妙地掩饰！在下手的前一个星期中，我对老头儿比什么时候都好。每晚午夜时分，我悄悄拨动他的门闩，推开门——哦，动作轻极了！然后，当门缝打开到我的头可以伸进去的时候，我先把一只黑灯笼塞进去，灯笼上下封得严严实实，没有一丝光线漏出，然后我把脑袋伸了进去。哦，你要是看到我当时的机灵样，一定会哈哈大笑的！我的动作很慢，慢极了，生怕把老头儿从睡梦中惊醒。我用了一个钟头的时间才把整个脑袋伸进门缝，使我能看到他躺在床上。哈！——一个疯子会这样聪明吗？然后，当我的头完全伸进屋里之后，我小心地打开灯笼——哦，那么小心——小心（因为铰链会吱呀作响）。只打开那么一点，让一丝细细的光线落在那只兀鹰般的眼睛上。就这样我一连去了七个晚上，每次都在午夜时分，可是那只眼睛总是闭着的，这样我就无法干那桩事。因为惹恼我的并不是那个老头儿，而是他邪恶的眼睛。每天早晨天一亮，我就大胆地走进他的房间，勇敢地和他攀谈，亲热地唤着他的名字，问他晚上睡得可好。所以你瞧，老头儿要能想到我在每天午夜时分趁他睡着的时候窥视他的话，那他可真是老谋深算了。

第八个晚上我开门的时候特别地小心。手表的分针都比我的手动得快些。那晚我第一次感觉到了自己的力量有多大，感觉到自己是多

么聪明。我几乎无法控制自己的得意。想想吧，我在那儿一点点地推门，而他做梦都想不到我秘密的行动和思想。想到这里我不禁窃笑了起来；可能听到了我的声音，床上的他突然动了一下，像是受了惊。你可能以为我会退缩——可我没有。他的房间漆黑一片，伸手不见五指（百叶窗紧紧地关着，因为怕有强盗），我知道他不会看见门开了，所以我继续稳稳地、稳稳地推动房门。

我把头伸进来了，正要打开灯笼时，我的手指不小心碰动了洋铁门，老头儿从床上腾地坐了起来，叫道：“谁在那儿？”

我不吱声，一动不动地站着。整整一小时我一块肌肉都没动一下，同时也没有听到他躺下。他仍旧坐在床上听着；就像我自己这样，整夜整夜地，听着墙中死神守望者的声音。

不多久我听到了一声轻微的呻吟，我知道这是人在极度恐惧下发出的呻吟。它不是疼痛或悲哀的呻吟。哦，不是的！它是在不堪恐惧的重压时，从灵魂深处发出的低沉而压抑的声音。我很熟悉这种声音。许多夜晚，午夜时分，全世界都在熟睡的时候，它也会从我自己的胸中涌出，带着可怕的回音，加深了那令我不安的恐惧。我说我很了解。我了解老头儿的感受，并同情他，尽管我在心里偷偷暗笑。我知道自从听到第一声微响，他在床上翻了个身以后，他就一直没有再睡着。他的恐惧在不断地增强。他试图想象它们是毫无根据的，可是不能够。他对自己说“那只是烟囱里的风，那只是一只耗子跑过去了”或“只不过是一只蟋蟀叫了一声”。是的，他试图用这些假说来安慰自己，可是都没有用，都没用，因为死神在悄悄走近他时，已经把自己的影子投在了他的身上，把他整个笼罩了。正是这无形的影子的悲惨影响使他感到了——尽管他既没有看到也没有听到——房间中我的脑袋的存在。

我非常耐心地等了很长的时间，还没有听到他躺下，于是我决定把灯笼打开一条缝，一丝极小极小的缝。我便这么做了，你想象不出我是多么小心翼翼，小心翼翼，终于，缝隙中射出一线微光，细若蛛丝，正好落在那只兀鹰般的眼睛上。

那眼睛睁着，大大地睁着，我凝视着它，不禁火冒三丈。我对它看得一清二楚，灰暗的蓝眼珠，上面还蒙着一层可恶的薄翳，它使我骨髓发凉；可是我看不到老头儿脸上或身体的其他任何部分，我好像是本能地把光线对准了那个该死的部位。

我不是说过被你们当作疯子的人只是感觉过于敏锐吗？现在，啊，我听到了一种低低的、沉闷而急促的声音，像是一只裹在棉花里的表在响。我对这声音也很熟悉。这是那老头儿的心跳。它加剧着我的愤怒，就像战鼓激发士兵的勇气一样。即使是这样我仍然克制住了

自己，静悄悄地站着，几乎连气都不出。我一动不动地举着灯笼，看自己能使光线在那只眼睛上保持得多稳。与此同时，那可怕的咚咚的心跳声在加剧，它每时每刻越来越快，越来越响。老头儿一定恐惧到了极点！它越来越响，随着时间的推移，一刻响过一刻！你听仔细了吗？我告诉过你我有些神经质，我确实是这样。半夜三更，在那座静得可怕的老房子里，这样一种奇怪的声音使我产生了无法控制的恐惧。然而，我克制着自己又待了几分钟没有动。可是那心跳越来越响，越来越响！我觉得那颗心要爆炸了。这时一种新的焦虑攫住了我，这声音会被邻居听到的！老头儿的死期到了！我一声大叫，扯开灯笼，跳进屋内。他尖叫一声，只一声。转眼我已把他拖到地上，拖过沉重的被褥压在他身上。然后我开心地微笑起来，这桩事情干完了。可是，那颗心继续沉闷地跳动了许多分钟。不过我并不为此而烦恼，隔着墙，人们是不会听到的。最后它终于停止了。老头儿死了。我搬开被子对尸体进行检查。没错，他已经死得跟石头一样了。我把手在他的心口上放了好久。没有搏动，他死得和石头一样了。他的眼睛再也不会使我心烦了。

如果你认为我疯了，那么等我讲述了我藏匿尸体时的谨慎周全之后，你就不会再这么想了。黑夜在渐渐过去，我急促却无声无息地干着活。首先我把尸体肢解了，把脑袋、胳膊和腿切了下来。

接着我抽出了三块地板，把尸体全部塞入地板中间，然后把地板重新铺好，铺得那样聪明，那样巧妙，任凭谁的眼睛——就连他的眼睛——也看不出任何破绽。没有什么需要冲洗，没有任何污迹，半点血迹也没有。我非常机警，全部都接在一只盆里了——哈！哈！

当我干完时，约莫是四点钟的光景，天仍然黑得像半夜一样。正在钟打四点的时候，大门上响起了敲门声。我怀着一颗轻松的心去开门，现在有什么可怕的呢？进来了三个男人，十分和蔼地自我介绍说他们是警官。一个邻居在夜里听到了一声尖叫，因疑心有不轨行为，向警察局报了案，他们（这三个警官）奉命对屋子进行搜查。

我笑了，我有什么可怕的？我欢迎三位先生的来访。我说那声尖叫是我自己在睡梦中发出的。我提到那老头儿去乡下了。我领着客人视察了整幢房子。我请他们仔细地搜查。最后我把他们带到了他的房间。我让他们看他的财宝，样样安好，纹丝未动。我仗着自信头脑一热，干脆搬来了几把椅子，让他们就在这里歇一歇脚。我得意忘形，把自己的椅子正好搁在了安放死者尸体的那个地方。

警官很满意。我的态度打消了他们的疑心。我泰然自若。他们坐在那儿，我愉快地回答他们的问题，于是他们随便地闲聊起来。可是，没过多久，我感到自己脸色开始发白，希望他们快走。我的头疼了起来，耳朵里有个声音在响，可他们还坐在那里聊着。耳朵里的声

音清晰起来了，它继续响着，越来越清晰。我更起劲地说话，试图摆脱这种感觉；可是它仍然在响，而且更清晰了，直到最后，我发现那声音不是在我的耳朵里。

我的脸色现在一定非常苍白，可是我更流利地说话，并且提高了嗓门儿。然而那声音更响了，我能怎么办呢？那是一种低低的、沉闷而急促的声音，很像一只裹在棉花里的表发出的声音。我喘息着，然而警官们没听到它。我更快地说话，我更激烈地说话；可那声音在不断地增强。我站起来，打着激烈的手势，提高了调门为一些小事而争论，可那声音在不断地增强。他们为什么还不走？我迈着沉重的步子在地板上走来走去，仿佛被他们的话所激怒，可那声音在不断地增强。哦，上帝啊！我能怎么办呢？我口吐白沫，我胡言乱语，我发誓赌咒！我挥舞着我坐的那把椅子，把它在地板上碾动，可是那声音高过了这一切，而且不断地增强着。它越来越响，越来越响，越来越响！那几个人仍然愉快地聊着，而且微笑着。他们会不会没有听见？万能的上帝！——不，不可能！他们听到了！——他们怀疑了！——他们知道了！——他们在讥笑着我的恐惧！——我这样想，现在也还这样想。可是什么都比这种痛苦要强！什么都比这种嘲笑要好受些！我再也受不了这种虚伪的微笑了！我感到必须要大声尖叫，或者死掉！——来来——又来了！——听啊！越来越响！越来越响！越来越响！越来越响！——

“坏家伙们！”我尖叫道，“别装了！我招认！——扯开地板！——这儿，就是这儿！——是他那颗该死的心在跳！”

厄歇尔府的倒塌

| 你的心是敏感的弦琴，轻轻一触便发出幽鸣。

——德·贝朗热

那年秋季的一天，整个白天愁云惨雾，死气沉沉，听不见一点声音，黑压压的乌云低悬在空中。我独自骑着马，穿过一片特别阴郁肃杀的乡村，最后当黄昏渐至，夜幕四合的时候，终于看见了那座忧郁的厄歇尔府邸。我不知道究竟是怎么回事，但当我第一眼看见那所房子，就有一种感伤之情在我心头弥漫，令我无法忍受。我说无法忍受，是因为当人们目睹自然界最荒凉萧条、最阴沉恐怖的景象时，通常会产生一种因富有诗意而令人欣慰的情愫，而此刻我的感伤却没有因这种情愫而得到丝毫解脱。我凝望眼前的这幅景象，凝望那座孤零零的房屋，以及周围纯朴的地貌风景，凝望那惨白凄凉的墙壁，凝望那像眼睛一样惆怅失神的窗户，凝望那几排熏衣草，凝望那几棵枯树的白色树干，内心感到万念俱灰，我只能把这种心境比作瘾君子服用鸦片后大梦初醒、陷入庸常生活后的痛苦以及脱去伪装面纱时的恐惧，除此之外没有任何尘世的情怀所能比拟。这是一种冷彻骨髓的感觉，是一种越陷越深的感觉，是一种心灵深处的厌憎，是一种从未体验过的恐怖意识，无论怎样百般地刺激想象力，都无法体会到任何崇高之感。是什么——我凝神静思——是什么使得我在凝视厄歇尔府邸时感到如此忧郁惆怅？这是一个无法破解的谜。而且我在沉思时无法抓住那些逼近我的阴暗朦胧的幻觉。我不得不勉强地聊以自慰地这么判定：肯定是一些十分简单的自然物体结合在一起，对我们构成了如此强烈的震撼力，而对这种力量的分析则超出了我们的理解深度。我思忖道，只要把这幅景象中的特殊物体稍做调整，把画面的细节略加修改，就足以改变甚至消灭它那令人无限忧伤的特性。为了把我的这一思想付诸实施，我勒住缰绳使马慢下步子，来到一个漆黑可怖的山中小湖的陡峭岸边。这个小湖坐落在寓所旁边，闪耀着宁静的光泽。我朝下面望去，却猛地打了一个寒噤，我看到灰色熏衣草、模样狰狞的树干和眼睛般空洞的窗户在水中扭曲的倒影，比刚才更感到毛骨悚然。

尽管如此，我还是建议自己在这座阴郁的房子里逗留几个星期。房子的主人罗德里克·厄歇尔曾经是我儿童时代的一个玩伴，但是我们已经有许多年没有见面了。不过，最近他有一封信寄给千里迢迢之外

的我，其中以迫切的、不近情理的口吻，叫我务必亲自给他答复。信的手稿显示他的心情焦虑不安。写信人说到严重的身体疾病，说到一种令他忧虑的精神失常，还说到想见我一面的迫切愿望，因为我是他最亲，实际上也是唯一知心的朋友，他希望通过和我轻松愉快的交往，能够多少减轻他的疾病。他就是用这种口吻说到这些和其他许多事情的，他显然是以一片真心向我提出请求的，不允许我有半点迟疑。于是，我立刻服从了这一我仍然认为非常蹊跷的召唤。

尽管我们童年时代是十分亲密的玩伴，其实我对这位朋友了解甚少。他一向不爱说话，沉默寡言是他的习惯。不过，我知道他的渊源悠久的家族，多年以来一直因性情极为敏感而闻名。在久远的过去，这种敏感曾经通过许多杰出的艺术作品得到展现，而最近，这种敏感又通过不断慷慨而又谦逊的乐善好施得到体现，此外还有对复杂的音乐科学的全身心的热爱，这甚至超过对传统的、一目了然的美的羡慕。我还了解到这样一个惊人的事实，厄歇尔家族尽管多少年来深孚众望，但其根基上从未生长出常青不朽的枝蔓。也就是说，整个家庭代代一脉单传，除了十分个别、十分暂时的例外，总是人丁不旺。我一边思绪如潮地想着这座府邸的特色与厄歇尔的家族特征完全相符，想着在多少个漫长的世纪里，房屋可能对人产生的影响，同时想到，就是这种不足，这种也许属于次要问题的缺憾，以及由此产生的父亲将遗产和姓氏不偏不倚地传给儿子的做法，最终使得两者合而为一，把房屋原来的名字变成了“厄歇尔府”这个古怪而双关的称呼。这一称呼在使用它的庄户人看来，似乎既包含家族，又包含着家族宅屋的意思。

前面已经说过，我那多少有点孩子气的试验——在山中小湖边俯瞰——的唯一结果反倒是加深了最初的那种奇特印象。毫无疑问，我越是意识到迷信思想——为什么不能用这个词呢？——在我心中迅速泛滥，越是反而加速了它的泛滥。这就是基于恐怖的一切情感的荒谬法则，我很久以前就知道。也许正是仅仅由于这个原因，当我再次将目光从水中倒影中抬起，转而凝望宅屋本身时，心里便产生了一种奇特的幻想，这幻想是如此荒诞不经，我之所以提到它，只是为了说明当时困扰我的情感是多么鲜明强烈。我努力调动我的想象力，使自己真的相信，在这整个宅屋和领地上，笼罩着一种它们及毗邻地区所特有的气氛，这种气氛和空中的大气没有任何相似之处，它是从枯朽的古树、灰暗的墙壁和寂寞的小湖中散发出来的，是一种瘟疫般有害的、神秘诡谲的雾气，沉闷，迟滞，若隐若现，是一种沉甸甸的铅灰色。

我摆脱精神上那种如梦似幻的感觉，更加专注地审视那座宅屋的真实面貌。它最主要的特点似乎就在于极其古老。无数个岁月的风吹日晒使它剥蚀褪色。房子外部长满细小的菌类，像错综复杂的网一

样，从屋檐上悬挂下来。然而，这一切绝不能算特别破败凋敝。砖石结构的每一部分都完好无损，它各个部分依然十分协调，但每块石头已渐渐碎裂，这之间似乎存在某种狂乱的、自相矛盾的东西。这不由得使我想起华而不实的老式木结构建筑：在漫长的岁月里，某个被人忽视的拱顶由于长年不通风，正在渐渐腐烂。不过，这座房屋除了外表有大面积的破败以外，整体结构丝毫没有动摇欲坠之感。也许，某个一丝不苟的观察者会发现一道几乎不易察觉的裂缝，从正面的屋顶延伸下来，蜿蜒曲折地贯穿整个墙壁，最后隐入小湖的死水中。

我注意到了这些，便骑马穿过一条短短的堤道，来到宅屋前。一位等在那里的仆人把马接了过去，我则跨入门厅哥特式的拱廊。一个男仆迈着鬼鬼祟祟的步子，一言不发地领我穿过许多黑暗而曲折的甬道，来到他主人的书房。不知怎的，一路上目之所及，竟使我刚才描述过的那种无法言说的感觉更加强烈了。尽管周围的一切——天花板上的雕画、墙壁上阴暗的挂毯、漆黑的乌木地板，以及随着我的脚步嗒嗒作响、显得鬼影幢幢的盔甲纪念品，都只是，或类似于我童年时代就已然看惯的事物——尽管迟疑着不愿意承认我对这一切是多么熟悉，我依然惊异地发现一些普通的形象竟能在人心里激起如此陌生的幻想。在一道楼梯上，我遇见了这里的家庭医生。在我看来，他的脸上是一种夹杂着卑劣狡诈和困惑茫然的混合表情。他惊惶失措地向我打个招呼，与我擦肩而过。这时男仆猛地推开一扇门，示意我进去见他的主人。

进到里面，我发现这是一个非常宽敞和高大的房间。窗户又长又窄，棱角分明，而且高高地远离乌黑的栎木地板，人在房间里根本接触不到它们。透过格子结构的窗玻璃，照射进几缕微弱的深红色的光线，使得周围几件比较突出的物体清晰可见；然而，若竭力想要看清房间里最深远的角落，或拱形的回纹饰天花板的幽秘之处，则是白费气力。墙壁上挂着黑暗的装饰布。整个房间布置铺张奢侈，古色古香，却毫无舒适之感，而且已是破旧不堪。到处散乱地放着许多书籍和乐器，却没有使整个房间增添丝毫活力。我感到自己呼吸到的是一种忧伤的气息。到处都笼罩着、弥漫着一种冷峻、幽深、无法改变的阴郁气氛。

看到我进来，厄歇尔从他平躺着的沙发上站起身来，以一种兴高采烈的热情招呼我。我起初认为，这种热情中包含着许多做过了头的亲热劲儿——是一个厌世者在强颜欢笑。但是，当我一眼瞥见他的面容时，才相信他的热情完全发自内心。我们坐了下来，他有片刻没有说话，我便带着一种半是怜悯半是惊惧的心情凝视着他。确实，从未见过有人像罗德里克·厄歇尔这样，在如此短的时间内，产生了如此触目惊心的变化！我好不容易才强迫自己承认，眼前的这个男人就是孩提时代的玩伴。不过，他的面部特征倒一直都很鲜明独特。他脸如

死灰，大大的眼睛泪汪汪的，放射出无与伦比的光芒；嘴唇略微薄了一点，没有一丝血色，但曲线轮廓却精美绝伦；鼻子是典雅的希伯来式，但鼻孔极为宽大，这在类似的鼻形中是十分少见的；下巴线条精致，轮廓并不突出，这说明了他在精神上缺少活力；头发柔软、纤细，酷似蛛网。这些面部特征，再加上天庭极为饱满宽阔，使他的模样令人难以忘怀。此刻，他的面部特征和一贯流露的神情，只比过去略微显著一些，却使他产生了如此惊人的变化，我简直怀疑是不是在跟他说话。最令我震惊甚至恐惧的，是他此刻死一般惨白的脸色，和他此刻眼睛里放射出的奇异的光芒。柔软如丝般的头发，主人无暇以顾，任其杂乱无章地生长着，丝丝缕缕的细发不是垂落下来，而是在面颊上随意流淌，我尽管拼命努力，也无法把这种奇异的面部表情与正常的人的概念联系起来。

我立刻就注意到我这位朋友的一举一动都颠三倒四，很不协调；很快，我发现这是由于他在吃力地克制一种惯性的痉挛——一种极度的神经焦虑，却又怎么也克制不住。对他的这副模样，我倒是有心理准备，一是因为读了他的来信，二是因为对他童年时的某些特征记忆犹新，三是因为从他与众不同的体质和脾性可以得出这样的结论。他的动作一会儿充满生机，一会儿垂头丧气。他的声音也瞬息多变，忽而吞吞吐吐、闪烁其辞（这时他身体里的元气似乎一时荡然无存），忽而又干脆有力、斩钉截铁——嗓音果断、沉着，掷地有声，听起来似乎不太真实，那种沉稳、镇定、被运用得游刃有余的喉音，只有神志恍惚的醉鬼，或是不可救药的烟鬼在极度兴奋、神魂颠倒时，才能发得出来。

他就是用这种口吻谈到他邀我前来的目的，说他诚心地盼着我，希望我给他提供安慰。他还颇为细致地谈到他自认为他的病情属于何种性质。他说，那是一种先天性的家族遗传病，他对药物治疗已经不抱任何希望。接着他又补充说道，这只是一种神经性疾病，不久自会痊愈。该病的症状是他经常出现大量离奇古怪的感觉。他详细叙述这些感觉，其中一些令我既感到有趣，又感到疑惑，尽管这也许是他说话时的措辞和口气在起作用。一种病态的神经过敏使他备受折磨；他只能吃最寡淡无味的饭菜；只能穿某一种面料的衣服；所有鲜花的芬芳都令他窒息；他的眼睛即使在微弱的光线下也刺痛难忍；而且，只有一些特殊的声音和弦乐器奏出的音响，他听了才不会感到心惊胆寒。

我看出来，他完全陷于变态的恐惧中不能自拔。“我要死了，”他说，“我一定会在这可悲的疯狂感觉中送命。就那样，就那样死去，不会有别的出路。我对将来要发生的事情感到害怕，倒不是害怕这些事情本身，而是害怕它们带来的后果。一想到任何意外，哪怕是最微不足道的小事，都会令我这敏感焦虑的心灵受到震撼，我就感到不寒

而栗。说实在的，我倒不怕灾祸，怕就怕灾祸带来的绝对后果，它使我胆战心惊。在这种惶惶不可终日的状态下，在这种凄惨可悲的处境下，我感到那个时刻迟早都会到来，我定会在与恐惧这个狰狞幻影的一次抗争中，彻底放弃我的生命和理智。”

此外，我还不时从他那吞吞吐吐、含义模糊的暗示中，发现了他精神状态的另一个奇怪特征。他内心纠缠着许多迷信想法，都是关于他多年居住、从不敢擅自离开的那幢府邸——关于一种影响力，而他在谈到他所想象的这种影响力的能量时用词晦涩，使我在此无法复述——他说，由于常年忍受这幢府邸的形状实质上的某些特异之处，使他的精神受到了某种影响，那灰墙、塔楼，以及它们倒映其中的那一湖幽暗的死水，这所有的景象最终对他的生存状态产生了一种影响。

不过，他虽然犹疑再三，还是承认说，这种令他痛不欲生的异样的忧郁情绪，多半可以追溯到某个更合乎情理、更明白显见的根源。那是因为他心爱的妹妹，他多少年来唯一的伴侣，他在世上仅存的亲人，长时间来一直重病缠身，实际上已经眼看着奄奄一息了。“她一旦死去，”他说道，那口气里的酸楚令我难以忘怀，“这古老的厄歇尔家族就剩下我一个人（一个孤苦无望、精神脆弱的人）。”他正说着，玛德琳小姐（别人就是这样称呼她的）从房间的尽头慢慢走过，根本没有留意我的存在，就兀自隐去了。我凝视着她，突然产生一种极度的惊诧，甚至还夹杂着一些恐惧。但是要解释这种感觉所为何来，我却不能办到。我的目光追随着她离去的背影，心里感到一阵恍惚。最后，房门在她身后关上，我不由自主、迫不及待地转眼去看她哥哥的神情，然而他已用双手将脸紧紧捂住，我只能看见他那瘦骨嶙峋的手指显得比平时更加苍白，一行行冲动的泪水从指缝间滚落。

玛德琳小姐的病早就使那些医生束手无策。不可改变的冷漠倦怠，日渐消瘦的身体，再加上尽管转瞬即逝，却时常都要发作的强直性昏厥症，这些便是她的种种反常症候。她一直顽强地同病魔抗争，始终不甘心就此一病不起。但在我到达这里的当天晚上夜色渐浓时（她的哥哥在夜里失魂落魄地告诉我），她最终屈从于死神的淫威。我这才知道，我目送她背影的那匆匆一瞥，也许就是我看到她的最后一眼——那位小姐，至少在她弥留的时候，我是不会再见到她了。

在随后的几天里，厄歇尔和我都绝口不提她的名字。在此期间，我一直真心诚意地想法减轻我朋友的伤悲。我们一起绘画，一起读书，或者我就聆听他即兴弹奏他那把如泣如诉的吉他，宛若在梦境一般。这种朝夕相处，使我们越来越亲密，也使我越来越深入地了他的内心世界，使我越来越痛苦地看出无论我怎样千方百计地鼓励他振作起来、摆脱忧郁，都是枉费心机，毫无结果。仿佛有一种与生俱来、根深蒂固的痛苦，像一道不死的幽光一样，把他精神世界和物质

世界的一切笼罩得一片昏暗。

我就这样独自陪伴厄歇尔府的主人度过了许多忧郁凝重的时光，这是我永生难以忘怀的。但是，我却说不清楚他缠着我、领着我读的是些什么书，做的是些什么事。一种极度亢奋、完全失常的胡思乱想，使一切都蒙上了一层硫黄的微光，他即兴奏出的大段大段的挽歌，将永远在我耳畔回响。其中，我格外痛楚地记得，他对冯·韦伯的那首狂放的《最后的华尔兹》做了奇特的变异和夸张。他凭借他精巧的想象构思的一幅幅画面，在他的笔触下变得模糊不清，令我不寒而栗，而我因为不知道自己为何颤抖，就更感到格外恐怖。这些绘画（如今历历在目，依然鲜明），尽管我费尽心机，也只能表达出原本就属于书面语言范畴的那一小部分。他用极为简单的构图，用完全袒露的笔触，吸引和震慑着别人的注意力。如果世上曾经有人把思想绘诸笔端，那个人一定是罗德里克·厄歇尔。至少对于处在当时那种环境中的我来说，看到这位抑郁症患者企图在画布上表现的纯粹抽象的东西，我就感到一种难以忍受的强烈的恐惧，以前我在端详富塞利那些色彩十分艳丽但造型过于具体的幻想构图时，也未曾有过这种恐惧的感觉。

在我这位朋友的那些幻影幢幢的构图中，有一个倒是不那么绝对抽象，可以勉强用文字描述一个大概。这是一幅小画，描绘了一个其长无比的矩形地窖或隧道的内部，内壁低矮，光滑，呈白色，没有间断，也没有装饰。从画面上的某些陪衬物可以看出，这个洞穴处于地底深处。长长的地道无限延伸，四周不见一个出口，也没有火炬和其他人造光源；但是却有一道耀眼的强光滚过整个空间，使一切沐浴在诡谲可怖、突兀怪异的光辉之中。

我在上文已经提到他病态的听觉神经，一切音乐都令他无法忍受，只有用弦乐器奏出的某些曲调例外。也许，正是因为他只能局限于摆弄吉他，所以才弹得那么如梦似幻，空灵怪诞。但是他那些即兴曲的狂热流畅，却不能归结于这个原因。他的狂想曲的那些音符，那些歌词（他经常一边弹琴，一边即兴唱出押韵的歌词），都肯定是，也确实是他情绪镇静、精神集中时的产物，而我前面已经委婉地提到，这种现象只有在他拼命强颜欢笑时才会出现。我很容易就记住了其中一首狂想曲的歌词。也许，他当初弹唱这支曲子时给我的印象最为强烈，因为我幻想自己从那潜在、隐秘的含义中第一次觉察出，厄歇尔已经充分意识到他那高高在上的理智正摇摇欲坠。这首《闹鬼的宫殿》的歌词大致如下，也许记录得并非完全准确：

—

幽幽溪谷一片绿色葱茏，

曾有仁慈天使聚居其中，
还有一座宫殿气势恢宏——
金碧辉煌，傲然耸向苍穹。
在“思想”统治的国度里，
那座宫殿挺拔屹立！
就连展翅高飞的仙女，
也从未领略如此的美丽。

二

黄色的旗幡金光夺目，
在宫殿屋顶迎风飘舞，
（这一切的一切皆成虚无，
归于一去不返的远古）
在往昔甜蜜的岁月里，
阵阵微风在欢闹嬉戏，
沿着宫殿那粉白的墙壁，
有一缕幽香悠然飘去。

三

游子来到美丽的溪谷，
透过两扇明亮的窗户，
看见精灵们翩翩起舞，
和着琵琶柔美的旋律；
中间有个帝王气宇轩昂，
威严端坐在宝座之上！

他威风凛凛，通体辉煌，
俨然是一副国君之相。

四

珍珠美玉闪耀着光芒，
镶嵌在华丽的宫殿门上，
一群群回声你来我往，
在宫门间穿梭、飘荡，
回音女神的唯一职责，
就是唱出甜蜜的颂歌，
用曼妙绝伦的歌喉，
赞美帝王的足智多谋。

五

但是有恶魔身披黑衣，
闯入帝王高贵的领地；
（呜呼哀哉，帝王命毙！
让我们祝他永远安息）
昔日王宫的荣华富贵，
嫣红姹紫的夺目光辉，
如今随光阴一去无回，
宛若梦境萦绕在心扉。

六

如今游人来到这溪谷，

透过一扇扇猩红的窗户，
但见一些怪影狂野无主，
随着杂乱的旋律狂舞；
一群青面獠牙的鬼影，
像地狱之河湍急阴森，
穿过惨白无光的宫门，
不见笑容，只闻狂笑阵阵。

我清楚地记得，这首歌谣的意蕴曾引得我浮想联翩，厄歇尔的某个想法就在其中体现出来。我之所以提到这个想法，倒不是因为它新颖别致（其他人也有过类似的想法），而是因为厄歇尔始终对它执着不移。这种看法一般说来，就是认为花草树木皆有灵性。但是，在他狂乱的想象里，这种想法变得更加放纵，在某种特定的情况下竟拓展到了无机物的领域。我无法用语言来表达他对这一信条是何等执着，何等痴迷。但正如我前文所暗示的，他的信念与他祖先留下的这幢灰石房子有关。他想象着，那种灵性就具体表现在那些石头的排列顺序以及它们的安排规律上，在覆盖其上的大量苔藓上，在四周枯立的古树上，尤其表现在那种布局的永恒不变、始终如一之中，表现在那一湖死水的倒影之中。他说，在湖水和石墙周围逐渐凝聚着一团雾气，这便是证明——是那种灵性的证明，我听到这里，感到大为吃惊。他又补充说道，从那种寂然无声却又挥之不去的可怕的感染力上，可以见到那种灵性造成的后果，多少个世纪以来，这感染力主宰着他们家族的命运，并使他变成眼前这副模样——我所看到的这副模样。对这类看法无须评论，我也不想妄做评论。

正如人们所能猜到的，我们读的书与这种幻想十分吻合，许多年来，这些书对病人的精神状态起了不小的作用。我们一同聚精会神地研读格雷塞的《翠鸟》和《修道院》，马基雅弗利的《魔鬼》，斯韦登堡的《天堂和地狱》，霍尔堡的《尼古拉·克里姆地下旅行记》，罗伯特·弗拉德、让·汤达日涅和德拉·尚布尔各自所著的《手相术》，蒂克的《蓝色的旅程》，康帕内拉的《太阳城》。我们最喜欢的一本书是多明我会 [1] 教士艾梅里克·德·吉罗尼所著的八开本《宗教法庭手册》；而读了庞波尼乌斯·梅拉的有关古代非洲森林神和牧羊神的一些章节，厄歇尔经常会如痴如梦地呆坐几小时。不过，他最感兴趣的是一本极其珍贵的四开本哥特体孤本奇书——一座被湮没教堂的祈祷手册——《在马因斯教会礼堂追思亡灵》。

那天晚上，当厄歇尔突然告诉我玛德琳小姐已然过世，并说他打算把尸体先在府邸的一个地窖中存放十四天之后再安葬时，我便不由自主地想起这本奇书中的荒唐仪式，以及它可能对这位忧郁症患者造成的影响。但是，他采取这一奇特做法也有其世俗的原因，我觉得不便贸然提出反对。他告诉我，他之所以这么决定，是考虑死者的病情不同一般，考虑到她那些医生会提出某些唐突的、刨根究底的疑问，还考虑到家族墓地偏僻荒凉，无人照看。当时我回想起我刚到厄歇尔府邸的那天，我在楼梯上遇见的那个人脸上的一副阴险表情，所以就无意反对他的做法，我认为这至少是一个没有害处、绝不算违背情理的防备措施。

应厄歇尔的请求，我亲自帮助他安排临时的入殓工作。尸体已经装入棺材，我们俩单独把它抬到停放处。停放尸体的那个地窖已经多年没有打开，我们的火把差点被令人窒息的空气熄灭，这使我们无法把里面查看清楚。只记得那个地窖窄小、潮湿，没有一点缝隙，透不进一丝光线，深深地埋在地下，上面正是我睡觉的那个房间。看来，在遥远的封建时代，那地窖曾被当作牢房，后来又作为贮存火药及其他易燃物品的地方，因为一部分地板和我们经过的整个长长的过道都仔细包裹着黄铜。那扇厚重的铁门也曾受到同样的保护。铁门因为沉重，在铰链上旋转时发出异常刺耳的吱嘎声。

在那可怕的地窖里，我们把令人悲伤的棺材放在架子上，稍稍掀开尚未钉上的棺盖，瞻仰死者的遗容。我第一次注意到他们兄妹二人长得极为相似。厄歇尔大概看出了我的心思，喃喃地解释了几句，我这才知道他和死者是孪生兄妹，彼此之间有着一种简直难以理解的心灵感应。然而，我们的目光却不敢在死者身上久留，因为看了不免心生恐惧。疾病就这样夺去了这位妙龄女子的生命，她像所有强直性晕厥症患者一样，胸口和脸上泛着一抹似真似假的红晕，一缕令人生疑的微笑在她唇角逗留不去，看上去十分可怕。我们把棺盖重新盖好，钉上钉子，然后关好铁门，迈着沉重的步伐，回到几乎和地窖同样阴暗凄凉的地面。

在度过几个悲痛欲绝的日子之后，我的朋友精神错乱的一些特征出现了显著的变化。平常的那副举止消失不见了。平常所做的事情也被他搁置一边或忘到脑后。他迈着慌慌张张、踉踉跄跄的步子，漫无目的地从一个房间徘徊到另一个房间。苍白的脸色变得更加惨白吓人，而眼里的光芒却熄灭无踪了。以往那种不时沙哑的嗓音不再听到；现在他的声音习惯性地颤抖不停，仿佛内心充满极度的恐惧。确实，有的时候，我认为他那终日惶恐不安的心里藏着某个令他窒息的秘密，他正在拼命积蓄足够的勇气，把它吐露出来。而有的时候，我又不得不把这一切当成莫名其妙的疯狂的胡思乱想，因为我看见他一连几小时两眼聚精会神地凝视空茫，仿佛在倾听冥冥之中的某个声

音。也无怪他的这副状况令我害怕，令我也受到感染。我觉得他那种荒诞癫狂、动人心魄的迷信，正在缓慢而明确地潜入我的心头。

尤其是在我们把玛德琳小姐放置在地窖七八天后的一个深夜，我躺在床上更为真切地体会到这种情绪的影响。我辗转反侧不能入睡，而时间却在一小时一小时地流逝。我拼命排解，想驱散盘踞在我心头的紧张不安。我强迫自己相信，我的紧张多半（如果不是全部）是由于房间里沉闷的家具对我产生了令人惶惑的影响——由于那暗淡破旧的帷幔，随着即将来临的风暴的吹动，在墙上来回摆动，摩擦着床上的装饰布，发出骚乱不安的窸窣窸窣的声音。但是我的排解无济于事。一阵难以抑制的战栗渐渐传遍我的全身，最后，一种噩梦一般的无名的恐惧占据了我的心房。我喘着气，挣扎着摆脱出来，从枕头上抬起身子，仔细凝视漆黑一片的房间，屏息倾听——我不知道为何倾听，除非是受到本能驱使——倾听某种低微而模糊的声音，它在风暴暂停的间歇响起，却不知道从何处传来。我被一种不可名状、难以忍受的极度的恐惧所震慑，慌忙穿上衣服（我感到那天夜里我不能再睡了），开始在房间里匆匆地踱来踱去，努力想使自己摆脱那凄楚可怜的境地。

我就这样来回踱了几圈，突然附近楼梯上传来一阵轻微的脚步声，引起了我的注意。我很快听出这是厄歇尔的脚步声。紧接着，他轻轻敲了敲我的房门，端着一盏灯走了进来。他的脸色和平时一样惨白，但眼睛里却闪耀着一种疯狂的喜悦——一举一动都带着显然经过压抑的歇斯底里。他的这副神情令我毛骨悚然——但是，比起我独守长夜那份孤独来，什么都是好的，我甚至把他的光临看作缓解我孤独的救星。

“怎么，你还没有看见？”他一声不吭地四下盯视片刻，突然说道，“你还没有看见？——啊，等一等，你会看见的。”他一边说着，一边仔细把灯遮上，然后匆匆走到一扇窗户跟前，猛地将它推开，迎向外面的风暴。

一阵猛烈的强风刮进来，差点吹得我们站不稳脚跟。这一夜虽然狂风呼啸，却是异常美丽，是一个奇特的、交织着恐惧和美丽的夜晚。一股旋风显然已在附近聚集起力量，因为风向不时发生剧烈变化；沉重的乌云低低垂悬，仿佛压向府邸的塔楼；乌云尽管浓重，我们仍能看见云块从四面八方涌来，带着充沛的活力挤压碰撞，却并不飘向远方。我是说乌云尽管浓重，我们仍能看见这幅景象，但却不见月亮和星星，也不见闪电的影子。但是在大团大团翻滚涌动的云雾下面，在我们附近地面上的一切物体上面，闪耀着一种微弱而又清晰的雾气散发出的奇异的白光，这雾气笼罩着宅屋，像裹尸布一样把它覆盖。

“你不能看！你绝不能看！”我战战兢兢地对厄歇尔说，一边轻轻用力把他从窗口拖到一张椅子上。“这些使你迷惑的景象不过是普通的电光现象，也许是由于那小湖中瘴气弥漫所形成的。我们关上窗户吧。空气寒冷，对你的身体没有好处。这里有一本你最喜欢的传奇小说，我来念，你听着，我们就这样共同度过这个恐怖的夜晚吧。”

我随手拿起的那本旧书是劳斯洛特·坎宁先生所著的《疯狂的宴会》，我称它为厄歇尔最爱读的书，不过是无奈中的一句言不由衷的调侃。因为说实话，这本书语言粗俗，想象贫乏，故事拖沓，我这位品味高雅、精神世界丰富的朋友是不会对它感兴趣的。然而，当时手头只有这么一本书，我怀有一种侥幸心理，希望那些搅得这位忧郁症患者惶恐不安的激动情绪，能在我所读的荒唐透顶的故事中得到缓解（精神错乱的病史上有许多类似的奇特病例）。确实，如果我当时能从他听故事（或表面上在听）时那副紧张压抑的狂喜上做出判断，我就真可以庆幸自己妙计得逞了。

我已经读到人们所熟悉的那一段情节，宴会的主人埃瑟尔雷德千方百计想和平进入隐士的居所，却始终没有成功，便开始靠武力强行闯入。记得书里是这样叙述这段情节的：

埃瑟尔雷德性情本就刚烈勇猛。加之畅饮后酒性发作，就更加气势逼人，他不再同那顽固不化的歹毒隐士多费口舌。这时他感到雨点落在他的肩头，担心暴风雨就要来临，立时抡起钉头槌，狠狠砸了几下，转眼将门板凿了个窟窿，再把套着臂铠的胳膊伸进去，使劲一拉，那扇门顿时四分五裂，木板折断破裂时发出干

燥空洞令人心惊胆寒的声音，在森林里久久回荡。

念完这最后一句，我猛吃一惊，停住了。我仿佛听到（尽管立刻断定是我情绪激动产生的幻觉）——我仿佛隐隐约约地听到——从府邸中某个偏僻的角落传来一个声音，听上去和劳斯洛特先生格外详细描写的那破门的回声极为相似，只是更加沉闷、模糊。毫无疑问，正是这种巧合吸引了我的注意。在窗框啪嗒啪嗒的撞击声和外面一阵紧似一阵的狂风呼啸声中，这声音实在不算什么，不会使我感兴趣，也不会使我惶恐不安。我继续把故事念下去：

好汉埃瑟尔雷德破门而入后，却不见那个歹毒隐士的踪影，这使他既恼怒又惊讶。却只见一条满身鳞片、口吐火舌的巨龙，镇守着一座黄金建造、白银铺地的宫殿，墙上挂着一副闪闪发光的铜盾，上面镌刻着两行铭文：

进宝殿者成霸主；

屠巨龙者赢盾牌。

埃瑟尔雷德高高抡起钉头槌，一下击中龙头。龙头滚落在他脚下，喷出一口毒气，发出一声令人发指的尖厉刺耳的惨叫，埃瑟尔雷德只好用双手捂住耳朵，这声音实在是撕心裂肺，前所未闻。

念到这里，我又猝然停住，心中大为愕然——这次再也无法怀疑了。我确实听见（尽管我发现我很难说出这声音来自何方）一个微弱、遥远，但却尖厉刺耳的惨叫声或摩擦声，悠长不绝，诡谲离奇——我读着书中的描写，心里已然想象出巨龙的那声石破天惊的惨叫，而耳边听到的这个声音，正跟我的想象不差分毫。

这个无比怪异的声音，这种最最离奇的巧合，自然使我心头产生无数种互相矛盾的感觉，直压得我喘不过气来，其中最令我不堪忍受的是极度的惊愕和恐惧，但我仍然保持着足够的镇静，以免出言不慎，刺激了我这位朋友敏感的神经。我不敢肯定他是否听见这些声音，不过在刚刚几分钟内，他的举止确实发生了奇怪的变化。他原来坐在我对面，现在却已将椅子慢慢挪开，面对房门坐着。这样一来，我只能看到他脸的局部，只见他双唇颤抖不已，仿佛在无声地喃喃自语。他的脑袋耷拉在胸口，但我知道他并没有睡着，从侧面也能看到他两眼大睁，一眨不眨。他身体的动作也证明他没有睡着，他一直在不停地轻轻左右摇晃。我把这一切看在眼里，继续念劳斯洛特先生的故事，情节如下：

却说那好汉摆脱了巨龙的魔爪，猛然想到墙上的铜盾，想到要打破上面所附的魔咒，于是他搬开挡在前面的巨龙尸体，英勇无畏地踏过城堡的白银地面，走向挂着铜盾的那面墙壁。可实际上，没等他来到墙边，铜盾就掉落在他脚边的白银地面上，发出一声可怕的巨响，震耳欲聋。

我刚刚念出这几个字，仿佛在那一刹那，真的有一面铜盾重重摔落在白银地面上一样——我听到一阵金属撞击的声音，清晰，空洞，却又显得沉闷压抑。我大惊失色，一跃而起；厄歇尔却依旧坐在椅子上晃来晃去。我冲到他的椅子跟前，只见他双眼怔怔地凝视前方，整个表情像石头一般僵硬。但是，当我把手放在他的肩头时，他浑身一阵剧烈的震颤，嘴唇哆嗦着露出一个惨笑。我看见他颤抖着喃喃自语，声音又低又急，仿佛不知道我就在跟前。我弯腰向他靠近，终于听见了他话里的可怕含义。

“现在听见了吧？——是的，我听见了，我早就听见了。好久——好久——好久——好几分钟，好几小时，好几天以前，我就听见了——可是我不敢——哦，可怜可怜我吧，我是多么可怜啊！——我不敢——我不敢说啊！我们把她活埋啦！我不是说过我感觉敏锐吗？

现在我告诉你，她在空洞洞的棺材里最初发出的微弱响动我都听见了。我听见了——好多好多天以前——可是我不敢——我不敢说啊！现在——今天夜里——埃瑟尔雷德——哈！哈哈！——撞破隐士的房门，巨龙临死的惨叫，盾牌落地的巨响——唉，那还不如说是她棺材的劈裂声，她牢房里铁铰链的摩擦声，和她在包着黄铜的地窖走廊里拼命挣扎的声音！啊！我逃到哪里去呢？她不是很快就会上这儿来吗？她不是正在匆匆赶来责备我行事仓促？我不是已经听见她的脚步踏上楼梯？我不是已经听出她的心脏在沉重而可怕地跳动？疯子！”说到这里，他疯狂地一跃而起，仿佛拼足了全身的气力，尖声怪叫着说：“疯子！我告诉你，她此刻就站在门外！”

似乎他那蕴含超凡力量的叫喊中真的有一股魔力，只见他用手指着那道宽大古老的房门，在刹那间，那两扇沉重的乌木门扉竟然徐徐打开了。这一定是狂风将它吹开的。但是，就在那两扇门外，果真站着厄歇尔家玛德琳小姐那体形高大、裹着尸衣的身影。她那白色的尸衣上血迹斑斑，瘦骨嶙峋的身体的每一部分都有苦苦挣扎过的痕迹。她浑身颤抖着，摇摇晃晃地站在门槛上，然后，随着一声低幽的呜咽，重重地跌进屋来，倒在她哥哥身上，一阵剧烈的、临终前的挣扎，把他也拖拽到地上，成为一具死尸，成为他曾经预料过的恐怖的牺牲品。

我吓得魂飞魄散，逃离了那个房间，逃离了那座宅屋。当我穿过那古老的堤道时，风暴仍然在疯狂肆虐。突然，沿着堤道射来一道耀眼的光芒，我转过身来，想看看这种不同寻常的光芒从何而来，因为我的身后只有那高大的府邸和它的影子。原来光芒来自那一轮正在西沉的血红色的满月，月光鲜明地照亮了我前文中提到的那道原来不易察觉的，从屋顶弯弯曲曲延伸至墙脚的裂缝。就在我凝视的时候，这道裂缝迅速变宽，随着一阵旋风呼啸着吹过，那轮圆满的红月亮赫然呈现在我眼前，我头晕目眩地看到宅屋那高大的墙壁纷纷坍塌，耳边传来一阵骚乱的喊叫。经久不息，仿佛十万个浪头在翻滚咆哮，而我脚下那黑暗幽深的小湖，沉闷地、寂无声息地淹没了已成碎石瓦砾的“厄歇尔府”。

[1] 多明我会，又名布道兄弟会，为天主教四大托钵修会之一，1215年由西班牙托钵修士圣多明我（约1170—1221）创立。——译者注

一桶白葡萄酒

福图纳托对我一而再再而三的伤害，我都能忍就忍了，可是他竟然敢侮辱我，我便发誓要报仇雪恨了。你这么了解我的脾气禀性，肯定知道我不会公开发出威胁。我最后必定要报仇雪恨，这是板上钉钉的事——但是报仇绝不能带来任何风险，这也是确凿无疑的。我不仅要惩罚对方，还要让自己不受惩罚。如果修正错误的人受到惩罚，那错误就得不到修正。如果复仇者没有让自己感觉到已经惩罚了做坏事的人，那错误也得不到修正。

你必须明白，我在语言和行为上，都没有给福图纳托任何理由来怀疑我的善良愿望。我继续按我的老习惯冲他微笑，他没有看出，我现在的笑容里藏着置他于死地的想法。

这位福图纳托老兄有一个弱点——在其他方面他倒是个令人尊敬甚至让人害怕的男人。他很为自己在葡萄酒方面的鉴赏力感到得意。意大利人很少具有真正的大师气质。在大多数情况下，他们的热情都只是逢场作戏，骗骗那些英国和美国的百万富翁。在绘画和宝石的领域，福图纳托跟他的同胞一样，是个江湖骗子，但是在陈年佳酿的问题上，他的态度十分认真。我在这方面跟他没有本质的区别——我本人对意大利葡萄酒也很精通，只要有可能就大量地购买。

话说，这是嘉年华到达癫狂顶峰的一个傍晚，我和我的朋友不期而遇。他过分热情地跟我搭话，因为他当时已经喝了不少。这家伙身上的衣服像个大杂烩。紧身的条纹衫，头上是一顶圆锥形的帽子，上面还挂着许多小铃铛。我见到他太高兴了，紧攥着他的手怎么也不肯松开。

我对他说：“亲爱的福图纳托，碰到你真是太巧了。你今天看上去气色很不错。我得到了一大桶好货，据说是阿蒙蒂亚多白葡萄酒，但我对此心存疑虑。”

“怎么会？”他说，“阿蒙蒂亚多？一大桶？不可能！而且是在嘉年华期间！”

“我心存疑虑，”我回答道，“当时我头脑发昏，没有征求一下你对此的看法，就按阿蒙蒂亚多的价钱付了全款。我那时候找不到你，又担心丢了一笔好买卖。”

“阿蒙蒂亚多！”

“我心存疑虑。”

“阿蒙蒂亚多！”

“我必须让他们满意。”

“阿蒙蒂亚多！”

“既然你有事在身，我这会儿正要去找卢切里西，有评论家天赋的人非他莫属。他会告诉我——”

“卢切里西根本分不清阿蒙蒂亚多酒和雪利酒。”

“可是有些傻瓜竟然说他的品位跟你不相上下。”

“快，我们走吧。”

“去哪儿？”

“去你的地下室。”

“不行，我的朋友。我不能因为你脾气好就强人所难。我看出你有应酬。卢切里西——”

“我没有应酬——快走吧。”

“我的朋友，不行啊。不是因为应酬，是我发现你正遭受重感冒的折磨。而地下室里潮湿得令人无法忍受。墙壁上都结了硝石。”

“我们还是走吧。感冒没什么大不了的。阿蒙蒂亚多！你准是受骗上当了。至于卢切里西，他根本就分不清雪利酒和阿蒙蒂亚多。”

这么说着话，福图纳托一把抓住了我的胳膊。我戴上一个黑色丝绸面罩，用一件短披风把身体紧紧裹住，他一个劲儿地催着我去我的豪华寝宫。

家里没有侍者，他们都逃出去过节，去寻欢作乐了。我跟他们说，过我要次日早晨才回来，我还明确地命令他们不许离开家门。我心里很清楚，这些命令能有效地保证他们全都在我刚一转身就消失得无影无踪。

我从他们的烛台上拿了两根蜡烛，递了一根给福图纳托，前倨后恭地领他穿过几个套间，走向通往地下室的那道拱门。我走下一条长长的旋转楼梯，请求他跟上时多加小心。最后，我们来到了楼梯底部，一起站在蒙特雷索尔地下墓穴的潮湿的地面上。

我朋友的步子踉踉跄跄，帽子上的铃铛随着他的脚步叮叮作响。

“那桶酒。”他说。

“还得再往前走一点，”我说，“可是，你仔细看看这些洞穴墙壁上

的亮晶晶的网状物。”

他转向我，盯着我的眼睛，他两个浑浊的眼球上渗出了迷醉的泪水。

“硝石？”他终于问道。

“硝石。”我回答道，“你那样咳嗽多久了？”

“喀！喀！喀！……喀！喀！喀！……喀！喀！喀！……喀！喀！喀！……喀！喀！喀！喀！”

我可怜的朋友发现他好几分钟没法儿回答我的话。

“没关系。”他最后说道。

“走，”我果断地说，“我们回去吧，你的健康最宝贵。你富有，受人尊敬，受人景仰，受人爱戴。你是幸福的，就像我曾经一样。你是一个不可或缺的人。至于我嘛，根本不值一提。我们回去吧。你会生病的，这个责任我可负不起。而且，还有卢切里西——”

“够了，”他说，“咳嗽根本不算什么，要不了我的命。我不会因为咳嗽而丢了性命。”

“不错——不错，”我回答道，“其实，我也并没打算毫无必要地让你感到紧张——但是你应该保持适当的谨慎。喝一口这种梅多克红葡萄酒吧，它能帮助我们抵抗潮湿。”

说到这里，我从放在地面上的一长排酒瓶里抽出一瓶，敲掉了它的瓶颈。

“喝吧。”我说着，把葡萄酒递给他。

他也斜着眼睛，把酒端到唇边。他顿了顿，冲我亲切地点了点头，那些铃铛发出叮叮的声音。

“我敬这些在我们周围安息的死者。”他说。

“我祝你长命百岁。”

他又一次抓住我的胳膊，我们继续往前走。

“这些地下室，”他说，“规模很大。”

“蒙特雷索尔，”我说，“是一个庞大的、人丁兴旺的家族。”

“我忘记你们的纹章是什么了。”

“一只巨大的金色人脚，底色是天蓝色。人脚踏碎了一条凶猛的蛇，蛇牙扎进了脚后跟。”

“铭词是什么？”

“凡伤我者必受惩罚。” [1]

“很好！”他说。

葡萄酒在他眼睛里闪烁，那些铃铛叮叮作响。我自己的想象也因梅多克红葡萄酒而有了温度。我们经过长长的墙壁，墙边堆着骷髅，大大小小的酒桶混杂其间，然后我们进入地下墓穴的最深的凹处。我又停了下来，这次冒昧地抓住了福图纳托一只胳膊的肘部上面。

“硝石！”我说，“看见了吗？越来越多了。像青苔一样挂在拱顶上。我们是在河床的下面了。湿气凝成的水珠在骨头间流淌。快，趁现在还来得及，我们回去吧。你的咳嗽——”

“那不算什么，”他说，“我们继续往前走吧。但是先给我再来一杯梅多克葡萄酒。”

我停住话头，给他拿了一瓶“坟墓诱惑”。他一饮而尽。他的眼睛里闪着灼热的光。他哈哈大笑，把酒瓶往上一扔，那姿势我看着有点奇怪。

我惊讶地看着他。他又做了一遍那个动作——十分怪异。

“你不懂吗？”他说。

“不懂。”我回答。

“看来你不是兄弟会的。”

“这怎么讲？”

“你不是瓦匠会的。”

“我是，我是，”我说，“我是瓦匠会的。”

“你？不可能！你是瓦匠？”

“我是瓦匠。”我回答。

“给个证明，”他说，“给个证明。”

“这就是。”我回答，从短风衣的褶皱中掏出一把泥刀。

“你开玩笑。”他惊叫道，向后退了几步，“不过，还是让我们继续去找阿蒙蒂亚多吧。”

“好的。”我说，把泥刀塞回短风衣下面，又让他挽住我的胳膊。他把沉重的身体靠在我胳膊上，我们继续前进，去寻找阿蒙蒂亚多。我们经过一连串低矮的拱门，往下，继续往前，再往下，来到一个很深的地下墓穴，里面浑浊的空气使我们的两根蜡烛不再燃烧，只发出一点微弱的亮光。

在地下墓穴的最远端，出现了另一个面积较小的墓穴。四壁堆着人类的遗骨，依照巴黎的地下墓穴的式样，一直堆到上面的拱顶。这个内部墓穴，三面墙都按这种风格装饰。第四面墙的遗骨坍塌了下来，乱七八糟地倒在地上，在某一处形成了相当大的一堆。因为遗骨的坍塌，我们看见墙里面是另一个内部墓穴或密室，深约四英尺，宽三英尺，高六七英尺。它似乎本身没有什么特殊的用途，只是在两根巨大的柱子之间形成了间隔，这两根柱子和其他柱子一起支撑起整个地下墓穴的顶部，密室的后部是坚实的花岗岩围墙。

福图纳托举起手里黯淡的蜡烛，努力想窥探这间密室的深处，可是没有成功。烛光太微弱了，我们无法看清密室的尽头。

“继续往前，”我说，“阿蒙蒂亚多就在这里面。那个卢切里西——”

“他是个无知的人。”我的朋友打断了我的话，继续踉踉跄跄地往前走，我立刻紧紧地跟上。一眨眼，他就来到了密室的尽头，发现被岩石挡住，没法儿再往前走了，他就一脸迷惑，呆呆地站在那儿。片刻之后，我就把他拴在了花岗岩上。花岗岩的表面有两个U形铁钉，在同一高度，相距大约两英尺。一个铁钉上挂着一根短短的链条，另一根铁钉上有个挂锁。我把链条从他的腰部甩过去，只用了几秒钟就把锁牢牢地锁住了。他完全被惊呆了，根本无力抵抗。我拔出钥匙，从密室里退了出来。

“把你的手，”我说，“放在墙上，你会忍不住摸那些硝石。这里确实非常潮湿。我再一次恳求你回去。不回？那么我必须果断地离开你了。但是我首先必须尽我所能对你表示一些关注。”

“阿蒙蒂亚多！”我的朋友突然喊道，还没有从他的惊愕中醒过神来。

“没错，”我回答道，“阿蒙蒂亚多。”

我一边说这句话，一边让我自己置身于前面说过的那堆尸骨中间。我把尸骨拨拉到旁边，很快就发现了大量的建筑石料和砂浆。我在那把泥刀的帮助下，开始充满干劲地用这些材料堵塞密室的入口。

我刚砌好第一层石料，就发现福图纳托的醉意大大地消退了。关于这点，我得到的最初迹象是密室深处传来一声低低的、呻吟般的喊叫。这不是一个醉汉的喊叫。在这之后是很长时间的顽强的沉默。我砌上第二层石料，然后是第三层、第四层，然后我听见链条在剧烈地摇晃。这声音持续了几分钟，在这期间，我停下手头的活儿，坐在那些尸骨上，让自己听得更加心满意足。最后，金属的碰撞声平静下来，我重新拿起泥刀，一口气砌完了第五层、第六层和第七层石料。现在石墙差不多到我胸口了。我又停下来，把蜡烛举到石墙上方，让

几道微弱的亮光投向里面的那个身影。

一连串响亮而凄厉的尖叫，突然从那个被链条拴住的人影的嗓子里发出，像一记重拳把我打了回来。在那短短的一瞬间，我迟疑了，我颤抖了。我拔出我的长剑，开始用它在密室里探索，可是突然一个闪念，使我放下心来。我把手放在地下墓穴坚实的墙体上，心里感到很踏实。我再一次走近石墙，对那个拼命吵闹的人的叫嚷做出回答。我重复他的喊叫，给他推波助澜，在音量和力度上都超越他的喊声。我这么做了之后，里面的喊叫声就平静了下来。

时间已是午夜，我的任务快要完成了。我已经砌完了第八层、第九层和第十层石料。第十一层是最后一层，我也砌好了一部分，现在只要把最后一块石头填进去，再抹上砂浆，就大功告成了。我挣扎着搬起沉重的石料，把它的一部分塞进那个注定的位置。然而，此时从密室里传来一声低笑，吓得我头发都竖了起来。低笑之后，一个悲哀的声音说话了，我好不容易才辨认出那是高贵的福图纳托的声音。只听那声音说道：

“哈！哈！哈！嘿！嘿！嘿！真是一个很有意思的恶作剧——一个精彩的玩笑。我们可以在寝宫里喝着葡萄酒——嘿！嘿！嘿！——拿这件事情笑个够了——嘿！嘿！嘿！”

“阿蒙蒂亚多！”我说。

“嘿！嘿！嘿！……嘿！嘿！嘿！……没错，阿蒙蒂亚多。不过时间是不是很晚了？他们，福图纳托夫人和其他人，会不会在宫殿里等我们？我们离开吧。”

“好的，”我说，“我们离开吧。”

“为了上帝的爱，蒙特雷索尔！”

“是的，”我说，“为了上帝的爱！”

可是我没有听到对我这句话的回答。我失去了耐心，大声喊道：“福图纳托！”

没有回答。我再次喊道：“福图纳托！”

还是没有回答。我把一根蜡烛伸进最后那个缺口，让它落了下去。里面只传来一阵叮叮的铃铛声。我感到心里难受，这都是地下墓穴的潮湿造成的。我匆匆把手头的活儿干完。我把最后一块石料用力塞进去，用砂浆把它抹平。我把那些古老的尸骨重新垒在新砌的石墙边。半个世纪以来，没有一个活人过来打扰过它们。愿死者的灵魂安息！

[1] 原文为拉丁语。——译者注

Edgar Allan
Poe

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

The
Tell-Tale Heart

N° 02

‘Presently I heard
a slight groan,
and I knew it
was a groan of
mortal terror . . .
the low stifled
sound that arises
from the bottom
of the soul . . .’

The Tell- Tale Heart

True! – nervous – very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why *will* you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses – not destroyed – not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily – how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain; but once conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! yes, it was this! He had the eye of a vulture –a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees – very gradually – I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever.

Now this is the point. You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen *me* . You should have seen how wisely I proceeded – with what caution –with what foresight – with what dissimulation I went to work! I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it – oh so gently! And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark lantern, all closed, closed, so that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head. Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in! I moved it slowly – very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep. It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see him as he lay upon his bed. Ha! –would a madman have been so wise as this? And then, when my head was well in the room, I undid the lantern cautiously – oh, so cautiously – cautiously (for the hinges creaked) – I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye. And this I did for seven long nights –

every night just at midnight – but I found the eye always closed; and so it was impossible to do the work; for it was not the old man who vexed me, but his Evil Eye. And every morning, when the day broke, I went boldly into the chamber, and spoke courageously to him, calling him by name in a hearty tone, and inquiring how he had passed the night. So you see he would have been a very profound old man, indeed, to suspect that every night, just at twelve, I looked in upon him while he slept.

Upon the eighth night I was more than usually cautious in opening the door. A watch's minute hand moves more quickly than did mine. Never before that night, had I *felt* the extent of my own powers – of my sagacity. I could scarcely contain my feelings of triumph. To think that there I was, opening the door, little by little, and he not even to dream of my secret deeds or thoughts. I fairly chuckled at the idea; and perhaps he heard me; for he moved on the bed suddenly, as if startled. Now you may think that I drew back – but no. His room was as black as pitch with the thick darkness, (for the shutters were close fastened, through fear of robbers,) and so I knew that he could not see the opening of the door, and I kept pushing it on steadily, steadily.

I had my head in, and was about to open the lantern, when my thumb slipped upon the tin fastening, and the old man sprang up in bed, crying out – ‘Who’s there?’

I kept quite still and said nothing. For a whole hour I did not move a muscle, and in the meantime I did not hear him lie down. He was still sitting up in the bed listening; – just as I have done, night after night, hearkening to the death watches in the wall.

Presently I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan of mortal terror. It was not a groan of pain or of grief – oh, no! – it was the low stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe. I knew the sound well. Many a night, just at midnight, when all the world slept, it has welled up from my own bosom, deepening, with its dreadful echo, the terrors that distracted me. I say I knew it well. I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him, although I chuckled at heart. I knew that he had been lying awake ever since the first slight noise, when he had turned in the bed. His fears had been ever since growing upon him. He had been trying to fancy them causeless, but could not. He had

been saying to himself – ‘It is nothing but the wind in the chimney – it is only a mouse crossing the floor,’ or ‘it is merely a cricket which has made a single chirp.’ Yes, he had been trying to comfort himself with these suppositions: but he had found all in vain. *All in vain* ; because Death, in approaching him had stalked with his black shadow before him, and enveloped the victim. And it was the mournful influence of the unperceived shadow that caused him to feel – although he neither saw nor heard –to *feel* the presence of my head within the room.

When I had waited a long time, very patiently, without hearing him lie down, I resolved to open a little – a very, very little crevice in the lantern. So I opened it – you cannot imagine how stealthily, stealthily – until, at length a simple dim ray, like the thread of the spider, shot from out the crevice and fell full upon the vulture eye.

It was open – wide, wide open – and I grew furious as I gazed upon it. I saw it with perfect distinctness – all a dull blue, with a hideous veil over it that chilled the very marrow in my bones; but I could see nothing else of the old man’s face or person: for I had directed the ray as if by instinct, precisely upon the damned spot.

And have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over acuteness of the senses? – now, I say, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound, such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I knew *that* sound well, too. It was the beating of the old man’s heart. It increased my fury, as the beating of a drum stimulates the soldier into courage.

But even yet I refrained and kept still. I scarcely breathed. I held the lantern motionless. I tried how steadily I could maintain the ray upon the eye. Meantime the hellish tattoo of the heart increased. It grew quicker and quicker, and louder and louder every instant. The old man’s terror *must* have been extreme! It grew louder, I say, louder every moment! – do you mark me well? I have told you that I am nervous: so I am. And now at the dead hour of the night, amid the dreadful silence of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable terror. Yet, for some minutes longer I refrained and stood still. But the beating grew louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst. And now a new anxiety seized me –the sound would be heard by a neighbour! The old man’s hour had come! With a loud yell, I threw open the lantern

and leaped into the room. He shrieked once – once only. In an instant I dragged him to the floor, and pulled the heavy bed over him. I then smiled gaily, to find the deed so far done. But, for many minutes, the heart beat on with a muffled sound. This, however, did not vex me; it would not be heard through the wall. At length it ceased. The old man was dead. I removed the bed and examined the corpse. Yes, he was stone, stone dead. I placed my hand upon the heart and held it there many minutes. There was no pulsation. He was stone dead. His eye would trouble me no more.

If still you think me mad, you will think so no longer when I describe the wise precautions I took for the concealment of the body. The night waned; and I worked hastily, but in silence. First of all I dismembered the corpse. I cut off the head and the arms and the legs.

I then took up three planks from the flooring of the chamber, and deposited all between the scantlings. I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, that no human eye – not even *his* – could have detected any thing wrong. There was nothing to wash out – no stain of any kind – no blood- spot whatever. I had been too wary for that. A tub had caught all – ha! ha!

When I had made an end of these labours, it was four o'clock – still dark as midnight. As the bell sounded the hour, there came a knocking at the street door. I went down to open it with a light heart, – for what had I *now* to fear? There entered three men, who introduced themselves, with perfect suavity, as officers of the police. A shriek had been heard by a neighbour during the night; suspicion of foul play had been aroused; information had been lodged at the police office, and they (the officers) had been deputed to search the premises.

I smiled, – for *what* had I to fear? I bade the gentlemen welcome. The shriek, I said, was my own in a dream. The old man, I mentioned, was absent in the country. I took my visitors all over the house. I bade them search – search *well*. I led them, at length, to *his* chamber. I showed them his treasures, secure, undisturbed. In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them *here* to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim.

The officers were satisfied. My *manner* had convinced them. I was singularly at ease. They sat, and while I answered cheerily, they chatted of familiar things. But, ere long, I felt myself getting pale and wished them gone. My head ached, and I fancied a ringing in my ears: but still they sat and still chatted. The ringing became more distinct: – it continued and became more distinct: I talked more freely to get rid of the feeling: but it continued and gained definiteness – until, at length, I found that the noise was *not* within my ears.

No doubt I now grew *very* pale; – but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased – and what could I do? It was *a low, dull, quick sound – much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton* . I gasped for breath – and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly – more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased. I arose and argued about trifles, in a high key and with violent gesticulations; but the noise steadily increased. Why *would* they not be gone? I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observations of the men – but the noise steadily increased. Oh God! what *could* I do? I foamed – I raved – I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder –louder – *louder* ! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God! –no, no! They heard! – they suspected! – they *knew* ! – they were making a mockery of my horror! – this I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die! and now – again! – hark! louder! louder! louder! *louder* !

‘Villains!’ I shrieked, ‘dissemble no more! I admit the deed! – tear up the planks! here, here! – it is the beating of his hideous heart!’

The Fall of the House of Usher

Son coeur est un luth suspendu;

Sitôt qu'on le touche il résonne.

de béranger

During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country; and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher. I know not how it was – but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. I say insufferable; for the feeling was unrelieved by any of that half-pleasurable, because poetic, sentiment, with which the mind usually receives even the sternest natural images of the desolate or terrible. I looked upon the scene before me – upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain – upon the bleak walls – upon the vacant eye-like windows – upon a few rank sedges – and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees – with an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the afterdream of the reveller upon opium – the bitter lapse into everyday life – the hideous dropping off of the veil. There was an iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart – an unredeemed dreariness of thought which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime. What was it – I paused to think – what was it that so unnerved me in the contemplation of the House of Usher? It was a mystery all insoluble; nor could I grapple with the shadowy fancies that crowded upon me as I pondered. I was forced to fall back upon the unsatisfactory conclusion, that while, beyond doubt, there *are* combinations of very simple natural objects which have the power of thus affecting us, still the analysis of this power lies among considerations beyond our depth. It was possible, I reflected, that a mere different arrangement of the particulars of the scene, of the details of the picture, would be sufficient to

modify, or perhaps to annihilate its capacity for sorrowful impression; and, acting upon this idea, I reined my horse to the precipitous brink of a black and lurid tarn that lay in unruffled lustre by the dwelling, and gazed down – but with a shudder even more thrilling than before – upon the remodelled and inverted images of the gray sedge, and the ghastly tree- stems, and the vacant and eye- like windows.

Nevertheless, in this mansion of gloom I now proposed to myself a sojourn of some weeks. Its proprietor, Roderick Usher, had been one of my boon companions in boyhood; but many years had elapsed since our last meeting. A letter, however, had lately reached me in a distant part of the country – a letter from him – which, in its wildly importunate nature, had admitted of no other than a personal reply. The MS. gave evidence of nervous agitation. The writer spoke of acute bodily illness – of a mental disorder which oppressed him – and of an earnest desire to see me, as his best, and indeed his only personal friend, with a view of attempting, by the cheerfulness of my society, some alleviation of his malady. It was the manner in which all this, and much more, was said – it was the apparent *heart* that went with his request – which allowed me no room for hesitation; and I accordingly obeyed forthwith what I still considered a very singular summons.

Although, as boys, we had been even intimate associates, yet I really knew little of my friend. His reserve had been always excessive and habitual. I was aware, however, that his very ancient family had been noted, time out of mind, for a peculiar sensibility of temperament, displaying itself, through long ages, in many works of exalted art, and manifested, of late, in repeated deeds of munificent yet unobtrusive charity, as well as in a passionate devotion to the intricacies, perhaps even more than to the orthodox and easily recognisable beauties, of musical science. I had learned, too, the very remarkable fact, that the stem of the Usher race, all time- honoured as it was, had put forth, at no period, any enduring branch; in other words, that the entire family lay in the direct line of descent, and had always, with very trifling and very temporary variation, so lain. It was this deficiency, I considered, while running over in thought the perfect keeping of the character of the premises with the accredited character of the people, and while speculating upon the possible influence which the one, in the long lapse of

centuries, might have exercised upon the other – it was this deficiency, perhaps, of collateral issue, and the consequent undeviating transmission, from sire to son, of the patrimony with the name, which had, at length, so identified the two as to merge the original title of the estate in the quaint and equivocal appellation of the ‘House of Usher’ – an appellation which seemed to include, in the minds of the peasantry who used it, both the family and the family mansion.

I have said that the sole effect of my somewhat childish experiment – that of looking down within the tarn – had been to deepen the first singular impression. There can be no doubt that the consciousness of the rapid increase of my superstition – for why should I not so term it? –served mainly to accelerate the increase itself. Such, I have long known, is the paradoxical law of all sentiments having terror as a basis. And it might have been for this reason only, that, when I again uplifted my eyes to the house itself, from its image in the pool, there grew in my mind a strange fancy – a fancy so ridiculous, indeed, that I but mention it to show the vivid force of the sensations which oppressed me. I had so worked upon my imagination as really to believe that about the whole mansion and domain there hung an atmosphere peculiar to themselves and their immediate vicinity – an atmosphere which had no affinity with the air of heaven, but which had reeked up from the decayed trees, and the gray wall, and the silent tarn – a pestilent and mystic vapour, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible, and leaden- hued.

Shaking off from my spirit what *must* have been a dream, I scanned more narrowly the real aspect of the building. Its principal feature seemed to be that of an excessive antiquity. The discoloration of ages had been great. Minute fungi overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled web- work from the eaves. Yet all this was apart from any extraordinary dilapidation. No portion of the masonry had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts, and the crumbling condition of the individual stones. In this there was much that reminded me of the specious totality of old wood- work which has rotted for long years in some neglected vault, with no disturbance from the breath of the external air. Beyond this indication of extensive decay, however, the fabric gave little token of instability. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinising observer might have

discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn.

Noticing these things, I rode over a short causeway to the house. A servant in waiting took my horse and I entered the Gothic archway of the hall. A valet, of stealthy step, thence conducted me, in silence, through many dark and intricate passages in my progress to the *studio* of his master. Much that I encountered on the way contributed, I know not how, to heighten the vague sentiments of which I have already spoken. While the objects around me – while the carvings of the ceilings, the sombre tapestries of the walls, the ebon blackness of the floors, and the phantasmagoric armorial trophies which rattled as I strode, were but matters to which, or to such as which, I had been accustomed from my infancy – while I hesitated not to acknowledge how familiar was all this – I still wondered to find how unfamiliar were the fancies which ordinary images were stirring up. On one of the staircases, I met the physician of the family. His countenance, I thought, wore a mingled expression of low cunning and perplexity. He accosted me with trepidation and passed on. The valet now threw open a door and ushered me into the presence of his master.

The room in which I found myself was very large and lofty. The windows were long, narrow, and pointed, and at so vast a distance from the black oaken floor as to be altogether inaccessible from within. Feeble gleams of encrimsoned light made their way through the trellised panes, and served to render sufficiently distinct the more prominent objects around; the eye, however, struggled in vain to reach the remoter angles of the chamber, or the recesses of the vaulted and fretted ceiling. Dark draperies hung upon the walls. The general furniture was profuse, comfortless, antique, and tattered. Many books and musical instruments lay scattered about, but failed to give any vitality to the scene. I felt that I breathed an atmosphere of sorrow. An air of stern, deep, and irredeemable gloom hung over and pervaded all.

Upon my entrance, Usher arose from a sofa on which he had been lying at full length, and greeted me with a vivacious warmth which had much in it, I at first thought, of an overdone cordiality – of the constrained effort of the *ennuyé* man of the world. A glance,

however, at his countenance, convinced me of his perfect sincerity. We sat down; and for some moments, while he spoke not, I gazed upon him with a feeling half of pity, half of awe. Surely, man had never before so terribly altered, in so brief a period, as had Roderick Usher! It was with difficulty that I could bring myself to admit the identity of the wan being before me with the companion of my early boyhood. Yet the character of his face had been at all times remarkable. A cadaverousness of complexion; an eye large, liquid, and luminous beyond comparison; lips somewhat thin and very pallid, but of a surpassingly beautiful curve; a nose of a delicate Hebrew model, but with a breadth of nostril unusual in similar formations; a finely moulded chin, speaking, in its want of prominence, of a want of moral energy; hair of a more than web-like softness and tenuity; these features, with an inordinate expansion above the regions of the temple, made up altogether a countenance not easily to be forgotten. And now in the mere exaggeration of the prevailing character of these features, and of the expression they were wont to convey, lay so much of change that I doubted to whom I spoke. The now ghastly pallor of the skin, and the now miraculous lustre of the eye, above all things startled and even awed me. The silken hair, too, had been suffered to grow all unheeded, and as, in its wild gossamer texture, it floated rather than fell about the face, I could not, even with effort, connect its Arabesque expression with any idea of simple humanity.

In the manner of my friend I was at once struck with an incoherence – an inconsistency; and I soon found this to arise from a series of feeble and futile struggles to overcome an habitual trepidancy – an excessive nervous agitation. For something of this nature I had indeed been prepared, no less by his letter, than by reminiscences of certain boyish traits, and by conclusions deduced from his peculiar physical conformation and temperament. His action was alternately vivacious and sullen. His voice varied rapidly from a tremulous indecision (when the animal spirits seemed utterly in abeyance) to that species of energetic concision – that abrupt, weighty, unhurried, and hollow- sounding enunciation – that leaden, self- balanced and perfectly modulated guttural utterance, which may be observed in the lost drunkard, or the irreclaimable eater of opium, during the periods of his most intense excitement.

It was thus that he spoke of the object of my visit, of his earnest desire to see me, and of the solace he expected me to afford him. He entered, at some length, into what he conceived to be the nature of his malady. It was, he said, a constitutional and a family evil, and one for which he despaired to find a remedy – a mere nervous affection, he immediately added, which would undoubtedly soon pass off. It displayed itself in a host of unnatural sensations. Some of these, as he detailed them, interested and bewildered me; although, perhaps, the terms, and the general manner of the narration had their weight. He suffered much from a morbid acuteness of the senses; the most insipid food was alone endurable; he could wear only garments of certain texture; the odours of all flowers were oppressive; his eyes were tortured by even a faint light; and there were but peculiar sounds, and these from stringed instruments, which did not inspire him with horror.

To an anomalous species of terror I found him a bounden slave. ‘I shall perish,’ said he, ‘I *must* perish in this deplorable folly. Thus, thus, and not otherwise, shall I be lost. I dread the events of the future, not in themselves, but in their results. I shudder at the thought of any, even the most trivial, incident, which may operate upon this intolerable agitation of soul. I have, indeed, no abhorrence of danger, except in its absolute effect – in terror. In this unnerved – in this pitiable condition – I feel that the period will sooner or later arrive when I must abandon life and reason together, in some struggle with the grim phantasm, Fear.’

I learned, moreover, at intervals, and through broken and equivocal hints, another singular feature of his mental condition. He was enchained by certain superstitious impressions in regard to the dwelling which he tenanted, and whence, for many years, he had never ventured forth – in regard to an influence whose supposititious force was conveyed in terms too shadowy here to be re-stated – an influence which some peculiarities in the mere form and substance of his family mansion, had, by dint of long sufferance, he said, obtained over his spirit – an effect which the *physique* of the gray walls and turrets, and of the dim tarn into which they all looked down, had, at length, brought about upon the *morale* of his existence.

He admitted, however, although with hesitation, that much of the peculiar gloom which thus afflicted him could be traced to a

more natural and far more palpable origin – to the severe and long-continued illness – indeed to the evidently approaching dissolution – of a tenderly beloved sister – his sole companion for long years – his last and only relative on earth. ‘Her decease,’ he said, with a bitterness which I can never forget, ‘would leave him (him the hopeless and the frail) the last of the ancient race of the Ushers.’ While he spoke, the lady Madeline (for so was she called) passed slowly through a remote portion of the apartment, and, without having noticed my presence, disappeared. I regarded her with an utter astonishment not unmingled with dread – and yet I found it impossible to account for such feelings. A sensation of stupor oppressed me, as my eyes followed her retreating steps. When a door, at length, closed upon her, my glance sought instinctively and eagerly the countenance of the brother – but he had buried his face in his hands, and I could only perceive that a far more than ordinary wanness had overspread the emaciated fingers through which trickled many passionate tears.

The disease of the lady Madeline had long baffled the skill of her physicians. A settled apathy, a gradual wasting away of the person, and frequent although transient affections of a partially cataleptical character, were the unusual diagnosis. Hitherto she had steadily borne up against the pressure of her malady, and had not betaken herself finally to bed; but, on the closing in of the evening of my arrival at the house, she succumbed (as her brother told me at night with inexpressible agitation) to the prostrating power of the destroyer; and I learned that the glimpse I had obtained of her person would thus probably be the last I should obtain – that the lady, at least while living, would be seen by me no more.

For several days ensuing, her name was unmentioned by either Usher or myself: and during this period I was busied in earnest endeavours to alleviate the melancholy of my friend. We painted and read together; or I listened, as if in a dream, to the wild improvisations of his speaking guitar. And thus, as a closer and still closer intimacy admitted me more unreservedly into the recesses of his spirit, the more bitterly did I perceive the futility of all attempt at cheering a mind from which darkness, as if an inherent positive quality, poured forth upon all objects of the moral and physical universe, in one unceasing radiation of gloom.

I shall ever bear about me a memory of the many solemn hours

I thus spent alone with the master of the House of Usher. Yet I should fail in any attempt to convey an idea of the exact character of the studies, or of the occupations, in which he involved me, or led me the way. An excited and highly distempered ideality threw a sulphureous lustre over all. His long improvised dirges will ring forever in my ears. Among other things, I hold painfully in mind a certain singular perversion and amplification of the wild air of the last waltz of Von Weber. From the paintings over which his elaborate fancy brooded, and which grew, touch by touch, into vaguenesses at which I shuddered the more thrillingly, because I shuddered knowing not why; – from these paintings(vivid as their images now are before me) I would in vain endeavour to educe more than a small portion which should lie within the compass of merely written words. By the utter simplicity, by the nakedness of his designs, he arrested and overawed attention. If ever mortal painted an idea, that mortal was Roderick Usher. For me at least –in the circumstances then surrounding me – there arose out of the pure abstractions which the hypochondriac contrived to throw upon his canvas, an intensity of intolerable awe, no shadow of which felt I ever yet in the contemplation of the certainly glowing yet too concrete reveries of Fuseli.

One of the phantasmagoric conceptions of my friend, partaking not so rigidly of the spirit of abstraction, may be shadowed forth, although feebly, in words. A small picture presented the interior of an immensely long and rectangular vault or tunnel, with low walls, smooth, white, and without interruption or device. Certain accessory points of the design served well to convey the idea that this excavation lay at an exceeding depth below the surface of the earth. No outlet was observed in any portion of its vast extent, and no torch, or other artificial source of light was discernible; yet a flood of intense rays rolled throughout, and bathed the whole in a ghastly and inappropriate splendour.

I have just spoken of that morbid condition of the auditory nerve which rendered all music intolerable to the sufferer, with the exception of certain effects of stringed instruments. It was, perhaps, the narrow limits to which he thus confined himself upon the guitar, which gave birth, in great measure, to the fantastic character of his performances. But the fervid *facility* of his *impromptu*s could not be so accounted for. They must have been, and were, in the

notes, as well as in the words of his wild fantasias (for he not unfrequently accompanied himself with rhymed verbal improvisations), the result of that intense mental collectedness and concentration to which I have previously alluded as observable only in particular moments of the highest artificial excitement. The words of one of these rhapsodies I have easily remembered. I was, perhaps, the more forcibly impressed with it, as he gave it, because, in the under or mystic current of its meaning, I fancied that I perceived, and for the first time, a full consciousness on the part of Usher, of the tottering of his lofty reason upon her throne. The verses, which were entitled ‘The Haunted Palace’, ran very nearly, if not accurately, thus:

i

In the greenest of our valleys,
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace –
Radiant palace – reared its head.
In the monarch Thought’s dominion –
It stood there!
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair.

ii

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow;
(This – all this – was in the olden Time long ago)
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,

Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A winged odour went away.

iii

Wanderers in that happy valley
Through two luminous windows saw
Spirits moving musically
To a lute's well-tuned law,
Round about a throne, where sitting
(Porphyrogene!)
In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

iv

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

v

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,

Assailed the monarch's high estate;
(Ah, let us mourn, for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him, desolate!)
And, round about his home, the glory
That blushed and bloomed
Is but a dim- remembered story
Of the old time entombed.

vi

And travellers now within that valley,
Through the red- litten windows, see
Vast forms that move fantastically
To a discordant melody;
While, like a rapid ghastly river,
Through the pale door,
A hideous throng rush out forever,
And laugh – but smile no more.

I well remember that suggestions arising from this ballad, led us into a train of thought wherein there became manifest an opinion of Usher's which I mention not so much on account of its novelty, (for other men have thought thus,) as on account of the pertinacity with which he maintained it. This opinion, in its general form, was that of the sentience of all vegetable things. But, in his disordered fancy, the idea had assumed a more daring character, and trespassed, under certain conditions, upon the kingdom of inorganization. I lack words to express the full extent, or the earnest *abandon* of his persuasion. The belief, however, was connected (as I have previously hinted) with the gray stones of the home of his

forefathers. The conditions of the sentience had been here, he imagined, fulfilled in the method of collocation of these stones – in the order of their arrangement, as well as in that of the many *fungi* which overspread them, and of the decayed trees which stood around – above all, in the long undisturbed endurance of this arrangement, and in its reduplication in the still waters of the tarn. Its evidence – the evidence of the sentience – was to be seen, he said, (and I here started as he spoke,) in the gradual yet certain condensation of an atmosphere of their own about the waters and the walls. The result was discoverable, he added, in that silent, yet importunate and terrible influence which for centuries had moulded the destinies of his family, and which made *him* what I now saw him – what he was. Such opinions need no comment, and I will make none.

Our books – the books which, for years, had formed no small portion of the mental existence of the invalid – were, as might be supposed, in strict keeping with this character of phantasm. We pored together over such works as the *Ververt et Chartreuse* of Gresset; the *Belphegor* of Machiavelli; the *Heaven and Hell* of Swedenborg; the *Subterranean Voyage* of Nicholas Klimm by Holberg; the *Chiromancy* of Robert Flud, of Jean D'Indaginé, and of De la Chambre; the *Journey into the Blue Distance* of Tieck; and the *City of the Sun* of Campanella. One favourite volume was a small octavo edition of the *Directorium Inquisitorum*, by the Dominican Eymeric de Gironne; and there were passages in Pomponius Mela, about the old African Satyrs and Ægipans, over which Usher would sit dreaming for hours. His chief delight, however, was found in the perusal of an exceedingly rare and curious book in quarto Gothic – the manual of a forgotten church – the *Vigiliæ Mortuorum secundum Chorum Ecclesiæ Maguntinæ*.

I could not help thinking of the wild ritual of this work, and of its probable influence upon the hypochondriac, when, one evening, having informed me abruptly that the lady Madeline was no more, he stated his intention of preserving her corpse for a fortnight, (previously to its final interment,) in one of the numerous vaults within the main walls of the building. The worldly reason, however, assigned for this singular proceeding, was one which I did not feel at liberty to dispute. The brother had been led to his resolution (so he told me) by consideration of the unusual character of the malady

of the deceased, of certain obtrusive and eager inquiries on the part of her medical men, and of the remote and exposed situation of the burial- ground of the family. I will not deny that when I called to mind the sinister countenance of the person whom I met upon the staircase, on the day of my arrival at the house, I had no desire to oppose what I regarded as at best but a harmless, and by no means an unnatural, precaution.

At the request of Usher, I personally aided him in the arrangements for the temporary entombment. The body having been encoffined, we two alone bore it to its rest. The vault in which we placed it (and which had been so long unopened that our torches, half smothered in its oppressive atmosphere, gave us little opportunity for investigation) was small, damp, and entirely without means of admission for light; lying, at great depth, immediately beneath that portion of the building in which was my own sleeping apartment. It had been used, apparently, in remote feudal times, for the worst purposes of a donjon- keep, and, in later days, as a place of deposit for powder, or some other highly combustible substance, as a portion of its floor, and the whole interior of a long archway through which we reached it, were carefully sheathed with copper. The door, of massive iron, had been, also, similarly protected. Its immense weight caused an unusually sharp grating sound, as it moved upon its hinges.

Having deposited our mournful burden upon tressels within this region of horror, we partially turned aside the yet unscrewed lid of the coffin, and looked upon the face of the tenant. A striking similitude between the brother and sister now first arrested my attention; and Usher, divining, perhaps, my thoughts, murmured out some few words from which I learned that the deceased and himself had been twins, and that sympathies of a scarcely intelligible nature had always existed between them. Our glances, however, rested not long upon the dead – for we could not regard her unawed. The disease which had thus entombed the lady in the maturity of youth, had left, as usual in all maladies of a strictly cataleptical character, the mockery of a faint blush upon the bosom and the face, and that suspiciously lingering smile upon the lip which is so terrible in death. We replaced and screwed down the lid, and, having secured the door of iron, made our way, with toil, into the scarcely less gloomy apartments of the upper portion of the

house.

And now, some days of bitter grief having elapsed, an observable change came over the features of the mental disorder of my friend. His ordinary manner had vanished. His ordinary occupations were neglected or forgotten. He roamed from chamber to chamber with hurried, unequal, and objectless step. The pallor of his countenance had assumed, if possible, a more ghastly hue – but the luminousness of his eye had utterly gone out. The once occasional huskiness of his tone was heard no more; and a tremulous quaver, as if of extreme terror, habitually characterized his utterance. There were times, indeed, when I thought his unceasingly agitated mind was labouring with some oppressive secret, to divulge which he struggled for the necessary courage. At times, again, I was obliged to resolve all into the mere inexplicable vagaries of madness, for I beheld him gazing upon vacancy for long hours, in an attitude of the profoundest attention, as if listening to some imaginary sound. It was no wonder that his condition terrified – that it infected me. I felt creeping upon me, by slow yet certain degrees, the wild influences of his own fantastic yet impressive superstitions.

It was, especially, upon retiring to bed late in the night of the seventh or eighth day after the placing of the lady Madeline within the donjon, that I experienced the full power of such feelings. Sleep came not near my couch – while the hours waned and waned away. I struggled to reason off the nervousness which had dominion over me. I endeavoured to believe that much, if not all of what I felt, was due to the bewildering influence of the gloomy furniture of the room – of the dark and tattered draperies, which, tortured into motion by the breath of a rising tempest, swayed fitfully to and fro upon the walls, and rustled uneasily about the decorations of the bed. But my efforts were fruitless. An irrepressible tremour gradually pervaded my frame; and, at length, there sat upon my very heart an incubus of utterly causeless alarm. Shaking this off with a gasp and a struggle, I uplifted myself upon the pillows, and, peering earnestly within the intense darkness of the chamber, hearkened – I know not why, except that an instinctive spirit prompted me – to certain low and indefinite sounds which came, through the pauses of the storm, at long intervals, I knew not whence. Overpowered by an intense sentiment of horror,

unaccountable yet unendurable, I threw on my clothes with haste (for I felt that I should sleep no more during the night), and endeavoured to arouse myself from the pitiable condition into which I had fallen, by pacing rapidly to and fro through the apartment.

I had taken but few turns in this manner, when a light step on an adjoining staircase arrested my attention. I presently recognised it as that of Usher. In an instant afterward he rapped, with a gentle touch, at my door, and entered, bearing a lamp. His countenance was, as usual, cadaverously wan – but, moreover, there was a species of mad hilarity in his eyes – an evidently restrained *hysteria* in his whole demeanour. His air appalled me – but anything was preferable to the solitude which I had so long endured, and I even welcomed his presence as a relief.

‘And you have not seen it?’ he said abruptly, after having stared about him for some moments in silence – ‘you have not then seen it? – but, stay! you shall.’ Thus speaking, and having carefully shaded his lamp, he hurried to one of the casements, and threw it freely open to the storm.

The impetuous fury of the entering gust nearly lifted us from our feet. It was, indeed, a tempestuous yet sternly beautiful night, and one wildly singular in its terror and its beauty. A whirlwind had apparently collected its force in our vicinity; for there were frequent and violent alterations in the direction of the wind; and the exceeding density of the clouds (which hung so low as to press upon the turrets of the house) did not prevent our perceiving the life-like velocity with which they flew careering from all points against each other, without passing away into the distance. I say that even their exceeding density did not prevent our perceiving this – yet we had no glimpse of the moon or stars – nor was there any flashing forth of the lightning. But the under surfaces of the huge masses of agitated vapour, as well as all terrestrial objects immediately around us, were glowing in the unnatural light of a faintly luminous and distinctly visible gaseous exhalation which hung about and enshrouded the mansion.

‘You must not – you shall not behold this!’ said I, shudderingly, to Usher, as I led him, with a gentle violence, from the window to a seat. ‘These appearances, which bewilder you, are merely electrical

phenomena not uncommon – or it may be that they have their ghastly origin in the rank miasma of the tarn. Let us close this casement; – the air is chilling and dangerous to your frame. Here is one of your favourite romances. I will read, and you shall listen; – and so we will pass away this terrible night together.’

The antique volume which I had taken up was the ‘Mad Trist’ of Sir Launcelot Canning; but I had called it a favourite of Usher’s more in sad jest than in earnest; for, in truth, there is little in its uncouth and unimaginative prolixity which could have had interest for the lofty and spiritual ideality of my friend. It was, however, the only book immediately at hand; and I indulged a vague hope that the excitement which now agitated the hypochondriac, might find relief (for the history of mental disorder is full of similar anomalies) even in the extremeness of the folly which I should read. Could I have judged, indeed, by the wild overstrained air of vivacity with which he hearkened, or apparently hearkened, to the words of the tale, I might well have congratulated myself upon the success of my design.

I had arrived at that well-known portion of the story where Ethelred, the hero of the Trist, having sought in vain for peaceable admission into the dwelling of the hermit, proceeds to make good an entrance by force. Here, it will be remembered, the words of the narrative run thus:

‘And Ethelred, who was by nature of a doughty heart, and who was now mighty withal, on account of the powerfulness of the wine which he had drunken, waited no longer to hold parley with the hermit, who, in sooth, was of an obstinate and maliceful turn, but, feeling the rain upon his shoulders, and fearing the rising of the tempest, uplifted his mace outright, and, with blows, made quickly room in the plankings of the door for his gauntleted hand; and now pulling therewith sturdily, he so cracked, and ripped, and tore all asunder, that the noise of the dry and hollow-sounding wood alarumed and reverberated throughout the forest.’

At the termination of this sentence I started, and for a moment, paused; for it appeared to me (although I at once concluded that my excited fancy had deceived me) –it appeared to me that, from some very remote portion of the mansion, there came, indistinctly, to my ears, what might have been, in its exact similarity of character, the

echo (but a stifled and dull one certainly) of the very cracking and ripping sound which Sir Launcelot had so particularly described. It was, beyond doubt, the coincidence alone which had arrested my attention; for, amid the rattling of the sashes of the casements, and the ordinary commingled noises of the still increasing storm, the sound, in itself, had nothing, surely, which should have interested or disturbed me. I continued the story:

‘But the good champion Ethelred, now entering within the door, was sore enraged and amazed to perceive no signal of the malicious hermit; but, in the stead thereof, a dragon of a scaly and prodigious demeanour, and of a fiery tongue, which sate in guard before a palace of gold, with a floor of silver; and upon the wall there hung a shield of shining brass with this legend enwritten –

Who entereth herein, a conqueror hath bin;

Who slayeth the dragon, the shield he shall win;

And Ethelred uplifted his mace, and struck upon the head of the dragon, which fell before him, and gave up his pesty breath, with a shriek so horrid and harsh, and withal so piercing, that Ethelred had fain to close his ears with his hands against the dreadful noise of it, the like whereof was never before heard.’

Here again I paused abruptly, and now with a feeling of wild amazement – for there could be no doubt whatever that, in this instance, I did actually hear (although from what direction it proceeded I found it impossible to say) a low and apparently distant, but harsh, protracted, and most unusual screaming or grating sound – the exact counterpart of what my fancy had already conjured up for the dragon’s unnatural shriek as described by the romancer.

Oppressed, as I certainly was, upon the occurrence of the second and most extraordinary coincidence, by a thousand conflicting sensations, in which wonder and extreme terror were predominant, I still retained sufficient presence of mind to avoid exciting, by any observation, the sensitive nervousness of my companion. I was by no means certain that he had noticed the sounds in question; although, assuredly, a strange alteration had, during the last few minutes, taken place in his demeanour. From a

position fronting my own, he had gradually brought round his chair, so as to sit with his face to the door of the chamber; and thus I could but partially perceive his features, although I saw that his lips trembled as if he were murmuring inaudibly. His head had dropped upon his breast – yet I knew that he was not asleep, from the wide and rigid opening of the eye as I caught a glance of it in profile. The motion of his body, too, was at variance with this idea – for he rocked from side to side with a gentle yet constant and uniform sway. Having rapidly taken notice of all this, I resumed the narrative of Sir Launcelot, which thus proceeded:

‘And now, the champion, having escaped from the terrible fury of the dragon, bethinking himself of the brazen shield, and of the breaking up of the enchantment which was upon it, removed the carcass from out of the way before him, and approached valorously over the silver pavement of the castle to where the shield was upon the wall; which in sooth tarried not for his full coming, but fell down at his feet upon the silver floor, with a mighty great and terrible ringing sound.’

No sooner had these syllables passed my lips, than – as if a shield of brass had indeed, at the moment, fallen heavily upon a floor of silver – I became aware of a distinct, hollow, metallic, and clangorous, yet apparently muffled reverberation. Completely unnerved, I leaped to my feet; but the measured rocking movement of Usher was undisturbed. I rushed to the chair in which he sat. His eyes were bent fixedly before him, and throughout his whole countenance there reigned a stony rigidity. But, as I placed my hand upon his shoulder, there came a strong shudder over his whole person; a sickly smile quivered about his lips; and I saw that he spoke in a low, hurried, and gibbering murmur, as if unconscious of my presence. Bending closely over him, I at length drank in the hideous import of his words.

‘Not hear it? – yes, I hear it, and *have* heard it. Long –long – long – many minutes, many hours, many days, have I heard it – yet I dared not – oh, pity me, miserable wretch that I am! – I dared not – I *dared* not speak! *We have put her living in the tomb!* Said I not that my senses were acute? I *now* tell you that I heard her first feeble movements in the hollow coffin. I heard them – many, many days ago – yet I dared not – I *dared not speak!* And now – to- night – Ethelred – ha! ha! – the breaking of the hermit’s door, and the

death- cry of the dragon, and the clangour of the shield! – say, rather, the rending of her coffin, and the grating of the iron hinges of her prison, and her struggles within the coppered archway of the vault! Oh whither shall I fly? Will she not be here anon? Is she not hurrying to upbraid me for my haste? Have I not heard her footstep on the stair? Do I not distinguish that heavy and horrible beating of her heart? Madman!’ –here he sprang furiously to his feet, and shrieked out his syllables, as if in the effort he were giving up his soul – ‘Madman! I tell you that she now stands without the door!’

As if in the superhuman energy of his utterance there had been found the potency of a spell – the huge antique panels to which the speaker pointed, threw slowly back, upon the instant, their ponderous and ebony jaws. It was the work of the rushing gust – but then without those doors there did stand the lofty and enshrouded figure of the lady Madeline of Usher. There was blood upon her white robes, and the evidence of some bitter struggle upon every portion of her emaciated frame. For a moment she remained trembling and reeling to and fro upon the threshold, then, with a low moaning cry, fell heavily inward upon the person of her brother, and in her violent and now final death- agonies, bore him to the floor a corpse, and a victim to the terrors he had anticipated.

From that chamber, and from that mansion, I fled aghast. The storm was still abroad in all its wrath as I found myself crossing the old causeway. Suddenly there shot along the path a wild light, and I turned to see whence a gleam so unusual could have issued; for the vast house and its shadows were alone behind me. The radiance was that of the full, setting, and blood- red moon which now shone vividly through that once barely discernible fissure of which I have before spoken as extending from the roof of the building, in a zigzag direction, to the base. While I gazed, this fissure rapidly widened – there came a fierce breath of the whirlwind – the entire orb of the satellite burst at once upon my sight – my brain reeled as I saw the mighty walls rushing asunder – there was a long tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thousand waters – and the deep and dank tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the ‘house of usher’.

The Cask of Amontillado

The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could, but when he ventured upon insult I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. *At length* I would be avenged; this was a point definitely settled – but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish but punish with impunity. A wrong is unre dressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unre dressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile *now* was at the thought of his immolation.

He had a weak point – this Fortunato – although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit. For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time and opportunity, to practise imposture upon the British and Austrian *millionaires*. In painting and gemmary, Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack, but in the matter of old wines he was sincere. In this respect I did not differ from him materially; – I was skilful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.

It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley. He had on a tight- fitting parti- striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.

I said to him – ‘My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking today. But I have received a pipe

of what passes for Amontillado, and I have my doubts.’

‘How?’ said he. ‘Amontillado? A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!’

‘I have my doubts,’ I replied; ‘and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain.’

‘Amontillado!’

‘I have my doubts.’

‘Amontillado!’

‘And I must satisfy them.’

‘Amontillado!’

‘As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchresi. If any one has a critical turn it is he. He will tell me –’

‘Luchresi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry.’

‘And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own.’

‘Come, let us go.’

‘Whither?’

‘To your vaults.’

‘My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchresi –’

‘I have no engagement; – come.’

‘My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive you are afflicted. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are encrusted with nitre.’

‘Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon. And as for Luchresi, he cannot distinguish Sherry from Amontillado.’

Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm; and putting on a mask of black silk and drawing a *roquelaire* closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo.

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to

make merry in honour of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.

I took from their sconces two flambeaux, and giving one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent, and stood together upon the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresors.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he strode.

‘The pipe,’ he said.

‘It is farther on,’ said I; ‘but observe the white web-work which gleams from these cavern walls.’

He turned towards me, and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.

‘Nitre?’ he asked, at length.

‘Nitre,’ I replied. ‘How long have you had that cough?’

‘Ugh! ugh! ugh! – ugh! ugh! ugh! – ugh! ugh! ugh! – ugh! ugh! ugh! – ugh! ugh! ugh!’

My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

‘It is nothing,’ he said, at last.

‘Come,’ I said, with decision, ‘we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchresi –’

‘Enough,’ he said; ‘the cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough.’

‘True – true,’ I replied; ‘and, indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily – but you should use all proper caution. A draught of this Medoc will defend us from the damp.’

Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mould.

‘Drink,’ I said, presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.

‘I drink,’ he said, ‘to the buried that repose around us.’

‘And I to your long life.’

He again took my arm, and we proceeded.

‘These vaults,’ he said, ‘are extensive.’

‘The Montresors,’ I replied, ‘were a great and numerous family.’

‘I forget your arms.’

‘A huge human foot d’or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel.’

‘And the motto?’

‘*Nemo me impune lacessit*.’

‘Good!’ he said.

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through long walls of piled skeletons, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

‘The nitre!’ I said; ‘see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river’s bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough –’

‘It is nothing,’ he said; ‘let us go on. But first, another draught of the Medoc.’

I broke and reached him a flagon of De Grâve. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upwards with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement – a grotesque one.

'You do not comprehend?' he said.

'Not I,' I replied.

'Then you are not of the brotherhood.'

'How?'

'You are not of the masons.'

'Yes, yes,' I said; 'yes, yes.'

'You? Impossible! A mason?'

'A mason,' I replied.

'A sign,' he said, 'a sign.'

'It is this,' I answered, producing from beneath the folds of my *roquelaire* a trowel.

'You jest,' he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces. 'But let us proceed to the Amontillado.'

'Be it so,' I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth side the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones, we perceived a still interior crypt or recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavoured to pry into the depth of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

‘Proceed,’ I said; ‘herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchresi –’

‘He is an ignoramus,’ interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward, while I followed immediately at his heels. In an instant he had reached the extremity of the niche, and finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock. Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key I stepped back from the recess.

‘Pass your hand,’ I said, ‘over the wall; you cannot help feeling the nitre. Indeed, it is *very* damp. Once more let me *implore* you to return. No? Then I must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power.’

‘The Amontillado!’ ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

‘True,’ I replied; ‘the Amontillado.’

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was *not* the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labours and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused, and holding the flambeaux over the mason- work, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated, I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I re-approached the wall; I replied to the yells of him who clamoured. I re-echoed, I aided, I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamourer grew still.

It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the ninth and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. It was succeeded by a sad voice, which I had difficulty in recognizing as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said –

‘Ha! ha! ha! – he! he! he! – a very good joke, indeed –an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo – he! he! he! – over our wine – he! he! he!’

‘The Amontillado!’ I said.

‘He! he! he! – he! he! he! – yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo, the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone.’

‘Yes,’ I said, ‘let us be gone.’

‘For the love of God, Montresor!’

‘Yes,’ I said, ‘for the love of God!’

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud –

‘Fortunato!’

No answer. I called again –

‘Fortunato!’

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick; it was the dampness of the catacombs

that made it so. I hastened to make an end of my labour. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re- erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. *In pace requiescat!*



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“‘哎呀，
我的上帝啊！……’
他反复说着，
‘游得痛快极了。
哎呀，
我的上帝啊！……’”



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LITTLE BLACK
CLASSICS

*此中文译本译自俄语原文

吻

五月二十日傍晚八点钟，某炮兵后备旅的所有六个连，到露营地去的途中，在梅斯捷奇金村停下来过夜。他们那儿乱哄哄，有的军官在大炮四周忙碌，有的军官会合在教堂围墙附近的广场上听设营官讲话，这时候忽然从教堂后边闪出一个穿便服的男子，骑着一匹奇怪的马。那匹浅黄色的小马生着好看的脖子和短短的尾巴，一步步走过来，然而不是照直走，却像是斜着溜过来，踩着一种细碎的舞步，仿佛有人用鞭子抽它的腿似的。骑马的人走到军官们面前，抬了抬帽子说：

“本地的地主，陆军中将冯·拉别克大人请诸位军官先生马上赏光到家里去喝茶……”

马低低头，踩着舞步，斜着身子往后退去。骑马的人又抬了抬帽子，一刹那间，跟他那匹奇怪的马隐到教堂后面，不见了。

“鬼才知道这是怎么回事！”有几个军官嘟哝道，他们正在散开，要回到自己的住处去，“大家都想睡觉了这位冯·拉别克却要请人喝什么茶！什么叫作喝茶，我们心里可有数！”

所有六个连的军官们都清楚地记得去年的一件事在阅兵期间，他们跟一个哥萨克团的军官们，也像这样受到一位伯爵地主——一位退伍军人的邀请去喝茶。那位好客、殷勤的伯爵款待他们，请他们吃饱、喝足之后不肯放他们回到村里的住处去，却把他们留在自己家里过夜。所有这些当然都很好，简直没法儿希望更好的了然而糟糕的是那位退伍军人有这些年轻人做伴，高兴得过了头。他对军官们讲他过去的光辉事迹，领他们走遍各处房间，给他们看名贵的画片、古老的版画、珍奇的武器，给他们念大人物的亲笔信，一直忙到太阳东升那些疲乏厌倦的军官看着，听着，一心想睡觉，小心地对袖口打呵欠。临了，主人总算放他们走了，可是要睡觉已经太迟了。

也许这个冯·拉别克就是这种人吧？是也好，不是也好，反正也没办法了。军官们换上整齐的军服，把周身收拾干净，成群结伙地去找那个地主的家。在教堂附近的广场上，他们打听出来要到那位先生的家可以沿着下面的路走——从教堂后面下坡到河边，沿着河岸走到一个花园，顺一条林荫路走到那所房子；或者走上面的路也成——从教堂照直顺着大路走，在离村子不到半俄里 [1] 的地方就到了地主的谷仓。军官们决定走上面的路。

“这个冯·拉别克是什么人？”他们一面走一面闲谈，“就是从前在普列夫纳统率H骑兵师的将领吧？”

“不，那人不叫冯·拉别克，单叫拉别克，没有冯。”

“多好的天气啊！”

大路在第一个谷仓那儿分成两股：一股照直往前去，消失在晦暗的暮色里；另一股往右去，通到主人的房子。军官们往右拐弯，讲话声音开始放低……路的两边排列着红房顶的石砌谷仓，笨重而森严，很像县城里的营房。前面，主人宅子的窗子里灯光明亮。

“好兆头，诸位先生！”有一个军官说，“我们的猎狗跑到大家前头去了。这是说，他闻出我们前头有猎物了！……”

中尉洛贝特科走在众人前面，他生得又高又结实可是没长唇髭（他已经过二十五岁了，可是不知什么缘故他那保养得很好的圆脸上却连一根胡子也没有），善于远远地辨出前面有女人，因此在这个旅里以这种嗅觉出名他扭转身来说：

“对了，这儿一定有女人。我凭本能就觉出来了。”

冯·拉别克本人在正屋门口迎接军官们，他是一位仪表优雅、年纪大约六十岁的老人，穿着便服。他跟客人们握手，说他见到他们很高兴，很幸福，可是诚恳地请求军官先生们看在上帝的分上原谅他不留他们过夜有两个带着孩子一起来的姐妹、几个弟兄、几个邻居来看望他，弄得他一个空房间也没有了。

将军跟每个人握手、道歉、微笑，可是凭他的脸色看得出他绝不像去年那位伯爵那么高兴接待这些客人他之所以邀请这些军官，只是因为他觉得这是一种必要的礼节罢了。军官们自己呢，走上铺着柔软的毡毯的楼梯一面听他讲话，一面觉得他们之所以受到邀请，也只是因为他不好意思不请他们罢了。他们看见听差们匆匆忙忙点亮楼下门道里和楼上前厅里的灯，觉得他们好像随身把不安和不便带进了这个宅子。既然已经有两个带着子女的姐妹、弟兄、邻居大概由于家庭的喜事或者变故而聚会在这所房子里，那么十九个素不相识的军官的光临会受到欢迎吗？

到了楼上，在大厅门口，军官们遇到一位身材高大、匀称的老太太，长脸上生着黑眉毛，很像厄热尼皇后 [2]。她殷勤而庄严地微笑着，说她看到客人很高兴，很幸福，道歉说她丈夫和她这回不能够邀请军官先生们在这里过夜。每逢她从客人面前扭转身去办点什么事，她那美丽、庄严的笑容立刻就消失了。那么，事情很清楚：她这一辈子见过很多军官，现在她对他們不感兴趣，即使她邀他们到家里来，而且表示歉意，那也只是因为她的教养和社会地位要求她这样做罢

了。

军官们走进一个大饭厅，那儿已经有十来个人，男男女女，老老少少，坐在长桌的一边喝茶。在他们的椅子背后可以隐约看见一群男人笼罩在雪茄烟的轻飘的云雾里，他们当中站着一个瘦长的青年，正在谈论什么，他留着红色的络腮胡子，讲英国话，声音响亮，可是咬字不清。这群人的背后有一扇门，从门口望出去可以看见一个明亮的房间，摆着淡蓝色的家具。

“诸位先生，你们人数这么多，简直没法儿跟你们介绍了！”将军大声说，极力说得很快活，“自己介绍吧诸位先生，不要客气！”

军官们有的带着很严肃的，甚至很严厉的脸相，有的现出勉强的笑容，大家都觉得很别扭，就好歹鞠一个躬坐下来喝茶。

其中觉得最别扭的是里亚博维奇上尉。他是一个戴眼镜的军官，身材矮小，背有点伛偻，生着山猫样的络腮胡子。他的同伴们有的做出严肃的神情，有的露出勉强的笑容，他那山猫样的络腮胡子和眼镜却好像在说“我是全旅当中顶腼腆、顶谦卑、顶没光彩的军官！”起初他刚走进饭厅以及后来坐下喝茶的时候，无论如何也不能够把注意力集中在一张脸或者一个东西上。那些脸衣服、盛着白兰地的玻璃长颈酒瓶、杯子里冒出来的热气、有着雕塑装饰的檐板，这一切合成一个总的强大印象在里亚博维奇心里引起不安，使他一心想把脑袋藏起来他像第一回当众表演的朗诵者一样，虽然瞧见他眼前的一切东西，可是对看到的東西却不十分理解，按照生理学家的说法，这种虽然看见然而不理解的情况叫作“意盲”。过了一会儿，里亚博维奇渐渐习惯新环境，眼睛亮了，就开始观察。他既是一个不善于交际的、腼腆的人，那么首先引起他注意的就是他自己最不行的，也就是他那些新相识的特别大胆的人。冯·拉别克，他的妻子，两位上了岁数的太太，一位穿淡紫色连衣裙的小姐，一个留着红色络腮胡子的青年（冯·拉别克的小儿子），仿佛事先排演过似的，很灵敏地夹在军官们当中坐好，立刻热烈地争论起来，弄得客人不得不插嘴。那位穿淡紫色衣服的小姐热烈地证明，做炮兵比做骑兵或者步兵轻松得多，冯·拉别克和上了岁数的太太们的看法则相反。紧跟着，大家七嘴八舌地谈起来。里亚博维奇瞧着淡紫色小姐十分激烈地争辩她所不熟悉的完全不感兴趣的事情，冷眼看出她脸上时而出现在不诚恳的笑容，时而把笑容又收敛起来。

冯·拉别克和他的家人巧妙地把军官们引进争论中来，同时一刻也不放松地盯紧他们的杯子和嘴，注意他们是不是都在喝茶，是不是茶里都放了糖，为什么有人不吃饼干或者不喝白兰地。里亚博维奇看得越久，听得越久，他就越喜欢这个不诚恳的可是受过很好训练的家庭。

喝完茶以后，军官们走进客厅。洛贝特科中尉的本能没有欺骗他，客厅里果然有许多小姐和年轻女人。“猎狗”中尉不久就站在一个穿黑色连衣裙、年纪很轻的金发女郎身旁，神气十足地弯下腰来，仿佛倚着一把肉眼看不见的军刀似的，微微笑着，风流地耸动肩膀。他大概在讲些很有趣味的荒唐话，因为金发女郎带着鄙夷的神情瞧着他那保养得很好的脸，淡漠地问一句：“真的吗？”猎狗倘若乖巧一点，从这不关痛痒的“真的吗”应该可以推断出她未必喜欢这样的猎狗。

钢琴响了，忧郁的华尔兹舞曲从大厅里飘出敞开的窗口，不知什么缘故大家都想起来窗外现在是春天，五月的黄昏，人人都觉出空中有玫瑰、紫丁香、白杨的嫩叶的香气。在音乐的影响下，里亚博维奇喝下的那点白兰地正在起作用。他斜眼看着窗口，微微地笑，开始注意女人们的动作。他觉得玫瑰、白杨、紫丁香的气息好像不是从花园里飘来，而是从女人的脸上和衣服上冒出来的。

冯·拉别克的儿子请一位瘦弱的姑娘跳舞，跟她跳了两圈。洛贝特科在镶木地板上滑过去，飞到淡紫色小姐面前，带着她在大厅里翩翩起舞。跳舞开始了……里亚博维奇站在门旁，夹在不跳舞的人们当中，旁观着他这一辈子从没跳过一回舞，他的胳膊也从没搂过一回上流女人的腰。一个男人当着大家的面搂着一个不认得的姑娘的腰，让那姑娘把手放在自己的肩头，里亚博维奇看了总是很喜欢，可是他无论如何也不能想象自己会成为那样的男人。有些时候他嫉妒同伴们胆大、灵巧，心里很难过。他一想到自己胆小、背有点伛偻，没有光彩，腰细长，络腮胡子像山猫，就深深地痛心。可是年深日久，他也就习惯了，现在他瞧着同伴们跳舞，大声说话，不再嫉妒，光是觉得感伤罢了。

等到卡德里尔舞开始，小冯·拉别克就走到没跳舞的人们跟前，请两位军官去打台球。军官们答应了，跟他一块儿走出客厅。里亚博维奇没事可做，想参加大家的活动，就慢腾腾地跟着他们走去。他们从大厅里出来，走进客厅，然后走过一个有着玻璃顶棚的窄过道，走进一个房间。他们一进去，就有三个带着睡意的听差从沙发上很快地跳起来。小冯·拉别克和军官们穿过一长串房间，末后走进一个不大的房间，那里有一张台球桌子。他们就开始打台球。

里亚博维奇除了打纸牌以外从没玩过别的东西，他站在台球桌旁边，冷淡地瞧着打台球的人。他们呢，解开上衣扣子，手里拿着球杆走来走去，说俏皮话，不断地嚷出一些叫人听不懂的词。打台球的人没注意他，只是偶尔有谁的胳膊肘碰着他，或者一不小心，球杆的一头戳着他，才扭转身来说一声：“对不起！”第一局还没打完，他就厌倦了，开始觉得他待在这儿是多余的，而且碍人家的事了……他想回到大厅里，就走出去了。

在回去的路上，他遇到一桩小小的奇事。他走到半路上，发现自己走错了地方。他清楚地记得在路上应当遇见三个带睡意的听差，可是他穿过五六个房间，那几个带着睡意的人好像钻到地底下去了。他发觉自己走错了，就扭转身退回一小段路，往右转弯，走进了他到台球房间去的时候没见过的一个昏暗的房间。他在那儿站了一会儿，犹豫不决地打开一扇他的眼睛偶然看见的门走进一个漆黑的房间。他看见前面，正对面有一道门缝从那道缝里射进一束明亮的光。门外面传来隐隐约约的忧郁的玛祖卡舞曲的声音。这儿也跟大厅里一样，窗子敞开，有白杨、紫丁香和玫瑰的气味……

里亚博维奇迟疑地站住……这当儿，他出乎意料地听见匆匆的脚步声、连衣裙的沙沙声、喘吁吁的女人低语声：“到底来了！”有两条柔软的、香喷喷的、准是女人的胳膊搂住他的脖子，温暖的脸颊贴到他的脸颊上来，同时发出了亲吻的声音。可是那个亲吻的人立刻轻轻地惊叫了一声，抽身躲开他，而且里亚博维奇觉得她是带着憎恶躲开的。他也差点儿叫起来，就向门边的亮光跑过去……

他回到大厅里，心怦怦地跳，手抖得厉害，他连忙把手藏到背后去。起初他羞得不得了，生怕满大厅的人知道他刚刚被一个女人搂抱过、吻过。他畏畏缩缩，不安地往四下里看，可是等到他相信大厅里的人们跟先前一样平静地跳舞、闲谈，他就完全让一种生平从没经历过的新感觉抓住了。他起了一种古怪的变化……他的脖子刚才给柔软芳香的胳膊搂过，觉得好像抹了一层油似的。他左脸上靠近唇髭、经那个素不相识的人吻过的地方，有一种舒服的、凉酥酥的感觉，仿佛擦了一点薄荷水似的。他越是擦那地方，凉酥酥的感觉就越是厉害。他周身上下，从头到脚充满一种古怪的新感觉，那感觉越来越强烈……他情不自禁地想跳舞、谈话、跑进花园、大声地笑……他完全忘了他的背有点伛偻，他没有光彩，他有山猫样的络腮胡子，而且“貌不惊人”（这是有一回他偶然听到几个女人在谈到他的相貌时所用的形容词）。正巧冯·拉别克的妻子走过他面前，他就对她亲切而欢畅地笑一笑笑得她站住了，探问地瞧着他。

“我非常喜欢您这所房子！……”他说，正了一下眼镜。

将军的妻子微笑着，说这房子原是她父亲的。后来她问起他的父母是否还在世，他在军队里待得是不是很久，为什么他这么瘦……她的问题得到答复后，她便往前走。他跟她谈过话以后，他的笑容比先前越发亲切他觉得他的四周尽是些好人……

进晚餐的时候，里亚博维奇漫不经心地吃完给他端来的所有菜，自管喝酒，什么话也没听进去，极力要弄明白他方才遇到的究竟是怎么回事。这件奇事具有神秘的、浪漫的性质，可是要解释却也不难。一定是有个姑娘或者太太跟别人约定在那个黑房间里相会。她等

了很久，又烦躁又兴奋，竟把里亚博维奇当作她的情人了尤其因为里亚博维奇走过那个黑房间的时候迟迟疑疑地站住，仿佛也在等什么人似的，那么这就更近情理了……里亚博维奇就照这样解释他何以会受到那样的一吻。

“不过她是谁呢？”他瞧了瞧四周女人的脸想道，“她一定年轻，因为老太太是不会去幽会的。而且她是个受过教育的女人，这只要凭她衣服的沙沙声、她的香气、她的声调，就可以揣摩出来……”

他的目光停在淡紫色小姐的身上，他很喜欢她。她有美丽的肩膀和胳膊、聪明的脸、好听的声音。里亚博维奇瞧着她，希望那个不相识的女人就是她，而不是别人……可是她笑起来不怎么真诚，而且皱起她的长鼻子，这就使他觉得她显老了。然后他掉过眼睛去瞧那个穿黑色连衣裙的金发女郎。她年轻些，朴素些，真诚些，两鬓秀气，端起酒杯喝酒的样子很潇洒。现在里亚博维奇希望那个女人是她了。可是不久他又觉得她的脸平平常常，就掉过眼睛去瞧他身旁的那个女人……

“这是很难猜的，”他暗想，沉思着，“如若只要淡紫色小姐的肩膀和胳膊，再配上金发女郎的两鬓和洛贝特科左边坐着的那位姑娘的眼睛，那么……”

他暗自把这些东西搭配起来，就此凑成了吻过他的那个姑娘的模样。他希望她有那样的模样，可是在饭桌上又找不到。

晚餐以后，军官们酒足饭饱，精神抖擞，开始告辞和道谢。冯·拉别克和他的妻子又开始道歉，说是可惜不能留他们过夜。

“诸位先生，跟你们见面很高兴，很高兴！”将军说，这一回倒是诚恳的（大概因为人们在送走客人的时候总比在迎接客人的时候诚恳得多，也和蔼得多），“很高兴！希望你们回来路过的时候再光临！别客气！你们怎样走？你们要走上面的路吗？不，穿过花园走吧，下面那条路要近一点。”

军官们走出去，到了花园里。从充满亮光和喧闹声的地方走出来，花园里显得十分黑暗而宁静。他们沉默地一路走到花园门口。他们都有点醉意，兴致很好，心满意足，可是黑暗和静寂使他们沉思了一会儿。大概他们每个人都有着一种跟里亚博维奇相同的感触：将来是不是有一天他们也会像冯·拉别克一样有一所大房子一个家庭、一个花园，即使本心并不诚恳，也能欢迎人们来，请他们吃得酒醉饭饱，使他们心满意足呢？

他们一走出花园门外，就开始争着讲话，无缘无故地大笑。他们现在顺小路走着，那条小路通到下面河边然后沿着河岸向前伸展，绕过岸上的矮树丛、沟渠、枝条垂在水面上的柳树。河岸和小路都看不

大清，对岸完全沉没在一片漆黑中。黑色的水面上这儿那儿映着星星它们颤抖着，破碎了，只凭这一点才能推断河水流得很急空中没有一丝风。河对岸有些带着睡意的麻鹬在悲凉地鸣叫，在这边岸上一个矮树丛里有一只夜莺一点也不理会这群军官，仍然在放声歌唱。军官们在矮树丛四周站了一会儿，拿手指头碰一碰它，可是夜莺仍旧唱下去。

“这家伙可真了不得！”他们赞许地叫道，“我们站在它旁边，它却一点也不在乎！好一个坏蛋！”

在道路的尽头，小路爬上坡去，在教堂的围墙附近跟大路会合了。军官们爬上坡，累了，就在这儿坐下，点上纸烟。河对面现出一块暗红色的光亮。他们反正没事可做，就花了不少工夫推断那是野火呢，还是窗子里的灯亮，还是别的什么东西……里亚博维奇也瞧那亮光，他觉得那一块光在向他微笑，□眼，仿佛它知道那一吻似的。

里亚博维奇回到驻营地，赶快脱掉衣服，上了床。洛贝特科和美尔兹里亚科夫中尉（一个和气而沉静的人，在他那伙人中被看作很有学问的军官，他一有空就老是看《欧洲通报》，这份杂志他随便到哪儿去都随身带着）跟里亚博维奇住在同一所农民的小木房里。洛贝特科脱了衣服，带着还没玩畅的神情在房间里走来走去，走了很久，随后打发勤务兵去买啤酒。美尔兹里亚科夫上了床，在枕头旁边放一支蜡烛，专心看那份《欧洲通报》。

“她是谁呢？”里亚博维奇瞧着被烟熏黑的天花板暗想。

他的脖子仍旧好像涂了油似的，嘴角旁边也仍旧带点凉意，仿佛擦了薄荷水一样。淡紫色小姐的肩膀和胳膊穿黑衣服的金发女郎的两鬓和诚恳的眼睛、柳腰、衣服胸针，在他的想象中闪动着。他极力注意这些形象，可是它们跳动着，逐渐变得模糊起来，摇曳不定。等到这些影子在每个人一闭上眼睛就会看见的宽阔的黑色背景上完全消失，他就开始听到匆忙的脚步声、衣裾的沙沙声亲吻的响声，一种没来由的、强烈的欢乐就涌上他的心头……他正在尽情享受这种欢乐，却听见勤务兵回来报告，说是没有啤酒。洛贝特科气得要命，又开始走来走去

“嘿，是不是蠢货？”他不断地说，先是在里亚博维奇面前站住，后来又在美尔兹里亚科夫面前站住，“连啤酒都买不着，真是个十足的蠢货，笨蛋！对不对？嘿恐怕是个坏蛋吧？”

“在这一带当然买不到啤酒。”美尔兹里亚科夫说眼睛却没离开《欧洲通报》。

“哦？您是这样看的吗？”洛贝特科坚持自己的意见“主啊，我的上帝，哪怕你把我送到月亮上去，我也会马上给您找着啤酒和女人！”

好，我马上就去找来……要是我找不着，您骂我是混蛋好了！”

他用很久的工夫穿上衣服，蹬上大皮靴，然后默默地抽完烟，走出去了。

“拉别克，格拉别克，拉别克，”他嘴里念着，却在前堂里站住了，“我一个人不高兴去，真该死！您肯出去溜达吗？啊？”

他没听见答话，就走回来，慢腾腾地脱掉衣服，上了床。美尔兹里亚科夫叹口气，收起《欧洲通报》，吹熄蜡烛。

“哼！……”洛贝特科嘟哝着，在黑暗里点上一支烟。

里亚博维奇拉起被子来蒙上头，蜷起身子，极力想把幻想中那些飘浮不定的影子拼凑起来，合成一个完整的人，可是任凭怎么样也拼凑不成。他不久就睡着了，他的最后一个思想是：不知一个什么人，对他温存了一下，使他喜悦，一件不平常的、荒唐的，可是非常美好快乐的事来到了他的生活里。哪怕在睡乡里，这个思想也没离开过他。

等到他醒来，他脖子上涂油的感觉和唇边薄荷的凉意都没有了，可是欢乐的波浪还是跟昨天一样在他的心中起伏。他痴迷地瞧着给初升的阳光镀上一层金的窗框听着街上行人走动的声音。贴近窗子，有人在大声讲话里亚博维奇的连长列别杰兹基刚刚赶到旅里来，由于不习惯低声讲话，正在大声地跟他的司务长讲话。

“还有什么事？”连长嚷道。

“昨天他们换马掌的时候，官长，他们钉伤了‘鸽子的蹄子。医士给涂上黏土和醋。现在他们用缰绳牵着它在边上走。还有，官长，昨天工匠阿尔捷米耶夫喝醉了中尉下命令把他拴在一个后备炮架的前车上。”

司务长还报告说，卡尔波夫忘了带来喇叭上用的新绳和支帐篷用的木桩，还提到各位军官昨天傍晚到冯·拉别克将军家里去做客。话正谈到半中腰，窗口出现了列别杰兹基的生着红头发的脑袋。他眯着近视的眼睛瞧着军官们带着睡意的脸，跟他们打招呼。

“没什么事吧？”他问。

“那匹备了鞍子的辕马戴上新套具，把脖子磨肿了。洛贝特科打着呵欠回答道。

连长叹口气，沉吟一下，大声说：

“我还要到阿列克山德拉·叶甫格拉芙芙娜那儿去一趟。我得去看看她。好，再见吧。到傍晚我会追上你们的。”

过了一刻钟，炮兵旅动身上路了。这个旅沿着大道走，经过地主粮仓的时候，里亚博维奇瞧了瞧右边的房子。所有的窗口都拉下着百叶窗。房子里的人分明都在睡觉。昨天吻过里亚博维奇的那个女人也在睡觉。他极力想象她睡熟的样子。卧室的敞开的窗子，伸进窗口的绿树枝，早晨的新鲜空气，白杨、紫丁香、玫瑰的幽香，一张床，一把椅子，昨天沙沙响、现在放在椅子上的连衣裙，小小的拖鞋，桌上的小表，所有这些，他暗自描摹着，清楚而逼真，可是偏偏那要紧的、关键的东西，她的脸庞和梦中甜蜜的微笑，却从他的幻想里滑出去，就跟水银从手指缝中间漏掉了一样。他骑着马走出半俄里远，回过头来看：黄色的教堂、房子、河、花园，都沉浸在阳光里；那条河很美，两岸绿油油的，水中映着蓝天，河面上这儿那儿闪着银色的阳光。里亚博维奇向梅斯捷奇金村最后看了一眼，心里觉得很难过，好像跟一个很接近、很亲密的东西拆开了似的。

他眼前的路上，只有那些早已熟悉的、没有趣味的画面……左右两旁是未成熟的黑麦和荞麦的田野，有些乌鸦在田野上蹦来蹦去。往前看，只瞧见灰尘和人的后脑勺儿。往后看，也只瞧见灰尘和人脸……打头的是四个举着佩刀步行前进的人，他们是前卫。后面，紧挨着的是一群歌手，歌手后面是骑马的司号员。前卫和歌咏队像送葬行列中擎火炬的人一样，常常忘记保持规定的距离，远远地赶到前头去了……里亚博维奇随着第五连的第一门炮走着。他可以看见在他前面走动的所有四个连在不是军人的人们看来，这个在行进的炮兵旅所形成的那条笨重的长行列好像是个复杂的、叫人不能理解的杂乱无章的东西，谁也不明白为什么有那么多人围着一尊大炮，为什么那尊炮由那么多套着古怪的挽具的马拉着，仿佛那尊炮真是很可怕、很沉重似的。在里亚博维奇看来，这一切却十分清楚，因此一点也引不起他的兴趣。他老早就知道为什么每个连的前头除了军官以外还要有一个身材魁梧的士官骑在马上，为什么他叫作前导。紧跟在士官背后的是拉前套的馬的骑手，随后是走在中间的馬的骑手。里亚博维奇知道他们所骑的馬，在左边的叫鞍馬，在右边的叫副馬，这些都很乏味。在那些骑手后面跟着两匹辕馬。其中一匹馬上坐着一个骑手，背上布满昨天的尘土，右腿上绑着一块粗笨的、样子可笑的小木头。里亚博维奇知道这块木头做什么用，并不觉得可笑。所有的骑手随便地摇动短皮鞭，不时嚷一声。炮本身也不好看。前车上堆了一袋袋的燕麦，盖着帆布。炮身上挂着茶壶、兵士的行囊、口袋，看上去那尊炮像是一头小小的、不伤人的动物，不知什么缘故被人们和馬匹包围着。炮的两旁，有六个兵，都是炮手，背着风走路，挥动着胳膊。在这尊炮后面又是另外的前导、骑手、辕馬，这后面又来了一尊炮，跟前面那尊同样难看，不威严。这第二尊炮过去以后，随后来了第三尊、第四尊，靠近第四尊炮有一个军官，等等。这个旅一共有六个连，每个连有四尊炮。这行列有半俄里长，殿后的是一串货车，货车旁边有一头

极可爱的牲口，驴子玛加尔，那是一个连长从土耳其带来的，它耷拉着耳朵挺长的脑袋，沉思着迈着步子。

里亚博维奇冷淡地瞧瞧前面和后面，瞧瞧人的后脑勺儿和脸。换了别的时候，他大概已经迷迷糊糊，要睡着了，可是现在他却完全沉浸在愉快的新体验到的思绪中了。起初在炮兵旅刚刚启程的时候，他想说服自己：那件亲吻的事，如果有趣味，也只因为那是一个小小的、神秘的奇遇罢了，其实那是没什么意思的，把这件事看得认真，至少也是愚蠢的。可是不久他就顾不得这些道理，想入非非了……他一会儿想着自己在冯·拉别克的客厅里，挨着一个姑娘，长得挺像淡紫色小姐和穿黑衣服的金发女郎；一会儿闭上眼睛，看见自己跟另一个完全不认得的姑娘待在一起，那人的脸相很模糊。他暗自跟她谈话，跟她温存，低下头去凑近她的肩头。他想象战争和离别，然后重逢，跟妻子儿女一块儿吃晚饭……

“煞住车！”每回他们下山，这个命令就响起来。

他也嚷着：“煞住车！”可是又生怕这一声喊搅乱他的幻梦，把他带回现实里来……

他们走过一个地主的庄园，里亚博维奇就隔着篱墙向花园里望。他的眼睛遇到一条很长的林荫路，像尺那么直，铺着黄沙土，夹道是新长出来的小桦树……他带着沉浸在幻想里的人的那份热情暗自想着女人的小小的脚在黄沙土上走着，于是突然间，在他的幻想中清清楚楚地出现了吻过他的那个姑娘的模样，正是昨天吃晚饭时候他描摹的那个样子。这个模样就此留在他的脑子里再也不离开他了。

中午，后面靠近那串货车的地方有人嚷道：

“立正！向左看！军官先生们！”

旅长是一位将军，坐着一辆由一对白马拉着的马车走过来了。他在第二连附近停住，嚷了一些谁也听不懂的话。好几个军官，里亚博维奇也在内，策动马，跑到他面前去。

“啊？怎么样？什么？”将军问，□着他的红眼睛，“有病号吗？”

将军是个瘦小的男子，听到回答，就动着嘴，好像在咀嚼什么。他沉吟一下，对一个军官说：

“你们第三尊炮的炮车辕马的骑手摘掉了护膝，把它挂在炮的前车上了，那混蛋。您得惩罚他。”

他抬起眼睛看看里亚博维奇，接着说：

“我觉得你们那根车带太长了……”

将军又说了几句别的乏味的話，瞧着洛贝特科，微微地笑了。

“今天您看起来很忧愁，洛贝特科中尉，”他说，“您在想念洛普霍娃吧？对不对？诸位先生，他在想念洛普霍娃！”

洛普霍娃是个很胖很高的女人，年纪早已过四十了。将军自己喜欢身材高大的女人，年纪大小倒不论，因此猜想他手下的军官们也有同样的爱好。军官们恭敬地陪着笑脸。将军觉得自己说了句很逗笑很尖刻的话，心里痛快，就扬声大笑，碰了碰他的车夫的后背，行了个军礼马车往前驶走了……

“我现在所梦想的一切，我现在觉得不能实现的、人们少有的一切，其实是很平常的，”里亚博维奇瞧着将军车子后面的滚滚尘土，暗自想着，“这种事平常得很，人人都经历过……比方说，那位将军当初就谈过恋爱，现在结了婚，有了子女。瓦赫捷尔大尉，虽然后脑勺儿很红很丑，没有腰身，可也结了婚，有人爱……萨尔玛诺夫呢，很粗野，简直跟鞑靼人一样，可是他也谈过恋爱最后结了婚……我跟大家一样，我早晚也会经历大家经历过的事……”

他想到自己是个平常的人，他的生活也平平常常，不由得很高兴，而且这给了他勇气。他由着性儿大胆描摹她和他自己的幸福，什么东西也不能束缚他的幻想了……

傍晚炮兵旅到达了驻扎地，军官们在帐篷里安歇里亚博维奇、美尔兹里亚科夫、洛贝特科围着一口箱子坐着吃晚饭。美尔兹里亚科夫不慌不忙地吃着，他一面从容地咀嚼，一面看一本摆在他膝头上的《欧洲通报》洛贝特科讲个没完，不断地往自己的杯子里斟啤酒。里亚博维奇做了一天的梦，脑筋都乱了，只顾喝酒，什么话也没说。喝过三杯酒，他有点醉了，浑身觉着软绵绵的，就起了一种熬不住的欲望，想把他的新感觉讲给他的同事们听。

“在冯·拉别克家里，我遇到一件怪事……”他开口说，极力在自己的声调里加进满不在乎的、讥诮的口吻，“你们知道，我走进了台球房……”

他开始详细地述说那件亲吻的事，过了一会儿就沉默了……一会儿工夫他已经把前后情形都讲完了，这件事只要那么短短的工夫就讲完，他不由得大吃一惊。他本来以为会把这个亲吻的故事一直讲到第二天早晨呢。洛贝特科是个爱说谎的人，因此什么人的话也不相信。他听里亚博维奇讲完，怀疑地瞧着他，冷冷地一笑。美尔兹里亚科夫动了动眉毛，眼睛没离开《欧洲通报》，说：

“上帝才知道这是怎么回事！……这女人一下子就搂住一个男人的脖子，也没叫一声他的名字……她一定是个心理变态的女人。”

“对了，一定是个心理变态的女人……”里亚博维奇同意。

“有一次我也遇见过这一类的事……”洛贝特科说，装出惊骇的眼神，“去年我上科甫诺去……我买了一张二等客车的票……火车上挤得很，没法儿睡觉。我塞给乘务员半个卢布……他就拿着我的行李，领我到一个人车室去……我躺下来，盖上毯子……你们知道，那儿挺黑。忽然我觉得有人碰了碰我的肩膀，朝我的脸上吹气我动一动手，却碰到了不知什么人的胳膊肘。我睁开眼你们猜怎么着，原来是一个女人！眼睛黑黑的，嘴唇红得好似一条新鲜的鲑鱼，鼻孔热情地呼气，胸脯活像一个软靠枕……”

“对不起，”美尔兹里亚科夫平静地插嘴，“关于胸脯的话，我倒能懂，可是既然那儿挺黑，你怎么看得清嘴唇呢？”

洛贝特科极力圆他的谎，嘲笑美尔兹里亚科夫缺乏想象力。这惹得里亚博维奇讨厌。他离开那口箱子，上了床，赌咒再也不向别人谈起这件事了。

露营生活开始了……日子一天天流过去，这一天跟那一天简直差不多。在那些日子，里亚博维奇的感情思想、举动都像是在谈恋爱。每天早晨他的勤务兵给他送水来洗脸，他用冷水冲头的时候，总想起他的生活里有了一件美好而温暖的事。

到傍晚，他的同事们一谈到爱情和女人，他就走近一点听着，脸上现出一种表情，仿佛兵士在听人述说他参加过的一个战役似的。有些天的傍晚，带着几分醉意的尉官们由“猎狗”洛贝特科领头到“城郊”去冶游，每逢里亚博维奇参加这类游乐的时候，他总是很难过，觉得深深的惭愧，暗自求“她”原谅……遇到空闲的当儿，或者失眠的夜晚，他回忆自己的童年、父亲、母亲，总之回想亲人的时候，他一定也会想起梅斯捷奇金村、那头怪马、冯·拉别克、他那长得像厄热尼皇后的妻子、那黑房间、门缝里漏进来的那一线亮光……

八月三十一日，他从露营地回去，然而不是跟整个炮兵旅，而是只跟其中的两个连一块儿走。他一路上梦想着，激动着，好像在回故乡似的。他热烈地盼望着再看见那匹怪马、那个教堂、冯·拉别克那个不诚恳的家庭、那黑房间。常常欺骗情人的那种“内心的声音”，不知什么缘故，向他悄悄说，他一定会看见她……他给种种疑问折磨着：他会怎样跟她见面？他跟她谈什么好呢？她忘了那回的亲吻没有？他想，就算事情真糟到这种地步，他竟不能再见到她，那么光是重走一遍那个黑房间，回想一下，在他也不失为一种乐趣……

将近傍晚，远远的地平线上出现了那熟悉的教堂和白色的谷仓。里亚博维奇的心怦怦地跳起来……他没听见跟他并排骑着马的军官对他说了些什么，他把一切都丢在脑后，眼巴巴地瞧着在远处发亮的那条河，瞧着那所房子的房顶，瞧着鸽子窝，在夕阳的余晖中鸽子正在

那上面飞来飞去。

他们走到教堂那儿，听说设营官指定宿营地的时候他时时刻刻巴望有一个骑马的人会从教堂的围墙后面走出来，请军官们去喝茶，可是……设营官讲完话，军官们下马，溜达到村里去了，那个骑马的人并没有来……

“冯·拉别克马上会从农民那儿听说我们来了，然后派人来请我们。”里亚博维奇想，这时候他走进农舍，不明白为什么一个同事点亮了一支蜡烛，为什么勤务兵忙着烧茶炊……

他心神不定。他躺下去，随后又起来，瞧着窗外看那骑马的人来了没有。可是骑马的人没来。他就又躺下去，可是过了半个钟头他又起来，压不住心里的不安就走到街上，向教堂走去。靠近教堂围墙的广场上又黑又荒凉……在下坡路那儿有三个兵士默默地排成一行站在那儿。他们一看见里亚博维奇，就挺起腰板，行军礼他回礼，开始顺着那条熟悉的小路走下去。

河对面，整个天空一片紫红色：月亮升上来了。有两个农妇大声说话，在菜园里摘白菜叶子。菜园后面有些小木房，颜色发黑……这边岸上的一切跟五月间一样：小路、矮树丛、挂在河面上的垂柳……不过那只勇敢的夜莺的声音却没有了，白杨和嫩草的香气也没有了。

里亚博维奇走到花园，往门里瞧，花园里黑暗而安静……他只看见近边桦树的白树干和一小段林荫路，别的东西全都化成漆黑的一团。里亚博维奇聚精会神地瞧着，听着，可是站了一刻钟工夫，既没听见一点声音，也没看见一点亮光，他就慢慢地往回走……

他走下坡，到了河边。将军的浴棚和挂在小桥栏杆上的浴巾，在他前面现出一片白色……他走到小桥上，站了一会儿，完全不必要地摸了摸浴巾，浴巾又粗又凉。他低下头看水……河水流得很快，在浴棚的木桩旁边发出勉强能听见的潺潺声。靠近左岸的河面上映着红月亮。小小的涟漪滚过月亮的倒影，把它拉长，扯碎，好像要把它带走似的……

“多么愚蠢，多么愚蠢啊！”里亚博维奇瞧着奔流的水，想着，“这是多么不近情理啊！”

现在他什么也不再盼望了，他这才清清楚楚地了解了那件亲吻的事、他的焦躁、他的模糊的希望和失望他想到他没有看见将军的使者，想到他永远也不会见到那个原该吻别人却错吻了他的姑娘，不再觉得奇怪了刚好相反，要是他见到了她，那倒奇怪了……

河水奔流着，谁也不知道它流到哪儿去，为什么流五月间它也像这样流，五月间它从小河流进大河，从大河流进海洋，然后化成蒸

汽，变成雨水，也许如今在里亚博维奇面前流过去的仍旧是原先的那点水吧……这是为什么？为什么呢？

里亚博维奇觉得整个世界，整个生活，都好像是一个不能理解的、没有目的的玩笑……他从水面上移开眼睛，瞧着天空，又想起命运怎样化为一个不相识的女人对他偶然温存了一下，想起他的夏天的迷梦和幻象，他这才觉得他的生活异常空洞，贫乏，没有光彩……

他回到他住的农舍里，没有碰见一个同事。勤务兵报告说，他们都到“冯特利亚勃金将军”家里去了，因为将军派了一个骑马的使者来邀请他们……一刹那间里亚博维奇心里腾起一股欢乐，可是他立刻扑灭它，上了床他存心跟他的命运作对，仿佛要惹它气恼似的，偏不到将军家去。

[1] 一俄里等于1.06千米。（说明：书中脚注除特别标明的之外，均为编者注。）

[2] 厄热尼皇后（1826—1920），拿破仑三世的妻子。

大沃洛嘉和小沃洛嘉

“放开我，我要自己赶车！我要坐到车夫旁边去！”索菲雅·利沃芙娜大声说，“车夫，你等一等，我要跟你一块儿坐在赶车座位上。”

她在雪橇上站着，她的丈夫符拉季米尔·尼基狄奇和她小时候的朋友符拉季米尔·米海雷奇抓住她的胳膊，免得她跌倒。那辆三套马的雪橇跑得飞快。

“我早就说不该给她喝白兰地，”符拉季米尔·尼基狄奇烦恼地小声对他的旅伴说，“你这个人啊，真是的！”

上校凭经验知道，像他的妻子索菲雅·利沃芙娜这样的女人在这种带点醉意的、疯疯癫癫的快乐过去以后，紧跟着照例就是歇斯底里的大笑，接着是痛哭。他担心过一会儿他们回到家里以后，他没法儿睡觉，而不得不忙着张罗冷敷布和药水。

“嘘！”索菲雅·利沃芙娜叫道，“我要赶车。”

她心里真是快活和得意。自从举行婚礼那天起，最近两个月来，总有一个想法煎熬着她，她觉得她嫁给亚吉奇上校是因为贪图富贵，而且像人们常说的那样，因为赌气^[1]；可是今天在城郊那家饭店里，她终于相信自己热烈地爱着他。尽管他已经五十四岁，却身材匀称，头脑机敏，动作灵活，擅长说俏皮话，给茨冈姑娘们伴唱真的，如今老头倒比青年可爱一千倍，仿佛老人和青年掉换了位置似的。尽管上校比她父亲还要大两岁，而她只有二十三岁，然而凭良心说，论精力和朝气，他却比她不知超出多少，那么，年纪大又有什么关系呢？

“啊，我亲爱的！”她暗想，“了不起的人！”

在那家饭店里，她还相信，她那旧日的感情已经连影子也没有了。对她小时候的朋友符拉季米尔·米海雷奇或者简称沃洛嘉，她昨天还爱得发疯，爱得要命，现在却完全淡漠了。今天整个傍晚，他觉得他无精打采，带着睡意，不招人喜欢，一无可取。他在饭店里照例厚着脸皮避免付账，这一回他的这种态度使她暗暗生气，好容易才忍住没对他说：“要是您没钱，就该坐在家里才对。”每次都是由上校一个人付钱。

也许由于她眼前不断地闪过树木、电线杆和雪堆吧，总之，各式各样的思想涌上了她的心头。她想起饭店的账单是一百二十卢布，另

外还付给茨冈人一百卢布。明天，只要她乐意，她可以随便挥霍上千的卢布，可是两个月以前，在她结婚以前，她自己连三个卢布都没有，随便买一点小东西都得向她父亲要钱。生活的变化是多么大呀！

她的思路千头万绪，她想起当初她十岁的时候，她现在的丈夫亚吉奇上校追求过她的姑母，全家人都说他把她害苦了，事实上，她姑母走出房来吃饭的时候确实常常脸上带着泪痕，而且老是坐上马车不知到什么地方去。大家讲起她来总是说：这个可怜的人休想得到安宁了。那时候他很漂亮，大受女人们的垂青。因此全城的人都知道他，大家说他似乎每天都要分头到那些爱慕他的女人的家里去一趟，就跟医生去给病人看病一样。现在呢，尽管他头发白了，脸上起了皱纹，戴了眼镜，可是他那张瘦脸，特别是从侧面看过去，有时候还是显得挺漂亮的。

索菲雅·利沃芙娜的父亲是个军医官，从前跟亚吉奇在同一个部队里共过事。沃洛嘉的父亲也是军医官从前也跟亚吉奇上校和她父亲在同一个部队里共过事沃洛嘉虽然常常闹出很复杂、很烦心的恋爱纠纷，可是学业优良，他在大学毕业的时候，成绩极好，现在选定外国文学作为他的专业，据说正在写论文。他住在他那做军医的父亲的营房里，虽然三十岁了，自己却没有钱索菲雅·利沃芙娜小时候和他同住在一栋房子里，虽然两家各有自己的一套住宅。他常来找她一块儿游玩，一块儿学跳舞，一块儿学说法国话。可是等到他长大，变成一个身材匀称、十分漂亮的青年，她见着他就怕羞了后来暗自发疯似的爱上他，直到最近嫁给亚吉奇为止他也很受女人们的垂青，差不多从十四岁起，他就善于博得她们的欢心，那些为他而对丈夫不忠诚的太太，总是借口沃洛嘉年纪还小而为自己辩白。不久以前有人讲起他，说他做大学生的时候，住在大学附近的公寓房间里每次有人去找他，敲他的房门，就会听见门里面响起他的脚步声，然后是低声的道歉：“对不起，我不是一个人在屋里。”^[2] 亚吉奇很欣赏他，夸奖他前途无量，就像杰尔查文^[3] 对待普希金一样，显然，亚吉奇喜欢他。他们两人往往一连几个钟头沉默地打台球或者玩“辟开”^[4]。亚吉奇如果坐上三套马的马车到什么地方去，总是把沃洛嘉带在身边，沃洛嘉也只把他论文的秘密讲给亚吉奇一个人听。当初上校比较年轻的时候，他们常常处于情敌的地位，可是彼此从来也不争风吃醋。在他们常常同去的社交场所，大家总是管亚吉奇叫作大沃洛嘉，管他的朋友叫作小沃洛嘉。

在雪橇上，除了大沃洛嘉、小沃洛嘉和索菲雅·利沃芙娜以外，还有一个女人，就是玛尔迦莉达·亚历山德罗芙娜，大家称呼她莉达。她是亚吉奇太太的表姐，一个三十岁开外的姑娘，脸色十分苍白，眉毛漆黑，戴着夹鼻眼镜，不停地吸纸烟，哪怕在天气严寒的时候也一样。她的胸前和膝盖上老是有烟灰。她说话带着鼻音，拖长每个字的

字音，性情冷僻，随便喝多少蜜酒和白兰地总也不会醉，时常懒洋洋而又乏味地讲些含意暧昧的掌故。她在家里从早到晚翻看厚本的杂志，弄得杂志上撒满烟灰，或者吃冰冻的苹果。

“索尼雅 [5]，别发疯了，”她用唱歌般的声调说，“真的这简直是愚蠢。”

在临近城门的地方，那三套马的雪橇跑得慢了点房屋和行人不断闪过去。索菲雅·利沃芙娜平静下来偎紧她的丈夫，专心想心事。小沃洛嘉坐在她对面。这时候，除了轻松快活的思想以外，又添上些阴郁的思想她暗想，坐在对面的这个人知道她爱他，他当然相信她是因为赌气嫁给上校的说法。她一次也没有向他表白过爱情，而且不希望他知道，总是隐瞒着她自己的感情可是从他的脸色看得出他十分了解她，这就伤了她的自尊心。不过在她的处境里最使她痛心的是，自从举行婚礼以后，这个小沃洛嘉倒忽然开始对她献起殷勤来，而这是以前从来也没有过的。他往往一连几个钟头默默地陪她坐着，或者谈些闲话，此刻在雪橇里他没有跟她谈话却微微地踩着她的脚，握握她的手。显然，他一心巴望她出嫁。他分明看不起她，她就像那种不规矩的坏女人那样在他心里只能引起某种性质的兴趣。当那种得意的感情和对丈夫的爱情跟屈辱的感情和受伤的自尊心在她心里混在一起的时候，她就不禁生出逞强的心，只想坐到赶车座位上去，嚷一阵，吹一阵口哨……

在他们的马车经过一个女修道院的当儿，院里那口一千普特 [6] 重的大钟敲响了。莉达在胸前画十字。

“我们的奥丽雅在这个修道院里。”索菲雅·利沃芙娜说，也在胸前画十字，身子哆嗦了一下。

“为什么她进了修道院？”上校问道。

“因为赌气，”莉达生气地回答说，显然暗指索菲雅·利沃芙娜和亚吉奇的婚姻，“现在这种因为赌气挺时行。它正向全世界挑战。她原是个爱说爱笑、极爱卖弄风情的女人，只喜欢舞会和舞伴，可是忽然间，她走了！弄得人人都吃了一惊！”

“这不是实情，”小沃洛嘉放下皮大衣的衣领，露出他那张漂亮的脸，说，“这跟赌气不相干，不瞒您说，这完全是由于遭了灾祸。她哥哥德米特利被流放去服苦役，如今下落不明。她母亲伤心而死。”

他又竖起他的衣领。

“奥丽雅做得好，”他声音低沉地接着说，“她处在养女的地位，况且又跟索菲雅·利沃芙娜那样的好人住在一起，这一点也得考虑到才是！”

索菲雅·利沃芙娜从他的声调里听出轻蔑的口气就想说几句话顶撞他，可是她没说出口。她又生出那种逞强的心情。她站起来，带着哭腔叫道：

“我要去做晨祷！车夫，往回走！我要去见见奥丽雅！”

雪橇往回驶去。修道院的钟声低沉，索菲雅·利沃芙娜感到这声音使人联想到奥丽雅和她的生活。别的教堂也在敲钟。等到车夫勒住那三匹马，索菲雅·利沃芙娜就跳下雪橇，独自一个人，也不要人陪伴，很快地往大门走去。

“劳驾，快一点！”她丈夫对她叫道，“时候已经不早了！”

她走进乌黑的大门口，然后顺着一条从大门通到大教堂的林荫路走去，积雪在她脚底下吱吱地响，钟声就在她的上空轰鸣，仿佛使她的全身震颤。她来到教堂门口走下三层台阶，然后穿过一道门廊，两旁都是圣徒的画像弥漫着刺柏和神香的气味。随后又是一道门，有一个穿黑衣服的人给她开门，对她深深地鞠躬……教堂里，晨祷还没开始。有一个修女在圣像壁旁边走动，点燃高烛台上的蜡烛，另一个修女点燃枝形烛台上的蜡烛。这儿那儿，圆柱附近和侧祭坛附近，有些黑色人影站着不动。“大概，他们现在这样站着，一直不离开，要到明天早晨才走吧。”索菲雅·利沃芙娜暗想。她觉得这儿又黑又冷，枯燥乏味，比墓园里还要乏味。她带着烦闷的感觉瞧着那些一动不动、呆若木鸡的人影，忽然她的心收紧了。不知怎的，她认出一个身量不高、肩膀窄小、头戴黑色三角头巾的修女就是奥丽雅，其实奥丽雅进修道院的时候长得挺胖，身量也似乎高一些。索菲雅·利沃芙娜不知什么缘故，心里十分激动，犹豫不决地走到那个见习修女跟前，从她肩膀上望过去，看清了她的脸，果然她就是奥丽雅。

“奥丽雅！”她说，举起两只手轻轻一拍，兴奋得说不出话来，“奥丽雅！”

那个修女立刻认出她来，惊讶地扬起眉毛。她那张刚洗过的、干净而苍白的脸高兴得放光，就连她那三角头巾下露出的白色包头布也似乎高兴得放光了。

“瞧，主赐的奇迹。”她说，也举起她那两只干瘦的白手拍了一下。

索菲雅·利沃芙娜紧紧地抱住她，吻她，同时又担心别冒出酒气来。

“刚才我们路过这儿，想起了你。”她说，喘不过气来好像刚才很快地跑过一段路似的，“你的脸色多么苍白啊上帝！我……我见着你高兴极了。哦，怎么样？怎么样？你觉得寂寞吗？”

索菲雅·利沃芙娜往四下里看一眼别的修女们，接着低声说：

“我们那儿发生了好多变化。……你知道，我嫁给亚吉奇，符拉季米尔·尼基狄奇了。你一定记得他。……我跟他在一块儿，很幸福。”

“好，感谢上帝。你父亲身体好吗？”

“好。他常想起你。你，奥丽雅，到了假日务必来看我们。听见了吗？”

“我会去的，”奥丽雅说，微微一笑，“我明天就去。”

索菲雅·利沃芙娜自己也不知道为什么，哭起来了她不出声地哭了一会儿，然后擦干眼泪说：

“莉达没有见到你，会觉得十分惋惜。她跟我们一块儿出来的。沃洛嘉也在。他们就在大门口。要是你能跟他们见面，他们会多么高兴啊！我们去找他们吧，反正祈祷还没开始。”

“那我们就去吧。”奥丽雅同意说。

她在胸前画了三次十字，然后跟索菲雅·利沃芙娜一块儿往门口走去。

“那么，索涅琪卡，你说你挺幸福？”她走出大门的时候问道。

“很幸福。”

“好，感谢上帝。”

大沃洛嘉和小沃洛嘉看见这个修女走出来，就跳下雪橇，恭恭敬敬向她问好。他们看见她那苍白的脸和黑色的修女服显然都感动了。而且，她还记得他们，出来向他们问候，两人心里暗暗高兴。索菲雅·利沃芙娜怕她冻着，就拿过一条车毯披在她身上，同时用她皮大衣的一块前襟把她裹住。方才的眼泪使她的心头轻松了一些，灵魂变得纯净了。她暗自欣喜，这个热闹的、不安宁的、实际上不纯洁的夜晚竟然出人意料，这样纯洁而温柔地结束了。为了要奥丽雅在她身边多留一会儿，她提议说：

“让她坐上雪橇兜一阵吧！奥丽雅，你坐上去，我们一会儿就回来。”

两个男人预料修女会拒绝，圣徒是不坐三套马的雪橇兜风的。可是使他们吃惊的是，她居然同意，还坐上了雪橇。这辆三套马的雪橇往城门那边跑去，大家都默不作声，只是极力让她坐得舒服点，暖和点，每个人都暗想她从前是什么样，现在又是什么样。现在她的脸缺乏热情，很少表情，冷淡而苍白，而且透明，好像她的血管里流

着的是水而不是血。不过两三年前，她却长得丰满，脸颊绯红，常常谈论那些追求她的男人，为一丁点儿小事而扬声大笑。

在城门附近，雪橇掉转头往回跑，过了大约十分钟在修道院门前停住，奥丽雅走下雪橇。钟楼上，钟声响得更急了。

“求主保佑你们。”奥丽雅说，照修女那样深深一鞠躬

“那么你一定要来，奥丽雅。”

“我会去的，会去的。”

她很快地走了，不久就消失在乌黑的大门里。这以后雪橇往回跑，不知什么缘故，大家心里都感到十分愁闷人人都沉默不语。索菲雅·利沃芙娜觉得浑身发软，心情沮丧。她觉得刚才逼着修女坐上雪橇，夹在一伙喝过酒的人当中，乘着三套马的雪橇兜风，未免荒唐、鲁莽而且几乎可以说是不敬。她的酒意过去了，欺骗自己的愿望也就随之而消失，她已经清楚地感到她不爱她的丈夫，而且也不可能爱他，这件事简直是胡闹、愚蠢。她嫁给他是由于贪图富贵，因为他，按她中学里的女同学的说法，“阔绰得不得了”；又由于她生怕自己像莉达似的做老处女；还由于她厌烦她那做军医的父亲，而且想气气小沃洛嘉。要是她出嫁前能够预料到生活会这样沉重、可怕、讨厌，那么，就是拿全世界的财富都送给她，她也不会同意结婚。然而现在已经无法挽回。只好听天由命了。

他们回到家里。索菲雅·利沃芙娜在暖和而柔软的床上躺下，盖好被子，于是想起那道幽暗的门廊、那种神香的气味、那些圆柱旁边的人影。她想到在她睡着以后，那些人将会始终站着不动，就不由得害怕。晨祷的时间很长，然后是念经，然后是弥撒，祈祷……

“可是要知道，上帝是有的，一定是有的，而我总会死的，那就是说，我早晚得考虑灵魂，考虑永恒的生活，像奥丽雅一样。奥丽雅现在得救了，她给自己解决了所有的问题。……可是万一没有上帝呢？那她的一生就会白白糟蹋了。可是怎么会是白白糟蹋呢？为什么就是白白糟蹋呢？”

过了一会儿又有些思想萦回在她的脑际：

“上帝是有的，死亡一定会来临，应当想到灵魂才对。如果奥丽雅此刻知道她马上会死掉，她也不会害怕她准备好了。主要的是她已经为自己解决了人生的问题上帝是有的……是啊……可是除了进修道院以外，难道就没有别的出路了？要知道，进修道院无非是放弃生活毁掉生活罢了……”

索菲雅·利沃芙娜有点害怕。她把脑袋埋在枕头底下。

“不应当想这些，”她小声说，“不应当。”

亚吉奇在隔壁房间里的地毯上走来走去，他的马刺轻轻地响着，他在想心事。索菲雅·利沃芙娜猛地想到这个人只在一点上使她感到亲切和可爱：他的名字也叫符拉季米尔。她从床上坐起来，柔声叫道：

“沃洛嘉！”

“什么事？”她丈夫应声说。

“没什么。”

她又躺下去。钟声响起来，也许就是修道院里的钟声吧。她又不由得想起那道门廊和那些乌黑的人影。那些关于上帝和不可避免的死亡的想法在她头脑里盘旋她就用被子蒙住头，免得听见钟声。她暗想，在衰老和不可避免的死亡来临以前，还有很长很长一段生活要过，她得每天忍受这个她所不爱的、此刻走进寝室里来睡觉的男子的亲近，她得扑灭她心里对另一个年轻迷人而且在她看来不平凡的男子的无望的爱情。她看一眼丈夫，想对他道一声晚安，可是没有说出口，却忽然哭起来。她恼恨自己。

“得，音乐开始了！”亚吉奇说，把“乐”字说得很重。

她哭了很久，一直到早晨九点多钟才平静下来。她停了哭，全身不再发抖，可是头痛欲裂。亚吉奇匆匆地赶着去做晚弥撒，在隔壁房间里抱怨帮他穿衣服的勤务兵。他到卧室里来取东西，马刺发出轻微的响声，后来又进来一趟，这一回已经戴上带穗的肩章和勋章了。他两条腿由于害风湿病而有点瘸。不知什么缘故，索菲雅·利沃芙娜觉得他的模样和步法像一头猛兽。

她听见亚吉奇在打电话。

“费心，请您接瓦西里耶夫营房！”他说。过了一会儿他又说：“瓦西里耶夫营房吗？劳驾，请萨里莫维奇医生接电话……”又过了一会儿：“是哪一位啊？是你吗，沃洛嘉？很高兴。亲爱的，请你父亲马上到我们家里来一趟，因为我的妻子昨天回来以后，觉得很不舒服。你是说他不在家？哦……谢谢。太好啦……非常感谢……谢谢 [7]。”

亚吉奇第三次走进寝室来，弯下腰凑近他妻子，在她胸前画个十字，伸出手去让她吻（凡是爱他的女人都吻他的手，他已经养成习惯了），说他吃午饭的时候回来他说完就走了。

十一点多钟，使女通报说，符拉季米尔·米海雷奇来了。索菲雅·利沃芙娜又疲乏又头痛，身子摇摇晃晃很快地穿上她那件用毛皮镶边、又新又漂亮的淡紫色家常便服，赶紧把头发好歹梳理一下。她觉得她的灵魂里生出一种无法形容的温柔感情，高兴得周身发抖，生怕

他会走掉。她只巴望看他一眼。

小沃洛嘉这次来访，装束整齐，穿着燕尾服，打着白领结。索菲雅·利沃芙娜走进客厅里，他吻她的手为她身体不爽而真诚地表示难过。后来他们坐下来，他就称赞她那件便服。

“昨天跟奥丽雅见过面以后，我心里很乱，”她说，“起初我感到害怕，而现在却羡慕她了。她好比牢不可破的山岩，谁都休想搬得动它。可是，沃洛嘉，难道她就没有别的出路了？难道活生生地埋葬自己才算是解决了人生问题？要知道，那是死而不是生啊。”

一提起奥丽雅，小沃洛嘉的脸上就现出感动的神情。

“您，沃洛嘉，是个聪明人，”索菲雅·利沃芙娜说，“请您指点我，好让我也能像她那样行事。当然，我不是个信徒，不会进修道院，不过我还是可以做些性质相似的事。我生活得不轻松啊。”她沉默一阵以后，接着说，“您指点我吧。……告诉我一种可以使我信服的办法。您哪怕只说一句话也好。”

“一句话？好吧：砰的一声响！”

“沃洛嘉，为什么您看不起我？”她痛心地问道，“您跟我讲起话来，原谅我这样说，总是用一种纨绔子弟的特别口气，不像是给朋友，对正派的女人讲话。您很有成就，您喜欢科学，可是为什么您从来也不对我谈科学呢？为什么？我不配吗？”

小沃洛嘉烦恼地皱起眉头，说：

“为什么您忽然需要起科学来了？也许您还需要宪法吧？或者需要鲑鱼肉烧辣根？”

“哦，好吧，我是个一无可取、渺小庸俗、品行不端、浅薄愚蠢的女人。……我干过许许多多错事，我心理变态，道德败坏，我活该受到轻视。可是话得说回来，您，沃洛嘉年纪比我大十岁，我的丈夫比我大三十岁。我是在你们眼前长大的，要是你们乐意，你们就可以随意把我培养成任什么样的人，哪怕培养成天使也未尝办不到。可是你们……”她的嗓音颤抖了，“这么可怕地对待我。亚吉奇年纪老了却跟我结婚，您呢……”

“哎，得了，得了，”沃洛嘉说，坐近一点，吻她的双手，“让叔本华去谈哲学，去证明他要证明的事吧，我们呢，还是来吻这两只小手的好。”

“您看不起我，但愿您能知道我为这种态度多么难过才好！”她迟疑地说，事先就知道他不会相信她的话。“但愿您知道我多么希望变个样子，开始过一种新的生活！我一想到这里就十分兴奋，”她说，

果然兴奋得流下泪来“我想做一个诚实纯洁的好人，不作假，有生活目标。”

“行了，行了，行了，劳驾，别装腔作势了！我不喜欢这样！”沃洛嘉说，脸上现出不痛快的神情，“说真的这简直像是演戏了。我们还是做普通人的好。”

她怕他生气走掉，就赶紧辩白，而且做出勉强的笑容来向他讨好，又讲起奥丽雅，讲到她一心想解决她的人生问题，开始做一个堂堂正正的人。

“砰的……一声……响……”他低声唱起来，“砰的……一声……响……”

猛然间，他搂住她的腰。她自己也不知道自己在做什么，把两只手放在他的肩膀上，一时间痴迷地，仿佛在雾里似的，瞧着他那张聪明而讥诮的脸、额头、眼睛、漂亮的胡子……

“你自己早就知道我爱你，”她对他承认道，痛苦地红了脸，甚至感到她的嘴唇由于羞耻而抽搐起来，“我爱你。可是你为什么折磨我呢？”

她闭上眼睛，热烈地吻他的嘴唇，吻了大约有一分钟之久。虽然她知道这不正派，连他都会指责她，而且可能有使女走进来，不过她无论如何也没法儿结束这一吻。……

“啊，你在怎样折磨我呀！”她又说了一遍。

过了半个钟头，他得到他所需要的一切以后，在饭厅里坐下来吃东西。她跪在他面前，贪婪地瞧着他的脸。他就对她说，她活像一条小狗，等着人家丢给它一小块火腿吃。后来他叫她坐在他的膝头上，拿她当小娃娃似的摇来摇去，嘴里唱着：

“砰的……一声……响！”

临到他准备告辞，她就用热烈的口气问他：

“什么时候？今天吗？在什么地方？”

她伸出两只手凑到他的嘴边，好像要用手去抓住他的答话似的。

“今天恐怕不方便了，”他沉吟一下说，“明天也许行。”

他们就分手了。午饭前，索菲雅·利沃芙娜坐上雪橇到修道院里去找奥丽雅，可是到了那边，人家告诉她说奥丽雅外出为死人念赞美诗去了。她从修道院里出来又坐上雪橇去找她父亲，也没在他家里碰到他，然后她就换一辆雪橇，毫无目的地串大街，走小巷，照这样坐车一直游逛到傍晚。不知什么缘故，她老是想起她那脸上带着泪痕、坐

立不安的姑母。

到晚上，他们又坐上三套马的雪橇，到城郊饭店里去听茨冈人唱歌。当他们再次路过修道院的时候，索菲雅·利沃芙娜想起奥丽雅，不由得心惊肉跳，因为她思忖对她这个圈子里的姑娘和女人来说，除了坐着三套马的车子不停地逛荡，说谎，或者索性进修道院去扑灭生机以外，就没有别的出路了……

第二天索菲雅·利沃芙娜去赴幽会，然后又孤身一人坐在街头的雪橇上跑遍全城，心里想着她的姑母。

过了一个星期，小沃洛嘉把她丢开了。这以后生活又照原样进行，仍旧那么没趣味，无聊，有时候甚至痛苦。上校和小沃洛嘉打了很久的台球和玩“辟开”，莉达懒洋洋地、乏味地讲那些掌故，索菲雅·利沃芙娜老是坐着街头的雪橇游逛，或者要求她丈夫带她坐着三套马的雪橇去兜风。

她几乎每天都到修道院去，惹得奥丽雅厌烦了。她对奥丽雅诉说自己难以忍受的痛苦，哭哭啼啼，同时又感到她一走进修道院，就随身带进一种不洁、可怜、陈腐的东西。奥丽雅呢，老是用背书的腔调不动感情地对她说：这些都没关系，一切都会过去，上帝会宽恕她的。

[1] 原文为法语。

[2] 原文为法语。

[3] 杰尔查文（1743—1816），俄罗斯诗人。1815年1月8日，年轻的普希金在皇村学校参加考试时，当众朗诵他的诗篇，受到杰尔查文的赞赏。

[4] 一种纸牌游戏。

[5] 索尼雅和下文的索涅琪卡均为索菲雅的爱称。

[6] 俄国重量单位。一普特等于16.38千克。

[7] 原文为法语。

醋栗

从大清早起，整个天空就已经布满了雨云。那天没风不热，可是闷。每逢晦暗的阴天，乌云挂在田野的上空久久不散，看样子会下雨而又不下的时候，往往就会有这样的天气。兽医伊万·伊万内奇和中学教师布尔金已经走累了，依他们看来田野好像没有尽头似的。前面远处隐约可以看见米罗诺西茨戈耶村的风车，右边有一排高岗，伸展出去，越过村子，消失在远方。他们俩都知道那是河岸，那儿有草场、绿油油的柳树、庄园，要是站在一个高岗的顶上望出去，就可以看见同样辽阔的田野和电报线，远处的一列火车，像是一条毛毛虫在爬，遇上晴朗的天气，从那儿甚至可以看得见城市。如今，在没风的天气，整个大自然显得那么温和而沉静。伊万·伊万内奇和布尔金对这片田野生出满腔热爱，两人都心想：这个地方多么辽阔、多么美丽啊。

“上一次我们在村长普罗科菲的堆房里，”布尔金说，“您打算讲一个故事来着。”

“对了，当时我原想讲一讲我弟弟的事。”

伊万·伊万内奇深深地叹一口气，点上烟斗，预备开口讲故事，可是正巧这时候下雨了。过了大约五分钟，雨下大了，空中乌云密布，很难预测这场雨什么时候才会停。伊万·伊万内奇和布尔金站住，考虑起来。他们的狗已经淋湿，站在那儿，用后腿夹着尾巴，深情地瞧着他们。

“我们得找个地方避一避雨才好，”布尔金说，“那就到阿廖欣家去吧。离这儿挺近。”

“那我们就去吧。”

他们就往斜下里拐过去，穿过已经收割过的田地，时而照直走，时而往右拐，直到走上一条大道为止。不久就出现了杨树，园子，然后是谷仓的红房顶；有一条河，河水闪闪发光，顿时眼界豁然开朗，前面是一大片水，有一个磨坊和一个白色的浴棚。这就是阿廖欣所住的索菲诺村。

磨坊在工作，声音盖过了雨声，水坝在颤抖。有几匹淋湿的马垂着头，站在大车旁边。人们披着麻袋走来走去。这儿潮湿、泥泞、憋闷，看上去河水冰凉，凶险伊万·伊万内奇和布尔金已经觉得周身潮湿、不清爽不舒服，脚沾着烂泥而变得挺重。他们穿过水坝，爬上坡

往地主的谷仓走去，一路上都没讲话，好像在互相生气似的。

有一个谷仓里筛谷机轰轰地响。仓门开着，滚滚的灰尘冒出来。阿廖欣本人就在门口站着，这是一个四十岁光景的男子，又高又胖，头发很长，与其说像地主不如说像教授或者画家。他穿一件很久没有洗过的白衬衫，拦腰系一根绳子，算是腰带，下身没穿外裤，只穿了一条长衬裤，靴子上也沾满了泥浆和麦秸。他的眼睛和鼻子扑满灰尘，变得乌黑。他认出了伊万·伊万内奇和布尔金，显然很高兴。

“请到屋里去吧，两位先生，”他含笑说道，“我马上就来，用不了一分钟。”

这是一所两层楼的大房子。阿廖欣住在楼下两个带拱顶的房间里，窗子很小，从前原是管家们居住的。屋里陈设简单，有黑面包、便宜的白酒和马具的气味。楼上的正房他难得去，只有客人来了他才去一趟。伊万·伊万内奇和布尔金在房子里遇到一个使女，是个年轻女人，长得那么美，他俩不由得同时站住，互相瞧了一眼。

“你们再也想不出我看见你们有多么高兴，两位先生，”阿廖欣说，跟着他们一块儿走进前厅，“这可是万万没想到！佩拉格娅，”他对那使女说，“给客人找几件衣服来换一换吧。顺便，我也要换一换。只是我先得去洗个澡，因为我大概打春天起就没洗过澡了。两位先生，你们愿意到浴棚里去吗？也好让他们趁这工夫把这儿收拾一下。”

美丽的佩拉格娅那么殷勤，看上去又那么温柔，她给他们送来了毛巾和肥皂，阿廖欣就陪着客人到浴棚里去了。

“是啊，我已经很久没有洗澡了，”他一面脱衣服一面说，“你们看，我的浴棚挺好，这还是我父亲盖起来的，可是不知怎的，我总是没工夫洗澡。”

他在台阶上坐下，给他的长头发和脖子擦满肥皂，他四周的水就变成棕色了。

“是啊，我看也是……”伊万·伊万内奇瞧着他的头，意味深长地说。

“我已经很久没洗过澡了……”阿廖欣难为情地重说一遍，又用肥皂洗起来，他四周的水就变成深蓝色，跟墨水一样了。

伊万·伊万内奇走到外面去，扑通一声跳进水里冒着雨抡开了胳膊游泳。他把身旁的水搅起波浪，睡莲就在水波上摇晃。他游到河中央水深处，扎一个猛子过一分钟又在另一个地方钻出来，再往远处游去，老是扎猛子，极力想够到河底。“哎呀，我的上帝啊！……他反复说着，游得痛快极了。“哎呀，我的上帝啊！……他游到磨坊那

儿，跟几个农民谈了一阵，再游回来，到了河中央就平躺在水面上，让他的脸淋着雨。布尔金和阿廖欣已经穿好衣服，准备走了，可是他还在游泳，扎猛子。

“哎呀，我的上帝啊！……”他说，“哎呀，求主怜恤我！……”

“您也游得够了！”布尔金对他喊道。

他们回到房子里。等到楼上的大客厅里点上灯，布尔金和伊万·伊万内奇都穿上了丝绸长袍和暖和的便鞋在圈椅上坐下。阿廖欣本人也洗好脸，梳好头，穿好新上衣，在客厅里走来走去，显然因为换了干衣服、轻便的鞋子，身上温暖洁净而感到满足。一直等到俊俏的佩拉格娅不出声地在地毯上走着，温柔地微笑，用盘子端来加了果酱的茶，一直到了这时候，伊万·伊万内奇才开口讲他的故事，而且仿佛不光是布尔金和阿廖欣在听，就连藏在金边镜框里、严厉而沉静地瞧着他们的那些老老少少的太太以及军官也在听似的。

“我们一共弟兄两个，”他开口了，“我伊万·伊万内奇和弟弟尼古拉·伊万内奇，他比我小两岁。我学技术做了兽医。尼古拉从十九岁起就已经在税务局里工作了。家父奇姆沙·吉马莱斯基本来是个世袭兵^[1]，不过后来当上了军官，给我们留下世袭的贵族身份和一份小小的田产。他死后，那份小田产抵了债，可是，不管怎样，我们的童年是在乡间自由自在地度过的。我们完全跟农民的孩子一样，一天到晚在田野上，在树林里度过，看守马匹，剥树皮，钓鱼，等等。……你们要知道，谁一生当中哪怕只钓到过一次鲈鱼，或者在秋天只见过一次候鸟南飞，看它们怎样在晴朗凉爽的日子里成群飞过村庄，那他就再也不想做城里人了，他一直到死都会向往那种自由的生活。我弟弟在税务局里老是惦记乡下。一年年过去了，他一直坐在他那老位子上，老是抄写那些文件老是想着一件事：怎样才能回到乡下去。他的这种苦恼渐渐成为明确的渴望，化成梦想，只求找个靠河或者近湖的地方给自己买下一个小小的庄园才好。”

“他是个温和善良的人，我喜欢他，可是这种把自己关在自家小庄园里过一辈子的愿望，我却素来不同情人们通常说：一个人只需要三俄尺的土地^[2]。可是要知道需要三俄尺土地的是死尸，而不是活人。现在有人说要是我们的知识分子向往土地，盼望有个庄园，那是好事。可是要知道，这些庄园跟三俄尺土地差不多。离开城市，离开斗争，离开生活的喧嚣，隐居起来，躲在自己的庄园里，这算不得生活，这是自私自利，偷懒，这也算是一种修道主义，可又是不见成绩的修道主义。人所需要的不是三俄尺土地，也不是一个庄园，而是整个地球，整个大自然，在那广阔的天地中人才能够尽情发挥他自由精神的所有品质和特点。

“我的弟弟尼古拉坐在他的办公室里，梦想将来怎样喝他自己家里的白菜汤，那种令人馋涎欲滴的香气弥漫在整个院子里。怎样在绿草地上吃饭，怎样在太阳底下睡觉，一连好几个钟头坐在大门外的凳子上眺望田野和树林。农艺书和日历上一切有关农艺方面的意见给了他乐趣，成了他心爱的精神食粮。他还喜欢看报，可是他光看报纸上的一种广告，说某地有若干俄亩 [3] 田地，连同草场、庄园、小溪、花园、磨坊和活水的池塘等一并出售。他脑子里就暗暗描出花园的幽径、花卉、水果、棕鸟巢、池塘里的鲫鱼，总之，你们知道，诸如此类的东西。这些想象的图画因他看到的广告不同而有所不同，可是不知什么缘故，其中每一个画面都一定有醋栗。他不能想象一个庄园，一个饶有诗意的安乐窝里会没有醋栗。

“乡村生活自有它舒服的地方，’他常说，‘人可以在露台上坐着，喝喝茶，自己养的小鸭子在池塘里泅水，空中弥漫着好闻的气味，而且……而且醋栗成熟了。’

“他常描画他田庄的草图，而每一回他的草图上都离不了这几样东西：（一）主人的正房，（二）仆人的下房，（三）菜园，（四）醋栗。他生活节俭，省吃省喝，上帝才知道他穿的是什么衣服，活像个叫花子；他不断地攒钱，存在银行里。他成了财迷。我一瞧见他就痛心，常给他点钱遇到过节也总要寄点钱给他，可是他连这点钱也收藏起来。一个人要是打定了主意，那你就拿他没办法了。

“若干年过去了，他调到另一个省里去了。他年纪已经过了四十岁，却仍旧看报上的广告，存钱。后来我听说他结婚了。他仍旧存心要买一个有醋栗的庄园，娶一个年老而难看的寡妇，对她一点感情也谈不上，只是因为她有几个钱罢了。跟她结婚以后，他生活仍旧吝啬老是弄得她吃不饱，同时，把她的钱存在银行里，却写上他自己的名字。早先她嫁给一个邮政局长，跟他一块儿过活的时候，吃惯馅饼，喝惯果子露酒，可是跟第二个丈夫一块儿过日子，却连黑面包也吃不饱。过着这样的生活，她开始憔悴，不出三年就把灵魂交给上帝了 [4] 当然，我的弟弟根本也没想过她的死要由他负责。金钱跟白酒一样，会把人变成怪物。从前我们城里有个垂危的商人。他临死叫人给他端来一碟蜂蜜，把他所有的钱钞和彩票就着蜜一股脑儿吃到肚子里，叫谁也得不着有一回我正在一个火车站检查畜群，正巧有个马贩子失足摔在火车头底下，压断了一条腿。我们把他抬到急诊室里，血哗哗地流，样子真是可怕，可是他老是求大家找回他的腿，老是放心不下：原来那条压断的腿所穿的靴子里有二十卢布，他生怕那点钱丢了。”

“您岔到别的事情上去了。”布尔金说。

“我的弟媳死后，”伊万·伊万内奇沉吟了半分钟，接着说，“我弟

弟就开始给他自己物色一份田产。当然，尽管物色了五年，到头来仍旧会出错，买下来的东西跟所想望的迥然不同。我弟弟尼古拉托中人买了一个抵押过的庄园，有一百一十二俄亩，有主人的正房，有仆人的下房，有花园，可是单单没有果树园，没有醋栗，没有池塘和小鸭子。河倒是有，可是河水的颜色跟咖啡一样，因为庄园的一边是造砖厂，另一边是烧兽骨的工场 [5] 。”

“可是我的尼古拉·伊万内奇倒也并不十分难过，他订购二十株醋栗树，栽好，照地主的排场过起来了。

“去年我去探望他。我心想我要去看看那儿的情况怎么样。我弟弟在来信上称它为‘楚木巴罗克洛夫菜园，又称希马莱斯科耶’。我是在下午到达那个‘又称希马莱斯科耶’的。天很热。到处都是沟渠、围墙、篱笆、栽成一行行的杉树，弄得人不知道怎样才能走到院子里去，应该把马拴在哪儿。我往正房走去，迎面遇见一条红毛的肥狗，活像一头猪。它本想叫一声，可又懒得叫。厨娘从厨房里走出来，是一个光脚的胖女人，看样子也像一头猪。她说主人吃过饭后正在休息。我走进去看我弟弟他在床上坐着，膝上盖着一条被子。他老了，胖了，皮肉发松，他的脸颊、鼻子、嘴唇，全都往前拱出去，眼看就要跟猪那样呼噜呼噜叫着钻进被子里去了。

“我们互相拥抱，流下了眼泪，一半因为高兴，一半也因为忧郁地想到，从前我们都年轻，现在两人却白发苍苍，快要入土了。他穿好衣服，领我出去看他的田庄。

“‘哦，您在这儿过得怎么样？’我问。

“‘哦，还不坏，感谢上帝，我过得挺好。’

“他不再是往日那个畏畏缩缩的、可怜的小职员，而是真正的地主老爷了。他已经在这儿住熟，习惯，觉得很有味道了。他吃得很多，常到澡棚去洗澡，长得胖起来已经跟村社和两个工厂打过官司，遇上农民不称呼他‘老爷’，就老大地不高兴。他还带着老爷气派郑重其事地关心他的灵魂的得救，就做起好事来，然而并不是简简单单地做，却是摆足了架子做的。然而那是怎样的好事啊！他用苏打和蓖麻子油给农民治各种病，到了他的命名日就在村子中央做一回谢恩祈祷，然后摆出半桶白酒来请农民喝，自以为事情就该这么办。啊，那可怖的半桶白酒！今天，这位胖地主拉着农民们到地方行政长官那儿去控告他们放出牲畜来践踏他的庄稼，明天遇上隆重的节日，却请那些农民喝半桶白酒。他们喝酒，嚷着：‘乌拉！’喝醉了的人就给他叩头。生活只要变得好一点，吃得饱，喝得足，闲着不做事，就会在俄罗斯人身上培养出顶骄傲的自大。尼古拉·伊万内奇当初在税务局里自己甚至不敢有自己的见解，现在说起话来却没有一句不是真理，而且

总是用大臣的口气：‘教育是必不可少的，然而对老百姓来说，还未免言之过早。’总的来说体罚是有害的，可是遇到某些情形，这却是有益的，不可缺少的。’

“‘我了解老百姓，我会善于对付他们，’他说，‘老百姓都喜欢我。我只要动一动手指头，老百姓就会把我要办的事统统给我办好。’

“请注意，这些话都是带着聪明而善良的笑容说出来的。他把‘我们这些贵族’我以贵族的身份看来’反反复复说了二十遍。他分明已经不记得我们的祖父是个庄稼汉、父亲是个兵了。就连我们的姓，奇姆沙·希马莱斯基，实际上十分古怪，可他现在也觉着响亮、高贵十分中意了。

“可是问题不在他，而在我自己了。我要跟你们讲一讲我在他那庄园上盘桓了短短几个钟头，我自己起了什么变化。傍晚，我们正在喝茶，厨娘端来满满一盘醋栗放在桌子上。这不是买来的，而是他自己家里种的，自从那些灌木栽下以后，这还是头一回收果子。尼古拉·伊万内奇笑起来，对那些醋栗默默地瞧了一会儿，眼泪汪汪，激动得说不出话来。然后他拿起一颗果子送进嘴里瞧着我，现出小孩子终于得到心爱的玩具那种得意的神情，说：

“‘多么好吃啊！’

“他贪婪地吃着，不住地重复道：

“‘嘿，多么好吃啊！你尝一尝吧！’

“那些醋栗又硬又酸，可是正如普希金所说：‘我们喜爱使人高兴的谎话，胜过喜爱许许多多的真理。’^[6] 我看见了一个幸福的人，他心心念念的梦想显然已经实现他的生活目标已经达到，他所想望的东西已经到手，他对他的命运和他自己都满意了。不知什么缘故，往常我一想到人的幸福，就不免带一点哀伤的感觉，这一回亲眼看到幸福的人，我竟生出一种跟绝望相近的沉重感。夜里我心头特别沉重。他们在我弟弟卧室的隔壁房间里为我搭好一张床，我听见他没有睡着，老是爬下床来，走到那盘醋栗跟前，拿果子吃。我心想：实际上有多少满足而幸福的人啊！这是一种多么令人压抑的力量！你们来看一看这种生活吧：强者骄横而懒惰，弱者无知而且跟牲畜那样生活着，处处都是叫人难以忍受的贫穷、拥挤、退化、酗酒、伪善、撒谎……可是偏偏所有的屋子里也好，街上也好，却一味地心平气和，安安静静。一个城市的五万居民当中竟没有一个人叫喊一声，大声发泄一下他的愤慨。我们看见人们到市场上去买食物，白天吃饭，晚上睡觉，他们说废话，结婚，衰老，心平气和地送死人到墓园去。可是那些受苦受难的人，那些在幕后什么地方正在进行着的人生惨事，我们却没看见，也没听见。处处都安静而太平，提抗议的只有那些没声音的统

计表：若干人发了疯，若干桶白酒喝光了，若干儿童死于营养不良……这样的世道显然是必要的，幸福的人之所以会感到逍遥自在，显然只是因为那些不幸的人沉默地背着他们的重担，而缺了这种沉默想要幸福就办不到。这是普遍的麻木不仁。每一个幸福而满足的人的房门边都应当站一个人，拿一个小锤子经常敲着门提醒他：天下还有不幸的人，不管他自己怎样幸福，生活早晚会向他伸出魔爪，灾难会降临——疾病啦，贫穷啦，损失啦，到那时候谁也不会看见他，谁也不会听见他就跟现在他看不见别人，听不见别人一样。可是却没有拿小锤子的人，幸福的人无忧无虑地生活下去，日常的小烦恼微微地扰动他，就跟风吹动白杨一样，真是天下太平。”

“那天晚上我才明白：我也幸福而满足，”伊万·伊万内奇站起来接着说，“我在吃饭和打猎的时候也教导过别人，应该怎样生活，怎样信仰宗教，怎样驾驭老百姓我也常说学问是光明，教育是必不可少的，可是对普通人来说，目前只要认得字，能写字，也就够了。我常说自由是好东西，我们生活中不能没有它，就跟不能没有空气一样，不过我们得等待。对了，我常说那样的话现在我却要问：为什么要等？”伊万·伊万内奇生气地瞧着布尔金问道，“我问你们，为什么要等？根据什么理由？人家对我说，什么事都不是一下子就能办到的，各种思想都要渐渐地到一定的时期才能在生活里实现。可是这话是谁说的？有什么证据能够证明这话对？你们引证事物的自然规律，引证社会现象的合法性，可是我，一个有思想的活人，站在一道壕沟面前，本来也许可以从上面跳过去，或者在上面搭座桥走过去，却偏要等它自动封口，或者等它淤淤泥填满，难道这样的事还说得什么规律和合法性？再说一遍，为什么要等？等到没有了生活的力量才算吗？可是人又非生活不可，而且也渴望生活！”

“我一清早就离开了我弟弟的家，从此我在城里住着就感到不能忍受。城里的那种和平安静压得我不舒服。我不敢看人家的窗子，因为这时候再也没有比幸福的一家人团团围住桌子喝茶的光景更使我难受的了。我已经老了，不适宜做斗争了，我甚至不会憎恨人了。我只能满心地悲伤，生气，烦恼，一到夜里，我的脑子里种种思想纷至沓来，弄得我十分激动，睡不着觉……唉，要是我年轻点就好了！”

伊万·伊万内奇激动得从这个墙角走到那个墙角，反复地说：

“要是我年轻就好了！”

他忽然走到阿廖欣面前，先是握住他的一只手，后来又握住他的另一只手。

“帕维尔·康斯坦丁内奇！”他用恳求的声调说，“不要心平气和，不要容您自己昏睡！趁您还年轻力壮，血气方刚，要永不疲倦地做好

事情！幸福是没有的，也不应当有。如果生活有意义，有目标，那意义和目标就绝不是我们自己的幸福，而是比这更伟大更合理的东西做好事吧！”

所有这些话，伊万·伊万内奇都是带着可怜的、恳求的笑脸说出来的，仿佛他本人为自己请求一桩什么事似的。

然后这三个人在客厅里挑了三张圈椅各据一方坐下来，沉默了。伊万·伊万内奇的故事既没满足布尔金也没满足阿廖欣。金边镜框里的将军们和太太们在昏光中显得像是活人，低下眼睛来瞧他们，在这样的時候听那个可怜的、吃醋栗的文官的故事觉得乏味得很。不知什么缘故他们很想谈一谈或者听一听高雅的人和女人的事。他们所在的这个客厅里，样样东西，蒙着套子的枝形烛架啦，圈椅啦，脚底下的地毯啦，都在述说如今在镜框里低下眼睛瞧他们的那些人，从前就在这房间里走动过，坐过，喝过茶，现在俊俏的佩拉格娅正在这儿没一点声音地走来走去，这倒比一切故事都美妙得多呢。

阿廖欣困得要命，他一清早两点多钟就起床干农活儿，现在他的眼皮粘在一起了，可是他生怕客人等他走后也许会讲出什么有趣的故事，就流连着没走。他并没细想伊万·伊万内奇刚才所讲的是不是有道理、正确，反正他的客人没谈起麦粒，也没谈起干草，也没谈起煤焦油，所谈的都是跟他的生活没有什么直接关系的事，他不由得暗自高兴，盼望他们接着谈下去才好……

“不过，现在该睡了，”布尔金说，站起来，“请允许我跟你们道一声晚安吧。”

阿廖欣道了晚安，走下楼回到自己的住处去。客人们仍旧待在楼上。他俩被人领到一个大房间里过夜，房间里安着两张旧的雕花木床，墙角有一个象牙的耶稣受难像的十字架。那两张凉快的大床由美丽的佩拉格娅铺好了被褥，新洗过的床单冒出好闻的气味。

伊万·伊万内奇一声不响地脱掉衣服，躺下。

“主啊，饶恕我们这些罪人吧！”他说，拉过被子来蒙上头。

他的烟斗放在桌子上，冒出一股浓烈的烟草的焦气。布尔金很久睡不着觉，不住地纳闷儿，想不出这股难闻的气味是打哪儿来的。

雨点通宵抽打着窗子。

[1] 在19世纪中叶的俄国，兵士的儿子从出生的那天起就编入军籍，到相当年龄就入军事学校受训。

[2] 1俄尺等于0.711米，3俄尺的土地指墓穴的长度。

[3] 1俄亩等于1.09公顷。

[4] 意思是“死了”。

[5] 烧兽骨是为了制胶。

[6] 引自普希金的诗《英雄》，但引文不全，原文是：“我们喜爱使人高兴的谎话胜过喜爱许许多多卑微的真理。”——俄文本编者注

Anton
Chekhov

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

Gooseberries

N° 03

““Oh, good God,”
he kept saying
with great relish.
“Good God . . .””

The Kiss

On 20 May, at eight o'clock in the evening, all six batteries of a reserve artillery brigade, on their way back to headquarters, stopped for the night at the village of Mestechki. At the height of all the confusion – some officers were busy with the guns, while others had assembled in the main square by the churchyard fence to receive their billetings – someone in civilian dress rode up from behind the church on a strange horse: it was small and dun-coloured with a fine neck and short tail, and seemed to move sideways instead of straight ahead, making small dancing movements with its legs as if they were being whipped. When the rider came up to the officers he doffed his hat and said, 'Our squire, His Excellency, Lieutenant- General von Rabbeck, invites you for tea and would like you to come now . . .'

The horse performed a bow and a little dance, and retreated with the same sideways motion. The rider raised his hat again and quickly disappeared behind the church on his peculiar horse.

'To hell with it!' some of the officers grumbled as they rode off to their quarters. 'We want to sleep and up pops this von Rabbeck with his tea! We know what *that* means all right!'

Every officer in the six batteries vividly remembered the previous year when they were on manoeuvres with officers from a Cossack regiment and had received a similar invitation from a landowning count, who was a retired officer. This hospitable and genial count had plied them with food and drink, would not hear of them returning to their billets and made them stay the night. That was all very well, of course, and they could not have hoped for better. But the trouble was that this retired officer was overjoyed beyond measure at having young men as his guests and he regaled them with stories from his glorious past until dawn, led them on a tour of the house, showed them his valuable paintings, old engravings and rare guns, and read out signed letters from eminent personages; and all this time the tired and weary officers listened, looked, pined for bed, and continuously yawned in their sleeves.

When their host finally let them go, it was too late for bed.

Now, was this von Rabbeck one of the same breed? Whether he was or not, there was nothing they could do about it. The officers put clean uniforms on, smartened themselves up and went off en masse to look for the squire's house. On the square by the church they were told that they could either take the lower path leading down to the river behind the church, and then go along the bank to the garden, or they could ride direct from the church along the higher road which would bring them to the count's barns about a quarter of a mile from the village. The officers decided on the higher route.

'Who is this von Rabbeck?' they argued as they rode along. 'Is he the one who commanded a cavalry division at Plevna?'

'No, that wasn't von Rabbeck, just Rabbe, and without the "von".'

'It's marvellous weather, anyway!'

The road divided when they reached the first barn: one fork led straight on and disappeared in the darkness of the evening, while the other turned towards the squire's house on the right. The officers took the right fork and began to lower their voices . . . Stone barns with red tiled roofs stood on both sides of the road and they had the heavy, forbidding look of some provincial barracks. Ahead of them were the lighted windows of the manor- house.

'That's a good sign, gentlemen!' one of the officers said. 'Our setter's going on in front. That means he scents game!'

Lieutenant Lobytko, a tall, strongly built officer, who was riding ahead of the others, who had no moustache (although he was over twenty- five there wasn't a trace of hair on his face), and who was renowned in the brigade for his keen senses and ability to sniff a woman out from miles away, turned round and said, 'Yes, there must be women here, my instinct tells me.'

The officers were met at the front door by von Rabbeck himself – a fine- looking man of about sixty, wearing civilian clothes. He said how very pleased and happy he was to see the officers as he shook hands, but begged them most sincerely, in the name of God, to excuse him for not inviting them to stay the night, as two sisters with their children, his brothers and some neighbours had turned

up, and he didn't have one spare room.

The general shook everyone's hand, apologized and smiled, but they could tell from his face that he wasn't nearly as pleased to have guests as last year's count and he had only asked them as it was the done thing. And, as they climbed the softly carpeted stairs and listened, the officers sensed that they had been invited only because it would have caused embarrassment if they had *not* been invited. At the sight of footmen dashing around lighting the lamps in the hall and upstairs, they felt they had introduced a note of uneasiness and anxiety into the house. And how could any host be pleased at having nineteen strange officers descend on a house where two sisters, children, brothers and neighbours had already arrived, most probably to celebrate some family anniversary. They were met in the ballroom upstairs by a tall, stately old lady with black eyebrows and a long face – the living image of Empress Eugénie. She gave them a majestic, welcoming smile and said how glad and happy she was to have them as guests and apologized for the fact that she and her husband weren't able to invite the officers to stay overnight on this occasion. Her beautiful, majestic smile, which momentarily disappeared every time she turned away from her guests, revealed that in her day she had seen many officers, that she had no time for them now, and that she had invited them and was apologizing only because her upbringing and social position demanded it.

The officers entered the large dining- room where about ten gentlemen and ladies, old and young, were sitting along one side of the table having tea. Behind their chairs, enveloped in a thin haze of cigar smoke, was a group of men with a rather lean, young, red-whiskered man in the middle, rolling his 'r's as he spoke out loud in English. Behind them, through a door, was a bright room with light blue furniture.

'Gentlemen, there's so many of you, it's impossible to introduce *everyone* !' the general was saying in a loud voice, trying to sound cheerful. 'So don't stand on ceremony, introduce yourselves!'

Some officers wore very serious, even solemn expressions; others forced a smile, and all of them felt awkward as they bowed rather indifferently and sat down to tea.

Staff- Captain Ryabovich, a short, stooping officer, with

spectacles and lynx- like side whiskers, was more embarrassed than anyone else. While his fellow- officers were trying to look serious or force a smile, his face, lynx- like whiskers and spectacles seemed to be saying, 'I'm the shyest, most modest and most insignificant officer in the whole brigade!' When he first entered the dining-room and sat down to tea, he found it impossible to concentrate on any one face or object. All those faces, dresses, cut- glass decanters, steaming glasses, moulded cornices, merged into one composite sensation, making Ryabovich feel ill at ease, and he longed to bury his head somewhere. Like a lecturer at his first appearance in public, he could see everything in front of him well enough, but at the same time he could make little sense of it (physicians call this condition, when someone sees without understanding, 'psychic blindness'). But after a little while Ryabovich began to feel more at home, recovered his normal vision and began to take stock of his surroundings. Since he was a timid and unsociable person, he was struck above all by what he himself had never possessed – the extraordinary boldness of these unfamiliar people. Von Rabbeck, two elderly ladies, a young girl in a lilac dress, and the young man with red whiskers – Rabbeck's youngest son – had sat themselves very cunningly among the officers, as though it had all been rehearsed. Straight away they had launched into a heated argument, which the guests could not help joining. The girl in lilac very excitedly insisted that the artillery had a much easier time than either the cavalry or the infantry, while Rabbeck and the elderly ladies argued the contrary. A rapid conversational crossfire ensued. Ryabovich glanced at the lilac girl who was arguing so passionately about something that was so foreign to her, so utterly boring, and he could see artificial smiles flickering over her face.

Von Rabbeck and family skilfully drew the officers into the argument, at the same time watching their wine glasses with eagle eyes to check whether they were filled, that they had enough sugar, and one officer who wasn't eating biscuits or drinking any brandy worried them. The more Ryabovich looked and listened, the more he began to like this insincere but wonderfully disciplined family.

After tea the officers went into the ballroom. Lieutenant Lobytko's instinct had not failed him: the room was full of girls and young married women. Already this 'setter' lieutenant had positioned himself next to a young blonde in a black dress, bending

over dashingly as though leaning on some invisible sabre, smiling and flirting with his shoulders. Most probably he was telling her some intriguing nonsense as the blonde glanced superciliously at his well-fed face and said, 'Really?'

If that 'setter' had had any brains, that cool 'Really?' should have told him that he would never be called 'to heel'.

The grand piano suddenly thundered out. The sounds of a sad waltz drifted through the wide-open windows and everyone remembered that outside it was spring, an evening in May, and they smelt the fragrance of the young leaves of the poplars, of roses and lilac. Ryabovich, feeling the effects of the brandy and the music, squinted at a window, smiled and watched the movements of the women. Now it seemed that the fragrance of the roses, the poplars and lilac wasn't coming from the garden but from the ladies' faces and dresses.

Rabbeck's son had invited a skinny girl to dance and waltzed twice round the room with her. Lobytko glided over the parquet floor as he flew up to the girl in lilac and whirled her round the room. They all began to dance . . . Ryabovich stood by the door with guests who were not dancing and watched. Not once in his life had he danced, not once had he put his arm round an attractive young woman's waist. He would usually be absolutely delighted when, with everyone looking on, a man took a young girl he hadn't met before by the waist and offered his shoulders for her to rest her hands on, but he could never imagine himself in that situation. There had been times when he envied his fellow-officers' daring and dashing ways and it made him very depressed. The realization that he was shy, round-shouldered, quite undistinguished, that he had a long waist, lynx-like side whiskers, hurt him deeply. But over the years this realization had become something of a habit and as he watched his friends dance or talk out loud he no longer envied them but was filled with sadness.

When the quadrille began, young von Rabbeck went over to the officers who were not dancing and invited two of them to a game of billiards. They accepted and left the great hall with him. As he had nothing else to do, and feeling he would like to take at least some part in what was going on, Ryabovich trudged off after them. First they went into the drawing-room, then down a narrow corridor

with a glass ceiling, then into a room where three sleepy footmen leapt up from a sofa the moment they entered. Finally, after passing through a whole series of rooms, young Rabbeck and company reached a small billiard- room and the game began.

Ryabovich, who never played any games except cards, stood by the table and indifferently watched the players, cue in hand, walking up and down in their unbuttoned tunics, making puns and shouting things he could not understand. The players ignored him, only turning round to say, 'I beg your pardon', when one of them happened accidentally to nudge him with an elbow or prod him with a cue. Even before the first game was over, he was bored and began to feel he was not wanted, that he was in the way . . . He felt drawn back to the ballroom and walked away.

As he walked back he had a little adventure. Halfway, he realized he was lost – he knew very well he had to go by those three sleepy footmen, but already he had passed through five or six rooms and those footmen seemed to have vanished into thin air. He realized his mistake, retraced his steps a little and turned to the right, only to find himself in a small, dimly lit room he had not seen on the way to the billiard- room. He stood still for a minute or so, opened the first door he came to with determination and entered a completely dark room. Ahead of him he could see light coming through a crack in the door and beyond was the muffled sound of a sad mazurka. The windows here had been left open as they had in the ballroom and he could smell poplars, lilac and roses . . .

Ryabovich stopped, undecided what to do . . . Just then he was astonished to hear hurried footsteps, the rustle of a dress and a female voice whispering breathlessly, 'At last!' Two soft, sweet-smelling arms (undoubtedly a woman's) encircled his neck, a burning cheek pressed against his and at the same time there was the sound of a kiss. But immediately after the kiss the woman gave a faint cry and shrank backwards in disgust – that was how it seemed to Ryabovich.

He was on the point of crying out too and he rushed towards the bright chink in the door.

His heart pounded away when he was back in the hall and his hands trembled so obviously that he hastily hid them behind his back. At first he was tormented by shame and he feared everyone

there knew he had just been embraced and kissed, and this made him hesitate and look around anxiously. But when he had convinced himself that everyone was dancing and gossiping just as peacefully as before, he gave himself up to a totally new kind of sensation, one he had never experienced before in all his life. Something strange was happening to him . . . his neck, which just a few moments ago had been embraced by sweet-smelling hands, seemed anointed with oil. And on his left cheek, just by his moustache, there was a faint, pleasant, cold, tingling sensation, the kind you get from peppermint drops and the more he rubbed the spot the stronger the tingling became. From head to heels he was overcome by a strange, new feeling which grew stronger every minute. He wanted to dance, speak to everyone, run out into the garden, laugh out loud. He completely forgot his stoop, his insignificant appearance, his lynx-like whiskers and 'vague appearance' (once he happened to hear some ladies saying this about him). When Rabbeck's wife went by he gave her such a broad, warm smile that she stopped and gave him a very searching look.

'I love this house so much!' he said, adjusting his spectacles.

The general's wife smiled and told him that the house still belonged to her father. Then she asked if his parents were still alive, how long he had been in the army, why he was so thin, and so on . . . When Ryabovich had replied, she moved on, leaving him smiling even more warmly and he began to think he was surrounded by the most wonderful people . . .

Mechanically, Ryabovich ate and drank everything he was offered at the dinner table, deaf to everything as he tried to find an explanation for what had just happened. It was a mysterious, romantic incident, but it wasn't difficult to explain. No doubt some girl or young married woman had a rendezvous with someone in that dark room, had waited for a long time, and then mistook Ryabovich for her hero in her nervous excitement. This was the most likely explanation, all the more so as Ryabovich had hesitated in the middle of the room, which made it look as though he were expecting someone . . .

'But who is she?' he thought as he surveyed the ladies' faces. 'She must be young, as old ladies don't have rendezvous. And

intelligent – I could tell from the rustle of her dress, her smell, her voice.’

He stared at the girl in lilac and found her very attractive. She had beautiful shoulders and arms, a clever face and a fine voice. As he gazed at her, Ryabovich wanted *her*, no one else, to be that mysterious stranger . . . But she gave a rather artificial laugh and wrinkled her long nose, which made her look old. Then he turned to the blonde in black. She was younger, simpler and less affected, with charming temples and she sipped daintily from her wine glass. Now Ryabovich wanted her to be the stranger. But he soon discovered that she had a featureless face and he turned to her neighbour . . . ‘It’s hard to say,’ he wondered dreamily. ‘If I could just take the lilac girl’s shoulders and arms away, add the blonde’s temples, then take those eyes away from the girl on Lobytko’s left, *then* .’ He merged them all into one, so that he had an image of the girl who had kissed him, the image he desired so much, but which he just could not find among the guests around the table.

After dinner the officers, well- fed and slightly tipsy by now, began to make their farewells and expressed their thanks. Once again the hosts apologized for not having them stay the night.

‘Delighted, gentlemen, absolutely delighted,’ the general was saying and this time he meant it – probably because people are usually more sincere and better- humoured saying goodbye to guests than welcoming them.

‘Delighted! Glad to see you back any time, so don’t stand on ceremony. Which way are you going? The higher road? No, go through the garden, it’s quicker.’

The officers went into the garden, where it seemed very dark and quiet after the bright lights and the noise. They did not say a word all the way to the gate. They were half- drunk, cheerful and contented, but the darkness and the silence made them pause for thought. Probably they were thinking the same as Ryabovich: would they ever see the day when they would own a large house, have a family, a garden, when *they* too would be able to entertain people (however much of a pretence this might be), feed them well, make them drunk and happy?

As they went through the garden gate they all started talking at

once and, for no apparent reason, laughed out loud. Now they were descending the path that led down to the river and then ran along the water's edge, weaving its way around the bushes, the little pools of water and the willows which overhung the river. The bank and the path were barely visible, and the far side was plunged in darkness. Here and there were reflections of the stars in the water, quivering and breaking up into little patches – the only sign that the river was flowing fast. All was quiet. Sleepy sandpipers called plaintively from the far bank and on the near side a nightingale in a bush poured out its song, ignoring the passing officers.

The men paused by the bush, touched it, but still the nightingale sang.

‘That’s a bird for you!’ approving voices murmured. ‘Here we are, right next to him and he doesn’t take a blind bit of notice! What a rascal!’

The path finally turned upwards and came out on to the high road by the church fence. The officers were exhausted from walking up the hill and sat down for a smoke. On the far bank they could make out a dim red light and they tried to pass the time by guessing whether it was a camp fire, a light in a window, or something else . . . Ryabovich looked at it and imagined that the light was winking at him and smiling, as though it knew all about that kiss.

When he reached his quarters Ryabovich quickly undressed and lay on his bed. In the same hut were Lobytko and Lieutenant Merzlyakov, a gentle, rather quiet young man, who was considered well- educated in his own little circle. He was always reading the *European Herald* when he had the chance and took it with him everywhere. Lobytko undressed, paced up and down for a long time, with the expression of a dissatisfied man, and sent the batman for some beer.

Merzlyakov lay down, placed a candle near his pillow and immersed himself in the *European Herald* .

‘Who is she?’ Ryabovich wondered as he glanced at the grimy ceiling. His neck still felt as if it had been anointed with oil and he had that tingling sensation around his mouth – just like peppermint drops. He had fleeting visions of the lilac girl’s shoulders and arms, the temples and truthful eyes of the blonde in black, waists, dresses,

brooches. He tried to fix these visions firmly in his mind, but they kept dancing about, dissolving, flickering. When these visions vanished completely against that darkened background everyone has when he closes his eyes, he began to hear hurried steps, rustling dresses, the sound of a kiss and he was gripped by an inexplicable, overwhelming feeling of joy. Just as he was abandoning himself to it, he heard the batman come back and report that there wasn't any beer. Lobytko became terribly agitated and started pacing up and down again.

'Didn't I tell you he's an idiot?' he said, stopping first in front of Ryabovich, then Merzlyakov. 'A man must really be a blockhead and idiot to come back without any beer! The man's a rogue, eh?'

'Of course, you won't find any beer in this place,' Merzlyakov said without taking his eyes off the *European Herald*.

'Oh, do you really think so?' Lobytko persisted. 'Good God, put me on the moon and I'll find you beer and women right away! Yes, I'll go now and find some . . . Call me a scoundrel if I don't succeed!'

He slowly dressed and pulled on his high boots. Then he finished his cigarette in silence and left.

'Rabbeck, Grabbeck, Labbeck,' he muttered, pausing in the hall. 'I don't feel like going on my own, dammit! Fancy a little walk, Ryabovich?'

There was no reply, so he came back, slowly undressed and got into bed. Merzlyakov sighed, put the *European Herald* away and snuffed the candle.

'Hm,' Lobytko murmured as he puffed his cigarette in the dark.

Ryabovich pulled the blankets over his head, curled himself into a ball and tried to merge the visions fleeting through his mind into one fixed image. But he failed completely. Soon he fell asleep and his last waking thought was of someone caressing him and making him happy, of something absurd and unusual, but nonetheless exceptionally fine and joyful, that had entered his life. And his dreams centred around this one thought.

When he woke up, the sensation of oil on his cheek and the minty tingling near his lips had vanished, but the joy of yesterday

still filled his heart. Delighted, he watched the window frames, gilded now by the rising sun, and listened intently to the street noises. Outside, just by the window, he could hear loud voices – Lebedetsky, Ryabovich's battery commander, who had just caught up with the brigade, was shouting at his sergeant – simply because he had lost the habit of talking softly.

'Is there anything else?' he roared.

'When they were shoeing yesterday, sir, someone drove a nail into Pigeon's hoof. The medical orderly put clay and vinegar on it and they're keeping the horse reined, away from the others. And artificer Artemyev got drunk yesterday and the lieutenant had him tied to the fore- carriage of an auxiliary field- gun.'

And the sergeant had more to report. Karpov had forgotten the new cords for the trumpets and the stakes for the tents, and the officers had spent the previous evening as guests of General von Rabbeck. During the conversation, Lebedetsky's head and red beard appeared at the window. He blinked his short- sighted eyes at the sleepy officers and bade them good morning.

'Everything all right?' he asked.

'One of the shaft- horses damaged its withers – it was the new collar,' Lobytko answered, yawning.

The commander sighed, pondered for a moment and said in a loud voice, 'I'm still wondering whether to pay Aleksandra a visit, I really ought to go and see how she is. Well, goodbye for now, I'll catch you up by evening.'

A quarter of an hour later the brigade moved off. As it passed the general's barns, Ryabovich looked to the right where the house was. The blinds were drawn in all the windows. Clearly, everyone was still asleep. And the girl who had kissed Ryabovich the day before was sleeping too. He tried to imagine her as she slept and he had a clear and distinct picture of the wide- open windows, the little green branches peeping into her bedroom, the morning freshness, the smell of poplars, lilac and roses, her bed and the chair with that dress which had rustled the day before lying over it, tiny slippers, a watch on the table. But the actual features of that face, that sweet, dreamy smile, exactly what was most characteristic of her, slipped through his imagination like mercury through the

fingers. When he had ridden about a quarter of a mile, he looked back. The yellow church, the house, the river and garden were flooded in sunlight and the river, with its bright green banks and its waters reflecting the light blue sky and glinting silver here and there, looked very beautiful. Ryabovich took a last look at Mestechki and he felt so sad, as if he were saying farewell to what was very near and dear to him.

But there were only long- familiar, boring scenes ahead of him. On both sides of the road there were fields of young rye and buckwheat, where crows were hopping about. Ahead, all he could see was dust and the backs of soldiers' heads; and behind, the same dust, the same faces. The brigade was led by a vanguard of four soldiers bearing sabres and behind them rode the military choristers, followed by trumpeters. Every now and then, like torchbearers in a funeral cortège, the vanguard and singers ignored the regulation distance and pushed on far ahead. Ryabovich rode alongside the first field- gun of the fifth battery and he could see the other four in front. These long, ponderous processions formed by brigades on the move can strike civilians as very peculiar, an unintelligible muddle, and non- military people just cannot fathom why a single field- gun has to be escorted by so many soldiers, why it has to be drawn by so many horses all tangled up in such strange harness, as if it really was such a terrible, heavy object. But Ryabovich understood everything perfectly well and for that reason he found it all extremely boring. He had long known why a hefty bombardier always rides with the officer at the head of every battery and why he is called an outrider. Immediately behind this bombardier came the riders on the first, then the middle- section trace- horses. Ryabovich knew that the horses to the left were saddle- horses, while those on the right were auxiliary – all this was very boring. The horsemen were followed by two shaft- horses, one ridden by a horseman with yesterday's dust still on his back and who had a clumsy- looking, very comical piece of wood fixed to his right leg. Ryabovich knew what it was for and did not find it funny. All the riders waved their whips mechanically and shouted now and again. As for the field- gun, it was an ugly thing. Sacks of oats covered with tarpaulin lay on the fore- carriage and the gun itself was hung with kettles, kitbags and little sacks: it resembled a small harmless animal which had been surrounded, for some reason, by men and horses. On the side sheltered from the wind a team of six

strode along, swinging their arms. This gun was followed by more bombardiers, riders, shaft- horses and another field- gun – just as ugly and uninspiring as the first –lumbering along in the rear. After the second gun came a third, then a fourth with an officer riding alongside (there are six batteries to a brigade and four guns to a battery). The whole procession stretched about a quarter of a mile and ended with the baggage wagons, where a most likeable creature plodded thoughtfully along, his long- eared head drooping: this was Magar the donkey, brought from Turkey by a certain battery commander.

Ryabovich looked apathetically at all those necks and faces in front and behind. At any other time he would have dozed off, but now he was immersed in new, pleasant thoughts. When the brigade had first set off, he had tried to convince himself that the incident of the kiss was only some unimportant, mysterious adventure and that essentially it was trivial and too ridiculous for serious thought. But very quickly he waved logic aside and gave himself up to his dreams. First he pictured himself in von Rabbeck's drawing- room, sitting next to a girl who resembled both the girl in lilac and the blonde in black. Then he closed his eyes and imagined himself with another, completely strange girl, with very indeterminate features: in his thoughts he spoke to her, caressed her and leaned his head on her shoulder. Then he thought of war and separation, reunion, dinner with his wife and children . . .

'Brakes on!' rang out the command every time they went downhill. He shouted the command too, and feared that his own shouts would shatter his daydreams and bring him back to reality.

As they passed some estate, Ryabovich peeped over the fence into the garden. There he saw a long avenue, straight as a ruler, strewn with yellow sand and lined with young birches. With the eagerness of a man who has surrendered himself to daydreaming, he imagined tiny female feet walking over the yellow sand. And, quite unexpectedly, he had a clear mental picture of the girl who had kissed him, the girl he had visualized the previous evening during dinner. This image had planted itself in his mind and would not leave him.

At midday someone shouted from a wagon in the rear, 'Attention, eyes left! Officers!'

The brigadier drove up in an open carriage drawn by two white horses. He ordered it to stop near the second battery and shouted something no one understood. Several officers galloped over to him, Ryabovich among them.

‘Well, what’s the news?’ asked the brigadier, blinking his red eyes. ‘Anyone ill?’

When they had replied, the brigadier, a small skinny man, chewed for a moment, pondered and then turned to one of the officers: ‘One of your drivers, on the third gun, has taken his knee-guard off and the devil’s hung it on the fore-carriage. Reprimand him!’

He looked up at Ryabovich and continued: ‘It strikes me your harness breeches are too long.’

After a few more tiresome comments, the brigadier glanced at Lobytko and grinned. ‘You look down in the dumps today, Lieutenant Lobytko. Pining for Madame Lopukhov, eh? Gentlemen, he’s pining for Madame Lopukhov!’

Madame Lopukhov was a very plump, tall lady, well past forty. The brigadier, who had a passion for large women, no matter what age, suspected his officers nurtured similar passions. They smiled politely. Then the brigadier, delighted with himself for having made a very amusing, cutting remark, roared with laughter, tapped his driver on the back and saluted. The carriage drove off.

‘All the things I’m dreaming about now and which seem impossible, out of this world, are in fact very ordinary,’ Ryabovich thought as he watched the clouds of dust rising in the wake of the brigadier’s carriage. ‘It’s all so very ordinary, everyone experiences it . . . The brigadier, for example. He was in love once, now he’s married, with children. Captain Vachter is married and loved, despite having an extremely ugly red neck and no waistline. Salmanov is coarse and too much of a Tartar, but *he* had an affair that finished in marriage. I’m the same as everyone else . . . sooner or later I’ll have to go through what they did . . .’

And he was delighted and encouraged by the thought that he was just an ordinary man, leading an ordinary life. Now he was bold enough to picture *her* and his happiness as much as he liked and he gave full rein to his imagination.

In the evening, when the brigade had reached its destination and the officers were resting in their tents, Ryabovich, Merzlyakov and Lobytko gathered round a trunk and had supper. Merzlyakov took his time, holding his *European Herald* on his knees and reading it as he slowly munched his food.

Lobytko could not stop talking and kept filling his glass with beer, while Ryabovich, whose head was rather hazy from dreaming all day long, said nothing as he drank. Three glasses made him tipsy and weak and he felt an irrepressible longing to share his new feelings with his friends.

‘A strange thing happened to me at the Rabbecks,’ he said, trying to sound cool and sarcastic. ‘I went to the billiard- room, you know . . .’

He began to tell them, in great detail, all about the kiss, but after a minute fell silent. In that one minute he had told them everything and he was astonished when he considered how little time was needed to tell his story: he had imagined it would take until morning. After he heard the story, Lobytko – who was a great liar and therefore a great sceptic – looked at him in disbelief and grinned. Merzlyakov twitched his eyebrows and kept his eyes glued to the *European Herald* as he calmly remarked, ‘Damned if I know what to make of it! Throwing herself round a stranger’s neck without saying a word first . . . She must have been a mental case . . .’

‘Yes, some kind of neurotic,’ Ryabovich agreed.

‘Something similar happened to me once,’ Lobytko said, assuming a frightened look. ‘Last year I was travelling to Kovno . . . second class. The compartment was chock- full and it was impossible to sleep. So I tipped the guard fifty copeks . . . he took my luggage and got me a berth in a sleeper. I lay down and covered myself with a blanket. It was dark, you understand. Suddenly someone was touching my shoulder and breathing into my face. So I moved my arm and felt an elbow. I opened my eyes and – can you imagine! –it was a woman. Black eyes, lips as red as the best salmon, nostrils breathing passion, breasts like buffers! . . .’

‘Just a minute,’ Merzlyakov calmly interrupted. ‘I don’t dispute what you said about her breasts, but how could you see her lips if it

was dark?’

Lobytko tried to wriggle out by poking fun at Merzlyakov’s obtuseness and this jarred on Ryabovich. He went away from the trunk, lay down and vowed never again to tell his secrets.

Camp life fell back into its normal routine. The days flashed by, each exactly the same as the other. All this time Ryabovich felt, thought and behaved like someone in love. When his batman brought him cold water in the mornings, he poured it over his head and each time he remembered that there was something beautiful and loving in his life.

In the evenings, when his fellow- officers talked about love and women, he would listen very attentively, sitting very close to them and assuming the habitual expression of a soldier hearing stories about battles he himself fought in. On those evenings when senior officers, led by ‘setter’Lobytko, carried out ‘sorties’ on the local village, in true Don Juan style, Ryabovich went along with them and invariably returned feeling sad, deeply guilty and imploring *her* forgiveness. In his spare time, or on nights when he couldn’t sleep, when he wanted to recall his childhood days, his parents, everything that was near and dear to him, he would always find himself thinking of Mestechki instead, of that strange horse, of von Rabbeck and his wife, who looked like the Empress Eugénie, of that dark room with the bright chink in the door.

On 31 August he left camp – not with his own brigade, however, but with two batteries. All the way he daydreamed and became very excited, as though he were going home. He wanted passionately to see that strange horse again, the church, those artificial Rabbecks, the dark room. Some inner voice, which so often deceives those in love, whispered that he was *bound* to see her again. And he was tormented by such questions as: how could he arrange a meeting, what would she say, had she forgotten the kiss? If the worst came to the worst, he would at least have the pleasure of walking through that dark room and remembering . . .

Towards evening, that familiar church and the white barns appeared on the horizon. His heart began to pound. He did not listen to what the officer riding next to him was saying, he was oblivious of everything and looked eagerly at the river gleaming in the distance, at the loft above which pigeons were circling in the

light of the setting sun.

As he rode up to the church and heard the quartermaster speaking, he expected a messenger on horseback to appear from behind the fence any minute and invite the officers to tea . . . but the quartermaster read the billeting list out, the officers dismounted and strolled off into the village – and no messenger came.

‘The people in the village will tell Rabbeck we’re here and he’ll send for us,’ Ryabovich thought as he went into his hut. He just could not understand why a fellow- officer was lighting a candle, why the batmen were hurriedly heating the samovars.

He was gripped by an acute feeling of anxiety. He lay down, then got up and looked out of the window to see if the messenger was coming. But there was no one. He lay down again but got up again after half an hour, unable to control his anxiety, went out into the street and strode off towards the church.

The square near the fence was dark and deserted. Some soldiers were standing in a row at the top of the slope, saying nothing. They jumped when they saw Ryabovich and saluted. He acknowledged the salute and went down the familiar path.

The entire sky over the far bank was flooded with crimson; the moon was rising. Two peasant women were talking loudly and picking cabbage leaves as they walked along the edge of a kitchen garden. Beyond the gardens were some dark huts. On the near bank everything was much the same as in May: the path, the bushes, the willows overhanging the river . . . only there was no bold nightingale singing, no fragrant poplars or young grass. Ryabovich reached the garden and peered over the gate. It was dark and quiet and all he could see were the white trunks of the nearest birches and here and there little patches of avenue – everything else had merged into one black mass. Ryabovich looked hard, listened eagerly, and after standing and waiting for about a quarter of an hour, without hearing a sound or seeing a single light, he trudged wearily away . . .

He went down to the river, where he could see the general’s bathing- hut and towels hanging over the rail on the little bridge. He went on to the bridge, stood for a moment and aimlessly fingered the towels. They felt cold and rough. He looked down at

the water . . . the current was swift and purled, barely audibly, against the piles of the hut. The red moon was reflected in the water near the left bank; tiny waves rippled through the reflection, pulling it apart and breaking it up into little patches, as if trying to bear it away.

‘How stupid, how very stupid!’ Ryabovich thought as he looked at the fast-flowing water. Now, when he hoped for nothing, that adventure of the kiss, his impatience, his vague longings and disillusionment appeared in a new light. He didn’t think it at all strange that he hadn’t waited for the general’s messenger or that he would never see the girl who had kissed him by mistake. On the contrary, he would have thought it strange if he *had* seen her . . .

The water raced past and he did not know where or why; it had flowed just as swiftly in May, when it grew from a little stream into a large river, flowed into the sea, evaporated and turned into rain. Perhaps this was the same water flowing past. To what purpose?

And the whole world, the whole of life, struck Ryabovich as a meaningless, futile joke. As he turned his eyes from the water to the sky, he remembered how fate had accidentally caressed him – in the guise of an unknown woman. He recalled the dreams and visions of that summer and his life seemed terribly empty, miserable, colourless . . . When he returned to his hut, none of the officers was there.

The batman reported that they had all gone to ‘General Fontryabkin’s’ – he’d sent a messenger on horseback with the invitation. There was a brief flicker of joy in his heart, but he snuffed it out at once, lay on his bed and in defiance of fate – as though he wanted to bring its wrath down on his own head – he did not go to the general’s.

The Two Volodyas

‘Let me go, *I* want to drive. I’m going to sit next to the driver,’ Sophia Lvovna shouted. ‘Driver, wait. I’m coming up on to the box to sit next to you.’

She stood on the sledge while her husband Vladimir Nikitych and her childhood friend Vladimir Mikhaylych held her by the arm in case she fell. Away sped the troika.

‘I said you shouldn’t have given her brandy,’ Vladimir Nikitych whispered irritably to his companion. ‘You’re a fine one!’

From past experience the Colonel knew that when women like his wife Sophia Lvovna had been in riotous, rather inebriated high spirits he could normally expect fits of hysterical laughter and tears to follow. He was afraid that once they got home he would have to run around with the cold compresses and medicine instead of being able to go to bed.

‘Whoa!’ Sophia Lvovna shouted. ‘I want to drive.’

She was really very gay and in an exultant mood. For two months after her wedding she had been tormented by the thought that she had married Colonel Yagich for his money or, as they say, *par dépit*. That same evening, in the out- of- town restaurant, she finally became convinced that she loved him passionately. In spite of his fifty- four years, he was so trim, sprightly and athletic, and he told puns and joined in the gypsy girls’ songs with such charm. It is true that nowadays old men are a thousand times more interesting than young ones, as though age and youth had changed places. The Colonel was two years older than her father, but was that important if, to be quite honest, he was infinitely stronger, more energetic and livelier than she was, even though she was only twenty- three?

‘Oh, my darling!’ she thought. ‘My wonderful man!’

In the restaurant she had come to the conclusion too that not a spark remained of her old feelings. To her childhood friend Vladimir Mikhaylych, whom only yesterday she had loved to

distraction, she now felt completely indifferent. The whole evening he had struck her as a lifeless, sleepy, boring nobody and the habitual coolness with which he avoided paying restaurant bills exasperated her so much this time that she very nearly told him, 'You should have stayed at home if you're so poor.' The Colonel footed the bill.

Perhaps it was the trees, telegraph poles and snowdrifts all flashing past that aroused the most varied thoughts. She reflected that the meal had cost one hundred and twenty roubles – with a hundred for the gypsies – and that the next day, if she so wished, she could throw a thousand roubles away, whereas two months ago, before the wedding, she did not have three roubles to call her own and she had to turn to her father for every little thing. How her life had changed!

Her thoughts were in a muddle and she remembered how, when she was about ten, Colonel Yagich, her husband now, had made advances to her aunt and how everyone in the house had said that he had ruined her. In fact, her aunt often came down to dinner with tear- stained eyes and was always going away somewhere; people said the poor woman was suffering terribly. In those days he was very handsome and had extraordinary success with women; the whole town knew him and he was said to visit his admirers every day, like a doctor doing his rounds. Even now, despite his grey hair, wrinkles and spectacles, his thin face looked handsome, especially in profile.

Sophia Lvovna's father was an army doctor and had once served in Yagich's regiment. Volodya senior's father had also been an army doctor and had once served in the same regiment as her own father and Yagich. Despite some highly involved and frantic amorous adventures Volodya junior had been an excellent student. He graduated with honours from university, had decided to specialize in foreign literature and was said to be writing his thesis. He lived in the barracks with his doctor father and he had no money of his own, although he was now thirty. When they were children, Sophia Lvovna and he had lived in different flats, but in the same building, and he often came to play with her; together they had dancing and French lessons. But when he grew up into a well- built, exceedingly good- looking young man, she began to be shy of him. Then she fell madly in love with him and was still in

love until shortly before she married Yagich. He too had extraordinary success with women, from the age of fourteen almost, and the ladies who deceived their husbands with him exonerated themselves by saying Volodya was 'so little'. Not long before, he was said to be living in digs close to the university and every time you knocked, his footsteps could be heard on the other side of the door and then the whispered apology: '*Pardon, je ne suis pas seul* .' Yagich was delighted with him, gave him his blessing for the future as Derzhavin had blessed Pushkin, and was evidently very fond of him. For hours on end they would silently play billiards or piquet, and if Yagich went off somewhere in a troika, he would take Volodya with him; only Yagich shared the secret of his thesis. In earlier days, when the Colonel was younger, they were often rivals, but were never jealous of one another. When they were in company, which they frequented together, Yagich was called 'Big Volodya' and his friend 'Little Volodya'.

Besides Big Volodya and Little Volodya, and Sophia Lvovna, there was someone else in the sledge, Margarita Aleksandrovna – or Rita as everyone called her – Mrs Yagich's cousin. She was a spinster, in her thirties, very pale, with black eyebrows, pince-nez, who chain-smoked even when it was freezing; there was always ash on her lap and chest. She spoke through her nose and drawled; she was cold and unemotional, could drink any quantity of liqueur or brandy without getting drunk and told stories abounding in *doubles entendres* in a dull, tasteless way. At home she read the learned reviews all day long, scattering ash all over them; or she would eat crystallized apples.

'Sophia, don't play the fool,' she drawled; 'it's really so stupid.'

When the town gates came into view the troika slowed down; they caught glimpses of people and houses, and Sophia quietened down, snuggled against her husband and gave herself up to her thoughts. And now gloomy thoughts began to mingle with her happy, carefree fantasies. The man opposite knew that she had loved him (so she thought), and of course he believed the reports that she had married the Colonel *par d  pit* . Not once had she confessed her love and she did not want him to know. She had concealed her feelings, but his expression clearly showed that he understood her perfectly, and so her pride suffered. But most humiliating of all about her situation was the fact that Little

Volodya had suddenly started paying attention to her after her marriage, which had never happened before. He would sit with her for hours on end, in silence, or telling her some nonsense; and now in the sledge he was gently touching her leg or squeezing her hand, without saying a word. Evidently, all he wanted was for her to get married. No less obviously, he did not think much of her and she interested him only in a certain way, as an immoral, disreputable woman. And this mingling of triumphant love for her husband and injured pride was the reason for her behaving so irresponsibly, prompting her to sit on the box and shout and whistle . . .

Just as they were passing the convent the great twenty-ton bell started clanging away. Rita crossed herself.

‘Our Olga is in that convent,’ Sophia Lvovna said, crossing herself and shuddering.

‘Why did she become a nun?’ the Colonel asked.

‘*Par dépit*,’ Rita answered angrily, obviously hinting at Sophia Lvovna’s marriage to Yagich. ‘This *par dépit* is all the rage now. It’s a challenge to the whole of society. She was a proper good-time girl, a terrible flirt, all she liked was dances and dancing partners. And then suddenly we have all this! She took us all by surprise!’

‘That’s not true,’ Little Volodya said, lowering the collar of his fur coat and revealing his handsome face. ‘This wasn’t a case of *par dépit*, but something really terrible. Her brother Dmitry was sentenced to hard labour in Siberia and no one knows where he is now. The mother died of grief.’ He raised his collar again. ‘And Olga did the right thing,’ he added dully. ‘Living as a ward, and with a treasure like our Sophia Lvovna, what’s more – that’s enough food for thought!’

Sophia Lvovna noted the contempt in his voice and wanted to say something very nasty in reply, but she said nothing. Once more euphoria gripped her. She stood up and shouted tearfully, ‘I want to go to morning service. Driver, turn back! I want to see Olga!’

They turned back. The convent bell had a dull peal and Sophia Lvovna felt there was something in it reminding her of Olga and her life. Bells rang out from other churches. When the driver had brought the troika to a halt, Sophia leapt from the sledge and rushed unescorted to the gates.

‘Please don’t be long!’ her husband shouted. ‘It’s late.’

She went through the dark gates, then along the path leading to the main church; the light snow crunched under her feet and the tolling of the bells sounded right over her head now and seemed to penetrate her whole being. First she came to the church door, the three steps down, then the porch, with paintings of the saints on both sides; there was a smell of juniper and incense. Then came another door, which a dark figure opened, bowing very low . . . In the church the service had not yet begun. One of the nuns was in front of the icon- screen lighting candles in their holders, another was lighting a chandelier. Here and there, close to the columns and side- chapels, were motionless, black figures. ‘They’ll be standing in exactly the same places till morning,’ Sophia Lvovna thought and the whole place struck her as dark, cold, depressing – more depressing than a graveyard. Feeling bored, she glanced at the motionless, frozen figures and suddenly her heart sank. Somehow she recognized one of the nuns – short, with thin shoulders and a black shawl on her head – as Olga, although when she had entered the convent she had been plump and taller, she thought. Deeply disturbed for some reason, Sophia Lvovna hesitantly walked over to the lay sister, looked over her shoulder into her face and saw it *was* Olga.

‘Olga!’ she said, clasping her hands and too excited to say anything else. ‘Olga!’

The nun recognized her immediately, raised her eyebrows in astonishment and her pale, freshly washed face (even, it seemed, her white kerchief visible under her shawl) glowed with joy.

‘God has performed a miracle,’ she said and also clasped her thin, pale little hands.

Sophia Lvovna firmly embraced her and kissed her, frightened as she did so that her breath might smell of drink.

‘We were just passing and we thought of you,’ she said breathlessly, as though she had just completed a fast walk. ‘Heavens, how pale you are! I’m . . . I’m very pleased to see you. Well, how are you? Bored?’ Sophia Lvovna looked round at the other nuns and now she lowered her voice: ‘So much has happened . . . you know I married Volodya Yagich. You must remember him . . . I’m very

happy.'

'Well, thank the Lord for that! And is your father well?'

'Yes, he often remembers you. But you must come and see us during the holidays, Olga. Will you do that?'

'Yes, I'll come,' Olga said smiling. 'I'll come the day after tomorrow.'

Without even knowing why, Sophia burst into tears and cried in silence for a whole minute. Then she dried her eyes and said, 'Rita will be very sorry she didn't see you. She's with us too. And Little Volodya. They're at the gate. How pleased they would be to see you! Come out and see them, the service hasn't started yet.'

'All right,' Olga agreed. She crossed herself three times and walked out with Sophia Lvovna.

'So, you said you're happy, Sophia,' she said after they were past the gates.

'Very.'

'Well, thank God.'

When Big Volodya and Little Volodya saw the nun they got off the sledge and greeted her respectfully. They were visibly moved by her pale face and her nun's black habit, and they were both pleased that she remembered them and had come to greet them. Sophia Lvovna wrapped her in a rug and covered her with one flap of her fur coat to protect her from the cold. Her recent tears had lightened and cleansed her soul and she was glad that the noisy, riotous and essentially immoral night had unexpectedly come to such a pure and quiet conclusion. Then to keep Olga by her side longer, she suggested, 'Let's take her for a ride! Olga, get in. Just a little one.'

The men expected the nun to refuse – religious people don't go around in troikas – but to their amazement she agreed and got in. When the troika hurtled off towards the town gates, no one said a word; their only concern was to make her warm and comfortable. Each one of them thought about the difference in her from before. Her face was impassive, somewhat expressionless, cold, pale, transparent, as though water flowed in her veins instead of blood. Two or three years ago she had been buxom and rosy-cheeked, had talked about eligible bachelors and laughed loud at the least thing.

The troika turned round at the town gates. Ten minutes later they were back at the convent and Olga climbed out. The bells were ringing a series of chimes.

‘God be with you,’ Olga said, giving a low, nun- like bow.

‘So you will come then, Olga?’

‘Of course I will.’

She quickly left and soon disappeared through the dark gateway. After the troika had moved on everyone somehow felt very sad. No one said a word. Sophia Lvovna felt weak all over and her heart sank. Making a nun get into a sledge and go for a ride with that drunken crowd struck her now as stupid, tactless and almost sacrilegious. The desire for self- deception vanished with her tipsiness and now she clearly realized that she did not and could not love her husband, it was all nothing but silly nonsense. She had married for money because, as her ex- schoolgirl friends put it, he was ‘madly rich’, because she was terrified of becoming an old maid, like Rita, because her doctor father got on her nerves and because she wanted to annoy Little Volodya. Had she guessed when she was contemplating marriage that it would turn out to be so nasty, painful and ugly, she would never have agreed to it, not for anything in the world. But the damage was done now, she had to accept things.

They arrived home. As she lay in her warm, soft bed and covered herself with a blanket, Sophia Lvovna recalled the dark porch, the smell of incense, the figures by the columns, and she was distressed at the thought that these figures would still be standing there, quite motionless, all the time she was sleeping. Early morning service would be interminably long, and after that there would be the hours, then Mass, then more prayers . . .

‘But surely God exists? He certainly exists and I must certainly die. Therefore, sooner or later, I must think of my soul, eternal life, like Olga does. Olga is saved now, she has solved all her problems for herself . . . But what if there is *no* God? Then her life has been wasted. But how has it been wasted? Why?’

A minute later another thought entered her head. ‘God exists, death will certainly come. I should be thinking of my soul. If Olga could see her death this very minute she would not be afraid. She’s

ready. But the most important thing is, she's solved the riddle of existence for herself. God exists . . . yes. But isn't there another way out apart from becoming a nun? *That* means renouncing life, destroying it . . .' Sophia Lvovna became rather scared and hid her head under the pillow. 'I mustn't think about it,' she whispered, 'I mustn't.'

Yagich was walking up and down in the next room, his spurs softly jingling; he was deep in thought. Sophia Lvovna thought that this man was near and dear to her only in one thing – he was called Volodya too. She sat on her bed and tenderly called, 'Volodya!'

'What do you want?' her husband replied.

'Nothing.'

She lay down again. There were bells tolling – from that same convent, perhaps – and once again she recalled the porch and the dark figures. Thoughts of God and inescapable death wandered through her mind; she pulled the blanket over her head to drown the sound of the bells. She expected, before old age and death came, that her life would drag on for such a terribly long time, and from one day to the next she would have to cope with the nearness of someone she did not love, and who had come into the room just at that moment and was getting into bed; and she would have to suppress that hopeless love for another – someone who was so young, so charming and apparently so unusual. She looked at her husband and wanted to say good night, but she suddenly burst into tears instead. She felt annoyed with herself.

'Well, we're off again,' Yagich said.

She did calm down, but not until later, towards ten in the morning. She had stopped crying and shaking all over; she developed a severe headache, however. Yagich was hurrying, getting ready for late Mass and in the next room he was grumbling at the batman helping him dress. He came into the bedroom once, his spurs softly jingling, took something, and when he came in a second time he was wearing epaulettes and decorations; he limped slightly from rheumatism. He gave Sophia Lvovna the impression he was a beast of prey, prowling and looking round.

Then she heard him on the telephone. 'Please put me through to the Vasilyevsky Barracks,' he said. A minute later he went on, 'Is

that Vasilyevsky Barracks? Please ask Dr Salimovich to come to the phone.' Then, a minute later, 'Who am I speaking to? Volodya? Fine. My dear chap, please ask your father to come over right away, my wife is terribly off colour after what happened yesterday. What's that? He's out? Hm . . . thanks . . . Yes, I'd be much obliged. *Merci*.'

Yagich came into the bedroom for the third time, bent over his wife, made the sign of the cross over her, let her kiss his hand (women who loved him would kiss his hand, he was used to this), and said he would be back for dinner. And he left.

Towards noon the maid announced Little Volodya. Swaying from weariness and her headache, Sophia Lvovna quickly put on her stunning new lilac, fur-trimmed negligee and hurriedly tidied her hair. In her heart she felt inexpressibly tender and trembled for joy – and for fear he might leave. She wanted just one look at him.

Little Volodya was paying her a visit in formal dress –tailcoat and white tie. When Sophia Lvovna came into the drawing-room he kissed her hand, said how deeply sorry he was to see her so unwell. When they had sat down he praised her negligee.

'Seeing Olga last night has upset me,' she said. 'At first it was painful for me, but now I envy her. She is like an immovable rock, it's impossible to budge her. But was there really no other way out for her, Volodya? Can burying oneself alive really solve life's problems? You'd call that death, not life, wouldn't you?' At the mention of Olga, Little Volodya's face showed deep emotion. 'Now look, Volodya, you're a clever man,' Sophia Lvovna said. 'Teach me to be like her. Of course, I'm a non-believer and I couldn't become a nun. But couldn't I do something that would be just as good? I find life hard enough.' After a brief silence she continued, 'Teach me . . . tell me something that will convince me. Just one word.'

'One word? Okay. Ta- ra- ra- boomdeay.'

'Volodya, why do you despise me?' she asked excitedly. 'You speak to me in some special – if you'll forgive the expression – fancy language that one doesn't use with friends and respectable women. You're a successful scholar, you love your studies, but why do you never tell me about them? Why? Aren't I good enough?'

Little Volodya frowned irritably and said, 'Why this sudden passion for scholarship? Perhaps you want us to have a

constitution? Or perhaps sturgeon with horseradish?’

‘Oh, have it your way then. I’m a mediocre, worthless, unprincipled, stupid woman . . . I’ve made thousands, thousands of mistakes. I’m not right in the head, a loose woman, and for that I deserve contempt. But you’re ten years older than me, Volodya, aren’t you? And my husband is thirty years older. You watched me grow up and if you’d wanted to, you could have made me anything you wanted, an angel even. But you . . .’ (here her voice shook) ‘treat me dreadfully. Yagich was an old man when he married me, and you . . .’

‘Well, enough of that. Enough,’ Volodya said, drawing closer to her and kissing both her hands. ‘We’ll leave the Schopenhauers to philosophize and argue about anything they like, but now we’re going to kiss these sweet little hands.’

‘You despise me and if only you knew the suffering it causes me,’ she said hesitantly, knowing beforehand that he would not believe her. ‘If you only knew how I want to improve myself, to start a new life! It fills me with joy just thinking about it,’ she murmured and actually shed a few joyous tears. ‘To be a good, honest, decent person, not to lie, to have a purpose in life.’

‘Stop it please! You don’t have to put on an act for me, I don’t like it,’ Volodya said, looking peevish. ‘Heavens, you’d think we were at the theatre! Let’s behave like normal human beings!’

To prevent him from leaving in a temper she began to make excuses, forced herself to smile – to please him – mentioned Olga again and that she wanted to solve the riddle of her existence, to become a real human being.

‘Ta- ra- ra- boomdeay,’ he chanted softly. ‘Ta- ra- ra- boomdeay!’

And then quite suddenly he clasped her waist. Barely conscious of what she was doing she put her hands on his shoulders and for a whole minute looked rapturously at his clever, sarcastic face, his forehead, eyes, handsome beard . . .

‘You’ve known for a long time that I love you,’ she confessed with an agonized blush and she felt that even her lips had twisted in a paroxysm of shame. ‘I love you. So why do you torment me?’

She closed her eyes and kissed him firmly on the lips. For a long time – a whole minute perhaps – she just could not bring herself to end this kiss, although she knew very well that she was behaving badly, that he might tell her off, or that a servant might come in . . .

Half an hour later, when he had got what he wanted, he sat in the dining- room eating a snack while she knelt before him, staring hungrily into his face. He told her she was like a small dog waiting for someone to toss it a piece of ham. Then he sat her on one knee, rocked her like a child and sang, ‘ Ta- ra- ra- boomdeay . . . Ta- ra- ra- boomdeay!’

When he was about to leave she asked him passionately, ‘When? Later on? Where?’ And she held out both hands to his mouth, as if wanting to catch his reply in them.

‘It’s not really convenient today,’ he said after a moment’s thought. ‘Perhaps tomorrow, though.’

And they parted. Before lunch Sophia Lvovna went off to the convent to see Olga, but was told that she was reading the Psalter for someone who had died. From the convent she went to her father’s and drove aimlessly up and down the main streets and side-streets until evening. While she was riding, for some reason she kept remembering that aunt with the tear- stained eyes, who was fretting her life away.

That night they all went riding on troikas again and heard the gypsies in that out- of- town restaurant. And when they were once again passing the convent Sophia Lvovna thought of Olga and became terrified at the thought that there was no escape for girls and women in her circle, except perpetual troika- rides or entering a convent to mortify the flesh . . .

The following day she had a lovers’ rendezvous once again. She went for solitary cab- rides around town and thought of her aunt.

A week later Little Volodya dropped her. Then life reverted to normal and was just as boring, dreary – and sometimes just as excruciating as it had ever been. The Colonel and Little Volodya had long billiards and piquet sessions, Rita told her tasteless anecdotes in the same lifeless fashion, Sophia Lvovna kept driving in cabs and asking her husband to take her for troika- rides.

Almost every day she called at the convent, boring Olga with her complaints of intolerable suffering; she cried and felt that she had brought something impure, pathetic and shabby into the cell. Olga, however, as if repeating a well- learnt lesson parrot- fashion, told her that there was nothing to worry about, that it would all pass and that God would forgive her.

Gooseberries

The sky had been overcast with rain clouds since early morning. The weather was mild, and not hot and oppressive as it can be on dull grey days when storm clouds lie over the fields for ages and you wait for rain which never comes. Ivan Ivanych, the vet, and Burkin, a teacher at the high school, were tired of walking and thought they would never come to the end of the fields. They could just make out the windmills at the village of Mironositskoye in the far distance – a range of hills stretched away to the right and disappeared far beyond it. They both knew that the river was there, with meadows, green willows and farmsteads, and that if they climbed one of the hills they would see yet another vast expanse of fields, telegraph wires and a train resembling a caterpillar in the distance. In fine weather they could see even as far as the town. And now, in calm weather, when the whole of nature had become gentle and dreamy, Ivan Ivanych and Burkin were filled with love for those open spaces and they both thought what a vast and beautiful country it was.

‘Last time we were in Elder Prokofy’s barn, you were going to tell me a story,’ Burkin said.

‘Yes, I wanted to tell you about my brother.’

Ivan Ivanych heaved a long sigh and lit his pipe before beginning his narrative; but at that moment down came the rain. Five minutes later it was simply teeming. Ivan Ivanych and Burkin were in two minds as to what they should do. The dogs were already soaked through and stood with their tails drooping, looking at them affectionately.

‘We must take shelter,’ Burkin said. ‘Let’s go to Alyokhin’s, it’s not very far.’

‘All right, let’s go there.’

They changed direction and went across mown fields, walking straight on at first, and then bearing right until they came out on the high road. Before long, poplars, a garden, then the red roofs of

barns came into view. The river glinted, and then they caught sight of a wide stretch of water and a white bathing- hut. This was Sofino, where Alyokhin lived.

The mill was turning and drowned the noise of the rain. The wall of the dam shook. Wet horses with downcast heads were standing by some carts and peasants went around with sacks on their heads. Everything was damp, muddy and bleak, and the water had a cold, malevolent look. Ivan Ivanych and Burkin felt wet, dirty and terribly uncomfortable. Their feet were weighed down by mud and when they crossed the dam and walked up to the barns near the manor house they did not say a word and seemed to be angry with each other.

A winnowing fan was droning away in one of the barns and dust poured out of the open door. On the threshold stood the master himself, Alyokhin, a man of about forty, tall, stout, with long hair, and he looked more like a professor or an artist than a landowner. He wore a white shirt that hadn't been washed for a very long time, and it was tied round with a piece of rope as a belt. Instead of trousers he was wearing underpants; mud and straw clung to his boots. His nose and eyes were black with dust. He immediately recognized Ivan Ivanych and Burkin, and was clearly delighted to see them.

'Please come into the house, gentlemen,' he said, smiling, 'I'll be with you in a jiffy.'

It was a large house, with two storeys. Alyokhin lived on the ground floor in the two rooms with vaulted ceilings and small windows where his estate managers used to live. They were simply furnished and smelled of rye bread, cheap vodka and harness. He seldom used the main rooms upstairs, reserving them for guests. Ivan Ivanych and Burkin were welcomed by the maid, who was such a beautiful young woman that they both stopped and stared at each other.

'You can't imagine how glad I am to see you, gentlemen,' Alyokhin said as he followed them into the hall. 'A real surprise!' Then he turned to the maid and said, 'Pelageya, bring some dry clothes for the gentlemen. I suppose I'd better change too. But I must have a wash first, or you'll think I haven't had one since spring. Would you like to come to the bathing- hut while they get

things ready in the house?’

The beautiful Pelageya, who had such a dainty look and gentle face, brought soap and towels, and Alyokhin went off with his guests to the bathing- hut.

‘Yes, it’s ages since I had a good wash,’ he said as he undressed. ‘As you can see, it’s a nice hut. My father built it, but I never find time these days for a swim.’

He sat on one of the steps and smothered his long hair and neck with soap; the water turned brown.

‘Yes, I must confess . . .’ Ivan Ivanych muttered, with a meaningful look at his head.

‘Haven’t had a wash for ages,’ Alyokhin repeated in his embarrassment and soaped himself again; the water turned a dark inky blue.

Ivan Ivanych came out of the cabin, dived in with a loud splash and swam in the rain, making broad sweeps with his arms and sending out waves with white lilies bobbing about on them. He swam right out to the middle of the reach and dived. A moment later he popped up somewhere else and swam on, continually trying to dive right to the bottom.

‘Oh, good God,’ he kept saying with great relish. ‘Good God . . .’

He reached the mill, said a few words to the peasants, then he turned and floated on his back in the middle with his face under the rain. Burkin and Alyokhin were already dressed and ready to leave, but he kept on swimming and diving.

‘Oh, dear God,’ he said. ‘Oh, God!’

‘Now that’s enough,’ Burkin shouted.

They went back to the house. Only when the lamp in the large upstairs drawing- room was alight and Burkin and Ivan Ivanych, wearing silk dressing- gowns and warm slippers, were sitting in armchairs and Alyokhin, washed and combed now and with a new frock- coat on, was walking up and down, obviously savouring the warmth, cleanliness, dry clothes and light shoes, while his beautiful Pelageya glided silently over the carpet and gently smiled as she

served tea and jam on a tray – only then did Ivan Ivanych begin his story. It seemed that Burkin and Alyokhin were not the only ones who were listening, but also the ladies (young and old) and the officers, who were looking down calmly and solemnly from their gilt frames on the walls.

‘There are two of us brothers,’ he began, ‘myself – Ivan Ivanych – and Nikolay Ivanych, who’s two years younger. I studied to be a vet, while Nikolay worked in the district tax office from the time he was nineteen. Chimsha- Gimalaysky, our father, had served as a private, but when he was promoted to officer we became hereditary gentlemen and owners of a small estate. After he died, this estate was sequestered to pay off his debts, but despite this we spent our boyhood in the country free to do what we wanted. Just like any other village children, we stayed out in the fields and woods for days and nights, minded horses, stripped bark, went fishing, and so on . . . As you know very well, anyone who has ever caught a ruff or watched migrating thrushes swarming over his native village on cool clear autumn days can never live in a town afterwards and he’ll always hanker after the free and open life until his dying day. My brother was miserable in the tax office. The years passed, but there he stayed, always at the same old desk, copying out the same old documents and obsessed with this longing for the country. And gradually this longing took the form of a definite wish, a dream of buying a nice little estate somewhere in the country, beside a river or a lake.

‘He was a kind, gentle man and I was very fond of him, but I could never feel any sympathy for him in this longing to lock himself away in a country house for the rest of his life. They say a man needs only six feet of earth, but surely they must mean a corpse – not a *man* ! These days they seem to think that it’s very good if our educated classes want to go back to the land and set their hearts on a country estate. But in reality these estates are only that same six feet all over again. To leave the town and all its noise and hubbub, to go and shut yourself away on your little estate – that’s no life! It’s selfishness, laziness, a peculiar brand of monasticism that achieves nothing. A man needs more than six feet of earth and a little place in the country, he needs the whole wide world, the whole of nature, where there’s room for him to display his potential, all the manifold attributes of his free spirit.

‘As he sat there in his office, my brother Nikolay dreamt of soup made from his own home- grown cabbages, soup that would fill the whole house with a delicious smell; eating meals on the green grass; sleeping in the sun; sitting on a bench outside the main gates for hours on end and looking at the fields and woods. Booklets on agriculture and words of wisdom from calendars were his joy, his favourite spiritual nourishment. He liked newspapers as well, but he only read property adverts – for so many acres of arable land and meadows, with “house, river, garden, mill, and ponds fed by running springs”. And he had visions of garden paths, flowers, fruit, nesting- boxes for starlings, ponds teeming with carp – you know the kind of thing. These visions varied according to the adverts he happened to see, but for some reason, in every single one, there *had* to be gooseberry bushes. “Life in the country has its comforts,” he used to say. “You can sit drinking tea on your balcony, while your ducks are swimming in the pond . . . it all smells so good and um . . . there’s your gooseberries growing away!”

‘He drew up a plan for his estate and it turned out exactly the same every time: (a) manor house; (b) servants’ quarters; (c) kitchen garden; (d) gooseberry bushes. He lived a frugal life, economizing on food and drink, dressing any- old- how –just like a beggar – and putting every penny he saved straight into the bank. He was terribly mean. It was really painful to look at him, so I used to send him a little money on special occasions. But he would put that in the bank too. Once a man has his mind firmly made up there’s nothing you can do about it.

‘Years passed and he was transferred to another province. He was now in his forties, still reading newspaper adverts and still saving up. Then I heard that he’d got married. So that he could buy a country estate with gooseberry bushes, he married an ugly old widow, for whom he felt nothing and only because she had a little money tucked away. He made her life miserable too, half- starved her and banked her money into his own account. She’d been married to a postmaster and was used to pies and fruit liqueurs, but with her second husband she didn’t even have enough black bread. This kind of life made her wither away, and within three years she’d gone to join her maker. Of course, my brother didn’t think that *he* was to blame – not for one minute! Like vodka, money can make a man do the most peculiar things. There was once a

merchant living in our town who was on his deathbed. Just before he died, he asked for some honey, stirred it up with all his money and winning lottery tickets, and swallowed the lot to stop anyone else from laying their hands on it. And another time, when I was inspecting cattle at some railway station, a dealer fell under a train and had his leg cut off. We took him to the local casualty department. The blood simply gushed out, a terrible sight, but all he did was ask for his leg back and was only bothered about the twenty roubles he had tucked away in the boot. Scared he might lose them, I dare say!

‘But that’s neither here nor there,’ Burkin said.

‘When his wife died,’ Ivan continued, after a pause for thought, ‘my brother started looking for an estate. Of course, you can look around for five years and still make the wrong choice and you finish up with something you never even dreamt of. So brother Nikolay bought about three hundred acres, with manor house, servants’ quarters and a park, on a mortgage through an estate agent. But there wasn’t any orchard, gooseberries or duck pond. There *was* a river, but the water was always the colour of coffee because of the brickworks on one side of the estate and a bone- ash factory on the other. But my dear Nikolay didn’t seem to care. He ordered twenty gooseberry bushes, planted them out and settled down to a landowner’s life.

‘Last year I visited him, as I wanted to see what was going on. In his letter my brother had called his estate “Chumbaroklov Patch” or “Gimalaysky’s”. One afternoon I turned up at “Gimalaysky’s”. It was a hot day. Everywhere there were ditches, fences, hedges, rows of small fir trees and there seemed no way into the yard or anywhere to leave my horse. I went up to the house, only to be welcomed by a fat ginger dog that looked rather like a pig. It wanted to bark, but it was too lazy. Then a barefooted, plump cook – she resembled a pig as well – came out of the kitchen and told me the master was having his after- lunch nap. So I went to my brother’s room and there he was sitting up in bed with a blanket over his knees. He’d aged, put on weight and looked very flabby. His cheeks, nose and lips stuck out and I thought any moment he was going to grunt into his blanket, like a pig.

‘We embraced and wept for joy, and at the sad thought that

once we were young and now both of us were grey, and that our lives were nearly over. He got dressed and led me on a tour of the estate.

‘ “Well, how’s it going?” I asked.

‘ “All right, thank God. It’s a good life.”

‘No longer was he the poor, timid little clerk of before, but a real squire, a *gentleman*. He felt quite at home, being used to country life by then and he was enjoying himself. He ate a great deal, took proper baths, and he was putting on weight. Already he was suing the district council and both factories, and he got very peeved when the villagers didn’t call him “sir”. He paid great attention to his spiritual wellbeing (as a gentleman should) and he couldn’t dispense charity nice and quietly, but had to make a great show of it. And what did it all add up to? He doled out bicarbonate of soda or castor oil to his villagers – regardless of what they were suffering from – and on his name- day held a thanksgiving service in the village, supplying vodka in plenty, as he thought this was the right thing to do. Oh, those horrid pints of vodka! Nowadays your fat squire drags his villagers off to court for letting their cattle stray on his land and the very next day (if it’s a high holiday) stands them all a few pints of vodka. They’ll drink it, shout hurray and fall at his feet in a drunken stupor. Better standards of living, plenty to eat, idleness – all this makes us Russians terribly smug. Back in his office, Nikolay had been too scared even to voice any opinions of his own, but now he was expounding the eternal verities in true ministerial style: “Education is essential, but premature as far as the common people are concerned” or “Corporal punishment, generally speaking, is harmful, but in certain cases it can be useful and irreplaceable”. And he’d say, “I know the working classes and how to handle them. They *like* me, I only have to lift my little finger and they’ll do *anything* for me.”

‘And he said all this, mark you, with a clever, good- natured smile. Time after time he’d say “we *gentlemen* ” or “speaking as *one of the gentry* ”. He’d evidently forgotten that our grandfather had been a peasant and our father a common soldier. Even our absolutely ridiculous surname, Chimsha- Gimalaysky, was melodious, distinguished and highly agreeable to his ears now.

‘But it’s myself I’m concerned with, not him. I’d like to tell you

about the change that came over me during the few hours I spent on his estate. Later, when we were having tea, his cook brought us a plateful of gooseberries. They weren't shop gooseberries, but home-grown, the first fruits of the bushes he'd planted. Nikolay laughed and stared at them for a whole minute, with tears in his eyes. He was too deeply moved for words. Then he popped one in his mouth, looked at me like an enraptured child that has finally been given a long-awaited toy and said, "Absolutely delicious!" He ate some greedily and kept repeating, "So tasty, you *must* try one!"

"They were hard and sour, but as Pushkin says: "Uplifting illusion is dearer to us than a host of truths." This was a happy man whose cherished dreams had clearly come true, who had achieved his life's purpose, had got what he wanted and was happy with his lot – and himself. My thoughts about human happiness, for some peculiar reason, had always been tinged with a certain sadness. But now, seeing this happy man, I was overwhelmed by a feeling of despondency that was close to utter despair. I felt particularly low that night. They made up a bed for me in the room next to my brother's. He was wide awake and I could hear him getting up, going over to the plate and helping himself to one gooseberry at a time. And I thought how many satisfied, happy people really do exist in this world! And what a powerful force they are! Just take a look at this life of ours and you will see the arrogance and idleness of the strong, the ignorance and bestiality of the weak. Everywhere there's unspeakable poverty, overcrowding, degeneracy, drunkenness, hypocrisy and stupid lies . . . And yet peace and quiet reign in every house and street. Out of fifty thousand people you won't find one who is prepared to shout out loud and make a strong protest. We see people buying food in the market, eating during the day, sleeping at night-time, talking nonsense, marrying, growing old and then contentedly carting their dead off to the cemetery. But we don't hear or see those who suffer: the real tragedies of life are enacted somewhere behind the scenes. Everything is calm and peaceful and the only protest comes from statistics – and they can't talk. Figures show that so many went mad, so many bottles of vodka were emptied, so many children died from malnutrition. And clearly this kind of system is what people need. It's obvious that the happy man feels contented only because the unhappy ones bear their burden without saying a word: if it weren't for their silence, happiness would be quite impossible. It's a kind of mass hypnosis.

Someone ought to stand with a hammer at the door of every happy contented man, continually banging on it to remind him that there are unhappy people around and that however happy *he* may be at the time, sooner or later life will show him its claws and disaster will overtake him in the form of illness, poverty, bereavement and there will be no one to hear or see him. But there isn't anyone holding a hammer, so our happy man goes his own sweet way and is only gently ruffled by life's trivial cares, as an aspen is ruffled by the breeze. All's well as far as *he's* concerned.

'That night I realized that I too was happy and contented,' Ivan Ivanych went on, getting to his feet. 'I too had lectured people over dinner – or out hunting – on how to live, on what to believe, on how to handle the common people. And I too had told them that knowledge is a shining lamp, that education is essential, and that plain reading and writing is good enough for the masses, for the moment. Freedom is a blessing, I told them, and we need it like the air we breathe, but we must wait for it patiently.'

Ivan Ivanych turned to Burkin and said angrily, 'Yes, that's what I used to say and now I'd like to know *what* is it we're waiting for? I'm asking you, *what* ? What is it we're trying to prove? I'm told that nothing can be achieved in five minutes, that it takes time for any kind of idea to be realized; it's a gradual process. But who says so? And what is there to prove he's right? You refer to the natural order of things, to the law of cause and effect. But is there any law or order in a state of affairs where a lively, thinking person like myself should have to stand by a ditch and wait until it's choked with weeds, or silted up, when I could quite easily, perhaps, leap across it or bridge it? I ask you again, what are we waiting for? Until we have no more strength to live, although we long to and *need* to go on living?

'I left my brother early next morning and ever since then I've found town life unbearable. I'm depressed by peace and quiet, I'm scared of peering through windows, nothing makes me more dejected than the sight of a happy family sitting round the table drinking tea. But I'm old now, no longer fit for the fray, I'm even incapable of hating. I only feel sick at heart, irritable and exasperated. At night my head seems to be on fire with so many thoughts crowding in and I can't get any sleep . . . Oh, if only I were young again!'

Ivan Ivanych paced the room excitedly, repeating, 'If only I were young again!'

Suddenly he went up to Alyokhin and squeezed one hand, then the other. 'Pavel Konstantinych,' he pleaded, 'don't go to sleep or be lulled into complacency! While you're still young, strong and healthy, never stop doing good! Happiness doesn't exist, we don't need any such thing. If life has *any* meaning or purpose, you won't find it in happiness, but in something more rational, in something greater. Doing good!'

Ivan Ivanych said all this with a pitiful, imploring smile, as though pleading for himself.

Afterwards all three of them sat in armchairs in different parts of the room and said nothing. Ivan Ivanych's story satisfied neither Burkin nor Alyokhin. It was boring listening to that story about some poor devil of a clerk who ate gooseberries, while those generals and ladies, who seemed to have come to life in the gathering gloom, peered out of their gilt frames. For some reason they would have preferred discussing and hearing about refined people, about ladies. The fact that they were all sitting in a drawing-room where everything – the draped chandeliers, the armchairs, the carpets underfoot – indicated that those same people who were now looking out of their frames had once walked around, sat down and drunk their tea there . . . and with beautiful Pelageya moving about here without a sound – all this was better than any story.

Alyokhin was dying to get to bed. That morning he had been up and about very early (before three) working on the farm, and he could hardly keep his eyes open. However, he was frightened he might miss some interesting story if he left now, so he stayed. He didn't even try to fathom if everything that Ivan Ivanych had just been saying was clever, or even true: he was only too glad that his guests did not discuss oats or hay or tar, but things that had nothing to do with his way of life, and he wanted them to continue . . .

'But it's time we got some sleep,' Burkin said, standing up. 'May I wish you all a very good night!'

Alyokhin bade them good night and went down to his room, while his guests stayed upstairs. They had been given the large

room with two old, elaborately carved beds and an ivory crucifix in one corner. These wide, cool beds had been made by the beautiful Pelageya and the linen had a pleasant fresh smell.

Ivan Ivanych undressed without a word and got into bed. Then he muttered, 'Lord have mercy on us sinners!' and pulled the blankets over his head. His pipe, which was lying on a table, smelt strongly of stale tobacco and Burkin was so puzzled as to where the terrible smell was coming from that it was a long time before he fell asleep.

All night long the rain beat against the windows.



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How Much Land Does a Man Need

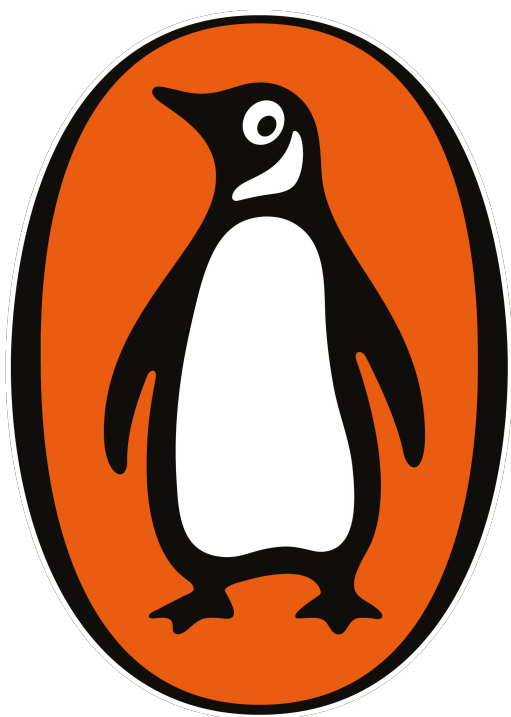
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“‘已经跑了这么多，
现在停下来，
会被人家笑话的！’”



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*此中文译本译自俄语原文

一个人需要许多土地吗？

—

姐姐从城里来乡下看望妹妹。姐姐嫁了个城里商人，妹妹嫁了个乡下农民。姐妹俩喝着茶，谈着天。姐姐得意扬扬地吹嘘她在城里的生活：她的房子多么宽敞，衣服多么时髦，她的孩子打扮得多么漂亮，她吃得多么香，喝得多么美，她怎么乘马车兜风，上剧场看戏。

妹妹听了很生气，就竭力贬低商人的生活，美化农民的生活。

她说：“我可不愿拿我的生活换你那种生活。尽管日子清苦，我们却无忧无虑。你们过得阔气，有时大发其财，但有时亏个精光。常言道：赚钱、亏本是双胞胎。今天百万富翁，明天上街要饭。我们庄稼人要稳当得多。我们肚子里油水少，但是寿命长，我们发不了财，也饿不了肚子。”

姐姐说：“成天同猪牛打交道，肚子能吃得饱？你们不懂得文明，不知道礼貌！不论你们当家的怎样累死累活，一辈子泡在猪粪牛尿里，永远没有出头的日子，你们的孩子也一样。”

妹妹说：“是的，我们干的就是这样的活儿，但日子过得踏实，我们不求人，也不怕谁。你们在城里到处受诱惑：今天太太平平，明天就会碰上魔鬼，引诱你们当家的去赌钱喝酒，嫖妓宿娼，到头来一场空。难道没有这样的事吗？”

当家的巴霍姆这时躺在炕上，听着她们闲聊。

“说得对，”他说道，“我们庄稼人从小种地，脑子从来不胡思乱想。只对一件事烦恼——地太少！要是有足够的土地，别说人，就是魔鬼也吓不倒我！”

姐妹俩喝完茶，又谈了一通衣着打扮，收拾好杯盘，躺下睡觉。

不料魔鬼坐在炕后面，这番话他听得一清二楚。魔鬼感到高兴，因为农民老婆夸奖丈夫，说他要是有了土地，就连魔鬼也不怕。

魔鬼想：“好吧，让我来跟你较量一下。我给你许多土地，就用土地来制服你。”

二

附近住着一个不大富裕的太太。她有一百二十俄亩 ^[1] 地。原来

她跟农民相处得很好，她不欺负他们。后来她雇了一个退伍兵来当管家，他动不动就要罚农民款。尽管巴霍姆小心翼翼，还是常常出事，不是马冲进燕麦地，就是牛闯到花园里，再不就是牛犊践踏草地，他就只好被罚款。

巴霍姆付了罚款，就回家打骂老婆孩子。一个夏天，巴霍姆吃了这个管家许多苦。等到牲口圈起来过冬，他才放下心来，虽然得多费点儿饲料，但不用担惊受怕。

冬天，听说太太要出卖土地，大路上一家客店的老板想把它买下来。农民们听了都很恐慌。他们想：“要是客店老板买下这块地，他罚起款来一定比太太更厉害。我们不能没有这块地，我们都靠它过活。”农民们就一起来到太太那里，要求她别把地卖给客店老板而卖给他们，他们愿意多出点儿钱。太太答应了。农民们商量由村社买下整块土地。他们商量了一次又一次，但始终没有谈成。原来是魔鬼在其中作怪，使他们的意见不能统一。最后农民们决定各人根据自己的力量各买各的，太太也答应了。巴霍姆听说邻居向太太买了二十俄亩地，太太答应先收一半钱，其余一半一年后再付。巴霍姆很羡慕，想：“地都被买光了，弄得我一无所有。”他就同妻子商量。

他说：“大家都在买地，我们也得买十来俄亩。要不管家动不动就罚款，我们没法儿过日子。”

他们考虑怎样设法买地。他们有一百卢布存款，卖掉一匹马驹和一半蜜蜂，把儿子抵押出去当雇工，再向连襟借点儿钱，这样就能凑满一半地价。

巴霍姆凑齐钱，看中一块地，有十五俄亩，带一片小树林，就去同太太谈。他们谈成了这笔买卖，拍了板，付了定金。他们又进城，把地契过了户，付了一半款子，其余一半两年内付清。

这样，巴霍姆就有了自己的土地。他借了种子，播在他买来的土地上。庄稼长得很好。一年之内他就付清了太太的欠款，还了连襟的债。巴霍姆从此成了土地的主人：他耕种自己的地，在自己的地上割草，在自己的地上伐木，在自己的地上放牧牲口。不论翻耕自己的土地，还是观赏自己的作物或者草地，巴霍姆总是心花怒放。他总觉得他土地上的草长得特别茂盛，花开得格外美丽。以前他走过这片土地，觉得它同别的土地一样，但现在却觉得它与众不同。

三

巴霍姆这样过着日子，感到心满意足。只要邻居不来糟蹋他的庄稼和草地，就一切称心如意了。他恳求他们，但是没有用：一会儿牧人把牛放到他的草地上，一会儿夏天夜里放牧的马闯进他的庄稼地。

巴霍姆总是把牲口赶走，原谅主人。他一直忍着不去告状，但后来实在受不了了，就告到乡里。他知道邻居这样做并不是有意的，而是因为土地太少，但又想：“也不能听任不管，这样下去他们会把地糟蹋光的。得教训教训他们。”

他一次一次上法院告状，法院罚一两个农民赔偿。邻居们对巴霍姆就怀恨在心，一再故意糟蹋他的地。有一天夜里他来到树林里，看见有十棵椴树被砍倒剥去树皮。巴霍姆来到树林里，看见有样东西白乎乎的。他骑马跑近一看，地上横着几棵椴树，旁边露出几个树桩。要是只砍去边上几棵倒也罢了，可是那坏蛋竟砍个精光。巴霍姆看了大为生气：“哼，我要知道是谁干的，我就找他算账。”他想来想去，断定：“不是别人，准是谢苗。”他走到谢苗家去找，什么也没有找到，两人只对骂了一通。他告到法院，谢苗被传去审问。法院一再审查，谢苗进行辩解，也没有找到罪证。巴霍姆越发生气，他跟乡长、法官都吵了嘴。

“你们包庇小偷。要是你们大公无私，就不会开脱小偷了。”

巴霍姆跟法官和左邻右舍都吵了嘴。有人威胁要烧他的房子。巴霍姆的地虽然多了，但他的日子却更加难过。

当时盛传有许多人迁移到新的地区去。巴霍姆想：“我可不用离开我的土地，要是有人离开这儿，我们的地盘可以宽广些。我会把他们的地弄到手，把我的农庄扩大，这样日子就会更舒坦。要不总觉得土地太少。”

一天，巴霍姆坐在家，来了一个过路的农民。巴霍姆留他在家过夜，给他饭吃，同他谈天，问他从什么地方来。农民说，他从伏尔加河下游来，他在那里当雇工。谈着谈着，农民说，有许多人迁移到那里，他们就在那里定居，加入村社，每人分到十俄亩地。

他说：“那边的地很肥，种下黑麦，麦秆长得比马背还高，可茂盛了，五把就可以扎一大捆。有个农民很穷，去的时候只有一双手，如今已有六匹马、两头牛了。”

巴霍姆心动了。他想：“既然有好日子可过，何必在这里受穷？我把这里的地和房子都卖掉，到那边另起炉灶，大干一番。挤在这小地方真是活受罪。不过我得亲自去了解了解。”

他在初夏动身，乘轮船沿伏尔加河到萨马拉，然后步行四百俄里[2] 到达目的地。情况果然如此。农民的地很多，每人分到十俄亩，他们高高兴兴加入村社。谁要是有钱，除了份地外还可以买地，最好的地每俄亩只要三卢布，要多少可以买多少！

巴霍姆把情况了解清楚后，秋天回家把东西变卖一空。他带点儿

赚头卖掉土地，又卖掉房子和牲口，退出村社。开春就全家搬到了新地方去。

四

巴霍姆带着一家人来到新地方，参加了一个大村的村社。他招待村社长辈喝酒，弄到了各种证件。村社接受巴霍姆入社，分给他五十俄亩份地，分在几个地方，牧场是公用的。巴霍姆盖了房子，养了牲口。单是从村社分到的地就比原来的多两倍，而且都是种庄稼的沃土。日子过得比原来好十倍。饲料也很充裕，牲口要养多少就可以养多少。

巴霍姆在这里安顿下来，感到称心如意，但定居后，又觉得土地不够。第一年，巴霍姆在份地上种小麦，收成很好。他种小麦来了劲，但觉得地不够。刚种过的地不宜立刻再种。当地人在熟荒地和休闲地上种小麦，种了一两年就让土地休闲，长野草。这种地要的人很多，不够分配，为此常常发生争吵。有钱的自己种，穷人则把地租给商人，租金用来缴税。巴霍姆想多种些，第二年就去向商人租来一块地，一年为期。他种得更多，收成更好，但那块地离家太远，赶车得走十五俄里。他看到有些农民兼做买卖，自己有农庄，日子过得很阔气。巴霍姆想：“我要是也买点儿私地，办个农庄，就更称心如意了。”巴霍姆开始考虑怎样买私地。

巴霍姆这样过了三年。他租地种小麦，年年风调雨顺，小麦喜获丰收，钱越存越多。这样的日子本可以一直过下去，但他感到麻烦，因为年年得为租地奔走忙碌，什么地方有好地，农民就涌到那里，把地一抢而光。你去晚了，就没有地种。第三年，他同一个商人向农民合买一片牧场，农民已耕了地，可是有纠纷，农民们告到官府，地也就白耕了。他想：“如果那地是自己的，就不用向人打躬作揖，也不会有麻烦了。”

巴霍姆到处打听哪里可以买到私地。他遇到一个农民，向他买了五百俄亩地，那人破产了，所以卖得很便宜。巴霍姆同他讨价还价，谈了半天，最后以一千五百卢布成交，一半付现金。这事差不多已办成，不想有个商人路过他那里喂马。巴霍姆同他一起喝茶，谈天。商人讲到他从遥远的巴什基尔来。他说，他向巴什基尔人买了五千俄亩地，总共才花了一千卢布。巴霍姆就向他详细打听这事。商人说：“不过先得去巴结老人。我花一百卢布买了绸袍、地毯送给他们，再加一箱茶叶，把能喝酒的都请来喝酒。结果我就以每俄亩二十戈比的价钱成交了。”他出示地契说，“地都在河边，上面长满茅草。”

巴霍姆又详细打听了一番。

商人说：“那边的土地一年也走不到头，全是巴什基尔人的。巴

什基尔人像羊一样没有脑子，那里的地几乎可以白拿。”

巴霍姆想：“既然如此，我何必花一千五百卢布去买五百俄亩地，还要欠债！我拿一千卢布到那边可以买到多少地啊！”

五

巴霍姆问清了到那地方的路径。他送走商人就准备动身。他抛下家给妻子照管，自己带了一名雇工出发。他们来到城里，照商人的话买了一箱茶叶、礼品和酒。他们走啊走啊，一连走了大约五百俄里，第七天来到巴什基尔人的游牧地。一切就像商人所说的那样，巴什基尔人临河搭了毡帐篷，住在草原上。他们不种地，也不吃粮。草原上放着成群的牛马。马驹拴在帐篷后面，母马一天两次被牵来喂奶。他们挤马奶，做马奶酒。巴什基尔女人搅马奶酒，做干酪，男人只知道喝马奶酒，饮茶，吃羊肉，吹笛子。他们个个肥肥胖胖，快快活活，整个夏天就像过节一样不干活儿。他们愚昧无知，不懂俄语，但是和蔼可亲。

巴什基尔人一看见巴霍姆从帐篷里出来，就把他团团围住。他们找来一名翻译。巴霍姆对他们说，他是来看地的。巴什基尔人听了很高兴，把巴霍姆领到一个最好的帐篷里，让他坐在地毯上，又给了他羽绒靠枕。他们围坐在四周，请他饮茶，喝马奶酒。巴什基尔人还宰了一头羊，请他吃羊肉。巴霍姆从马车里取出礼品，分送给他们。巴霍姆送了巴什基尔人礼品，又把茶叶分给他们。巴什基尔人很高兴，彼此叽里咕噜地说了一通，然后叫翻译告诉巴霍姆。

翻译说：“他们说，他们喜欢你，我们这里的风俗是尽量让客人高兴，还要回赠礼品。你送了我们礼品，现在你说说，你喜欢我们这里什么东西，我们好给你还礼。”

“我最喜欢你们这里的土地，”巴霍姆说，“我们那里地少，而且种薄了，你们这里地多，而且很肥。这样好的地我还没见过呢。”

翻译翻译了他的话。巴什基尔人又交谈了好一阵。巴霍姆不明白他们在说些什么，但看出他们很高兴，又是叫，又是笑。随后他们安静下来，望着巴霍姆，翻译就说：“他们要我对你说，他们愿意给你土地来回报你的好意，你要多少给你多少。你只要用手点一点，那地就是你的了。”

他们又谈了一会儿，像是在争论什么问题。巴霍姆问他们在争论什么，翻译说：“有人说，土地的事得问问头人，没得到他的许可不行。也有人说，没得到他的许可也可以。”

六

巴什基尔人争论着，突然来了个戴狐皮帽的人。大家都不说话，站起来。翻译说：“这位就是头人。”

巴霍姆立刻拿出一件最好的绸袍送给头人，还给了他五磅茶叶。头人接受了礼物，在首席坐下。巴什基尔人立刻对头人说着什么。头人听着听着，点了点头，告诉他们不用再说下去。然后他用俄语对巴霍姆说话。

“好吧，”他说，“你喜欢什么地方，就拿什么地方。地多的是。”

“我怎么能把要的地都拿到手呢？”巴霍姆想，“总得有个保证啊。要不现在说是我的，以后又把地收回去。”

“谢谢你们的美意，”巴霍姆说，“你们的地很多，我要的不多。不过我要知道给我的地是哪一块。总得量一下，给我定下来。要不死生由命，现在你们这些好人给了我土地，但难保将来你们的子孙不收回去。”

“你说的有理，”头人说，“可以定下来。”

巴霍姆说：“我听说有个商人来过你们这儿，你们也给了他地，还写了契约，我也希望这样做。”

头人懂得他的意思。

“这都不成问题，”他说，“我们这儿有文书。我们到城里去一次，正式订个契约。”

“那么价钱怎么算？”巴霍姆问。

“我们这儿只有一个价：一千卢布一天。”

巴霍姆不懂他的意思。

“一天是多少啊？一天等于几俄亩？”

“我们不会算，”他说，“我们出卖土地用天计算；你一天能绕多少地，这些地就归你，价钱是一千卢布一天。”

巴霍姆感到惊讶，他说：“一天走下来，那地可多啦！”

头人笑起来。

“全部归你！”头人说，“但有一个条件：你要是当天不能回到出发的地方，你的钱就白花了。”

“那我怎么在走过的地方做记号？”巴霍姆问。

“我们将站在你看中的地方，你去绕一圈，随身带一把铲子，你要什么地方，就挖个坑盖上草做记号，我们再从一个坑到另一个坑犁

出一条沟。你要绕多大的圈子，就绕多大的圈子，但日落之前一定要回到出发的地方。你一圈绕下来的地方都归你所有。”

巴霍姆高兴极了。他们决定第二天一早出发。接着大家又谈天，又喝马奶酒，又吃羊肉，又饮茶，直到天黑。他们安排巴霍姆睡羽绒褥子，讲定天一亮就集合，日出前出发，这才各自回家。

七

巴霍姆躺在羽绒褥子上睡不着，心里一直在想：“我要弄到一大块地。我一天可以走五十俄里路。现在日长，五十俄里绕一圈地可多啦。以后我把坏地卖掉，或者让给农民，挑最好的地自己种。我要买两头公牛，雇两名工人。我要种五十俄亩地，其余的养草放牲口。”

巴霍姆通宵没有合眼，直到天快亮才迷迷糊糊地睡着。他做了个梦，梦见他就躺在这个帐篷里，听见外面有人在哈哈大笑。他想看看谁在笑，就起身走出帐篷，看见巴什基尔头人坐在帐篷前捧腹大笑。他走过去问道：“你在笑什么呀？”他发现这人不是巴什基尔头人，而是几天前路过他家告诉他买地的商人。他刚问商人：“你来这儿好久了？”立刻又发现他不是商人，而是那个好久前从伏尔加河下游来的农民。接着巴霍姆又看见那不是农民，而是一个长着犄角和蹄子的魔鬼。魔鬼坐在那里哈哈大笑，前面躺着个只穿短衫裤的赤脚农民。巴霍姆仔细瞧瞧，才发现这是个死人，而且就是他自己。巴霍姆吓醒了，想：“真是什么梦都会做啊！”他回头一看，看见门外天色已经发白。他想：“得叫醒人，是时候了。”巴霍姆起身，叫醒车上的雇工，吩咐他套车，自己则去唤醒巴什基尔人。

“起来吧，到草原上去量地。”他说。

巴什基尔人纷纷起来，聚集在一起，头人也来了。巴什基尔人又喝马奶酒，还要请巴霍姆饮茶，但巴霍姆等不及了。

“要走就走吧，是时候了。”他说。

八

巴什基尔人集合起来，有的骑马，有的坐车，大家出发。巴霍姆跟他的雇工带了铲子，坐上自己的马车上路。他们来到草原上，朝霞刚刚出现。他们爬上一座小丘。大家下了车，下了马，聚在一起。头人走到巴霍姆跟前，用手指着说：“瞧，这片土地都是我们的，一眼望不到边。你随便挑吧。”

巴霍姆眼睛红了：这是一片熟荒地，平得像手掌，黑得像鸦片，洼地上野草丛生，长得齐胸高。

头人摘下狐皮帽放在地上，说：“瞧，这就是记号。你从这儿出发，再回到这儿。凡是你绕一圈走下来的地都归你。”

巴霍姆摸出钱放在帽子上，脱下长袍，只穿一件短袄，收紧宽腰带，把一袋面包揣在怀里，又把水壶挂在腰带上，拉拉靴筒，向雇工要了铲子，准备上路。他反复考虑走哪个方向，觉得到处都是好地。他想：“反正都一样，我朝太阳升起的地方走就是了。”他面对太阳站着，活动活动身子，等太阳从天边出来。他想：“不能浪费时间，要趁凉快赶路。”等太阳从地平线一出来，巴霍姆就背起铲子向草原走去。

巴霍姆走得不快不慢。他走了一俄里光景停下来站住，挖了一个坑，盖上草皮，这样醒目些。接着又向前走。他活动活动身子，加快脚步。他走了一段路，又挖了一个坑。

巴霍姆回头望了望。小丘在阳光下看得清清楚楚，人们站在那里，马车的轮子闪闪发亮。巴霍姆估计他已走了五俄里。他感到热，脱下短袄搭在肩上，继续往前走。又走了五俄里的样子。天气更热了。他望望太阳，已是吃早饭的时候。

“已经走了一程 [3]，”巴霍姆想，“不过一天能走四程路，回去还早。让我把靴子脱掉。”他坐下来脱下靴子挂在腰带上，继续走路。现在比较轻松了。他想：“让我再走五俄里，然后往左拐。这地方太好了，放弃可惜。越往前，地越好。”他又一直走过去。他回头一看，小丘隐约可见，小丘上的人像黑蚂蚁，还有一样东西在发亮。

巴霍姆想：“是啊，这个方向已走了不少路，得拐弯了。可把我渴死了，真想喝点儿水。”他停下来，挖了个更大的坑，盖上草皮，解下水壶，喝了个够，就陡然向左拐弯。他走啊走，草长得更高，天更热了。

巴霍姆走累了。他望望太阳，已是吃午饭的时候。他想：“好吧，让我歇会儿。”巴霍姆收住脚步，蹲下来。他吃了点儿面包，又喝了点儿水，但没有躺下。他想：“我一躺下就会睡着的。”他坐了一会儿，继续往前走。起初走得还轻松，因为吃了点儿东西，添了力气。天气越来越热，他直想打瞌睡，但他没有停下来，心里想，忍耐一时，享福一世。

他朝这个方向又走了许多路，正想向左拐，忽然看见一片水洼地，觉得放弃可惜。他想：“这里种亚麻很好。”他又一直向前走去。他走过水洼地，在那边挖了一个坑，拐了弯。巴霍姆回头望望小丘，那边热得雾气弥漫，仿佛空气也在颤动，隐约看得见小丘上的人，离他大约有十五俄里。巴霍姆想：“哦，那两边走得够多了，这边得少走些。”他加快脚步朝第三个方向走去。他望望太阳，太阳已到中

天，可第三个方向还只走了两俄里。距离出发的地方仍有十五俄里。他想：“不行，虽然这样我会弄到一块斜形地，但是必须笔直赶回去。我不要更多的地，现在已经很多了。”巴霍姆急忙挖了一个坑，拐弯笔直向小丘走去。

九

巴霍姆一直向小丘走去。他汗流浹背，两脚划破，浑身瘫软。他想歇一会儿，但是不能，日落之前要赶不回去的。太阳不等人，越来越往下沉，往下沉。他想：“哦，我是不是要的太多了？会不会来不及？”他往前望望小丘，望望太阳：离出发点很远，而太阳离地平线却不远了。

巴霍姆一直走着，越来越吃力，但仍不断加快脚步。他走啊走啊，离终点还是很远。他小跑起来。他抛下短袄、靴子、水壶和帽子，只拿着铲子当拐杖。他想：“唉，我太贪心，这下子全完了。日落以前我跑不到了。”他心里发慌，更加上气不接下气。巴霍姆跑得浑身大汗，衬衫衬裤都贴在身上，嘴巴发干。他的胸膛好像铁匠铺里的风箱一样拼命喘气，心上好像有一把铁锤在敲打，两腿失去知觉，好像散了架。巴霍姆感到害怕，心里想：“可别累死啊。”

他怕死，但又不愿停下来。他想：“已经跑了这么多，现在停下来，会被人家笑话的。”他跑啊跑啊，越来越接近终点，他听见巴什基尔人在向他大声叫喊，心里更加发慌。他拼出最后的力气向前跑去，太阳已接近地平线，落到迷雾中，它又大又红，像血染了一样，眼看就要落下去了。太阳离地平线很近，他到达出发点也不远了。巴霍姆已看见小丘上人们在向他招手，要他加油。他看见地上的狐皮帽，看见帽子上的钱；他看见头人坐在地上，双手按住肚子。巴霍姆想起了他的梦，同时想：“土地很多，但上帝是不是让我在上面过？唉，我把自己给毁了，我跑不到了。”

巴霍姆望望太阳，太阳已触到地平线，一半已隐没不见，只剩下一半。巴霍姆竭尽全力冲去，两只脚勉强跟上，使自己不致倒下。巴霍姆跑近小丘，天色突然黑下来。他回头一看，太阳已经落山了。巴霍姆大叫一声，想：“我白费力气了。”他想停下来，但听见巴什基尔人还在叫喊。他突然想到，他从低处看太阳已经落下，但从小丘上看太阳一定还没有落下。他拼着最后一口气跑上小丘。小丘上还很亮。巴霍姆跑上去，看见了帽子。帽子前面坐着头人，双手捧腹哈哈笑着。巴霍姆想起了那个梦，他惊叫一声，两腿一软扑倒在地，他的手伸出去够着了帽子。

“啊，真是条好汉！”头人叫道，“你得到了许多土地！”

巴霍姆的雇工跑过来，想把他扶起，但他口吐鲜血，躺在地上死

了。

巴什基尔人叹息不已。

雇工拿起铲子给巴霍姆挖了一个坑，从头到脚有三俄尺 [4] 长，就把他埋了。

[1] 一俄亩约合1.09公顷。（说明：书中脚注均为译者注。）

[2] 一俄里约合1.0668公里。

[3] 一程指马一口气能走的路。

[4] 一俄尺合0.71米。

人靠什么生活

我们因为爱弟兄，就晓得是已经出生入死了。没有爱心的，仍住在死中。（《新约·约翰一书》，第三章，第十四节）

凡有世上财物的，看见弟兄穷乏，却塞住怜恤的心，爱上帝的心怎能存在他里面呢？（同上，第三章，第十七节）

小子们哪，我们相爱，不要只在言语和舌头上，总要在行为和诚实上。（同上，第三章，第十八节）

爱是从上帝来的，凡有爱心的，都是由上帝而生，并且认识上帝。（同上，第四章，第七节）

没有爱心的，就不认识上帝，因为上帝就是爱。（同上，第四章，第八节）

从来没有人见过上帝。我们若彼此相爱，上帝就住在我们里面。（同上，第四章，第十二节）

上帝就是爱。住在爱里面的，就是住在上帝里面，上帝也住在他里面。（同上，第四章，第十六节）

人若说，我爱上帝却恨他的弟兄，就是说谎话的。不爱他所看见的弟兄，就不能爱没有看见的上帝。（同上，第四章，第二十节）

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从前有个鞋匠，他带着老婆、孩子租了农民的一所小房子，住在那里。他没有自己的房子，没有土地，靠做鞋养家糊口。粮食贵，工钱贱，挣得的钱全部吃光。夫妻俩只有一件皮袄，而且这件皮袄也已穿得破破烂烂。鞋匠想买一块羊皮做件新皮袄，为此他已攒了一年多的钱。

到今年秋天，鞋匠已攒了一些钱；老婆箱子里藏着一张三卢布钞票，还有五卢布二十戈比是村里农民欠他的债。

一天早晨，鞋匠打算去村里买羊皮。他在衬衫外面穿上老婆的布棉袄，外面再套一件布长袍，口袋里放着那张三卢布钞票。他折了一根棍子，吃过早饭就动身。他想：“我从农民那里收来五卢布，再加上自己的三卢布，就可以买一块羊皮做新皮袄了。”

鞋匠来到村里，走进一个农民家，农民出去了，他老婆没钱，但答应一星期内叫丈夫送去。他去找另一个农民，那农民指天发誓说他没钱，只付了二十戈比修鞋费。鞋匠想赊一块羊皮，可是卖皮货的信不过他。

“拿钱来，”他说，“皮子随你挑，我可尝过讨债的滋味。”

结果鞋匠一事无成，只收到二十戈比修鞋钱，还有一双旧毡靴，那是一个农民要他拿回去用皮子码边的。

鞋匠垂头丧气，拿二十戈比全喝了伏特加，空着一双手回家。早晨，鞋匠感到寒冷彻骨，但喝了点儿酒，不穿皮袄也还暖和。鞋匠走大路回家，一手拿棍子敲着冰冻的地面，一手摇摇晃晃提着毡靴，嘴里自言自语：“我不穿皮袄也挺暖和。一杯酒下肚，浑身发热，皮袄都用不着了。我现在高高兴兴回家去。嗨，我就是这样一个人！有什么可烦恼的？没有皮袄照样活下去。我一辈子也用不着皮袄，可是老太婆会不高兴的。再说，你整天给人干活儿，却一个钱也拿不到，总叫人生气。哼，你要是不拿钱来，我就摘你帽子，真的，摘你帽子。要不这像什么话？一次只给你二十戈比！哼，二十戈比能干什么？只能喝一盅。他说他手头紧。你手头紧，我就不紧？你有房子，有牲口，什么都有。你有自己种的粮，可我得花钱买粮吃。不论怎么说，我光买面包每星期就得三卢布。我回去，家里没有面包，又得掏出一个半卢布去买。所以你得把欠的钱还我。”

这时鞋匠来到大路转角处的一座小教堂旁。他看见教堂那边有个白乎乎的东西。天已黑下来，鞋匠仔细看了半天，也看不清究竟是什么。他想：“石头吗？这里没有这样的石头。牲口吗？又不像牲口。脑袋有点儿像人，但怎么会是白乎乎的？再说，人怎么会待在那里？”

他走近些，看清楚了。真稀奇，的确是一个人，但不知是死是活，光着身子坐在那里，身子靠在教堂墙上，一动不动。鞋匠很害怕，心里想：“准是谁杀了他，剥去衣服，把他扔在这里。我要是再走近点儿，就脱不了干系啦。”

鞋匠从旁边绕过去，走到教堂后面就看不见那个人了。他走过教堂，回头一看，那人已不再靠着墙壁，身子在动，仿佛也瞧着他。鞋

匠越发害怕，心里想：“走过去，还是绕开？走过去，难保不出事，谁知道他是什么人？他落到这里准不是什么好事。要是走过去，他跳起来掐我的脖子，我就别想脱身了。即使他不掐脖子，你能拿一个光身子的人怎么办？总不能把自己身上最后一件衣服脱给他吧。上帝保佑！”

鞋匠加快脚步，眼看就要绕过教堂，但他的良心不答应。

鞋匠在路上站住。

“谢苗，你这算什么呀？”他自己对自己说，“人家遭难都快死了，你却害怕，想绕过去。难道你发了大财，怕人家抢你的钱吗？唉，谢苗，这样可不好！”

谢苗转身向那人走去。

二

谢苗走到那人身边，仔细一看，发现他年轻力壮，身上没有伤痕，但是几乎冻僵了。这可把他吓坏了。那人斜靠在墙上，眼睛不看谢苗，样子非常虚弱，连眼皮也抬不起来。谢苗走到他跟前，那人仿佛突然清醒过来，转过头，睁开眼睛，瞧了瞧谢苗。他的目光引起谢苗的爱怜。谢苗把毡靴往地上一扔，解下腰带放在毡靴上，然后脱下长袍。

“你不用说什么！”谢苗说，“快穿上！来！”

谢苗抓住那人的手肘，扶他站起来。那人站了起来。谢苗看到他身体细长、干净，手脚完整，相貌和蔼可亲。谢苗把长袍披在他肩上，可是他的手臂伸不进衣袖。谢苗把他的手塞进衣袖里，给他掩上前襟，束好腰带。

谢苗摘下破便帽，想给那人戴上，但自己头上感到冷。他想：“我的头全秃了，他却有一头长长的鬃发。”于是他又戴上帽子，“还是给他穿上靴子吧。”

谢苗让他坐下，给他穿上毡靴。

谢苗给他穿好衣服说：“好了，兄弟。你活动活动身子，暖和暖和。别的不我就管了。你能走吗？”

那人站在那里，温柔地瞧着谢苗，但说不出话来。

“你怎么不说话？总不能在这里过冬啊。得到有人家的地方去。喏，把我的棍子拿去，你身子虚，就拄着棍子走。打起精神来！”

那人就迈开步子。他走得挺轻松，没有落后。

他们在大路上走着，谢苗问：“你是哪里人？”

“我不是本地人。”

“本地人我都认识。你怎么会到教堂这儿来的？”

“我不能告诉你。”

“是不是有人欺负你了？”

“谁也没有欺负我。是上帝惩罚我。”

“当然，一切都是上帝的旨意，但你总得找个地方安顿啊。你要上哪儿去？”

“我都无所谓。”

谢苗听了觉得奇怪。那人不像个泼皮，说话也挺温和，可自己的事却绝口不谈。谢苗想：“天下什么怪事没有啊。”接着就对他说：“好吧，你就到我家去吧，哪怕去暖和暖和身子也好。”

谢苗向家里走去，陌生人跟在他旁边。起风了，谢苗穿着衬衫感到冷，他已酒意全消，身体都快冻僵了。他走着，吸着鼻子，掩紧身上的女短袄，想：“哼，买皮袄，买皮袄，回来连长袍都没有了，还带回一个光身男子。玛特廖娜准会不高兴的！”一想到玛特廖娜，谢苗就很担忧。他望望陌生人，记起那人在教堂旁的目光，心里感到一阵温暖。

三

谢苗的妻子一早就料理好家务。她劈了柴，打了水，让孩子们吃饱，自己也吃了点儿东西，坐着想心事。她在考虑，面包今天做还是明天做？家里还剩有一大块面包。

她想：“谢苗要是在那里吃了中饭，晚饭就吃不了多少，面包就够明天吃了。”

玛特廖娜反复掂着那块面包的重量，想：“今天不做面包吧。面粉只够烤一炉面包了，我们得熬到星期五。”

玛特廖娜收拾好面包，坐到桌子旁给丈夫补衬衫。她一面补，一边想着丈夫，不知他会买一块怎样的羊皮回来。

“他可别被卖皮的骗了。我男人实在是个老实人。他从来不骗人，可是连小孩子都会让他上当。八卢布不是个小数目，可以做一件好皮袄。就算不是熟皮，也总是一件皮袄。去年冬天没有皮袄可难过啦！去河边不行，去哪儿都不行。他出门把衣服都穿走，我就没有衣服穿了。他今天出门不算早，但也该回来了。我这个老头子总不会去

喝酒吧？”

玛特廖娜刚想到这里，台阶上就响起吱吱嘎嘎的声音，有人走进来。她把针插好，看见进来的有两个人：谢苗和一个汉子，那汉子光着头，脚上却穿着毡靴。

玛特廖娜立刻闻到丈夫身上酒气熏天。她想：“哼，真的喝过酒了。”她看见他身上没有穿长袍，只有一件女短袄，空着一双手，一声不吭，显出一副畏畏缩缩的样子，她的心都凉了。她想：“他准是把钱都喝光了，同这种浪荡汉鬼混，还把他带回家来。”

玛特廖娜让他们走进屋，自己也跟着进去。她发现这个陌生人年纪很轻，瘦瘦的，身上穿着他们家的长袍。长袍里没有衬衫，头上没戴帽子。他一进来，就垂下眼睛，一动不动地站着。玛特廖娜想，看来不是个正经人，这么鬼鬼祟祟的。

玛特廖娜皱起眉头，走到灶边，冷眼看他们怎么样。

谢苗摘下帽子，规规矩矩地坐到长凳上。

“哎，玛特廖娜，”谢苗说，“给我们吃晚饭吧！”

玛特廖娜低声嘀咕着。她一动不动地站在灶旁，一会儿看看这个，一会儿望望那个，不住地摇头。谢苗看到老婆不高兴，但他无可奈何。他装作没注意，拉起陌生人的手说：“坐吧，兄弟，我们吃饭吧。”

陌生人在长凳上坐下。

“怎么，饭还没做吗？”

玛特廖娜火冒三丈。

“做了，可不是为你做的。我看你是喝糊涂了。你出去买皮袄，可回来连长袍也没有了，还带来一个光身子的无赖。我这儿没有你们酒鬼吃的饭！”

“够了，玛特廖娜，别胡说八道！你得先问问他是个什么人……”

“你说说，钱到哪儿去了？”

谢苗伸手到长袍口袋里，掏出钞票，把它们摊开来。

“钱在这里，特里丰诺夫没给钱，他答应明天给。”

玛特廖娜特别生气的是，他没有买皮袄，把最后一件长袍给了一个光身子的人，还把他领回家来。

她一把抓住桌上的钞票，把它们藏好，说：“我没有晚饭。光身子的酒鬼太多了，喂不过来。”

“喂，玛特廖娜，别乱说。先听听人家……”

“酒鬼的傻话我可听够了。是的，我当初就不肯嫁给你这个酒鬼。妈妈给我的麻布被你喝掉了，这回买皮袄的钱又被你喝掉了。”

谢苗要向妻子解释他只喝掉二十戈比，他要说明他在哪儿找到这个人，但玛特廖娜不让他插嘴。她喋喋不休地说个没完，连十年前的旧账都翻了出来。

玛特廖娜说着说着，突然冲到谢苗跟前，抓住他的衣袖。

“还我的短袄。我只剩下这么一件衣服，你还要从我身上剥去，穿到自己身上。拿来，癞皮狗，叫你不得好死！”

谢苗从身上脱下短袄，把一个衣袖翻了过来，玛特廖娜一扯，把线脚都扯开了。玛特廖娜抓住短袄套到头上，走到门口。她想出去，但又站住。她怒气冲天，很想发作，但又想知道来的是个什么人。

四

玛特廖娜在门口站住说：“他要是个好人，也不会光着身子，可他连衬衫都不穿一件。他要是干的正经事，你也得说说从哪儿弄来这样一个花花公子。”

“对，我正要告诉你。我在路上看见这个人光着身子坐在教堂旁，完全冻僵了。又不是夏天，怎么能光着身子？上帝让我碰上他，要不他会冻死的。咳，叫我怎么办？天知道他会怎么样！我就把他拉起来，给他穿上衣服，带回家来。你别这样发火，玛特廖娜，罪过啊！我们都是凡人，有一天都要死的。”

玛特廖娜正要破口大骂，但看了陌生人一眼，就不作声了。陌生人坐在凳子边上，一动不动。他的双手放在膝盖上，头垂在胸前，眼睛闭着，眉头皱紧，仿佛喘不过气来。玛特廖娜没作声。谢苗说：“玛特廖娜，难道你心里没有上帝吗？！”

玛特廖娜听见这话，又瞧了陌生人一眼，她的心肠顿时软了下来。她从门边走到灶旁，端出晚饭。她把碗放在桌上，倒了一碗格瓦斯，拿出最后一块面包，又给了陌生人刀和匙子。

“您吃吧！”她说。

谢苗推了推陌生人说：“坐吧，年轻人！”

谢苗切了面包，把它撕碎，吃起来。玛特廖娜坐在桌子角上，一只手托着脑袋，望着陌生人。

玛特廖娜可怜陌生人，对他产生了好感。陌生人也突然高兴起来，不再皱眉头，抬眼望望玛特廖娜，微微一笑。

他们吃完晚饭，女主人收拾好餐桌，问陌生人：“你是哪里人？”

“我不是本地人。”

“你是怎么流落街头的？”

“我不能说。”

“是不是有谁抢劫了你？”

“是上帝惩罚我。”

“你就这样光着身子躺在那儿吗？”

“就这样光着身子躺在那儿，我冻坏了。谢苗看见我，可怜我，把身上的长袍脱下来给我穿上，叫我到这儿来。到了这儿，你也可怜我，给我吃，给我喝。上帝保佑你们！”

玛特廖娜站起来，从窗上取下她刚补好的谢苗的旧衬衫递给陌生人，还找出一条裤子给他穿。

“拿去吧，我看你身上没有衬衣。你穿上，爱睡哪儿就睡哪儿，睡阁楼也行，睡炕也行。”

陌生人脱下长袍，穿上衬衫和裤子，躺到阁楼上。玛特廖娜熄了灯，拿起长袍，爬到丈夫身边。

玛特廖娜拿长袍一角盖在身上躺下来，但是睡不着，脑子里一直想着陌生人。

她想到，最后一块面包让他吃掉，他们明天就没有面包了。她想到，她给了他衬衫和裤子，心里闷闷不乐。可她想到他的微笑，心里便高兴了。

玛特廖娜好久都没有睡着，她听见谢苗也没有睡着，把长袍往他那边拉。

“谢苗！”

“嗯！”

“面包都吃光了，可我没发面。我不知道明天怎么过。是不是去向邻居玛拉尼雅借一点儿？”

“活一天是一天，不会挨饿的。”

老婆又躺了一会儿，不再作声。

“看样子他是个好人，只是干吗不肯讲他的来历？”

“大概不便说吧。”

“谢苗！”

“嗯！”

“我们给人家东西，可是怎么没有人给我们东西啊？”

谢苗不知道怎么回答，他只说：“别啰唆了！”他转了个身，睡着了。

五

第二天早晨谢苗醒来，孩子们还睡着，妻子向邻居借面包去了。那个陌生人穿着旧裤旧衬衫独自坐在长凳上，眼睛向上望。他的气色比昨天好。

谢苗说：“朋友，肚子饿了要吃面包，身子光着要穿衣服。人得养活自己。你会干什么活儿？”

“我什么也不会。”

谢苗感到奇怪，就说：“只要肯学，什么都学得会的。”

“人家都在干活儿，我也要干。”

“你叫什么名字？”

“米哈伊尔。”

“那么，米哈伊尔，你不愿谈自己，这随你的便，但你得养活自己。你要是能照我的话做，我就养你。”

“上帝保佑你，我愿意学。你教我怎么干就行。”

谢苗拿起纱，把它绕在手指上捻。

“你瞧，这事并不难……”

米哈伊尔瞧了一会儿，也把纱绕在手指上捻了起来。

谢苗教他给纱线上蜡。米哈伊尔立刻懂了。谢苗又教他把鬃毛捻到纱线上，怎样上靴子。米哈伊尔也立刻学会了。

不论谢苗教他做什么，他都一学就会。第三天他开始独自干活儿，仿佛做了一辈子的鞋。他干活儿不休息，吃得又少。工作间歇，他不说话，眼睛望着天空。他不上街，不闲聊，也不开玩笑。

只有第一天晚上，玛特廖娜给他吃晚饭，他才微微笑了笑。

六

日子过了一天又一天，过了一周又一周，不觉已过了一年。米哈

伊尔仍在谢苗家干活儿。他的名声传开了：他做的靴子又挺括又结实，谁也比不上。附近一带的人都来找谢苗定做靴子，他的日子越过越富裕。

冬季的一天，谢苗和米哈伊尔正在干活儿，有一辆带铃铛的三驾雪橇向他家驶来。他们向窗外一望，看见雪橇在门口停下，一个汉子从驭座上下来，打开雪橇门。一位老爷身穿皮大衣，走下雪橇。他下了雪橇，走到谢苗家门口。玛特廖娜连忙起来打开门。老爷低下头走进小屋，又挺直身子，脑袋差点儿碰到天花板。他高大的身子把屋角都塞满了。

谢苗站起来鞠了一躬，看到老爷觉得很奇怪。他从没见过这样的人。谢苗自己筋脉毕露，米哈伊尔皮包骨头，玛特廖娜像一片木板，而这位老爷却像来自另一个世界：面色红润，体格魁梧，脖子粗得像公牛。他的整个身体就像用生铁铸成的。

老爷气喘吁吁，脱下皮大衣，坐在凳子上说：“谁是鞋匠老板？”

谢苗走过去说：“是我，老爷。”

老爷对他的跟班吆喝道：“喂，费杰卡，拿皮子来。”

跟班跑进来，拿来一个包裹。老爷接过包裹，把它放在桌上。“解开来。”他说。跟班解开包裹。

老爷用一根手指戳戳皮子，对谢苗说：“喂，听我说，鞋匠，你看见皮子了吗？”

“看见了，”谢苗说，“老爷。”

“那你知道这是什么皮子吗？”

谢苗摸摸皮子，说：“皮子挺好。”

“对，挺好！你这傻瓜还没见过这样的皮子吧。这是德国货，我花二十卢布买来的。”

谢苗吓了一跳，说：“我们哪里见过。”

“对了，一点儿不错。你能用这块皮子给我做一双靴子吗？”

“能，老爷。”

“这就对了。你要明白，你这是给谁做靴子，用的是什么皮子。我要你替我做一双靴子，穿上一年不走样、不开线。你能，就拿去裁；你不能，就别动。我把丑话说在前头：要是不到一年靴子开线、走样，我叫你坐班房；要是穿上一年不走样、不开线，我给你十卢布工钱。”

谢苗害怕了，不知道怎样回答。他回头瞧瞧米哈伊尔，用手肘推推他，低声问：“接不接？”

米哈伊尔点点头，说：“接。”

谢苗听了米哈伊尔的话，同意做一双一年不走样、不开线的靴子。

老爷唤来跟班，脱下左脚的靴子，伸直腿。

“给我量尺寸！”

谢苗缝了一个十俄寸 [1] 长的纸样，把它抚平，又跪下来，在围裙上仔细擦了擦手，以免弄脏老爷的袜子，这才动手量尺寸。谢苗量了鞋底，量了脚背，再量小腿肚，可是纸不够大。他的小腿肚粗得像圆木。

“注意，靴筒不要做得太紧。”

谢苗又缝了一个纸样。老爷坐着，动动穿着袜子的脚趾，环顾屋里的人。他看见米哈伊尔。

“这人是谁啊？”他问。

“他是我这里的师傅，靴子由他给您做。”

“留神啊，”老爷对米哈伊尔说，“记住，要一年穿不坏。”

谢苗回头看了看米哈伊尔，看见米哈伊尔根本不瞧老爷，却盯着老爷后面的角落，仿佛盯着什么人。米哈伊尔望着，望着，突然微微一笑，容光焕发。

“傻瓜，你龇牙咧嘴干什么？你还是留点儿神，到时候把靴子做好。”

米哈伊尔说：“到时候一定做好。”

“那就对了。”

老爷穿上靴子，掩上皮袄，向门口走去。他忘了弯弯腰，头在门楣上撞了一下。

老爷破口大骂，摸摸脑袋，坐上雪橇走了。

老爷走后，谢苗说：“哼，这可是个人物。这样的汉子棍子也打不倒。门楣都快被他撞倒了，可他却没事。”

玛特廖娜说：“过这样的日子怎么会不胖！这样的树墩连死神也搬不动。”

谢苗对米哈伊尔说：“活儿是接下来了，我们可别给自己惹麻烦。皮子很贵，老爷脾气又大，可不能出岔子。你来吧，你眼睛尖，手艺比我强。这是尺寸，你来裁，我来上靴头。”

米哈伊尔听从他的话，拿起老爷的皮子摊在桌上，折成两半，拿起剪刀动手裁剪。

玛特廖娜走过来，看米哈伊尔裁皮子，对他的裁法感到惊讶。玛特廖娜看惯鞋匠活儿，现在看见米哈伊尔不按鞋匠的规矩裁，而是剪成圆形。

玛特廖娜想说但没有说出来：“看来是我不懂怎样给老爷做靴子。米哈伊尔一定更懂行，我还是不要去干涉他。”

米哈伊尔裁好一双，拿起麻线缝，但不像一般做靴子那样用两根线，而是像做便鞋那样只用一根线。

玛特廖娜看见这情景感到奇怪，但还是没说什么。米哈伊尔则一直缝下去。到吃午饭的时候，谢苗站起来，看见米哈伊尔已用老爷的皮子做了一双便鞋。

谢苗大吃一惊。他想：“这是怎么搞的，米哈伊尔来了整整一年，还从未出过岔子，这回竟会闯下这样大的祸？老爷要做一双有延条的皮靴，他却做了一双不打底的便鞋，把皮子都糟蹋了。如今叫我怎样向老爷交代？这样的皮子上哪儿去找啊？”

他对米哈伊尔说：“朋友，你这是怎么啦？你这是要我的命！老爷定的是一双靴子，可你做了什么？”

他刚在责备米哈伊尔，门环响了起来，有人敲门。他们往窗外一看，看见一个人骑马跑来，正在系马。他们开了门，进来的是老爷的跟班。

“你们好！”

“你好！你有什么事？”

“太太派我来取靴子。”

“什么靴子？”

“靴子嘛！我家老爷已用不着靴子了。他归天了。”

“你说什么？”

“他离开你们，还没到家就死在雪橇上。雪橇一到家，我们要扶他下雪橇，可他已像口袋那样倒在雪橇里。他已经死了，身子都硬了。我们好不容易才把他抬下雪橇。太太就派我到这儿来。她说：‘你对鞋匠说，老爷向你们定了一双靴子，还留下皮子，现在他不要靴子’

了，你赶快拿皮子给他做一双死人穿的便鞋。’她还叫我等着，等你们一做好就把鞋带回家。所以我来了。”

米哈伊尔捡起桌上裁剩的皮料卷起来，拿起两只做好的便鞋拍了一下，又用围裙擦了擦，交给跟班。

跟班接过便鞋说：“再见，老板！祝你好运！”

八

又过了一年，两年……米哈伊尔住在谢苗家不觉已是第六个年头了。他还是那样过日子，哪儿也不去，多余的话一句也不说，脸上只出现过两次笑容：一次是女主人第一回请他吃晚饭，另一次是那个老爷来定靴子。谢苗对他这个工人真是再满意不过了。他不再问他从哪儿来，只担心他离开他们。

有一天，他们都在家。女主人正把锅子放在灶上，孩子们在长凳上嬉戏，眼睛望着窗外。谢苗在一个窗口里钉靴子，米哈伊尔在另一个窗口里钉鞋跟。

一个男孩儿从长凳上跑到米哈伊尔旁边，靠在他肩上，眼睛望着窗外。

“米哈伊尔叔叔，你瞧，老板娘带着几个姑娘到我们家来了。有一个姑娘是瘸子。”

男孩儿一说完这话，米哈伊尔就扔下活儿，转身往街上望。

谢苗感到奇怪。米哈伊尔一向不往街上望，现在却伏在窗口望着什么。谢苗也往窗外望了望，果然有一个女人向他家走来，衣服干干净净，手里拉着两个身穿皮袄、头包羊毛围巾的女孩儿。两个女孩儿长得一模一样，叫你没法儿分辨，只是一个女孩儿左腿有毛病，走路一瘸一拐的。

那女人上了台阶，走进门廊，摸到门，抓住把手，打开门。她让两个女孩儿走在前头，自己跟着走进屋里。

“你好，老板！”

“请进。有什么事啊？”

那女人在桌旁坐下。两个女孩儿伏在她的膝上，她们看到陌生人有点儿害怕。

“想给这两个姑娘做两双春天穿的皮鞋。”

“行，没问题。我们没有做过这样小的鞋，但我们能做。有延条的，没延条的，都行。我们这位米哈伊尔师傅手艺可好啦。”

谢苗回头望了望米哈伊尔，看见他放下活计坐在那里，眼睛盯住两个小姑娘。

谢苗觉得米哈伊尔很怪。他想，这两个姑娘确实长得不错：黑眼睛，红脸颊，胖鼓鼓的，她们身上的皮大衣也挺漂亮。但谢苗不明白，米哈伊尔为什么这样盯着她们，仿佛认识她们似的。

谢苗感到困惑不解。他同那女人讲价钱，讲好价钱，动手量尺寸。女人把瘸腿的女孩儿抱到膝上，说：“你替这姑娘量两个尺寸；给这只跛脚做一只鞋，给这只好脚做三只鞋。她们俩的脚一样大。她们是双胞胎。”

谢苗量了尺寸，指着瘸腿的姑娘说：“她怎么会弄成这样？这么好看的姑娘。生下来就是这样的吗？”

“不，是她母亲把她压坏的。”

玛特廖娜想知道那女人是谁，姑娘们又是谁的孩子，就问：“那你不是她们的母亲吗？”

“老板娘，我不是她们的母亲，也不是亲戚，我完全是外人，只是领养了她们。”

“她们不是你自己的孩子，你却这样疼她们。”

“我怎能不疼她们呢？是我用自己的奶把她们喂大的。我自己有过一个孩子，可是上帝把他召去了，我疼他还不如疼她们呢。”

“那她们到底是誰的孩子啊？”

九

那女人就把事情从头到尾讲了一遍：

“大概六七年前吧，她们的父母在一个星期里相继去世。星期二刚葬了父亲，星期五母亲也死了。父亲在这两个孤儿出世前三天就死了，母亲生下她们连一天也没有活满。当时我跟丈夫住在乡下种庄稼，跟他们是邻居，两家门挨着门。她们的父亲一个人在树林里干活儿。那一天一棵树倒下来，把他拦腰压住，内脏都压了出来。他被抬到家里，就把灵魂交给了上帝。他老婆就在那个星期生下双胞胎，就是这两个姑娘。贫穷，孤独，上无老，下无小。她孤独地生下孩子，孤独地死去。

“第二天早晨我去看望邻居，走进小屋，她这个可怜人已经僵了。她死的时候身子把这个姑娘压住。她就这样把她的一条腿压坏了。乡亲们走来，把她洗干净，换上衣服，装进棺材，把她埋了。都是好人帮的忙。只留下两个没爹没娘的娃娃。怎么办？当时村里只有

我一人奶娃娃，我正在喂养我那才八个星期的头生儿。我就把她们暂时带回家。庄稼人聚在一起，反复商量拿她们怎么办。他们对我说：‘玛丽亚，你先把这两个娃娃带回家去，我们再想想办法。’我用奶先喂没病的那个娃娃，却不喂腿被压坏的娃娃，我想她恐怕活不成了。但后来又想，怎么能亏待那个小东西呢？我也可怜她，我就一人喂三个——自己的一个再加上这两个！我当时年轻力壮，吃得又好。上帝开恩，奶汁多得直往外流。我常常同时喂两个，让第三个等着。等两个喂饱了，再喂第三个。上帝保佑，我把这两个喂大了，可自己那一个不满两岁就死了。上帝从此没再给我孩子，不过我们的日子越过越宽裕。现在，我丈夫在磨坊干活儿，工钱多，日子过得挺好，可我们没有自己的孩子。要是没有这两个姑娘，我真不知道日子怎么过！叫我怎能不疼她们呢？她们是我的心头肉！”

女人一手搂住瘸腿的姑娘，一手擦着脸上的眼泪。

玛特廖娜叹了口气，说：“常言说得好，没有爹娘还能过，没有上帝无法活。”

她们这样谈了一会儿，那女人站起来走了。主人两口子送她走，又回头望望米哈伊尔，只见米哈伊尔双手放在膝盖上，仰天微笑着。

十

谢苗走到他跟前说：“米哈伊尔，你怎么啦？”

米哈伊尔从长凳上站起来，放下活计，解下围裙，向主人两口子鞠躬说：“当家的，请你们饶恕我。上帝已经饶恕了我，你们也饶恕我吧。”

主人两口子看见米哈伊尔身上发出一道光。谢苗站起来，向米哈伊尔鞠了一躬说：“米哈伊尔，我知道你不是一个凡人，我不能留你，我也不能盘问你。只是请你告诉我：为什么当我发现你，把你领回家时，你神情忧郁，等我老婆给你端来了晚饭，你对她一笑，从此你就变得高兴了？为什么后来老爷来定做靴子，你又笑了一次，而且从此变得更开心？现在，那女人带了两个姑娘来，你第三次笑了，而且容光焕发，精神振奋。告诉我，米哈伊尔，为什么你身上会发光，而且笑了三次？”

米哈伊尔回答说：“我身上发光，那是因为上帝惩罚我，如今上帝饶恕我了。我笑了三次，因为我必须懂得上帝的三个道理，现在都懂了。那天你妻子可怜我，我懂得了第一个道理，因此第一次笑了。后来富人来定做靴子，我懂得了第二个道理，因此第二次笑了。现在我看见两个姑娘，我懂得了第三个道理，也就是最后一个道理，因此第三次笑了。”

谢苗又问：“告诉我，米哈伊尔，上帝为什么要惩罚你，上帝的那三个道理是什么。”

米哈伊尔说：“上帝惩罚我，因为我不听他的话。我原是天上的天使，但我不听上帝的旨意。

“我本是天上的天使，上帝派我去勾一个女人的魂。我降到地上，看见一个女人生病躺在床上，她一胎生了两个女孩儿。两个娃娃在母亲身旁蠕动，但她没有力气把她们抱过来喂奶。那女人看见我，知道是上帝派来取她的魂的，就哭诉道：‘天使啊！我的丈夫刚刚落葬，是被一棵树压死的。我没有姐妹，没有姨妈，没有婆婆，没人帮我养孩子。你先别取我的魂，让我先把两个孩子喂养长大！孩子没爹没娘活不成！’我听了她的话，把一个娃娃放在她怀里吃奶，另一个让她搂着，自己回到天上。我飞到上帝面前说：‘我不能取走产妇的灵魂。她男人被树压死了，她自己生了双胞胎，恳求我不要取走她的灵魂，说让她把孩子喂养长大，孩子没爹没娘活不成。我就没有取走产妇的灵魂。’上帝就说：‘你再去取那产妇的灵魂，并且弄懂三个道理：第一，人心里存在着什么；第二，人天生缺少什么；第三，人靠什么生活。等你弄懂了这三个道理，你就回天上来。’我又降到地上，取走了产妇的灵魂。

“两个娃娃就离开奶头。死人横在床上，压住了一个娃娃，把她的一条腿压坏了。我升到村庄上空，想把产妇的灵魂带给上帝，可是一阵风吹来把我的翅膀吹落，她的灵魂就单独去见上帝，而我就落到大路旁的地上。”

十一

谢苗和玛特廖娜这时才明白他们收留的人是谁，跟他们住在一起的人是谁，他们又惊又喜，不禁哭了起来。

天使说：“我就独自光着身子落在田野里。以前我不知道人们的贫困，不知道饥寒，这下我可成为人了。我肚子饿，身上冷，但不知道怎么办。我看见田野里有一座为上帝盖的教堂，就走到那儿，想在那里安身。教堂锁着，进不去。我坐在教堂后面避风。到了晚上，我又饿又冷，全身疼痛。忽然听见有人沿大路走来，手里拿着靴子，自言自语。我这是变人以后第一次看见一张凡人的脸，这脸使我害怕，我就转过身去。我听见这人在自言自语，盘算冬天用什么御寒，怎样养活老婆孩子。我想：‘我又饿又冷，现在来了一个人，可他只考虑怎样搞到皮袄给自己和妻子御寒，怎样弄到粮食充饥，他是不会帮助我的。’这人看见我皱起眉头，样子更加害怕，他从我身旁走过去。我绝望了。忽然我听见这人走回来。我朝他一看，简直认不出了：他的脸原来死气沉沉，如今变得生气勃勃，我从他脸上认识了上帝。他走到

我跟前，给我衣服穿，把我领回家。我走进他家，一个女人朝我们走过来，嘴里说着什么。这女人比男人更可怕，嘴里吐出一股死气，憋得我喘不过气来。她想把我赶到冰天雪地里，我知道，她要是把我赶出去，她准会死掉。她丈夫突然向她提到上帝，她的态度顿时变了。她给我们端来晚饭，眼睛瞧着我，我也看了她一眼，她身上的死气已没有了，变得生气勃勃，我又从她身上认识了上帝。

“我记起上帝的第一句话：‘人心里存在着什么。’我知道人心里存在着爱。上帝向我启示他交代的事，我感到高兴，第一次笑了。但我还没懂得另外两个道理。我不懂得人天生缺少什么，以及人靠什么生活。

“我在你们家里住了一年。有人来定做靴子，要能穿上一年不走样、不开线。我瞧了他一眼，忽然看见他背后有我的同伴死亡天使的影子。这个天使，除了我，谁也看不见，可我认识他，并且知道不等太阳落山这个富人的灵魂就会被取走。我想：‘这人要做一双可以穿上一年的靴子，却不知道自已已活不到晚上。’于是我想起了上帝说的另一句话：‘人天生缺少什么。’

“人心里存在着什么，我已知道了。现在我又知道了人缺少什么。人们不知道他们为了自己的肉体需要什么。我又一次笑了。我高兴的是因为看见了我的同伴死亡天使，上帝又向我启示了第二个道理。

“但我还不懂得第三个道理。我还不懂得人靠什么生活。于是我继续等待上帝向我启示最后一个道理。第六年出现了双胞胎姑娘和那个女人。我认出这两个姑娘，知道她们是怎样活下来的。我当时想：‘母亲为了孩子求我不要取走她的灵魂，她说没有爹妈孩子们活不成，我相信了她的话，可是另一个女人把她们喂养长大了。’当这个女人爱惜别人的孩子并且痛哭流涕时，我从她身上看到了活生生的上帝，我懂得了人靠什么生活。我懂得上帝向我启示了最后一个道理并且饶恕了我，我就第三次笑了。”

十二

天使光着身子，全身发光，肉眼无法逼视。他说话的声音越来越响，仿佛这声音不是出自他的嘴，而是自天而降。天使说：“我知道，一切人活着不是靠自私，而是依靠爱。

“做母亲的不知道她的孩子要活下去需要的是什么。那富人不知道他究竟需要什么。谁也不知道，到傍晚他需要活人穿的靴子，还是死人穿的便鞋。

“我变成了人，我活着不是依靠自己的打算，而是依靠一个过路

人和他妻子的爱心，他们怜悯我，爱我。两个孤女能活下来，不是依靠母亲的照顾，而是依靠一个陌生女人心中的爱，她怜悯她们，爱她们。一切人活着不是依靠自己的打算，而是依靠人们心中的爱。

“以前我知道上帝赐给人们生命，要他们活在世上。现在我知道的事更多了。

“我懂得了，上帝不愿人们分开来生活，因此不向他们启示每个人单独需要什么；他要人们一起生活，因此向他们启示为了自己和为了大伙儿需要什么。

“现在我懂得了，人们以为他们活着靠自己的盘算，其实他们活着全靠爱。谁生活在爱之中，谁就生活在上帝之中，上帝就在他心里，因为上帝就是爱。”

天使对上帝唱起了赞美诗，他的歌声震动了小屋。这时房顶开了，一根火柱从地面直冲天上。谢苗夫妻和孩子们拜倒在地。天使张开背上的一对翅膀，升上天去。

等谢苗清醒过来，他的小屋又恢复了原状，屋里只有他们一家，没有一个外人。

[1] 一俄寸合4.44厘米。

Leo Tolstoy

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

How Much Land
Does A Man
Need?

N° 04

‘If I stopped now,
after coming all
this way – well,
they’d call me
an idiot!’

How Much Land Does A Man Need?

1

An elder sister came from the town to visit her younger sister in the country. This elder sister was married to a merchant and the younger to a peasant in the village. The two sisters sat down for a talk over a cup of tea and the elder started boasting about the superiority of town life, with all its comforts, the fine clothes her children wore, the exquisite food and drink, the skating, parties and visits to the theatre.

The younger sister resented this and in turn scoffed at the life of a merchant's wife and sang the praises of her own life as a peasant.

'I wouldn't care to change my life for yours,' she said. 'I admit mine is dull, but at least we have no worries. You live in grander style, but you must do a great deal of business or you'll be ruined. You know the proverb, "Loss is Gain's elder brother." One day you are rich and the next you might find yourself out in the street. Here in the country we don't have those ups and downs. A peasant's life may be poor, but it's long. Although we may never be rich, we'll always have enough to eat.'

Then the elder sister said her piece.

'Enough to eat indeed with nothing but those filthy pig and calves! What do you know about nice clothes and good manners! However hard your good husband slaves away you'll spend your lives in the muck and that's where you'll die. And the same goes for your children.'

'Well, what of it?' the younger sister retorted. 'That's how it is here. But at least we know where we are. We don't have to crawl to anyone and we're afraid of no one. But you in the town are surrounded by temptations. All may be well one day, the next the Devil comes along and tempts you husband with cards, women and drink. And then you're ruined. It does happen, doesn't it?'

Pakhom, the younger sister's husband, was lying over the stove listening to the women's chatter.

'It's true what you say,' he said. 'Take me. Ever since I was a youngster I've been too busy tilling the soil to let that kind of nonsense enter my head. My only grievance is that I don't have enough land. Give me enough of that and I'd fear no one – not even the Devil himself!'

The sisters finished their tea, talked a little longer about dresses, cleared away the tea things and went to bed.

But the Devil had been sitting behind the stove and had heard everything. He was delighted that a peasant's wife had led her husband to boast that if he had enough land he would fear no one, not even the Devil. 'Good!' he thought. 'I'll have a little game with you. I shall see that you have plenty of land and that way I'll get you in my clutches!'

2

Not far from the village lived a lady with a small estate of about three hundred acres. She had always been on good terms with the peasants and had never ill-treated them. But then she had taken on an old soldier to manage her estate and he proceeded to harass the peasants by constantly imposing fines. No matter how careful Pakhom was, one of his horses might stray into the lady's oats, or a cow might sometimes wander into her garden, or some calves might venture out on to her meadows. Every time this happened he would have to pay a fine.

Pakhom would pay up and then he would go and swear at his family and beat them. All that summer Pakhom had to put up with a great deal from that manager, so he welcomed winter when it came and his cattle had to be kept in the shed: although he begrudged the fodder, at least he wouldn't have to worry about them straying.

That winter word got round that the lady wanted to sell some of her land and that the innkeeper on the highway was trying to agree on a price with her. The peasants took this news very badly. 'If that innkeeper gets his hands on that land he'll start slapping even more fines on us than that manager. But we can't survive without it, we all depend on it for our living.'

So a few peasants, in the name of the village commune, begged the lady not to sell any of her land to the innkeeper and to let them buy it, offering her a better price. The lady agreed. Then the members of the commune thought of buying the whole estate. They met once, they met twice, but no progress was made: the Devil had set them at loggerheads and there was nothing they could agree upon. In the end they decided to buy the land in separate lots, each according to what he could afford. The lady agreed to this as well.

One day Pakhom learned that one of his neighbours was buying about fifty acres and that the lady had taken half payment in cash, allowing the man one year to pay the balance. This made Pakhom very envious. 'They'll buy up all the land,' he thought, 'and I'll be left with nothing.' So he conferred with his wife.

'Everyone's buying land,' he said. 'We must get hold of twenty acres, or thereabouts. If we don't we won't be able to live, what with that manager bleeding us white with fines.'

So they racked their brains as to how they could buy some of the land. They had a hundred roubles saved up, so that by selling a foal and half their bees, by sending one of their sons out to work for someone who paid wages in advance and borrowing from a brother-in-law, they managed to scrape together half the money.

Then Pakhom took the money, chose about thirty acres of partly wooded land and went off to the lady to see if he could strike a deal. He managed to get the thirty acres, they shook hands on it and Pakhom paid a deposit. Then they went into town and signed the deeds, Pakhom paying half cash down and pledging to settle the balance within two years.

And so Pakhom now had land. He borrowed money for seeds and sowed the newly bought land; the harvest was excellent. Within a year he had repaid both the lady and his brother-in-law. Now he was a landowner, in the full sense of the word: he ploughed and sowed his own fields, reaped his own hay, cut his own timber and could pasture his cattle on his own land. Whenever he rode out to plough the land which was now his for ever, or to inspect his young corn and meadows, he was filled with joy. He felt that the grass that grew and the flowers that bloomed were different from any other grass and flowers. Before, when he had ridden over that land, it had seemed the same as any other. But now it was something quite

special.

3

So Pakhom lived a landowner's life and he was happy. And in fact all would have been well had other peasants not trespassed on his cornfields and meadows. He spoke to them very politely, but they took no notice. Herdsmen let their cows stray on to his meadows, then horses wandered into his corn on their way home from night pasture. Again and again Pakhom drove them out without taking further action, but in the end he lost patience and complained to the District Court. He knew very well that the peasants weren't doing it deliberately but because they were short of land. But still he thought, 'I can't let this go on. Before long they'll have destroyed all I have. I must teach them a lesson.'

So he taught them a lesson in court, then another, making several of them pay fines. Pakhom's neighbours resented this and once again began to let their cattle stray on his land, this time on purpose. One night someone managed to get into Pakhom's wood and felled about ten young lime-trees for their bark. Next day, when Pakhom was riding through his wood, he suddenly noticed something white on the ground. He went nearer and saw tree-trunks lying all around, stripped of their bark, with the stumps lying nearby. 'If he'd only just cut one or two down, but that devil's left me with one tree standing and cleared the rest.' Pakhom seethed with anger. 'Oh, if I knew who did it I'd show him a thing or two!' For a long time he racked his brains and finally concluded, 'It must be Semyon, it can't be anyone else.' So off he went to search Semyon's place, but he found nothing and all the two men did was swear at each other. Pakhom was more convinced than ever that it was Semyon's work and he lodged a complaint. The magistrates sat for ages debating the case and finally acquitted Semyon for lack of evidence. This incensed Pakhom even more and he had a stormy session with the village elder and the magistrates.

'You are hand in glove with thieves,' he protested. 'If you were honest men you wouldn't let a thief like him off the hook.'

As a result Pakhom fell out with the magistrates as well as his neighbours, who threatened to burn his cottage down.

And so, although Pakhom had plenty of leg-room now, he felt

that the commune was hemming him in.

Around that time rumours were in the air that many peasants were leaving to settle in new parts of the country. Pakhom thought, 'I don't really need to go away, what with all that land of mine. But if some of the villagers were to go there'd be more room for others. I could buy their land and make my estate bigger. Life would be easier then, but as things are, it's still too cramped here for my liking.'

One day a peasant who was passing through stopped at Pakhom's cottage. They let him stay the night and gave him food. Pakhom asked where he was from and the man replied that he had come from the south, from the other side of the Volga, where he had been working. Then he told how people from his own village had settled there, joined the commune and had been allotted twenty- five acres each. 'The land is so fertile,' he said, 'that rye grows as high as a horse and it's so thick you can make a whole sheaf from only five handfuls! One peasant arrived with a copeck and only his bare hands to work with and now he has six horses and two cows.'

Pakhom was terribly excited by this news. 'Why should I have to scrape a living cooped up here,' he thought, 'when I could be leading a good life somewhere else? I could sell the land and cottage and with the money I'd be able to build myself a house there and start a whole new farm. But here there's no room to breathe and I get nothing but aggravation. I must go and find out what it's like for myself.'

When summer came he was ready and he set off. He went down the Volga to Samara by steamboat, then walked the remaining three hundred miles to the new settlement, which was just as the visitor had described. All the men had plenty of space, each having been allotted twenty- five acres without charge and welcomed into the commune. Anyone who had the money could also buy as much of the finest freehold land as he wanted, at three roubles an acre – there was no limit!

Towards autumn, after finding out all he needed to know, Pakhom went home and started selling up. He sold the land at a profit, his home and all his cattle, resigned from the commune and waited until the spring, when he left with his family for the new

settlement.

4

When he arrived with his family Pakhom managed to get himself on the register of a large village commune, having duly moistened the elders' throats. All was signed and sealed and Pakhom was granted a hundred acres (twenty for each member of his family, in different fields), besides the use of the communal pasture. Then he put up some buildings and stocked his farm with cattle. The allotted land alone was three times as much as at home and it was perfect for growing corn. He was ten times better off here, for he had plenty of arable land and pasturage, and he was able to keep as many cattle as he wanted.

At first, while he was busy building and stocking up, everything seemed wonderful. But no sooner had he settled down to his new life than he began to feel cramped even here. During the first year he had sowed wheat on the allotted land and the crop had been excellent. But when he wanted to sow more wheat he found he needed more land: the other land he had been allotted was not suitable for wheat. In the south wheat is sown only on grass or on fallow land. They sow it for one or two years and then leave it fallow until the land is overgrown with feather-grass again. This type of land was in great demand and there wasn't enough to go round, so that people quarrelled over it. The richer ones sowed their own, whilst the poorer ones had to mortgage theirs to merchants to pay their taxes. Pakhom wanted to sow more wheat, so the following year he rented some fields from a dealer for one year. He sowed a great deal of wheat and had a good crop. But the fields were a long way from the village and the wheat had to be carted more than ten miles. Then Pakhom noticed that some peasant farmers with large homesteads in the neighbourhood were becoming very wealthy. 'What if I bought some freehold land and built myself a homestead like theirs?' he wondered. 'Then everything would be within easy reach.' And he tried to think how he could buy some.

Pakhom farmed the same way for three years, renting land and sowing wheat. They were good years, the crops were good and he was able to save some money. But Pakhom grew tired of having to rent land, year after year, of having to waste his time scrambling

after it. Whenever good land came up for sale the peasants would immediately fall over themselves to buy it and it would all be gone before he could do anything: he was never quick enough and so he had no land for sowing his wheat. So in the third year he went halves with a merchant in buying a plot of pasture land outright from some peasants. They had already ploughed it when someone sued the peasants over it and as a result all their work was wasted. 'If it had been *my* land,' Pakhom thought, 'I wouldn't have been under an obligation to anyone and I wouldn't have got into that mess.'

So Pakhom tried to discover where to buy some freehold land. He came across a peasant who, having purchased some thirteen hundred acres, had then gone bankrupt and was selling the land off very cheaply. Pakhom bargained with him. After much haggling they finally agreed upon fifteen hundred roubles, half cash down, half to be paid at a later date. The deal was all but signed and sealed when a passing merchant called at Pakhom's to have his horses fed. They drank tea together and got into conversation. The merchant said that he was on his way back from the far- off land of the Bashkirs, where he had bought some thirteen thousand acres for a mere thousand roubles. When Pakhom questioned him further the merchant told him, 'All I had to do was give the old men there a few presents – a hundred roubles' worth of silk robes and carpets, a chest of tea, and vodka for anyone who wanted it. I managed to get the land for twenty copecks an acre.' He showed Pakhom the title deeds. 'The land is near a river and it's all beautiful grassy steppe.'

Pakhom continued to ply him with questions.

'There's so much land that you couldn't walk round it all in a year. It all belongs to the Bashkirs. Yes, the people there are as stupid as sheep and you can get land off them for practically nothing.'

'Well,' Pakhom thought, 'why should I pay a thousand roubles for thirteen hundred acres and saddle myself with debt? To think what I could buy with the same money down there!'

5

Pakhom asked him how to get there and as soon as he had said goodbye to the merchant he prepared to leave. He left his wife

behind and set off, taking a workman with him. First they stopped off in town and bought a chest of tea, vodka and other presents, just as the old merchant had advised. Then they travelled for miles and miles until, on the seventh day, they reached the Bashkir settlement. Everything was as the merchant had described: the people lived on the steppe, near a river, in tents of thick felt. They neither ploughed the soil nor ate bread, and their cattle and horses wandered in herds over the steppe. The foals were tethered behind the tents and the mares brought over to them twice a day. These mares were milked and from the milk kumiss was made. The women also made cheese from the kumiss and all the men seemed concerned with was drinking kumiss and tea, eating mutton and playing their pipes. All of them were cheerful and well-fed, and they spent the whole summer idling about. The Bashkirs were very ignorant, knew no Russian, but were kindly people.

The moment they spotted Pakhom, the Bashkirs streamed out of their tents and surrounded their visitor. An interpreter was found and Pakhom told him that he had come about some land. The Bashkirs were delighted and took Pakhom off to one of the finest tents, where they made him sit on some rugs piled with cushions, while they formed a circle and offered him tea and kumiss. Then they slaughtered a sheep and fed him with mutton. Pakhom fetched the presents from his cart, handed them round and shared the tea out. The Bashkirs were delighted. For a while they talked away amongst themselves and then told the interpreter to translate.

‘They want me to tell you,’ the interpreter said, ‘that they’ve taken a great liking to you and that it’s our custom to do all we can to please a guest and repay him for his gifts. You have given us presents, so please tell us if there is anything of ours that you would like so we can show our gratitude.’

‘What I like most of all here,’ Pakhom replied, ‘is your land. Back home there isn’t enough to go round and, what’s more, the soil is exhausted. But here you have plenty and it looks very good. I’ve never seen soil like it.’

The interpreter translated and then the Bashkirs went into a lengthy conference. Although Pakhom did not understand, he could see how cheerful they were, laughing and shouting. Then they all became quiet, glanced at Pakhom and the interpreter continued,

‘I’m to tell you that they would be only too pleased to let you have as much land as you like in return for your kindness. All you have to do is point it out and it will be yours.’

Then they conferred again and started arguing about something. Pakhom asked what it was and the interpreter told him, ‘Some of them are saying they should first consult the elder about the land. They can’t do anything without his permission, but some of the others say it’s not necessary.’

6

While the Bashkirs were arguing, a man in a fox- fur cap suddenly came into the tent, whereupon they all became quiet and stood up.

‘It’s the elder,’ the interpreter explained.

Pakhom immediately fetched his best robe and presented it with five pounds of tea to the elder, who accepted the gifts and then sat in the place of honour. The Bashkirs immediately started telling him something. After listening for a while the elder motioned with his head for them to be quiet and then spoke to Pakhom in Russian.

‘Well now,’ he said. ‘It’s all right. Choose whatever land you like, there’s plenty of it.’

‘How can I just go and take whatever I like?’ Pakhom wondered. ‘I must have it all signed and sealed somehow. Now they tell me it’s mine, but who knows, they might change their minds?’ So he told them, ‘Thank you for your kind words. Yes, you do have a great deal of land, but I need only a little. However, I would like to be sure which will be mine, so couldn’t it be measured and made over to me by some sort of contract? Our lives are in God’s hands and although you good people are willing to give me the land now, it’s possible your children might want it back again.’

‘What you say is true,’ said the elder. ‘We can have a contract drawn up.’

Pakhom said, ‘I’ve heard that you made some land over to a merchant not long ago, together with the title deeds. I would like you to do the same with me.’

The elder understood. ‘That’s no problem,’ he said. ‘We have a

clerk here and we can ride into town and have the documents properly witnessed and signed.'

'But what about the price?' Pakhom asked.

'We have a set price – a thousand roubles a day.'

Pakhom did not understand.

'What kind of rate is that – a *day* ? How many acres would that be?'

'We don't reckon your way. We sell by the day. However much you can walk round in one day will be yours. And the price is a thousand roubles a day.'

Pakhom was amazed. 'Well, a man can walk round a lot of land in one day,' he said.

The elder burst out laughing. 'Well, all of it will be yours,' he replied. 'But there's one condition: if you don't return to your starting- point the same day, your money will be forfeited.'

'But how can I mark where I've been?'

'We'll all go to whatever place you select and wait until you've completed your circuit. You must take a spade, dig a hole at every turning and leave the turf piled up. Afterwards, we will go from hole to hole with a plough. You may make as large a circuit as you like, only you must be back at your starting- point by sunset. All the land you can walk round will be yours.'

Pakhom was absolutely delighted. An early start was decided on and after talking for a while they drank kumiss, ate some mutton and then had tea. This went on until nightfall. Then the Bashkirs made up a feather- bed for Pakhom and left. They promised to be ready to ride out to the chosen spot before sunrise.

7

Pakhom lay down on the feather- bed, but the thought of all that land kept him awake. 'Tomorrow,' he thought, 'I shall mark out a really large stretch. In one day I can easily walk thirty- five miles. The days are long now – just think how much land I'll have from walking that distance! I'll sell the poorer bits, or let it to the peasants. I'll take the best for myself and farm it. I'll have two ox-

ploughs and hire a couple of labourers to work them. Yes, I'll cultivate about a hundred and fifty acres and let the cattle graze the rest.'

Pakhom did not sleep a wink that night and dozed off only just before dawn. The moment he fell asleep he had a dream: he seemed to be lying in the same tent and could hear someone roaring with laughter outside. Wondering who was laughing like that he got up, went out and saw that same Bashkir elder sitting there, holding his sides and rolling about in fits of laughter. He went closer and asked, 'What are you laughing at?' And then he saw that it wasn't the elder at all, but the merchant who had called on him a few days before and told him about the land. And just as Pakhom asked him, 'Have you been here long?' the merchant turned into the peasant who had come up from the Volga and visited him at home. And then Pakhom saw that it wasn't the peasant, but the Devil himself, with horns and hoofs, sitting there laughing his head off, while before him lay a barefoot man wearing only shirt and trousers. When Pakhom took a closer look he saw that the man was dead and that it was himself. Pakhom woke up in a cold sweat. 'The things one dreams about!' he thought. Then he looked round and saw that it was getting light at the open door – dawn was breaking. 'I must go and wake them,' he thought, 'it's time to start.' So Pakhom got up, roused the workman, who was sleeping in the cart, ordered him to harness the horse and went off to wake the Bashkirs. 'It's time to go out on the steppe and measure the land,' he said. The Bashkirs got up, assembled, and then the elder came and joined them. They drank some more kumiss and offered Pakhom tea, but he was impatient to be off. 'If we're going,' he said, 'let's go. It's time.'

8

So the Bashkirs got ready and left, some on horses, others in carts. Pakhom went to his little cart with him. They came out on to the open steppe just as the sun was rising. They climbed a small hill (called a 'shikhan' in Bashkir). Then the Bashkirs got out of their carts, dismounted from their horses and gathered in one place. The elder went over to Pakhom and pointed.

'Look,' he said, 'that's all ours, as far as the eye can see. Choose any part you like.'

Pakhom's eyes lit up, for the land was all virgin soil, flat as the palm of one's hand, black as poppy- seed, with different kinds of grass growing breast- high in the hollows.

The elder took off his fox- fur cap and put it on the ground.

'Let this be the marker: this is the starting point to which you must return. All the land you can walk round will be yours.'

Pakhom took out his money, placed it on the cap, took off his outer coat, so that he was wearing only a sleeveless undercoat, tightened his belt below the waist and stuffed a small bag of bread inside his shirt. Then he tied a flask of water to the belt, pulled up his boots, took the spade from his workman and was ready to leave. He could not decide which direction to take at first as the land was so good everywhere. Then he decided, 'It's all good land, so I'll walk towards the sunrise.' He turned to the east, stretching himself as he waited for the sun to appear above the horizon. 'There's no point in wasting time,' he thought. 'And it's easier walking while it's still cool.' The moment the sun's rays came flooding over the horizon Pakhom put the spade on one shoulder and walked out on to the steppe.

Pakhom walked neither quickly nor slowly. When he had gone about three quarters of a mile he stopped, dug a hole and piled the pieces of turf high on top of each other so that they were easily visible. The stiffness had now gone from his legs and he lengthened his stride. A little further on he stopped again and dug another hole.

When Pakhom looked back he could see quite clearly the small hill tyres of the cart- wheels. Pakhom guessed that he had covered about three miles. He was beginning to feel warmer, so he took off his undercoat, flung it over his shoulder and walked another three miles. It was hot, and a look at the sun reminded him it was time for breakfast.

'Well, that's the first stretch completed!' he thought. 'But there are four to a day and it's too early to start turning. I must take these boots off, though.'

So he sat down, took off his boots, stuck them behind his belt and moved on. The going was easy now and he thought, 'I'll do another three miles and then turn left. The land's so beautiful here, it would be a pity to miss out on any of it. The further I go, the

better the land gets.' So for a while he carried straight on and when he looked back the hill was barely visible and the people on it looked like black ants; he could just glimpse something that glinted in the sun.

'Well,' thought Pakhom, 'I've walked enough in this direction, I should be turning now. Besides, I'm stewing in this heat and terribly thirsty.' So he stopped, dug a large hole, piled up the turf, untied his flask, drank and then turned sharp left. On and on he walked – the grass was higher here and it was very hot.

Pakhom began to feel tired. He glanced at the sun and saw that it was noon. 'Well,' he thought, 'I must have a little rest.' So he stopped, sat down and had some bread and water. He did not stretch out, though, thinking, 'Once I lie down I'll fall asleep.' After a few minutes he carried on. At first it was easy – the food had given him strength. But by now it was extremely hot and he began to feel sleepy. Still, he kept going and thought of the proverb, 'A moment's pain can be a lifetime's gain.'

He had walked a long way in the same direction and was just about to turn left when he spotted a lush hollow and decided it would be a pity to lose it. 'What a good place for growing flax!' he thought. So he carried straight on until he had walked right round the low-lying meadows, dug a hole the other side, and then he turned the second corner. Pakhom looked back at the hill: it was shimmering in the heat and through the haze it was difficult to see all the people there – they were at least ten miles away. 'Well,' thought Pakhom, 'I've made those sides too long, this one has to be shorter.' So he started the third side, quickening his step. He looked at the sun and saw that it was already half way to the horizon, but he had completed only about one mile of the third side. The starting-point was still ten miles away. 'No,' he thought, 'although it will make the land a bit lopsided I must take the shortest way back. It's no good trying to grab too much, I've quite enough already!'

Pakhom hastily dug another hole and headed straight for the hill.

On the way back Pakhom found the going tough. The heat had

exhausted him, his bare feet were cut and bruised and his legs were giving way. He wanted to rest, but this was out of the question – he would never get back by sunset. The sun waits for no man and was sinking lower and lower. ‘Oh,’ he wondered, ‘have I blundered, trying to take too much? What if I’m not back in time?’ He looked towards the hill, then at the sun. The hill was far off, the sun was close to the horizon.

But Pakhom struggled on. Although it was very hard, he walked faster and faster. On and on he went – but there was still a long way to go. He started running and threw away his coat, boots, flask, cap, keeping only the spade which he used for leaning on. ‘Oh dear,’ he thought, ‘I’ve been too greedy. Now I’ve ruined it. I’ll never get back by sunset.’ His fear made him only more breathless. On he ran, his shirt soaking and his trousers clinging to him: his throat was parched. His lungs were working like a blacksmith’s bellows, his heart beat like a hammer and his legs did not seem to be his – he felt that they were breaking . . . Pakhom was terrified and thought, ‘All this strain will be the death of me.’

Although he feared death, he could not stop. ‘If I stopped now, after coming all this way – well, they’d call me an idiot!’ So on he ran until he was close enough to hear the Bashkirs yelling and cheering him on. Their shouts spurred him on all the more, so he summoned his last ounce of strength and kept running. But by now the sun was almost touching the horizon: veiled in mist, it was large and blood- red. It was about to set, but although it did not have very far to sink it was no distance to the starting- point either. Pakhom could see the people on the hill now, waving their arms and urging him on. He could see the fox- fur cap on the ground with the money on it; he could see the elder sitting there with his arms pressed to his sides. And Pakhom remembered his dream. ‘I’ve plenty of land now, but will God let me live to enjoy it? No, I’m finished . . . I’ll never make it.’

Pakhom looked at the sun – it had reached the earth now: half of its great disc had dipped below the horizon. With all the strength he had left Pakhom lurched forwards with his full weight, hardly able to move his legs quickly enough to stop himself falling. He reached the hill – and everything suddenly became dark. He looked round and saw that the sun had set. Pakhom groaned. ‘All that effort has been in vain,’ he thought. He wanted to stop, when he

heard the Bashkirs still cheering him on and he realized that from where he was at the bottom of the hill the sun had apparently set, but not for those on top. Pakhom took a deep breath and rushed up the hill which was still bathed in sunlight. When he reached the top he saw his cap with the elder sitting by it, holding his sides and laughing his head off. Then he remembered the dream and he groaned. His legs gave way, he fell forward and managed to reach the cap with his hands.

‘Oh, well done!’ exclaimed the elder. ‘That’s a lot of land you’ve earned yourself!’

Pakhom’s workman ran up and tried to lift his master, but the blood flowed from his mouth. Pakhom was dead.

The Bashkirs clicked their tongues sympathetically.

Pakhom’s workman picked up the spade, dug a grave for his master – six feet from head to heel, which was exactly the right length – and buried him.

What Men Live By

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. (I John iii, 14)

But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (I John iii, 17)

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue: but in deed and in truth. (I John iii, 18)

. . . for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. (I John iv, 7)

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. (I John iv, 8)

No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us . . . (I John iv, 12)

God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. (I John iv, 16)

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? (I John iv, 20)

1

Once there was a shoemaker who had neither house nor land of his own and who lived in a peasant's cottage with his wife and children, supporting them by what work he could get. Bread was expensive but his work was cheap and the little he earned was spent on food for his family. He and his wife had only one winter coat between them and even that was in a sorry state. For the past two years he had been saving to buy sheepskins for a new one.

By autumn he had scraped together a small sum: there was the three-rouble note that his wife kept in a little wooden box, as well

as the five roubles and twenty copecks that some of the villagers owed him.

One morning he decided to go to the village to buy the skins. He put his wife's wadded twill jacket over his shirt and over that his own cloth coat. After breakfast he put the three-rouble note in his pocket, cut himself a walking-stick and set off.

'With the five roubles that one of them owes me,' he thought, 'plus the three I already have, I should have enough to buy the sheep skins.'

When he reached the village he stopped at a cottage, but the owner was out. His wife did not have the money, but she promised to send her husband over with it by the end of the week. So he called on another peasant who swore he was short of cash and that all he could manage was twenty copecks that were owing for some boot repairs. And then, when the shoemaker tried to buy the skins on credit, the dealer would not trust him.

'Bring me the money first,' he said. 'Then you can pick whatever skins you like. We all know how hard it is to collect what's owing to us!'

And so the shoemaker did no business that day, apart from twenty copecks for the repairs and a pair of felt boots that needed soling.

All this depressed the shoemaker and after spending the twenty copecks on vodka he set off for home without any skins. Earlier that morning he had felt a sharp nip in the air, but after a few vodkas he warmed up – even though he had no proper winter coat. As he walked down the road, striking frozen clods of earth with his stick in one hand and swinging the felt boots in the other, he started talking to himself.

'I feel quite warm without a coat,' he said. 'I've only had a drop, yet I can feel it rushing through every vein in my body. I don't need any sheepskins! I'm going home, with all my troubles behind me. That's the sort of man I am! Why should I worry? I can survive without a new coat – I won't need one for ages. Only, the wife won't be too happy. But it's really rotten when you do a job and the customer tries to string you along and doesn't pay up. You just wait – if you don't bring me the money I'll have the shirt off

your back, I swear it! It's a bit much, what with a measly twenty copecks at a time. What can I do with twenty copecks? Spend it on drink, that's all. You say you're hard up. Well, what about me? You've a house, cattle, everything, but all I have is on my back. You grow your own corn, while I have to go out and buy mine. Whatever happens I must spend three roubles a week on bread alone. By the time I get home there won't be any left and I'll have to fork out another rouble and a half. So, you'd better pay up!

The shoemaker kept rambling on like this until he drew near the wayside chapel at the bend in the road where something whitish just behind it caught his eye. But by now it was growing dark and although he strained his eyes he could not make out what it was. 'There wasn't any stone there before,' he thought. 'Perhaps it's a cow? No, it doesn't look like one at all. From the head it looks like a man and it's all white. But what would a man be doing there?'

He went a few steps closer and could now make it out quite clearly. How amazing! It was a man sitting there, but he could not see if he were dead or alive, and he was naked and quite motionless, his back propped against the chapel wall. The shoemaker was terrified and thought, 'A man's been murdered, stripped naked and dumped. If I go any nearer I might get mixed up in all sorts of troubles.'

And so the shoemaker went on his way. He walked behind the chapel to avoid having to look at him again. After a short distance he turned round and saw that the man was no longer leaning against the wall, but was moving, as if trying to see who he was. The shoemaker felt even more frightened and thought, 'Shall I go back or simply carry on? If I go back something terrible might happen. Who knows what kind of man he might be? I bet he's up to no good. Besides, he might suddenly jump to his feet and start choking the life out of me – and there'd be nothing I could do about it. And if he doesn't throttle me I might get lumbered with looking after him. But how can I help a naked man? I couldn't let him have the last shirt off my back. Please God, help me!'

And the shoemaker quickened his stride. He had almost left the chapel behind when his conscience began to prick him. He stopped in the middle of the road.

‘How could you do such a thing, Semyon?’ he reproached himself. ‘That man might be dying miserably and you’re such a coward you’d leave him there to die. Or have you become so rich all of a sudden that you’re scared stiff he might steal all your money? You should be ashamed, Semyon!’

And he turned round again and went right up to the man.

2

After a close look Semyon could see that he was young and healthy. There were no bruises on his body: he was just chilled to the bone and terrified. There he sat, leaning forward without looking at Semyon and apparently too weak to raise his eyes. When Semyon was right next to him he suddenly seemed to wake as if from a trance. He turned his head, opened his eyes and looked straight at Semyon. That one look was enough to allay all Semyon’s fears. He threw down the felt boots, undid his belt, laid it over the boots and took off his cloth coat.

‘There’s no time for talking,’ he said. ‘Put that on – and be quick about it!’

Then Semyon took the man under the arms and tried to lift him, but he got to his feet without any help. And then Semyon saw that his body was slender and clean, that his legs and arms bore no trace of any wounds; his face was mild and gentle. Semyon threw his coat over his shoulders, but the man could not find the sleeves, so Semyon guided his arms into them, pulled on the coat, wrapped it around him and fastened it with his belt.

Then Semyon took off his tattered cap, intending to put it on the naked man’s head, but he felt the cold on his own head and thought, ‘I’m completely bald, while he’s got long, curly hair.’ And he put it back on again. ‘It would be better to give him the boots,’ he thought.

So he made the man sit down again and put the felt boots on his feet, after which he said, ‘There you are, my friend. Stretch your legs a bit and warm yourself. Don’t worry, it will all be sorted out later. Now, can you walk?’

The man stood up, looked tenderly at Semyon, but was unable to say one word.

‘Why don’t you say something? Come on, we can’t spend all winter here, we must be on our way. Here, you can lean on my stick if you feel weak. Right, come on!’

And the man started walking – and he walked effortlessly, without lagging behind.

As they went down the road Semyon asked, ‘Where are you from?’

‘Not from these parts.’

‘I thought so – I know everyone round here. But how did you come to be there, by the chapel?’

‘I cannot tell you that.’

‘Did some men attack you?’

‘No, no one harmed me. It was God who punished me.’

‘Well, we are all in His hands. All the same, you must have somewhere to go. Where are you heading?’

‘Nowhere in particular.’

Semyon was amazed. The man did not strike him as a ruffian, he was so softly spoken, yet he revealed nothing about himself. ‘Anything can happen in this world,’ Semyon reflected and he told the man, ‘All right, come home with me, even if it is a bit out of your way.’

As Semyon walked down the road the stranger did not lag behind for one moment, but kept abreast. The wind got up and the cold air crept under Semyon’s shirt. The drink was beginning to wear off and he felt chilled to the marrow.

Sniffing as he went, he wrapped his wife’s jacket tighter around himself and thought, ‘So much for sheepskins! I go off to buy some and all I do is come home without even the old coat on my back, and with a naked stranger into the bargain! Matryona won’t be too pleased about that!’ And the thought of his wife depressed him. But the moment he looked at the stranger he remembered the look he had given him at the chapel and his heart filled with joy.

Semyon's wife had finished her chores early that day. She had chopped the wood, fetched water, fed the children, had a bite to eat herself and had then sat for a long time wondering when she should bake the bread – that same day or the next. There was still one thick slice left.

'If Semyon has his dinner in the village,' she thought, 'then he won't want much for supper and there'll be enough bread for tomorrow.'

She turned the slice over, 'I shan't do any baking today,' she decided, 'there's only enough flour for one loaf. But we can make this last till Friday.'

So Matryona put the bread away and sat down at the table to patch her husband's shirt. As she worked she thought of him buying the sheepskins for the new winter coat.

'I hope the dealer won't swindle him. He's so simple, that husband of mine. He'd never cheat a soul himself and even a little child could trick him. Eight roubles is a lot of money, enough to buy very good sheepskins. Not the best quality tanned ones perhaps, but still good enough for a nice coat. Last winter was so hard without a proper one! I couldn't even go down to the river, couldn't go anywhere. And when he left this morning he took all the warm clothes we have, leaving me with nothing to wear. Now, he didn't leave all that early. All the same, it's time he was back. I hope my old man hasn't gone drinking!'

These thoughts had just crossed Matryona's mind when the front steps creaked and someone came in. Matryona stuck her needle into the shirt and went out into the hall. There she saw two men – Semyon and someone in felt boots and without a cap.

Matryona immediately smelt the vodka on her husband's breath. 'So, I was right, he's been on the drink,' she thought. And when she saw him standing there, empty-handed and with a guilty grin on his face, wearing nothing but the jacket she had lent him, her heart sank. 'He's gone and spent all that money drinking with some good-for-nothing. What's more, he's got the nerve to bring him home.'

Matryona ushered them in and followed them into the living-room. Now she could see that the stranger was a thin young man

and that he was wearing her husband's coat. She could see no shirt under it and he had no cap. Once inside he stood quite still and kept looking down. Matryona concluded that he was a bad lot, as he seemed so nervous.

Frowning, she went over to the stove and waited to see what they would do next.

Semyon took off his cap and sat down on the bench as if he had done no wrong.

'Come on, Matryona, let's have some supper!' he said.

Matryona muttered something to herself and stayed quite still by the stove. She kept looking first at one, then the other, shaking her head. Semyon realized that his wife was annoyed, but there was nothing he could do about it. Pretending not to notice, he took the stranger by the arm.

'Sit down,' he said. 'Let's have something to eat.'

The stranger sat on the bench.

'Well, don't you have anything?'

Matryona lost her temper. 'Yes, I do, but not for you. It seems you've drunk your brains away. You went out to buy some sheepskins and back you come without even the coat you left in. What's more, you bring some half-naked tramp back with you. I don't have any supper for a pair of drunkards like you!'

'Now that's enough of your stupid tongue-wagging, Matryona! You might at least ask who he is.'

'And you can tell me what you did with the money.'

Semyon felt in his pocket, took out the three-rouble note and unfolded it.

'Here it is. Trifonov wouldn't give me any money, but he promised to pay up in a day or so.'

Matryona grew even more furious: in addition to not buying the sheepskins, her husband had lent their only coat to some naked stranger. What's more, he'd brought him back home.

She snatched the note from the table and went off to hide it somewhere.

‘I’ve no supper for you,’ she told them. ‘You can’t expect me to feed every naked drunkard.’

‘And you mind your tongue, Matryona. First hear what he has to say . . .’

‘What sense will I get from a drunken fool like him? I was right in not wanting to marry an old soak like you! You sold all Mother’s linen for drink. And then, instead of buying sheepskins you spend the money on drink.’

Semyon tried hard to make his wife understand that all he had spent on drink was a mere twenty copecks and to explain where he had found the stranger. But she would not let him get a word in edgeways, rattling away nineteen to the dozen and even reminding him of things that had happened ten years ago. On and on she went, until finally she dashed over to Semyon and grabbed his sleeve.

‘Give me my jacket back, it’s the only one I have and you took it to wear yourself. Give it back, you flea-bitten dog. May you die of a fit!’

Semyon began taking the jacket off and turned a sleeve inside-out, but his wife tugged so hard that it came apart at the seams. Then she seized it, threw it over her head and made for the door. But then she stopped. Her heart seemed to melt and she felt that she wanted to banish all those spiteful feelings and to find out who that man really was.

4

As she stood there, quite still, Matryona said, ‘If he were an honest man he wouldn’t be going around without a shirt to his back. And if you’d been doing what you were supposed to you’d have told me where you picked up this fine young fellow!’

‘All right, I’ll tell you. I was on my way home when I saw this man sitting by the chapel, naked and frozen. Now, it’s not the kind of weather to go about naked! God must have led me to him, or he’d have perished. What could I do? Who knows what may have happened to him? So, I made him stand up, clothed him and brought him back here. Please don’t be angry, Matryona, it’s sinful. Don’t forget that we must all die one day.’

Matryona was about to give him a piece of her mind again, but then she looked at the stranger and became silent. There he sat, motionless, on the edge of the bench, his hands folded on his knees, his head drooping on his breast. His eyes were closed and he wrinkled his face as if something were choking him. Matryona still said nothing, but Semyon asked, 'Matryona, is there no love of God within you?'

At these words Matryona glanced at the stranger and her heart suddenly filled with pity. She came back from the door, went over to the stove, took out the supper, placed a cup on the table, poured out some kvass, brought out the last slice of bread and set out a knife and some spoons. Please eat,'she said.

Semyon nudged the stranger and told him, 'Come and sit at the table.'

Semyon divided the bread into small pieces and they started eating. Matryona sat at one corner of the table, her head on her hand, gazing at the stranger. And she was filled with pity and her heart went out to him. Suddenly, his face brightened, the wrinkles disappeared and he looked up at Matryona and smiled.

After supper Matryona cleared the table and began questioning him.

'Where are you from?'

'Not from these parts.'

'How did you come to be by the wayside?'

'I cannot tell you.'

'Who stole your clothes?'

'God punished me.'

'And you were lying there, all naked?'

'Yes, naked and freezing. And then Semyon saw me and took pity on me. He took off his coat, put it over me and insisted I came home with him. You have given me food and drink and shown compassion. God will reward you!'

Matryona got up, took from the window-sill the old shirt of Semyon's she had been patching and handed it to the stranger. Then she found him some trousers.

‘Here, I see you’ve no shirt, so put this on and lie down where you like – up on the sleeping- bench or over the stove.’

The stranger took off the coat, put on the shirt and trousers and lay on the sleeping- bench. Matryona blew out the candle, took the coat and joined her husband over the stove.

Matryona drew the skirts of the coat over herself and lay down. But she did not fall asleep, for she could not get that stranger out of her mind.

When she remembered that he had eaten their last slice of bread and that they would have none for tomorrow, and that she had given him the shirt and trousers, she became terribly dejected. But then, when she recalled his smile her heart leapt up. For a long time she lay awake and she noticed that Semyon was awake too, as he kept pulling the coat up.

‘Semyon!’

‘What is it?’

‘You two have eaten the last slice of bread and I haven’t prepared any more. I don’t know what we’re going to do tomorrow. Perhaps I can borrow some from our neighbour Malanya.’

‘Yes, we’ll get by, we won’t starve.’

Matryona lay silently for a while and then she said, ‘He seems to be a good man, only he doesn’t tell us anything about himself.’

‘I suppose he can’t.’

‘Semyon!’

‘What?’

‘We’re always giving, but why does nobody ever give us anything?’

Semyon didn’t know what to reply. All he said was, ‘Let’s talk about that another time,’ after which he turned over and went to sleep.

5

Next morning, when Semyon woke up, the children were still asleep and his wife had gone over to the neighbour’s to borrow

some bread. Only the stranger was sitting on the bench, wearing the old trousers and shirt and looking up. His face was brighter than the evening before. Semyon said, 'Well, my friend. The belly needs food and the body clothes. We all have to earn a living, so what sort of work can you do?'

'I can't do anything.'

Semyon was amazed and replied, 'If a man has the will he can learn anything.'

'Yes, men work for their living, so I'll work too.'

'What's your name?'

'Mikhail.'

'Well, Mikhail, if you don't want to tell us about yourself that's your affair. But we have to earn our living. If you do as I tell you I'll see you have enough to eat.'

'God bless you! I'll learn how to work, just tell me what to do.'

Semyon took a piece of yarn, wound it round his fingers and twisted it.

'It's not hard, just watch . . .'

Mikhail watched and right away he caught the knack, winding the yarn and twisting it just like Semyon.

Then Semyon showed him how to wax it and Mikhail understood at once. Then he showed him how to draw it through and how to stitch. Again Mikhail immediately understood.

Whatever Semyon showed him he mastered right away and within three days was working as if he had been making shoes all his life. He would work without any let-up and ate very little. Only when one job was finished would he stop for a moment and silently look up. He never went out, only spoke when he really had to, and he never joked or laughed.

And in fact the only time they had seen him smile was on that very first evening, when Matryona had given him supper.

The days passed, weeks passed, and a year ran its course.

Mikhail was still living with Semyon and working for him. The word got round that Semyon's new workman could make boots better and stronger than anyone else. People from all over the district came to Semyon for new boots and he prospered.

One winter's day Semyon and Mikhail were sitting at their work when a three-horse carriage on sleigh runners drove up to the cottage, its bells gaily ringing. When they looked out of the window they saw it had stopped right outside. A boy jumped down from the box and opened the carriage door. A gentleman in a fur coat stepped out, walked up to the front door and climbed the steps. Matryona rushed to fling open the door.

As he came in, the gentleman had to lower his head and then straighten up. But still his head almost touched the ceiling and he filled a whole corner of the room.

Semyon stood up and marvelled at the gentleman: he had never seen anyone like him. Semyon himself was lean, Mikhail was skinny, while Matryona was as thin as a rake. But this visitor seemed like someone from another world: with his full red face and his bull's neck he seemed to be made of cast iron.

He puffed, took off his fur coat, sat on the bench and asked, 'Who is the master bootmaker here?'

Semyon stepped forward and said, 'I am, Your Honour.'

Then the gentleman shouted to his boy, 'Hey, Fedka, bring the leather!'

The boy ran in with a parcel, which the gentleman took and placed on the table.

'Untie it,' he said. The boy untied it.

Then the gentleman pointed at the leather and told Semyon, 'Now, listen to me, bootmaker. Do you see that leather?'

'Yes, I do, Your Honour.'

'Do you know what kind it is?'

Semyon felt it and said, 'It's very good quality.'

'I should say it's good quality! You fool, I bet you've never set eyes on leather like that. It's German and I paid twenty roubles for it.'

Semyon quailed and said, 'Now where would *I* see leather like that?'

'Yes, where indeed! Could you make me a pair of boots out of it?'

'It's possible, Your Honour.'

'I'll give you possible!' the gentleman shouted. 'Now, see you don't forget for whom you're making them and the quality of the leather you'll be using. I want a pair of boots that will last me a year without losing their shape or coming apart at the stitches. If you can do the job, take the leather and cut it up. But if you can't, you'd better tell me here and now. I'm warning you: if the boots split or lose their shape before the year's out I'll have you clapped in prison. But if they keep their shape and don't split for a year I'll pay you ten roubles.'

Semyon was quite afraid and did not know what to reply. He glanced at Mikhail, nudged him with his elbow and whispered, 'Well, shall I take it on?'

Mikhail nodded as if to say, 'Yes, take it on.'

So Semyon followed Mikhail's advice and undertook to make a pair of boots that would not lose their shape or split for a whole year.

Then the gentleman called the boy over to take off his left boot for him and stretched out his leg.

'Take my measurements!'

Semyon sewed together a strip of paper about seventeen inches long, smoothed it out, knelt down, wiped his hands thoroughly on his apron so as not to dirty the gentleman's sock and started measuring. He took the sole and instep measurements. But when he tried to measure the calf he found that the strip of paper was not long enough – the gentleman's calf was as thick as a log.

'Mind you don't make them too tight in the leg,' he said.

Semyon sewed another piece to the strip of paper, while the gentleman sat wriggling his toes in his sock and surveying the people in the room. And then he noticed Mikhail.

'Who's that over there?' he asked.

‘He’s my master craftsman, he’ll be making the boots.’

‘Now you watch out,’ the gentleman said, ‘remember they have to last a whole year.’

When Semyon turned towards Mikhail he saw that he was not even looking at the gentleman, but staring into the corner, as if someone was standing behind him. Mikhail kept staring until suddenly he smiled and his whole face lit up.

‘What are you grinning at, idiot?’ the gentleman asked. ‘You’d better see to it that the boots are ready on time!’

‘They’ll be ready whenever you want them,’ Mikhail replied.

‘Good.’

The gentleman put on his boots again, then his fur coat, which he wrapped tightly around him, and went to the door. But he forgot to lower his head and banged it against the lintel. He cursed and rubbed it. Then he climbed into the carriage and drove off.

As soon as he had gone Semyon remarked, ‘He’s as tough as nails! You couldn’t kill him with a mallet. Why, he nearly knocked the lintel out and still he hardly felt a thing!’

‘You’d expect him to be strong with the kind of life he leads,’ Matryona said. ‘Death itself couldn’t touch that iron girder!’

7

‘Well, we’ve taken on the work now,’ Semyon told Mikhail, ‘and I only hope it doesn’t land us in trouble. The leather’s very expensive and the gentleman’s short-tempered, so we’d better not slip up. Your eyes are sharper than mine and your hands are more skilled, so take the measure and start cutting the leather. I’ll sew the vamps later.’

Mikhail obediently took the leather, spread it on the table, folded it in two, took a knife and started cutting.

Matryona went over to watch Mikhail working and was amazed to see what he was doing. Naturally she knew all about boot-making and could see that instead of cutting the leather into the normal shape for boots Mikhail was cutting it into round pieces.

Matryona felt she should point it out, but then she thought,

‘Maybe I don’t understand how a *gentleman’s* boots should be made. Maybe Mikhail knows best, so I won’t interfere.’

When he had finished cutting Mikhail took some thread and started sewing the pieces together – not with two ends, as he should have done for boots, but with one end, as if for slippers.

Although Matryona was astonished by this as well, she did not interfere and Mikhail carried on sewing until midday.

When Semyon got up and saw that Mikhail had made a pair of slippers from the gentleman’s leather he groaned.

‘I don’t understand,’ he thought, ‘how Mikhail, who’s been with me for a whole year without making one mistake, should now go and make such a dreadful mess of things. The gentleman ordered welted high boots and he’s made slippers without soles and ruined the leather. How can I face the gentleman now? I can’t replace leather of that quality.’

And he told Mikhail, ‘What on earth have you done, my friend? You’ve ruined me! The gentleman ordered high boots and just look what you’ve made!’

And he was just about to give Mikhail a stern lecture when someone knocked hard on the front door with the iron ring. They looked out of the window and saw that someone had ridden up and was tethering his horse. When the door was opened in came the same young boy who had accompanied the gentleman.

‘Good afternoon to you!’

‘Good afternoon. What can we do for you?’

‘The mistress sent me about those boots.’

‘What about them?’

‘Just this: the master won’t be needing them. He’s dead.’

‘What did you say?’

‘He died in the carriage even before we got home. When we reached the house the others came to help him out, but there he lay, slumped like a sack of potatoes. He was already stiff, stone-dead, and we had a real struggle getting him out. So the mistress told me to come back here. “Tell that shoemaker,” she said, “that the gentleman who called and ordered some boots and left the

leather won't be needing them and that instead he must make a pair of soft corpse- slippers as soon as he can." She told me to wait until they're ready. So here I am.'

Mikhail collected the offcuts from the table and rolled them up. Then he took the soft slippers he had already made, slapped them together, wiped them with his apron and handed them to the boy, who took them.

'Goodbye, masters! Good luck to you!' he said as he left.

8

Another year passed, then another, until Mikhail was in his sixth year with Semyon. He lived just as before, never going out, speaking only when he had to. And all that time he smiled only twice – when the old woman had first given him supper and then when the rich gentleman called. Semyon thought the world of his workman and no longer inquired where he was from. His only fear was that Mikhail might leave him.

One day they were all at home and Matryona was putting iron pots into the oven, while the children were scampering along the benches and looking out of the windows. Semyon was stitching at one window, while Mikhail was heeling a boot at the other.

One of the little boys ran along the bench to Mikhail, leant on his shoulder and looked through the window.

'Look, Uncle Mikhail! There's a lady with two little girls. I think she's coming here. One of the girls is limping.'

When the boy said this, Mikhail put down his work, turned to the window and looked out into the street.

Semyon was amazed: Mikhail had never looked out into the street before, but now he was glued to the window and staring at something. Semyon, too, looked out and saw that a well- dressed woman with two little girls in fur coats and thick woollen shawls were in fact coming towards the cottage. The girls were so alike it would have been impossible to tell them apart were it not that one had a crippled left leg and walked with a limp.

The woman climbed the steps, fumbled for the latch and opened the door. She let the little girls in first and then followed

them.

‘Good day, everyone!’ she said.

‘Welcome! What can we do for you?’

The woman sat at the table while the girls, feeling shy with all those people in the room, snuggled against her knees.

‘I’d like some leather shoes for the girls, for the spring,’ she said.

‘That’s no problem. Although we’ve never made such small ones before we can do them – either welted or lined with linen. This is Mikhail, my master shoemaker.’

Semyon turned to Mikhail and saw that he had stopped working and was sitting there with his eyes fixed on the little girls.

Semyon was quite surprised. True, the girls were very pretty – plump, with black eyes and rosy little cheeks – and wore fine fur coats and shawls. Still, he could not understand why Mikhail should be staring like that, as if he knew them.

Semyon kept wondering and then started discussing the price with the woman. This was finally agreed and Semyon took his measure. The woman lifted the lame girl on to one knee and said, ‘Measure her twice and make one shoe for her lame foot and three for the sound one: they take exactly the same size, because they’re twins.’

Semyon took the measurements and inquired about the little lame girl.

‘What happened? Such a pretty little girl. Was she born like that?’

‘No, she was crushed by her mother.’

Just then Matryona joined in. She was wondering who the woman was and whose children they were.

‘You’re their mother, aren’t you?’

‘No, dear woman, I’m not their mother, nor am I a relative. They were complete strangers and I adopted them.’

‘They’re not your own and yet you seem so fond of them!’

‘How can I help being fond of them? I breast- fed them both. I

did have a child of my own once, but it pleased God to take him. I didn't love him as much as these little girls, though.'

'So whose are they?'

9

And the woman proceeded to tell them the whole story.

'It all started about six years ago, when these little girls lost their father and mother the same week – the father was buried on the Tuesday and the mother died on the Friday. So, for three days they had no father and on the fourth they lost their mother. At that time my husband and I were farm- workers and our yard was right next door. The father was a lone wolf and worked as a woodcutter. One day when they were cutting down some trees they let one fall right on him and it crushed his insides. They had hardly got him back to the village when his soul went up to heaven and the same week his widow gave birth to twins – these little girls. She was a poor woman, all on her own, with no other women, young or old, to help her. Alone she gave birth and alone she died.

'The next morning I went to see how she was, but the poor thing was already stiff and cold. When she died she'd rolled over on to this little girl and twisted her leg out of shape. Then the villagers came, washed the body and laid it out. Then they made a coffin and buried her. Good folk they were. So the two little girls were left alone in the world, and who was going to look after them? I happened to be the only woman in that village who'd had a baby at the time and I'd been breast- feeding my first- born for about eight weeks. So I took care of the girls for the time being. The men thought hard about what to do with the orphans and in the end they told me, "You'd better look after them for now, Marya, until we manage to sort something out." So I breast- fed the girl who hadn't been harmed, but not the one who'd been crippled, as I didn't expect her to live. And then I thought to myself, "Why should that little angel be left to fade away?" I took pity on her too and started feeding her, so that in the end I was feeding all three of them – my own first- born and these two, at my own breasts! I was young, strong and well- nourished and God gave me so much milk that it filled my breasts to overflowing. Sometimes I'd feed two at a time, with the third waiting, and when one had had its fill, I'd put

the third to my breast. But it was God's will that I should nurse these little girls and bury my own child before he was two years old. And God never gave me another one. But after that I became quite well off. My second husband's working for a corn merchant and we live at the mill. He earns good money and we live well. But as we've no children of our own I'd be terribly lonely without these two little girls. How can I help loving them? They are the apple of my eye!

The woman pressed the lame girl to her with one hand and wiped the tears from her cheeks with the other.

Matryona sighed. 'There's a lot of truth in the saying "You can live without mother or father, but you can't live without God." '

They chatted together for a while and then the woman got up to leave. Semyon and his wife saw them out and then they looked at Mikhail: he was sitting there, his arms folded on his knees, and he was looking up and smiling.

10

Semyon went over to Mikhail and asked, 'What is it?'

Mikhail rose from the bench, put down his work, took off his apron, bowed to Semyon and Matryona and said, 'Please forgive me, you good people. God has forgiven me, so please forgive me too.'

And the shoemaker and his wife saw a light shining from Mikhail. And Semyon stood up, bowed in turn and said, 'I can see you are no ordinary mortal and I cannot detain you any longer or question you. But please tell me one thing: why were you so miserable when I first found you and brought you home? And why, when my wife gave you supper, did you smile and from that time onwards brighten up? And why, when that rich gentleman ordered those boots, did you smile again and become even more cheerful? And why, when that woman brought those little girls here just now, did you smile a third time and become the very picture of joy? Please tell me, Mikhail. What is that light coming from you and why did you smile three times?'

'The light is radiating from me,' Mikhail replied, 'because I had been punished, but now God has forgiven me. And I smiled three

times because I was commanded to discover three truths and I have discovered them. I discovered the first truth when your wife took pity on me – that is why I smiled for the first time. The second truth I discovered when that rich gentleman ordered the boots – and then I smiled again. And just now, when I saw those two little girls, I discovered the last of the three truths – and I smiled for the third time.’

‘Tell me, Mikhail,’ Semyon asked, ‘why did God punish you and what are those three truths, so that I too may know them?’

Mikhail replied, ‘God punished me because I disobeyed Him. I was an angel of the Lord and I disobeyed Him. Yes, I was an angel in heaven and the Lord sent me down to earth to take a woman’s soul. I flew down and saw the woman lying there. She was sick, all alone and had just given birth to twins, two little girls. There they were, crawling around their mother, but she was unable to put them to her breasts. When she saw me she understood that God had sent me to take her soul. She burst into tears and said, “Angel of the Lord! My husband has just been buried, killed by a falling tree. I have no sister, no aunt, no grandmother – no one to bring up my little orphans. So please don’t take my soul, let me suckle my babies, bring them up and set them on their feet. Children cannot live without father or mother!” And I did what she asked, pressed one little girl to her breast, put the other in her arms and ascended to heaven. I flew to God and told Him, “I could not bring myself to take the soul of a woman who had just borne twins. The father was killed by a falling tree and the mother had just given birth and begged me not to take her soul. ‘Let me suckle my children, bring them up and set them on their feet. Children cannot live without a father or mother,’ she pleaded. So I did not take that woman’s soul.” And then God said, “If you go down to earth and take that woman’s soul you will discover three truths: you will learn *what dwells in man*, *what is not given to man* and *what men live by*. When you have learnt these truths you shall return to heaven.” So I flew down to earth again and took the mother’s soul. The babies dropped from her breasts and her body rolled over on to one of them, crushing its leg. Then I rose above the village, wishing to return her soul to God, but I was seized by a strong wind and my wings drooped and fell off. And so the soul alone returned to God and I fell to earth, by the roadside.’

And now Semyon and Matryona realized whom they had been clothing and feeding and had taken in to live with them. And they both wept for joy and fear. And the angel said, 'I was alone and naked in that field. Never before had I known the needs of man, never had I known cold or hunger. But now I was an ordinary mortal, cold and hungry and not knowing what to do. And then I saw a chapel in the field, built for the glory of God. So I went to it to seek shelter. But it was locked and I could not enter. So I sat down behind it to shelter from the wind. Evening came and I was famished, freezing and in pain. Suddenly I heard a man coming down the road. He was carrying a pair of boots and talking to himself. For the first time since I became a man I saw the mortal face of man. It terrified me and I turned away. And I could hear this man wondering how to protect his body from the winter cold and feed his wife and children. And I thought, "I am perishing with cold and hunger, but here is someone whose only thought is how to find a warm coat for himself and his wife, and food for his family. I cannot expect any help from him." When the man saw me he frowned, looking even more terrifying, and he passed me by. I was desperate. But suddenly I heard him coming back. As I looked he no longer seemed the same man. Before, his face had borne the stamp of death, but now he had suddenly become alive again and in that face I could see God. He came up to me, clothed me and took me to his home. When we arrived a woman came out to meet us and she spoke. This woman was even more terrifying than the man. Her breath seemed to come from the grave and I was almost choked by that deathly stench. She wished to cast me out into the cold and I knew that if she did that she would die. Then suddenly her husband told her to think of God and at once she was transformed. When she had given us supper I returned the look she gave me and saw that death no longer dwelt in her, but life. And in her too I could see God.

'And I recalled God's first lesson: *thou shalt learn what dwelleth in man* . And now I knew that it is Love that dwells in man. I was overjoyed that God had begun to reveal what He had promised to reveal, and I smiled for the first time. But I did not know the whole truth yet. I did not yet know what is not given to man and what men live by.

‘And so I came to live with you and one year passed. One day a rich gentleman came to order a pair of boots that would last a year without splitting or losing their shape. When I looked at him I suddenly saw my comrade, the Angel of Death, standing behind him. No one but I could see that angel. And I knew that he would take the gentleman’s soul before sunset. And I thought, “Here is a man who wants to provide for himself for a year from now but does not know that by evening he will be dead.’ And so I remembered God’s second lesson: *thou shalt learn what is not given to man* .

‘What dwells in man I already knew. Now I knew that which is not given to man: it is not given to him to know his bodily needs. And I smiled for the second time. I rejoiced that I had seen my fellow angel and that God had revealed His second truth.

‘But still I did not know everything. I did not understand what it is that men live by. And so I lived on, waiting for God to reveal this last truth to me. In my sixth year that woman came here with the two little girls. I recognized the girls and learnt how they had stayed alive. After this discovery I thought, “The mother pleaded with me for her children’s sake and I believed what she said, thinking that children cannot live without father or mother. But the other woman had nursed them and brought them up.” And when I saw how much love this woman had for the children and how she wept over them I saw the living God in her and understood *what men live by* . And I realized that God had revealed His last lesson and had forgiven me. So I smiled for the third time.’

12

And the angel’s body was bared and it was robed in light, so that the eye could not look upon it. And the angel’s voice grew louder, as though it came not from him, but from heaven itself. And the angel said, ‘I have learned that men live not by selfishness, but by love.

‘It was not given to the mother to know what her children needed for their lives. Nor was it given to the rich man to know what his true needs were. Nor is it given to any man to know, before the sun has set, whether he will need boots for his living body or slippers for his corpse. When I became a mortal I survived not by thinking of myself, but through the love that dwelt in a

passer-by and his wife, and the compassion and love they showed me. The two orphans' lives were preserved, not by what others may have intended for them, but by the love that dwelt in the heart of a woman, a complete stranger, and by the love and compassion she showed them. Indeed, all men live not by what they may intend for their own well-being, but by the love that dwells in others.

‘Previously I had known that God gave life to men and desired that they should live. But then I came to know something else.

‘I came to understand that God does not wish men to live apart and that is why He does not reveal to each man what he needs for himself *alone*. On the contrary, He wishes men to live in peace and harmony with each other and for this reason He has revealed to each and every one of them what *all* men need, as well as themselves.

‘And I understood that men only think that they live by caring only about themselves: in reality they live by love alone. He who dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him, for God is love.’

And the angel sang the Lord's praises and the hut shook with the sound of his voice. And the roof parted and a pillar of fire rose from earth to heaven. Semyon and his wife and children prostrated themselves; the angel's wings unfurled and he soared into the sky.

When Semyon came to his senses the hut was just as it had always been and there was no one there but him and his family.



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A Simple Heart

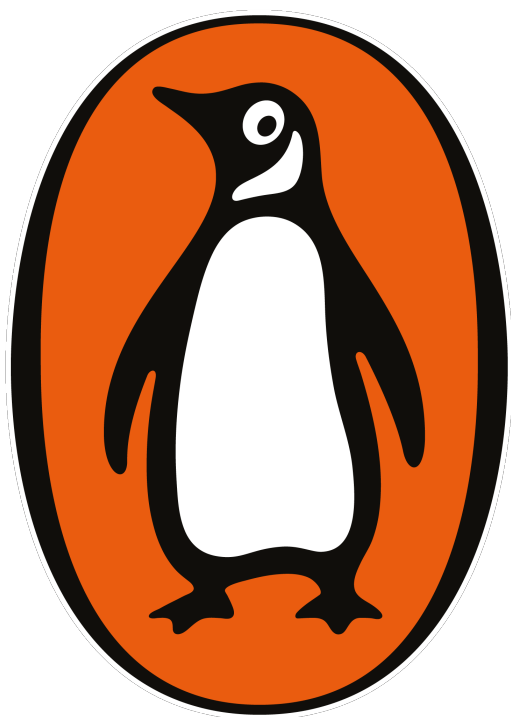
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“她决心教他说话，
而且没过多久，
他便会说：
‘好孩子！’
‘您的仆人，先生！’
‘万福玛利亚！’”



PENGUIN
LITTLE BLACK
CLASSICS

欧班夫人的女仆费莉西泰，让蓬莱韦克那些好太太羡慕了整整半个世纪。

她一年的工钱也就一百法郎，却包揽了所有下厨房的事和家务活。她缝补，清洗，熨烫衣裳；套马，喂养家禽，炼制奶油。不仅如此，她对女主人也一直忠心耿耿，而我们得说，那女主人可不好相处。

欧班夫人嫁给了一位英俊而贫穷的年轻人。一八〇九年初，他过世了，留下她和两个年幼的孩子，以及一笔数额可观的债务。她只好变卖家产，仅留下图克和热福塞两处的农庄。这两处农庄一年能提供给她的租金收入，最多不过五千法郎。为了维持生计，她只好搬出圣梅兰的住宅，住进一栋相对便宜的房子。那房子本是她家族的，坐落在集市后面。

这栋房子有着石板瓦屋顶，在一条小巷和一条通往河边的窄街之间。房子里，地面高低不平，走在上面很容易被绊倒。一条狭窄的过道隔开了厨房与起居室。欧班夫人整日待在起居室，坐在平开窗前一张柳条编的扶手椅上。一排八张红木椅靠着白漆护壁板。晴雨表挂在墙上，下方是架古旧的钢琴。各种小包裹、纸板箱在钢琴上堆得高高的，像一座金字塔。两张铺着挂毯的简易椅，分别放置在路易十五风格的黄色大理石壁炉旁。一只钟，挂在壁炉上方的中央，设计得像座维斯塔神庙。整个房间散发着霉味，那是因为地面比花园低的缘故。

二楼，有一间“夫人”的卧室。那是一个很大的房间，装饰着暗淡的、带有花纹的墙纸。墙上挂着幅“老爷”的画像，他穿着在那时很时髦的奇特服装。卧室径直通往一个更小的房间，里面放着两张孩子的床，每张床的垫子都被移走了。再过去便是客厅，常年关闭，堆满了蒙着布罩的家具。最后，有一个过道通向书房。堆着书和纸的书橱，占据了三面墙，将一个很大的乌木书桌包围其中。书橱的侧板上贴满了素描画、水粉风景画，以及奥德朗的版画，让人想起已然逝去的美好时日，以及更奢华的品位。三楼是费莉西泰的卧室，被天窗所照亮。窗外，可以见到牧场。

费莉西泰总在天蒙蒙亮时起床，以确保能赶上弥撒。之后，她便一口气也不歇地劳作到晚上。晚餐结束后，她收拾好陶盘，紧实地门上门，用灰烬埋了柴火，便手拿念珠，在壁炉前睡去了。在讨价还价

时，没人能比她更固执。而论干净，她洗刷的平底小圆锅，足以让蓬莱韦克别家的女仆绝望。她从不浪费，吃得很慢，还会用手指把掉在桌上的面包屑沾干净。那面包是专为她烤的，足有十二磅，能让她吃上二十天。

无论遇上什么天气，她都披一条印花方头巾，用别针扣在后面，戴一顶完全盖住头发的女帽，穿一双灰色长筒袜、一条红色裙子，再在上衣外面罩着背带围裙，像医院护士穿的那样。

她的脸是瘦削的，声音是尖锐的。二十五岁时，人们以为她有四十岁。而在她五十岁生日过后，倒让人越发难以看出她的年纪了。她不怎么说话，身板挺直，步调僵硬，就像一位被发条驱使的、木头做的女人。

和别的女孩一样，她也曾恋爱过。

她的父亲是个石匠，从脚手架上跌下来摔死了。随后，母亲过世，姐姐们也各自谋生去了。一个农民收留了她。尽管她还很小，仍被派去牧场看顾牛群。她总是衣不遮体，冷得直哆嗦；趴在地上喝池塘里的水。她经常毫无缘由地挨打，最后被赶出了房子，说是她偷了三十苏^[1]，但她其实是无辜的。后来，她在别的农场找了份工作，饲养家禽。雇主喜爱她，却招来了朋友们的妒忌。

八月的一个晚上（那时她十八岁），她被拉去参加科勒维尔的乡村游园会。喧闹的提琴声、树上的彩灯、一件件绚丽多彩的衣裳、金色的十字架和丝带，以及那些随音乐跳动的人，一时间让她茫然不知所措。她独自站在一旁，怯生生的。一个看起来很有钱的年轻人，靠在农场马车的车轴上抽着烟斗。他走来，邀请她跳舞。他为她买了一杯苹果汁、一杯咖啡、一个蛋糕和一条丝绸围巾。他想着她已领会了他的意思，便提议送她回家。走到燕麦田边时，他将她推倒在地。她害怕地尖叫起来。他跑了。

不久后的一个晚上，她在前往博蒙特的路上遇到一辆大车。车子载着干草，缓慢笨拙地前行着。她想超过它。在挨着车轮走过去的时候，她认出车上的人是泰奥多尔。

他面无愧色地看着她，说她理应原谅他那晚的行为，毕竟他“那晚只是喝多了”。

她不知该如何作答，只想逃走。

于是，他转换话题，谈起了当年的收成，以及这个地区的各大人物。他说，他父亲已离开科勒维尔，在艾科特买了处农庄，也就是说，他们现在是邻居了。她回答说：“哦，这样啊！”他说，他父母希望他安定下来，但他不着急，更愿意在结婚前遇见那个对的女人。她听了，垂下双眼。他问，她是否正考虑结婚的事情。她笑了，说他那样取笑她可不好。“但我发誓，我不是在取笑你。”他说着，伸出左手，搂住了她的腰。她就这样让他搂着，继续往前走。现在，他们走得更慢了。微风徐徐，星辰闪耀。在他们面前，大马车上的干草来回晃动。四匹马艰难地踱步向前，起了片片尘土。未经任何指令，马儿向右转了。这时，他吻了吻她，而她在夜色里逃开了。

接下来的那周，泰奥多尔约她出来了几次。

他们在农家院子的角落里碰面，躲在墙后或一棵树下。费莉西泰并不像同龄的年轻姑娘那般懵懂无知。和农场牲口打交道，让她学到了很多。然而，她与生俱来的慎重，以及保持贞洁的本能，使她避免了屈从泰奥多尔的欲求。她这般推阻，让泰奥多尔很是泄气。为了满足欲望（或者，也可能是出于单纯的想法），他开始向她求婚。她不知道是否该相信他，而他则坚持说自己是认真的。

不久，他说起一件烦心的事：一年前，他父母花钱让人代他服兵役，但他仍有可能随时被征召。一想起有这种可能，他就害怕。费莉西泰将这种怯懦看成是爱的讯息，这让她更爱他了。夜里，她从房子里溜出来去见泰奥多尔，而他则用忧惧和哀求，向她发起进攻。

最终，他说他要亲自去市政府查探情况。他会在下个星期天的十一点至午夜间回来，告诉费莉西泰结果。

到了约定的时间，费莉西泰去见她的情人。

但她见到的并不是泰奥多尔，而是他的一个朋友。

他告诉她，她再也不会见到泰奥多尔了。为了确保不被征召入伍，他娶了图克一个有钱的老女人，勒胡塞太太。

费莉西泰很悲伤。她扑倒在地，号啕痛哭；她祈求上天的帮助，独自一人躺在田野里，哭到天亮。然后，她回到农场，说她决定要离开了。到了月底，她领了工钱，将几样东西用披巾包好，便前往蓬莱韦克了。

她来到一家客栈前，向一个戴寡妇帽的女人打听。正好她也在找一个厨子。这位年轻的姑娘对烹饪所知不多，但似乎很乐意学习，而且随时准备帮忙，于是欧班夫人最后说：“那好吧，就你了。”

一刻钟后，费莉西泰就在他家安置下来。

起初，她时常感到不安，因为这家人规矩很多，而对“老爷”的怀念似乎徘徊在所有事物之上。维尔吉妮和保罗，一个七岁，一个只有四岁，都像是某种珍贵的材料做的。她喜欢像马似的驮着他们，只在欧班夫人不许她老是亲吻他们时，才会让她觉得受了委屈。即使如此，她仍很快乐。新的环境很舒适，她早先的不愉快很快就消散了。

每逢周四，欧班夫人的朋友会来玩波士顿牌。费莉西泰事先备好了纸牌和暖脚炉。客人们总是八点准时到，十一点钟声响起时离开。

每周一早上，在小巷尽头有家店面的旧货商，会在人行道上摆出各种零碎的五金器件。整个城镇充满了嘈杂的声响，有马嘶、羊叫、猪哼，以及马车驶过街面的咔嚓声。正午左右，也就是集市最繁忙的

时候，一个老农会跨上台阶，前来拜访欧班夫人。他身材高大，鹰钩鼻，脑后面歪戴着顶帽子。他叫罗伯兰，来自热福塞农场。随之而来的，是图克农场的里埃巴。他又矮又胖，脸色红润，穿着一件灰夹克，长筒皮靴上绑着马刺。

他们俩都带着鸡或奶酪，想着办法让女地主能买下来。但无论耍什么把戏，费莉西泰总能赢过他们，他们也因此总是很尊敬她。

有时，欧班夫人也会接待她的叔叔，德·格莱芒维特侯爵。他因生活放纵，败光了所有的钱财。现在，住在法莱斯仅剩的一小块领地上。他总是在午餐时间来，带着一条惹人厌的小贵宾犬，它会在家具上涂满泥爪印。他表现得像一位绅士，每次提及“先父”，总会抬一下帽子。但终究恶习难改，很快他就会给自己倒上一杯又一杯酒，尽说一些下流的玩笑话。费莉西泰会礼貌地将他带到门边，说：“我想，今天差不多了，德·格莱芒维特侯爵！下回再来看我们吧！”说完，便把他关在了门外。

不过，她倒是很乐意迎接退休的律师布雷先生。他的白领带、秃脑门、衬衫前襟上的荷叶花边、宽大的棕色大衣、捏鼻烟时弯起胳膊的独特姿态——事实上，有关这个人的一切，都让费莉西泰心慌意乱，就像我们见到大人物时那样。

他替“夫人”照管产业，会连着好几小时和夫人关在“老爷”的书房里。他总担心名誉受损，对法院尊敬万分，并声称自己懂一些拉丁文。

他给孩子们买了一本带插图的地理书，因为他认为这将有利于他们从学习中得到乐趣。这本书描述了世界各地的场景：戴着羽毛头饰的食人族，一只诱拐年轻女孩的猴子，一群沙漠中的贝都因人，一条中了鱼叉的鲸鱼，等等。

保罗将所有这些插图仔细地讲解给费莉西泰听。实际上，这是唯一一次有人教她如何阅读一本书。

给孩子们上课的是居尤，那是一个着实可怜的家伙。他在镇公所工作，因写一手好字而出名，喜欢在鞋底磨砺他的笔刀。

一旦天气晴好，全家都会起得早早的，前往热福塞农庄消磨一整天。

院子坐落在斜坡上，农舍则在院子中央。从那里可以望见远处的海，像一条小小的灰色带子。

费莉西泰从篮子里拿出片片冷肉。他们在挨着牛奶房的房间里吃饭。那个房间是已然塌毁的乡村别墅中唯一残存的部分。墙纸剥落，垂了下来，随穿堂风摆动着。欧班夫人低着头，沉浸在往事里。这让

孩子们几乎不敢说话。她说：“你们去玩吧。”于是，他们就走开了。

保罗会爬上谷仓，捉小鸟，在池塘里打水漂，或用木杖敲打大木桶，发出轰隆轰隆的响声，像在敲鼓。

维尔吉妮会去喂兔子，或跑过牧场去采矢车菊。她跑的时候，会露出靓丽的绣花短裤。

秋天的一个晚上，他们穿过草地回家。

上弦月照亮了天空。薄雾飘移着，像纱一样蒙在图克河蜿蜒的水面上。有一群牛躺在草地中央，慵懒地看着他们路过。到了第三块草地，一些牛站起来，在他们面前围成一个圈。费莉西泰说：“不用怕！”她边往前走，边哼着引人沉思的小调。来到最近的动物旁，她轻轻拍着它的背脊。它走开了，其他的牛也一样。然而，刚穿过下块草地，他们就听到一声可怕的牛哞。那是一头隐藏在雾中的公牛。它开始朝那两位女士走来。欧班夫人想逃走。费莉西泰说：“不不，不能走得太快！”但她们却走得更快了。即使如此，她们仍能听到身后越来越近的公牛鼻息，以及牛蹄捶打青草的声响。她们知道它正飞奔而来。费莉西泰转身，面对公牛，从地上捡起土块，扔向它的脸。公牛低下头，晃着双角，颤抖着发出怒吼。现在，欧班夫人带着两个孩子，已到了草地边，急着想穿过树篱。费莉西泰则面对公牛，仍有条不紊地撤退，将一块草根土扔进它的眼睛里，一边还喊着：“快，快！”

欧班夫人下了沟底，相继推着维尔吉妮和保罗上去了。她爬堤岸时，跌落了几次。不过最终还是凭着股子意志力，成功地爬了上去。

公牛已将费莉西泰逼到一扇栅栏门前，喷吐的口水溅到了她脸上。下一秒，牛角就要顶到她了。在这危急时刻，她竟从两根木桩之间硬挤了过去。这庞大的家伙吓了一跳，愣在了原地。

多年以后，蓬莱韦克的人仍会谈起这桩历险。但费莉西泰并不引以为傲，也丝毫不觉得她的作为有什么英勇可言。

维尔吉妮占据了全部的心神。那场公牛带来的可怕经历，已影响了维尔吉妮的神经。普帕特医生建议她到特鲁维尔洗海水浴。

那时候，还鲜有人来这处风景胜地。欧班夫人四处打听，还请教了布雷先生，做了充分准备，仿佛是一场很漫长的旅程。

临行前一天，行李由里埃巴的农场马车送走了。第二天，他牵着两匹马回来。一匹有女士马鞍，带着天鹅绒靠背。另一匹马的背上放着一个斗篷卷成的坐垫。欧班夫人骑上马，跟在里埃巴后头。费莉西泰在另一匹马上照顾维尔吉妮。保罗骑的则是夏勒杜瓦先生的驴。借这头驴，有一个明确的条件，他们得精心照顾它。

路况很糟。五英里的路，他们走了两小时。马匹踩在泥地里，陷到踝骨。它们得猛然向前，才能自如地拔出脚来。它们的脚绊在车辙里，有时不得不跳一下。在路上的某些地方，里埃巴的母马突然不走了。里埃巴耐心等着，直到它再次走动。骑行时，他会说起住在路旁那些人的故事，并总是额外添加些许个人的评判。比如，到了图克镇中心，他们行经一栋房子，窗外围着簇旱金莲。他耸耸肩，说：“这里住着一位勒胡塞太太，她倒不挑年轻人，反而……”费莉西泰没有听到下文，因为这时马儿开始慢跑起来，驴也在前头跑了。他们下了条小道，一扇门开了，出来两位年轻的农场工人。他们就在农舍门外的肥料堆旁下了马。

里埃巴老夫人迎接女东家，一脸的欢喜溢于言表。午饭时，她摆出牛里脊、大肠、灌肠、奶油炖鸡块、泛着泡沫的果汁、水果馅饼、酒浸李子。全程都在说着恭维的话，说夫人看起来“气色更好了”，说小姐已长成一位“美丽的少女”，说少爷保罗是个多“壮实”的年轻人，还不忘提及他们过世的祖父母。里埃巴一家数代为他们服务，因此老一辈的人也都认识。这农场和里埃巴一家一样，透着股陈旧年代的味道。虫子蛀蚀了房顶的横梁，烟熏黑了墙面，尘土蒙上了窗玻璃。一个橡木架上堆着各种工具：水壶、碟子、锡盘、捕狼器、剪羊毛的大剪刀，以及一个让孩子们觉得格外逗乐的巨大的灌肠器。外面有三所院子，那里的每棵树都长着蘑菇，许多树枝中间生着槲寄生。有些树被风吹倒了，但在树干绽裂的地方又重新长出来。在果实的重压下，所有的树都弯了。茅草屋顶像是厚薄不一的棕色天鹅绒，倒是经受住了最猛烈的风，但马车房坍塌了。欧班夫人说，她会安排人去修的，接着就让人备马去了。

他们花了半小时，来到特鲁维尔。这支小小的旅行队伍，在来到文考尔——一座从船上方延展的悬崖时，不得不下了马。三分钟后，他们来到码头的一端，进了大卫老夫人的客栈“金色羊羔”的院子。

由于空气变换，以及海水浴的关系，维尔吉妮很快就康复了。她没有泳衣，是穿着衬衫下水的。她的女仆会在一间海关人员的简陋小屋帮她穿衣服，这间小屋也供淋浴的人使用。

下午，他们骑驴走过罗切斯-诺雷斯，去往恩克维尔。起初，小道在像公园草地般轻柔起伏的牧场间蜿蜒攀升。接着，便来到一片高原，那里是牧场和耕地。小道旁种植着冬青，与杂乱的树莓丛长在一起。一棵枯死的大树，其枝丫呈之字形，横亘在蓝天下。

他们总是在一块特定的草地停下休息。往下看，左边是多维尔，右边是勒阿弗尔。前方则是开阔的海。在阳光下，大海散发着微光，像镜面一样光滑。四周围很安静，几乎能听到海浪持续而低沉的声音。麻雀在附近吱吱叫着。巨大的天穹铺展在上方。欧班夫人坐在那

里，做着针线活儿。维尔吉妮坐在她身旁，编织着灯芯草。费莉西泰采摘一束束野生薰衣草。而保罗则很无聊，总想着早点上路。

别的时候，他们坐船渡过图克河，去找贝壳。退潮时，海胆、鲍鱼、水母被留在沙滩上。孩子们追逐风吹来的星星点点的泡沫。波浪从海滩一边到另一边，慵懒地破碎在沙子里。海滩延展着，没有边际，但在陆地那一侧，以沙丘为界，将它和跑马场似的玛黑大牧场分隔开来。他们穿过牧场，往回走向特鲁维尔——它就躺在山脚下，每走一步，这座小镇就大一些。各式房子错落开来，像花园里缤纷的花朵。

天气热的时候，他们便待在房间里。外面炫目的光透过百叶窗的缝隙，投进一道道光束。乡村里听不到一丝声响。没有一个人敢冒险来到大街上。占据一切的寂静，让万物显得更为平静。远处，传来船工的锤子在敲打船体的声音，而柏油的气息也随着倦怠的微风飘荡而来。

一天中最激动人心的事，发生在渔船归来的时候。一旦过了入口浮标，他们便开始迂回前进。他们的主帆降到桅杆的一半高，前帆膨胀，像巨大的气球。他们滑过飞溅的海浪，直达海港的中央，随后便突然抛锚。渔船被带到码头后，水手吊起他们的鱼，扔到岸上。鱼还是活的，轻微颤动着。一排马车早就等在那里了。戴着棉布帽的女人们冲向前，去拿篮子，亲吻她们的男人。

有一天，有个女人向费莉西泰走来。不久，费莉西泰便兴冲冲地回到客栈的房间。她找到了失散姐妹中的一个，这位纳斯塔西·巴奈特，也就是勒鲁夫人，紧随其后进了房间，怀里抱着一个宝宝。一个小孩握着她的右手，而她的左手边是一个小水手。他的手放在臀部上，贝雷帽扣到了耳朵上。

一刻钟后，欧班太太就让她走了。

但之后并没有摆脱他们。他们会刚好等在厨房外面，或者在她们外出散步时，尾随而来。至于那个丈夫，则一直没有现身。

费莉西泰倒是很依恋他们。她给他们买了一条毯子、几件衬衫，和一只炉子。他们很明显在利用她。欧班夫人对费莉西泰这种软心肠很是懊恼。她也反对那个外甥对保罗所表现出的亲密举止。再加上，维尔吉妮犯了咳嗽，天气也更恶劣了，她便返回了蓬莱韦克。

在为保罗选择一所好学校时，布雷先生提了建议。在康城有所公认是最好的学校。因此保罗就被送到了康城。他告别时很勇敢，为即将住在一个会有自己朋友的地方而心满意足。

欧班夫人只好任由她儿子离去，因为她知道他必将获得良好的教

育。维尔吉妮很快就适应了，倒是费莉西泰发现，没有他，房子变得太安静了。不过，很快地就有别的事吸引了她的注意力。圣诞节后，她每天得带着维尔吉妮去学习教理问答。

[1] 苏（sou），法国曾发行的一种铜币。——译者注

费莉西泰进门时，屈膝行了个礼，沿着教堂中堂高耸的天花板下方的过道一路走来，打开欧班夫人坐的教堂长椅的挡门后，自行坐下，环顾了一下四周。

孩子们已在唱诗班的席位入座，男孩在右，女孩居左。神父站在他们前面，靠近读经台。在后殿，一扇彩色玻璃上显示着圣灵在俯视圣母玛利亚。另一扇窗上，则是圣母跪在圣婴耶稣前面。神龛的背后是圣米迦勒屠龙的木雕。

神父开始讲起圣典的梗概。于是，费莉西泰的脑子里便满是伊甸园、大洪水、巴别塔、大火焚毁的城市、灭亡的种族，以及被推倒的偶像。这绚烂的叙事慢慢灌输给她，让她充满了对天父的尊崇，以及对天谴的极度恐惧。听到耶稣受难的故事，她哭了。他们为什么要将他钉在十字架上？既然他对孩子那么善良，他给饥饿的人以粮食，让盲人重见光明；既然他已被选中，出于温和的天性，选择降生于穷人家一座马厩的麦秆堆上。播种与收获，葡萄树上的果实，所有这些在福音书里提及的常见事物，也在她的生活里头出现。现在，有了与上帝的联系，这些事物更显神圣了。费莉西泰比以往更爱羊羔，因为她爱上帝的羔羊。而鸽子则会让她想起圣灵。

她发现很难想象圣灵到底是什么模样，因为他不仅是一只鸟，有时还是火，有时则是气息。入夜时，她看到在沼泽闪耀的，可能就是圣灵的光；或者是他的气息促使云朵飘过天空；或者是他的声音让教堂的钟声如此悦耳动听。她坐在那里，沉浸于对这些奇迹的敬仰之中，在石头墙的冰凉和教堂的平和里感到身心愉悦。

她丝毫不理解教义，也没有想过去理解。当神父站着给孩子们讲解，而孩子们重复着所学的时候，费莉西泰睡着了，直到孩子们离开教堂，木屐拍打着石头地面所发出的声响才将她惊醒。就这样，费莉西泰靠着听孩子们背诵，学到了她的教理问答，而这种宗教教育在她年轻时却被忽略了。此后，她便模仿起维尔吉妮的宗教戒律。她斋戒，她也斋戒。无论她何时去忏悔，她便跟着去。为了圣体瞻礼节，费莉西泰和维尔吉妮还一起做了个圣坛。

维尔吉妮初次领圣餐的前几天，费莉西泰为要准备什么而着急。她担忧她的鞋子，她的念珠，她的弥撒用书，她的手套。她帮着欧班夫人给维尔吉妮穿衣服的时候，手一直在抖。

整个弥撒期间，她都焦虑不安。唱诗班的一侧被布雷先生挡住了，她看不见。但在正对面，她能看见一群女孩，低垂着面纱，戴着白色花冠，看上去像是一片雪地。即使隔着一段距离，她仍能从那线条优美的脖颈、虔诚沉思的情态，认出她深爱的小维尔吉妮。钟声响了。他们全都在静默中低下头，跪了下来。接着，伴随着管风琴强而有力的演奏，唱诗班和教众唱起了《上帝的羔羊》。男孩们列队向前，女孩们随之站起身来。她们双手合十，祈祷着，缓慢地走向点着蜡烛的圣坛。她们一个接一个地跪在圣坛台阶上，领受圣餐，又以相同的顺序，返回到唱诗班的位置。轮到维尔吉妮时，费莉西泰倾身向前，以便能看到她。带着那种出于真爱的非凡想象，她觉得自己就是维尔吉妮本人，借用了她的表情，穿着她的衣服，用她的心在她的胸口跳动。维尔吉妮张开嘴时，费莉西泰闭上眼睛，几乎要晕厥过去。

第二天一早，费莉西泰前往圣器室，请求给予她圣餐。她带着应有的钦敬领受圣餐，但并没有体验到那相同的狂喜。

欧班夫人想要给女儿最好的教育。既然居尤不能教她英语或音乐，她决定将女儿送往翁弗勒的乌尔苏拉修女学校。

维尔吉妮对此没有意见，但费莉西泰却很不开心，觉得夫人过于严厉了。然而，她还是接受了，毕竟这件事并不是她所能决定的，而她的女主人可能最了解情况。

有一天，一俩老旧的马车来到门外。车上下来一位修女，她是来接小姐的。费莉西泰将行李放在行李架上，向车夫叮嘱了几句，便将六罐果酱、一打梨子和一束紫罗兰放在车座上。

就要离去时，维尔吉妮哭了。她紧紧抱着母亲，而母亲则亲吻她的额头，不断地对她说：“好了，好了，我们得勇敢些！”步梯拉上来了，马车出发了。

马车走后，欧班夫人的情绪失控了。那天晚上，她所有的朋友，劳尔曼夫妇、勒沙普图瓦夫人、洛赫弗耶姐妹、胡波维尔先生、布雷先生都来安慰她。

起初，女儿不在让她很伤心。但每周有三天，她都能收到女儿的信。其他几天，她则给女儿回信，在花园里散步、读书，以此打发时间。

每天早上，费莉西泰会习惯性地走进维尔吉妮的卧室，凝视着墙壁。她多想还能给她梳头，给她系鞋带，把她塞进被窝啊；多想能成天见到她那甜蜜的小脸蛋，握着她的手一起外出啊。为了找点事做，她试着做一些针线活儿。但她的手指太笨了，老是把线弄断。她没心思做任何事情，晚上也睡不着。她现在，用自己的话说，就是“体内空空的”。

为了能“有个伴儿”，她问欧班夫人能否允许她的外甥维克多过来看望。

维克多总在星期天弥撒过后那会儿来。他脸色红润，敞着胸，带着一股他刚刚走过的乡野的气息。她会立即为他摆好桌子。他们坐在桌子两头，面对面地吃午饭。为了节省开支，费莉西泰尽可能吃得少些，而维克多则吃很多，甚至吃到最后都睡着了。晚祷的钟声响了，她叫醒他，给他刷干净裤子，系好领带，然后靠在他的肩膀上，像一位自豪的母亲，向教堂走去。

他父母总是让他带点东西回去，一包糖、一块肥皂、一小瓶白兰地，有时甚至是钱。任何一件需要缝补的衣服，他都会带过来，而费莉西泰总是很乐意做这样的事情。一有机会，她就高兴地鼓励他再次过来。

八月里，维克多和他父亲一起到沿海一带捕鱼去了。

这时，暑假刚刚开始，孩子们回家了，这让费莉西泰有了些许的安慰。只是保罗变任性了，维尔吉妮也已大了，没法儿像对孩子那样待她了。这让他们之间的氛围变得尴尬，疏远。

维克多先后去了默尔克、敦刻尔克和布莱顿。每次航行回来，他都会带一份礼物给费莉西泰。第一次是贝壳做的盒子。第二次是一个咖啡杯。第三次是一个大大的姜饼人。他正长成一个英俊的年轻人。优美的身形，刚长出的一点胡髭，一副直爽开朗的表情，一顶总是戴在后脑勺上的小皮帽，让他看起来像是个领航员。为了逗费莉西泰高兴，他夹杂着水手的各种行话，给她讲故事。

一八一九年七月十四日，星期一（这是费莉西泰永远也不会忘记的日子），维克多说，他已签约受雇于一艘远洋轮船。两天后，他将从翁弗勒坐晚上的渡轮前往他的纵帆船，这艘船很快就会从勒阿弗尔启航。他这一去，也许要两年。

想到要分别这么久，费莉西泰极为伤心。为了能与她最后告别，星期三晚上，在欧班夫人吃完饭后，她便从蓬莱韦克到翁弗勒，穿着木屐跑了十英里。

到各他时，她没有朝左，而是向右走，结果在造船厂里迷了路，不得不原路返回。她向路人打听方向，那人告诉她得快点。一路上，她绕着满是船只的海港走着，碰到了各种缆索。突然，她脚下的地面似乎倾斜了，光束呈十字形交织在眼前。她看到空中有几匹马，心想自己一定是疯了。

码头边，马群因害怕大海嘶鸣着。它们被起重架吊起，放到船里。船上人满为患，在苹果酒桶、奶酪筐和谷袋间拥挤着，走动。

母鸡在咯咯叫，船长在咒骂。甲板上，有个水手似乎对周遭的一切丝毫都不在意，靠着船头站着。费莉西泰没认出他，正一遍遍地叫着“维克多”。他抬起头，她向前冲来，但就在这时，舷梯突然从岸上被抽走了。

船只离了海港，被一群女人拖拽向前。她们在做事的时候，会齐声唱着歌。船体咯吱作响，沉重的波浪拍打着船头。然后船帆掉转，将所有人都遮挡在视线之外。月光下，海面闪着银色的光泽，而航行其上的船看起来像是个黑点，越来越暗淡。最终，在远处被吞没，消失不见了。

回家的路上，途经各各他，费莉西泰突然想请求上帝怜悯所有她珍爱的人。她站在那里，祈祷了很长时间。她的双眼凝视着上方的云朵，眼泪滑落她的脸颊。整座城镇都睡了，除了那些海关的人。可以听见水从闸门的孔中流过，像是激流。钟声敲响了两点。

天亮前，女修道院是不会接待访客的。而费莉西泰也知道，如果她回来晚了，夫人肯定会很生气。因此，尽管她很想从维尔吉妮那儿得到一个小小的吻，但还是启程回家了。她踏进蓬莱韦克时，客栈的女仆才刚刚起床。

维克多太可怜了，他得在海上持续颠簸数月！她并不担忧他之前的航行，毕竟英格兰也好，布列塔尼也罢，都是可以回来的地方。但美洲，殖民地和安的列斯群岛，则迷失在世界另一边的未知领域里。

自他走后，费莉西泰无时不在想着她的外甥。天气炎热、阳光充足时，她担心他可能会渴了。暴风雨来临时，她害怕他可能会被雷电击中。听到风在烟囱里呼啸，将屋顶上的瓦片吹落，她则想象他正经受着同样的风暴，正紧紧抓住折断的桅杆顶端，身子向后，被抛掷在大海的白沫之中。别的时候，受她所记得的地理书上那些插图的刺激，她想象他正在被野人吃掉，在树林里被猿猴捕获，或者正死在一片荒凉的海滩上。但她从未将这些焦虑告诉任何人。

欧班夫人则在担忧她的女儿。

修道院的修女说，她是个情感丰富的孩子，只是太过敏感。哪怕一点点的情感波动都会影响到她。这让她不得不放弃弹钢琴。

她母亲坚持要她定期写信。有一天早晨，邮差没有出现，她几乎不能自制，在房间里的扶手椅和窗户之间，来回走个不停。实在太过分了！都四天没消息了！

费莉西泰想到自己的境况可能对女主人有所安抚，便说：

“但是夫人，我已经六个月没有收到消息了。”

“谁的消息？”

“哎呀，我外甥的消息呀。”费莉西泰温柔地回答。

“哦，你的外甥！”欧班夫人耸耸肩，又在房间里踱起步来，那似乎在说：“我想都没想过他！他关我什么事呢！只不过是这个小船员，一个乞丐。他不值得我焦虑。但像我的女儿那样的……想想看！”

尽管自小就受尽虐待，但费莉西泰还是被欧班夫人深深伤害了。不过很快，她就平复了。

毕竟夫人为她的女儿心烦意乱，是可以理解的。

对费莉西泰来说，两个孩子是同等重要的。他们因她的爱而连接在一起。而让他们享有相同的命运，看起来也是恰当的。

费莉西泰听药剂师说，维克多的船已到了哈瓦那。他是在报纸上读到这则消息的。

由于与雪茄有关，费莉西泰幻想着哈瓦那是这样的一个地方：人们除了抽烟，什么都不干。她想象着维克多正走在一群黑鬼之间，被烟雾笼罩着。“如果需要的话”，从哈瓦那可以走回来吗？那里离蓬莱韦克有多远？为此，她去请教了布雷先生。

他找来地图册，开始解说经纬线。费莉西泰听蒙了。布雷先生坐在她前面，沾沾自喜，好像他无所不知似的。最后，他拿出铅笔，在地图上一个椭圆形斑点的缺口处，指了指一个几乎看不见的黑点说：“就是这里了。”费莉西泰凑近看着地图。这些彩色的线条组成的网络压迫着她的双眼，但并没有告诉她任何事情。布雷先生问，她在迷惑什么。她说，他是否可以指出维克多现在住的房子。布雷先生举起手臂，打了个喷嚏，哈哈大笑，被自己遇到头脑如此简单的人逗乐了。费莉西泰没能理解他的笑点。毕竟，她理解力有限，她甚至期望能在那里看到一张她外甥的照片呢。

两周后，是里埃巴照常去集市的日子。他走进厨房，递给费莉西泰一封她姐夫的信。两人都不识字，费莉西泰只好拿给女主人看。

欧班夫人正在数一件织物的针脚。她将活儿放在一边，打开信，停顿了片刻，然后低沉着声音，严肃地说：“他们给你带来了……坏消息。你外甥……”

维克多死了。这就是那封信所说的。

费莉西泰倒在了椅子上，头抵着墙，眼皮紧闭，眼眶泛红。她僵在那儿，低垂着头，双手无力地垂在身旁，凝视前方，一遍遍地重复说：“可怜的孩子！可怜的孩子！”

里埃巴站在那里，看着她，叹了口气。欧班夫人轻轻颤抖。

她建议费莉西泰到特鲁维尔去看看她姐姐。

费莉西泰做了个手势，意思是那没有必要。

一片沉默。里埃巴老头觉得他最好离开。

他走后，费莉西泰说：“他们是不会在意的，一点都不会。”

她再次低头，坐在那儿，不时心烦意乱地玩弄着摆在桌上的编织针。

院子里走过一群女人，正推着一车湿漉漉的亚麻衣服。

透过窗户，费莉西泰看见了她们，突然想起要洗的衣服。昨天她用碱液泡过，今天该洗出来了。于是，她起身出了房间。

她的洗衣板和木盆都在图克河边。她将一堆内衣扔到岸边，卷起袖子，抓住棒槌。这捶打的声响，在邻居的花园里都能听到。牧场空落无人，风吹皱了河面。河床上长长的水草，随波漂流着，像死人的头发在水里向下漂移。费莉西泰很勇敢，克制着她的悲痛，一直到天黑。但当她独自一人在房间里时，还是没能忍住。她平躺在床垫上，将脸埋在枕头里，用拳头挤压着太阳穴。

很久以后，她从那艘船的船长那里得知维克多死时的情况。他得了黄热病，在医院里放了很多血。四个医生同时在给他治疗，而他立即死了。主治医生说：“上帝啊，又死了一个。”

维克多一直受父母苛待。费莉西泰不再乐意见到他们。他们也没有去联系费莉西泰。可能他们只是把她忘了，也可能是因为贫穷让他们生就了一副硬心肠。

维尔吉妮越来越虚弱了。

呼吸困难，咳嗽持续，高烧不断，脸上布满暗淡的红疹，所有这些都在显示某种隐晦的身心失调。普帕特医生建议她去普罗旺斯度假。欧班夫人听从了他的意见。如果不是蓬莱韦克的天气不好，她会立即将维尔吉妮接回家的。

她和一个出租马车的人达成协议，让他每周二带她去往修道院。修道院的花园里有一座露台，可以俯瞰塞纳河。维尔吉妮靠着母亲的手臂，踩着掉落的葡萄叶，上下来回地散步。她会望着远处的帆船，以及从唐卡维尔的别墅到勒阿弗尔的灯塔这一带的海岸。有时，太阳突然冲破云层，照得她直眨眼睛。之后，她们会坐在棚架下休息。她母亲弄来一小杯上等的马拉加葡萄酒。维尔吉妮会喝那么两口，一想到自己会喝醉就发笑。

她开始恢复元气。秋天缓慢地滑过。费莉西泰竭尽所能安慰欧班夫人。但有一天傍晚，她在镇里办完差事回来，发现普帕特医生的马

车停在门前。普帕特医生在大厅出口处，欧班夫人在系她的帽子。

“把我的脚炉、钱包和手套拿来，快！”

维尔吉妮患了肺炎，夫人怕她好不了。

“我确信没那么糟糕。”医生说。于是，两人一起爬上了他的马车。四周落着慌乱的雪。夜晚正在来临，天气异常寒冷。

费莉西泰猛冲进教堂，点了一支蜡烛后，就去追赶普帕特医生的马车了。过了整整一小时，她从后头跳上来，紧紧抓住马车的边。突然，她想起来：“院门没有关！万一小偷进来怎么办？”于是，她又从车里跳回了路上。

第二天，在最初的日光中，她来到医生家。医生回来过，但又去乡下探望病人了。她在客栈里等着，想着有人可能会捎信过来。最终，在早晨的朦胧光线里，她坐上了利雪来的公共马车。

修道院坐落在一条陡窄的街道底部。她从半途往下走时，听到修道院里传来的奇怪声响。那是丧钟的鸣响。“那一定是为别人敲的。”她想着，大声地叩着门环。

不久，她听到有脚步声拖拽而来，门开了些许，一个修女出现了。

这位善良的修女庄重地宣称“她刚过世”。就在这时，圣里奥纳多教堂的钟声响起，越发显得响亮。

费莉西泰来到三楼。

在门口，她看到维尔吉妮仰卧着，双手紧握，嘴巴张着，头向后仰。头上方，一尊黑色的受难像向她倾斜而来。她的脸，比她周边僵直地垂挂下来的帘子还要惨白。欧班夫人躺在那里，抱着床脚，疯狂地啜泣。院长站在她右边。三支蜡烛在五斗柜上闪着小小的红色光圈。外面，雾气蒙上了窗玻璃。几位修女来了，带走了欧班夫人。

整整两个晚上，费莉西泰都没有离开维尔吉妮的床边。她坐在那儿，不断重复着相同的祷词。她起身，将圣水洒在被单上，又回到椅子上，继续凝视这位死去的姑娘。第一天守夜结束时，她注意到她的脸变黄了，嘴唇变蓝了，鼻子变瘦了，而她的眼睛也凹陷了下来。不止一次，她亲吻她的眼睛。此时，如果维尔吉妮再次睁开眼，她也不会有丝毫的惊讶。对她这样的人来说，超自然的事情是很平常的。她将她放好，给她穿上寿衣，放入棺材，给她戴上花环，将她的头发铺展开来。她的头发很美，对她这个年龄的女孩来说，算是长的了。费莉西泰剪下一大卷头发，将其中一半放进怀中，打定主意，永不分离。

按欧班夫人的意思，人们将尸体运回了蓬莱韦克。欧班夫人坐在关得严实的马车里，尾随着灵车。

葬礼弥撒过后，要过三刻钟才能到达公墓。保罗领着队伍，哭泣着。布雷先生在他后面，随后是蓬莱韦克的各个名流，以及戴着黑面纱哭泣的女人，最后是费莉西泰。费莉西泰不禁想起她的外甥。想到不能给他这最后的荣耀，她感到了双重的悲伤，就好像他正随着维尔吉妮一同被埋葬了。

欧班夫人绝望了。

起初，她反抗上帝，认为他将维尔吉妮从她身边带走是不公平的，因为她从未做过错事，也没有什么事能让她内疚。然而，也许是有的。她应该带她去南方。别的医生会治好她。她自我谴责，希望能随女儿而去，并在睡梦中痛苦地呼叫。有一个梦特别折磨她。她的丈夫，打扮得像一个水手，从漫长的旅途归来，流着泪，哽咽着说，他收到指示，要带维尔吉妮走。接着，他们绞尽脑汁，想给她找一个躲藏的地方。

有一次，她失魂落魄地从花园回来。就在这之前（她指着一个地方），父亲和女儿依次出现在她面前。他们什么也没做，只是望着她。

有好几个月，她都待在房间里，无精打采的。费莉西泰温柔地劝说她，要她好好照顾自己，为了她的儿子，她过世的丈夫，以及出于对“她”的怀念。

“她？”欧班夫人说着，仿佛从睡梦中醒来。“哦，是的，你当然没有忘记她，你有吗？”她说的是公墓，那是欧班夫人绝不会去的地方。

费莉西泰每天都去那儿。

四点的钟声一响，她便走过一排房子，爬上山，打开门，来到维尔吉妮的墓前。墓上立着一根粉色的大理石柱，底下是块石板，一条链子将四周围成一个小花园。繁花几乎要淹没那张独立的花床了。费莉西泰给叶子浇水，换上新的沙子，然后趴在地上，除尽地面的杂草。如果欧班夫人最终能来，她会从中找到安慰，一种对痛失所爱的慰藉。

多年过去了，年岁间极为相似，无非是来来去去的年度教堂节日：复活节、圣母升天节、万圣节。反倒是日常中那些微小的事件，在数年后，会让她们想起某些特殊的日子。例如，一八二五年，两个装玻璃的工人粉刷过堂；一八二七年，屋顶的一部分掉落在院子里，差点砸死了路人；一八二八年夏天，轮到夫人给教区居民发放祝圣面

包，差不多就在这时，布雷先生神秘地离开了镇子。然后，一个接一个地，相识的熟人都离开了：居尤、里埃巴、勒沙普图瓦夫人、罗贝林，以及她那已瘫痪多年的老叔叔格莱芒维特。

有一晚，邮车的车夫来到蓬莱韦克，带来“七月革命”的消息。几天后，新的县长上任了：勒森尼耶男爵，曾经的美洲领事。他来到蓬莱韦克，带着他的妻子，以及他的小姨和三位年纪很大的小姐。人们经常看见她们，穿着飘逸的长罩衣，出现在她们家的草坪上。她们还有一个黑人仆从和一只鸚鵡。她们拜访欧班夫人，以表达敬意。她也回访。只要远远看见，费莉西泰就会跑来告诉欧班夫人，说她们已在路上了。但能唤起欧班夫人兴趣的只有一件事，那就是她儿子的来信。

他看似无法专注于任何事情，整日沉湎于酒馆。欧班夫人会支付他的账单，但新的账单很快就来了。她在窗旁织着毛衣，发出沉重的叹息。即使身在厨房摇着手纺车的费莉西泰也能听到。

两个女人经常一起沿着花园的格子墙漫步。她们仍会频繁地谈起维尔吉妮，想着她是否会喜欢某某事，或她对某某场合会说些什么。

她所有的东西仍保存在儿童房卧室的橱柜里。欧班夫人尽量避免往里查看。但在夏日的一天，她终究没能忍住，打开了。橱柜里飞出了好多蛾子。

维尔吉妮的连衣裙成排地挂在架子下，上面摆着三个玩偶、一些发箍、一副玩偶的家具和她的洗手盆。两个女人拿出所有的裙子、袜子和手帕，平铺在两张床上，再叠起来。这些可怜的东西躺在那儿，在一束阳光的照耀下，显出了所有的污渍，以及因维尔吉妮的身体运动弄出来的折痕。空气温暖，天空湛蓝，一只黑鸟在外面鸣唱，整个世界显得格外平和。她们找到一顶栗色的长毛绒帽，但已被飞蛾蛀蚀了。费莉西泰问是否可以将它作为纪念品留下来。两个女人看着彼此，双眼满是泪水。欧班夫人张开双臂，费莉西泰扑了过去。女主人和仆人相互拥抱着，在一个不分贵贱的吻里，联结起她们的悲伤。

她们是第一次这样做，之前从未发生过。因为就其天性而言，欧班夫人是非常矜持的。费莉西泰从未如此感激她，仿佛得了一份无价的礼物。自此之后，她更为溺爱女主人，像狗一般忠贞，像对待圣人一般虔诚。

随着时间的流逝，她本性中的善意越发凸显了。

有一天，她听到街上行军的鼓声，便站在门前，捧着一壶苹果酒，递给士兵喝。她帮着看护霍乱病人，照顾波兰的难民。有一个波兰人甚至说，想要娶她，但他们发生了很严重的争执。那是在一天早晨，她做完礼拜回来，发现他坐在她的厨房里，镇定自若地吃着一盘

色拉，而那是她为午饭准备的。

波兰人走后，她注意到了一个叫考尔米克的老人。传言他在一七九三年做过很残暴的事情。现在他住在河边一间破败的猪圈里。镇里的小孩经常从墙缝里窥看他，朝他扔石子。他躺在草垫上，咳得快呛住了。他有一头披散的长发，眼皮发炎了，手臂上长着一个比他的头还大的瘤子。费莉西泰给了他一些布，竭力打扫干净他简陋的住所。她甚至想，也许可以将他安置在外屋，一处不会打扰到夫人的地方。瘤子破了，她就每天都给他换衣服。有时，她会给他带来一小片蛋糕，或扶他出去，将他放在一捆麦秆上，晒晒太阳。这个贫穷可怜的人语无伦次，颤动着，以一种几乎听不见的低语感谢她，说害怕她走掉。见她要走，就会伸出双手。他死了，费莉西泰做了一场弥撒，让他的灵魂安息。

同一天，她收到一份极为美妙的惊喜。在她吃饭时，勒森尼耶夫人的黑人仆从来了，带着一只关在笼子里的鹦鹉，还有栖木、链子和挂锁。男爵夫人给欧班夫人带来一张字条，说她丈夫荣升省长了，晚上他们就要离开蓬莱韦克。她问欧班夫人，能否发善心收下这只鹦鹉，作为她们友谊的纪念，以及她表达敬意的象征。

很长一段时间，费莉西泰对这只鹦鹉心存好奇。因为它来自美洲，一个总能让她想起她的维克多的地方。她曾就这只鸟问过仆从。有一次，她甚至说“夫人若能照料它，会很开心的”。

黑人仆从就把这事说给他的女主人，而她反正也不能带走，于是很乐意抓住这次机会，将它脱手了。

四

这只鹦鹉叫露露。他的身子是绿色的，翼尖是粉色的，额头是蓝色的，而胸脯是金色的。

不幸的是，他有着很惹人厌的习惯：咬栖木，拔羽毛，到处抛洒粪便，还将杯里的水飞溅得满笼子都是。欧班夫人被惹怒了，就把他送给费莉西泰来照料。

她决心教他说话，而且没过多久，他便会说：“好孩子！”“您的仆人，先生！”“万福玛利亚！”她把他放在正门附近，路过的人都很惊奇，因为他竟对“波利”没有反应，而所有的鹦鹉都叫这个名字。有人说他更像火鸡，有人则叫他傻瓜。费莉西泰觉得这些嘲弄太伤人了。令人惊奇的是，露露有种奇怪的执拗：有人看他就拒绝说话。

但他无疑还是喜欢有人陪伴的。星期天，当洛赫弗耶姐妹、胡波维尔先生，欧班夫人的新朋友药剂师翁弗洛瓦、瓦林先生和马修船长来玩纸牌的时候，露露就会用翅膀拍打窗玻璃，发出剧烈的骚乱声，闹得人都无法听清在说什么。

显然，他觉得布雷先生的脸很可笑。一见到他，就会忍不住爆发出一阵笑声。他粗砺的声音回荡在院子四周。邻居们听到后，就会来到窗前，也随之大笑。为了不让他看见，布雷先生会将脸藏在帽子后面，沿着墙偷偷地走过房前。他走过河边，从后花园绕进屋里。他投向这只鸟的眼神，可不是很温柔的。

肉铺的伙计在露露想偷吃他篮子里的东西时，弹了弹他的脑门儿。自那以后，露露总想隔着衬衫啄他。于是，法布威胁说要扭断他的脖子。他倒不是天性残忍，只是手臂上的文身和那长长的络腮胡，可能会给人留下这样的印象。事实上，他很喜欢这只鹦鹉。为了逗乐，甚至想教他脏话。费莉西泰怕他沾上这些坏毛病，就把他移到了厨房里。链子也被拿掉了，他可以在房子里四处逗留。

下楼的时候，他会用嘴钩子顶在前面的台阶上，抬起右脚，接着是左脚。费莉西泰总担心这些奇怪的动作，会将鹦鹉弄晕。果然，他生病了，不能说话，不能吃东西。他的舌尖下生了溃疡，有时候母鸡也会得这种病。费莉西泰用指甲戳破他嘴里的肿块，治好了他。有一天，保罗少爷愚蠢地将雪茄烟喷到他的鼻子里。还有一次，劳尔曼夫人用伞尖逗弄他，他咬掉了金属箍。后来，他就不见了。

费莉西泰将他放在草地上，让他呼吸新鲜空气，然后便回了室内一会儿。回来时，鹦鹉就不见了。她在灌木丛、河边，甚至在屋顶上找着，也不顾女主人喊着说：“小心，你一定是疯啦！”随后，她找遍了蓬莱韦克的每一座花园，遇到路人就问：“你凑巧见过我的鹦鹉吗？”对不熟悉鹦鹉的人，她还会做一番详细的描述。突然，她似乎看到一个绿色的东西在山脚下的磨坊后面飞着。可到了山顶，却什么也没有。一个小贩说，不久前，他在圣梅兰区西蒙老夫人的店里见过它。费莉西泰就一路跑去，但没人知道她在说什么。最后，她回来了，精疲力竭，鞋子磨破了，意志消沉。她坐在花园的椅子中央，挨着夫人，说着她所做的事情。这时，有什么轻柔地落在肩上。是露露！他究竟去干吗了？也许只是绕着镇子走了走。

费莉西泰没能立即从惊吓中复原。如果知道真相，也可以说，她再也不能恢复了。

因为着凉，她患上了扁桃体炎。不久，耳朵也疼了。三年后，她全聋了，说话特别大声，即使在教堂里也是。她的罪过散播在教区的各个角落，即使这并非有损她的名声，也不冒犯他人，但神父仍然觉得，听她忏悔最好在圣器室内。

头脑中想象的嗡嗡声令她备受折磨。她的女主人经常说：“天啊，你多蠢啊！”费莉西泰会回答说：“是的，夫人。”然后，她四处打量，仍想要找寻这嘈杂声是哪里发出的。

她陷入越来越小的自我世界里。教堂的钟声、牧场上的牛哞，远远地离她而去了。所有的活物都如鬼魂，从旁静默地经过。现在唯一能抵达她耳朵的声音，便是鹦鹉的叫声。

像是有意给她解闷似的，他模仿起烤肉叉转动的咔嗒响、鱼贩子尖锐的叫声，或者街对面工匠的锯齿声。无论何时，门铃一响起来，他就会模仿欧班夫人说：“费莉西泰，门，门！”

他们彼此交谈。鹦鹉不断地重复着三个烂熟的短句。而费莉西泰呢，则用没什么意义但发自肺腑的话来回答。在她孤绝的世界里，露露几乎成了她的儿子，她溺爱他。而他则爬上她的手指，咬咬她的唇，挂在她的披肩上。有时，她的脸会挨着他的，摇晃着，就像护士对婴儿做的那样。帽子的两翼和鸟的翅膀一起颤动着。

乌云聚集，雷电轰隆作响的时候，鹦鹉就大声地叫着，显然是忆起了野生森林里的暴雨。下雨的声音，让他很不安。他满屋子疯狂地飞着，撞上天花板，撞倒了所有的东西，最后穿过窗户逃到花园里，泼溅着泥水。但他很快就会回来，高高地栖息在壁炉架上，跳上跳下的，晾干了羽毛，自豪地展示着他的尾巴或者嘴。

一八三七年那个可怕的冬日，有一天早晨，她见天冷，就把他放

在壁炉旁。这时，她发现他死在了笼子里。头下垂着，爪子抓着金属门闩。想必是死于中风吧，但费莉西泰却想，他可能吃了欧芹，毒发而死。尽管没有确切的证据，但她怀疑是法布干的。

她哭得很伤心，最终女主人说：“为什么不把他做成标本呢？”

费莉西泰咨询了药剂师，他对鹦鹉一向很好。

他写信到勒阿弗尔，一个叫弗拉切的接了这份活儿。考虑到公共马车有时会丢失包裹，费莉西泰决定亲自带着鹦鹉，前往翁弗勒。

道路向前延伸，两旁是无尽的苹果树，光秃秃的，没什么叶子。水沟里结着冰。她走过农场时，狗吠叫着。她的手缩在斗篷下方，篮子挂在手臂上。费莉西泰穿着黑色小木屐，在路中央快步走着。

她穿过树林，走上歇纳，最终来到了圣加蒂安。

这时，在她身后起了一团尘土，只见一辆邮车飓风似的，从山上疾驰而来。车夫看女人没有躲开的意思，便站起身，目光越过马车顶，朝外望去。他和车童都竭力叫喊着。他想要四匹马停下，但没有用。它们反而越来越快，朝着她奔来。他们经过时，前头的两匹马蹭过了费莉西泰。车夫猛地一拉缰绳，迫使马匹转向了路旁。盛怒之下，他举起手臂，挥鞭打去，从她的脸一直打到了上半身。她仰面倒在了地上。

醒来时，她所做的第一件事，就是看看篮子。还好，露露毫发无损。她觉得右脸一阵阵地灼痛，便用手摸了摸，看见手是血红色的。她正在流血。

她坐在石堆上，用手帕轻抚着脸，然后吃了点预先备好的面包。她看着鹦鹉，试图借此忘记伤口。

到了埃屈埃莫维尔的山顶，她便看见翁弗勒像是群星般闪烁的夜晚灯火。再过去便是大海，朦胧地延展向远方。突然，她感到一阵晕眩。悲惨的童年，初恋带来的失望之情，外甥的离世，维尔吉妮的亡故，所有这些都潮水似的，汹涌袭来，涌进她的体内，让她窒息。

她坚持要和船长当面说话，要他好好照顾这个包裹，尽管她没说这里面有什么。

弗拉切拖了很长时间，尽管他总说下周就会寄出来。六个月后，他才说将箱子寄出来了，但之后就再没有下文了。费莉西泰怕露露再也不会回来。她想：“他被偷了，我知道的。”

最终，他还是来了。他看起来也很棒，栖息在一根树枝上，用螺丝钉固定在桃木底座上。他抬着一只爪，头侧向一边，嘴里叼着一颗坚果。标本师为了添加一点华丽的质感，还给坚果镀了金。

费莉西泰将他安置在房间里。

她很少让人进入这个房间，里面放着各种宗教小摆件和杂七杂八的东西，像是小教堂，又像是集市。

门旁有个大衣橱，妨碍人开门。面向花园的窗户对面，有一扇能望见院子的圆形小窗。有一张没有弹簧的、朴素的床。床旁边是一张桌子，桌上放着一个水壶、两把梳子、一个带缺口的碟子——上面放着一小块蓝色的肥皂。墙上挂着念珠、纪念章、几幅圣母像、一个椰子壳做的圣水杯。五斗橱蒙着布，像是圣坛，上面放着维克多给她的贝壳盒子，还有一把喷壶、一个球、一些练习册、一本带插图的地理书和一双小小的短筒靴。镜子的挂钉上，挂着那顶小小的长绒帽！这些纪念品，对费莉西泰来说，都有着很深的意义。她甚至连老爷的一件礼服都留着。欧班夫人不要的东西，她都在房间里找地方放着，像五斗橱旁放着人造花，天窗里挂着阿图瓦伯爵的画像。

至于露露，则放在专为他准备的小木架上。那木架被固定在面向房间凸起的壁炉侧墙上。每天早上醒来时，她都会在晨光中看见他。她会想起那些过去的日子，那些微小的事件，直至想到各种细枝末节。想起这些，并不让她感到悲伤，反而充满了平静。

由于不能和人交流，她的生活像是在梦游。唯有圣体瞻礼节的游行，似乎还能将她带回到生活里来。她拜访邻居，收集烛台和垫子，用来装饰那些一般会放在街上的圣坛。

她来到教堂，坐下来，凝视着圣灵的画像。她发现圣灵和她的鹦鹉很像。这种相像在一幅埃皮纳勒版画上表现得尤为明显，上面画着我主受洗的情景。那鸽子有着深红的翅膀、祖母绿的身体，跟露露一模一样。费莉西泰将这幅画买回来，挂在阿图瓦伯爵画像挂的地方，这样她就能同时看到它们。在她的心中，两者联结在了一起。因着与圣灵的联结，鹦鹉更神圣了；而圣灵也因此更显生动，更有意义。上帝当然不会选中一只鸽子去言说，因为鸽子不能说话。那么，一定会选露露的先祖吧。费莉西泰望着圣灵那幅画祈祷时，不时会微微转头，看着鹦鹉。

她想过加入圣女姐妹团，但被欧班夫人劝阻了。

现在，发生了一件大事——保罗结婚了。

起先，他是法庭书记员，随后他去经商，在海关工作，在税务局做事，甚至还考虑过加入森林和水利部门。到了三十六岁时，仿佛受了神启似的，他突然发现了自己的天职——登记处办公室！事实上，他已展现出了这方面的天赋。一位检查官已将女儿许配给他，并答应动用他的影响力，助他晋升。

他正严肃地履行自己的职责，带她来见母亲。

她指摘蓬莱韦克的所有事情，期望自己能像皇族一样被人对待。她伤害费莉西泰甚深。见她走了，欧班夫人顿觉松了口气。

接下来的那周，她们听闻布雷先生死在了下布列塔尼的一家客栈里。谣传说，他是自杀的。很快，这就被证实了。人们开始质疑他的正直。欧班夫人检查她的账本，发现了一系列他的不法行为：盗用应收租金、没有申报树木所得、伪造收据，等等。他还有一个私生子，与“多聚莱的某人有着不正当的关系”。

欧班夫人很难过。一八五三年三月，她觉得胸口疼痛。舌头上覆着层灰色的苔衣。几次放血治疗都没能减轻她的呼吸困难。到了第九晚，她就死了，刚好七十二岁。

人们觉得她看起来要年轻些，因为她的头发是黑色的，还一束束地垂在两旁，裹着她苍白的麻脸。没什么朋友来哀悼她。她平素傲慢，让人对她保持了距离。

费莉西泰哭了，很少有仆人像她那样为主人哭。夫人先于她去世，让她怎么也想不通，觉得这违背了事物的自然秩序。无法接受，也不真实。

十天后，也就是从贝桑松赶来所费的时间，继承人来到了现场。欧班夫人的媳妇翻开了所有的抽屉，留了一些家具，剩下的全卖掉了。随后，他们便返回了登记处办公室。

欧班夫人的扶手椅、小桌子、暖脚炉和八张椅子都被运走了！墙上的画像也被拿掉了，只留下一块黄色的空当。他们还带走了两张小孩的床和床垫，以及橱柜里维尔吉妮的东西。费莉西泰在房间之间来回走着，心都碎了。

第二天，门上贴着一张告示。药剂师对着她的耳朵大声说，房子要卖掉了。

费莉西泰一阵晕眩，坐了下来。

一想到要搬出自己的房间，她就极为不安。对可怜的露露来说，那也是再合适不过的地方了。她满怀痛苦，凝视着他，祈求圣灵帮助。她跪在鹦鹉面前祈祷，养成了崇拜偶像的习惯。有时候，阳光透过小窗，落在鹦鹉的玻璃眼珠上，散发着明亮的光，将她带入了狂喜之中。

女主人给费莉西泰留了一笔三百八十法郎的退休金。花园可以供给她蔬菜。至于衣服，足够她穿到生命中的最后一刻。为了节省灯火，天一黑，她就上床睡觉。

她不怎么出门，免得走过二手商店时看见正摆着的那些旧家具。自被摔晕后，她就拖着一条腿走路。现在，她更虚弱了。最近，西蒙老夫人的杂货店破产了，她每天早晨都来为她劈柴打水。

她的视力越来越差。百叶窗也不再打开了。一晃多年，没人来租房，也没人来买。

费莉西泰怕被人赶走，从未让人来修房子。屋顶的木板条烂了，整个冬天，雨水打湿了她的长枕头。复活节过去不久，她咯血了。

西蒙老夫人叫来一位医生。费莉西泰想知道她怎么了，但她的耳朵全聋了，很难听到他们说什么，只捕捉到一个词：“肺炎”。她是知道这个词的。她平静地回答说：“哈！跟夫人一样。”跟随夫人的脚步，她觉得这很自然。

准备圣坛的日子临近了。

第一座圣坛照例放在山脚下，第二座在邮局外面，第三座在街道的半途。最后一座该放在哪儿，起了些争执，但教区的女人们最终同意放在欧班夫人的院子里。

费莉西泰呼吸更艰难了，发烧也更严重。不能为圣坛做点什么，让她很难过。至少她得在上面放点什么吧。于是，她想到了鹦鹉。邻居们反对说，这样并不合适，但神父却允许了。这让费莉西泰很快乐，要神父收下她唯一的财产露露，作为死前送出的礼物。

从星期二到星期六，圣体瞻礼节前夕，她的咳嗽加剧。到了晚上，脸绷得紧紧的，嘴唇粘着牙床。她开始呕吐。第二天一早，天蒙蒙亮，她感觉很不好，便请求见神父。临终涂油礼时，四周站着三位善良的女人。然后，她说要和法布谈谈。

法布穿着他星期天最好的衣服来了。如此忧伤的氛围，令他很不舒服。

“请你原谅我。”她说，用力朝他伸出手臂，“我还以为是你杀了他。”

她在说什么废话？她怎能怀疑像他这样的人是一个凶手！法布很生气，忍不住要发脾气。

“她头脑迷糊了，”她们说，“你肯定能看得出来。”

费莉西泰似乎不时地在同幽灵谈话。女人们走了，只有西蒙老夫人留了下来，在吃午饭。

不久，她拿来露露，靠近费莉西泰。“来吧，”她说，“和他道别。”

露露不是尸体，但也被蛆蛀食了。一只翅膀断了，填充物从肚子里露了出来。但费莉西泰眼睛已瞎，没能看到。她亲吻他的额头，让他贴着自己的脸颊。西蒙老夫人将他从她那里拿开，重新放在了圣坛上。

五

从牧场那里飘来夏日的气息。苍蝇在空中嗡嗡作响。阳光在河面闪耀，照暖了屋顶上的石板瓦。西蒙老夫人回了房间，正轻柔地打着盹睡去。

突然，她被钟声惊醒了。人们正做完晚祷出来。费莉西泰镇静了许多。她想到了游行，清晰地看到了所有的一切，仿佛就置身于其中。

所有的小学生、唱诗班和消防员，都走在了人行道上。街道中央，走在队伍前头的，是执戟的教堂守卫、捧着大十字架的教区执事、管理男孩的学校校长，以及母亲般盯着女孩的修女。三个最可爱的女孩，像头发卷曲的天使，正将玫瑰花瓣撒向空中。在她们身后，助祭张开双臂，正指挥着乐队；两个捧香炉的，每走一步，都会转过头看着圣体。圣体由穿着华丽长袍的神父捧着，由四个教区委员在其上举着顶红色的天鹅绒华盖护佑。在路上，在挂着白布的房墙之间，一大群人尾随而来，最终来到山脚下。

费莉西泰额前直冒冷汗。西蒙老夫人用布给她擦拭，对自己说，终有一天她也会这样走的。

人群的嘈杂声越来越响，有一瞬间特别响亮，然后又消退了。

一阵枪声震得窗户嗡嗡作响。那是骑马的人正在向圣体匣致敬。费莉西泰转动眼珠，费力地问：“他还好吗？”她还在担心鸚鵡。

费莉西泰正进入她的弥留时刻。她喘着气，短促而嘶哑，两肋艰难地起伏，嘴角聚集着泡沫，全身开始颤抖。

外面，街上传来乐器的嘟嘟声、孩子响亮的声音，以及男人低沉的声响。有那么一些时刻，一切都沉寂了，能听到脚步因散落的花瓣变得轻柔，像是羊群穿过牧场。

神职人员走进院子。西蒙老夫人爬上椅子，朝小窗外张望，正好能看到窗下的圣坛。

圣坛挂着绿色花环，镶着英式针织的花边。正中间有一个小小的方盒子，放着圣人的遗物。两边各有一棵橘子树。沿着圣坛摆放的是一排银烛台、瓷花瓶。花瓶里插着向日葵、百合、牡丹、毛地黄和绣球花。这串绚烂的色彩，从圣坛高处一路向下，延展至铺在鹅卵石上

方的毯子。花丛里，可以见到其他一些珍贵的装饰品：一个装饰着紫罗兰花环的镀银糖罐，在小片青苔上闪烁的阿朗松宝石耳坠，两扇描画着风景的中国屏风。露露掩藏在玫瑰花底下，只见到他额头上的那点蓝，像块青金石。

教区委员、唱诗班、小孩在院子的三面站好。神父缓缓走来，将那大大的闪光的球体放在圣坛的花边上。所有人都跪了下来，一片沉静。香炉随链子晃动来回摇摆着。

一道蓝色的烟升起，进入费莉西泰的房间。她张大鼻孔，以一种神秘的狂热品味着。随后，她闭上眼睛，唇间现出一抹微笑。她的心跳放慢了，越来越微弱、模糊，像泉水干涸，回音消逝。就在呼出最后一口气时，她仿佛看到，天国开启的地方，一只巨大的鸚鵡在头上徘徊，来接纳她。

Gustave
Flaubert

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

A Simple
Heart

Nº 05

‘She decided she
would teach him
to speak and he
was very soon
able to say,
“Pretty boy!”,
“Your servant,
sir!” and “Hail
Mary!”’

For half a century, Madame Aubain's housemaid Félicité was the envy of all the good ladies of Pont- l'Evêque.

For just one hundred francs a year, she did all the cook-ing and the housework, she saw to the darning, the washing and the ironing, she could bridle a horse, keep the chickens well fed and churn the butter. What is more she remained faithful to her mistress, who, it must be said, was not the easiest of people to get on with.

Madame Aubain had married a handsome but impecunious young man, who had died at the beginning of 1809, leaving her with two very young children and substantial debts. Upon his death, she sold her properties, with the exception of the two farms at Toucques and Geffosses, which between them provided her with an income of no more than five thousand francs in rent, and she moved out of her house in Saint- Melaine to live in another which was less costly to maintain, which had belonged to her family and which was situated behind the market.

This house had a slate roof and stood between an alley and a narrow street leading down to the river. Inside, the floors were at different levels, making it very easy to trip up. A narrow hallway separated the kitchen from the living room in which Madame Aubain remained all day long, sitting in a wicker armchair close to the casement window. Against the wainscoting, which was painted white, there stood a row of eight mahogany chairs. A barometer hung on the wall above an old piano, piled high with a pyramid-shaped assortment of packets and cardboard boxes. Two easy chairs upholstered in tapestry stood on either side of a Louis- Quinze- style mantelpiece in yellow marble. The clock, in the middle, was designed to look like a Temple of Vesta, and the whole room smelt musty, due to the fact that the floor level was lower than the garden.

On the first floor, there was 'Madame's' bedroom, a very large

room, decorated with pale, flowery wallpaper and containing a picture of 'Monsieur' dressed up in the fanciful attire that was fashionable at the time. This room led directly to a smaller bedroom which housed two children's beds, each with the mattress removed. Next came the parlour, which was always kept locked and was full of furniture draped in dust-sheets. Finally, there was a corridor leading to a study; books and papers lay stacked on the shelves of a bookcase which ran around three walls of the room and surrounded a large writing-desk in dark wood. The two end panels of this bookcase were covered in line drawings, landscapes in gouache and etchings by Audran, a reminder of better days and of more expensive tastes that were now a thing of the past. On the second floor was Félicité's bedroom, lit by a dormer window which looked out over the fields.

Félicité always rose at first light to make sure she was in time for mass, and then worked without a break until the evening. As soon as dinner was finished, the crockery cleared away and the door firmly bolted, she would cover the log fire with ashes and go to sleep in front of the fire-place, holding her rosary in her hand. No one could have been more persistent when it came to haggling over prices and, as for cleanliness, the spotless state of her saucepans was the despair of all the other serving maids in Pont-l'Évêque. She wasted nothing and ate slowly, gathering every crumb of her loaf from the table with her fingers, a twelve-pound loaf baked especially for her and which lasted her twenty days.

In all weathers she wore a printed kerchief fastened behind with a pin, a bonnet which completely covered her hair, grey stockings, a red skirt and over her jacket a bibbed apron like those worn by hospital nurses.

Her face was thin and her voice was shrill. At twenty-five, people took her to be as old as forty. After her fiftieth birthday, it became impossible to say what age she was at all. She hardly ever spoke, and her upright stance and deliberate movements gave her the appearance of a woman made out of wood, driven as if by clockwork.

Like other girls, she had once fallen in love.

Her father, a stonemason by trade, had been killed falling from some scaffolding. Following this, her mother died and her sisters went their separate ways. A farmer took her in and, even though she was still a very young girl, he would send her out into the fields to look after the cows. She was dressed in mere rags, she shivered with cold and would lie flat on her stomach to drink water from ponds. She was regularly beaten for no reason at all and was eventually turned out of the house for having stolen thirty sous, a theft of which she was quite innocent. She was taken on at another farm, where she looked after the poultry and, because she was well liked by her employers, her friends were jealous of her.

One evening in August (she was eighteen at the time) she was taken to the village fête at Colleville. She was instantly overcome, bewildered by the boisterous sounds of the fiddle music, the lamps in the trees, the array of brightly coloured clothes, the gold crosses and the lace all those people moving as one in time to the tune. She was standing on her own, shyly, when a young man, fairly well off to judge by his appearance and who had been leaning against the shaft of a farm wagon smoking his pipe, approached her and asked her to dance. He bought her a glass of cider, a cup of coffee, a cake and a silk scarf and, imagining that she understood his motive, offered to accompany her back home. As they were walking along the edge of a field of oats, he thrust her to the ground. She was terrified and began to scream. He ran off.

One evening a little later, she was walking along the road leading to Beaumont and was trying to get past a large hay wagon as it lumbered slowly along. As she was edging her way round the wheels, she recognized Théodore.

He looked at her quite unabashed and said she should forgive his behaviour of the other night; he 'had just had too much to drink'.

She did not know how to answer him and wanted to run away.

He immediately began to talk about the harvest and various important people in the district and told her that his father had left Colleville and bought a farm at Les Ecots, which meant that they were now neighbours. 'Oh, are we!' she said. He said that his parents wanted him to settle down but that he was in no rush and preferred to wait until the right woman came along before he married. She lowered her eyes. He then asked her if she was think-ing of marrying. She smiled and said that he was wrong to tease her. 'But I am not teasing you, I swear,' he said, and slipped his left arm around her waist. She walked on with his arm still around her. They were now walking more slowly. There was a gentle breeze, the stars were shining, the huge wagon- load of hay swayed from side to side in front of them and dust rose from the feet of the four horses as they plodded along. Then, without any word of command, the horses turned off to the right. He kissed her once more and she vanished into the darkness.

The following week, Théodore persuaded her to go out with him on several other occasions.

They would meet in a corner of some farmyard, behind a wall or beneath a solitary tree. Félicité was not naive like other young girls of her age; working with the farm animals had taught her a great deal. However, her natural discretion and an intuitive sense of honour prevented her from giving in to Théodore's demands. Théodore found this resistance so frustrating that, in order to satisfy his passion (or maybe out of sheer simple- mindedness), he proposed to her. She was not sure whether to believe him or not, but he insisted that he was serious.

He then announced something rather disturbing: a year ago his parents had paid for someone else to do his mili tary service but he might still be called up at any time. The prospect of serving in the army terrified him. Félicité took this cowardice as a sign of his affection for her and it made her love him all the more. She would slip out of the house at night to meet Théodore, who assailed her with his fears and entreaties.

Eventually, he declared that he would go to the Préfec ture himself and find out what the situation was. He would come back and tell Félicité the following Sunday between eleven o'clock and

midnight.

At the appointed time, Félicité ran to meet her lover.

But instead of Théodore, it was one of his friends who stood waiting to meet her.

He informed her that she would never see Théodore again. In order to make sure he could not be called up, he had married a wealthy old lady from Toucques, by the name of Madame Lehoussais.

Félicité's distress was unbounded. She threw herself to the ground, weeping and wailing; she implored God to come to her aid and lay moaning, all alone in the fields, until daylight. Then she made her way back to the farm and announced that she had decided to leave. At the end of the month, having received her wages, she wrapped her few belongings in a shawl and left for Pont-l'Evêque.

Outside the inn she spoke to a woman wearing a widow's hood who, as it happened, was looking for a cook. The young girl knew precious little about cooking but she seemed so willing and so ready to oblige that Madame Aubain eventually said: 'Very well, you may work for me.'

A quarter of an hour later, Félicité was installed in her house.

At first she lived in a constant state of trepidation as a result of 'the sort of house it was' and the memory of 'Monsieur' which seemed to hover over everything! Paul and Virginie, one aged seven and the other barely four, seemed made of some precious material; she liked to give them piggyback rides and was mortified when Madame Aubain instructed her not to keep kissing them. Even so, she was happy. Her new surroundings were very pleasant and her earlier unhappiness quickly faded.

Every Thursday, a group of Madame Aubain's friends came to play Boston. Félicité would set out the cards and the foot-warmers in readiness. The guests always arrived punctually at eight and left as the clock struck eleven.

On Monday mornings, the secondhand dealer who had a shop at the end of the lane would spread his various bits and pieces of ironmongery out on the pavement. The town would be filled with

the buzz of voices, with the sounds of horses neighing, lambs bleating, pigs grunting and carts rattling through the streets. At about midday, just when the market was at its busiest, an old peasant would present himself on Madame Aubain's front doorstep – a tall man with a hooked nose and with his hat perched on the back of his head. This was Robelin, the farmer from Geffosses. He would be followed shortly afterwards by Liébard, the farmer from Toucques, short, fat and red in the face, wearing a grey jacket and leather gaiters complete with spurs.

They would both come bearing chickens or cheeses which they hoped they might persuade their landlady to buy. But Félicité was more than a match for their banter and they always respected her for this.

Madame Aubain also received sporadic visits from the Marquis de Grémanville, an uncle of hers who had squandered his money in loose living and who now lived at Falaise on the last bit of property he could still call his own. He would always turn up at lunch time with a loathsome little poodle which left its muddy paw marks all over the furniture. Despite his efforts to behave like a gentleman, raising his hat every time he mentioned his 'late father', habit would soon get the better of him and he would pour himself glass after glass and start telling bawdy jokes. Félicité would politely show him to the door. 'I think you have had enough for today, Monsieur de Grémanville! Do come and see us again soon!' And she would close the door behind him.

But she was always delighted to welcome Monsieur Bourais, a retired solicitor. His white cravat and bald head, the flounces on his shirt-front and the generous cut of his brown frock-coat, the special way he had of bending his arm when taking snuff, indeed everything about his person prompted in Félicité the sort of agitation we always feel when in the presence of some great man.

He looked after the management of 'Madame's' properties and would shut himself away with her for hours on end in 'Monsieur's' study. He lived in constant fear for his own reputation, had an inordinate respect for the judiciary and claimed to know some Latin.

Thinking that it would help the children to derive some enjoyment from their studies, he bought them an illustrated

geography book. It depicted scenes from different parts of the world, cannibals wearing feathered head-dresses, a monkey abducting a young girl, a group of Bedouins in the desert, a whale being harpooned, and so on.

Paul carefully explained all these pictures to Félicité. In fact, this was the only time anyone ever taught her how to read a book.

The children received their lessons from Guyot, a rather pitiful character who worked at the Town Hall, who was noted for his fine handwriting and who used to sharpen his penknife on the sole of his shoe.

Whenever the weather was fine, the whole family would get up early and spend the day at the farm at Geffosses.

The farmyard there was on a slope, with the farmhouse in the middle. One could just see the sea, a little streak of grey in the distance.

Félicité would take a few slices of cold meat from her basket and they would eat in a room adjoining the dairy. This room was all that now remained of a country house which had fallen into ruin. The paper hung in strips from the wall and fluttered in the draught. Madame Aubain sat with her head bowed, absorbed in her memories, the children hardly daring to speak. 'Off you go and play, she would say. And off they went.

Paul would climb up into the barn, catch birds, play ducks and drakes on the pond or bang the great farm barrels with a stick to make them boom like drums.

Virginie would go and feed the rabbits or run off across the fields gathering cornflowers, showing her dainty embroidered knickers as she ran.

One evening in autumn, they were coming back through the fields.

The moon, which was in its first quarter, lit up part of the sky, and a mist drifted like a scarf over the windings of the river Touques. A group of cattle, lying in the middle of a field, lazily watched them go by. When they came to the third field, a few of them got to their feet and stood in a circle in front of them. 'There's nothing to be frightened of!' said Félicité and, humming a wistful

little tune as she approached, she went up to the nearest of the animals and patted it on the back. It turned away and the others did the same. But no sooner had they got through the next field when they heard a terrifying bellowing. It was a bull that had been hidden by the mist. It began to come towards the two women. Madame Aubain wanted to run. 'No, no, we must not move too quickly!' said Félicité. They walked more quickly, even so, and could hear the bull's loud breathing getting nearer behind them and the pounding of its hoofs on the grass. They knew it was now galloping towards them! Félicité turned round to face it, grabbed clods of earth from the ground and flung them into the bull's face. It lowered its muzzle, shook its horns and began to shudder and bellow with rage. Madame Aubain had now reached the edge of the field with the two children and was frantically trying to find a way of getting over the hedge. Félicité was still steadily retreating before the bull, throwing lumps of turf into its eyes and calling out, 'Hurry up! Hurry up!'

Madame Aubain got down into the ditch, pushing first Virginie and then Paul in front of her. She fell several times as she tried to climb the bank and at last, by dint of sheer determination, she succeeded.

The bull had driven Félicité up against a gate and was blowing slaver into her face. A second later and it would have gored her. In the nick of time she managed to squeeze herself between two bars in the gate. The huge animal was taken completely by surprise and stopped in its tracks.

People in Pont- l'Evêque talked about this adventure for years afterwards. But Félicité never boasted about it and hardly seemed to realize that she had done anything heroic.

Virginie commanded all her attention. The frightening experience with the bull had affected her nerves and Mon sieur Poupart, the doctor, recommended sea bathing at Trouville.

In those days, very few people visited the resort. Madame Aubain made enquiries, sought the advice of Bourais and made preparations as if for a long journey.

The day before they left, the luggage was sent off in Liébard's farm wagon. The next day he returned with two horses. One of

them had a woman's saddle with a velvet backrest and the other had a cloak rolled up across its back as a makeshift seat. Madame Aubain sat on this behind Liébard. Félicité looked after Virginie on the other horse and Paul rode separately on Monsieur Lechaptois's donkey, which had been lent on the clear understanding that they took great care of it.

The road was so bad that the five-mile journey took them two hours. The horses sank up to their pasterns in the mud and lurched forward in order to pull themselves free. They lost their footing in the ruts and sometimes had to jump. At certain points on the road, Liébard's mare would suddenly stop dead. Liébard would wait patiently for her to move forward again. As they rode on, he would tell them stories about the people who lived along the way, always adding a few personal comments of his own for good measure. In the town centre of Toucques, for instance, as they were passing alongside a house with nasturtiums growing around the windows, he said, with a shrug of his shoulders, 'There's a Madame Lehoussais lives there and, rather than take a young man . . .' Félicité did not hear the rest, for the horses had broken into a trot and the donkey had run on ahead. They turned down a track, a gate swung open, two young farmhands appeared and they all dismounted beside the manure-heap right outside the front door of the farmhouse.

Old Madame Liébard greeted her mistress with effusive expressions of delight. For lunch she served a sirloin of beef, along with tripe, black pudding, a fricassee of chicken, sparkling cider, a fruit tart and plums in brandy, all accompanied by a stream of compliments to Madame who seemed 'in much better health', to Mademoiselle who had grown up into such 'a fine looking young woman', to Monsieur Paul who was such a 'strapping' young man, not forgetting their dear departed grandparents whom the Liébards had known personally, having been in service to the family for several generations. The farm, like the Liébards themselves, had an old-world feel to it. The beams in the ceiling were pitted with woodworm, the walls blackened with smoke the window panes grey with dust. There was an oak dresser, cluttered with all manner of implements – jugs, plates, pewter bowls, wolf-traps, shears for the sheep and a huge syringe which particularly amused the children. In the three yards outside, there was not a single tree which did not

have mushrooms growing at its foot or clumps of mistletoe in its branches. Several had been blown down by the wind but had begun to grow again where the trunk had been split and all of them were bent beneath the weight of apples. The thatched roofs looked like brown velvet of unequal thickness and weathered the fiercest winds. But the shed for the carts was falling down. Madame Aubain said that she would arrange to have it repaired and asked for the horses to be reharnessed.

It took them another half- hour to reach Trouville. The little caravan had to dismount when they came to the Ecores, a cliff which jutted out over the boats below Three minutes later they had arrived at the end of the quay and turned into the courtyard of the Golden Lamb an inn run by old Madame David.

Virginie very quickly began to recover her strength as a result of the change of air and of bathing in the sea. She did not have a bathing costume and so she went into the water wearing a chemise. Afterwards, her maid would help her to get dressed in a customs officer's hut that was also used by the bathers.

In the afternoon, they would take the donkey and walk out beyond the Roches- Noires, towards Hennequeville. At first the path wound up between gently rolling meadows like the lawn in a park and then came to a plateau where there were grazing pastures and ploughed fields. The path was lined by holly bushes which grew amongst the tangles of brambles, and here and there the branches of a large dead tree traced their zigzag patterns against the blue of the sky.

There was one particular field in which they usually stopped to rest themselves, looking down towards Deau-ville to their left, Le Havre to their right and, in front of them, the open sea. It lay shimmering in the sunshine, as smooth as the surface of a mirror and so calm that they could barely hear the murmur of the waves. Sparrows twit-tered from somewhere nearby and the great dome of the sky lay spread out above them. Madame Aubain would sit with her needlework, Virginie would sit beside her, plaiting rushes, Félicité gathered bunches of wild lavender and Paul, utterly bored, would always be itching to move on.

At other times they would take the ferry across the Touques and go looking for shells. At low tide, sea urchins, ormers and

jellyfish were left behind on the sand. The children would chase after flecks of foam blown about by the breeze. The waves broke lazily on the sand from one end of the beach to the other. The beach stretched as far as the eye could see but was bounded on the landward side by sand dunes which separated it from the Marais, a broad meadow in the shape of a racecourse. As they walked back through it towards Trouville, which lay at the foot of the hill, the town appeared to grow bigger at every step they took and, with its motley assortment of houses, it seemed to blossom like a flower garden in colourful disarray.

When it was too hot, they kept to their room. The dazzling brightness outside cast bars of light through the slats in the window blinds. There was not a sound to be heard in the village. Not a soul ventured out into the streets. The prevailing quiet made everything seem all the more peaceful. From far away came the sound of the caulkers' hammers beating against the hull of a boat and the smell of tar was wafted to them on the listless breeze.

The most exciting event of the day was when the fishing boats came in. Once past the entrance buoys, they would begin to tack from side to side. Their main sails would be lowered to half-mast and, with their foresail swollen like a great balloon, they would come gliding through the splashing waves right into the middle of the harbour and suddenly drop anchor. The boat would then be brought alongside the quay. The sailors would hoist their fish ashore, still live and quivering. A line of carts was ready waiting and women in cotton bonnets rushed forward to take the baskets and to kiss their menfolk.

One day one of these women came up to Félicité. A moment or two later, Félicité was back in the room at the inn, beside herself with excitement. She had found one of her lost sisters, and into the room walked Nastasie Barette, now Leroux, with a baby at her breast, another child holding her right hand and, on her left, a little ship's boy with his hands on his hips and his beret over one ear.

After a quarter of an hour, Madame Aubain asked her to leave.

But after that there was no getting away from them. They would wait just outside the kitchen or follow them when they went for walks. The husband always kept well out of sight.

Félicité became very attached to them. She bought them a blanket, some shirts and a cooking stove. They were obviously out to take advantage of her. Madame Aubain was annoyed that Félicité was not more firm with them. She also took objection to the familiar way in which the nephew spoke to Paul. So, because Virginie had developed a cough and the weather had taken a turn for the worse, she returned to Pont- l'Evêque.

Monsieur Bourais offered his advice on choosing a good school for Paul. The one at Caen was generally considered to be the best. So Paul was sent away to Caen. He said his goodbyes bravely, really quite pleased that he was going to live somewhere where he would have some friends of his own.

Madame Aubain resigned herself to her son going away, knowing that he must have a good education. Virginie quickly got used to being on her own, but Félicité found the house very quiet without him. Soon, however she had something else to occupy her mind. From Christmas onwards she had to take Virginie to catechism every day.

Genuflecting as she went in through the door, Félicité walked up the aisle beneath the high ceiling of the nave opened the door of Madame Aubain's pew, sat herself down and looked all around her.

The children were seated in the choir stalls, the boys on the right and the girls on the left. The priest stood in front of them beside the lectern. One of the stained-glass windows in the apse showed the Holy Spirit looking down on the Virgin Mary. In another, the Virgin knelt before the infant Jesus and behind the tabernacle there was a carving in wood representing Saint Michael slaying the dragon.

The priest began with a summary of the Holy Scriptures. Félicité's mind was filled with images of Paradise the Flood, the Tower of Babel, cities consumed by flames peoples dying and idols cast down. This dazzling recital of events instilled in her a wholesome respect for the Almighty and a profound fear of his wrath. She wept at the story of Christ's Passion. Why had they crucified a man who was so kind to children, fed the hungry, gave sight to the blind, and who had chosen, out of his own gentle nature, to be born amongst the poor on the rough straw of a stable? Seed-time and harvest, the fruits of the vine, all those familiar things mentioned in the gospels had their place in her life too. They now seemed sanctified by contact with God. Félicité loved lambs all the more because of her love for the Lamb of God, and doves now reminded her of the Holy Spirit.

She found it difficult to imagine what the Holy Spirit actually looked like because he was not only a bird but sometimes a fire and sometimes a breath. Perhaps it was the light of the Holy Spirit that she would see at night-time, flickering at the edge of the marshes, or his breath which drove the clouds across the sky, or his voice which made the church bells ring so beautifully. She sat rapt in adoration of these wonders, delighting in the cool-ness of the stone walls and the peacefulness of the church.

Of church dogma she understood not a word and did not even attempt to understand it. As the curé stood explaining it all to the children and the children repeated what they had learnt, Félicité would drop off to sleep, to be woken suddenly by the clatter of wooden shoes on the stone floor as the children left the church. And so Félicité came to learn her catechism by dint of hearing the children recite it, for her own religious education had been neglected when she was young. From then on, she copied the religious observances of Virginie, fasting when she fasted and going to confession whenever she did. For the feast of Corpus Christi, Félicité and Virginie made an altar of repose together.

For days beforehand, Félicité fretted over the preparations for Virginie's first communion. She worried about her shoes, her rosary, her missal and her gloves. Her hands trembled as she helped Madame Aubain to dress her.

All through the mass she was on tenterhooks. One half of the choir stalls was hidden from her sight by Monsieur Bourais, but straight in front of her she could see the flock of young girls all wearing white crowns over their lowered veils and looking like a field of snow. Even from a distance, she could recognize her beloved little Virginie by the delicate line of her neck and her attitude of reverent contemplation. The bell tinkled. They all bowed their heads and knelt in silence. Then, with a mighty flourish from the organ, the choir and congregation sang the *Agnus Dei*. After the boys had processed forwards, the girls stood up. With their hands joined in prayer, they moved slowly towards the candle-lit altar, knelt at the altar-step, received the Host one by one and returned in the same order to their place in the choir stalls. When it came to Virginie's turn, Félicité leant further forwards so that she could see her and, with that singular imagination that is born of true love, she felt she was herself Virginie assuming her expression, wearing her dress and with her heart beating inside her breast. As Virginie opened her mouth, Félicité closed her eyes and almost fainted.

The next morning, bright and early, Félicité went to the sacristy and asked to be given communion. She received it with due reverence but did not experience the same rapture.

Madame Aubain wanted the best possible education for her daughter and, because Guyot was unable to teach her either English

or music, she resolved to send her to the Ursuline convent school in Honfleur.

Virginie had no objection to this plan but Félicité was most unhappy and felt that Madame was being too strict. However, she came to accept that it was not really for her to decide and that her mistress probably knew best.

Then one day, an old carriage drew up outside the door. Out of it got a nun who had come to collect Mademoiselle. Félicité loaded the luggage up on to the rack, issued some parting instructions to the driver and put six pots of jam, a dozen pears and a bunch of violets in the boot.

Just as they were about to leave, Virginie burst into tears. She clung to her mother, who kissed her on the forehead and kept telling her: 'Come, come, we must be brave!' The step was pulled up and the carriage drove away.

When it had gone, Madame Aubain broke down and that evening all her friends, Monsieur and Madame Lormeau, Madame Lechaptois, the two Rochefeuille sisters, Monsieur de Houpeville and Bourais, came round to comfort her.

At first, the loss of her daughter left her feeling very sad. But she received letters from her on three days each week and on the other days she wrote back to her, walked in her garden, read a little and so managed to occupy her time.

Every morning, out of habit, Félicité would go into Virginie's bedroom and gaze at the walls. She missed being able to comb her hair for her, tie her bootlaces and tuck her up in bed; she missed seeing her sweet little face always beside her and holding her hand when they went out for walks. For want of something to do, she tried to take up lace work. But she was too clumsy with her fingers and she kept breaking the threads. She could not put her mind to anything and was losing sleep. She was, in her own words, 'all empty inside'.

In order to provide herself with 'a bit of company', she asked Madame Aubain if her nephew Victor might be allowed to visit her.

He would always arrive on Sundays, just after mass, rosy cheeked, his shirt unbuttoned and bringing with him the smells of the countryside through which he had travelled. She straight away

laid the table for him. They would eat lunch sitting opposite each other, Félicité taking care to eat as little as possible so as to save on expense and giving Victor so much to eat that he ended up falling asleep. As the first bell for vespers began to ring, she would wake him up, give his trousers a good brush, tie his tie, and make her way to church, leaning on his arm like a proud mother

His parents always told him to make sure he brought something back with him, a bag of sugar, a piece of soap a little brandy or even money. He brought with him any of his clothes that needed mending and Félicité always did the work willingly, glad of any opportunity of encouraging him to visit her again.

In August, Victor went to join his father on his sea trips along the coast.

It was the beginning of the school holidays and it was some consolation to Félicité to have the children back at home. But Paul had become rather temperamental and Virginie was now too grown-up to be treated as a little child, which created a sense of awkwardness and distance between them.

Victor's travels took him to Morlaix, to Dunkirk and to Brighton and after each trip he brought back a present for Félicité. The first was a little box made out of shells, the second a coffee cup and the third a big gingerbread man. He was growing into a handsome young man, with a fine figure, the first signs of a moustache, a frank and open expression and a little leather cap which he wore perched on the back of his head like a sea pilot. He would entertain Félicité by telling her stories laced with all sorts of nautical jargon.

One Monday, 14 July 1819 (it was a date that Félicité was never to forget), Victor announced that he had been signed on to the crew of an ocean-going ship and that in two days' time he would be taking the night ferry from Honfleur to join his schooner, which was due shortly to set sail from Le Havre. He might be away for two years.

The prospect of such a long separation left Félicité feeling very saddened. In order to say one final farewell to him, on the Wednesday evening, after Madame had finished her dinner, she put on her clogs and ran the ten miles from Pont-l'Évêque to Honfleur.

When she came to the Calvary, instead of turning left she turned right, got lost in the shipyards and had to retrace her steps. She asked directions from some passers- by, who told her she would have to hurry. She walked all the way round the harbour, which was full of boats, getting caught up in the moorings as she went. Suddenly the ground seemed to fall away beneath her beams of light criss- crossed before her eyes and she thought she must be losing her senses when she saw some horses in the sky overhead.

On the quayside, more horses were neighing, frightened by the sea. They were being hoisted into the air by a der rick and then lowered into a boat which was already crammed with passengers trying to squeeze their way between barrels of cider, baskets of cheese and sacks of grain. Hens were cackling and the captain was swearing. One of the deck- hands, apparently oblivious to everything around him, stood leaning against the cat- head. Félicité had not recognized him and was calling out 'Victor!' again and again. He looked up and she rushed forward, but just at that moment the gangway was suddenly pulled ashore.

The boat moved out of the harbour, hauled along by a group of women who sang in chorus as they went about their work. Its ribs creaked and heavy waves lashed its bows. The sail swung round and hid everyone from view. The surface of the sea shone like silver in the moonlight and on it the ship appeared as a black spot, growing paler as it moved away. Eventually it was swallowed up in the distance and vanished from sight.

Returning home, Félicité passed by the Calvary and was taken by a sudden desire to commend to God's mercy all that she held dear. She stood there praying for a long time, with tears running down her cheeks and her eyes fixed on the clouds above. The town was fast asleep; the only people about were the customs men. Water could be heard gushing through the holes in the lock- gate like a running torrent. A clock struck two.

The convent would not be open to visitors before day-break and Félicité knew that, if she arrived back late, Madame was sure to be annoyed. So, although she would have loved just one small kiss from Virginie, she set off back home. The maids at the inn were just waking up as she walked into Pont- l'Evêque.

So poor little Victor was to spend months on end being tossed

around on the waves! His previous trips at sea had not bothered her. England and Brittany were places one came back from. But America, the colonies and the Antil-les were lost in some unknown region on the other side of the world.

From the day he left, Félicité could not stop thinking about her nephew. When it was hot and sunny, she worried that he might be thirsty and when there was a storm, she feared he might be struck by lightning. As she listened to the wind howling in the chimney and blowing slates off the roof, she pictured him buffeted by the same storm clinging to the top of a broken mast and being flung backwards into a sheet of foam. At other times, prompted by her recollection of the pictures in the geography book she imagined him being eaten by savages, captured by monkeys in a forest or dying on some deserted beach. But she never spoke about these worries to anyone.

Madame Aubain had worries of her own about her daughter.

The sisters at the convent said that she was an affectionate child, but over-sensitive. The slightest emotion unsettled her and she had to give up playing the piano.

Her mother insisted that she wrote home regularly. One morning, when the postman had failed to appear, she could scarcely contain her impatience and kept pacing backwards and forwards in her room between her arm chair and the window. This really was extraordinary! No news for four days!

Thinking that her own situation might serve as some comfort to her mistress, Félicité ventured:

‘But Madame, I haven’t received any news for six months!’

‘News from whom?’

‘Why, news from my nephew,’ Félicité gently replied.

‘Oh, your nephew!’ And with a shrug of her shoulders, Madame Aubain began pacing about the room again, as if to say, ‘I hadn’t given him a thought! And in any case, he’s no concern of mine! A mere ship’s boy, a scrounger; he’s not worth bothering about! But someone like my daughter . . . Really!’

Although Félicité had been fed such rough treatment since she was a child, she felt very offended by Madame Aubain. But she soon

got over it.

After all, it was to be expected that Madame should get upset about her own daughter.

For Félicité, the two children were of equal importance; they were bound together by her love for them and it seemed right that they should share the same fate.

Félicité learnt from the chemist that Victor's ship had arrived in Havana. He had read the announcement in a newspaper.

Because of its association with cigars, Félicité imagined Havana to be a place in which the only thing people did was to smoke and she pictured Victor walking amongst crowds of Negroes in a cloud of tobacco smoke. Was it possible to return from Havana by land, 'if need be'? How far was it from Pont- l'Evêque? In order to find out, she went to consult Monsieur Bourais.

He reached for his atlas and launched into a disquisition on lines of longitude. Félicité was utterly bewildered. Bourais sat in front of her, beaming smugly to himself, like the know- all he was. Eventually, he picked up his pencil and pointed to an almost invisible black dot in one of the little indentations in the contour of an oval- shaped patch on the map. 'Here it is,' he said. Félicité peered closely at the map. The network of coloured lines was a strain on her eyes, but it told her nothing. Bourais asked her what was puzzling her and she asked him if he would show her the house in which Victor was living. Bourais raised his arms in the air, sneezed and roared with laughter, delighted to come across someone so simple- minded Félicité, whose understanding was so limited that she probably even expected to see a picture of her nephew could not understand what he found so funny.

It was a fortnight after this, at his usual time on market day, that Liébard came into the kitchen and handed Félicité a letter which he had received from her brother- in- law. As neither of them could read, Félicité showed the letter to her mistress.

Madame Aubain, who was counting the stitches on a piece of knitting, put her work to one side, opened the letter, gave a sudden start and then, lowering her voice and looking very serious, she said, 'They are sending you . . . bad news. Your nephew . . .'

Victor was dead. That was all the letter said.

Félicité sank down on to a chair and leant her head against the wall. Her eyelids closed and suddenly flushed pink. She remained there, her head bowed, her hands hanging limply at her side, staring in front of her and repeating over and over again, 'The poor boy! The poor boy!'

Liébard stood looking at her and sighing. Madame Aubain was shaking slightly.

She suggested that Félicité might go and see her sister at Trouville.

Félicité gave a wave of her hand to indicate that it was not necessary.

There was a silence. Old Liébard thought it best to leave.

When he had gone, Félicité said, 'It doesn't matter a bit, not to them it doesn't.'

She lowered her head again and sat there, now and then toying distractedly with the knitting needles that lay on the work-table.

A group of women passed by in the yard, wheeling a barrow-load of dripping linen.

Félicité caught sight of them through the window and suddenly remembered that she had washing to do herself. She had passed the lye through it the day before and today it needed rinsing. She got up and left the room.

Her washing board and her tub were on the bank of the Toucques. She flung her pile of chemises on to the ground beside the river, rolled up her sleeves and seized her battledore. The drubbing could be heard in all the neighbouring gardens. The fields lay deserted and the wind rippled the surface of the river. On the river-bed, long strands of weed drifted with the current, like the hair of corpses floating downstream in the water. Félicité managed to restrain her grief and was very brave until the evening, but when she was alone in her room she gave in to it, lying prone on her mattress with her face buried in the pillow and pressing her fists to her temples.

Much later, she came to learn the circumstances of Victor's death from the captain of his ship. He had caught yellow fever and had been bled too much in the hospital. Four separate doctors had

given him the same treatment and he had died immediately. The chief doctor's comment was, 'Good, that's one more to add to the list!'

Victor had always been treated cruelly by his parents and Félicité preferred not to see them again. They did not get in touch with Félicité either; perhaps they had simply forgotten about her or perhaps poverty had hardened their hearts.

Virginie was now growing weaker.

Difficulty in breathing, a persistent cough, a constant high temperature and pale blotches on her cheeks all pointed to some underlying disorder. Monsieur Poupart had advised a holiday in Provence. Madame Aubain decided to follow his advice and would have brought Virginie back home immediately, had it not been for the weather at Pont- l'Evêque.

She had a standing arrangement with a job- master, who drove her to the convent every Tuesday. In the convent garden there was a terrace overlooking the Seine where Virginie would walk up and down over the fallen vine leaves, leaning on her mother's arm. She would look out at the sails in the distance and the whole sweep of the estuary from the chateau at Tancarville to the lighthouses at Le Havre. Sometimes the sun would suddenly break through the clouds and make her blink. Afterwards, they would rest under the arbour. Her mother had procured a little flask of the choicest Malaga wine, from which Virginie would take just two tiny sips, laughing at the thought of making herself tipsy.

She began to recover her strength. Autumn gradually slipped by. Félicité did all she could to reassure Madame Aubain. But one evening, on her way back from an errand in the town, she noticed Monsieur Poupart's gig standing at the front door. Monsieur Poupart himself was in the entrance hall and Madame Aubain was fastening her bonnet.

'Bring me my foot- warmer, my purse and my gloves! Hurry!'

Virginie had pneumonia and Madame feared she was beyond recovery.

'I'm sure it's not that bad,' said the doctor, and the two of them climbed into his carriage, with the snowflakes falling in great flurries around them. Night was drawing on and it was bitterly cold.

Félicité dashed into the church to light a candle and then began to run after Monsieur Poupart's gig. It was a full hour before she caught up with it. She jumped up behind it and clung to the fringe. Suddenly a thought occurred to her. "The gate to the courtyard was not locked! What if thieves should break in!" She jumped back down on to the road.

The next day, at the very first sign of daylight, she went to the doctor's house. The doctor had returned but had already left again to visit patients in the country. She waited at the inn, thinking that someone or other might arrive with a letter. Eventually, in the half-light of morning, she boarded the Lisieux stagecoach.

The convent was situated at the foot of a steep narrow street. When she was about half-way down the street, she began to make out strange sounds coming from the convent; it was the tolling of a death bell. 'It must be for someone else', she thought, and gave the door-knocker a loud rap.

After some considerable time, she heard the shuffle of foot steps, the door was inched open and a nun appeared

The good sister solemnly announced that 'she had just passed away'. At precisely the same moment, the bell of Saint- Léonard's began to toll even more strongly.

Félicité went up to the second floor.

She stood in the doorway of the bedroom and could see Virginie laid out on her back, her hands clasped together, her mouth open and her head tilted backwards. Above her head and inclined towards her was a black crucifix; her face was whiter than the drapes which hung stiffly around her. Madame Aubain lay hugging the foot of the bed and sobbing wildly. The Mother Superior stood beside her on the right. On the chest of drawers three candlesticks gave out little circles of red light; outside, the fog whitened the window panes. Some nuns came and led Madame Aubain away.

Félicité did not leave Virginie's bedside for two whole nights. She sat there, repeating the same prayers over and over again; she would get up to sprinkle holy water on the sheets, then come back to her chair and continue to gaze fixedly at the dead girl. At the end of her first night's vigil, she noticed that her face was beginning to

turn yellow, her lips were turning blue, her nose had grown thinner and her eyes had become sunken. More than once she kissed her eyes and would not have been in the least surprised if Virginie had opened them again; to minds like hers, the supernatural appears perfectly ordinary. She laid her out, wrapped her in her shroud, put her in her coffin, placed a wreath upon her and spread out her hair. Her hair was fair and amazingly long for a girl of her age. Félicité cut off a large lock of it and slipped half of it into her bosom, resolv-ing that it would never be separated from her.

The body was brought back to Pont- l'Evêque, accord-ing to Madame Aubain's instructions. Madame Aubain followed the hearse in a closed carriage.

After the funeral mass, it took another three- quarters of an hour to get to the cemetery. Paul led the procession, sobbing. Monsieur Bourais walked behind him, followed in turn by various dignitaries from Pont- l'Evêque, the women, all wearing black veils, and lastly Félicité. Félicité could not help thinking of her nephew and, having been unable to offer him these last honours, she now felt an added grief, as if he were being buried along with Virginie.

Madame Aubain's despair knew no bounds.

At first she rebelled against God, thinking it was unjust that He should take her daughter from her when she had never done any wrong and when there was nothing for her to feel guilty about. But perhaps there was. She should have taken her to the South. Other doctors would have cured her. She blamed herself, wished she could follow her daughter to the grave and called out in anguish in the middle of her dreams. One dream in particular tormented her. Her husband, dressed like a sailor, had returned from a long voyage and, choking back his tears told her that he had received an order to take Virginie away. They then both racked their brains to think of a hiding place for her.

On one occasion she came in from the garden dis traught. Just a moment before (and she pointed to the spot), the father and daughter had appeared in front of her, one after the other. They were not doing anything; they were just staring at her.

For several months she remained in her room, totally listless. Félicité gently admonished her, telling her that she should look

after herself for the sake of her son and her late husband and in memory of 'her'.

'Her?' said Madame Aubain as though waking from sleep. 'Oh yes, of course. You haven't forgotten her, have you!' This was a reference to the cemetery, which Madame Aubain had been expressly forbidden to visit.

Félicité went there every day.

On the stroke of four, she would walk past the row of houses, climb the hill, open the gate and approach Virginie's grave. There was a little column of pink marble standing on a stone base, with a small garden surrounded by chains. The separate beds could hardly be seen beneath the covering of flowers. Félicité would water the leaves, place fresh sand on the garden and get down on her hands and knees to make sure the ground was properly weeded. When Madame Aubain was eventually able to come to see the grave, she found it a source of comfort, a kind of consolation for her loss.

The years passed, one very much like another, marked only by the annual recurrence of the church festivals: Easter, the Assumption, All Saints' Day. It was only little incidents in their daily lives that, in later years, enabled them to recall a particular date. Thus in 1825 two glaziers whitewashed the entrance hall; in 1827 a part of the roof fell into the courtyard and nearly killed a passer-by. In the summer of 1828 it was Madame's turn to distribute consecrated bread to the parishioners. This was also about the same time that Bourais mysteriously left the town. One by one, all their old acquaintances went away: Guyot, Liébard, Madame Lechaptois, Robelin and old Uncle Gremenville, who had been paralysed for many years.

One night, the driver of the mail-coach arrived in Pont-l'Évêque with news of the July Revolution. A few days later, a new subprefect was appointed: the Baron de Larsonnière, who had previously been a consul in America. He arrived in Pont-l'Évêque accompanied not only by his wife but also by his sister-in-law and three young girls, all of them already quite grown up. They were often to be seen on their lawn, dressed in long, flowing smocks. They also had a Negro servant and a parrot. They called on Madame Aubain to pay their respects and she made a point of doing likewise. As soon as she spotted them approaching in the distance,

Félicité would come running in to tell Madame Aubain that they were on their way. But there was only one thing that could really awaken her interest and that was her son's letters.

Paul seemed unable to settle down to a career and spent much of his time in the tavern. Madame Aubain would pay off his debts, but he immediately ran up new ones. She would sit at her knitting by the window and heave sighs that Félicité could hear even in the kitchen, where she was working at her spinning wheel.

The two women would often take a stroll together alongside the trellised wall of the garden. They still talked constantly about Virginie, wondering whether she would have liked such and such a thing or trying to imagine what she would have said on such and such an occasion.

All her belongings were still in a cupboard in the child's bedroom. Madame Aubain had avoided looking inside it as much as possible. Then, one summer day, she resigned herself. Moths came flying from the cupboard.

Virginie's frocks hung in a row beneath a shelf upon which there were three dolls, some hoops, a set of doll's furniture and her own hand-basin. The two women took out all the petticoats, stockings and handkerchiefs and spread them out on the two beds before folding them again. This sorry collection of objects lay there, caught in a beam of sunlight which brought out all the stains and the creases that had been made by the movements of Virginie's body. The air was warm, the sky was blue, a blackbird sang outside and the world seemed to be utterly at peace. They found a little chestnut-coloured hat made of long-piled plush, but it had been completely destroyed by the moths. Félicité asked if she might have it as a keepsake. The two women looked at each other and their eyes filled with tears. Madame Aubain opened her arms and Félicité threw herself into them. Mistress and servant embraced each other, uniting their grief in a kiss which made them equal.

It was the first time that this had ever happened, Madame Aubain being, by nature, very reserved. Félicité could not have been more grateful if she had been offered a priceless gift and from then on she doted on her mistress with dog-like fidelity and the reverence that might be accorded to a saint.

As time went by, Félicité's natural kind- heartedness increased.

One day she heard the sound of drums from a regiment marching along the street and she stood at the door with a jug of cider, handing out drinks to the soldiers. She helped to nurse cholera victims and to look after the refu-gees from Poland. One of the Poles even said he would like to marry her, but they had a serious argument when she came back one morning from the angelus to find him ensconced in her kitchen, calmly helping himself to a salad which she had prepared for lunch.

After the Poles had left, she turned her attention to an old man by the name of Colmiche, who was rumoured to have committed terrible atrocities in '93. He now lived down by the river in a ruined pigsty. The boys in the town used to spy on him through the cracks in the wall and throw stones at him as he lay coughing and choking on his straw bed. He had long, straggling hair, his eyelids were inflamed and on one arm there was a swelling bigger than his head. Félicité provided him with linen and did what she could to keep his hovel clean; she even hoped she might be able to install him in the outhouse, where he would not disturb Madame. When the tumour burst she changed his dressing every single day. Sometimes she would bring him a small piece of cake or help him outside on to a bundle of straw, where he could lie in the sun. The poor old wretch would splutter and shake and thank her in a barely audible whisper, saying he could not bear to lose her and stretching out his hands the minute he saw her preparing to leave him. He died and Félicité had a mass said for the repose of his soul.

On the same day, she received the most wonderful surprise. Just as she was serving dinner, Madame de Larsonnière's Negro servant arrived, carrying the parrot in its cage, along with its perch, chain and padlock. There was a note from the Baroness, informing Madame Aubain that her husband had been promoted to a Préfecture and that they were leaving Pont- l'Evêque that very evening. She asked Madame Aubain if she would be kind enough to accept the parrot as a memento of their friendship and as a token of her respect.

The parrot had been a source of wonder to Félicité for a long time, for it came from America, a word which always reminded her of Victor. She had already questioned the servant about it and, on

one occasion, had even said that 'Madame would be delighted to look after it!'

The Negro had mentioned this to his mistress and, because she could not take it away with her, she readily seized this opportunity of getting it off her hands.

The parrot was called Loulou. His body was green, the tips of his wings were pink, the top of his head was blue and his breast was gold- coloured.

Unfortunately, he had the tiresome habit of chewing his perch and he kept plucking out his feathers, scattering his droppings everywhere and splashing the water from his bath all over his cage. He thoroughly irritated Madame Aubain and so she gave him to Félicité to look after.

She decided she would teach him to speak and he was very soon able to say, 'Pretty boy!', 'Your servant, sir!' and 'Hail Mary!' She put him near the front door and a number of visitors were surprised that he would not answer to the name 'Polly', which is what all parrots are supposed to be called. Some people said he looked more like a turkey or called him a blockhead. Félicité found their jibes very hurtful. There was a curious stubborn streak in Loulou which never ceased to amaze Félicité; he would refuse to talk the minute anyone looked at him!

Even so, there was no doubt that he appreciated company. On Sundays, when the Rochefeuille sisters Monsieur de Houpeville and some of Madame Aubain's new friends – the apothecary Onfroy, Monsieur Varin and Captain Mathieu – came round to play cards, Loulou would beat on the window panes with his wings and make such a furious commotion that no one could hear them selves speak.

He obviously found Bourais's face a source of great amusement. He only had to see it and he would break into fits of uncontrollable laughter. His squawks could be heard echoing round the yard. The neighbours would come to their windows and start laughing too. To avoid being seen by the parrot, Bourais would slink past the house along the side of the wall, hiding his face behind his hat. He would go down to the river and come into the house by way of the back garden. The looks he gave the bird were not of the tender variety.

The butcher's boy had once flipped Loulou on the ear for trying to help himself to something from his basket and, since then, Loulou always tried to give him a peck through his shirt. Fabu threatened to wring his neck although he was not cruel by nature, despite what the tattoos on his arms and his long side whiskers might have led one to believe. In fact, he was rather fond of the parrot and, just for the fun of it, he had even tried to teach him a few swear words. Félicité was alarmed at the thought of his acquiring such bad habits and moved him into the kitchen. His chain was removed and he was allowed to wander all over the house.

When he came down the stairs, he would position the curved part of his beak on the step in front of him and then raise first his right foot, followed by his left. Félicité was always worried that these weird acrobatics would make the parrot giddy. He fell ill and could not talk or eat due to an ulcer under his tongue, such as chickens sometimes have. Félicité cured him herself, extracting the lump in his mouth with her fingernails. One day, Mon-sieur Paul was silly enough to blow cigar smoke up his nose. On another occasion, when Madame Lormeau was teasing him with the end of her parasol, he bit off the metal ferrule with his beak. Then there was the time he got lost.

Félicité had put him out on the grass to get some fresh air. She went indoors for a minute and, when she came back, the parrot had disappeared. She searched for him in the bushes, by the river and even on the rooftops, oblivious to her mistress's shouts of 'Do be careful! You must be mad!' She then hunted through every single garden in Pont- l'Evêque and stopped all the people in the street, asking, 'You don't happen to have seen my parrot by any chance?' Those who did not already know the parrot were given a full description. Suddenly, she thought she saw something green flying about behind the mills at the bottom of the hill. But when she got to the top of the hill there was nothing to be seen. A pedlar told her he had definitely seen the bird only a short while ago in old Madame Simon's shop at Saint- Melaine. Félicité ran all the way there, but nobody knew what she was talking about. In the end she came back home, utterly exhausted, her shoes torn to shreds and feeling sick at heart. She sat down on the middle of the garden bench, next to Madame, and she was telling her everything that she had done

when she suddenly felt something drop gently on to her shoulder It was Loulou! What on earth had he been up to? Perhaps he had just gone for a little walk around the town!

It took Félicité quite a while to recover from this shock If the truth were known, she never really recovered from it completely.

She caught tonsillitis, as a result of getting thoroughly chilled, and shortly afterwards developed pains in her ears. Within three years she was completely deaf and spoke in a very loud voice, even in church. Even though her sins could have been proclaimed in every corner of the diocese without bringing any discredit to her or causing offence to others, the curé decided that it would now be best to hear her confession in the sacristy.

Imaginary buzzing noises in her head added to her troubles. Her mistress would often say, 'Goodness me! You're just being silly!' Félicité would answer, 'Yes, Mad-ame,' still looking around her to see where the noises were coming from.

She became enclosed in an ever- diminishing world of her own; gone for ever was the pealing of church bells and the lowing of cattle in the fields. Every living thing passed by her in ghostly silence. Only one sound now reached her ears, and that was the voice of her parrot.

Almost as if he were deliberately trying to entertain her, he would imitate the clicking of the turnspit, the shrill cry of the fishmonger or the sound of sawing from the joiner's shop on the other side of the street. Whenever the front door bell rang, he would imitate Madame Aubain: 'Félicité! The door, the door!'

They would hold conversations with each other, the parrot endlessly repeating the three stock phrases from his repertory and Félicité replying with words that made very little sense but which all came straight from the heart. In her isolation, Loulou was almost a son to her; she simply doted on him. He used to climb up her fingers, peck at her lips and hang on to her shawl. Sometimes she would put her face close to his and shake her head in the way a nurse does to a baby, with the wings of her bonnet and the bird's wings all fluttering together.

When storm clouds gathered and thunder rumbled, the bird would squawk loudly, no doubt remembering the sudden cloud-

bursts of his native forests. The sound of falling rain would send him into a frenzy. He would fly madly about the house, shooting up to the ceiling, knock ing everything over and finally escaping through the window into the garden to splash around in the puddles But he would soon come back, perch on one of the fire-dogs, jump up and down to dry his feathers and then proudly display his tail or his beak.

One morning in the terrible winter of 1837, when she had put him near the fireplace because of the cold, she found him dead in his cage, hanging head downwards with his claws caught in the metal bars. He had probably died of a stroke, but the thought crossed Félicité's mind that he might have been poisoned with parsley and, although there was no definite proof, her suspicions fell on Fabu.

She wept so much that her mistress eventually said, 'Well, why don't you have him stuffed?'

Félicité went to consult the chemist, who had always been kind to the parrot.

He wrote to Le Havre and a man by the name of Fel-lacher agreed to do the job. But, knowing that the mail-coach sometimes mislaid parcels, Félicité decided that she would take the parrot as far as Honfleur herself.

The road ran between endless lines of apple trees, bare and leafless. Ice lay in the ditches. Dogs barked as she walked past the farms. With her hands tucked under her mantlet and her basket on her arm, Félicité walked briskly along the middle of the road in her little black clogs.

She followed the road through the forest, passed Le Haut-Chêne and eventually reached Saint-Gatien.

On the road behind her, in a cloud of dust and gather-ing speed on its way down the hill, a mail-coach at full gallop came rushing towards her like a whirlwind. The coachman, seeing that this woman was making no attempt to get out of the way, stood up and looked out over the roof of the carriage and both he and his postilion shouted at her for all their worth. The four horses, which he was vainly trying to rein in, galloped faster and faster towards her and the leading pair struck her as they went by. With a sharp

tug on the reins, the coachman forced them to swerve on to the side of the road. In his rage, he raised his arm and lashed out at her with his long whip as the coach lurched past. The blow struck Félicité full across her face and the upper part of her body, and with such force that she fell flat on her back.

The first thing she did when she regained consciousness was to open her basket. Fortunately, Loulou had come to no harm. She felt a burning sensation on her right cheek. She put her hand to her face and saw that her hand was red. She was bleeding.

She sat down on a pile of stones and dabbed her face with her handkerchief. Then she ate a crust of bread which she had brought with her in case she needed it and tried to take her mind off her wound by looking at the parrot.

As she came to the top of the hill at Ecquemaerville, she saw the lights of Honfleur twinkling in the night like clusters of stars and, beyond them, the sea, stretching dimly into the distance. She was suddenly overcome with a fit of giddiness and her wretched childhood, the disappointment of her first love affair, the departure of her nephew and the death of Virginie all came flooding back to her like the waves of an incoming tide, welling up inside her and taking her breath away.

She insisted on speaking personally to the captain of the ship and, although she did not tell him what was in her parcel, she asked him to look after it carefully.

Fellacher kept the parrot for a long time. He kept promising that it would arrive the following week. After six months, he announced that a box had been dispatched but that was the last they heard of it. Félicité began to fear that Loulou would never come back. 'He has been stolen, I know it!' she thought to herself.

But at last he arrived. And quite magnificent he looked too, perched on a branch which was screwed on to a mahogany plinth, with one foot held raised, his head cocked to one side and holding in his beak a nut which the taxidermist, in order to add a little touch of grandeur had gilded.

Félicité installed him in her room.

This room, which few were allowed into, was filled with a mixture of religious knick-knacks and other miscellaneous bits and

pieces and resembled something between a chapel and a bazaar.

A large wardrobe made it awkward to open the door fully. Opposite the window that looked out on to the garden was a smaller circular window which looked out on to the courtyard. There was a plain, unsprung bed and beside it a table with a water jug, two combs and a small cake of blue soap on a chipped plate. Fixed to the walls were *rosa-ries*, medals, several pictures of the Virgin and a holy-water stoop made out of a coconut shell. On the chest of drawers, which was draped with a cloth like an altar, was the shell box that Victor had given her, a watering can and a ball, some handwriting books, the illustrated geography book and a pair of little ankle boots. Hanging by its two ribbons from the nail which supported the mirror was the little plush hat! These keepsakes meant so much to Félicité. She had even kept one of Monsieur's frock-coats. If there was anything that Madame Aubain wanted to get rid of, she would find a place for it in her room, like the artificial flowers beside her chest of drawers and the portrait of the Comte d'Artois in the window recess.

Loulou was placed on a little shelf made especially for the purpose and fixed to a chimney breast which protruded into the room. Every morning, as she woke, she would catch sight of him in the early morning light and would recall the days gone by, trivial incidents, right down to the tiniest detail, remembered not in sadness but in perfect tranquillity.

Being unable to hold a conversation with anyone, she lived her life as if in a sleepwalker's trance. The only thing that seemed capable of bringing her back to life was the Corpus Christi procession, when she would visit all the neighbours, collecting candlesticks and mats to decorate the altar of repose that was always set up outside in the street.

When she went to church, she would sit gazing at the picture of the Holy Spirit and it struck her that it looked rather like her parrot. The resemblance was even more striking in an Epinal colour print depicting Our Lord's baptism. The dove had wings of crimson and a body of emerald-green and it looked for all the world like Loulou. Félicité bought the picture and hung it in place of the portrait of the Comte d'Artois, so that she could see them both together at the same time. In her mind, the one became associated with the other,

the parrot becoming sanctified by connection with the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit in turn acquiring added life and meaning. Surely it could not have been a dove that God had chosen to speak through since doves cannot talk. It must have been one of Loulou's ancestors. Félicité would say her prayers with her eyes turned towards the picture but every now and then she would turn her head slightly to look at the parrot.

She thought of entering the sisterhood of the Ladies of the Virgin but Madame Aubain persuaded her not to

There now occurred an event of considerable importance – Paul's wedding.

Having worked first as a lawyer's clerk, Paul had subsequently tried his hand at business, worked for the Customs and for the Inland Revenue and had even considered joining the Department of Forests and Waterways. Now, at the age of thirty-six, as if by divine inspiration he had suddenly discovered his vocation – the Registry Office! Indeed, he had displayed such a talent for the job that one of the inspectors had offered him his daughter's hand in marriage and had promised to use his influence to advance his career.

By now, Paul took his responsibilities seriously and he brought his intended to see his mother.

Not a thing at Pont-l'Évêque met with her approval. She expected to be treated like royalty and she hurt Félicité's feelings badly. Madame Aubain was relieved to see her go.

The following week, they learned of the death of Monsieur Bourais in an inn somewhere in Lower Brittany. Rumour had it that he had committed suicide. This turned out to be true and questions were raised about his honesty. Madame Aubain went through her accounts and the catalogue of his misdeeds soon became apparent: embezzlement of arrears of rent, undeclared sales of wood, forged receipts, and so forth. It was also discovered that he was the father of an illegitimate child and that he was having 'an illicit relationship with someone from Dozulé'.

This sordid business was a source of great distress to Madame Aubain. In March 1853, she began to feel pains in her chest. A grey coating covered her tongue. She was treated with leeches but this failed to improve her breathing. On the ninth evening of her

illness, she died, aged just seventy- two.

People took her to be younger than this because of her dark hair, which she had always worn in bandeaux round her pale, pockmarked face. She had very few friends to lament her death; there was a certain haughtiness about her that had always kept people at a distance.

Félicité wept for her in a way that servants rarely weep for their masters. That Madame should die before her disturbed her whole way of thinking; it seemed to go against the natural order of things; it was something unacceptable and unreal.

Ten days later, just as soon as they could get there from Besançon, the heirs arrived on the scene. Madame Aubain's daughter- in- law went through all the drawers chose a few pieces of furniture for herself and sold what was left. Then they all went back to the Registry Office.

Madame's armchair, her little table, her foot- warmer and the eight chairs had all gone! On the walls, yellow patches marked the places where pictures had once hung. They had taken away the children's beds, along with their mattresses, and the cupboard had been cleared of all Virginie's things. Félicité went from room to room heartbroken.

The following day, a notice appeared on the front door. The apothecary shouted into Félicité's ear that the house was for sale.

Félicité's head began to swim and she had to sit down

What most upset her was the thought of having to move out of her own room; it was the perfect place for poor Loulou. In her anguish she would gaze at him and beg the Holy Spirit to come to her aid. She developed the idolatrous habit of kneeling in front of the parrot to say her prayers. Sometimes the sun would catch the parrot's glass eye as it came through the little window, causing an emanation of radiant light that sent her into ecstasies.

Félicité had been left a pension of three hundred and eighty francs by her mistress. The garden provided her with vegetables. As for clothes, she had sufficient to last her her lifetime and she saved on lighting by going to bed as soon as it began to get dark.

She hardly ever went out, because she disliked walking past the

secondhand dealer's shop, where some of the old furniture was on display. Ever since her fit of giddiness, she had been dragging one leg and, as she was now grow-ing frail, old Madame Simon, whose grocery business had recently collapsed, used to come round every morning to chop her firewood and draw her water.

Her eyes grew weaker. The shutters were no longer opened. Many years passed. Nobody came to rent the house and nobody came to buy it.

Félicité never asked for any repairs to be done, because she was frightened she might be evicted. The laths in the roof rotted and for one whole winter her bolster was per-manently wet from the rain. Shortly after Easter, she coughed blood.

Madame Simon called for a doctor. Félicité wanted to know what was wrong with her. But by now she was too deaf to hear what was said and she only managed to catch one word: 'pneumonia'. It was a word she knew and she quietly answered, 'Ah! Like Madame', finding it quite nat ural that she should follow in her mistress's footsteps.

The time for preparing the altars of repose was drawing near.

The first of them was always placed at the foot of the hill, the second outside the post office and the third about half- way up the street. The exact position of this last altar was a matter of some rivalry, but the women of the parish eventually agreed that it should be placed in Madame Aubain's courtyard.

Félicité's breathing was getting worse and she was becom-ing more feverish. She fretted at not being able to do anything for the altar. If only there were at least something that she could put on it! And then she thought of the par rot. The neighbours objected, saying that it was not really suitable. But the curé gave his permission and this made Félicité so happy that she asked him to accept Loulou, the one treasure she possessed, as a gift from her when she died.

From Tuesday to Saturday, the eve of Corpus Christi her coughing increased. By the evening, her face looked drawn, her lips were sticking to her gums and she began vomiting. The following morning, at first light, feeling very low, she sent for a priest. Three good women stood round her as she was given extreme unction.

She then announced that she needed to speak to Fabu.

Fabu arrived dressed in his Sunday best and feeling very ill at ease in such sombre surroundings.

‘Please forgive me,’ she said, summoning all her strength to extend her arm towards him, ‘I thought it was you who had killed him.’

What was all this nonsense? How could she suspect someone like him of having committed a murder! Fabu was most indignant and was on the point of losing his temper.

‘Her mind is wandering,’ they said. ‘Surely you can see that.’

From time to time Félicité seemed to be speaking to phantoms. The women went away. Madame Simon ate her lunch.

A little later she went to fetch Loulou and held him close to Félicité. ‘Come on,’ she said. ‘Say goodbye to him.’

Although Loulou was not a corpse, he was being eaten away by maggots. One of his wings was broken and the stuffing was coming out of his stomach. But Félicité was now blind. She kissed him on his forehead and held him against her cheek. Madame Simon took him from her and went to replace him on the altar.

The smells of summer drifted in from the meadows. The air was filled with the buzzing of flies. The sun glinted on the surface of the river and warmed the slates of the roof. Madame Simon had come back into the room and was gently nodding off to sleep.

She was awoken by the sound of bells; they were coming out of vespers. Félicité grew suddenly calmer. She thought of the procession and saw everything as clearly as if she were there.

All the schoolchildren, the choristers and the firemen were walking along the pavements. In the middle of the street, at the head of the procession, came the church officer with his halberd, the beadle carrying the great cross, the schoolmaster in charge of the boys and the nun keeping a motherly eye on the girls. Three of the prettiest looking like curly headed angels, were throwing rose petals in the air. They were followed by the deacon conducting the band with arms outstretched and two censer-bearers turning round at every step to face the Holy Sacrament which was carried by Monsieur le Curé, clad in his magnificent chasuble and protected by a canopy of bright red velvet held aloft by four churchwardens. A great throng of people followed on behind as the procession made its way between the white sheets which draped the walls of the houses and eventually arrived at the bottom of the hill.

Félicité's forehead was bathed in a cold sweat. Madame Simon sponged it with a cloth, telling herself that one day she would go the same way.

The noise of the crowd gradually increased, at one point becoming very loud and then fading away.

A sudden burst of gunfire rattled the window panes. The postilions were saluting the monstrosity. Félicité rolled her eyes and, trying to raise her voice above a whisper, she asked, 'Is he all right?' She was still worrying about the parrot.

Félicité was now entering her final moments. Her breath came in short raucous gasps, making her sides heave. Beads of froth

gathered in the corners of her mouth and her whole body began to shake.

From the street outside came the blaring of ophicleides, the high-pitched voices of the children and the deeper voices of the men. There were moments when all was quiet and all that could be heard was the tread of feet, cushioned by the scattered petals and sounding like a flock of sheep crossing a field.

The group of clergy entered the courtyard. Madame Simon climbed up on to a chair to look out of the little window and was able to see the altar directly below.

It was hung with green garlands and covered with a flounce in English point lace. Standing in the centre was a little square frame containing some relics and at each end there was an orange tree. Along the length of the altar there was a row of silver candlesticks and china vases containing a vivid display of sunflowers, lilies, peonies, foxgloves and bunches of hydrangea. A cascade of bright colours fell from the top of the altar down to the carpet spread out on the cobblestones beneath it. In amongst the flowers could be seen a number of other treasured ornaments: a silver-gilt sugar-bowl decorated with a ring of violets, a set of pendants cut from Alençon gemstones glittering on a little carpet of moss, two Chinese screens with painted landscapes. Loulou lay hidden beneath some roses and all that could be seen of him was the spot of blue on the top of his head, like a disc of lapis lazuli.

The churchwardens, the choristers and the children took up their places around three sides of the courtyard. The priest slowly walked up the steps and placed his great shining orb on the lace altar cloth. Everyone fell to their knees. There was a deep silence in which all that could be heard was the sound of the censers sliding on their chains as they were swung backwards and forwards.

A blue haze of incense floated up into Félicité's room. She opened her nostrils wide to breathe it in, savouring it with mystical fervour. Her eyes closed and a smile played on her lips. One by one her heartbeats became slower, growing successively weaker and fainter like a fountain running dry, an echo fading away. With her dying breath she imagined she saw a huge parrot hovering above her head as the heavens parted to receive her.



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The Life of a Stupid Man

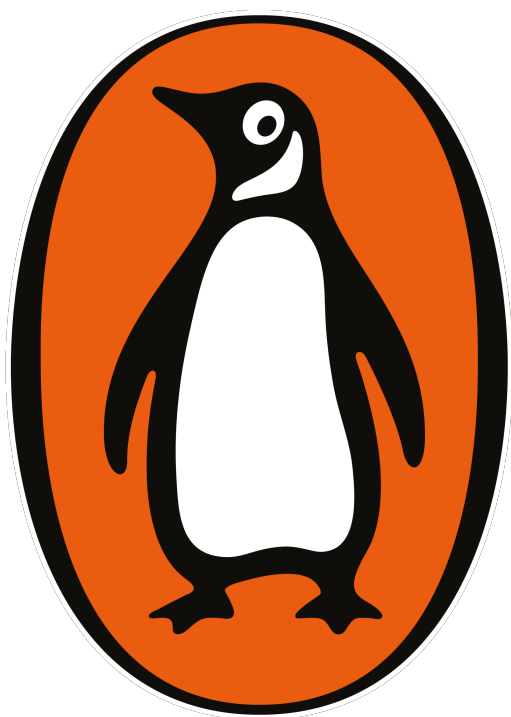
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“人生诚然是如
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哎呀呀，
我简直不知道
怎么说才好，
多么可怜！”



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*此中文译本译自日语原文

竹林中

樵夫答典史问

是啊，发现那具尸体的正是我。今天早晨，我跟往常一样去砍伐后山的杉树。没料到山后的竹林里，竟有这么一具尸体。地点在哪儿？离山科的驿路有那么四五町 [1] 光景。竹子当中夹杂着细小的杉树，那地方连个人影儿也没有。

尸体上身穿淡蓝色短褂，头上戴着有皱纹的京式乌帽，脸朝天倒在那里。想想看，这一刀刚好戳在胸口上，尸体周围竹子的落叶简直就像是浸透了苏枋 [2] 水般地染红了。不，已经不再流血了，伤口好像早就凝固了。那里一只马蝇紧紧地叮在伤口上，似乎连我的脚步声都没理会。

没有看见什么凶器吗？没有，啥都没有。只是旁边的杉树底下丢着一根绳子。另外——对，除了绳子还有一把梳子。尸体旁边只有这两样东西。可是周围的草和竹叶给踩得很厉害，看来那个汉子被害以前，还曾拼命搏斗过一番。什么，有马没有？那里根本进不去马，竹林后面的路才能够走马呢！

云游僧答典史问

不错，昨天我碰见过那个如今成了尸体的汉子。昨天晌午，地点是从关山到山科的路上。那个人跟着一个骑马的妇女朝关山这边走来。女人遮着面纱，我看不见她的脸，只看见了她身上那件夹衣的颜色——好像是红面蓝里子。马是桃花马，记得马鬃是剃光了的 [3] 。马有多高吗？总有四尺四寸吧。……不过我是沙门，不大懂得这种事。那个男子——不，既佩着大刀，也带着弓箭，而且在上上了黑漆的箭囊里插着二十来支箭，这我至今还清清楚楚地记得。

我做梦也想不到那个汉子会落到这么个下场。人生诚然是如过眼浮云。哎呀呀，我简直不知道怎么说才好，多么可怜！

捕役 [4] 答典史问

我抓到的那个人吗？他确实是个臭名昭著的强盗，名叫多襄丸。不过我逮他的时候，他正在栗田口的石桥上嗯嗯地呻吟着呢，大概是从马上摔下来的吧。时间吗？是昨天晚上初更光景。上回我差点捉住了他，被他逃掉了。那一回他穿的也是藏青短褂，腰里插着大刀。您

瞧，如今他除了刀以外，还带着弓箭呢。啊？原来那个被害的人携带的也是这些……那么杀人的无疑就是这个多襄丸了。缠着皮的弓，黑漆的箭囊，鹰翎的箭十七支——这都是那个被害人随身带的吧。对，正如您说的，马也正是那匹剃光了鬃毛的桃花马。准是因果报应，被这畜生用下来啦。它就在石桥过去一点儿的地方，拖着长长的缰绳，在吃路旁的青芒呢。

在洛中出没的强盗当中，多襄丸这家伙也是个好色之徒。去年秋天，有个好像是来进香的妇女和丫头一道在鸟部寺宝头卢的后山被杀，据说就是这家伙干的。男的被他杀了，骑桃花马的那个女人也不知道给带到什么地方去，后来怎样了呢。也许我不该多嘴，这一点也请您调查一下吧。

老嫗答典史问

没错，这就是我闺女嫁的那个男人的尸体。他不是京城的人，是若狭国府的武士。名字叫金泽武弘，二十六岁。不，他性情温和，绝不会招人忌恨的。

女儿吗？女儿叫真砂，今年十九岁。她性格刚强，几乎赛过男子。除了武弘以外，她不曾跟别的男人好过。小小的瓜子儿脸，肤色微黑，左眼角上有颗痣。

武弘昨天跟我女儿一道动身到若狭去，竟出了这样的事，真不知前世造了什么孽！女婿已然这样，也只好认命了，可我女儿怎样了呢？真把我急坏了。我这苦老婆子求求您啦，一辈子也忘不了您，哪怕上天入地，也恳求您务必找到我女儿的下落。不管怎么说，可恨的是那个叫作什么多襄丸的强盗。他不但害了我女婿，连我女儿也……（老嫗泣不成声）

多襄丸的供词

那个男人是我杀死的，可我没杀女的。她到哪儿去啦？这我可不知道。喏，慢着。再怎么拷问，不知道的也说不出来呀！而且事到如今，我不打算卑鄙地隐瞒什么了。

昨天刚过晌午，我碰见了那对夫妇。那时候碰巧刮了一阵风，撩起了那女人长长垂下的面纱，我瞅见了她的脸。可一眨眼的工夫，就又看不见了。一方面也是由于这个缘故吧，我只觉得那个女人长得像菩萨一样标致。我一时打定了主意，即使杀了那个男的，也非把女的抢到手不可。

咳，杀死个把男人，并不是像你们想的那样了不起的事。要抢女人，男人横竖是要给杀死的。只不过我杀人是用腰间佩的大刀，而你

们杀人不用刀，单凭权力，凭金钱，往往还仅仅凭了那张伪善的嘴巴就够了。不错，血是不会流的，人还活得好好的——然而还是给杀了。想想有多么罪孽呀！谁知道究竟是你们坏还是我坏呢？（嘲讽的微笑）

不过，要是能够不杀男人就把女人抢到手，倒也没什么不好。哦，那时候原是想尽量避免杀男人而把女人抢到手的。但在那山科的驿路上，说什么也办不到。所以我就想方设法把那对夫妇引到山里去。

这也不费什么事。我跟那对夫妇结伴走，跟他们说，对面山上有个古冢，我一挖，挖出了许许多多镜子和大刀，我悄悄地给埋在山后的竹林里了。谁要是想买，随便哪样，出几个钱就成。那个男的听了我的话，不知不觉地动了心——您瞧，贪欲有多么可怕啊。不到半个时辰，那对夫妇就跟我一道走上了山路。

到了竹林前面我就说，宝贝埋在这里呢，来看吧。男的利欲熏心，自然同意。可是那个女人连马都没下，说是就在那儿等着。看到竹林那么密，也就难怪她会这么说了。说实在的，这正合我意，就把女人留在那儿，跟男的一块儿走进了竹林。

竹林里起初净是竹子。走了十六七丈，才是一簇疏疏朗朗的杉树——为了达到我的目的，没有比这地方更妥当的了。我扒开竹枝，撒了个听起来好像很有道理的谎，说宝贝就埋在杉树底下。听我这么一说，男的就拼命朝着透过竹叶已经能够看到细小杉树的那个方向走去。这当儿竹子稀疏起来，并立着好几棵杉树——刚走到这儿，我就马上把对方按倒。那人不愧是个佩刀的，好像相当有力气。无奈我给他个措手不及，他怎么也招架不住，马上就给捆到一棵杉树脚下了。绳子吗？这是做贼的妙处，随时得翻墙越壁，所以腰间早就准备好了。当然，为了不让他喊出声来，就用竹子的落叶堵上他的嘴，此外就没什么麻烦了。

我把男的安排停当后，就又到女人那里去说，那个男的好像得了急病，要她快去看看。不用说，这一次也达到了目的。女的已经摘掉那个垂着面纱的市女笠，就那样被我拉着手走到竹林深处来了。到这儿一看，男的给捆在杉树脚上呢——女人一看到这幅情景，不知什么工夫从怀里掏出了小刀，闪亮亮地拔出了鞘。我从来还没见过那么烈性子的女人呢。这当儿只要稍微一大意，就会被她一刀戳破了肚皮。不，即使躲过了这一下，在她的乱刀下面，指不定会受什么样的伤呢。我毕竟是多囊丸啊，好歹连大刀也没拔，到底把她的小刀打落了。再怎么刚强的女人，没有了武器也就没办法了。我终于照原来想的那样，不杀害男人，就把女人弄到了手。

不杀害男人——是的，只要把女人弄到手，我并不曾打算要男人的命。可是正当我丢下伏在地上哭泣的女人，往竹林外头逃去的时候，那个女人突然像疯子一样抓住了我的胳膊，而且她断断续续地喊道，你也罢，我丈夫也罢，你们之间总得死一个。在两个男人面前丢丑，比死还痛苦。后来还气喘吁吁地说，不管是你们哪个活下来，我就情愿跟他。这时我猛地对那个男人动了杀机。（阴郁的兴奋）

我这么一说，你们一定会认为我比你们还要残酷。那是因为你们不曾看见那个女人的脸，尤其是一瞬间她那烈火般的眸子。我和这个女人眼光相遇时，心想就是天打雷劈，也要把她娶到手。我只有娶她为妻这么一个念头。这不是像你们所想象的那种下流的色欲。假若当时除了色欲之外什么愿望也没有，我就是把女人踢倒了，也非逃跑不可。这样，我的大刀也就不至于沾上男人的血了。但是我在阴暗的竹林中定睛看了看女人的脸。当时我就打定主意，不杀死男人，绝不离开这里。

但是杀男人嘛，我也不想用卑鄙的手段。我给他松了绑，要求跟他用大刀来决斗。（丢在杉树脚下的绳子，就是那时忘了扔掉的）那个男人依然煞白着脸，马上把大刀拔出了鞘。一眨眼的工夫，一声不响气冲冲地向我扑来——交手的结果怎样，那就不用多说了。第二十个回合，我的大刀把对方的胸膛刺透了。请不要忘记——是第二十个回合啊。直到现在，我对他这一点还是佩服的。因为他是天下唯一和我交手到二十回合以上的。（快活的微笑）

男人刚一倒下，我就提着血淋淋的大刀，回头去看女人。可哪里想到，女人已经无影无踪了。她逃到哪儿去了呢？我在那簇杉树中找了找，可是竹子的落叶上，连点可疑的痕迹也没有。竖起耳朵听了听，只传来了男子喉间发出的断气声。

也许我刚开始抡刀的时候，那个女人为了呼救，就钻出竹林逃跑了——想到这里，这下子我为了保全自己的性命，就拿了大刀和弓箭，立即又回到原来的山路上去。女人的马还在那儿静静地吃草呢。以后的事情就用不着去说了。只是在进京之前，我已经把大刀卖掉了——我的口供完啦。我这颗脑袋总有挂在苦楝树梢 [5] 上的一天，请处我以极刑吧。（气概昂然）

来到清水寺的女人的忏悔

那个穿藏青短褂的人把我污辱以后，就瞧着我那被绑起来的丈夫嘲笑起来。我丈夫该是多么气愤啊。可他不管怎么挣扎，浑身绑着的绳子只是越勒越紧。我不由得滚也似的跑到丈夫身边去——不，是想要跑过去。可是那个人马上一脚把我踢倒了。就在这当儿，我觉察到丈夫眼里有一种难以形容的光。难以形容的——直到现在，我一起

他那眼神还不禁发抖。丈夫一句话也说不出，在这一刹那间，用眼睛把他整个儿的心意传给我了。可闪烁在他眼睛里的，既不是愤怒也不是悲哀——只是蔑视我的冷冰冰的光呀！与其说是被那个人踢的，毋宁说是由于受了这眼光的刺激，我不由得喊了一句什么，就终于昏倒了。

后来我总算恢复了知觉。一看，那个穿藏青短褂的人已经不知去向。只剩下我丈夫被绑在杉树脚下。我从落满竹叶的地上勉强撑起身来，看了看丈夫的脸。但是丈夫的眼神跟方才丝毫没有两样。在冷冰冰的轻蔑之下，蕴藏着憎恶的光。羞耻，悲哀，愤怒——简直不知道怎么形容当时我心里的感觉才好。我摇摇晃晃地站起来，走到丈夫身边。

“你呀，事情已经是这样了，我再也不能跟你在一块儿啦。我打算一死了之。可是……可是请你也死掉。你看到了我的耻辱，我不能让你一个人就这样活下去。”

我拼命地说了这么几句。然而丈夫只是厌恶地盯着我。我按捺住几乎要破裂的胸膛，搜寻丈夫的大刀。大概是给强盗抢去了，大刀自不用说，竹丛里连弓箭也没有了。可是幸亏小刀还掉在我脚底下。我举起小刀，又对丈夫说了一遍：“那么，请允许我先要了你的命，我随后就来。”

丈夫听了我的话，好容易才动了动嘴唇。他嘴里塞满了竹子的落叶，声音当然是一点也听不见的。但是我一看见他的嘴动，马上就明白了他在说什么。他依然对我抱着轻蔑的态度，说了句：“杀吧。”我几乎像做梦一般朝着丈夫那穿着淡蓝色短褂的胸口扑哧一声把小刀戳了进去。

我这时大概又昏过去了。好歹恢复知觉后，四下里打量了一下，丈夫仍旧绑在那里，早已咽了气。透过交错的竹子和杉树，一道夕阳从天空里射到他那苍白的脸上。我忍着哭声，给尸体松了绑。于是……于是我怎样了呢？唯独这一点，我已经没有力气来说明了。横竖我怎样也没有能耐去死。把小刀往喉咙里戳也罢，投身到山脚下的池子里也罢，种种办法都试过了，可就是死不了。现在还这么活着，这也不是什么光彩的事。（淡淡的惨笑）像我这样没有骨气的人，说不定连大慈大悲的观音菩萨也不屑睬一眼了。可是，杀了丈夫的我，被强盗糟蹋了的我，究竟该怎么办才好呢？我究竟……我……（突然激烈地抽搭）

鬼魂借巫女之口所说的话

——强盗奸污完了我的妻子，就在那儿坐下来，用种种话来安慰她。我当然说不出话来，身子也给绑在杉树脚下，可是我多次给妻子

使眼色，想暗示她，不要把这个人话信以为真。要知道，不管他说什么都是一派谎言。可是我妻子沮丧地坐在竹子的落叶上，一个劲儿地望着自己的膝头。怎么看也像是在专心听强盗的话哪。我嫉妒得浑身发抖，可是强盗花言巧语地变着法儿讲下去，最后竟大胆地说出了这样的话：即便就被糟蹋这么一回，反正跟丈夫也很难再圆满相处了。与其跟这样的丈夫过下去，你有没有做我妻子的打算呢？我正因为疼你，才干出了这样一桩无法无天的事来。

听强盗这么一说，妻子竟然就心荡神驰地仰起脸来。我还从来没见过妻子像那个时刻那么美丽过。可是那个美丽的妻子，当着像这样被绑起来的我的面，怎么回答了强盗呢？尽管魂游冥世，每逢想起妻子的回答，就怒火中烧。妻子确实是这样说的：“那么，请你随便把我带到哪儿去吧。”（沉默良久）

妻子的罪过，还不止于此。要仅仅是这样，我也不至于在冥冥之中这么痛苦了。可是妻子犹如做梦一般被强盗牵着手往竹林外面走的当儿，脸色忽然变得刷白，指着杉树脚下的我，像发了疯般地喊了好几遍：“请你把那个人杀掉。只要他活着，我就不能跟你在一块儿。”“请你把那个人杀掉”——这句话像一股狂风，即使现在也好像要把我头朝下刮落到遥远、黑暗的深渊底下去。哪怕是一次，难道人的嘴巴曾吐出过这样可憎恶的话吗？哪怕是一次，难道人的耳朵曾听到过这样可诅咒的话吗？哪怕是一次，难道……（突然一阵冷笑）听了这话，连强盗也煞白了脸。“请你把那个人杀掉。”妻子边这么喊着，边拉住强盗的胳膊。强盗定睛看着我的妻子，不说杀也不说不杀……我刚这么一想，妻子一脚就给踢倒在竹子的落叶上了。（又迸发出一阵冷笑）强盗安详地抱起胳膊，向我看了看：“那个女人你打算怎么处置？是杀掉，还是饶她一条命？点一下头吧：杀掉吗？”——单凭这句话，我就想赦免强盗的罪孽。（再度沉默良久）

趁着我迟疑的工夫，妻子喊叫了一句什么，立即逃到竹林深处去了。强盗马上扑奔过去，可是好像连袖子也没抓着。我仿佛是在梦幻中看到了这幅情景。

妻子逃掉以后，强盗夺过我的大刀弓箭，把我身上绑的绳子割断一处。我记得强盗消失在竹林外面的时候，喃喃地说了句：“这回该轮到我了。”以后，周围寂静下来。不，还有什么人的哭声哩。我一边解开绳子，一边侧耳细听。呃，这不是我自己的哭声吗？（第三次沉默良久）

我很吃力地从杉树脚下抬起我那精疲力竭的身子。妻子落下的小刀就在我跟前闪着光。我把它拿在手里，朝着胸口一戳。一块带着腥味的玩意儿涌到嘴里来。我丝毫不觉得痛苦，只是胸口凉了以后，四下里越发寂然无声。哎呀，多么凄凉啊！连只小鸟也不飞到这山后的

竹林上空来啁啾，唯有几抹阳光寂寥地飘在竹子和杉树梢头。就连这阳光也逐渐暗淡下来，杉树和竹子都再也看不见了。我倒在那儿，笼罩在深沉的静穆之中。

这当儿有谁蹑手蹑脚地走到我身边来了。我想掉过头去看一看，但是不知什么时候我周围已经昏暗下来了。什么人——不知是谁，用看不见的手悄悄地拔掉了我胸口上的小刀。同时，鲜血又涌到我嘴里来。从此，我就永远沉沦在冥世的黑暗中了……

一九二一年十二月

（文洁若 译）

[1] 町是日本长度单位，一町约合109米。（说明：书中脚注均为译者注。）

[2] 苏枋，也叫苏木、苏方，是一种常绿小乔木，心材浸液可做红色染料。

[3] 原文为剃有法师发的马，即将马鬃像和尚头那样剃光。

[4] 原文为放免一词，即日本古代对一些犯人免除徒刑，利用他们来追捕罪犯。

[5] 日本古代在牢狱门口植以苦楝树，以便将犯人梟首示众。

点鬼簿

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我母亲是个狂人。我从未对母亲有过骨肉之情。我母亲用梳子把头发卷在头顶上，总是独自坐在位于芝 [1] 的娘家，咕噜咕噜地吸烟袋 [2]。她的脸小，身体也小。不知为什么，那张脸是灰色的，没有朝气。我曾经读过《西厢记》，读到“土气息，泥滋味”一语时，一下就想起了我母亲那张脸——消瘦的侧脸。

说这番话的我，从未被母亲照料过。有一次，养母带着我，特意到楼上去问候母亲，她竟然冷不防用烟袋打了我的脑袋。我对此事记忆犹新。不过，总的来说，我母亲是一位实在文静的狂人。我或我的姐姐迫使她画画的时候，她就在折成四折的日本纸 [3] 上为我们画。非但用墨笔画，还把我姐姐的水彩画颜料涂在她自己所画男男女女的衣服啦、草木和花上面。只不过这些画上的人物个个都长着活脱儿是狐狸的脸。

我十一岁那一年的秋天，我母亲去世了。与其说是生病而死，毋宁说是衰弱而死的吧。唯独她逝世前前后后的记忆却比较清晰地留在我的记忆里。

大概是由于接到了病笃的电报吧。在一个无风的深夜，我和养母同乘一辆人力车，从本所 [4] 赶到芝。迄今我还没使用过叫作围巾的玩意儿。然而，特别在这个夜晚，我记得围了一条画了南画 [5] 里一些山水风景的薄绸手绢儿。也记得那条手绢儿发出的叫作“蝴蝶花”的香水气味。

我母亲躺在二楼下方那间八榻榻米 [6] 的客厅里。我和比我大四岁的姐姐跪在母亲的枕畔，两个人都不断地号啕大哭。尤其是有人在我后边念诵“驾鹤西去，驾鹤西去”，当时我越发感到悲伤不禁涌上心头。然而，一直闭着眼睛、几乎是死者的母亲突然睁开双目，说了些话。我们尽管凄怆，却小声哧哧地笑起来了。

次日晚上，我依然在母亲的枕边坐到将近拂晓。不过，不知为何，这一晚我一滴眼泪也流不出来。我在几乎不停地嚎哭的姐姐面前觉得丢脸，于是拼命地假装哭泣。同时，我又相信既然自己哭不出来，母亲必定不会死。

第三天的夜晚，我母亲几乎没怎么痛苦就咽了气。死前大概清醒

过来了，凝视着我们的面孔，扑簌簌地落泪。不过，依然像平素那样什么话也不说。

入殓之后，我也不禁经常哭泣。有一位叫作“王子 [7] 的姑妈”的远亲说：“实在使人钦佩。”我当时唯一的想法就是，她是那种对玄妙的事感到钦佩的人。

我母亲出殡的那一天，姐姐拿着灵牌，我跟在后边，拿着香炉。两个人都是乘人力车去的。我有时打盹儿，总会在险些要把香炉掉下去的时候，突然惊醒。一直就这样，我们好像永远也到不了谷中 [8] 似的。相当长的送葬行列静悄悄地沿着秋季那总是晴朗的东京的大街前进。

我母亲的忌辰是十一月二十八日，戒名是“归命院妙成日进大师”。可是二十年后，我却不记得自己的亲生父亲的忌辰与戒名。多半是因为对十一岁的我而言，记住忌辰与戒名也是值得夸耀的一件事吧。

二

我有一位姐姐。尽管她身体多病，却成了两个孩子的母亲。想添加在我《点鬼簿》中的，当然不是这位姐姐的事，而是那位恰好在我出生前，突然夭折了的姐姐的事。据说，我们三姐弟中，她最聪明。

这位姐姐叫作初子，或许是由于她生为长女。我家的佛盒上至今有一张“小初”的相片，装在小小的镜框里。“小初”一点也不像是衰弱的孩子。长着小酒窝儿的两颊，就像熟杏子一般，圆溜溜的……

被父母过多地宠爱的终究是“小初”。他们把“小初”从芝的新钱座特意带到位于筑地 [9] 的萨姆纳夫人担任园长的幼儿园。然而，星期六至星期日，必定到我母亲的娘家——坐落在本所的芥川家过夜。像这样出门的时候，“小初”穿的是就连在明治二十年代 [10] 都够时兴的西装。我记得上小学的时候，得到了给“小初”做西装的下脚布料。我把它们裹在人造橡胶玩具娃娃身上。那些下脚布料无一例外，全都是进口的平纹细白棉布，上面点缀着细碎的印花或乐器花样。

一个早春的星期日下午，“小初”一边在院子里踱来踱去，一边跟坐在房间里的伯妈说话。（我当然想象着当时姐姐依然穿着西装）

“伯妈，这棵树叫什么呀？”

“哪一棵树？”

“这棵有花骨朵的树。”

我外婆家的院子里有一棵低矮的木瓜树。树枝耷拉到一口古老的

井里。估计梳着小辫儿的“小初”杏眼圆睁，当时正凝视着枝子带刺儿的木瓜树吧。

“这棵树的名字跟你的一样。”

偏巧“小初”未能理解伯妈的戏谑语。

“那么，这棵树就叫作‘傻瓜树’喽。”

至今，只要有人提到“小初”，伯妈就反复地说她们之间曾经怎样一问一答。实际上，此外，“小初”说过的话，一句也没留存。大概这之后没过几天她就进了棺材。我不记得刻在小小的灵牌上的“小初”的戒名。然而，“小初”的忌辰是四月五日。玄妙的是，我对此记忆犹新。

不知为什么，我对这位姐姐——素昧平生的姐姐，有一种亲密感情。倘若“小初”至今健在，已经四十多岁了吧。过了不惑之年的“小初”那张脸也许活脱儿像是在坐落于芝的娘家二楼茫然地抽烟的母亲的脸吧。我时常宛若幻想一般觉得：弄不清是我母亲还是姐姐的一位四十来岁的女人，不知从何处守望着我的一生。难道这是喝咖啡啦、抽烟啦搞得疲惫不堪的我，神经遭到摧残了吗？抑或是超自然的力量借着什么机会出现在真实的世界，并干出了这样的勾当吧？

三

由于母亲疯了，我刚生下来就到收养我的家来啦（那是舅父的家），所以对亲生父亲也冷淡。我父亲经营牛奶铺，似乎是一位有些成功的人。教给我认识在当时而言还蛮时髦的水果与饮料的也统统是父亲。香蕉、冰激凌、菠萝、朗姆酒——或许还有其他的。我记得曾在当时坐落于新宿的牧场外边那棵槲树的树叶阴影下喝朗姆酒的往事。朗姆酒是酒精极少、橙黄色的饮料。

我父亲劝幼小的我吃喝如此新奇的东西，试图把我从收养我的家庭弄回来。我还记得有一天晚上，在大森^[11]的鱼荣餐馆，父亲一边劝我吃冰激凌，一边露骨地说服我逃回到自个儿家来。说这番话的时候，我父亲发挥了巧言令色的本事。然而，遗憾的是他的劝说诱导一次也未奏效。因为我爱收养我的那一家的父母——尤其是舅妈。

我父亲还性急，屡次跟随便什么人吵架。我在中学三年级时，与父亲玩相扑，我用现代柔道的特殊招数巧妙地把她摔倒了。我父亲刚站起来就说“再来个回合”，并朝着我走过来。我再度没费什么力气就把他摔倒了。我父亲第三次一边说“再来个回合”，一边勃然变色猛扑过来。我的后母在观看——她是我母亲的妹妹，又是我父亲的继室——朝我使了两三个眼神。我与父亲较量了一番，故意摔了个四仰八叉。然而，倘若那时我没败给父亲，他必定要揪住我吧。

我二十八岁时——那时还在当教师，接到了“父住进医院”的电报，遂仓皇地从镰仓^[12]直奔东京。我父亲是由于患流行性感而住进东京医院的。我与收养我的舅妈和后母在病房的角落住宿了约莫三天。这当儿我逐渐感到郁闷了。正在此时，跟我有交情的一位爱尔兰新闻记者打电话来邀请我到筑地的一家酒馆去吃饭。我以那位新闻记者最近要赴美国为借口，丢下奄奄一息的父亲，前往筑地的那家酒馆。

我们跟四五位艺伎一道，愉快地吃了日本风味的饭。大概是十点左右吃完的。有人从背后招呼我：“先生。”我在中段止步，回头朝宽踏板的楼梯上边望着。一位恰好在场的艺伎聚精会神地俯视着我。我一言不发地走下楼梯。坐上停在正门外边的出租汽车。出租汽车立即开动了。然而，出现在我的脑海中的与其说是父亲，毋宁说是绾着娇艳的西式发髻的她的脸——尤其是她的眼睛。

我回到医院，只见父亲正等得不耐烦。不但如此，他让其他人全都离开，到两扇的屏风外边去。要么握住我的手，要么就抚摸它；谈起我不知道的往事——当年跟我母亲结婚时的事。左不过是与母亲出门去买衣柜啦，购买了寿司啦，一些琐碎的事罢了。不过，正说着的时候，我的眼睑不知不觉地灼热起来了。眼泪也沿着我父亲那消瘦的脸蛋流下来。

我父亲在次日早晨没怎么痛苦地驾鹤西去，死前好像发疯了，说什么：“来了一艘军舰，瞧那些飘扬着的旗子！大伙儿都喊万岁吧！”我压根儿不记得自己父亲的丧礼情况。不过，依然记得把父亲的遗体护送到他本人之家时，春季的一轮大月亮的光照耀在灵柩车上。

四

今年三月中旬我还揣着怀炉时，隔了好久才第一次跟妻子一道去上坟。已经过去了这么久——然而，小小的坟墓自不待言，就连将枝子伸到坟墓上的一株赤松也没有变化。

添加在《点鬼簿》里的三个人的骸骨都埋在谷中墓地的角落里——而且在同一座墓碑下面。我想起了母亲的棺材被静悄悄地降下这座墓碑下边时的往事。“小初”大概也是这样的。唯独我父亲——我记得父亲的骸骨发白、细碎，夹杂着金牙……

我并不喜欢上坟。倘若能忘掉，巴望把双亲与姐姐也忘记。然而，尤其是那一天，或许是身体衰弱的缘故，一边眺望早春的阳光中那座发黑的墓碑，一边思索：究竟他们三个人当中，谁幸福呢？

升腾起阳气

我独自住在

坟地外边

说实在的，我从来没有像这时那样，感到这么写的丈草 [13] 的心境逼近自己过。

（文洁若译于二〇一八年二月十四日）

[1] 芝是东京都港区的一个街区。

[2] 烟袋是一种吸烟用具，一般在细竹管的一端安着烟袋锅儿，可以装烟，另一端安着玉石、翡翠等制成的嘴儿，可以衔在嘴里吸。

[3] 原文为“半纸”，习字、写信用的日本纸，长24厘米，宽34厘米左右。

[4] 本所是东京都墨田区的一个街区。

[5] 南画也叫文人画。是18、19世纪很多日本画家采用的一种绘画风格。在江户中期和后期，一些具有独特创作能力的画家属于这一画派。其画风是依据17至18世纪具有个性的中国清代绘画形成的。同时，南画画家们在构图及笔法上改变了中国文人画的夸张手法，作品中常带有一种幽默感。

[6] 也称“叠”“帖”，榻榻米为音译，指铺在和式房间地板上的草垫子，呈长方形，尺寸大小各地不尽相同。一般宽90厘米，长180厘米，厚约6厘米。

[7] 东京都北区内的一个街区。

[8] 东京都台东区内的一个街区。

[9] 东京都中央区的一个街区。

[10] 明治二十年至二十九年是1887年至1896年。

[11] 是东京都大田区的一个街区。

[12] 神奈川县南部城市。

[13] 内腾丈草（1662—1704），江户前期的俳句诗人，“和歌”诗人。

傻子的一生

久米正雄君 [1]：

此稿可否发表，什么时候在哪儿发表，我愿意完全委托给你。

稿中所出现的人物你大概都知道。但是发表之际，希望你不要加上注解。

我目前生活在最不幸的幸福当中。但奇怪的是我并不懊悔。我只是对有了我这样的恶夫、恶子、恶父的亲人感到遗憾。那么，再见了。在此稿中，我至少还不曾有意识地替自己辩护。

最后再说一句：我之所以特地将此稿委托给你，乃是因为我相信你恐怕比任何人都更了解我。（一旦揭掉我这张城里人的皮）我在此稿中表现出的傻劲儿供你一笑。

昭和二年六月二十日
芥川龙之介

一 时代

那是某书店的二楼。年方二十的他登上靠在书架上的西式梯子，寻找新书。莫泊桑、波德莱尔 [2]、斯特林堡、易卜生、萧伯纳、托尔斯泰……

天色逐渐黑下来了。他却还热心地继续读书脊上的字。那里陈列的，与其说是书籍，毋宁说是这个时代 [3] 本身。尼采、魏尔伦、龚古尔兄弟 [4]、陀思妥耶夫斯基、霍普特曼 [5]、福楼拜……

他在薄暮中挣扎，数着他们的名字，可是书籍自然而然地淹没在阴郁的暮色中。他终于失去耐性，想从西式梯子上下来。他头上刚好悬着个秃灯泡，忽然亮了。他就立在梯子上，俯视在书籍之间移动的店员和顾客。他们显得怪渺小的，而且非常寒碜。

人生还不如波德莱尔的一行诗。

他立在梯子上，朝着这些人望了片刻。

二 母亲

疯子们都清一色地穿着灰衣服。宽阔的屋子因而越发显得忧郁。其中的一个对着风琴，热衷于弹赞美歌。同时，另外一个站在屋子正中间，与其说是跳舞，不如说是乱蹦着。

他和红光满面的医生一起看着这样的情景。十年前，他母亲也跟他们毫无二致。毫无——说实在的，他从他们的气味中嗅到了母亲的气味。

“那么，走吧？”

医生走在他的前面，沿着走廊进入一个房间。房间的角落里有个装满酒精的大玻璃瓶，里面浸着几副脑髓。他在其中的一副上发现了略微发白的东西，有些像是撒上了点蛋白。他同医生站着谈话，又想起了自己的母亲。

“这是××电灯公司的一个技师生前的脑髓。他一直认定自己是黑油油的大发电机。”

为了避开医生的视线，他就朝玻璃窗外面望去。除了插着空瓶碎片的砖墙以外，那里什么也没有。不过砖墙上长的薄薄青苔斑驳地泛着白色。

三 家

他住在郊外的一个二楼的房间里。由于地基松软了，这座房子的二楼有些倾斜。

他的姑妈常常跟他在楼上吵架。他的养父养母有时出面调解。可是他最爱这位姑妈。姑妈终身未嫁，当他二十岁的时候，她已接近六十岁了。

他在某郊外的楼上屡屡思索：莫非相爱的人就得彼此折磨吗？这当儿，他感到二楼歪斜得有点可怖。

四 东京

隅田川阴沉沉的。他从行驶中的小汽船窗口眺望向岛的樱树。在他眼里，盛开的樱花恍若一片败絮般令人忧郁。可是他在那些樱树中——江户时代以来的向岛的樱树中发现了他自己。

五 自我

他和他的前辈一起坐在某咖啡馆的桌边，不断地吸着纸烟。他不

大开口讲话，却热心地听着前辈的话。

“今天乘了半天汽车。”

“有什么事情吗？”

他的前辈手托着腮，漫不经心地回答说：“没有什么事，只不过想坐坐罢了。”

这句话把他自己解放到不可知的世界——接近诸神的“自我”的世界。他觉得有点痛苦，同时也感到欢乐。

那个咖啡馆很小。牧羊神的相框下面却有一棵栽在赭色盆中的橡树，肥厚的叶片耷拉着。

六 病

潮风不断刮来，他摊开《英语大辞典》，手指划着找词条。

Talaria：生了翼的鞋，或作Sandal。

Tale：故事。

Talipot：印度东部产的椰子。树干高达五十英尺至一百英尺，叶子可用于制伞、扇子、帽子等。七十年开花一次……

他凭想象清晰地描绘出这种椰子的花。他的喉咙从来没这么痒过，不由得往辞典上吐了口痰。痰？——那却不是痰。他想到短暂的生命，又一次想象着椰子花——在遥远的大海彼岸高高耸立的椰子花。

七 画

他突然地——实在是突然地……站在某书店的店頭翻阅梵·高的画集时，他突然地领悟了画这个东西。当然，梵·高的画集无疑是影印版。他从影印版中也感到了鲜明地浮现的大自然。

对这幅画的热情使他的眼界一新。他不知不觉间密切注意着树枝的弯曲和女人面颊的丰腴。

在一个下雨的秋日傍晚，他走过郊外的陆桥下面。陆桥对面的堤坝下停着一辆货运马车。他经过那里时，感到有人曾走过这条路。是谁呢？——无须问他本人。二十三岁的他，心目中浮现出一个割去了耳朵的荷兰人，叼着长烟斗，锐利的目光注视着这幅忧郁的风景画……

八 火花

他淋着雨，在柏油路上行走。雨下得相当大。在飞溅的雨水中，他嗅到了橡胶雨衣的气味。

眼前的一根架空线冒出紫色火花。他格外感动。他的上衣口袋里藏着准备在同人杂志上发表的原稿。他冒雨走着，再次仰望了一下后面的架空线。

架空线依然放出耀眼的火花。他展望人生，并没有特别稀罕的东西。但是只有这紫色的火花——只有这可怕的空中的火花，哪怕用生命来换取，他也想把它抓住。

九 尸体

那些尸体的拇指上都挂着穿上铁丝的牌子，上面记着姓名、年龄等等。他的朋友弯着腰，灵活地运用解剖刀，开始剥一具尸体脸上的皮。皮下布满了美丽的黄色脂肪。

他望着那具尸体。为了完成一个短篇——以王朝时代为背景的一个短篇，他非这么做不可。可是，像腐烂了的杏子一样的尸臭是难闻的。他的朋友皱起眉头，静静地动着解剖刀。

“近来尸体也不够用。”他的朋友说。

不知什么时候，他早已准备好了答复：“如果尸体不够用，我就会没有任何恶意地去杀人。”可是他当然只把这话放在心里。

十 先生

他在一棵大槲树下读着先生的书。槲树沐浴在秋天的阳光下，连一片叶子也不动。远处的空中有一架吊着玻璃秤盘的天平，刚好保持平衡——他边读着先生的书，边遐想着这样的情景……

十一 拂晓

天逐渐亮了。有一次，他在某街的拐角望着广阔的市场。市场上熙熙攘攘的人和车子都染成了玫瑰色。

他点燃一支纸烟，安详地走进市场。一条黑色瘦狗突然向他吠起来。可是他不惊慌。他甚至爱起那条狗来。

市场正中有一棵法国梧桐树，树枝向四面桡攀着。他站在树干下，透过树枝仰望高空。正好在他头顶上空，闪烁着一颗星星。

这是他二十五岁的时候——会见先生以后的第三个月。

十二 军港

潜水艇内部是阴暗的。周围都是机器，他弯着腰，透过小小的方镜望去。映在方镜里的是明亮的军港风光。

“那边还可以看到‘金刚’呢。”一个海军高级军官对他说。

他看着方镜上的小军舰，不知怎的，忽然想起了荷兰芹菜——每份三毛钱的牛排上也有荷兰芹菜，散发着清香。

十三 先生之死

雨后起了风，他在一个新车站的站台上走着。天刚蒙蒙亮。站台那面，三四名铁路工人一齐抢着镐，高声唱着什么。

雨后的风吹散了工人的歌声和他的感情。他拿着没有点燃的香烟，感到近于欢乐的痛苦。“先生病危”的电报揣在大衣兜里……

这时，从对面松山的背阴处，早上六点的上行列车拖着一缕轻烟，蜿蜒向这边驶来。

十四 结婚

婚后第二天他就数落妻子道：“刚来就浪费可不行啊。”然而，这种数落的话，与其说是他自己要说的，不如说是他的姑妈叫他“说”的。当然，他的妻子不但向他本人，也向他的姑妈赔了不是。为他买来的那钵黄水仙花就摆在她前面……

十五 他们

在大芭蕉叶的宽阔阴影下，他们和平地生活着——他们的家在从东京乘火车要足足一小时的海滨某镇上。

十六 枕头

他枕着散发玫瑰叶香的怀疑主义，读着阿纳托尔·法朗士的书。可是，他没有注意到枕中还有半人半马神。

十七 蝴蝶

在充满海藻气味的风中，一只蝴蝶在蹁跹飞舞。一眨眼的工夫，他感到这只蝴蝶的翅膀碰了一下他那干燥的嘴唇。可是沾在他嘴唇上的翅粉却在几年后还闪着光。

十八 月

他在某饭店的台阶上偶然遇见了她。就连在这样的白昼，她的脸也跟月光下一样。他目送着她（他俩素昧平生），感到从来没有过

的寂寞.....

十九 人工翼

他从阿纳托尔·法朗士转向十八世纪的哲学家去了，但是他没有接近卢梭。那或许是他本人的一面——容易感情用事的一面跟卢梭相近之故。他却去接近跟他本身的另一面——富于冷静的理智的一面——相近的《天真汉》^[6]的哲学家了。

对二十九岁的他来说，人生已经一点也不光明了。可是伏尔泰给了这样的他以人工翼。

他张开这人工翼，轻而易举地飞上天空。同时，理智之光照耀的人生的悲欢沉沦在他的眼底下。他向穷街陋巷投以讽刺与微笑，穿过一无遮拦的太空，径直飞向太阳。他似乎忘记了古代希腊人因这样的人工翼被阳光晒化而终于落进海里死去的事^[7].....

二十 桎梏

由于他要到某报社去工作，他们夫妇就跟他的养父养母同住在一座房子里了。他依靠的是写在黄纸上的合同。后来才知道，报社对这份合同不承担任何义务，只由他承担义务。

二十一 狂人的女儿

两辆人力车在冷冷清清的阴天的乡间道路上跑着。海风习习，这条路显然通向海边。他坐在后面这辆人力车上，边纳闷着为什么自己对这次的幽会兴致索然，边思索是什么把他引到这里来的。这绝不是恋爱。倘若不是恋爱——他为了回避这个答复，不得不想：总之，我们是平等的。

坐在前面那辆人力车上的是一个狂人的女儿。不仅如此，她的妹妹是因嫉妒而自杀的。

——事到如今，怎么也没办法了。

他对这个狂人的女儿——她只有强烈的动物本能——已经感到某种憎恶了。

这当儿，两辆人力车经过有咸腥气味的墓地外面。粘着蚝壳的矮树篱里面，有几座黑黝黝的石塔。他眺望着在那些石塔后面微微闪烁的海洋，不知怎的，忽然对她的丈夫——没能抓住她的心心的丈夫，感到蔑视.....

二十二 某画家

那是某杂志的插图。一只公鸡的水墨画表现出明显的个性。他向某友人打听这位画家的情况。

大约一周后，这位画家访问了他。在他的一生中，这是一件颇不寻常的事情。他在这位画家身上发现了谁都不知道的那一面。不但如此，还发现了连画家本人也一直不知道的画家的灵魂。

在一个微寒的秋日傍晚，他因看到一株玉米，蓦地联想起这位画家。长得高高的玉米，披着粗糙的叶子，培在根部的土里露出像神经那样纤细的根须。这无疑又是容易受伤的他的自画像。可是这样的发现只有使他忧郁罢了。

——已经晚了。可是到了节骨眼儿上……

二十三 她

某广场前面，暮色苍茫。他的身体发着低烧，在广场上踱步。晴空略呈银色，大厦林立，窗口灯火辉煌。

他在路边停下脚步，等候她到来。大约过了五分钟，她好像有些憔悴似的向他走来。她看到了他的脸，就微笑着说：“累啦。”他们并肩在依稀有些亮光的广场上走着。对他们来说，这是第一次。为了跟她在一起，他无论抛掉什么都在所不惜。

他们乘上汽车后，她凝视着他的脸说：“你不后悔吗？”他斩钉截铁地说：“不后悔。”她按着他的手说道：“我也不后悔。”这样讲的时候，她的脸好像沐浴在月光下。

二十四 分娩

他伫立在纸隔扇旁边，俯视着穿白色手术衣的一名接生婆在给婴儿洗澡。每当肥皂浸进眼里，婴儿就可爱地反复皱起眉头，还不断地大声哭。他一面觉得婴儿的气味有点像鼠崽子，一面不由得深刻地想道：“为什么这娃娃也出生了呢？生到这个充满俗世之苦的世界上来——为什么他命中注定要有我这个爸爸呢？”

而且这是他的妻子头胎生的男孩。

二十五 斯特林堡

他站在房间门口，看着开着石榴花的月光底下几个衣冠不整的中國人在打麻将。然后回到房间里，在矮矮的油灯下开始读《痴人的告白》。可是还没有读上两页，就不知不觉苦笑起来——斯特林堡在给情妇伯爵夫人的信中，写着和他差不离的谎言……

二十六 古代

彩色剥落了的佛像、天人、马和莲花座几乎使他为之倾倒。他仰望着它们，把一切抛在脑后。甚至忘记了他本人侥幸得以摆脱狂人的女儿……

二十七 斯巴达式训练

他同他的朋友在一条巷子里走着。一辆上篷的人力车径直迎面跑来。而且出人意料的是车上坐的正是昨晚的她。在这样的白昼，她的面容恍若沐浴在月光下。当着他朋友的面，他们当然连招呼也没打。

“真漂亮。”他的朋友这样说。

他望着巷子尽头的春天的山，毫不犹豫地回答说：“是啊，真漂亮。”

二十八 杀人

乡间道路沐浴在阳光下，散发着牛粪的臭气。他揩着汗，踏着上坡路走去。道路两旁飘着熟麦的香气。

“杀吧，杀吧……”他不知不觉间嘴里反复嘟囔着。杀谁呢？——这他是清楚的。他想起一个极卑鄙的留平头的男子。

黄色麦地的那面，不知何时露出了一座天主教堂的圆屋顶……

二十九 形象

那是一把铁制酒壶。这把细纹酒壶使他懂得了“造型”的美。

三十 雨

他在大床上同她聊着天。寝室窗外下着雨。在这场雨中，木棉花说不上什么时候就会烂掉吧。她的面容仍像是沐浴在月光下。可是同她交谈，他未免感到无聊。他匍匐着，静静地点起一支纸烟，想起同她一起生活已有七年了。

“我爱着这个女人吗？”他问他自己道。

“我还爱着。”——这个答复使注视着自己的他也感到意外。

三十一 大地震

那种气味和熟透了的杏子差不多。他在火灾后的废墟上走着，微微嗅到这样的气味，于是想道：炎天的腐尸，气味居然也不太难闻。可是当他站在尸骸累累的池畔望去的时候，才发现“鼻子发酸”这句话在感觉上绝不是夸张的。尤其使他动情的是十二三岁的小孩的尸体。他看着那具尸体，有点觉得羡慕。他想起“上帝所爱者不长命”这句

话。他的姐姐和异母兄弟的家都焚毁了，而且他的姐夫是犯了伪证罪而缓期服刑的……

他站在灰烬中，不由得深深地想道：人人都死掉才好呢。

三十二 打架

他同异母兄弟扭打起来了。他弟弟无疑由于他的缘故经常受到压迫。同时，他也因为弟弟而失掉了自由。他的亲戚一个劲儿地对他的弟弟说：“你要学他。”然而这不啻是把他本人的手脚都绑了起来。他们扭作一团，终于滚到廊子上了。他还记得，廊外的庭院中有一棵百日红，在酝酿着一场雨的天空下开着红彤彤的花。

三十三 英雄

不知什么时候，他从伏尔泰家的窗口仰望着高山。那挂着冰河的山上，连秃鹰的影子也看不见。可是有一个身材矮小的俄罗斯人在顽强地沿着山路攀登。

夜幕降临到伏尔泰家后，他在明亮的灯光下回忆着攀登山路的俄罗斯人的身姿，写了这样一首有教化目的的诗：

你比谁都恪守十诫，
又比谁都违反十诫。

你比谁都爱护民众，
又比谁都轻视民众。

你比谁都富于理想，
又比谁都了解现实。

你是我们东洋诞生的，
散发草花香气的电气机车。

三十四 色彩

三十岁的他不知什么时候爱上了某块空地。那里，长着青苔的地面上只散着一些残砖碎瓦。可是在他眼里这与塞尚 [8] 的风景画没有什么两样。

他忽然想起了七八年前他的激情。同时发现他在七八年前是不懂得色彩的。

三十五 假人

他打算过一种激烈到不论何时死去也不会后悔的生活。可是在养父养母和姑妈面前，他的日子依然过得很拘谨。这就使他的生活形成了阴阳两面。他看见立在某西服店里的一个人体模型，就想到究竟他自己在多大程度上像这个模型。但是意识之外的他——可以说是第二个他，早已把这样的心情写入一篇短篇小说里了。

三十六 倦怠

他同一个大学生在长满狗尾草的野地上行走。

“你们仍有旺盛的生活欲吧？”

“嗯……可是你也……”

“可是我没有了。只是有创作欲罢了。”

这是他的真情。说实在的，他不知不觉间已对生活失去了兴趣。

“创作欲也是生活欲吧。”

他没有回答。曾几何时，野地的红穗上清晰地映现出一座喷火山。他觉得有些羡慕这座喷火山。可是他自己也莫名其所以然……

三十七 过来人

他遇到了在才力上也能够同他匹敌的女人。可是他写了《过来人》等抒情诗，才摆脱了这个危机。这是一种百无聊赖的心情，宛如把冻在树干上的闪闪发光的雪拍了下来。

草笠随风舞，
飘摇落道旁；
我名何所惜，
但愿君名扬。

三十八 复仇

那是某饭店的阳台，周围满是刚萌芽的树木。他在那里画着画，哄一个少年玩。这是七年前分手的狂人的女儿的独生子。

狂人的女儿点燃纸烟，看着他们玩。他在心情沉重地继续描绘火车和飞机。幸亏这个少年不是他的儿子。可是，使他感到痛苦的莫过于这个少年叫他“叔叔”。

少年不知跑到哪儿去了，狂人的女儿边抽着烟，边带点媚态地对他说：“那孩子不像你吗？”

“不像。第一……”

“可是，还有胎教的说法呢。”

他默不作声，眼睛望着在一旁。可是他心里并非没有残忍的愿望，恨不得把他掐死……

三十九 镜子

他在某咖啡馆的一个角落里同朋友谈话。他的朋友吃着烤苹果，谈论着近来天气寒冷之类的话。他突然感到这样的话里有矛盾。

“你还是独身呀。”

“不，下个月就结婚。”

他不由得默不作声了。嵌在咖啡馆墙壁上的镜子映出他无数的形象。冷冰冰的，像威胁什么似的……

四十 问答

你为什么要攻击现代的社会制度？

因为我看到了资本主义所产生的罪恶。

罪恶？我还只当你分辨不出善恶的差别呢。那么，你的生活呢？

——他就这样同天使一问一答。当然是体体面面地戴着大礼帽的天使……

四十一 病

他患了失眠病，并且体力也开始衰弱了。好几位医生各自给他的病做了两三种诊断：胃酸过多、胃弛缓、干性肋膜炎、神经衰弱、慢性结膜炎、脑疲劳……

可是他知道自己病源。那就是对他自己感到羞愧，同时又害怕他们的心情。害怕他们——害怕他所蔑视的社会！

在一个要下雪的阴沉的下午，他在某咖啡馆的一个角落里衔着点燃了的雪茄烟，倾听对面留声机放出的音乐。乐声沁人心脾。等到那段音乐结束后，他就走到留声机前，看看唱片上贴的说明：《魔笛》——莫扎特。^[9]

他顿时领悟了。破了十诫的莫扎特也还是有过苦闷的。可是，该不至于像他这样……他垂着头，静静地回到自己的桌边。

四十二 众神的笑声

在春光明媚的松林中，三十五岁的他边踱步边回忆着自己两三年前写过的话：

我最同情的是神不能自杀。

四十三 夜

夜幕又快降临了。要闹天气了，半明半暗中，海上浪花滚滚。在这样的天空下，他同妻子第二次结婚了。这给他们带来了欢乐，同时又带来痛苦。三个孩子和他们一起看着海上的闪电。他的妻子抱着一个孩子，好像忍着眼泪。

“那边有一只船。”

“嗯。”

“桅杆断了船。”

四十四 死

他趁着独自睡觉的机会，把腰带挂在窗棂子上想自缢。可是把脖子伸进带子时忽然又怕死了。并不是害怕死的那一瞬间的痛苦。他第二次自缢时拿着怀表测试缢死的时间。稍感痛苦以后，神志就有些恍惚了。只要过了这一关，准会进入死境。他看了看表针，发现感到痛苦的过程为一分二十几秒。窗棂子外一片漆黑。从黑暗中传来了粗犷的鸡鸣。

四十五 Divan [10]

Divan即将再次给他的心灵倾注以新的力量。那是他所不知道的“东洋的歌德”。他看见超脱一切善恶，悠然站在彼岸的歌德，感到近乎绝望的羡慕。在他眼里，诗人歌德比诗人基督更伟大。在这位诗人的心中，除了阿克罗波利斯 [11] 和各各他 [12] 之外，还有阿拉伯玫瑰花在怒放。倘若多少有力量追踪这位诗人的足迹的话……他读完诗集，当极为激动的情绪平息以后，不禁深深蔑视自己，因为他在生活中就像宦官一样。

四十六 谎言

他姐夫的自杀猝然使他受了打击。今后连姐姐一家人也得由他来照顾了。至少对他来说，未来就像日暮那样昏暗。他对自己精神上的破产有一种近乎冷笑的感觉（他完全明白自己的罪孽和弱点），继续阅读各种书籍。可是连卢梭的《忏悔录》也充满英雄的谎言。尤其是《新生》 [13] ——他从来没有遇见过像《新生》的主人公那样老奸巨猾的伪善者。可是只有弗朗索瓦·维庸 [14] 浸透了他的心。他在几篇诗里发现了“美丽的男性”。

等待绞刑的维庸的形象出现在他的梦里。他几次差点儿像维庸那

样坠入人生的底层。但是他的境遇和体力不允许这样。他渐渐衰弱下去，恰似从前斯威夫特^[15]见到过的从树梢枯萎起来的树木那样……

四十七 玩火

她容光焕发，犹如晨光照耀下的薄冰似的。他对她抱有好感，但是没有恋爱的感觉，而且连碰也没碰过她的身体。

“听说你想死。”

“是——不，与其说想死，不如说活腻了。”

他们这样一问一答，约好一起死。

“这是精神自杀。”

“双双精神自杀。”

他对他自己这样镇静自若，不由得感到奇怪。

四十八 死

他没有同她一起死。至今连碰也没碰过她的身体这一点，似乎使他感到满意。她若无其事时常同他谈，并且把她带着的一瓶氰化钾递给他，还说：“有了这个，彼此心里都有仗势了。”

那确实使他心里有了仗势。他独自坐在藤椅上，看着柯树的嫩叶，不由得反复思索死亡将给予他的和平。

四十九 剥制的天鹅

他想尽最后的力量写自传。可是这对他来说竟然并不容易。那是由于他还残留着自尊心、怀疑主义和利害打算。他不得不轻蔑这样的自己。可是另一方面，他又不由自主地想：如果剥开一层皮来看，谁都是一样的。他总是想，《诗与真实》这个书名好像是一切自传的书名。他还清楚地知道，文艺作品不一定使人人都感动。他还产生了这样的念头：只有那些与他的生涯相近并且和他相似的人们才会为他的作品所感动。因此，他决定简短地把自己的《诗与真实》写出来。

他写完《傻子的一生》后，偶然在某旧家具店看见了剥制的天鹅。它伸长了颈立着，连发黄的羽毛也被蛀蚀了。他回想自己的一生，不禁热泪盈眶，发出冷笑。他的前途不是发疯就是自杀。他独自在日落的街上走着，决心等待慢慢把他毁灭的命运的到来。

五十 俘虏

他的朋友之一发疯了。他对这个朋友一向有某种亲近的感觉。因

为他比别人更深刻地理解这个朋友的孤独——快活的假面掩盖下的孤独。这个朋友发疯后他去看望过两三次。

“你和我都给恶魔附体了——给所谓世纪末的恶魔附体了。”

这位朋友曾低声对他这样说。听说两三天以后，这位朋友在去某温泉旅馆的途中，甚至吃起玫瑰花来了。这个朋友住院后，他想起了过去曾送给这个朋友一座赤陶半身像。那是这个朋友所喜欢的《钦差大臣》一书的作者的半身像。他想起果戈理也是发疯而死的，不由得感到冥冥之中有一股力量在支配他们。

他已筋疲力竭之际，偶尔读到拉迪盖 [16] 临终的话，又一次觉得听见了众神的笑声。那句话说：“神兵来捉我。”他想与他的迷信和感伤主义做斗争。可是从肉体上来说，他已经不可能进行任何斗争了。“世纪末的恶魔”无疑正在摧残他。他对虔信神的中世纪的人们感到羡慕。可是他终究不可能信神——信仰神的爱。连科克托 [17] 都是信神的啊！

五十一 败北

他执笔的手颤抖起来了，甚至还流了口水。除非服用零点八毫克的佛罗那 [18]，他的头脑没有一次清醒过，而且清醒也不过半小时或一小时。他只有在幽暗中挨着时光，直好像是将一把崩了刃的细剑当拐杖拄着。

一九二七年六月，遗稿
(文学朴译)

[1] 久米正雄（1891—1952），日本小说家、剧作家。

[2] 波德莱尔（1821—1867），法国诗人。诗中歌咏死亡，充满悲观厌世情绪。

[3] 文中所指为19世纪末，颓废派的时期。

[4] 指埃德蒙·德·龚古尔（1822—1896）和茹尔·德·龚古尔（1830—1870），法国小说家，文学史上称“龚古尔兄弟”。

[5] 霍普特曼（1862—1946），德国剧作家。

[6] 《天真汉》是法国启蒙思想家、哲学家、作家伏尔泰（1694—1778）的哲理小说。

[7] 见希腊神话中的故事《代达罗斯和伊卡洛斯》。伊卡洛斯和他的父亲代达罗斯一起逃离克里忒，伊卡洛斯不听父亲的话，飞近太阳，人工翼上的蜡被晒化，坠海而死。

[8] 塞尚（1839—1906），法国画家，后期印象派的代表人物。

[9] 原文为英文。

[10] 英语：诗集（尤指用波斯文或阿拉伯文写的个人诗集）。

[11] 阿克罗波利斯是雅典的卫城。

[12] 各各他是耶稣被钉上十字架的地方。

[13] 《新生》（1918—1919）是岛崎藤村的自传体长篇小说，描写作者做出了背离社会道德的事情后，交代了事实经过，从而获得“新生”。

[14] 弗朗索瓦·维庸（1431—约1463），法国抒情诗人，贫民出身，一生颠沛流离。

[15] 斯威夫特（1667—1745），英国讽刺作家，生于爱尔兰贫苦家庭，著有《格列佛游记》。他曾参加爱尔兰人民反抗英国统治者的斗争，晚年发疯。

[16] 拉迪盖（1903—1923），法国小说家、诗人。

[17] 科克托（1889—1963），法国诗人、小说家。

[18] 佛罗那是一种安眠药。

Ryūnosuke
Akutagawa

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

The Life of
a Stupid Man

N° 06

‘Ah, what is the
life of a human
being — a drop
of dew, a flash
of lightning?
This is so sad,
so sad.’

In a Bamboo Grove

The TesTimony of a WoodcuTTER under QuesTioning by The magisTraTe

That is true, Your Honor. I am the one who found the body. I went out as usual this morning to cut cedar in the hills behind my place. The body was in a bamboo grove on the other side of the mountain. Its exact location? A few hundred yards off the Yamashina post road. A deserted place where a few scrub cedar trees are mixed in with the bamboo.

The man was lying on his back in his pale blue robe with the sleeves tied up and one of those fancy Kyoto- style black hats with the sharp creases. He had only one stab wound, but it was right in the middle of his chest; the bamboo leaves around the body were soaked with dark red blood. No, the bleeding had stopped. The wound looked dry, and I remember it had a big horsefly sucking on it so hard the thing didn't even notice my footsteps.

Did I see a sword or anything? No, Sir, not a thing. Just a length of rope by the cedar tree next to the body. And – oh yes, there was a comb there, too. Just the rope and the comb is all. But the weeds and the bamboo leaves on the ground were pretty trampled down: he must have put up a tremendous fight before they killed him. How's that, Sir – a horse? No, a horse could never have gotten into that place. It's all bamboo thicket between there and the road.

The TesTimony of a Traveling PriesT under QuesTioning by The magisTraTe

I'm sure I passed the man yesterday, Your Honor. Yesterday at – about noon, I'd say. Near Checkpoint Hill on the way to Yamashina. He was walking toward the checkpoint with a woman on horseback. She wore a stiff, round straw hat with a long veil hanging down around the brim; I couldn't see her face, just her robe. I think it had a kind of dark- red outer layer with a blue-

green lining. The horse was a dappled gray with a tinge of red, and I'm fairly sure it had a clipped mane. Was it a big horse? I'd say it was a few inches taller than most, but I'm a priest after all. I don't know much about horses. The man? No, Sir, he had a good- sized sword, and he was equipped with a bow and arrows. I can still see that black- lacquered quiver of his: he must have had twenty arrows in it, maybe more. I would never have dreamt that a thing like this could happen to such a man. Ah, what is the life of a human being – a drop of dew, a flash of lightning? This is so sad, so sad. What can I say?

The TesTimony of a Policeman under QuestTioning by The magisTraTe

The man I captured, Your Honor? I am certain he is the famous bandit, Tajōmaru. True, when I caught him he had fallen off his horse, and he was moaning and groaning on the stone bridge at Awataguchi. The time, Sir? It was last night at the first watch. He was wearing the same dark blue robe and carrying the same long sword he used the time I almost captured him before. You can see he also has a bow and arrows now. Oh, is that so, Sir? The dead man, too? That settles it, then: I'm sure this Tajōmaru fellow is the murderer. A leather- wrapped bow, a quiver in black lacquer, seventeen hawk- feather arrows – they must have belonged to the victim. And yes, as you say, Sir, the horse is a dappled gray with a touch of red, and it has a clipped mane. It's only a dumb animal, but it gave that bandit just what he deserved, throwing him like that. It was a short way beyond the bridge, trailing its reins on the ground and eating plume grass by the road.

Of all the bandits prowling around Kyoto, this Tajōmaru is known as a fellow who likes the women. Last fall, people at Toribe Temple found a pair of worshippers murdered – a woman and a child – on the hill behind the statue of Binzuru. Everybody said Tajōmaru must have done it. If it turns out he killed the man, there's no telling what he might have done to the woman who was on the horse. I don't mean to meddle, Sir, but I do think you ought to question him about that.

The TesTimony of an old Woman under QuestTioning by The magisTraTe

Yes, Your Honor, my daughter was married to the dead man. He is not from the capital, though. He was a samurai serving in the Wakasa provincial office. His name was Kanazawa no Takehiro, and he was twenty- six years old. No, Sir, he was a very kind man. I can't believe anyone would have hated him enough to do this.

My daughter, Sir? Her name is Masago, and she is nineteen years old. She's as bold as any man, but the only man she has ever known is Takehiro. Her complexion is a little on the dark side, and she has a mole by the outside corner of her left eye, but her face is a tiny, perfect oval.

Takehiro left for Wakasa yesterday with my daughter, but what turn of fate could have led to this? There's nothing I can do for my son- in- law anymore, but what could have happened to my daughter? I'm worried sick about her. Oh please, Sir, do everything you can to find her, leave no stone unturned: I have lived a long time, but I have never wanted anything so badly in my life. Oh how I hate that bandit – that, that Tajōmaru! Not only my son- in- law, but my daughter . . . (Here the old woman broke down and was unable to go on speaking.)

* * * * *

Tajōmaru's confession

Sure, I killed the man. But I didn't kill the woman. So, where did she go? I don't know any better than you do. Now, wait just a minute – you can torture me all you want, but I can't tell you what I don't know. And besides, now that you've got me, I'm not going to hide anything. I'm no coward.

I met that couple yesterday, a little after noon. The second I saw them, a puff of wind lifted her veil and I caught a peek at her. Just a peek: that's maybe why she looked so perfect to me – an absolute bodhisattva of a woman. I made up my mind right then to take her even if I had to kill the man.

Oh come on, killing a man is not as big a thing as people like you seem to think. If you're going to take somebody's woman, a man has to die. When I kill a man, I do it with my sword, but people like you don't use swords. You gentlemen kill with your power, with your money, and sometimes just with your words: you

tell people you're doing them a favor. True, no blood flows, the man is still alive, but you've killed him all the same. I don't know whose sin is greater – yours or mine. (A sarcastic smile.)

Of course, if you can take the woman without killing the man, all the better. Which is exactly what I was hoping to do yesterday. It would have been impossible on the Yamashina post road, of course, so I thought of a way to lure them into the hills.

It was easy. I fell in with them on the road and made up a story. I told them I had found an old burial mound in the hills, and when I opened it it was full of swords and mirrors and things. I said I had buried the stuff in a bamboo grove on the other side of the mountain to keep anyone from finding out about it, and I'd sell it cheap to the right buyer. He started getting interested soon enough. It's scary what greed can do to people, don't you think? In less than an hour, I was leading that couple and their horse up a mountain trail.

When we reached the grove, I told them the treasure was buried in there and they should come inside with me and look at it. The man was so hungry for the stuff by then, he couldn't refuse, but the woman said she'd wait there on the horse. I figured that would happen – the woods are so thick. They fell right into my trap. We left the woman alone and went into the grove.

It was all bamboo at first. Fifty yards or so inside, there was a sort of open clump of cedars – the perfect place for what I was going to do. I pushed through the thicket and made up some nonsense about how the treasure was buried under one of them. When he heard that, the man charged toward some scrawny cedars visible up ahead. The bamboo thinned out, and the trees were standing there in a row. As soon as we got to them, I grabbed him and pinned him down. I could see he was a strong man –he carried a sword – but I took him by surprise, and he couldn't do a thing. I had him tied to the base of a tree in no time. Where did I get the rope? Well, I'm a thief, you know – I might have to scale a wall at any time – so I've always got a piece of rope in my belt. I stuffed his mouth full of bamboo leaves to keep him quiet. That's all there was to it.

Once I finished with the man, I went and told the woman that her husband had suddenly been taken ill and she should come and

have a look at him. This was another bull' s- eye, of course. She took off her hat and let me lead her by the hand into the grove. As soon as she saw the man tied to the tree, though, she whipped a dagger out of her breast. I never saw a woman with such fire! If I'd been off my guard, she'd have stuck that thing in my gut. And the way she kept coming, she would have done me some damage eventually no matter how much I dodged. Still, I *am* Tajōmaru. One way or another, I managed to knock the knife out of her hand without drawing my sword. Even the most spirited woman is going to be helpless if she hasn't got a weapon. And so I was able to make the woman mine without taking her husband's life.

Yes, you heard me: without taking her husband's life. I wasn't planning to kill him on top of everything else. The woman was on the ground, crying, and I was getting ready to run out of the grove and leave her there when all of a sudden she grabbed my arm like some kind of crazy person. And then I heard what she was shouting between sobs. She could hardly catch her breath: 'Either you die or my husband dies. It has to be one of you. It's worse than death for me to have two men see my shame. I want to stay with the one left alive, whether it's you or him.' That gave me a wild desire to kill her husband.(Sullen excitement.)

When I say this, you probably think I'm crueller than you are. But that's because you didn't see the look on her face – and especially, you never saw the way her eyes were burning at that moment. When those eyes met mine, I knew I wanted to make her my wife. Let the thunder god kill me, I'd make her my wife – that was the only thought in my head. And no, not just from lust. I know that's what you gentlemen are thinking. If lust was all I felt for her, I'd already taken care of that. I could've just kicked her down and gotten out of there. And the man wouldn't have stained my sword with his blood. But the moment my eyes locked onto hers in that dark grove, I knew I couldn't leave there until I had killed him.

Still, I didn't want to kill him in a cowardly way. I untied him and challenged him to a sword fight. (That piece of rope they found was the one I threw aside then.) The man looked furious as he drew his big sword, and without a word he sprang at me in a rage. I don't have to tell you the outcome of the fight. My sword pierced his breast on the twenty- third thrust. Not till the twenty- third: I want you to keep that in mind. I still admire him for that. He's the only

man who ever lasted even twenty thrusts with me. (Cheerful grin.)

As he went down, I lowered my bloody sword and turned toward the woman. But she was gone! I looked for her among the cedars, but the bamboo leaves on the ground showed no sign she'd ever been there. I cocked my ear for any sound of her, but all I could hear was the man's death rattle.

Maybe she had run through the underbrush to call for help when the sword fight started. The thought made me fear for my life. I grabbed the man's sword and his bow and arrows and headed straight for the mountain road. The woman's horse was still there, just chewing on grass. Anything else I could tell you after that would be a waste of breath. I got rid of his sword before coming to Kyoto, though.

So that's my confession. I always knew my head would end up hanging in the tree outside the prison some day, so let me have the ultimate punishment. (Defiant attitude.)

PeniTEnT confession of a Woman in The Kiyomizu TemPle

After the man in the dark blue robe had his way with me, he looked at my husband, all tied up, and taunted him with laughter. How humiliated my husband must have felt! He squirmed and twisted in the ropes that covered his body, but the knots ate all the deeper into his flesh. Stumbling, I ran to his side. No – I *tried* to run to him, but instantly the man kicked me down. And that was when it happened: that was when I saw the indescribable glint in my husband's eyes. Truly, it was indescribable. It makes me shudder to recall it even now. My husband was unable to speak a word, and yet, in that moment, his eyes conveyed his whole heart to me. What I saw shining there was neither anger nor sorrow. It was the cold flash of contempt –contempt for *me* . This struck me more painfully than the bandit's kick. I let out a cry and collapsed on the spot.

When I regained consciousness, the man in blue was gone. The only one there in the grove was my husband, still tied to the cedar tree. I just barely managed to raise myself on the carpet of dead bamboo leaves, and look into my husband's face. His eyes were exactly as they had been before, with that same cold look of contempt and hatred. How can I describe the emotion that filled my heart then? Shame . . . sorrow . . . anger . . . I staggered over to

him.

‘Oh, my husband! Now that this has happened, I cannot go on living with you. I am prepared to die here and now. But you – yes, I want you to die as well. You witnessed my shame. I cannot leave you behind with that knowledge.’

I struggled to say everything I needed to say, but my husband simply went on staring at me in disgust. I felt as if my breast would burst open at any moment, but holding my feelings in check, I began to search the bamboo thicket for his sword. The bandit must have taken it – I couldn’t find it anywhere – and my husband’s bow and arrows were gone as well. But then I had the good luck to find the dagger at my feet. I brandished it before my husband and spoke to him once again.

‘This is the end, then. Please be so good as to allow me to take your life. I will quickly follow you in death.’

When he heard this, my husband finally began moving his lips. Of course his mouth was stuffed with bamboo leaves, so he couldn’t make a sound, but I knew immediately what he was saying. With total contempt for me, he said only, ‘Do it.’ Drifting somewhere between dream and reality, I thrust the dagger through the chest of his pale blue robe.

Then I lost consciousness again. When I was able to look around me at last, my husband, still tied to the tree, was no longer breathing. Across his ashen face shone a streak of light from the setting sun, filtered through the bamboo and cedar. Gulping back my tears, I untied him and cast the rope aside. And then – and then what happened to me? I no longer have the strength to tell it. That I failed to kill myself is obvious. I tried to stab myself in the throat. I threw myself in a pond at the foot of the mountain. Nothing worked. I am still here, by no means proud of my inability to die. (Forlorn smile.) Perhaps even Kanzeon, bodhisattva of compassion, has turned away from me for being so weak. But now – now that I have killed my husband, now that I have been violated by a bandit – what am I to do? Tell me, what am I to . . . (Sudden violent sobbing.)

**The TesTimony of The dead man’s sPiriT Told Through a
medium**

After the bandit had his way with my wife, he sat there on the ground, trying to comfort her. I could say nothing, of course, and I was bound to the cedar tree. But I kept trying to signal her with my eyes: *Don't believe anything he tells you. He's lying, no matter what he says* . I tried to convey my meaning to her, but she just went on cringing there on the fallen bamboo leaves, staring at her knees. And, you know, I could see she was listening to him. I writhed with jealousy, but the bandit kept his smooth talk going from one point to the next. 'Now that your flesh has been sullied, things will never be the same with your husband. Don't stay with him – come and be my wife! It's because I love you so much that I was so wild with you.' The bandit had the gall to speak to her like that!

When my wife raised her face in response to him, she seemed almost spellbound. I had never seen her look so beautiful as she did at that moment. And what do you think this beautiful wife of mine said to the bandit, in my presence – in the presence of her husband bound hand and foot? My spirit may be wandering now between one life and the next, but every time I recall her answer, I burn with indignation. 'All right,' she told him, 'take me anywhere you like.' (Long silence.)

And that was not her only crime against me. If that were all she did, I would not be suffering so here in the darkness. With him leading her by the hand, she was stepping out of the bamboo grove as if in a dream, when suddenly the color drained from her face and she pointed back to me. 'Kill him!' she screamed. 'Kill him! I can't be with you as long as he is alive!' Again and again she screamed, as if she had lost her mind, 'Kill him!' Even now her words like a windstorm threaten to blow me headlong into the darkest depths. Have such hateful words ever come from the mouth of a human being before? Have such damnable words ever reached the ears of a human being before? Have such – (An explosion of derisive laughter.) Even the bandit went pale when he heard her. She clung to his arm and screamed again, 'Kill him!' The bandit stared at her, saying neither that he would kill me nor that he would not. The next thing I knew, however, he sent my wife sprawling on the bamboo leaves with a single kick. (Another explosion of derisive laughter.) The bandit calmly folded his arms and turned to look at me.

'What do you want me to do with her?' he asked. 'Kill her or let

her go? Just nod to answer. Kill her?’ For this if for nothing else, I am ready to forgive the bandit his crimes. (Second long silence.)

When I hesitated with my answer, my wife let out a scream and darted into the depths of the bamboo thicket. He sprang after her, but I don’t think he even managed to lay a hand on her sleeve. I watched the spectacle as if it were some kind of vision.

After my wife ran off, the bandit picked up my sword and bow and arrows, and he cut my ropes at one place. ‘Now it’s my turn to run,’ I remember hearing him mutter as he disappeared from the thicket. Then the whole area was quiet. No – I could hear someone weeping. While I was untying myself, I listened to the sound, until I realized – I realized that I was the one crying. (Another long silence.)

I finally raised myself, exhausted, from the foot of the tree. Lying there before me was the dagger that my wife had dropped. I picked it up and shoved it into my chest. Some kind of bloody mass rose to my mouth, but I felt no pain at all. My chest grew cold, and then everything sank into stillness. What perfect silence! In the skies above that grove on the hidden side of the mountain, not a single bird came to sing. The lonely glow of the sun lingered among the high branches of cedar and bamboo. The sun – but gradually, even that began to fade, and with it the cedars and bamboo. I lay there wrapped in a deep silence.

Then stealthy footsteps came up to me. I tried to see who it was, but the darkness had closed in all around me. Someone – that someone gently pulled the dagger from my chest with an invisible hand. Again a rush of blood filled my mouth, but then I sank once and for all into the darkness between lives.

Death Register

1

My mother was a madwoman. I never did feel close to her, as a son should feel toward his mother. Hair held in place by a comb, she would sit alone all day puffing on a long, skinny pipe in the house of my birth family in Tokyo's Shiba Ward. She had a tiny face on a tiny body, and that face of hers, for some reason, was always ashen and lifeless. Once, reading *The Story of the Western Wing*, I came upon the phrase 'smell of earth, taste of mud', and thought immediately of my mother – of her emaciated face in profile.

And so I never had the experience of a mother's care. I do seem to recall that one time, when my adoptive mother made a point of taking me upstairs to see her, she suddenly conked me on the head with her pipe. In general, though, she was a quiet lunatic. I or my elder sister would sometimes press her to paint a picture for us, and she would do it on a sheet of paper folded in four. And not just with black ink, either. She would apply my sister's watercolors to blossoming plants or the costumes of children on an outing. The people in her pictures, though, always had fox faces.

My mother died in the autumn of my eleventh year, not so much from illness, I think, as from simply wasting away. I have a fairly clear memory of the events surrounding her death.

A telegram must have arrived to alert us. Late on a windless night, I climbed into a rickshaw with my adoptive mother and sped across the city from Honjo to Shiba. Otherwise in my life I have never used a scarf, but I do recall that on that particular night I had a thin silk handkerchief wrapped around my neck. I also recall that it had some kind of Chinese landscape motif, and that it smelled strongly of Iris Bouquet.

My mother lay on a futon in the eight- mat parlor directly beneath her upstairs room. I knelt beside her, wailing, with my four- year- older sister. I felt especially miserable when I heard someone behind me say, 'The end is near.' My mother had been

lying there as good as dead, but suddenly she opened her eyes and spoke. Sad as everyone felt, we couldn't help giggling.

I stayed up by my mother through the following night as well, but that night, for some reason, my tears simply wouldn't flow. Ashamed to be so unfeeling while right next to me my sister wept almost constantly, I struggled to pretend. Yet I also believed that as long as I was unable to cry, my mother would not die.

On the evening of the third day, though, she did die, with very little suffering. A few times before it happened, she would seem to regain consciousness, look us all in the face, and release an endless stream of tears, but as usual she said not a thing.

Even after her body had been placed in the coffin, I couldn't keep from breaking down time and again. The old woman we called our 'Ōji Auntie', a distant relative, would say, 'I'm so impressed with you!' My only thought was that here was a person who let herself be impressed by very strange things.

The day of my mother's funeral, my sister climbed into a rickshaw holding the memorial tablet, and I followed her inside, holding the censer. I dozed off now and then, waking with a start each time the censer was about to drop from my hand. Still, we seemed never to reach Yanaka. Always I would wake to find the long funeral procession still winding its way through the streets of Tokyo in the autumn sunlight.

The anniversary of my mother's death is 28 November. The priest gave her the posthumous name of Kimyōin Myōjō Nisshin Daishi. I can remember neither the anniversary of my birth father's death two decades later nor his posthumous name. Memorizing such things had probably been a matter of pride for me at the age of eleven.

2

I have just the one elder sister. Not very healthy, she is nevertheless the mother of two children. She is not, of course, one of those I want to include in this 'Death Register.' Rather, it is the sister who died suddenly just before I was born. Among us three siblings, she was said to be the smartest.

She was certainly the first – which is why they named her

‘Hatsuko’ (First Daughter). Even now a small framed portrait of ‘Little Hatsu’ adorns the Buddhist altar in my house. There is nothing at all sickly- looking about her. Her cheeks, with their little dimples, are as round as ripe apricots.

Little Hatsu was by far the one who received the greatest outpouring of love from my parents. They made a point of sending her all the way from Shiba Shinsen-za to attend the kindergarten of a Mrs Summers – I think it was – in Tsukiji. On weekends, though, she would stay with my mother’s family, the Akutagawas, in Honjo. On these outings of hers, Little Hatsu would probably wear Western dresses, which still, in the Meiji twenties, would have seemed very modish. When I was in elementary school, I remember, I used to get remnants of her clothes to put on my rubber doll. Without exception, all the cloth patches were imported calico scattered with tiny printed flowers or musical instruments.

One Sunday afternoon in early spring, when Little Hatsu was strolling through the garden (wearing a Western dress, as I imagine her), she called out to our aunt Fuki in the parlor, ‘Auntie, what’s the name of this tree?’

‘Which one?’

‘This one, with the buds.’

In the garden of my mother’s family, a single low *boke* ^[1] trailed its branches over the old well. Little Hatsu, in pigtails, was probably looking up at its thorny branches with big round eyes.

‘It has the same name as you,’ my aunt said, but before she could explain her joke, Hatsu made up one of her own:

‘Then it must be a “dummy” tree.’

My aunt always tells this story whenever the conversation turns to Little Hatsu. Indeed, it’s the only story left to tell about her. Probably not too many days later, Little Hatsu was in her coffin. I don’t remember the posthumous name engraved on her tiny memorial tablet. I do have a strangely clear memory of her death date, though: 5 April.

For some unknown reason, I feel close to this sister I never knew. If ‘Little Hatsu’ were still living, she would be over forty now. And maybe, at that age, she would look like my mother as I recall

her upstairs in the Shiba house, blankly puffing away on her pipe. I often feel as if there is a fortyish woman somewhere – a phantom not exactly my mother nor this dead sister – watching over my life. Could this be the effect of nerves wracked by coffee and tobacco? Or might it be the work of some supernatural power giving occasional glimpses of itself to the real world?

3

Because my mother lost her mind, I was adopted into the family of her elder brother shortly after I was born, and so my real father was another parent for whom I had little feeling. He owned a dairy and seems to have been a small- scale success. That father was the person who taught me all about the newly imported fruits and drinks of the day: *banana* , *ice cream* , *pineapple* , *rum* – and probably much more. I remember once drinking rum in the shade of an oak tree outside the pasture, which was then located in Shinjuku. Rum was an amber- colored drink with little alcohol.

When I was very young, my father would try to entice me back from my adoptive family by plying me with these rare treats. I remember how he once openly tempted me into running away while feeding me ice cream in the Uoei restaurant in Ōmori. At times like this he could be a smooth talker and exude real charm. Unfortunately for him, though, his enticements never worked. This was because I loved my adoptive family too much – and especially my mother's elder sister, Aunt Fuki.

My father had a short temper and was always fighting with people. When I was in the third year of middle school, I beat him at sumo wrestling by tripping him backwards using a special judo move of mine. He got up and came right after me saying 'One more go.' I threw him easily again. He came charging at me for a third time, again saying 'One more go,' but now I could see he was angry. My other aunt (Aunt Fuyu, my mother's younger sister – by then my father's second wife) was watching all this, and she winked at me a few times behind my father's back. After grappling with him for a little while, I purposely fell over backwards. I'm sure if I hadn't lost to him, I would have ended up another victim of my father's temper.

When I was twenty- eight and still teaching, I received a

telegram saying ‘Father hospitalized,’ and I rushed from Kamakura to Tokyo. He was in the Tokyo Hospital with influenza. I spent the next three days there with my Aunts Fuyu and Fuki, sleeping in a corner of the room. I was beginning to feel bored when a call came for me from an Irish reporter friend inviting me out for a meal at a Tsukiji tea house. Using his upcoming departure for America as an excuse, I left for Tsukiji even though my father was on the verge of death.

We had a delightful Japanese dinner in the company of four or five geisha. I think the meal ended around ten o’clock. Leaving the reporter, I was headed down the steep, narrow stairway when, from behind, I heard a soft feminine voice calling me ‘ Ah- san’ in that playful geisha way. I stopped in mid- descent and turned to look up toward the top of the stairs. There, one of the geisha was looking down, her eyes fixed on mine. Wordlessly, I continued down the stairs and stepped into the cab waiting at the front door. The car moved off immediately, but instead of my father what came to mind was the fresh face of that geisha in her Western hairstyle – and in particular her eyes.

Back at the hospital, I found my father eagerly awaiting my return. He sent everyone else outside the two- panel folding screen by the bed, and, gripping and caressing my hand, he began to talk about long- ago matters that I had never known – things from the time when he married my mother. They were inconsequential things – how he and she had gone to shop for a storage chest, or how they had eaten home- delivered sushi – but before I knew it my eyelids were growing hot inside, and down my father’s wasted cheeks, too, tears were flowing.

My father died the next morning without a great deal of suffering. His mind seemed to grow confused before he died, and he would say things like ‘Here comes a warship! Look at all the flags it has flying! Three cheers, everybody!’ I don’t remember his funeral at all. What I do remember is that when we transported his body from the hospital to his home, a great big spring moon was shining down on the hearse.

to carry pocket warmers, my wife and I visited the cemetery for the first time in a long while – a very long while. Still, however, there was no change at all in either the small grave itself (of course) nor in the red pine stretching its branches above it.

The bones of all three people I have included in this ‘Death Register’ lie buried in the same corner of the cemetery in Yanaka – indeed, beneath the same gravestone. I recalled the time my mother’s coffin was gently lowered into the grave. They must have done the same with Little Hatsu. In my father’s case, though, I remember the gold teeth mixed in with the tiny white shards of bone at the crematorium.

I don’t much like visiting the cemetery, and I would prefer to forget about my parents and sister if I could. On that particular day, though, perhaps because I was physically debilitated, I found myself staring at the blackened gravestone in the early spring afternoon sunlight and wondering which of the three had been the most fortunate.

A shimmering of heat –
Outside the grave
Alone I dwell.

Never before had I sensed these feelings of Jōsō’s pressing in upon me with the force they truly had for me that day.

[1] *boke* : The name of the tree, known as a Japanese quince (*Pyrus japonica*) in English, is a homonym for ‘dimwit’. Before the aunt can joke with her that both she and the tree are ‘*boke*’, Hatsu cleverly makes up her own remarkably similar word play using ‘*baka*’ (dummy).

The Life of a Stupid Man

To my friend, Kume Masao:

I leave it to you to decide when and where to publish this manuscript – or whether to publish it at all.

You know most of the people who appear here, but if you do publish this, I don't want you adding an index identifying them.

I am living now in the unhappiest happiness imaginable. Yet, strangely, I have no regrets. I just feel sorry for anyone unfortunate enough to have had a bad husband, a bad son, a bad father like me. So goodbye, then. I have not tried *–consciously* , at least – to vindicate myself here.

Finally, I entrust this manuscript to you because I believe you probably know me better than anyone else. I may wear the skin of an urbane sophisticate, but in this manuscript I invite you to strip it off and laugh at my stupidity.

Akutagawa Ryūnosuke

20 June 1927

1. The era

He was upstairs in a bookstore. Twenty years old at the time, he had climbed a ladder set against a bookcase and was searching for the newly- arrived Western books: Maupassant, Baudelaire, Strindberg, Ibsen, Shaw, Tolstoy . . .

The sun threatened to set before long, but he went on reading book spines with undiminished intensity. Lined up before him was not so much an array of books as the *fin de siècle* itself. Nietzsche, Verlaine, the Goncourt brothers, Dostoevsky, Hauptmann, Flaubert . . .

He took stock of their names as he struggled with the impending gloom. The books began to sink into the somber shadows. Finally his stamina gave out and he made ready to climb down. At that very moment, directly overhead, a single bare light

bulb came on. Standing on his perch on top of the ladder, he looked down at the clerks and customers moving among the books. They were strangely small – and shabby.

Life is not worth a single line of Baudelaire.

He stood on the ladder, watching them below . . .

2. moTher

All the lunatics had been dressed in the same gray clothing, which seemed to give the large room an even more depressing look. One of them sat at an organ, playing a hymn over and over with great intensity. Another was dancing – or, rather, leaping about – in the very center of the room.

He stood watching this spectacle with a doctor of notably healthy complexion. Ten years earlier, his mother had been in no way different from these lunatics. In no way. And in fact in their smell he caught a whiff of his own mother's smell.

‘Shall we go, then?’

The doctor led him down a corridor to another room. In a corner there were several brains soaking in large jars of alcohol. On one of the brains he noticed something faintly white, almost like a dollop of egg white. As he stood there chatting with the doctor, he thought again of his mother.

‘The man who had this brain here was an engineer for the XX lighting company. He always thought of himself as a big shiny black dynamo.’

To avoid the doctor's eyes, he kept looking out the window. There was nothing out there but a brick wall topped with embedded broken bottles. It did, though, have thin growths of moss in dull white patches.

3. The house

He was living in the upstairs room of a house in the suburbs. The second story tilted oddly because the ground was unstable.

In this room, his aunt would often quarrel with him, though not without occasional interventions from his adoptive parents. Still, he loved this aunt more than anyone. She never married, and

by the time he was twenty, she was an old woman close to sixty.

He often wondered, in that suburban second story, if people who loved each other had to cause each other pain. Even as the thought crossed his mind, he was aware of the floor's eerie tilt.

4. ToKyo

A thick layer of cloud hung above the Sumida River. From the window of the little steamer, he watched the Mukōjima bank drawing closer. To his eyes, the blossoming cherry trees there looked as dreary as rags in a row. But almost before he knew it, in those trees – those cherry trees that had lined the bank of Mukōjima since the Edo Period –he was beginning to discover himself.

5. ego

He and an elder colleague sat at a café table puffing on cigarettes. He said very little, but he paid close attention to his companion's every word.

‘I spent half the day riding around in an automobile.’

‘Was there something you needed to do?’

Cheek resting on his hand, the elder colleague replied with complete abandon, ‘No, I just felt like riding around.’

The words released him into a world of which he knew nothing – a world of ‘ego’ close to the gods. He felt a kind of pain but, at the same time, a kind of joy.

The café was extremely small. Beneath a framed picture of the god Pan, however, a rubber tree in a red pot thrust its thick leaves out and down.

6. illness

In a steady ocean breeze, he spread out the large English dictionary and let his fingertip find words for him.

Talaria: A winged sandal.

Tale: A story.

Talipot: A coconut palm native to the East Indies. Trunk from 50 to 100 feet in height, leaves used for umbrellas, fans, hats, etc.

Blooms once in 70 years . . .

His imagination painted a vivid picture of this bloom. He then experienced an unfamiliar scratchy feeling in his throat, and before he knew it he had dropped a glob of phlegm on the dictionary. Phlegm? But it was not phlegm. He thought of the shortness of life and once again imagined the coconut blossom – the blossom of the coconut palm soaring on high far across the ocean.

7. PicTure

It happened for him suddenly – quite suddenly. He was standing outside a bookstore, looking at a Van Gogh volume, when he suddenly understood what a ‘picture’ was. True, the Van Gogh was just a book of reproductions, but even in the photographs of those paintings, he sensed the vivid presence of nature.

This passion for pictures gave him a whole new way of looking at the world. He began to pay constant attention to the curve of a branch or the swell of a woman’s cheek.

One rainy autumn evening, he was walking beneath an iron railroad bridge in the suburbs. Below the bank on the far side of the bridge stood a horse cart. As he passed it, he sensed that someone had come this way before. Someone? There was no need for him to wonder who that ‘someone’ might have been. In his twenty- three- year- old heart, a Dutchman with a cut ear and a long pipe in his mouth was fixing his gaze on this dreary landscape.

8. sParKs: floWers of fire

Soaked by the rain, he trod along the asphalt. It was a heavy downpour. In the enveloping spray, he caught the smell of his rubberized coat.

Just then he saw the overhead trolley line giving off purple sparks and was strangely moved. His jacket pocket concealed the manuscript of the piece he was planning to publish in their little magazine. Walking through the rain, he looked back and up once again at the trolley line.

The cable was still sending sharp sparks into the air. He could think of nothing in life that he especially desired, but those purple sparks – those wildly- blooming flowers of fire – he would trade his

life for the chance to hold them in his hands.

9. cadavers

A tag on a wire dangled from the big toe of each cadaver. The tags were inscribed with names, ages, and such. His friend bent over one corpse, peeling back the skin of its face with a deftly wielded scalpel. An expanse of beautiful yellow fat lay beneath the skin.

He studied the cadaver. He needed to do this to finish writing a story – a piece set against a Heian Period background – but he hated the stink of the corpses, which was like the smell of rotting apricots. Meanwhile, with wrinkled brow, his friend went on working his scalpel.

‘You know, we’re running out of cadavers these days,’ his friend said.

His reply was ready: ‘If *I* needed a corpse, I’d kill someone without the slightest malice.’ Of course the reply stayed where it was – inside his heart.

10. The masTer

He was reading the Master’s book beneath a great oak tree. Not a leaf stirred on the oak in the autumn sunlight. Far off in the sky, a scale with glass pans hung in perfect balance. He imagined such a vision as he read the Master’s book . . .

11. daWn

Night gradually gave way to dawn. He found himself on a street corner surveying a vast market. The swarming people and vehicles in the market were increasingly bathed in rose light.

He lit a cigarette and ambled into the market. Just then a lean black dog started barking at him, but he was not afraid. Indeed, he even loved this dog.

In the very center of the marketplace, a sycamore spread its branches in all directions. He stood at the foot of the tree and looked up through the branches at the sky. A single star shone directly above him.

It was his twenty- fifth year – the third month after he first met the Master.

12. naval Port

Gloom filled the interior of the miniature submarine. Crouching down amid all the machinery, he peered into a small scope. What he saw there was a view of the bright naval port.

‘You should be able to see the *Kongō* , too,’ the naval officer explained to him.

As he was looking at the small warship through the square eyepiece, the thought of parsley popped into his mind for no reason – faintly aromatic parsley on top of a thirty- yen serving of beefsteak.

13. The masTer’s deaTh

In the wind after the rain, he walked down the platform of the new station. The sky was still dark. Across from the platform three or four railway laborers were swinging picks and singing loudly. The wind tore at the men’s song and at his own emotions.

He left his cigarette unlit and felt a pain close to joy. ‘Master near death,’ read the telegram he had thrust into his coat pocket.

Just then the 6 a.m. Tokyo- bound train began to snake its way toward the station, rounding a pine- covered hill in the distance and trailing a wisp of smoke.

14. marriage

The day after he married her, he delivered a scolding to his wife: ‘No sooner do you arrive here than you start wasting our money.’ But the scolding was less from him than from his aunt, who had ordered him to deliver it. His wife apologized to him, of course, and to the aunt as well – with the potted jonquils she had bought for him in the room.

15. he and she

They led a peaceful life, surrounded by the garden’s broad green *bashō* leaves.

It helped that their house was located in a town by the shore a

full hour's train ride from Tokyo.

16. Pillow

Pillowing his head on his rose- scented skepticism, he read a book by Anatole France. That even such a pillow might hold a god half- horse, he remained unaware.

17. butterfly

A butterfly fluttered its wings in a wind thick with the smell of seaweed. His dry lips felt the touch of the butterfly for the briefest instant, yet the wisp of wing dust still shone on his lips years later.

18. moon

He happened to pass her on the stairway of a certain hotel. Her face seemed to be bathed in moonglow even now, in daylight. As he watched her walk on (they had never met), he felt a loneliness he had not known before.

19. man- made Wings

He moved on from Anatole France to the eighteenth- century philosophers, though not to Rousseau. Perhaps this was because one side of him – the side easily moved by passion – was too close to Rousseau. Instead, he approached the author of *Candide* , who was closer to another side of him – the cool and richly intellectual side.

At twenty- nine, life no longer held any brightness for him, but Voltaire supplied him with man- made wings.

Spreading these man- made wings, he soared with ease into the sky. The higher he flew, the farther below him sank the joys and sorrows of a life bathed in the light of intellect. Dropping ironies and smiles upon the shabby towns below, he climbed through the open sky, straight for the sun – as if he had forgotten about that ancient Greek who plunged to his death in the ocean when his man-made wings were singed by the sun.

20. shackles

He and his wife came to live with his adoptive parents when he went to work for a newspaper. He saw his contract, written on a

single sheet of yellow paper, as a great source of strength. Later, however, he came to realize that the contract saddled *him* with all the obligations and the company with none.

21. crazy girl

Two rickshaws sped down a deserted country road beneath overcast skies. From the sea breeze it was clear that the road was headed toward the ocean. Puzzled that he felt not the slightest excitement about this rendezvous, he sat in the second rickshaw thinking about what had drawn him here. It was certainly not love. And if it was not love, then . . . but to avoid the conclusion, he had to tell himself, *At least we are in this as equals* .

The person riding in the front rickshaw was a crazy girl. And she was not alone in her madness: her younger sister had killed herself out of jealousy.

There's nothing I can do about this anymore.

He now felt a kind of loathing for this crazy girl – this woman who was all powerful animal instinct.

The two rickshaws soon passed a cemetery where the smell of the shore was strong. Several blackened, pagoda-shaped gravestones stood within the fence, which was woven of brushwood and decorated with oyster shells. He caught a glimpse of the ocean gleaming beyond the gravestones and suddenly – inexplicably – he felt contempt for the woman's husband for having failed to capture her heart.

22. a Painter

It was just a magazine illustration, but the ink drawing of a rooster showed a remarkable individuality. He asked a friend to tell him about the painter.

A week later, the painter himself came to pay him a visit. This was one of the most remarkable events in his entire life. He discovered in this painter a poetry of which no one else was aware. In addition, he discovered in himself a soul of which he himself had been unaware.

One chilly autumn evening, he was reminded of the painter by a stalk of corn: the way it stood there armed in its rough coat of

leaves, exposing its delicate roots atop the mounded earth like so many nerves, it was also a portrait of his own most vulnerable self. The discovery only served to increase his melancholy.

It's too late now. But when the time comes . . .

23. The Woman

From where he stood, the plaza was beginning to darken. He walked into the open space feeling slightly feverish. The electric lights in the windows of several large office buildings flashed against the clear, faintly silvery sky.

He halted at the curb and decided to wait for the woman there. Five minutes later she came walking toward him looking somewhat haggard. 'I'm exhausted,' she said with a smile when she caught sight of him. They walked through the fading light of the plaza side-by-side. This was their first time together. He felt ready to abandon anything and everything to be with her.

In the automobile she stared at him and asked, 'You're not going to regret this?'

'Not at all,' he answered with conviction.

She pressed her hand on his and said, 'I know *I* won't have any regrets.'

Again, as she said this, her face seemed to be bathed in moonlight.

24. The birTh

He stood by the sliding screen, looking down at the midwife in her white surgical gown washing the baby. Whenever soap got in its eyes, the baby would wrinkle up its sad little face and let out a loud wail. It looked like a baby rat, and its odor stirred him to these irrepressible thoughts –

Why did this one have to be born – to come into the world like all the others, this world so full of suffering? Why did this one have to bear the destiny of having a father like me?

This was the first son his wife bore him.

25. sTrindberg

He stood in the doorway, watching some grimy Chinese men playing Mahjongg in the moonlight where figs bloomed. Back in his room, he started reading *The Confessions of a Fool* beneath a squat lamp. He had barely read two pages when he caught himself with a sour smile. So – the lies that Strindberg wrote to his lover, the Countess, were hardly different from his own.

26. anTiQuiTy

He was nearly overwhelmed by peeling Buddhas, heavenly beings, horses and lotus blossoms. Looking up at them, he forgot everything – even his good fortune at having escaped the clutches of the crazy girl.

27. sParTan disciPline

He was walking down a back street with a friend when a hooded rickshaw came charging in their direction. He was surprised to recognize the passenger as the woman he had been with the night before. Her face seemed to be bathed in moonglow even now, in the daylight. With his friend present, they could not exchange even ordinary greetings.

‘Pretty woman,’ his friend said.

Eyes on the spring hills at the end of the street, he answered without the slightest hesitation:

‘Yes, very.’

28. murder

The country road stank of cow manure in the sun. Mopping his sweat, he struggled up the steep hill. The ripened wheat on either side of the road gave off a pleasant scent.

‘Kill him, kill him . . .’

Before he knew it, he was muttering this aloud to himself over and over. Kill whom? It was obvious to him. He recalled the cringing fellow with close-cropped hair.

Just then, the domed roof of a Catholic church appeared beyond the yellow wheat.

29. form

It was a cast- iron saké bottle. With its finely incised lines, it had managed at some point to teach him the beauty of form'.

30. rain

In the big bed he talked with her about many things. Beyond the bedroom window it was raining. The blossoms of the crinum tree had begun to rot in the rain, it seemed. Her face, as always, looked as if it were in moonlight, yet talking with her was not entirely free of boredom. He lay on his stomach, had himself a quiet smoke, and realized he had now been with her for seven years.

Do I still love this woman? he asked himself. He was in the habit of observing himself so closely that the answer came as a surprise to him: *I do* .

31. The greaT earThQuaKe

The odor was something close to overripe apricots. Catching a hint of it as he walked through the charred ruins, he found himself thinking such thoughts as these: *The smell of corpses rotting in the sun is not as bad as I would have expected* . When he stood before a pond where bodies were piled upon bodies, however, he discovered that the old Chinese expression, 'burning the nose', was no mere sensory exaggeration of grief and horror. What especially moved him was the corpse of a child of twelve or thirteen. He felt something like envy as he looked at it, recalling such expressions as 'Those whom the gods love die young.' Both his sister and his half- brother had lost their houses to fire. His sister's husband, though, was on a suspended sentence for perjury.

Too bad we didn't all die.

Standing in the charred ruins, he could hardly keep from feeling this way.

32. fight

He had a quarrel with his half- brother that ended in a physical brawl. True, he was a constant source of pressure for this younger brother, who in turn cost him a good deal of freedom. Relatives were always telling the young man, 'be like your brother', but for him, this was like being bound hand and foot. Locked in each other's grip, they fell near the edge of the veranda. He still

remembers the one crape myrtle bush in the garden by the veranda – its load of brilliant red blossoms beneath a sky about to drop its rainy burden.

33. hero

From the window of Voltaire's house, he found himself looking up toward a high mountain. There was nothing to be seen on the glacier- topped mountain, not even a vulture. There was, however, a short Russian man doggedly climbing the trail.

After night fell, beneath the bright lamp in Voltaire's house, he wrote this didactic poem (still picturing that Russian man climbing the mountain).

You who more than anyone obeyed the Ten Commandments
Are you who more than anyone broke the Ten Commandments.
You who more than anyone loved the masses
Are you who more than anyone despised the masses.

You who more than anyone burned with ideals Are you who more than anyone knew reality.

You are what our Eastern world has bred –An electric locomotive that smells of flowering grasses.

34. color

At thirty he found himself loving a piece of vacant land. It contained only some moss and scattered bits of brick and tile. To his eyes, however, it was exactly like a Cezanne landscape.

He suddenly recalled his passions of seven or eight years earlier. And when he did so, he realized that seven or eight years earlier he had known nothing about color.

35. comic PuPPeT

He wanted to live life so intensely that he could die at any moment without regrets. But still, out of deference to his adoptive parents and his aunt, he kept himself in check. This created both light and dark sides to his life. Seeing a comic puppet in a Western tailor's shop made him wonder how close he himself was to such a figure. His self beyond consciousness, however – his 'second self' – had long since put such feelings into a story.

36. Tedium

He was walking through a field of plume grass with a university student. 'You fellows still have a strong will to live, I suppose?'

'Yes, of course, but you, too . . .'

'Not any more,' he said. He was telling the truth. At some point he had lost interest in life. 'I *do* have the will to create, though.'

'But surely the will to create is a form of the will to live . . . ?'

To this he did not reply. Above the field's red plumes rose the sharp outline of an active volcano. He viewed the peak with something close to envy, though he had no idea why this was so . . .

37. 'Woman of hoKuriKu'

He met a woman he could grapple with intellectually. He barely extricated himself from the crisis by writing a number of lyric poems, some under the title 'Woman of Hokuriku'. These conveyed a sense of heartbreak as when one knocks away a brilliant coating of snow frozen onto a tree trunk.

Hat of sedge dancing in the wind:
How could it fail to drop into the road?
What need I fear for my name?
For your name alone do I fear.

38. Punishment

They were on the balcony of a hotel surrounded by trees in bud. He was drawing pictures to amuse a little boy –the only son of the crazy girl, with whom he had broken off relations seven years earlier.

The crazy girl lit a cigarette and watched them play. With an oppressive feeling, he went on drawing trains and airplanes. Fortunately, the boy was not his, but it still pained him greatly when the child called him 'uncle'.

After the boy wandered off, the crazy girl, still smoking her cigarette, said suggestively:

‘Don’t you think he looks like you?’

‘Not at all. Besides –’

‘But you do know about “prenatal influence”, I’m sure.’

He looked away from her in silence, but in his heart he wanted to strangle her.

39. mirrors

He was in the corner of a café, chatting with a friend. The friend was eating a baked apple and talking about the recent cold weather when he himself began to sense a certain contradiction in the conversation.

‘Hey, wait a minute – you’re still a bachelor, right?’

‘Not exactly: I’m getting married next month.’

That silenced him. The mirrors set in the café walls reflected him in endless numbers. Coldly. Menacingly.

40. dialogue

Why do you attack the present social system?

Because I see the evils that capitalism has engendered.

Evils? I thought you recognized no difference between good and evil. How do you make a living, then?

He engaged thus in dialogue with an angel – an angel in an impeccable top hat.

41. illness

He suffered an onslaught of insomnia. His physical strength began to fade as well. The doctors gave him various diagnoses – gastric hyperacidity, gastric atony, dry pleurisy, neurasthenia, chronic conjunctivitis, brain fatigue . . .

But he knew well enough what was wrong with him: he was ashamed of himself and afraid of *them* – afraid of the society he so despised.

One afternoon when snow clouds hung over the city, he was in the corner of a café, smoking a cigar and listening to music from the

gramophone on the other side of the room. He found the music permeating his emotions in a strange new way. When it ended, he walked over to the gramophone to read the label on the record.

‘Magic Flute – Mozart.’

All at once it became clear to him: Mozart too had broken the Ten Commandments and suffered. Probably not the way *he* had, but . . .

He bowed his head and returned to his table in silence.

42. The laughTer of The gods

At thirty- five, he was walking through a pinewood with the spring sun beating down on it. He was recalling, too, the words he had written a few years earlier: ‘It is unfortunate for the gods that, unlike us, they cannot commit suicide.’

43. nighT

Night closed in again. The rough sea sent up spray in the fading light. Beneath these skies, he married his wife anew. This brought them joy, but there was suffering as well. With them, their three sons watched the lightning over the open sea. His wife, holding one of the boys in her arms, seemed to be fighting back tears.

‘See the boat over there?’ he asked her.

‘Yes . . .’

‘That boat with the mast cracked in two . . .’

44. deaTh

Taking advantage of his sleeping alone, he tried to hang himself with a sash tied over the window lattice. When he slipped his head into the sash, however, he suddenly became afraid of death. Not that he feared the suffering he would have to experience at the moment of dying. He decided to try it again, using his pocket watch to see how long it would take. This time, everything began to cloud over after a short interval of pain. He was sure that once he got past that, he would enter death. Checking the hands of his watch, he discovered that the pain lasted one minute and twenty-some seconds. It was pitch dark outside the lattices, but the wild

clucking of chickens echoed in the darkness.

45. *divan*

Divan was giving him new inner power. This was an 'Oriental Goethe' he had not known before. He saw the author standing with quiet confidence on the Other Shore, far beyond good and evil, and he felt an envy close to despair. In his eyes, the poet Goethe was even greater than the poet Christ. For in the heart of the poet Goethe, there bloomed not only the roses of the Acropolis and Golgotha but the rose of Arabia as well. If only he had the least ability to follow in this poet's footsteps!

Once he had finished reading *Divan* and recovered somewhat from its terrifying emotional impact, he could only despise himself for having been born such a eunuch in life!

46. *lies*

He felt the suicide of his sister's husband as a terrible blow. Now he was responsible for his sister's family as well. To him at least, his future looked as gloomy as the end of the day. He felt something like a sneer for his own spiritual bankruptcy (he was aware of all of his faults and weak points, every single one of them), but he went on reading one book after another. Even Rousseau's *Confessions*, though, was full of the most heroic lies. And when it came to Tōson's *New Life*, he felt he had never met such a cunning hypocrite as that novel's protagonist. The one who truly moved him, though, was François Villon. He found in that poet's many works the 'beautiful male'.

Sometimes in his dreams the image would come to him of Villon waiting to be hanged. Like Villon, he had several times nearly fallen to the ultimate depths of life, but neither his situation nor his physical energy would permit him to keep this up. He grew gradually weaker, like the tree Swift saw so long ago, withering from the top down.

47. *Playing With fire*

She had a radiant face, like the morning sun on a thin sheet of ice. He was fond of her, but he did not love her, nor had he ever laid a finger on her.

‘I’ve heard you want to die,’ she said.

‘Yes – or rather, it’s not so much that I want to die as that I’m tired of living.’

This dialogue led to a vow to die together.

‘It would be a Platonic suicide, I suppose,’ she said.

‘A Platonic double suicide.’

He was amazed at his own sangfroid.

48. deaTh

He did not die with her, but he took a certain satisfaction in his never having touched her. She often spoke with him as though their dialogue had never happened. She did once give him a bottle of cyanide with the remark, ‘As long as we have this, it will give us both strength.’

And it did indeed give him strength. Sitting in a rattan chair, observing the new growth of a *shii* tree, he often thought of the peace that death would give him.

49. sTuffed sWan

With the last of his strength, he tried to write his autobiography, but it did not come together as easily as he had hoped. This was because of his remaining pride and skepticism, and a calculation of what was in his own best interest. He couldn’t help despising these qualities in himself; but neither could he help feeling that ‘Everyone is the same under the skin.’ He tended to think that Goethe’s title ‘Poetry and Truth’ could serve for anyone’s autobiography, but he knew that not everyone is moved by literature. His own works were unlikely to appeal to people who were not like him and had not lived a life like his – this was another feeling that worked upon him. And so he decided to write his own brief ‘Poetry and Truth’.

Once he had finished writing ‘The Life of a Stupid Man’, he happened to see a stuffed swan in a secondhand shop. It stood with its head held high, but its wings were yellowed and moth-eaten. As he thought about his life, he felt both tears and mockery welling up inside him. All that lay before him was madness or suicide. He

walked down the darkening street alone, determined now to wait for the destiny that would come to annihilate him.

50. caPTive

One of his friends went mad. He had always felt close to this man because he understood far more deeply than anyone else the loneliness that lurked beneath his jaunty mask. He visited him a few times after the madness struck.

‘You and I are both possessed by a demon,’ the friend whispered, ‘the demon of the *fin de siècle*.’

Two or three days later, he heard, the man ate roses on the way to a hot- spring resort. When the friend was hospitalized, he recalled once sending him a terra cotta piece. It was a bust of the author of *The Inspector General*, one of the friend’s favorite writers. Thinking how Gogol, too, had gone mad, he could not help feeling that there was a force governing all of them.

Just as he reached the point of utter exhaustion, he happened to read Raymond Radiguet’s dying words, ‘God’s soldiers are coming to get me,’ and sensed once again the laughter of the gods. He tried to fight against his own superstitions and sentimentalism, but he was physically incapable of putting up any kind of struggle. The ‘demon of the *fin de siècle*’ was preying on him without a doubt. He envied medieval men’s ability to find strength in God. But for him, believing in God – in God’s love – was an impossibility, though even Cocteau had done it!

51. defeaT

The hand with the pen began to tremble, and before long he was even drooling. The only time his head ever cleared was after a sleep induced by eight- tenths of a gram of Veronal, and even then it never lasted more than thirty minutes or an hour. He barely made it through each day in the gloom, leaning as it were upon a chipped and narrow sword.



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N° 07

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The Withered Arm

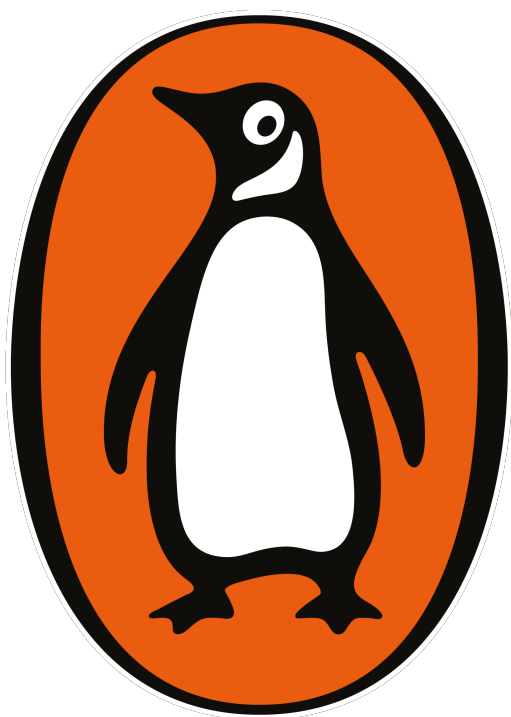
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可怜的胳膊……”



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LITTLE BLACK
CLASSICS

萎缩的胳膊

一 遭遗弃的挤奶姑娘

这是一个有八十头奶牛的牛奶场，一群挤奶工，正式的和临时的，都在干活儿；季节虽然还不过是四月初的春天，可放牧全在那些水浇地牧场上，所以那些奶牛个个都是“满桶奶的”。时间大约到了傍晚六点钟，那些大个头、红颜色、长方块的畜生，有四分之三已经挤完了奶，这样大家就有机会聊聊天了。

“我听说，他明天真要把新娘子带回家来啦。他们今天已经从安格伯瑞动身了。”

声音仿佛发自那头叫作樱桃的母牛的肚子，不过说话的人可是一个挤奶妇，她的脸埋在那头一动不动的母牛肋条上。

“有谁瞧见过她吗？”另一个人问。

先说话的那个人说，没有。“可他们说，她真够得上是玫瑰脸蛋儿，樱草花球小身段儿。”她又这样加了一句。这个挤奶妇一边说，一边转过脸去，这样，她就可以隔着她那头母牛的尾巴对场院的那一边膘上一眼。那里有一个姿容憔悴的瘦削女人，大约三十岁模样，和别人多少分开了一点，正在挤奶。

“他们说，比他小好些岁呢。”第二个人接着说，也对那个方向投去若有所思的一瞥。

“那么，你说他多大岁数了？”

“三十上下吧。”

“更像四十岁。”旁边一个年岁大的挤奶男工插了一句，他罩了一件大白围裙或者说“工作罩衣”，帽檐向下耷拉着，看起来像是一个女人。“他出世的时候，水坝还没筑，我在那里提水的时候，还没拿大人的工资呢。”

议论越来越热闹，牛奶往下流的声音变得断断续续的了，这时从另一头母牛肚子那儿传来颇有权威的声音：“嗨，嗨，农场主洛吉的年纪，或者洛吉的新太太，究竟和咱们有啥关系？不管他或者她是多大岁数，反正我租他的这些奶牛，每头牛每年都得交他九镑。接着干你们的活儿吧，要不，咱们干不完天就黑了。晚霞已经把天都照红啦。”说这话的人是牛奶场的老板，这些挤奶的女工和男工都是他雇

的。

谁也没有再公然大声议论农场主洛吉的婚事了，不过第一个说话的女工仍在她那头牛下面对她的近邻嘀咕：“她可不好受啦。”她指的是刚才提到的那个瘦削憔悴的挤奶女工。

“啊，不会的，”第二个说，“他已经有几年没跟若达·布茹克说话了。”

挤完了奶，他们刷净了自己的奶桶，把它们挂在奶桶架上。它像通常的奶桶架一样，是用一根剥了皮的橡树枝做的，上面装着许多钩子，直直地竖在地上，像一盘巨大的鹿角。大多数人都朝着四面八方回家去了。那个一言未发的瘦女人，和一个大约十二岁的男孩走到一起，他们俩也顺着那块场地走上去了。

他们走的路和别人不同，通向水浇牧场上面一块高出来的孤零零的地方，离爱敦荒原的边缘不远，当他们走到家门附近的时候，可以远远看见荒原那黑乎乎的影子。

“他们刚才在场院里说，你爸爸明天要把他那个年轻的媳妇从安格伯瑞带回来了，”那个女人说，“我想打发你到市场上去干点事，你准保可以碰见他们。”

“好吧，妈妈，”男孩说，“那么爸爸结婚了吗？”

“是……你可以看她一眼。要是你真看到了她，就告诉我她什么样。”

“好吧，妈妈。”

“她是长得黑还是白，个儿高不高——是不是跟我一样高。还有，她看起来是不是像一个靠干活儿吃饭的女人，或者是一个富裕惯了的人，从来没有干过什么活儿，显出一副太太的样子，就像我想的那样。”

“好。”

他们在苍茫暮色中爬上那座小山，走进自己的农舍。农舍四面是土墙，多次雨水冲刷，已经把墙面冲出一道道的沟纹和凹洼，原来那种平整的墙面，一点也看不见了，而上面铺草的房顶，时而露出一根椽子，像是一根骨头戳破了皮肤露在外面。

她跪在炉灶旁边，两块泥煤架在前面，煤块中间放着石楠的干枝，她用力吹那堆红热的余烬，一直吹到泥煤燃起了火苗。火光照亮了她苍白的脸颊，使她那对曾经看起来很漂亮的眼睛，好像又漂亮起来了。“是的，”她接着又说起来，“看她长得是黑还是白，还有，要是能够看得到，留神一下她那双手白不白，要是不白，就看看它们是不

是做过家务活儿，或者是像我这双挤奶的手。”

男孩照样答应了，这次有点心不在焉，他母亲没有注意到，他正在用一把小刀，在山毛榉木靠背椅上刻一道凹痕。

二 年轻媳妇

从安格伯瑞到霍姆斯托克的大道，基本都是平路，只有一个地方有个很陡的上坡道，使它显得不那么单调。赶集回家的农夫，都是一路让马小跑着，到了这段短短的陡坡，才赶着马缓慢爬坡。

第二天黄昏，太阳还挺亮，一辆崭新漂亮的轻便双轮马车，由一匹健壮的牝马拉着，沿着那条平川大道向西飞跑。这辆车车身是柠檬色的，车轮是红色的。赶车人是个年富力强的自耕农，胡子刮得干干净净，像个演戏的，脸色红里透青。一个兴旺发达的农夫，在镇上做了几笔顺手的买卖回家，常常就是这样满面生辉。他身旁坐着一个女人，比他年轻得多，简直可以说还是一个女孩儿。她的脸色也很光鲜，但那完全是另外一种性质——柔媚缥缈，像是从一堆玫瑰花瓣透过来的光辉。

没有什么人这样赶路，因为这不是一条主要的大道。在这条沙砾铺成的白色长带上，他们前面空空荡荡，只有一个几乎并不活动的小黑点，它渐渐地变成了一个男孩的模样，好似一只蜗牛正在慢慢向上爬，而且不断地回过头来朝后面张望。他背的那个沉重的包，如果说不是他步履缓慢的理由，也可以说是某种借口。那辆欢腾跳跃的轻便马车，来到前面提到的那个陡坡下面，放慢了速度，这时那个步行的男孩在前面不过几码 [1] 的地方。他一只手放在屁股上托着那个大包，和马并排走着，同时回过头来，死死盯住农场主的媳妇，好像要把她仔仔细细琢磨个透似的。

夕阳迎面照在她的脸上，把她五官的每一个部分，从她那小巧鼻孔的曲线直到她那双眼睛的颜色都照得一清二楚。那个农场主，对男孩这样死乞白赖地盯着看，似乎感到恼火，可是并没有赶他走，吩咐他让路，因此这个小小子一直走在他们前面。他的眼睛一直死盯着她，等到他们到达坡顶，农场主脸上露出放下心来的神情，撒开马小跑起来——从外表上看，不再注意那个男孩究竟怎样了。

“看那可怜的男孩盯着我看的那副神情！”年轻媳妇说。

“是呀，亲爱的，我看见他是在盯着你瞧。”

“他是村里的人吧，我猜？”

“是附近的一个人。我想他是和他妈住在一两英里 [2] 远的地方。”

“毫无疑问，他知道我们是谁吧？”

“啊，是的，你一定得预料到，刚开始人家会盯着你瞧，我漂亮的格楚德。”

“我料到了——不过我以为，这个可怜的男孩盯着我们瞧，可能是想让我们帮他带一下他背的那个沉重的大包，而不是出于好奇。”

“啊，不对，”她丈夫脱口而出，“这些乡下小子，只要东西一上肩，就可以背上一英担 [3]，再说，他那个包看起来很大，实际上并不那么重。好啦，再走上一英里，我就可以远远地指给你看我们住的那所房子——要是我们赶到那儿天还不太黑的话。”车轮滚滚向前，又像以前那样把砂土碾得向四周乱迸，终于出现了一所占地阔大的白房子，房后还有一些专为干农活儿用的房子和干草堆。

这时候，那个男孩加快了脚步，在离这所白色农庄还有差不多一英里半的地方，拐到一条小路上，向着那些比较贫瘠的草场爬上去，一直走到他母亲的那所村舍。

她干完了她当天在外面奶场上挤奶的活儿，已经回到家里，正借着渐渐昏暗的光线，在门洞里洗菜。“把这个网兜拿一会儿。”男孩刚一走进来，她没有先打招呼就这样说。

他赶忙扔下他那个大包袱，抓住盛菜网兜的边，她一边往兜里放正在滴水的卷心菜，一边继续说话：“怎么样，你看见她了吗？”

“嗯，挺清楚的。”

“她像个太太吗？”

“嘿，不单像，还是个不折不扣的太太呢。”

“她年轻吗？”

“嗯，她已经是大人啦。她那神气，十足是个女人。”

“当然。她的头发和脸蛋儿是什么颜色？”

“她头发是浅色的，脸蛋儿就像一个活的玩具娃娃。”

“她的眼睛，那么，不是像我的眼睛这样深颜色的吧？”

“不，是浅蓝色的，她的嘴长得挺俏挺红，笑起来露出一口白牙。”

“她个儿高吗？”她酸溜溜地问道。

“我看不见。她坐着呢。”

“那么，明天早晨你到霍姆斯托克教堂去，她准会去那儿。早点

去，看着她走进来，回家来告诉我，她是不是比我高。”

“那好吧，妈妈。可是你干吗不自己去看看呢？”

“我去看她！她就是这会儿从我窗户前面走过去，我也不会抬头去看她。当然，她是和洛吉先生在一起。他说了些什么？做了些什么？”

“和平常一样。”

“没有注意你？”

“没有。”

第二天，母亲给孩子穿了一件干净的衬衫，打发他到霍姆斯托克教堂去。他到达这座小小的古老建筑的时候正赶上开门，他就第一个走了进去。他在洗礼盘旁边找了个座位，看着教区所有的教民鱼贯而入。阔气的农场主洛吉几乎是最后一个走进来的，伴随他的那个年轻的媳妇，走进教堂走廊，脸上带着羞涩的神情，这对于一个第一次在众人面前露面的端庄淑静的女人来说，也是自然而然的事。大家的目光都盯着她，所以这个年轻人的注视，现在也就没有引起人们的注意了。

他到达家门口的时候，还没等走进屋子，他母亲就问：“怎么样？”

“她个儿并不高，还有点矮呢！”他回答说。

“啊！”他母亲满意地叫了一声。

“可是她很漂亮——很漂亮。说实话，她挺可爱。”自耕农的媳妇那种年轻鲜艳的神情，甚至给这个秉性多少有点严峻的男孩，显然留下了深刻的印象。

“这就是所有我想要听到的。”他母亲很快地说，“好啦，把桌布铺上。你用铁丝网套住的兔子很嫩，可是要小心，别让谁抓住你——你一直还没告诉我，她的手是什么样的。”

“我根本没见到。她一直没有脱下手套。”

“她今天早晨穿戴的什么？”

“一顶白帽子和一身银灰色的袍子。袍子蹭到教堂条凳上刺啦刺啦地响，声音那么大，那位太太自己听到这声音感到不好意思，脸红得比原先更厉害了，她把衣服拉起来，好让它别再蹭，可是她猛一下坐到位子上，那刺啦声更大了。洛吉先生，他好像很得意，他的背心露着，他几颗金晃晃的大印吊着，就像一个大老爷似的，可是他太太好像是希望她那件闹人的袍子放在哪里都成，就是别穿在她身

上。”

“是吗？不管怎么说，现在这就够啦！”

以后，这个男孩每次偶然碰见这对新婚夫妇，他母亲都要他陆续把他们的情况再讲一遍。若达·布茹克固然只要走上一两英里就可以很容易地亲自见到年轻的洛吉太太，但是她从没打算走这一点路，到农庄房舍所在的地方去。牛奶场的场院就在洛吉这远处的第二个农场里，她每天在场院挤奶的时候，也从来不提最近办的这桩婚事。牛奶场老板租了洛吉的奶牛，对这个高挑挤奶姑娘的身世也知道得清清楚楚，他怀着男子汉的善意，总是不让奶场场院里的这些流言蜚语引起若达苦恼。但是洛吉太太到达以后最初那些日子，周围的环境老是充满这个话题。而若达·布茹克从她孩子的描述和其他挤奶工人偶尔露出的只言片语，也能够心里描绘出对这个一无所知的洛吉太太的图像，就像照片那样逼真。

三 幻象

新人回家两三个星期后的一天晚上，男孩上床睡了，若达把泥煤灰扒出来放在面前，好让它们熄灭，她在那堆泥煤余火前面坐了很长时间。她就着那些余烬，按照她想象的模样，心里想着那个新媳妇，思考得那样聚精会神，竟忘记时间过去了多久，最后，由于一天工作的疲累，她也去睡觉了。

但是，这一天和前些天来一直萦回在她心中的形象，即使在夜晚也无法赶开。梦中，那个取代她的地位的格楚德·洛吉第一次来看她了。若达·布茹克在睡着以前确信自己真看见她了，而这是不足信的。她梦见这个年轻媳妇穿了一身浅灰色的衣服，戴着一顶白帽子，但是面容却歪歪扭扭，一塌糊涂，好像年纪很大，满脸皱纹。她躺在那儿，这个新媳妇就坐在她的胸脯上。洛吉太太的身体压得越来越重，那双蓝眼睛冷酷无情地死盯着她的脸，然后这个影子又嘲弄地向前伸出左手，好让她戴的那个结婚戒指在若达的眼前熠熠闪耀。睡觉的人精神狂乱，给压得几乎透不过气来，她拼命挣扎。一会儿压在她身上的那个梦魔退到床脚去了，可是仍然死盯着她，随后又逐渐移上前来，重新坐在她胸脯上，又像刚才那样晃着左手。

若达使劲喘着气，最后拼命挣扎，抽出自己的右手，猛地抓住面前这个影子伸出的左臂，迅速把它向后拧着朝地上摔，她自己一下坐起来，同时发出一声低沉的叫喊。

“啊，善心的老天爷呀！”她叫喊着，坐在床边，出了一身冷汗。“这不是做梦——她到这儿来了！”

甚至到这时候，她都能感觉到那只胳膊在她紧握的手掌中挣扎

——好像真是有骨头有肉似的。她看看地上，她曾经把鬼影摔在那儿，但是地上什么也看不见。

若达·布茹克那天夜里再也没睡。第二天清早她去挤牛奶的时候，大家注意到，她的脸色惨白，显得疲乏不堪。她挤出的牛奶颤颤悠悠地流进牛奶桶，她的手到那时还没有平静下来，仍然感觉得到那只胳膊。她回家吃早饭，就好像是到了吃晚饭的时候那样困。

“妈妈，昨天晚上你屋子里有声音，怎么啦？”她儿子问她，“你真是从床上滚下来了吧？”

“你听见什么东西摔下来吗？什么时候？”

“刚好钟敲两点的时候。”

她无法解释，吃过早饭就一声不响地干起家务活儿来，男孩帮她干，因为他讨厌到外面农场地里去，他不愿去，她也就惯着他。十一二点钟的时候，园子的门咔嚓一响，她抬头望着窗户，园子尽头门口站着她幻觉中的那个女人。若达好像一下子呆住了。

“啊，她说过她要来的！”男孩也看到了这个女人，大声喊着。

“这样说过——什么时候？她怎么知道我们？”

“我见过她，和她说过话。我昨天和她说过话。”

“我不是告诉过你了吗？”妈妈满脸通红愤怒地说，“不要和那所房子里的什么人说话，也不要走到那所房子跟前去。”

“我没和她说话，是她先和我说的。我也没有走到那所房子跟前，我在大路上碰到她的。”

“你告诉她什么啦？”

“什么也没有。她说：‘你就是那天从市场上背回那么重一包东西的那个可怜的孩子吗？’她看了看我的靴子，并且说，要是走在湿地上，这靴子没法儿让我的脚不湿，因为靴子都那么破了。我告诉她，我和妈妈一起过，我们为养活自己，已经做得够可以了，而且事实就是这样。那时候她就说了‘我给你带双好点的靴子来，并且看看你妈妈’。不光给我们，她还给牧场上别的人散东西呢。”

洛吉太太这时已经接近屋门口了——不是满身丝绸，像若达梦见在卧室里那样，而是戴了一顶晨帽，穿了一件普通薄料子的袍子，而这比丝绸更适合她。她胳膊上挎着一只篮子。

头天夜里所经历的事情，留下的印象仍然很强烈。布茹克差不多还以为可以从来访客人的脸上看到那些皱纹，那种蔑视，那种冷酷。如果能够躲开，她就会躲开，不和她见面。然而，这所房子并没有后

门，洛吉太太轻轻一敲门，孩子就立刻把门门拨开了。

“我说呢，我找这所房子是找对了。”她一边说，一边瞅了一眼这个小子，满脸含笑，“可是不是你开门，我还没有把握呢。”

这种形象和举止同幻梦中的影子一模一样，但是她的声音那么难以言传的甜，她的一顾一盼都那么逗人喜欢，她的笑容那么温柔，完全不像若达夜半梦中那个来访的贵客，若达简直无法相信自己的感觉是否正确了。她本来因为非常讨厌而想一躲了事，这时她却真正感到高兴，她幸好没有躲开。洛吉太太篮子里带来了她原来答应给孩子的一双靴子，还有一些别的有用的东西。

面对这些说明洛吉太太对她和她的亲人亲切友善的感情，若达内心不觉在痛苦地责备自己。这个天真无辜的年轻人儿，应该得到她的祝福，而不是她的诅咒。她离开他们以后，屋子里好像少了一种光辉。两天以后，她又来了，想知道那双靴子是不是合脚；在那以后不到两个星期，她又来看了若达一次。这一次男孩不在家。

“我经常出来走走，”洛吉太太说，“你们的房子是我们自己那个教区以外离我们最近的了。我希望你身体很好。可是你看起来好像不太好。”

若达说她很好，的确，两个人比起来，她脸色比较苍白，可是她身体结实，身材高大，比起站在她面前的这位面容娇柔的年轻女人来，更有力量，更能耐劳。谈起谁强壮谁柔弱，谈话也就越来越亲密了。洛吉太太动身离开的时候，若达说：“我希望这里的空气对你合适，太太，希望水浇牧场的潮气对你没有害处。”

年纪轻的这位回答说，这倒没有多大的问题，她总的健康状况通常都是很好的。“不过，你现在提醒我了，”她又接着说下去，“我有点小毛病，叫我闹不明白。它也并不是什么大不了的事，可是我就是弄不清楚。”

她露出她的左手和左胳膊，若达一看，就是她在梦中看见过并且猛地抓住的那只胳膊的样子。胳膊粉红圆润的表皮上，现出的淡淡的颜色带有病态的痕迹，像是给猛力抓住过而留下的手印。若达的眼睛死盯在这些变了颜色的痕迹上。在想象中，她以为她从中辨认出来了她的四根手指头的形状。

“这是怎么弄的？”她不动声色地问。

“我也说不上来，”洛吉太太一边摇头，一边说，“有一天晚上，我睡得很熟，梦见我去到一个有些陌生的地方，突然我的胳膊猛地一疼，疼得很厉害，把我疼醒了。我想，大概是我白天里撞了一下，可是我也记不得这样撞过。”她笑着又加了一句，“我对我亲爱的丈夫开

玩笑说，看起来好像是他突然大发雷霆，在那儿打了我一下。噢，我敢说，它很快就会没了的。”

“哈，哈！是呀……那是哪一天夜里有的？”

洛吉太太想了想，然后说，那是两个星期以前的一个夜晚。“我醒过来的时候，记不清我到过哪里。”她又加了一句，“一直到钟敲了两点，这才提醒了我。”

她说出了若达与幻影相遇的那天夜晚和具体钟点，布茹克觉得好像成了一个罪人。这样没有一点矫饰虚夸就透露了真情，使她大为惊恐，但她并不把它设想为奇怪的巧合：闹鬼那天夜里的一切景象，都更加生动地重现在她心里了。

“啊，难道说，”客人走了以后，她自言自语道，“我能违反自己的意愿，对别人施加邪恶的力量吗？”她知道，她失身以后，有人一直偷偷地叫她叫作女巫；但是她从来不明白，为什么要把这恶名加在她头上，不去管它也就过去了。难道这就是原因吗？难道像这样的事果真以前也发生过吗？

四 建议

夏天越来越近了，若达·布茹克几乎害怕再见到洛吉太太，尽管她对这个年轻的媳妇差不多可以说很有感情了。若达个人品格上的某些东西似乎要把她自己判为有罪。然而出于命运安排，她有时离开家门不是为了上工，走着走着就走到霍姆斯托克附近去了；因此她们下一次会面也就到了户外。若达想避也避不开那个使她感到神秘的话题，说了不多几句话，她就吞吞吐吐地说：“我想，你的——胳膊已经复原了吧，太太？”其实她早已惊愕地发现，格楚德·洛吉的左胳膊有些直挺挺的。

“不，还没怎么见好。说实在的，根本就没有见好，倒不如说是更坏了。有时候痛得要命。”

“也许你最好还是去找个医生看看，太太。”

她回答说，她已经找过医生了。她丈夫坚持要她去找一个医生。但是那位外科大夫好像根本不懂那只有病的胳膊是怎么回事。他告诉她用热水浸泡，她也泡过了，但是这种治疗一点用处也没有。

“让我看看，好吗？”挤奶妇问道。

洛吉太太把袖子卷上去，露出那个地方，就在手腕上边几英寸[4]。若达·布茹克一看见它，几乎都无法保持镇静了。那并不是像伤口一样的什么东西，但是胳膊上那个地方现出干瘪的样子，那四根手指头的轮廓比前一次显得更清楚了。不仅如此，她还想象出，这些指

印刚好就在她恍惚之间使劲抓住的位置：第一根指头朝着格楚德的手腕，第四根指头朝向她的胳膊肘。

格楚德自己在她们上次会面之后，好像也感到这些印痕和什么相像。“看起来几乎就像手指印。”她说，接着淡淡一笑，“我丈夫说，好像是什么女巫，或者魔鬼抓住过我这个地方，把肌肉掐干瘪了。”

若达打了一个冷战。“那是胡思乱想，”她急忙说，“我要是你，我就不会在乎它。”

“我本来不应该那样在乎它，”年轻的那位迟迟疑疑地说，“要是……要是我没有一种感觉，觉得它使我丈夫……不喜欢我，不，不那样爱我。男人都那样喜欢考虑一个人的外表。”

“有些人是那样的——他就是一个。”

“是的，而且起先，他对我的外表非常得意。”

“把你的胳膊遮着，别让他瞧见。”

“唉——他知道那儿变样了！”她竭力想不让人看见她那满眼泪水。

“好了，太太，我真心诚意希望这事马上就过去。”

就这样，这个挤奶妇回家的时候，又重新让一种可怕的魔力把自己的心同这件事情牢牢地拴在一起了。她装作嘲笑自己迷信，可是做了某种坏事的犯罪感还是增强了。若达在内心深处，并不完全反对她那位后任的花容月貌略微有点减损，不管是出于什么方式；但是也不希望使她遭受肉体上的痛苦，因为，虽然有了这个年轻漂亮的女人，洛吉再也不可能就他自己过去对若达的所作所为给予任何补偿，但是在这个较年长女人的心里，对别人完全出于无心的篡夺行为所怀有的任何愤恨，都早已烟消云散了。

如果这位甜美善良的格楚德·洛吉知道了卧房里的那场梦境，她会怎么想呢？和她保持友谊，而又不把这件事告诉她，好像就是不仁不义；但是她自己又不愿意主动地去告诉她——而且她也想不出什么补救的办法。

那天晚上她大部分时间都在思索这件事情。第二天，挤完了早晨那班牛奶之后，由于有一种可怕的魔力把她拉向洛吉太太那里，她就动身出去，想看看是不是能够再见格楚德·洛吉一面。挤奶姑娘从远处遥望那所房子，终于能够辨认出农场主的妻子独自一人骑马外出——大概是到远处的农场去和她丈夫会合。洛吉太太看见了她，就策马朝她这个方向慢慢跑来。

“早上好，若达！”格楚德跑过来的时候说，“我正要去看你呢。”

若达注意到，洛吉太太握住缰绳都有些困难。

“我希望——那只有毛病的胳膊……”若达说。

“他们告诉我，也许有一种办法，我可以找出它的原因，这样就可以把它治好，”另一位急匆匆地说，“那就是去找爱敦荒原上的一个什么聪明人。他们不知道他是否还活着——这会儿我一下想不起他的名字来了。但是他们说，你比附近不管谁都更了解他的动静，可以告诉我，是不是还可以找他请教。哎呀——他叫什么名字？你是知道的。”

“不是纯德法师吗？”她问着，瘦削的脸变得惨白了。

“纯德——对了。他还活着吗？”

“我相信他还活着。”若达勉强地说。

“你为什么把他称作法师？”

“嗯——他们说……他们一直说，他是个……他有许多别人没有的能力。”

“唉，我们那些人怎么那样迷信，要介绍这种人？我原来以为他们说的是个什么行医的人呢。我不想再找他了。”

若达看来松了一口气，洛吉太太骑马走了。挤奶妇听说别人提出向她打听这个人，那时，她就从内心感到，工友中间一定有某种讥讽的看法，说一个女巫会知道那个魔法师的下落。那么，他们是在怀疑她。不久以前，这种事不会让她这个明理的女人在意。但是，现在她可有一个挥之不去让她迷信的理由了。她突然恐惧起来，害怕这个法师会指名道姓，说她是那个正在摧毁格楚德美貌的恶人，因而使她那位朋友永远恨她，把她看成是化作人形的魔鬼。

但是所有一切都还没有完结。过了两天，午后的太阳透过窗格子照进来，在若达·布茹克家的地上投下了一个黑影。这个女人立刻开了门，几乎都喘不过气来了。

“你一个人在家吗？”格楚德问道。她看来也同若达·布茹克本人一样焦虑急躁。

“是。”若达说。

“我胳膊上那块地方看来好像更糟了，这让我很苦恼！”这个年轻的农场主太太继续说，“它多么奇怪呀！我真希望它不会是一种不治之症。我一直又在考虑他们所说的纯德法师的事。我并不真信那种人，但是我觉得，只是去看看他并不碍事，出于好奇吧——不过绝不应该让我丈夫知道。到他住的地方去远吗？”

“是——有五英里地呢，”若达迟迟疑疑地说，“在爱敦荒原最里边。”

“嗯，我应该步行去。你能和我一起去，帮我带带路吗？——比如说，明天下午？”

“啊，我不行。那是——”挤奶妇低声咕哝着，心中一惊。她突然觉得很恐惧，害怕她在梦中采取那种猛烈行动的事会泄露出来，那样，在她这个平生最有益的朋友眼中，她的人格就完了，而且再也无可挽回了。

洛吉太太一再撺掇，若达虽然非常担心，最后还是同意了。这条道路对她说来固然很伤心，可是她的恩人那种奇怪的病有可能治好，她就不能蓄意挡她的道。最后两人商量好，为了避免别人对她们这种不可思议的意图产生怀疑，她们决定在荒原边沿一块人工林的角落上会合。从她们现在站着的地方就可以看见那个角落。

五 纯德法师

在第二天下午以前，若达本来可以做出一些事情来逃避这次探访，但是她已经答应要去。不仅如此，如果真能有助于找到一种可能的方法，弄清究竟，也许可以发现她在那个神秘莫测的世界里还是一个人物，比她过去对她自己设想过的更加了不起，这本身有时就具有一种可怕的诱惑力。

快到她们约定的那个时间，她出发了，经过半小时轻快的步行，她走到了这一地带爱敦荒原的东南边缘，那里有一片枞树林。一个身材娇小的人，穿着外套，戴着面罩，早已到了那里。若达一看到洛吉太太用吊带把左胳膊吊着，几乎浑身打了一个哆嗦。

她们彼此几乎没有讲什么话，就立即开始爬坡，朝这片森严肃穆的荒野深处走去。这片地方居高临下，俯视她们半小时之前刚刚离开的那片冲积而成的富饶土地。这是一次长途跋涉。乌云使整个环境显得阴暗，虽然这时还不过刚到下午。风在荒原的斜坡上凄厉地嚎叫，这个荒原未必就不是那个目睹过威塞克斯国王伊那的痛苦的荒原，而后世则把伊那描述为李尔 [5]。格楚德·洛吉说话多，若达只是用简单几个现成的字眼儿回答。她有一种奇怪的厌恶心理，不愿走在这个同伴吊着那条有毛病的胳膊的那一边，一不小心靠近那条胳膊了，她就转身走到另一边去。下坡走向一条车道的时候，她们的脚扫着了许多石楠。她们要寻找的那个人的房子就在路旁。

他并不承认他开业治病，或者关心与此相关的任何事情。他直接关心的是经营常青棘、泥煤、“粗砂”等土特产品。的确，他假装并不相信自己的能力，人们请他治疗瘰子，这些瘰子奇迹般地消失了——

必须承认，的确是消失了——他会轻描淡写地说：“噢，我不过是对着那些瘕子喝了杯烈酒，也许是凑巧了吧。”而且马上就转换话题。

她们到达的时候，他正好在家，事实上是看着她们下到他这个山谷里来的。他胡须灰白，脸色红润。他一见到若达，就用一种奇特的眼神盯着她。洛吉太太告诉他，她是来干什么的。他一边嘴里叨唠着自己不行，一边又检查她的胳膊。

“药可治不了它，”他立刻说，“这是一个仇人干的。”

若达缩作一团，倒退了两步。

“一个仇人？什么仇人？”洛吉太太问道。

他摇摇头。“那你自已最容易弄清楚，”他说，“要是你愿意，我可以把那个人给你指出来。不过我自己并不会知道那是谁。别的我干不了，也不想干。”

她催着他干。于是他告诉若达，让她在外面她现在站的地方等着，然后把洛吉太太领进屋里。屋门马上开了，而且后来一直留着一道缝儿，因此若达没有跟他们在一起，也可以看见他们自始至终在干什么。他从食具柜里拿出一只平底酒杯，装上半杯水，并且拿出一个鸡蛋，用某种不让别人知道的办法摆弄了一番，然后就着玻璃杯的边缘把蛋敲破，让蛋清流进去，蛋黄留在蛋壳里。因为天越来越暗了， he 就把酒杯和酒杯里的东西一起拿到窗前，告诉格楚德仔细地观察水里的东西。他们俩一起躬身靠近桌子，挤奶妇能够看见蛋清在水里下沉的时候形状不断变化泛起的乳白色，但是她离得不够近，看不出它成了什么形状。

“你看的时候，能够看得出像什么人的脸或者模样吗？”法师对年轻的女人说。

她小声回答，声音轻得若达听不见，并且还继续全神贯注地看着杯子里面。若达转过身去，向远处走了几步。

洛吉太太出来了，阳光照在她脸上，在荒原景物忧郁暗淡的色调衬托之下，她的脸显得特别惨白——和若达的脸一样惨白。纯德在她走出之后把门关上了，她们立刻一起回家。但是若达看得出来，她的同伴完全变了。

“他收费很多吗？”她探问道。

“啊，不——没花钱。他分文不取。”格楚德说。

“那么，你看到什么啦？”若达问道。

“什么……什么我也不乐意说。”她那种小心翼翼的样子很明显。她的脸板着，一下变老了，有点像若达卧室中的那张脸。

“是你首先建议到这里来的吗？”洛吉太太停了很久以后突然问道，“如果是你首先建议的，那该多怪呀！”

“不是。但是就目前的情况来看，我并不认为这个决定是错误的。”她回答道。她忽然第一次有了一种胜利感，她一点也不悔恨，她身边的这个小东西该知道，并不是她们自己，而是别的什么有影响力的东西，使她们不相容。

在回家去的这条漫长而又累人的路上，再也没有人提到这个话题了。但是，那年冬天在那片有很多牛奶场的低地上，以这种或那种方式悄悄流传着这样一个故事：洛吉太太的左胳膊慢慢不中用了，是因为若达·布茹克用“目光震慑”住了。若达对于那场梦魇保有她自己的想法，但是她的面容越来越愁苦，越来越消瘦。到了春天在霍姆斯托克附近就再也见不到她和她那个男孩了。

六 第二次尝试

六年过去了，洛吉先生和太太的婚后生活平淡乏味，而且更糟。农场主常常闷闷不乐，沉默寡言；而那个女人，以前由于优雅和美貌而受到他的热烈追求，这时左臂已经变形，不成样子。不仅如此，她也并没有给他生孩子，这就大有可能使他在大约二百年来占有这个河谷的家族中，成为末代子孙了。他想起若达·布茹克和她的儿子，害怕这可能就是上天对他的判决。

过去一向心情轻快、头脑开明的格楚德，逐渐变成了一个容易激动、思想迷信的女人，她全部时间都用来为治她的病痛做试验，采用她碰上的任何一个江湖医生的药方。她一心眷恋丈夫，还暗怀着痴心妄想至少挽回她身上原有的某些美貌，来赢得他的回心转意，因此她的私室里摆满了各式各样的瓶瓶、包包、药盒、药罐——不仅这些，还有一包包神秘的草药、种种符咒和宣讲巫术的书籍，要是在她的学生时代，她一定会嘲笑说这些东西都是愚蠢胡闹。

“见鬼。看吧，这些药店乱配的杂烩和巫婆胡掺和的东西，哪一天不把你自已毒死才怪呢。”她丈夫偶尔看到那一排又一排的玩意儿就这样说。

她并不回答，只是用那样一种痛心的责备神情，向他投去悲哀而又温情的一瞥，所以他显出对自己的话感到歉意的样子，又加了一句：“你知道，我这不过是为了你好，格楚德。”

“我要把这些劳什子一股脑儿都清理出来，全部毁掉，”她哑着嗓子说，“再也不试那种药方了！”

“你得有个什么人，让你高兴起来。”他说，“我曾经想抱养一个男孩，可是他现在岁数太大了，而且他走了，我也不知道现在他在什么

地方。”

她猜到了他指的是谁，因为这些年来，若达·布茹克的事她已经知道了，虽然她丈夫从来没有就这件事和她交谈过一个字。她也从来没有对他说过，她曾经去拜访过纯德法师，也没说过那个孤零零地住在荒原上的人给她透露过什么，或者她以为给她透露过什么。

她现在二十五岁，但是看起来要老得多。“六年的婚姻，不过几个月的爱情。”有时她这样自言自语。于是她想到那个显而易见的原因，看看自己那条日益萎缩的胳膊，满怀悲哀地说：“要是我能够再变回原来的模样，就像他第一次见到过的那样，那该多好呀！”

她顺从地毁掉了那些丹方符咒，但是仍然保留着一种热切的愿望，想试试另外的东西——完全不同的另一种疗法。自从若达勉为其难地领着她去拜访过那位离群索居的人以后，她再也没有重访纯德。但格楚德现在突然想起，她可以再做孤注一掷的努力，来消除这种看来像是受到诅咒的灾祸，如果他还活着，就再去找找他。他应该是可信的，因为他在酒杯中造出的那个不大清晰的形象，毫无疑问是和一个女人相像，虽然那时她还不知道，可是她现在知道了，世界上只有那个女人有理由对她不怀好意。是应该再去拜访一次。

这一次她是一个人去的，不过她在荒原上几乎迷了路，比她应该走的路多绕了很远的一段。然而，最后总算到了纯德的那所房子，他不在家，没有在屋子里等她。远处他那伛偻的身影，指明他在那个地方干活儿，她走了过去。纯德还记得她。他把他收集的常青棘根放下，堆成一堆，提出要陪着她朝她回家的路上走走，因为路程很远，而白天又很短。这样他们就一起走着，他的头低得几乎都要触到地面了，而且他的外表和地面是一个颜色。

“我知道，你可以把瘡子、瘤子消掉，”她说，“为什么不能把这个消掉呢？”她说就露出了胳膊。

“你把我的力量想得太大了！”纯德说，“我现在是年纪又老，身体又弱。不行，不行。我亲自干，干不了。你试过些什么办法？”

她时时变换，用过上百种治病的药物和驱邪的符咒，她给他举出了几种，他摇了摇头。

“有一些是够好的，”他用赞成的口气说，“可是其中有许多并非如此。这种病是一种萎缩性的，不是创伤性的，而且只要你一下把它摆脱了，那马上就会完全好了。”

“要是我能那样该多好！”

“我所知道的，只有唯一一种机遇能行。治疗类似的病痛，这个办法从来没有不灵的——我敢这样说。不过做起来难，特别是一个女

人。”

“告诉我吧！”她说。

“你必须用那条胳膊去摸上过绞刑的人的脖子。”

他讲的这种景象把她吓了一跳。

“要在刚从绞刑架上放下来尸体还没有冰凉的时候。”法师不动声色地继续说。

“那样做有什么好处呢？”

“它可以调理血脉，改变体质。不过，我刚说过，做起来很难。你得在有绞刑的时候到监狱去，在那里等着把人从绞刑架上放下来，好多人都那样干过，不过也许没有像你这样漂亮的女人。我一向打发皮肤有毛病的人去，总有几十人了。不过，那都是以前的事，我打发的最后一个人，是在一八一三年——都差不多有十二年啦。”

他再没有对她说什么，然后把她送上一条回家去的直路，就转身离开了她，和第一次一样，一文钱也不肯收。

七 骑马赶路

这番话深深地印在格楚德的心里了。她的性格属于有点怯弱的那种，大概这个善心的术士所能够推荐的一切疗法中，没有任何一种能像这种办法那样，使她充满反感，更不用说实行起来会遇到的不计其数的障碍了。

到郡城所在地卡斯特桥有十二英里或十五英里。虽然在那个犯盗马罪、纵火罪、夜盗罪的人都要处死刑的年月，一场巡回审判过后很少有不判绞刑的，但是，没有别人帮忙，她大概没法儿接近犯人的尸体。而她又害怕她丈夫会大发雷霆，所以不愿意把纯德的建议向他或他周围的人透露一个字。

她等了几个月，什么也没做，只是像以前一样，耐心地忍受着破相的痛苦。但是，她毕竟是一个女人，从天性来说，总想恢复自己的秀美姿容，重新得到爱情（她还不过二十五岁呀），这种渴望不断地刺激她，要她尝试一下这种无论如何也不大可能使她受到任何伤害的办法。“用魔法降临的，也一定得用魔法赶走。”她常这样说。可是她的想象里一出现这种行动，她就恐惧退缩，不敢正视这种可能性。随后，法师讲的“它可以调理血脉”这句话又来了，好像它能够变成一种符合科学的解释，而不是一派胡言乱语。同时那种难以抑制的想克服病痛的愿望也催促她再去尝试尝试。

那个时候，郡里只有一家报纸，她丈夫也只是偶尔借阅一下。但

是过去也有过去的办法。人们广泛用口舌传递消息，从一个市场到另一个市场，从一个集市到另一个集市，所以一有执行死刑这类事情快要发生，方圆二十英里之内，几乎没有人不知道这种马上要来的光景，哪怕远在霍姆斯托克，也有些热心的人，据大家所知道的，步行去到卡斯特桥，一天之内走个来回，就是为了亲眼看看那场热闹。下一次巡回审判定在三月；格楚德·洛吉听说审判已经举行了，一找到机会就偷偷地向酒馆、客店打听审判的结果。

然而，她已经太迟了。行刑的时间已经到了，走那么一段路，还要在那样短的时间内就能获准进去，那至少要得到她丈夫的帮助。她可不敢告诉他，因为她刚稍微一试探就已经发现，农村中此类迷信的念头，只要一提就使他火冒三丈，一半原因是他自己对这类念头也半信半疑，因此她只好再等另一次机会。

她听说，就在霍姆斯托克的这个村子里，多年以前有两个患癫痫病的孩子曾经去过，而且效果很好，尽管附近的教会人士强烈谴责这种做法，这种事情还是使她的决心得到鼓舞。四月、五月、六月都过去了，可以毫不夸张地说，到了六月底的时候，格楚德简直是在热切希望把什么人处死了。她平时每天晚上都做常规的祈祷，这时她却不知不觉地这样祈祷起来了：“啊，上帝，快把一个什么人绞死吧，管他有罪还是无辜！”

这一次她更早就开始打听，她的做法也更加按部就班。不仅如此，当时正是夏季，处在储草和收获之间，她丈夫有空闲时间，常常离家在外度假。

巡回审判是在七月份，她又像以前那样到客店去打听。只判了一个死刑——仅仅一个——罪名是纵火。

她最大的问题倒不是如何去卡斯特桥，而是采用什么办法可以获准进入监狱。虽然为了这种目的而提出进入监狱，这种申请以前从来没有遭到过拒绝，可是这种习俗现在已经不时兴了。她考虑到可能遇到的困难，差不多又要迫不得已回过头来去依靠她丈夫了。但是，她对巡回审判的事情稍微一试探，他就显得那么不愿谈论，甚至比以前更加冷淡，所以她没往下再说，决定不管要做什么，她都自己一个人去做。

一向冷酷无情的命运，于她来说出乎意料地好转了。死刑定在星期六，星期四的时候，洛吉先生对她说，他要再离家一两天，到集市上去做点生意，并且说他很抱歉，不能带她一起去。

这次她表示非常乐意留在家里，这使他感到惊讶，盯着她直看。她以前对于失去这种短途旅游的机会，总是表现出强烈失望的。然而，他慢慢恢复了他一向沉默寡言的态度，到了所说的那一天，就离

开了霍姆斯托克。

现在该轮到她了。她最初想赶车去，可是仔细一想，又打住了，因为那样她就得走税卡路，她那鬼鬼祟祟的使命让人发觉的可能性就要增加十倍了。本来在结婚之前，她丈夫答应过要经常留一匹牝马供她骑用，而这时在她丈夫的几个马厩里，无论想象多么出格，也找不到一匹适合女人的坐骑；尽管如此，她还是决心骑马，并且避开人们常走的路。她丈夫有许多拉车的马，很好的驭马，留下的马匹中间有一匹可以使唤。这是一匹体形高大的亚马逊牝马，马背宽得像一只沙发，她小有不适的时候，偶尔也骑出去换换空气。她挑上了这匹马。

星期五下午，一个伙计把它溜熟了。她已经穿戴停当，临走前她看着那条干瘪的胳膊。“哎呀！”她说，“如果不是为了你，我就不会去受这一趟可怕的罪啦！”

她带了几件衣物，打了一个小包，趁这个机会对仆人说：“我去看一个朋友，怕今天晚上回不来，所以带了这些东西。要是我十点钟还没回来，不要惊慌，像平日一样把家门关好。明天我肯定会回来。”她打算以后再私下告诉她丈夫，做完了的事不像计划要做的事，他差不多肯定会宽恕她的。

于是，这个颇为忐忑的格楚德·洛吉离开了丈夫的宅院。但是，尽管她的目的地是卡斯特桥，她却并没有走直路经过斯蒂克福到那里去。她耍花招最初走的路刚好是相反的方向。然而，她一走到人们看不见的地方，就向左拐，走上去爱敦荒原的路。刚要走上荒原的时候，又拐一个弯，走上真正要走的路，向正西方走去。很难想象出，到郡城去还有比这更隐秘的路了；至于方向，她只需要把马头牢牢对准太阳右边一点就行。她懂得，她随时可以碰到砍常青棘的或者村舍里的什么人，问问他们就不会走错了路。

虽然说来那时离现在还不太久远，可是爱敦远远不像现在这个样子把地面都分成了小块小块的，人们想在低坡上开垦，不管结果是成功还是失败，都把原来的荒原分割成了许多互不相连的小荒原。而那时候，这些还不太盛行，还没实现圈地法，田埂和树篱都还没建立起来。不像现在这样：村民的牲口不能享有从前在公有地上放牧的权利，那些享有泥煤开采特权的人自己的大车也不能随便到处走，保证他们一年到头都有东西烧。因此格楚德骑马走去，除了带刺的常青棘丛、一片片石楠、白色的水沟、地表上自然的悬崖和斜坡以外，并没有别的什么障碍。

她那匹马如果大踏步、慢慢走很稳当，虽然是一匹挽马，走得却从容不迫。如果不是这样，她就不敢端着一条半死不活的胳膊，骑上它走这样一片村野荒地了。因此，她快要离开荒原下到满是耕地的山

谷之前，走到了荒原通向卡斯特桥的路上最后一块边远的高地，勒住缰绳让她的坐骑喘口气，这时候，已经快到八点钟了。

她停在一个叫作灯草池的水塘边，池子两侧是两道树篱的尽头，一道栏杆通过池子中心，把水池分为两半。从栏杆上面望过去，是乡间的低绿地，越过绿树，是市镇的房顶，越过房顶有一道房子平平的白色前脸儿，那就是郡监狱的入口。这道房子前脸儿的房顶上，有几个小黑点在来回挪动；看来他们像是几个工人在竖一个什么东西。她觉得毛骨悚然。她缓慢地往下走，不久就走到玉米地和牧场中间了。又过了半小时以后，格楚德走到城市这一边的第一个客店白鹿客栈，这时差不多已是暮色苍茫了。

她到达这里并没有激起什么人的惊讶。那个年月，农夫的妻子骑马赶路，比现在要多，不过，此情此景别人也根本想象不出洛吉太太已经身为人妻了。客栈老板以为她是一个轻率莽撞的年轻女人，到这里来看第二天的“绞刑盛会”。她丈夫和她本人都没有在卡斯特桥市场上做过买卖，所以没有人认识她。下马的时候她看到一群男孩就在客栈前面围在一个马具店的大门口，兴趣盎然地在朝里面看。

“那儿在干什么？”她问客栈的马夫。

“搓绳子明天好用。”

她会意地心头一悸，并且把胳膊缩回来了。

“事情完了以后，这根绳子要一寸一寸地卖，”那个马夫接着说，“要是你想要，小姐，我可以给你弄一段，免费的。”

她赶紧打消了任何这类念头，主要是因为她不知道怎么忽然有了一种奇怪的感觉，好像那个判了死刑的可怜人的命运，和她自己的命运交织在一起了。她订了一个房间准备过夜，然后坐下寻思。

究竟应该用什么办法获得允许进入监狱，一直到现在她连哪怕是最模糊的一点主意也没有。她忽然想起那个神通广大的人说过的那番话。他曾经暗示过，她可以利用她的美貌——尽管遭到了损害，作为通关的钥匙。她没有经验，狱卒、狱吏她都不认识。她曾经听说过一个郡长和副郡长，但是也只是模糊地提到。然而她知道，一定有一个绞刑吏，于是她决定去求绞刑吏。

八 水边隐士

在那个年月以及几年以后，几乎每个监狱都有一个绞刑吏。格楚德经过打听才知道，卡斯特桥的那个小吏住在悬崖下面那条很深、很缓的河流旁边一个孤零零的村舍里，悬崖上面就是监狱那些房子的所在。而那条河，虽然她并不知道，就是灌溉下游斯蒂克福德和霍姆斯

托克那一带草场的同一条河。

格楚德换了衣服，没吃没喝就出发了，因为不把某些具体事情定下来，她就是无法让自己安下心来。她沿着河边的一条小路走向所说的那所房子。走过监狱附近，在天空的映衬下，可以看得出来，在门道上面的平房顶上，有三个长方形的框子，她远远望去，有几个黑影在那里活动，她认出了竖起的东西是什么，于是快步走过去。再走了一百码，她就到了行刑人的房子，这是一个男孩指给她的。房子就在同一条河流的旁边，紧靠一座排闸，河水流过不断发出轰隆的声响。

她站在那儿犹豫不决，这时门开了，一个老人走了出来，用一只手遮住一根蜡烛。他从外面把门锁上，转身登上一座木踏板楼梯，楼梯安在那所房子的边上，他开始上楼，显然这是通往他卧室的楼梯。格楚德赶忙上前，但是等赶到楼梯下面，他已经上到楼梯顶上了。她朝着他高声叫喊，声音足可以盖过排闸那边的轰鸣，让他听见，他往下看着问道：“你来这儿干啥？”

“和你说一分钟。”

烛光总算还照在了她仰面朝上颜色惨白而且带着乞求神情的脸上，戴维斯（大家都这样称呼这个绞刑吏）又走下楼梯。“我正要睡觉去了，”他说，“早睡早起”嘛，可是为了像你这样的一位女士，耽搁一分钟我是不会在乎的。进屋里来吧。”他重新打开门，把她领到屋子里面。

他平常干活的工具，也就是短工花匠的工具，摆在墙角，他大概看出了她像个乡下人，于是说道：“要是你想找我去干乡下的活儿，我可不能去，因为我从来没有离开过卡斯特桥，为高贵的或是低微的人去干事儿——别找我吧。尽管有的时候我会让别人“离开”这里。”他正式地加了一句。

“是呀，是！是那样。明天！”

“啊，我想是这么回事。好吧，那又怎么样啦？关于绳结的事，到这儿来没有用——人们不断到这儿来，可是俺告诉他们，这个结也好，那个结也好，只要你把它打在耳朵下面，都是一样仁慈的。那个不幸的又是个亲戚吗？或者我该说，也许是（他看了看她的装束）你雇用的一个人？”

“不是。绞刑在什么时候执行？”

“和以前一样——十二点，或者说只等伦敦来的邮车一到就执行。我们总是等邮车到，准备等缓刑令。”

“噢——缓刑令——我希望没有！”她不觉说了出来。

“好吧——嘻——嘻！——当作公事办，我也这么希望！可是不管怎样，如果说一个年轻小伙子应该得到从轻发落的话，这个小伙子就应该。才刚刚十八岁出头嘛，而且只是碰巧在草垛着火的时候在那儿。不管怎么说，那并没有多大的危险，其实他们是不得已拿他来杀一儆百，这些日子像那样破坏财产的事太多啦。”

“我的意思是，”她解释说，“我想摸摸他，作为治病的法术，治一种病痛。有一个人证明，这种疗法很灵，是他出的主意。”

“噢，是的，小姐！现在我懂了。前几年有这种人来找过我。可是我想不到，你会是需要调理血脉的那种人。是怎么不好？这种事搞错了，我可担着责任呢。”

“我的胳膊。”她很不愿意地露出那块干瘪的皮肤来。

“啊，这就是胳膊萎缩！”绞刑吏一边观察一边说。

“是。”她说。

“好吧，”他很感兴趣地接着说，“我不得不承认，这真是个很好的病例！我喜欢这种样子的伤，就我所见过的来比较，这肯定真正适合做这种治疗。告诉你来这儿的，不管他是谁，可真是一个明白人。”

“你能费心帮我把要办的都安排好吗？”她屏住呼吸问。

“你应该去找监狱长，和你的医生一起去，说出你的名字和住址——要是我记得不错，一向都是这么办的。不过，也许俺能帮你办，只要很少一点费用。”

“噢，谢谢你！我宁愿这么办，因为我愿意保密。”

“不让情人知道，嗯？”

“不是，是不让丈夫知道。”

“哈哈！好极了。俺会让你摸一下尸体。”

“它现在在哪儿？”她一边说一边颤抖。

“它？你的意思是说他吧，他现在还活着。在上面那个暗处，就在那个矮窗后面。”他指着悬崖上面的那个监狱。

她想起她丈夫和她那些朋友。“是的，当然啰，”她说，“那么，我怎么进行呢？”

他把她领到门口。“看，你可以等在那堵墙上的小门旁边，你往上走，在那个小巷里就可以找到，不要迟过一点钟。我从里边把门打开，因为不把他放下来，我是不会回家吃饭的。晚安。要准时到；要是你不想让别人看见你，罩块面纱。嗯——俺有一阵子有过你这么个

女儿！”

她走了，爬上上面的那条小路，想自己先去弄清楚，好在第二天能够找到那扇小门。小门的轮廓，她很快就看得见了——是在监狱外面围墙上的一个小缺口。这是那么高的一个陡坡，她爬到小门旁边，不得不停下喘一会儿气，她朝后面望了一下水边的那所小房子，看见绞刑吏又在爬他户外的楼梯。他进了楼梯顶上的那个阁楼，或者屋子，过了几分钟，他的烛光就灭了。

郡城的钟敲了十点，她像她刚到的时候那样，回到了白鹿客栈。

九 不期而遇

星期六中午一点钟。格楚德·洛吉像前面说过的那样，得到允许进入监狱，坐在第二道大门里面一个会客室里。这道门建在条石砌成的古典式拱廊下面，在当时看来，拱廊还是比较新式的，门上有几个字：“郡监狱；1793年”。这就是她前一天从荒原上看到的那面墙。旁边有一个通道，通向竖着绞刑架的房顶。

城里面人山人海，市场暂时停业了，但是格楚德几乎没有见到一个人影，她在屋子里一直待到约定的时刻，然后就动身去指定的地点。她走的那条路避开了悬崖下面那片开阔地带，观众那时都会集在那里，但是她甚至能听得见那里人声鼎沸。喧嚣声停顿的时候，一个沙哑的粗嗓子大叫了一声：“死前最后遗言，忏悔！”并没来缓刑令，绞刑已经执行了；但是大伙还在等着，想看看尸体怎样卸下来。

不久，这个苦苦等待的女人听到头顶上有脚步声，然后就有一只手招呼她，她随着指引的方向，走了出去，穿过门房外面铺平了院子。她的双膝发抖，简直走不动了。她一只胳膊露在袖子外面，只用披肩盖着。

她现在来到的地方，有两个支架，她还没来得及想这两个支架是干什么用的，就听见沉重的脚步在她背后什么地方下楼。她没有转过头去，或者无法转过头去，就用这种姿势僵在那里：她模模糊糊感到有四个人抬着一个粗糙的棺材和她擦肩而过。棺材敞开着，里面躺着一个年轻小伙子的尸体，身上穿着一件农民干活儿穿的长罩衫和一条粗斜纹布过膝短裤。尸体是匆匆忙忙扔进棺材的，所以罩衫的下摆吊在上面。这副沉重的东西暂时搁在支架上。

这个年轻女人现在处于这样一种状态：好像有一阵灰色的雾在她眼前浮动，因为这个缘故，再加上她又戴着面纱，她简直分辨不出任何东西，她好像已经快要死了，只是由于某种电流刺激才缓着没有断气。

“来吧！”紧靠她身边有个声音，她刚刚能意识到，这句话是对她

说的。

她拼命使出最后的一点气力，向前走去，就在这个时候，她听见背后有人向她走过来。她露出她那只被诅咒的可怜的胳膊，于是戴维斯揭开罩在尸体脸上的布，拉过格楚德的手举着，好让她的胳膊搭在死者的脖子周围，像还没熟透的黑莓果那种颜色的一道线上面。

格楚德尖叫了一声：法师预言的“调理血脉”实现了。但是就在这个当口，第二声尖叫响彻这个围墙里面的整个空间，它不是格楚德的喊叫。这一声尖叫使她大吃一惊，不禁往四处看。

紧靠她身后，站着若达·布茹克，她的脸歪扭着，两只眼睛因为哭泣而红肿起来了。若达身后站着格楚德自己的丈夫，他的脸上布满皱纹，两眼黯然无光，但是并没有眼泪。

“见鬼！你来这里干什么？”他声音沙哑地问道。

“臭婊子——现在到我们和我们孩子中间来了！”若达大叫，“这就是魔鬼在幻梦中显示给我的意思！到头来你还是像她！”她一把抓住这个年轻女人袒露出来的那只胳膊，把她死命地向后拉，一直把她顶到墙上。布茹克刚一松手，年轻虚弱的格楚德就滑溜下来，瘫靠在她丈夫的脚上，他把她抱起来的时候，她已经不省人事了。

一看见那一对，就足以提醒她，死去的年轻人是若达的儿子。在那个时代，罪犯处死之后，他的亲属只要愿意就有权要求领回尸体下葬，因此洛吉同若达一起在等待验尸。这个年轻人这次被拘留之后，若达就把他叫去了，以后又在不同的时候叫去过几次，而且审判期间，他还曾经在法庭出席。这就是他近来经常沉迷其中的“度假”。这一对可怜的父母原来希望避免事情暴露，因此他们亲自来收尸，运尸的马车和盖尸的单子都在外面等着呢。

格楚德的病情十分严重，所以大家认为最好还是让她在附近就医。她被抬出监狱送往市内，但是她再也没有活着回家。她脆弱的生命力，由于胳膊瘫痪也许一直在逐渐给榨干，而在这以前的二十四小时内，她的身体和精神方面都受到重压，于是一受到双重的震惊就彻底垮了。她的血脉的确得到了“调理”——但是太过头了。两天以后，她就在市内死去。

她的丈夫再也没有在卡斯特桥露过面，仅仅在他一向经常光顾的安格伯瑞老市场曾经露过一次面。而在任何公开场合，他都很少出现。他最初由于郁郁寡欢和悔恨交加，心情沉重，后来逐渐好转，看来像是一个历经磨炼和细心体贴的人了。他参加了他那年轻亡妻的葬礼之后，立即采取了放弃霍姆斯托克和邻近教区的农场的行动，并且卖掉了他的每一头牲口，然后离开，去到这个郡另一头的波特布瑞迪，住在那里孤零零的寓所中，直到两年以后因衰竭无疾而终。直到

那个时候，大家才知道，他早已把他那笔不算菲薄的财产，全部遗赠给一家男童感化院，唯一的附带条件是，如果能找到若达·布茹克认领，就给她一小笔年金。

有一段时间，并没有找到她。但是她终于在她那个老教区重新出现了，不过她坚决拒绝与为她制定的规定有什么瓜葛。她又恢复了在牛奶场挤奶那种毫无变化的活儿，一直干了很多年，直到最后身体变得佝偻了，原来那一头浓密的头发变成了银丝，前额也脱光了——也许是因为挤奶时长期顶着奶牛的缘故。这里一些了解她身世的人，有时会站住看着她，并且寻思：随着那交错流下的条条奶流的节奏，在那个一动不动、满布皱纹的脑门儿后面，有些什么阴沉忧郁的思想在那儿悸动呢？

（张扬 张玲 译）

[1] 一码等于0.914米。（说明：书中脚注均为编者注。）

[2] 一英里等于1.609千米。

[3] 一英担约等于50.802千克。

[4] 一英寸等于0.025米。

[5] 英国历史家兼博古家凯姆敦（1551—1623），在他的《不列颠纪拾遗》里，曾提过威塞克斯的国王是伊那，哈代以此为据，引用到自己的书中。但除此以外，包括莎士比亚在内的其他大家作品中，所提到的威塞克斯国王均为李尔。

止不住打喷嚏的贼

很多很多年前，当现在已不茂盛的老橡树还只和老绅士的拐杖一样粗的时候，有位农民和儿子住在韦塞克斯。当时儿子休伯特十四岁上下，直率坦荡又英勇果敢，大家都很好。不过这个小伙子倒是有一点自负。

一个寒冷的圣诞节前夜，由于人手不足，父亲只能差遣他去离家数英里外的小镇办个重要差事。他是骑马去的，又被差事拖到很晚，时间已近深夜。所幸最后事情圆满解决了，他赶回小旅馆，给马配好鞍后，就上路了。回家要穿过肥沃但有些荒僻的布莱克摩山谷，那时的山谷土质黏重，小路蜿蜒，和如今一样被大片丛林所覆盖。

大约九点前后，休伯特骑着自己壮实的矮脚马杰瑞，走在遮天的林荫小道上，哼起了圣诞颂歌。仿佛是为了应和此情此景，他恍惚觉得自己听到林间有些微响动，不由得想起，他所经过的这个地方可是恶名在外，以前路过的人曾在此遭到伏击。休伯特看看杰瑞，真希望它不是这一身亮灰鬃毛，其他任何颜色都好；因为如此一来，即便在昏暗的荫蔽中，这匹温驯小马的身形也清晰可见。“我在担心什么呢？”他想了一下，大声说道，“杰瑞这么敏捷矫健，一定不会让强盗靠近我的。”

“哈哈！那倒是。”一个低沉的声音响起。转眼间一个身影从他右手边的密林里蹿出来，又有一个从左边的树丛中跳出，另一个则在前方好几码外的树干后现身。接着休伯特手中的缰绳便被夺走，自己也被从马上拽下。尽管奋力挣扎，像任何一个英勇的男孩都会做的那样，最终他还是被制服了，双臂捆在身后，两腿紧紧绑在一起。强盗把他扔进道沟后，驾马扬长而去。此时他才勉强看清：那两个人的脸都被故意涂黑了。

当休伯特意识清醒一点时，他发现，虽然自己可以奋力挣脱腿上的绳子，但不管怎么活动，两只胳膊还是捆得严严实实。所以他只能跳起来，双手背在身后前进，希望能够在某一个瞬间把绳结挣开。他知道今晚是走不到家了，而且还是在这种情况下，但他也没有放弃，依然坚持前进。谁知刚才受到的袭击让脑袋昏昏沉沉的，他很快就迷了路。如果不是很清楚大冬天毫无覆盖地睡在霜地上有多危险，休伯特真想就此躺下，休息一晚。他继续往前走，双臂被绳索绑着拧着，早已麻木，心中想到失去了可怜的杰瑞，便愈加伤痛：他的杰瑞不踹

人也不咬人，从没有半点臭毛病。走着走着，休伯特惊喜地看到森林中依稀有微弱的灯光射出。于是他循着光亮向前，最终发现自己来到了一栋有宽阔侧翼、山墙和高塔的大宅前，碉堡之上有城垛和烟囱，映衬在星空下。

四周一片寂静，宅邸的门却赫然洞开，正是门内射出的光吸引他来到这里。进去之后，他发现这个巨大套间是一个餐厅，灯火通明，墙面均铺了深色的护壁板，配有缘饰镶板、各种雕刻、壁橱门柜，以及其他这类大房子里常见的装饰陈设。不过，最吸引休伯特的还是正中央的大桌子，因为上面摆满了珍馐佳肴，是无比丰盛的晚餐，但却未被动过。而桌子四周摆好了餐椅，看起来像是正要开始的晚宴被什么事突然打断了。

就算休伯特再想，他现在这个状况也吃不了，除非把嘴浸在盘子里，像猪牛一样拱着进食，所以当务之急是看看有没有人能帮忙解开绳子。正当他准备往房子里走时，突然听到门廊处传来匆忙的脚步声和说话声：“快点！”这声音低沉，和他从马背上被拖下来时听到的一模一样。他赶紧往桌下一钻，接着三个男人就进来了。休伯特从垂下的桌布边缘偷偷向外望，只见那几个人的脸也是涂黑的，这时他心中最后一点疑问打消了：真是同一伙贼。

“现在，”走在最前的那个人用低沉的嗓音说，“我们快藏起来。他们一会儿就又回来了。这方法不错吧？让他们都出去了。”

“嗯。别说，你模仿惊慌失措的叫声还真挺像。”第二个人说。

“惟妙惟肖。”另一个说。

“不过他们很快就会发现警报是假的，快，我们藏哪儿好呢？最好是能待两三个小时的地方，可以一直等到所有人都上床睡着。啊！知道了。这边！之前听人说过最远的橱柜一年都开不了一次，正合我意。”

说话人出了餐厅进入一条走廊。休伯特悄悄往前爬了些，依稀可以看见伫立在走廊另一头的橱柜，柜门朝着餐厅这边。这几个贼猫腰躲进去，关上了柜门。休伯特屏住呼吸，向前挪了挪，想要弄清楚他们的意图；凑近后，他听见强盗们在小声谈论哪些房间有金银珠宝，其他值钱的东西藏在哪里，很显然，他们准备行窃。

不一会儿，露台那边开始传来绅士、淑女们的闲谈欢笑声。休伯特意识到如果被人发现自己在房子里鬼鬼祟祟可不太好，除非他想要被当成劫匪给抓起来，于是他悄悄潜回厅外，藏在门廊黑暗的角落里。在这里他可以看见厅内的一切，却不会被人发现。很快，一群人走过来，和休伯特擦身而过，进了房子。其中有一对较为年长的绅士和淑女，还有年轻的小姐和男士各八九位，除此之外随行的男女仆从

共有六人。显然，他们才是这栋大房子真正的主人、客人，之前有事出去了。

“孩子们、年轻人，现在，晚宴继续，”老绅士说，“我也不知道刚才的吵闹声是怎么回事，但敢肯定的是，一定有一个人在家门口被杀了。”

随后，女士们开始讨论方才的情形有多么骇人，她们又是怎样暗自期待一场冒险奇遇，结果到头来什么事也没发生。

“等着吧，女士们，”休伯特自言自语道，“不久后你们就会有一场货真价实的冒险了。”

看起来，年轻的男士、女士似乎是老夫妻已婚的儿女们，他们在这一天回家，与父母共度圣诞节。

接着大门就关上了，休伯特被留在了门廊外。他意识到这是自己寻求帮助的绝佳时机，由于双手被捆起来了没办法敲，他便开始用身体使劲地撞门。

“喂！在这儿闹什么呢？”开门的男仆质问道，一把抓住休伯特的肩膀，把他拽进餐厅里。“西蒙爵士，我发现这个男孩在门廊里制造噪声，非常可疑。”

所有人都看向休伯特。

“把他带过来。”西蒙男爵说，他正是之前提到的那位老绅士，“孩子，你在那里做什么呀？”

“为什么他的手臂被绑起来了？”其中一位女士说。

“可怜的孩子！”另一位说道。

休伯特立即解释了自己是在回家途中遭受伏击，被盗贼夺去马匹后残忍地抛下，才沦落至此的。

“想想都让人难过！”西蒙爵士大声说道。

“这很可能只是编造的故事。”一位绅士打扮的客人狐疑道。

“你不相信，嗯？”西蒙爵士问。

“也许他自己就是一个盗匪。”一位女士表示。

“我仔细看了他的相貌，长得就邪里邪气，不像好人。”老夫人说道。

休伯特脸唰的一下红了；他没有再说下去，想到强盗们还藏在房子里，他赶紧停住了嘴，一边开始思忖如何让这群人自己发现危险。

“给他松绑吧。”西蒙爵士说，“这样，既然今天是圣诞前夜，我们还是要好好招待一下。来，小伙子，坐在长桌那头的空座上吧，敞开了吃，尽情享用。等你吃饱喝足了，我们再细听你的故事。”

于是盛宴又继续进行着；休伯特现在没有了束缚，一点也不觉得不好意思。他们吃得越多喝得越多，休伯特也就愈加高兴。葡萄酒在人们的杯中芳香四溢，木材燃起熊熊炭火，直顶烟囱，女士们被绅士们讲的故事逗得捧腹大笑；简而言之，周遭一切都是喧闹欢愉的，和那个时候所有热闹的圣诞聚会一样。

人们的欢呼与嬉笑，在座主宾的热闹与狂喜，这场面使休伯特也情不自禁被感染了，虽然因为别人怀疑自己的诚实而有点受伤，但此时他的身心都备感温暖。他渐渐融入其中，到最后，他和老从男爵、西蒙男爵一样，也因为那些风趣故事和妙语如珠而痛快大笑。宴席快结束的时候，男爵的一个儿子，好像酒喝得多了点，和那个世纪的男人们一样，晃悠悠地靠过来跟休伯特说：“嘿，我的朋友，最近怎么样啊？要吸撮鼻烟吗？”说着他掏出一个鼻烟盒。这种小盒子当时风靡全国，老人、年轻人都很喜欢。

“谢谢。”休伯特说，吸了一口。

“告诉这些女士们，你是谁，你是做什么的，你能干什么。”年轻男人接着说道，重重拍着休伯特的肩膀。

“当然，”我们的男主人公说，提了提精神，想着最好还是勇敢面对，“我是一个旅行魔术师。”

“没错！”

“接下来要说什么呢？”

“你能从深渊招魂吗，小巫师？”

“我能在橱柜里掀起一场小风暴。”休伯特回答道。

“哈哈！”老从男爵听了兴奋地搓搓手，“那我们可得好好看看。女士们，别走远，好戏就要开始啦。”

“应该不危险吧？”老夫人问。

休伯特从桌旁起身，对刚才那个无礼的年轻人说：“请把鼻烟盒递给我一下。”“现在，”他继续说道，“请大家保持安静，随我来。任何人出声都会打破咒语。”

于是宾客们都乖乖听话，鸦雀无声。休伯特脱下皮靴，进入走廊，蹑手蹑脚地靠近那扇柜门，其他人默默跟在他后面，保持一小段距离。接着休伯特悄悄在门前放下一只凳子，自己站上去，刚好能够到柜顶。他悄无声息地从上面的柜门外把鼻烟倾倒进去，再呼出短短

几口气，就把鼻烟恰好从门缝里吹进了橱柜。他挥手示意人群继续保持安静。

“我的天哪，什么声音？”过了一两分钟后，老夫人说。

只听得柜子里面一声压抑的喷嚏。

休伯特继续示意安静。

“真是奇了怪了，”西蒙爵士小声说，“太有意思了。”

休伯特趁此机会悄悄插紧橱柜的门闩，平静地说：“再来点鼻烟。”

“来点鼻烟。”西蒙爵士说。两三个绅士立即递来几个鼻烟盒，里面的东西继而也从柜门上方被吹了进去。接着又是一声喷嚏，已经不像第一声那样闷了；然后又一声，似乎在诉说自己无论如何都不想压抑了。最后，只听得一阵雷鸣般的喷嚏声此起彼伏。

“非常好，真是年少有为！”西蒙爵士说，“我对这种发声技巧很感兴趣，我猜，是叫腹语术吧。”

“还需要鼻烟。”休伯特说。

“还需要鼻烟。”西蒙爵士吩咐下去，于是仆从们拿来了一大罐香气浓郁的苏格兰鼻烟。

休伯特再次对准柜门上方的空隙，像之前一样把鼻烟吹进去。反复了好几次，直至把罐子全部清空。喷嚏声变得喧闹起来，毫不费力就能听见——并且一刻不停，就像是暴风雨中狂风、大雨和海水的激荡。

“我想这里面是有人的，根本就不是什么魔术！”西蒙爵士恍然大悟，大声说道。

“是的，”休伯特说，“他们是来打劫的，也是他们抢了我的马。”

此时喷嚏声已转为断断续续的嘟囔呻吟，其中一个贼听到了休伯特的声音，大喊道：“噢！行行好！饶了我吧！让我们出去！”

“我的马在哪儿？”休伯特问。

“系在了山谷间的一棵树上，就在绞刑架后面。行行好！行行好！放我们出去，不然就要被闷死了！”

此时，所有圣诞宾客都明白了，这不是什么消遣戏法，而是严肃的真事。枪和棍棒都已备好，所有男仆也都被叫进来，严阵以待。信号一发，休伯特抽开门闩，准备好防守姿势。然而这三个强盗哪还有力气攻击他们，早就在柜子角落蜷缩成一团，上气不接下气了。他们

毫无抵抗便乖乖束手就擒，绑住双臂后就直接被扔到外屋去，等候明早处置。

休伯特现在才将整个故事向宾客众人娓娓道来，大家都对他的竭力帮助感激不尽。西蒙爵士表示一定要留他下来过夜，并且让他享用大宅子里最好的卧室。伊丽莎白女王和查尔斯王子到访当地时，就曾先后下榻在那间房。不过休伯特婉言谢绝了，因为他迫不及待地要找回自己的小马杰瑞，他要去验证强盗们的说辞是否真实。

几位客人陪着休伯特走到绞刑架后，根据盗贼暗指的意思，杰瑞就藏在这附近。他们走上小圆丘四处查看，瞧！小马就站在那里呢，毫发无伤，而且颇为惬意。一看到休伯特，它便兴奋地嘶叫起来；对于休伯特来说，也没有什么比找到杰瑞更开心了。他骑了上去，向身边朋友们道了声“晚安”，便策马朝着他们所指的方向飞驰，那是回家最近的路。清晨四点前后，他终于平安抵家。

（谢万容 译）

Thomas
Hardy

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

The
Withered
Arm

Nº 07

‘She bared her
poor curst
arm . . .’

The Withered Arm

I A Lorn MILkMAId

It was an eighty- cow dairy, and the troop of milkers, regular and supernumerary, were all at work; for, though the time of year was as yet but early April, the feed lay entirely in water- meadows and the cows were 'in full pail'. The hour was about six in the evening, and three- fourths of the large, red, rectangular animals having been finished off, there was opportunity for a little conversation.

'He brings home his bride tomorrow, I hear. They've come as far as Anglebury today.'

The voice seemed to proceed from the belly of the cow called Cherry, but the speaker was a milking- woman, whose face was buried in the flank of that motionless beast.

'Has anybody seen her?' said another.

There was a negative response from the first. 'Though they say she's a rosy- cheeked, tisty- tosty little body enough,' she added; and as the milkmaid spoke she turned her face so that she could glance past her cow's tail to the other side of the barton, where a thin, faded woman of thirty milked somewhat apart from the rest.

'Years younger than he, they say,' continued the second, with also a glance of reflectiveness in the same direction.

'How old do you call him, then?'

'Thirty or so.'

'More like forty,' broke in an old milkman near, in a long white pinafore or 'wropper', and with the brim of his hat tied down, so that he looked like a woman. ' 'A was born before our Great Weir was builded, and I hadn't man's wages when I laved water there.'

The discussion waxed so warm that the purr of the milk-streams became jerky, till a voice from another cow's belly cried with authority, 'Now then, what the Turk do it matter to us about

Farmer Lodge's age, or Farmer Lodge's new mis'ess? I shall have to pay him nine pound a year for the rent of every one of these milchers, whatever his age or hers. Get on with your work, or 'twill be dark before we have done. The evening is pinking in a'ready.' This speaker was the dairyman himself, by whom the milkmaids and men were employed.

Nothing more was said publicly about Farmer Lodge's wedding, but the first woman murmured under her cow to her next neighbour, ' 'Tis hard for *she* ,' signifying the thin worn milkmaid aforesaid.

'Oh no,' said the second. 'He hasn't spoken to Rhoda Brook for years.'

When the milking was done they washed their pails and hung them on a many- forked stand made of the peeled limb of an oak-tree, set upright in the earth, and resembling a colossal antlered horn. The majority then dispersed in various directions homeward. The thin woman who had not spoken was joined by a boy of twelve or thereabout, and the twain went away up the field also.

Their course lay apart from that of the others, to a lonely spot high above the water- meads, and not far from the border of Egdon Heath, whose dark countenance was visible in the distance as they drew nigh to their home.

'They've just been saying down in barton that your father brings his young wife home from Anglebury tomorrow,' the woman observed. 'I shall want to send you for a few things to market, and you'll be pretty sure to meet 'em.'

'Yes, mother,' said the boy. 'Is father married, then?'

'Yes . . . You can give her a look, and tell me what she's like, if you do see her.'

'Yes, mother.'

'If she's dark or fair, and if she's tall – as tall as I. And if she seems like a woman who has ever worked for a living, or one that has been always well off, and has never done anything, and shows marks of the lady on her, as I expect she do.'

'Yes.'

They crept up the hill in the twilight, and entered the cottage. It was thatched, and built of mud- walls, the surface of which had been washed by many rains into channels and depressions that left none of the original flat face visible; while here and there a rafter showed like a bone protruding through the skin.

She was kneeling down in the chimney- corner, before two pieces of turf laid together with the heather inwards, blowing at the red- hot ashes with her breath till the turves flamed. The radiance lit her pale cheek, and made her dark eyes, that had once been handsome, seem handsome anew. ‘Yes,’ she resumed, ‘see if she is dark or fair, and if you can, notice if her hands are white; if not, see if they look as though she had ever done housework, or are milker’s hands like mine.’

The boy again promised, inattentively this time, his mother not observing that he was cutting a notch with his pocket- knife in the beech- backed chair.

II The young wife

The road from Anglebury to Holmstoke is in general level; but there is one place where a sharp ascent breaks its monotony. Farmers homeward- bound from the former market- town, who trot all the rest of the way, walk their horses up this short incline.

The next evening, while the sun was yet bright, a handsome new gig, with a lemon- coloured body and red wheels, was spinning westward along the level highway at the heels of a powerful mare. The driver was a yeoman in the prime of life, cleanly shaven like an actor, his face being toned to that bluish- vermilion hue which so often graces a thriving farmer’s features when returning home after successful dealings in the town. Beside him sat a woman, many years his junior – almost, indeed, a girl. Her face too was fresh in colour, but it was of a totally different quality – soft and evanescent, like the light under a heap of rose- petals.

Few people travelled this way, for it was not a turnpike- road; and the long white riband of gravel that stretched before them was empty, save of one small scarce- moving speck, which presently resolved itself into the figure of a boy, who was creeping on at a snail’s pace, and continually looking behind him – the heavy bundle he carried being some excuse for, if not the reason of, his

dilatoriness. When the bouncing gig- party slowed at the bottom of the incline above mentioned, the pedestrian was only a few yards in front. Supporting the large bundle by putting one hand on his hip, he turned and looked straight at the farmer's wife as though he would read her through and through, pacing along abreast of the horse.

The low sun was full in her face, rendering every feature, shade, and contour distinct, from the curve of her little nostril to the colour of her eyes. The farmer, though he seemed annoyed at the boy's persistent presence, did not order him to get out of the way; and thus the lad preceded them, his hard gaze never leaving her, till they reached the top of the ascent, when the farmer trotted on with relief in his lineaments – having taken no outward notice of the boy whatever.

‘How that poor lad stared at me!’ said the young wife.

‘Yes, dear; I saw that he did.’

‘He is one of the village, I suppose?’

‘One of the neighbourhood. I think he lives with his mother a mile or two off.’

‘He knows who we are, no doubt?’

‘Oh yes. You must expect to be stared at just at first, my pretty Gertrude.’

‘I do, – though I think the poor boy may have looked at us in the hope we might relieve him of his heavy load, rather than from curiosity.’

‘Oh no,’ said her husband off- handedly. ‘These country lads will carry a hundredweight once they get it on their backs; besides, his pack had more size than weight in it. Now, then, another mile and I shall be able to show you our house in the distance – if it is not too dark before we get there.’ The wheels spun round, and particles flew from their periphery as before, till a white house of ample dimensions revealed itself, with farm- buildings and ricks at the back.

Meanwhile the boy had quickened his pace, and turning up a by- lane some mile and half short of the white farmstead, ascended towards the leaner pastures, and so on to the cottage of his mother.

She had reached home after her day's milking at the outlying dairy, and was washing cabbage at the doorway in the declining light. 'Hold up the net a moment,' she said, without preface, as the boy came up.

He flung down his bundle, held the edge of the cabbage-net, and as she filled its meshes with the dripping leaves she went on, 'Well, did you see her?'

'Yes; quite plain.'

'Is she ladylike?'

'Yes; and more. A lady complete.'

'Is she young?'

'Well, she's grown up, and her ways are quite a woman's.'

'Of course. What colour is her hair and face?'

'Her hair is lightish, and her face as comely as a live doll's.'

'Her eyes, then, are not dark like mine?'

'No – of a bluish turn, and her mouth is very nice and red; and when she smiles, her teeth show white.'

'Is she tall?' said the woman sharply.

'I couldn't see. She was sitting down.'

'Then do you go to Holmstoke church tomorrow morning: she's sure to be there. Go early and notice her walking in, and come home and tell me if she's taller than I.'

'Very well, mother. But why don't you go and see for yourself?'

'I go to see her! I wouldn't look up at her if she were to pass my window this instant. She was with Mr Lodge, of course. What did he say or do?'

'Just the same as usual.'

'Took no notice of you?'

'None.'

Next day the mother put a clean shirt on the boy, and started him off for Holmstoke church. He reached the ancient little pile when the door was just being opened, and he was the first to enter.

Taking his seat by the font, he watched all the parishioners file in. The well- to- do Farmer Lodge came nearly last; and his young wife, who accompanied him, walked up the aisle with the shyness natural to a modest woman who had appeared thus for the first time. As all other eyes were fixed upon her, the youth's stare was not noticed now.

When he reached home his mother said 'Well?' before he had entered the room.

'She is not tall. She is rather short,' he replied.

'Ah!' said his mother, with satisfaction.

'But she's very pretty – very. In fact, she's lovely.' The youthful freshness of the yeoman's wife had evidently made an impression even on the somewhat hard nature of the boy.

'That's all I want to hear,' said his mother quickly. 'Now, spread the table- cloth. The hare you caught is very tender; but mind that nobody catches you. – You've never told me what sort of hands she had.'

'I have never seen 'em. She never took off her gloves.'

'What did she wear this morning?'

'A white bonnet and a silver- coloured gownd. It whewed and whistled so loud when it rubbed against the pews that the lady coloured up more than ever for very shame at the noise, and pulled it in to keep it from touching; but when she pushed into her seat, it whewed more than ever. Mr Lodge, he seemed pleased, and his waistcoat stuck out, and his great golden seals hung like a lord's; but she seemed to wish her noisy gownd anywhere but on her.'

'Not she! However, that will do now.'

These descriptions of the newly- married couple were continued from time to time by the boy at his mother's request, after any chance encounter he had had with them. But Rhoda Brook, though she might easily have seen young Mrs Lodge for herself by walking a couple of miles, would never attempt an excursion towards the quarter where the farmhouse lay. Neither did she, at the daily milking in the dairyman's yard on Lodge's outlying second farm, ever speak on the subject of the recent marriage. The dairyman, who rented the cows of Lodge, and knew perfectly the

tall milkmaid's history, with manly kindness always kept the gossip in the cow-barton from annoying Rhoda. But the atmosphere thereabout was full of the subject during the first days of Mrs Lodge's arrival; and from her boy's description and the casual words of the other milkers, Rhoda Brook could raise a mental image of the unconscious Mrs Lodge that was realistic as a photograph.

III A vision

One night, two or three weeks after the bridal return, when the boy was gone to bed, Rhoda sat a long time over the turf ashes that she had raked out in front of her to extinguish them. She contemplated so intently the new wife, as presented to her in her mind's eye over the embers, that she forgot the lapse of time. At last, wearied with her day's work, she too retired.

But the figure which had occupied her so much during this and the previous days was not to be banished at night. For the first time Gertrude Lodge visited the supplanted woman in her dreams. Rhoda Brook dreamed – since her assertion that she really saw, before falling asleep, was not to be believed – that the young wife, in the pale silk dress and white bonnet, but with features shockingly distorted, and wrinkled as by age, was sitting upon her chest as she lay. The pressure of Mrs Lodge's person grew heavier; the blue eyes peered cruelly into her face; and then the figure thrust forward its left hand mockingly, so as to make the wedding-ring it wore glitter in Rhoda's eyes. Maddened mentally, and nearly suffocated by pressure, the sleeper struggled; the incubus, still regarding her, withdrew to the foot of the bed, only, however, to come forward by degrees, resume her seat, and flash her left hand as before.

Gasping for breath, Rhoda, in a last desperate effort, swung out her right hand, seized the confronting spectre by its obtrusive left arm, and whirled it backward to the floor, starting up herself as she did so with a low cry.

'Oh, merciful heaven!' she cried, sitting on the edge of the bed in a cold sweat, 'that was not a dream – she was here!'

She could feel her antagonist's arm within her grasp even now – the very flesh and bone of it, as it seemed. She looked on the floor whither she had whirled the spectre, but there was nothing to be seen.

Rhoda Brook slept no more that night, and when she went milking at the next dawn they noticed how pale and haggard she looked. The milk that she drew quivered into the pail; her hand had not calmed even yet, and still retained the feel of the arm. She came home to breakfast as wearily as if it had been supper- time.

‘What was that noise in your chimmer, mother, last night?’ said her son. ‘You fell off the bed, surely?’

‘Did you hear anything fall? At what time?’

‘Just when the clock struck two.’

She could not explain, and when the meal was done went silently about her household work, the boy assisting her, for he hated going afield on the farms, and she indulged his reluctance. Between eleven and twelve the garden- gate clicked, and she lifted her eyes to the window. At the bottom of the garden, within the gate, stood the woman of her vision. Rhoda seemed transfixed.

‘Ah, she said she would come!’ exclaimed the boy, also observing her.

‘Said so – when? How does she know us?’

‘I have seen and spoken to her. I talked to her yesterday.’

‘I told you,’ said the mother, flushing indignantly, ‘never to speak to anybody in that house, or go near the place.’

‘I did not speak to her till she spoke to me. And I did not go near the place. I met her in the road.’

‘What did you tell her?’

‘Nothing. She said, “Are you the poor boy who had to bring the heavy load from market?” And she looked at my boots, and said they would not keep my feet dry if it came on wet, because they were so cracked. I told her I lived with my mother, and we had enough to do to keep ourselves, and that’s how it was; and she said then, “I’ll come and bring you some better boots, and see your mother.” She gives away things to other folks in the meads besides us.’

Mrs Lodge was by this time close to the door – not in her silk, as Rhoda had seen her in the bed- chamber, but in a morning hat, and gown of common light material, which became her better than

silk. On her arm she carried a basket.

The impression remaining from the night's experience was still strong. Brook had almost expected to see the wrinkles, the scorn, and the cruelty on her visitor's face. She would have escaped an interview, had escape been possible. There was, however, no back-door to the cottage, and in an instant the boy had lifted the latch to Mrs Lodge's gentle knock.

'I see I have come to the right house,' said she, glancing at the lad, and smiling. 'But I was not sure till you opened the door.'

The figure and action were those of the phantom; but her voice was so indescribably sweet, her glance so winning, her smile so tender, so unlike that of Rhoda's midnight visitant, that the latter could hardly believe the evidence of her senses. She was truly glad that she had not hidden away in sheer aversion, as she had been inclined to do. In her basket Mrs Lodge brought the pair of boots that she had promised to the boy, and other useful articles.

At these proofs of a kindly feeling towards her and hers, Rhoda's heart reproached her bitterly. This innocent young thing should have her blessing and not her curse. When she left them a light seemed gone from the dwelling. Two days later she came again to know if the boots fitted; and less than a fortnight after that paid Rhoda another call. On this occasion the boy was absent.

'I walk a good deal,' said Mrs Lodge, 'and your house is the nearest outside our own parish. I hope you are well. You don't look quite well.'

Rhoda said she was well enough; and indeed, though the paler of the two, there was more of the strength that endures in her well-defined features and large frame, than in the soft-cheeked young woman before her. The conversation became quite confidential as regarded their powers and weaknesses; and when Mrs Lodge was leaving, Rhoda said, 'I hope you will find this air agree with you, ma'am, and not suffer from the damp of the water-meads.'

The younger one replied that there was not much doubt of it, her general health being usually good. 'Though, now you remind me,' she added, 'I have one little ailment which puzzles me. It is nothing serious, but I cannot make it out.'

She uncovered her left hand and arm; and their outline

confronted Rhoda's gaze as the exact original of the limb she had beheld and seized in her dream. Upon the pink round surface of the arm were faint marks of an unhealthy colour, as if produced by a rough grasp. Rhoda's eyes became riveted on the discolorations; she fancied that she discerned in them the shape of her own four fingers.

'How did it happen?' she said mechanically.

'I cannot tell,' replied Mrs Lodge, shaking her head. 'One night when I was sound asleep, dreaming I was away in some strange place, a pain suddenly shot into my arm there, and was so keen as to awaken me. I must have struck it in the daytime, I suppose, though I don't remember doing so.' She added, laughing, 'I tell my dear husband that it looks just as if he had flown into a rage and struck me there. Oh, I daresay it will soon disappear.'

'Ha, ha! Yes . . . On what night did it come?'

Mrs Lodge considered, and said it would be a fortnight ago on the morrow. 'When I awoke I could not remember where I was,' she added, 'till the clock striking two reminded me.'

She had named the night and the hour of Rhoda's spectral encounter, and Brook felt like a guilty thing. The artless disclosure startled her; she did not reason on the freaks of coincidence; and all the scenery of that ghastly night returned with double vividness to her mind.

'Oh, can it be,' she said to herself, when her visitor had departed, 'that I exercise a malignant power over people against my own will?' She knew that she had been silyly called a witch since her fall; but never having understood why that particular stigma had been attached to her, it had passed disregarded. Could this be the explanation, and had such things as this ever happened before?

Iv A suggestion

The summer drew on, and Rhoda Brook almost dreaded to meet Mrs Lodge again, notwithstanding that her feeling for the young wife amounted wellnigh to affection. Something in her own individuality seemed to convict Rhoda of crime. Yet a fatality sometimes would direct the steps of the latter to the outskirts of Holmstoke whenever she left her house for any other purpose than

her daily work; and hence it happened that their next encounter was out of doors. Rhoda could not avoid the subject which had so mystified her, and after the first few words she stammered, 'I hope your – arm is well again, ma'am?' She had perceived with consternation that Gertrude Lodge carried her left arm stiffly.

'No; it is not quite well. Indeed it is no better at all; it is rather worse. It pains me dreadfully sometimes.'

'Perhaps you had better go to a doctor, ma'am.'

She replied that she had already seen a doctor. Her husband had insisted upon her going to one. But the surgeon had not seemed to understand the afflicted limb at all; he had told her to bathe it in hot water, and she had bathed it, but the treatment had done no good.

'Will you let me see it?' said the milkwoman.

Mrs Lodge pushed up her sleeve and disclosed the place, which was a few inches above the wrist. As soon as Rhoda Brook saw it, she could hardly preserve her composure. There was nothing of the nature of a wound, but the arm at that point had a shrivelled look, and the outline of the four fingers appeared more distinct than at the former time. Moreover, she fancied that they were imprinted in precisely the relative position of her clutch upon the arm in the trance; the first finger towards Gertrude's wrist, and the fourth towards her elbow.

What the impress resembled seemed to have struck Gertrude herself since their last meeting. 'It looks almost like finger- marks,' she said; adding with a faint laugh, 'my husband says it is as if some witch, or the devil himself, had taken hold of me there, and blasted the flesh.'

Rhoda shivered. 'That's fancy,' she said hurriedly. 'I wouldn't mind it, if I were you.'

'I shouldn't so much mind it,' said the younger, with hesitation, 'if – if I hadn't a notion that it makes my husband – dislike me – no, love me less. Men think so much of personal appearance.'

'Some do – he for one.'

'Yes; and he was very proud of mine, at first.'

‘Keep your arm covered from his sight.’

‘Ah – he knows the disfigurement is there!’ She tried to hide the tears that filled her eyes.

‘Well, ma’am, I earnestly hope it will go away soon.’

And so the milkwoman’s mind was chained anew to the subject by a horrid sort of spell as she returned home. The sense of having been guilty of an act of malignity increased, affect as she might to ridicule her superstition. In her secret heart Rhoda did not altogether object to a slight diminution of her successor’s beauty, by whatever means it had come about; but she did not wish to inflict upon her physical pain. For though this pretty young woman had rendered impossible any reparation which Lodge might have made Rhoda for his past conduct, everything like resentment at the unconscious usurpation had quite passed away from the elder’s mind.

If the sweet and kindly Gertrude Lodge only knew of the scene in the bed-chamber, what would she think? Not to inform her of it seemed treachery in the presence of her friendliness; but tell she could not of her own accord –neither could she devise a remedy.

She mused upon the matter the greater part of the night; and the next day, after the morning milking, set out to obtain another glimpse of Gertrude Lodge if she could, being held to her by a gruesome fascination. By watching the house from a distance the milkmaid was presently able to discern the farmer’s wife in a ride she was taking alone –probably to join her husband in some distant field. Mrs Lodge perceived her, and cantered in her direction.

‘Good morning, Rhoda!’ Gertrude said, when she had come up. ‘I was going to call.’

Rhoda noticed that Mrs Lodge held the reins with some difficulty.

‘I hope – the bad arm,’ said Rhoda.

‘They tell me there is possibly one way by which I might be able to find out the cause, and so perhaps the cure, of it,’ replied the other anxiously. ‘It is by going to some clever man over in Egdon Heath. They did not know if he was still alive – and I cannot remember his name at this moment; but they said that you knew

more of his movements than anybody else hereabout, and could tell me if he were still to be consulted. Dear me –what was his name? But you know.’

‘Not Conjuror Trendle?’ said her thin companion, turning pale.

‘Trendle – yes. Is he alive?’

‘I believe so,’ said Rhoda, with reluctance.

‘Why do you call him conjuror?’

‘Well – they say – they used to say he was a – he had powers other folks have not.’

‘Oh, how could my people be so superstitious as to recommend a man of that sort! I thought they meant some medical man. I shall think no more of him.’

Rhoda looked relieved, and Mrs Lodge rode on. The milkwoman had inwardly seen, from the moment she heard of her having been mentioned as a reference for this man, that there must exist a sarcastic feeling among the work- folk that a sorceress would know the whereabouts of the exorcist. They suspected her, then. A short time ago this would have given no concern to a woman of her common- sense. But she had a haunting reason to be superstitious now; and she had been seized with sudden dread that this Conjuror Trendle might name her as the malignant influence which was blasting the fair person of Gertrude, and so lead her friend to hate her for ever, and to treat her as some fiend in human shape.

But all was not over. Two days after, a shadow intruded into the window- pattern thrown on Rhoda Brook’s floor by the afternoon sun. The woman opened the door at once, almost breathlessly.

‘Are you alone?’ said Gertrude. She seemed to be no less harassed and anxious than Brook herself.

‘Yes,’ said Rhoda.

‘The place on my arm seems worse, and troubles me!’ the young farmer’s wife went on. ‘It is so mysterious! I do hope it will not be a permanent blemish. I have again been thinking of what they said about Conjuror Trendle. I don’t really believe in such men, but I should not mind just visiting him, from curiosity – though on no

account must my husband know. Is it far to where he lives?’

‘Yes – five miles,’ said Rhoda backwardly. ‘In the heart of Egdon.’

‘Well, I should have to walk. Could not you go with me to show me the way – say tomorrow afternoon?’

‘Oh, not I – that is,’ the milkwoman murmured, with a start of dismay. Again the dread seized her that something to do with her fierce act in the dream might be revealed, and her character in the eyes of the most useful friend she had ever had be ruined irretrievably.

Mrs Lodge urged, and Rhoda finally assented, though with much misgiving. Sad as the journey would be to her, she could not conscientiously stand in the way of a possible remedy for her patron’s strange affliction. It was agreed that, to escape suspicion of their mystic intent, they should meet at the edge of the heath, at the corner of a plantation which was visible from the spot where they now stood.

v Conjuror Trendle

By the next afternoon Rhoda would have done anything to escape this inquiry. But she had promised to go. Moreover, there was a horrid fascination at times in becoming instrumental in throwing such possible light on her own character as would reveal her to be something greater in the occult world than she had ever herself suspected.

She started just before the time of day mentioned between them, and half an hour’s brisk walking brought her to the south-eastern extension of the Egdon tract of country, where the fir plantation was. A slight figure, cloaked and veiled, was already there. Rhoda recognized, almost with a shudder, that Mrs Lodge bore her left arm in a sling.

They hardly spoke to each other, and immediately set out on their climb into the interior of this solemn country, which stood high above the rich alluvial soil they had left half an hour before. It was a long walk; thick clouds made the atmosphere dark, though it was as yet only early afternoon; and the wind howled dismally over the hills of the heath – not improbably the same heath which had

witnessed the agony of the Wessex King Ina, presented to after- ages as Lear. Gertrude Lodge talked most, Rhoda replying with monosyllabic preoccupation. She had a strange dislike to walking on the side of her companion where hung the afflicted arm, moving round to the other when inadvertently near it. Much heather had been brushed by their feet when they descended upon a cart- track, beside which stood the house of the man they sought.

He did not profess his remedial practices openly, or care anything about their continuance, his direct interests being those of a dealer in furze, turf, 'sharp sand', and other local products. Indeed, he affected not to believe largely in his own powers, and when warts that had been shown him for cure miraculously disappeared – which it must be owned they infallibly did – he would say lightly, 'Oh, I only drink a glass of grog upon 'em – perhaps it's all chance,' and immediately turn the subject.

He was at home when they arrived, having in fact seen them descending into his valley. He was a grey- bearded man, with a reddish face, and he looked singularly at Rhoda the first moment he beheld her. Mrs Lodge told him her errand; and then with words of self- disparagement he examined her arm.

'Medicine can't cure it,' he said promptly. "'Tis the work of an enemy.'

Rhoda shrank into herself, and drew back.

'An enemy? What enemy?' asked Mrs Lodge.

He shook his head. 'That's best known to yourself,' he said. 'If you like I can show the person to you, though I shall not myself know who it is. I can do no more; and don't wish to do that.'

She pressed him; on which he told Rhoda to wait outside where she stood, and took Mrs Lodge into the room. It opened immediately from the door; and, as the latter remained ajar, Rhoda Brook could see the proceedings without taking part in them. He brought a tumbler from the dresser, nearly filled it with water, and fetching an egg, prepared it in some private way; after which he broke it on the edge of the glass, so that the white went in and the yolk remained. As it was getting gloomy, he took the glass and its contents to the window, and told Gertrude to watch them closely. They leant over the table together, and the milkwoman could see

the opaline hue of the egg- fluid changing form as it sank in the water, but she was not near enough to define the shape that it assumed.

‘Do you catch the likeness of any face or figure as you look?’ demanded the conjuror of the young woman.

She murmured a reply, in tones so low as to be inaudible to Rhoda, and continued to gaze intently into the glass. Rhoda turned, and walked a few steps away.

When Mrs Lodge came out, and her face was met by the light, it appeared exceedingly pale – as pale as Rhoda’s – against the sad dun shades of the upland’s garniture. Trendle shut the door behind her, and they at once started homeward together. But Rhoda perceived that her companion had quite changed.

‘Did he charge much?’ she asked tentatively.

‘Oh no – nothing. He would not take a farthing,’ said Gertrude.

‘And what did you see?’ inquired Rhoda.

‘Nothing I – care to speak of.’ The constraint in her manner was remarkable; her face was so rigid as to wear an oldened aspect, faintly suggestive of the face in Rhoda’s bed- chamber.

‘Was it you who first proposed coming here?’ Mrs Lodge suddenly inquired, after a long pause. ‘How very odd, if you did!’

‘No. But I am not sorry we have come, all things considered,’ she replied. For the first time a sense of triumph possessed her, and she did not altogether deplore that the young thing at her side should learn that their lives had been antagonized by other influences than their own.

The subject was no more alluded to during the long and dreary walk home. But in some way or other a story was whispered about the many- dairied Swenn valley that winter that Mrs Lodge’s gradual loss of the use of her left arm was owing to her being ‘overlooked’ by Rhoda Brook. The latter kept her own counsel about the incubus, but her face grew sadder and thinner; and in the spring she and her boy disappeared from the neighbourhood of Holmstoke.

Half a dozen years passed away, and Mr and Mrs Lodge's married experience sank into prosiness, and worse. The farmer was usually gloomy and silent: the woman whom he had wooed for her grace and beauty was contorted and disfigured in the left limb; moreover, she had brought him no child, which rendered it likely that he would be the last of a family who had occupied that valley for some two hundred years. He thought of Rhoda Brook and her son; and feared this might be a judgement from heaven upon him.

The once blithe- hearted and enlightened Gertrude was changing into an irritable, superstitious woman, whose whole time was given to experimenting upon her ailment with every quack remedy she came across. She was honestly attached to her husband, and was ever secretly hoping against hope to win back his heart again by regaining some at least of her personal beauty. Hence it arose that her closet was lined with bottles, packets, and ointment-pots of every description – nay, bunches of mystic herbs, charms, and books of necromancy, which in her schoolgirl time she would have ridiculed as folly.

'Damned if you won't poison yourself with these apothecary messes and witch mixtures some time or other,' said her husband, when his eye chanced to fall upon the multitudinous array.

She did not reply, but turned her sad, soft glance upon him in such heart- swollen reproach that he looked sorry for his words, and added, 'I only meant it for your good, you know, Gertrude.'

'I'll clear out the whole lot, and destroy them,' said she huskily, 'and attempt such remedies no more!'

'You want somebody to cheer you,' he observed. 'I once thought of adopting a boy; but he is too old now. And he is gone away I don't know where.'

She guessed to whom he alluded; for Rhoda Brook's story had in the course of years become known to her; though not a word had ever passed between her husband and herself on the subject. Neither had she ever spoken to him of her visit to Conjuror Trendle, and of what was revealed to her, or she thought was revealed to her, by that solitary heath- man.

She was now five- and- twenty; but she seemed older. 'Six years of marriage, and only a few months of love,' she sometimes

whispered to herself. And then she thought of the apparent cause, and said, with a tragic glance at her withering limb, 'If I could only again be as I was when he first saw me!'

She obediently destroyed her nostrums and charms; but there remained a hankering wish to try something else – some other sort of cure altogether. She had never revisited Trendle since she had been conducted to the house of the solitary by Rhoda against her will; but it now suddenly occurred to Gertrude that she would, in a last desperate effort at deliverance from this seeming curse, again seek out the man, if he yet lived. He was entitled to a certain credence, for the indistinct form he had raised in the glass had undoubtedly resembled the only woman in the world who – as she now knew, though not then – could have a reason for bearing her ill-will. The visit should be paid.

This time she went alone, though she nearly got lost on the heath, and roamed a considerable distance out of her way. Trendle's house was reached at last, however: he was not indoors, and instead of waiting at the cottage she went to where his bent figure was pointed out to her at work a long way off. Trendle remembered her, and laying down the handful of furze-roots which he was gathering and throwing into a heap, he offered to accompany her in her homeward direction, as the distance was considerable and the days were short. So they walked together, his head bowed nearly to the earth, and his form of a colour with it.

'You can send away warts and other excrescences, I know,' she said; 'why can't you send away this?' And the arm was uncovered.

'You think too much of my powers!' said Trendle; 'and I am old and weak now, too. No, no; it is too much for me to attempt in my own person. What have ye tried?'

She named to him some of the hundred medicaments and counterspells which she had adopted from time to time. He shook his head.

'Some were good enough,' he said approvingly; 'but not many of them for such as this. This is of the nature of a blight, not of the nature of a wound; and if you ever do throw it off, it will be all at once.'

'If I only could!'

‘There is only one chance of doing it known to me. It has never failed in kindred afflictions, – that I can declare. But it is hard to carry out, and especially for a woman.’

‘Tell me!’ said she.

‘You must touch with the limb the neck of a man who’s been hanged.’

She started a little at the image he had raised.

‘Before he’s cold – just after he’s cut down,’ continued the conjuror impassively.

‘How can that do good?’

‘It will turn the blood and change the constitution. But, as I say, to do it is hard. You must get into jail, and wait for him when he’s brought off the gallows. Lots have done it, though perhaps not such pretty women as you. I used to send dozens for skin complaints. But that was in former times. The last I sent was in ’13 – near twenty years ago.’

He had no more to tell her; and, when he had put her into a straight track homeward, turned and left her, refusing all money as at first.

vII A rIdE

The communication sank deep into Gertrude’s mind. Her nature was rather a timid one; and probably of all remedies that the white wizard could have suggested there was not one which would have filled her with so much aversion as this, not to speak of the immense obstacles in the way of its adoption.

Casterbridge, the county- town, was a dozen or fifteen miles off; and though in those days, when men were executed for horse-stealing, arson, and burglary, an assize seldom passed without a hanging, it was not likely that she could get access to the body of the criminal unaided. And the fear of her husband’s anger made her reluctant to breathe a word of Trendle’s suggestion to him or to anybody about him.

She did nothing for months, and patiently bore her disfigurement as before. But her woman’s nature, craving for renewed love, through the medium of renewed beauty (she was but

twenty- five), was ever stimulating her to try what, at any rate, could hardly do her any harm. 'What came by a spell will go by a spell surely,' she would say. Whenever her imagination pictured the act she shrank in terror from the possibility of it: then the words of the conjuror, 'It will turn your blood,' were seen to be capable of a scientific no less than a ghastly interpretation; the mastering desire returned, and urged her on again.

There was at this time but one county paper, and that her husband only occasionally borrowed. But oldfashioned days had old- fashioned means, and news was extensively conveyed by word of mouth from market to market or from fair to fair; so that, whenever such an event as an execution was about to take place, few within a radius of twenty miles were ignorant of the coming sight; and, so far as Holmstoke was concerned, some enthusiasts had been known to walk all the way to Casterbridge and back in one day, solely to witness the spectacle. The next assizes were in March; and when Gertrude Lodge heard that they had been held, she inquired stealthily at the inn as to the result, as soon as she could find opportunity.

She was, however, too late. The time at which the sentences were to be carried out had arrived, and to make the journey and obtain admission at such short notice required at least her husband's assistance. She dared not tell him, for she had found by delicate experiment that these smouldering village beliefs made him furious if mentioned, partly because he half entertained them himself. It was therefore necessary to wait for another opportunity.

Her determination received a fillip from learning that two epileptic children had attended from this very village of Holmstoke many years before with beneficial results, though the experiment had been strongly condemned by the neighbouring clergy. April, May, June passed; and it is no overstatement to say that by the end of the last- named month Gertrude wellnigh longed for the death of a fellow- creature. Instead of her formal prayers each night, her unconscious prayer was, 'O Lord, hang some guilty or innocent person soon!'

This time she made earlier inquiries, and was altogether more systematic in her proceedings. Moreover, the season was summer, between the haymaking and the harvest, and in the leisure thus

afforded her husband had been holiday- taking away from home.

The assizes were in July, and she went to the inn as before. There was to be one execution – only one – for arson.

Her greatest problem was not how to get to Casterbridge, but what means she should adopt for obtaining admission to the jail. Though access for such purposes had formerly never been denied, the custom had fallen into desuetude; and in contemplating her possible difficulties, she was again almost driven to fall back upon her husband. But, on sounding him about the assizes, he was so uncommunicative, so more than usually cold, that she did not proceed, and decided that whatever she did she would do alone.

Fortune, obdurate hitherto, showed her unexpected favour. On the Thursday before the Saturday fixed for the execution, Lodge remarked to her that he was going away from home for another day or two on business at a fair, and that he was sorry he could not take her with him.

She exhibited on this occasion so much readiness to stay at home that he looked at her in surprise. Time had been when she would have shown deep disappointment at the loss of such a jaunt. However, he lapsed into his usual taciturnity, and on the day named left Holmstoke.

It was now her turn. She at first had thought of driving, but on reflection held that driving would not do, since it would necessitate her keeping to the turnpike- road, and so increase by tenfold the risk of her ghastly errand being found out. She decided to ride, and avoid the beaten track, notwithstanding that in her husband's stables there was no animal just at present which by any stretch of imagination could be considered a lady's mount, in spite of his promise before marriage to always keep a mare for her. He had, however, many horses, fine ones of their kind; and among the rest was a serviceable creature, an equine Amazon, with a back as broad as a sofa, on which Gertrude had occasionally taken an airing when unwell. This horse she chose.

On Friday afternoon one of the men brought it round. She was dressed, and before going down looked at her shrivelled arm. 'Ah!' she said to it, 'if it had not been for you this terrible ordeal would have been saved me!'

When strapping up the bundle in which she carried a few articles of clothing, she took occasion to say to the servant, 'I take these in case I should not get back tonight from the person I am going to visit. Don't be alarmed if I am not in by ten, and close up the house as usual. I shall be at home tomorrow for certain.' She meant then to privately tell her husband: the deed accomplished was not like the deed projected. He would almost certainly forgive her.

And then the pretty palpitating Gertrude Lodge went from her husband's homestead; but though her goal was Casterbridge she did not take the direct route thither through Stickelford. Her cunning course at first was in precisely the opposite direction. As soon as she was out of sight, however, she turned to the left, by a road which led into Egdon, and on entering the heath wheeled round, and set out in the true course, due westerly. A more private way down the county could not be imagined; and as to direction, she had merely to keep her horse's head to a point a little to the right of the sun. She knew that she would light upon a furze- cutter or cottager of some sort from time to time, from whom she might correct her bearing.

Though the date was comparatively recent, Egdon was much less fragmentary in character than now. The attempts – successful and otherwise – at cultivation on the lower slopes, which intrude and break up the original heath into small detached heaths, had not been carried far: Enclosure Acts had not taken effect, and the banks and fences which now exclude the cattle of those villagers who formerly enjoyed rights of commonage thereon, and the carts of those who had turbary privileges which kept them in firing all the year round, were not erected. Gertrude therefore rode along with no other obstacles than the prickly furze- bushes, the mats of heather, the white water- courses, and the natural steeps and declivities of the ground.

Her horse was sure, if heavy- footed and slow, and though a draught animal, was easy- paced; had it been otherwise, she was not a woman who could have ventured to ride over such a bit of country with a half- dead arm. It was therefore nearly eight o'clock when she drew rein to breathe the mare on the last outlying high point of heath- land towards Casterbridge, previous to leaving Egdon for the cultivated valleys.

She halted before a pond, flanked by the ends of two hedges; a railing ran through the centre of the pond, dividing it in half. Over the railing she saw the low green country; over the green trees the roofs of the town; over the roofs a white flat facade, denoting the entrance to the county jail. On the roof of this front specks were moving about; they seemed to be workmen erecting something. Her flesh crept. She descended slowly, and was soon amid corn- fields and pastures. In another half- hour, when it was almost dusk, Gertrude reached the White Hart, the first inn of the town on that side.

Little surprise was excited by her arrival: farmers' wives rode on horseback then more than they do now; though, for that matter, Mrs Lodge was not imagined to be a wife at all; the inn- keeper supposed her some harum- skarum young woman who had come to attend 'hang- fair' next day. Neither her husband nor herself ever dealt in Casterbridge market, so that she was unknown. While dismounting she beheld a crowd of boys standing at the door of a harness- maker's shop just above the inn, looking inside it with deep interest.

'What is going on there?' she asked of the ostler.

'Making the rope for tomorrow.'

She throbbed responsively, and contracted her arm.

' 'Tis sold by the inch afterwards,' the man continued. 'I could get you a bit, miss, for nothing, if you'd like?'

She hastily repudiated any such wish, all the more from a curious creeping feeling that the condemned wretch's destiny was becoming interwoven with her own; and having engaged a room for the night sat down to think.

Up to this time she had formed but the vaguest notions about her means of obtaining access to the prison. The words of the cunning- man returned to her mind. He had implied that she should use her beauty, impaired though it was, as a pass- key. In her inexperience she knew little about jail functionaries; she had heard of a high- sheriff and an under- sheriff, but dimly only. She knew, however, that there must be a hangman, and to the hangman she determined to apply.

vIII A wATer- side herMIT

At this date, and for several years after, there was a hangman to almost every jail. Gertrude found, on inquiry, that the Casterbridge official dwelt in a lonely cottage by a deep slow river flowing under the cliff on which the prison buildings were situate – the stream being the self- same one, though she did not know it, which watered the Stickleford and Holmstoke meads lower down in its course.

Having changed her dress, and before she had eaten or drunk – for she could not take her ease till she had ascertained some particulars – Gertrude pursued her way by a path along the water-side to the cottage indicated. Passing thus the outskirts of the jail, she discerned on the level roof over the gateway three rectangular lines against the sky, where the specks had been moving in her distant view; she recognized what the erection was, and passed quickly on. Another hundred yards brought her to the executioner's house, which a boy pointed out. It stood close to the same stream, and was hard by a weir, the waters of which emitted a steady roar.

While she stood hesitating the door opened, and an old man came forth shading a candle with one hand. Locking the door on the outside, he turned to a flight of wooden steps fixed against the end of the cottage, and began to ascend them, this being evidently the staircase to his bedroom. Gertrude hastened forward, but by the time she reached the foot of the ladder he was at the top. She called to him loudly enough to be heard above the roar of the weir; he looked down and said, 'What d'ye want here?'

'To speak to you a minute.'

The candle- light, such as it was, fell upon her imploring, pale, upturned face, and Davies (as the hangman was called) backed down the ladder. 'I was just going to bed,' he said; ' "Early to bed and early to rise," but I don't mind stopping a minute for such a one as you. Come into the house.' He reopened the door, and preceded her to the room within.

The implements of his daily work, which was that of a jobbing gardener, stood in a corner, and seeing probably that she looked rural, he said, 'If you want me to undertake country work I can't come, for I never leave Casterbridge for gentle nor simple – not I.

Though sometimes I make others leave,' he added formally.

'Yes, yes! That's it! Tomorrow!'

'Ah! I thought so. Well, what's the matter about that?' 'Tis no use to come here about the knot – folks do come continually, but I tell 'em one knot is as merciful as another if ye keep it under the ear. Is the unfortunate man a relation; or, I should say, perhaps' (looking at her dress) 'a person who's been in your employ?'

'No. What time is the execution?'

'The same as usual – twelve o'clock, or as soon after as the London mail- coach gets in. We always wait for that, in case of a reprieve.'

'Oh – a reprieve – I hope not!' she said involuntarily.

'Well, – he, he! – as a matter of business, so do I! But still, if ever a young fellow deserved to be let off, this one does; only just turned eighteen, and only present by chance when the rick was fired. Howsomever, there's not much risk of it, as they are obliged to make an example of him, there having been so much destruction of property that way lately.'

'I mean,' she explained, 'that I want to touch him for a charm, a cure of an affliction, by the advice of a man who has proved the virtue of the remedy.'

'Oh yes, miss! Now I understand. I've had such people come in past years. But it didn't strike me that you looked of a sort to require blood- turning. What's the complaint? The wrong kind for this, I'll be bound.'

'My arm.' She reluctantly showed the withered skin.

'Ah! – 'tis all a- scram!' said the hangman, examining it.

'Yes,' said she.

'Well,' he continued with interest, 'that is the class o'subject, I'm bound to admit! I like the look of the place; it is truly as suitable for the cure as any I ever saw. 'Twas a knowing- man that sent 'ee, whoever he was.'

'You can contrive for me all that's necessary?' she said breathlessly.

‘You should really have gone to the governor of the jail, and your doctor with ’ee, and given your name and address – that’s how it used to be done, if I recollect. Still, perhaps, I can manage it for a trifling fee.’

‘Oh, thank you! I would rather do it this way, as I should like it kept private.’

‘Lover not to know, eh?’

‘No – husband.’

‘Aha! Very well. I’ll get ’ee a touch of the corpse.’

‘Where is it now?’ she said, shuddering.

‘It? – *he* , you mean; he’s living yet. Just inside that little small winder up there in the glum.’ He signified the jail on the cliff above.

She thought of her husband and her friends. ‘Yes, of course,’ she said; ‘and how am I to proceed?’

He took her to the door. ‘Now, do you be waiting at the little wicket in the wall, that you’ll find up there in the lane, not later than one o’clock. I will open it from the inside, as I shan’t come home to dinner till he’s cut down. Good night. Be punctual; and if you don’t want anybody to know ’ee, wear a veil. Ah – once I had such a daughter as you!’

She went away, and climbed the path above, to assure herself that she would be able to find the wicket next day. Its outline was soon visible to her – a narrow opening in the outer wall of the prison precincts. The steep was so great that, having reached the wicket, she stopped a moment to breathe; and, looking back upon the water- side cot, saw the hangman again ascending his outdoor staircase. He entered the loft or chamber to which it led, and in a few minutes extinguished his light.

The town clock struck ten, and she returned to the White Hart as she had come.

IX A renCounTer

It was one o’clock on Saturday. Gertrude Lodge, having been admitted to the jail as above described, was sitting in a waiting-room within the second gate, which stood under a classic archway

of ashlar, then comparatively modern, and bearing the inscription, 'CovnTy jAIL: 1793.' This had been the facade she saw from the heath the day before. Near at hand was a passage to the roof on which the gallows stood.

The town was thronged, and the market suspended; but Gertrude had seen scarcely a soul. Having kept her room till the hour of the appointment, she had proceeded to the spot by a way which avoided the open space below the cliff where the spectators had gathered; but she could, even now, hear the multitudinous babble of their voices, out of which rose at intervals the hoarse croak of a single voice, uttering the words, 'Last dying speech and confession!' There had been no reprieve, and the execution was over; but the crowd still waited to see the body taken down.

Soon the persistent girl heard a trampling overhead, then a hand beckoned to her, and, following directions, she went out and crossed the inner paved court beyond the gatehouse, her knees trembling so that she could scarcely walk. One of her arms was out of its sleeve, and only covered by her shawl.

On the spot at which she had now arrived were two trestles, and before she could think of their purpose she heard heavy feet descending stairs somewhere at her back. Turn her head she would not, or could not, and, rigid in this position, she was conscious of a rough coffin passing her shoulder, borne by four men. It was open, and in it lay the body of a young man, wearing the smockfrock of a rustic, and fustian breeches. It had been thrown into the coffin so hastily that the skirt of the smockfrock was hanging over. The burden was temporarily deposited on the trestles.

By this time the young woman's state was such that a grey mist seemed to float before her eyes, on account of which, and the veil she wore, she could scarcely discern anything: it was as though she had nearly died, but was held up by a sort of galvanism.

'Now,' said a voice close at hand, and she was just conscious that it had been addressed to her.

By a last strenuous effort she advanced, at the same time hearing persons approaching behind her. She bared her poor curst arm; and Davies, uncovering the face of the corpse, took Gertrude's hand, and held it so that her arm lay across the dead man's neck,

upon a line the colour of an unripe blackberry, which surrounded it.

Gertrude shrieked: 'the turn o' the blood,' predicted by the conjuror, had taken place. But at that moment a second shriek rent the air of the enclosure: it was not Gertrude's, and its effect upon her was to make her start round.

Immediately behind her stood Rhoda Brook, her face drawn, and her eyes red with weeping. Behind Rhoda stood her own husband; his countenance lined, his eyes dim, but without a tear.

'D— n you! what are you doing here?' he said hoarsely.

'Hussy – to come between us and our child now!' cried Rhoda. 'This is the meaning of what Satan showed me in the vision! You are like her at last!' And clutching the bare arm of the younger woman, she pulled her unresistingly back against the wall. Immediately Brook had loosened her hold the fragile young Gertrude slid down against the feet of her husband. When he lifted her up she was unconscious.

The mere sight of the twain had been enough to suggest to her that the dead young man was Rhoda's son. At that time the relatives of an executed convict had the privilege of claiming the body for burial, if they chose to do so; and it was for this purpose that Lodge was awaiting the inquest with Rhoda. He had been summoned by her as soon as the young man was taken in the crime, and at different times since; and he had attended in court during the trial. This was the 'holiday' he had been indulging in of late. The two wretched parents had wished to avoid exposure; and hence had come themselves for the body, a waggon and sheet for its conveyance and covering being in waiting outside.

Gertrude's case was so serious that it was deemed advisable to call to her the surgeon who was at hand. She was taken out of the jail into the town; but she never reached home alive. Her delicate vitality, sapped perhaps by the paralysed arm, collapsed under the double shock that followed the severe strain, physical and mental, to which she had subjected herself during the previous twenty- four hours. Her blood had been 'turned' indeed –too far. Her death took place in the town three days after.

Her husband was never seen in Casterbridge again; once only in the old market place at Anglebury, which he had so much

frequented, and very seldom in public anywhere. Burdened at first with moodiness and remorse, he eventually changed for the better, and appeared as a chastened and thoughtful man. Soon after attending the funeral of his poor young wife he took steps towards giving up the farms in Holmstoke and the adjoining parish, and, having sold every head of his stock, he went away to Port- Bredy, at the other end of the county, living there in solitary lodgings till his death two years later of a painless decline. It was then found that he had bequeathed the whole of his not inconsiderable property to a reformatory for boys, subject to the payment of a small annuity to Rhoda Brook, if she could be found to claim it.

For some time she could not be found; but eventually she reappeared in her old parish, – absolutely refusing, however, to have anything to do with the provision made for her. Her monotonous milking at the dairy was resumed, and followed for many long years, till her form became bent, and her once abundant dark hair white and worn away at the forehead – perhaps by long pressure against the cows. Here, sometimes, those who knew her experiences would stand and observe her, and wonder what sombre thoughts were beating inside that impassive, wrinkled brow, to the rhythm of the alternating milkstreams.

The Thieves Who Couldn't Help Sneezing

Many years ago, when oak- trees now past their prime were about as large as elderly gentlemen's walking- sticks, there lived in Wessex a yeoman's son, whose name was Hubert. He was about fourteen years of age, and was as remarkable for his candour and lightness of heart as for his physical courage, of which, indeed, he was a little vain.

One cold Christmas Eve his father, having no other help at hand, sent him on an important errand to a small town several miles from home. He travelled on horseback, and was detained by the business till a late hour of the evening. At last, however, it was completed; he returned to the inn, the horse was saddled, and he started on his way. His journey homeward lay through the Vale of Blackmore, a fertile but somewhat lonely district, with heavy clay roads and crooked lanes. In those days, too, a great part of it was thickly wooded.

It must have been about nine o'clock when, riding along amid the overhanging trees upon his stout- legged cob Jerry, and singing a Christmas carol, to be in harmony with the season, Hubert fancied that he heard a noise among the boughs. This recalled to his mind that the spot he was traversing bore an evil name. Men had been waylaid there. He looked at Jerry, and wished he had been of any other colour than light grey; for on this account the docile animal's form was visible even here in the dense shade. 'What do I care?' he said aloud, after a few minutes of reflection. 'Jerry's legs are too nimble to allow any highwayman to come near me.'

'Ha! ha! indeed,' was said in a deep voice; and the next moment a man darted from the thicket on his right hand, another man from the thicket on his left hand, and another from a tree-trunk a few yards ahead. Hubert's bridle was seized, he was pulled from his horse, and although he struck out with all his might, as a brave boy would naturally do, he was overpowered. His arms were tied behind him, his legs bound tightly together, and he was thrown into the ditch. The robbers, whose faces he could now dimly

perceive to be artificially blackened, at once departed, leading off the horse.

As soon as Hubert had a little recovered himself, he found that by great exertion he was able to extricate his legs from the cord; but, in spite of every endeavour, his arms remained bound as fast as before. All, therefore, that he could do was to rise to his feet and proceed on his way with his arms behind him, and trust to chance for getting them unfastened. He knew that it would be impossible to reach home on foot that night, and in such a condition; but he walked on. Owing to the confusion which this attack caused in his brain, he lost his way, and would have been inclined to lie down and rest till morning among the dead leaves had he not known the danger of sleeping without wrappers in a frost so severe. So he wandered further onwards, his arms wrung and numbed by the cord which pinioned him and his heart aching for the loss of poor Jerry, who never had been known to kick, or bite, or show a single vicious habit. He was not a little glad when he discerned through the trees a distant light. Towards this he made his way, and presently found himself in front of a large mansion with flanking wings, gables, and towers, the battlements and chimneys showing their shapes against the stars.

All was silent; but the door stood wide open, it being from this door that the light shone which had attracted him. On entering he found himself in a vast apartment arranged as a dining- hall, and brilliantly illuminated. The walls were covered with a great deal of dark wainscoting, formed into moulded panels, carvings, closet-doors, and the usual fittings of a house of that kind. But what drew his attention most was the large table in the midst of the hall, upon which was spread a sumptuous supper, as yet untouched. Chairs were placed around, and it appeared as if something had occurred to interrupt the meal just at the time when all were ready to begin.

Even had Hubert been so inclined, he could not have eaten in his helpless state, unless by dipping his mouth in the dishes, like a pig or cow. He wished first to obtain assistance; and was about to penetrate further into the house for that purpose when he heard hasty footsteps in the porch and the words, 'Be quick!' uttered in the deep voice which had reached him when he was dragged from the horse. There was only just time for him to dart under the table before three men entered the dining- hall. Peeping from beneath the

hanging edges of the tablecloth, he perceived that their faces, too, were blackened, which at once removed any remaining doubts he may have felt that these were the same thieves.

‘Now, then,’ said the first – the man with the deep voice – ‘let us hide ourselves. They will all be back again in a minute. That was a good trick to get them out of the house – eh?’

‘Yes. You well imitated the cries of a man in distress,’ said the second.

‘Excellently,’ said the third.

‘But they will soon find out that it was a false alarm. Come, where shall we hide? It must be some place we can stay in for two or three hours, till all are in bed and asleep. Ah! I have it. Come this way! I have learnt that the further closet is not opened once in a twelvemonth; it will serve our purpose exactly.’

The speaker advanced into a corridor which led from the hall. Creeping a little farther forward, Hubert could discern that the closet stood at the end, facing the dining-hall. The thieves entered it, and closed the door. Hardly breathing, Hubert glided forward, to learn a little more of their intention, if possible; and, coming close, he could hear the robbers whispering about the different rooms where the jewels, plate, and other valuables of the house were kept, which they plainly meant to steal.

They had not been long in hiding when a gay chattering of ladies and gentlemen was audible on the terrace without. Hubert felt that it would not do to be caught prowling about the house, unless he wished to be taken for a robber himself; and he slipped softly back to the hall, out at the door, and stood in a dark corner of the porch, where he could see everything without being himself seen. In a moment or two a whole troop of personages came gliding past him into the house. There were an elderly gentleman and lady, eight or nine young ladies, as many young men, besides half-a-dozen men-servants and maids. The mansion had apparently been quite emptied of its occupants.

‘Now, children and young people, we will resume our meal,’ said the old gentleman. ‘What the noise could have been I cannot understand. I never felt so certain in my life that there was a person being murdered outside my door.’

Then the ladies began saying how frightened they had been, and how they had expected an adventure, and how it had ended in nothing after all.

‘Wait a while,’ said Hubert to himself. ‘You’ll have adventure enough by- and- by, ladies.’

It appeared that the young men and women were married sons and daughters of the old couple, who had come that day to spend Christmas with their parents.

The door was then closed, Hubert being left outside in the porch. He thought this a proper moment for asking their assistance; and, since he was unable to knock with his hands, began boldly to kick the door.

‘Hullo! What disturbance are you making here?’ said a footman who opened it; and seizing Hubert by the shoulder, he pulled him into the dining- hall. ‘Here’s a strange boy I have found making a noise in the porch, Sir Simon.’

Everybody turned.

‘Bring him forward,’ said Sir Simon, the old gentleman before mentioned. ‘What were you doing there, my boy?’

‘Why, his arms are tied!’ said one of the ladies.

‘Poor fellow!’ said another.

Hubert at once began to explain that he had been waylaid on his journey home, robbed of his horse, and mercilessly left in this condition by the thieves.

‘Only to think of it!’ exclaimed Sir Simon.

‘That’s a likely story,’ said one of the gentleman- guests, incredulously.

‘Doubtful, hey?’ asked Sir Simon.

‘Perhaps he’s a robber himself,’ suggested a lady.

‘There is a curiously wild wicked look about him, certainly, now that I examine him closely,’ said the old mother.

Hubert blushed with shame; and, instead of continuing his story, and relating that the robbers were concealed in the house, he doggedly held his tongue, and half resolved to let them find out

their danger for themselves.

‘Well, untie him,’ said Sir Simon. ‘Come, since it is Christmas Eve, we’ll treat him well. Here, my lad; sit down in that empty seat at the bottom of the table, and make as good a meal as you can. When you have had your fill we will listen to more particulars of your story.’

The feast then proceeded; and Hubert, now at liberty, was not at all sorry to join in. The more they ate and drank the merrier did the company become; the wine flowed freely, the logs flared up the chimney, the ladies laughed at the gentlemen’s stories; in short, all went as noisily and as happily as a Christmas gathering in old times possibly could do.

Hubert, in spite of his hurt feelings at their doubts of his honesty, could not help being warmed both in mind and in body by the good cheer, the scene, and the example of hilarity set by his neighbours. At last he laughed as heartily at their stories and repartees as the old Baronet, Sir Simon, himself. When the meal was almost over one of the sons, who had drunk a little too much wine, after the manner of men in that century, said to Hubert, ‘Well, my boy, how are you? Can you take a pinch of snuff?’ He held out one of the snuff-boxes which were then becoming common among young and old throughout the country.

‘Thank you,’ said Hubert, accepting a pinch.

‘Tell the ladies who you are, what you are made of, and what you can do,’ the young man continued, slapping Hubert upon the shoulder.

‘Certainly,’ said our hero, drawing himself up, and thinking it best to put a bold face on the matter. ‘I am a travelling magician.’

‘Indeed!’

‘What shall we hear next?’

‘Can you call up spirits from the vasty deep, young wizard?’

‘I can conjure up a tempest in a cupboard,’ Hubert replied.

‘Ha- ha!’ said the old Baronet, pleasantly rubbing his hands. ‘We must see this performance. Girls, don’t go away: here’s something to be seen.’

‘Not dangerous, I hope?’ said the old lady.

Hubert rose from the table. ‘Hand me your snuffbox, please,’ he said to the young man who had made free with him. ‘And now,’ he continued, ‘without the least noise, follow me. If any of you speak it will break the spell.’

They promised obedience. He entered the corridor, and, taking off his shoes, went on tiptoe to the closet door, the guests advancing in a silent group at a little distance behind him. Hubert next placed a stool in front of the door, and, by standing upon it, was tall enough to reach to the top. He then, just as noiselessly, poured all the snuff from the box along the upper edge of the door, and, with a few short puffs of breath, blew the snuff through the chink into the interior of the closet. He held up his finger to the assembly, that they might be silent.

‘Dear me, what’s that?’ said the old lady, after a minute or two had elapsed.

A suppressed sneeze had come from inside the closet.

Hubert held up his finger again.

‘How very singular,’ whispered Sir Simon. ‘This is most interesting.’

Hubert took advantage of the moment to gently slide the bolt of the closet door into its place. ‘More snuff,’ he said, calmly.

‘More snuff,’ said Sir Simon. Two or three gentlemen passed their boxes, and the contents were blown in at that top of the closet. Another sneeze, not quite so well suppressed as the first, was heard: then another, which seemed to say that it would not be suppressed under any circumstances whatever. At length there arose a perfect storm of sneezes.

‘Excellent, excellent for one so young!’ said Sir Simon. ‘I am much interested in this trick of throwing the voice –called, I believe, ventriloquism.’

‘More snuff,’ said Hubert.

‘More snuff,’ said Sir Simon. Sir Simon’s man brought a large jar of the best scented Scotch.

Hubert once more charged the upper chink of the closet, and

blew the snuff into the interior, as before. Again he charged, and again, emptying the whole contents of the jar. The tumults of sneezes became really extraordinary to listen to – there was no cessation. It was like wind, rain, and sea, battling in a hurricane.

‘I believe there are men inside, and that it is no trick at all!’ exclaimed Sir Simon, the truth flashing on him.

‘There are,’ said Hubert. ‘They are come to rob the house; and they are the same who stole my horse.’

The sneezes changed to spasmodic groans. One of the thieves, hearing Hubert’s voice, cried, ‘Oh! mercy! mercy! let us out of this!’

‘Where’s my horse?’ said Hubert.

‘Tied to the tree in the hollow behind Short’s Gib bet. Mercy! mercy! let us out, or we shall die of suffocation!’

All the Christmas guests now perceived that this was no longer sport, but serious earnest. Guns and cudgels were procured; all the men-servants were called in, and arranged in position outside the closet. At a signal Hubert withdrew the bolt, and stood on the defensive. But the three robbers, far from attacking them, were found crouching in the corner, gasping for breath. They made no resistance; and, being pinioned, were placed in an out-house till the morning.

Hubert now gave the remainder of his story to the assembled company, and was profusely thanked for the services he had rendered. Sir Simon pressed him to stay over the night, and accept the use of the best bedroom the house afforded, which had been occupied by Queen Elizabeth and King Charles successively when on their visits to this part of the country. But Hubert declined, being anxious to find his horse Jerry, and to test the truth of the robbers’ statements concerning him.

Several of the guests accompanied Hubert to the spot behind the gibbet, alluded to by the thieves as where Jerry was hidden. When they reached the knoll and looked over, behold! there the horse stood, uninjured, and quite unconcerned. At sight of Hubert he neighed joyfully; and nothing could exceed Hubert’s gladness at finding him. He mounted, wished his friends ‘Good night!’ and cantered off in the direction they pointed out as his nearest way, reaching home safely about four o’clock in the morning.



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N° 08

樱花树下的清酒

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A Cup of Sake Beneath the Cherry Trees

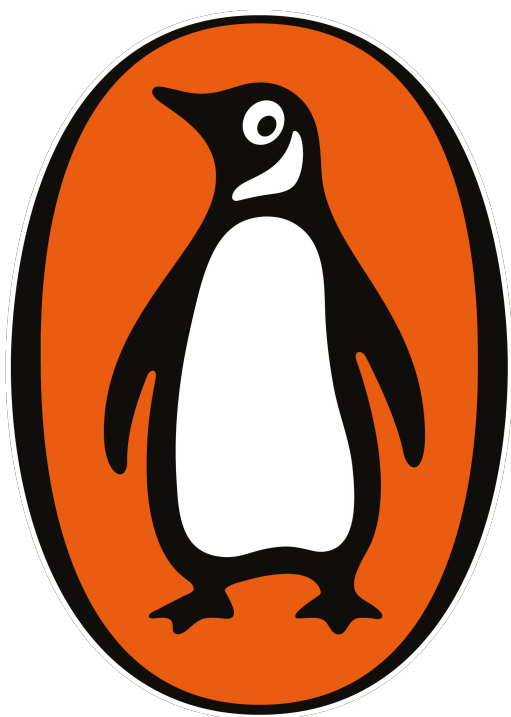
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A Cup of Sake Beneath the Cherry Trees

“在孤灯下独坐翻书，
与古人相伴，
真是乐何如哉！”



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LITTLE BLACK
CLASSICS

*此中文译本译自日语原文

櫻花樹下的清酒

序段

无聊之日，枯坐硯前，心中不由得杂想纷呈，乃随手写来；其间似有不近常理者，视为怪谈可也。

*

人生在世，最是贪图名位。

天皇固然尊贵至极，皇亲国戚也都是金枝玉叶，不是寻常人可以高攀；摄政关白^[1]在一人之下、万人之上，当然不容奢望。

至于身在大内，号称“舍人”的诸贵人，也不能等闲视之。其子孙即便破落，也自有其清姿贵格。相比之下，有一点身份就小人得志、自命不凡的人，就不足道了。

世上怕没有多少人把法师瞧得上眼吧。清少纳言就说过：人视之“犹如木屑”。说得很客观。法师一辈子高座说法，俯临众生，似有无上的权威，但对他来说，究竟有什么意义呢？增贺上人似乎说过，一心求名，是有违佛陀教义的。

不过真心舍弃现世、皈依佛门的人，倒颇为令人钦羨。

人都想有秀美的姿容。不过谈吐招人喜爱而并不多话的人，也让人整天面对都不觉得乏味。姿采虽然炫目，德行并不相符的人，就着实令人惋惜了。德行与容貌都是天生的，姑且不论。思想境界，通过持续不断的修习，能够日复一日地精进。天生容貌气质不错的人，如果腹中并无才学，又常与品貌俱无的人在一起，甚至被其习性品味所浸染，比他们还不如，就实在是我所不愿看到的。

我对于世上男子的期许，在于有修身齐家的真才实学，长于诗赋文章，通晓和歌乐理，精典章制度，而能够为人表率，这是最理想的。其次，工于书法，信笔挥洒皆成模样；善于歌咏，而能合乎音律节拍；对于席上别人的劝酒，如果推辞不了，也能略饮一点，以不伤应酬的和气，对于男人来说，这也是相当好的事。

事事能干却不解风情的男子，好比没有杯底的玉杯，中看不中用。

相比之下，彷徨无计、流离失所，整日里晨霜夜露、疲于奔命，

既怕听父母的训诫，又担心世人的讥讽，时时刻刻心中慌乱不安，而常常孤枕难眠，这样的日子，倒是其味无穷。

只要不一味沉迷于女色，且让女子们知道自己不是随意苟且之人，就比较得体了。

*

倘若无常野的露水和鸟部山的云烟都永不消散，世上的人，既不会老，也不会死，则纵然有大千世界，又哪里有生的情趣可言呢？世上的万物，原本是变动不居、生死相续的，也唯有如此，才妙不可言。

天生万物，而以人之寿命最长。其他如蜉蝣，早上出生晚上即死；如夏蝉，只活一夏而不知有春与秋。然而抱着从容恬淡的心态过日子，一年都显得漫长无尽；抱着贪婪执着的心态过日子，纵有千年也短暂如一夜之梦。

以过客之身，暂居于世上，等待老丑之年的必然到来，到底所图为何呢？寿则多辱。所以至迟四十岁以前，就应该瞑目谢世，这是天大好事。过了这个年纪，还没有自惭形秽的觉悟，仍然热衷于在众人中抛头露脸，等到了晚年，又溺爱子孙，奢望在有生之年看到他们功成名就，把心思一味地放在世俗的名利上，对人情物趣一无所知，这样的人，想起来就觉得可悲可厌。

*

世上最能迷惑人心的，莫过于色欲。人心实在是愚昧啊！

明知薰香并不能常驻，虽暂时附着于衣物之上，闻着也不禁心旌荡漾，难以自持。

昔年有位久米仙人，能够御空而行。当他飞过家乡时，看见河边洗衣女用双脚踏踩衣物，裸露出雪白的小腿，心中起了色欲，顿时丧失神通之力，从天上掉了下来。不过女人手足的丰满美艳如凝脂，是其天然的本色，能够让人心迷惑，倒在情理之中。

女子美发的修饰，最引人注目。至于她的人品、气质之类，就算隔帘相语，不睹其面，也能从二三语中听出大概来。女人的作为，能让男人心旌荡漾、神魂颠倒。她自己也为春思所催，不能安眠，以至于不惜自荐于枕席之间，行苟且之事。这都是心怀色欲的缘故。

人心的爱欲，根自本性，其源也远。能令人沾惹六尘的嗜欲虽然不少，舍而弃之，是可以办到的。唯有爱欲，不论老幼贤愚，莫不为其所惑，不能了断。

是以用女人的发丝搓为绳索，能够拴住象腿不令其动；以女人的木屐削而为笛，横吹之声能令秋日之牡鹿集于眼前。

想来这色欲之惑，是最需戒惧的。

*

住所要舒适自在，虽说浮生如逆旅，也不妨有盎然的意趣。

高人雅士幽居之所，月光流入时，自有一股沁人心脾的气象。今天的时尚，追逐的都是些恶俗的风格，一无可取。此间则是古木缭绕、园草杂生，一派天然野趣。篱围与墙垣的造设，要考虑到周边的景致宜人，日常器物的措置，也一定富有古朴之趣，没有一丝做作的痕迹，才可以让人到此则雅兴勃发。

唐土与日本之器物，有极精致的，都是工匠们费尽心思、百般雕琢而成，如果将它们错杂并陈，又将庭前的草木，一律违拗其天性，肆意摧残，看了真让人心生厌恶。这样的地方，又怎么能长住呢？我每见到这样的庭户，就想，搞得这么精致，谁知道它哪天不会顷刻间付诸一炬呢？

大体说来，从住所的布置情况，就能够推断主人的品位气质。

后德大寺大臣 [2] 在寝殿中拉了绳索，不让野鸢飞到庭院中来。前来造访的西行法师看见了，就问：“就算野鸢飞进来，又有什么关系？这位大人怎么会有这样的心胸呢？”据说他从此以后再也不来这里了。绫小路宫居住的小坂殿的梁柱上，也曾经拉了绳，我因此才想起西行法师的事。小坂殿中的人说：“这是因为乌鸦飞进来啄食池中的青蛙，亲王心痛那些青蛙的缘故。”如果是这样的话，就是一件大好事了。后德大寺大臣那么做，或者也有他的原因吧，只是我不知道而已。

*

神无月时节 [3]，我路过叫栗栖野的地方，到一个山村去。

沿着长满苔藓的小路走了很久，来到山村的深处，见到一个清寂的佛庵。被落叶所埋的引水管中，水声泠泠可闻，此外便寂然无声。在于伽棚上，看到散放着摘下的菊花、红叶，才知道此处仍有人居住。

如此简陋的地方，也有人居住，不禁感慨系之。又见前方庭园里，有一株果实沉沉的橘树，只是四周严实地围着一圈篱栅，有些人扫兴。如果没有这棵树，这里的天然之趣，或者就得以保全了吧？

*

与志趣相投的友人从容闲谈，不论所谈为饶有趣味之事，还是琐碎无聊之事，都能以性情相见，真是一大快乐。不过这样的人很难遇到。如果谈话的对象，意见与自己一味相同，则与自己独坐有何差异？

我辈倾谈之时，有完全倾向于对方意见的，也有意见略有分歧的，要争论起来，说“我的看法不是这样”“因此我的结论是”等等，在闲来无事时，都挺有意思的。有人对世道人心颇为不满，而我的想法则迥然不同，与之论辩一番，也可稍慰寂寥之心。然而毕竟心存隔阂，不能尽兴，和与知己晤对时的感觉不同。

*

在孤灯下独坐翻书，与古人相伴，真是乐何如哉！

书籍当中，《文选》的各卷都是富于情趣的作品，除此之外，如白居易的《白氏文集》、老子《道德经》及庄子《南华真经》等，都是佳作。本国历代诸博士的著述中，也常有高妙之作。

*

人如果立身简素，不慕豪奢，不敛财货，不贪图功名利禄，则可谓人中之上品也。自古以来，很少见到富贵贤人。

唐土有个许由，没有任何身外之物。有人见他用双手捧水喝，就送他一个水瓢。他将水瓢挂在树上，因为风吹得响动，听了心烦，就弃而不用，仍然用手捧水喝。此人心中，何其清澈啊！

还有个名叫孙晨的人，冬天没有被褥，只有蒿草一束，晚上睡在上面，早上便收起来。

唐土的人视之为高士，记入书中传之后世。此等之人若在我国，是无人记述的。

*

万物随四季的更替，各有其不同的情趣。

人都说，秋天的事物最有情趣。这话确乎不错。然而最使人心潮涌动的则莫过于春色。当此之际，啁啾鸟鸣中饱含春意，和煦的阳光下，幼草在墙根悄然萌动，而春意随之渐浓。此时霞光遍洒，众花含苞欲放，如不幸遇上连日风雨，则又仓皇殒落、飘散一地。此后则草木繁滋、天地转绿，其中触动人心、惹人愁思的，就多了。

橘之花，本就令人怀旧了；梅之香，也让人思虑往昔，牵惹旧

情；何况还有棣棠之花的艳光明丽，藤花的娇弱无依、我见犹怜。凡此种种，都令人逡巡流连，不能忘怀。

浴佛日与祭祀日的时候，到处装饰着葵花，初发的新叶与嫩枝，透出欣欣的生意，让人有清凉之感。于是有人说，这是人世间的情趣与人的恋世之心最为浓郁的时候，此话不假。五月间，要在门上插菖蒲驱邪，稻田里开始插稻秧，水鸡的鸣叫笃笃如叩门之声，都让人为之心动。六月里，穷人家的墙根开满了白色的夕颜花，到处燃起驱赶蚊虫的烟火，很有味道。六月末的大祓 [4] 也很有意思。

七夕的祭仪很是优雅。夜晚逐渐转凉，大雁飞来，在天际鸣叫，芦荻之叶开始变黄，早稻收割、晾晒等事务接踵而来。秋日，乃是农事最多的时节。劲风吹拂的晚秋之晨，也有趣。这样的情景，在《源氏物语》《枕草子》等书中都有过描述，然而相同的事物，亲身经历后，不妨自己也来描述一番。心中有所感触而不把它表达出来，不免会腹胀气闷，郁积不堪，所以就信手写下来。不过也没有必要拿给别人看，随手扔掉就是了。

冬日草木枯萎的景色，不下于秋色。早上起来，水边的草地上，散落着红叶，泛着白色的霜气；庭院的流水之上，寒烟缭绕，颇饶意趣。就要到年终了，看着世人忙着备置货物，心中也不免有所感触。

过腊月二十日后，月亮就见不着了，静夜里面没有什么可观赏的，只有一天的澄澈清寒，令人有寂寞之感。佛名会、祭陵使诸事都很有意思，也让人心怀崇敬。这个时候，朝中政事繁忙，又要为新春到来时的诸事务做好准备，还真不轻松。除夕夜宫中的追傩仪式与紧接着元日早上皇上的四方拜仪式，都非常有意思。

除夕，众人于午夜前手持松枝火把狂呼乱叫，四处叩门，奔跑起来好像双脚都没有着地，哪知道为了什么呢。天亮之后，到处寂静无声，只有旧年的余味在心头萦回，令人有怅然之感。除夕之夜原本是祭奠亡灵的时间，但现在京城已经没有这个风俗了，只在关东地区还有人这么做。这也是个让人产生兴趣的事。

元日的早晨，晴空万里，景色与昨日并无两样，但心情却大不相同，真是奇怪。京城里，通衢大道的两旁，家家户户都摆出了门松，一眼望去，绵延不绝，充满盎然的生机，令人心生喜爱，真是有味道啊。

*

有遁世者说：“我在世上已经了无牵挂，只对于时序节令的推移，还不能忘怀。”此话我深以为然。

*

人心是不待风吹而自落的花。以前的恋人，还记得她情深意切的话，但人已离我而去，形同路人。此种生离之痛，有甚于死别也。故见到染丝，有人会伤心；面对岔路，有人会悲泣。堀川院的百首和歌中有歌云：

旧垣今又来，
彼妹安在哉？
唯见萋萋处，
寂寞堇花开。

这种寂寞的景况，谁说没有呢。

*

死后的情景，是最令人伤心的。

死后中阴期间，遗体停在山寺里，亲戚朋友从各处云集而来，举行法事。一时间这里就显得拥挤嘈杂，让人心绪不宁。时间过得很快，不觉就是最后一天了，大家都意兴阑珊，彼此之间也没什么话说了，于是收拾行李，各自返回来处。回家之后，让人伤心的事恐怕会更多吧。

有人说：“这种事不要随便谈论，多考虑下活着的人吧。”这世道竟然有这样的言论，想起来真让人感到遗憾。

对亡人的追思，并不随岁月的流逝而消减，但古话说“去者日以疏”，其哀伤之情，已不如当初深切，乃至说起往事时，已是言笑如常。

遗骸葬于了无人迹的深山之中，只有在忌日才去洒扫一次。不久，坟上的碑碣便长出青苔，落叶也覆盖了墓地，来访的，只有日暮的风、夜半的月罢了。

怀念者在世时尚且如此，当其逝世之后，子孙只是听说其人，又如何会有由衷的缅怀呢？从此墓地就再无人凭吊，沦为无名荒坟，只有年年春草，令善感者望之动情。呜咽之苍松，不待千年就已伐而为薪，古墓也犁为田地，从此再无形迹可寻，可悲啊！

*

早晨起来，白雪飞舞，真是意趣盎然。又因有事要告诉某人，就

去了一封信，信中只字没有提到早晨的飞雪。对方回信说：“对这场雪作何感想，尊驾真是吝于一言。如此俗物，岂能与我言事？君胸中甚少情趣也。”这话着实令人回味。

这位友人如今已经故去，但这件小事，却令我难忘。

*

九月二十日，应某人的邀约，一起去赏月夜游。中途此人一时兴起，要去拜访他的一位友人。于是派人传达入内，我则站在荒芜的庭院中等他。四下里露气繁重，飘浮着薰香的气味，这幽居的住所，景致还不错。

那人不久便从屋里出来，我还在欣赏美景。从暗处望去，见主人送完客后，又把旁边的窗户推开一点，抬头望月。此时如果只是关门进屋，就毫无韵味了。她却不知道外面有人看到她推户赏月，所以此举当出于她平素的修养，绝不是做给人看的。

听说此主人不久即去世了。

*

被名利驱使，一辈子紧张劳累，是何等不明智的事啊！

只顾积累钱财，忽略了修身养性，钱财就只是招累买烦的东西。而“身后堆金拄北斗”，又把烦恼都留给了后人。凡夫俗子们就喜欢看到家中堆金砌银，十分无聊。乘高车、坐大马，穿金戴玉，在明白人看来，不仅讨厌，而且愚不可及。最好还是“捐金于山，沉珠于渊”。一味沉迷于利欲的人，可谓愚蠢之至。

人都想有不朽的盛名能够传诸后世。达官贵人，不一定是忠贞正直的人。名门之下，也有拙劣之辈，靠出身和运气跻身庙堂，甚至过着穷奢极欲的生活。相反，杰出的圣贤，一生地位卑下、怀才不遇的，也不乏其人。因此，一心渴慕高官显位的人，其愚蠢的程度，仅次于沉醉利欲的人。

还有想以出众的智慧与品行留名后世的人。然而这也是经不起推敲的：一般喜爱名誉的人，都喜欢听到世人的赞扬。只是不管是赞扬你的人，还是诋毁你的人，在世上都待不久，替你传名的人，也要不多久就消逝了。害怕愧对谁，希望得到谁的认可，又有什么意义呢？非议随声誉而起，身后之名毫无用处，执意去追求，实在也是愚蠢之举。

一心想变得智慧或者成为贤者的人，要知道虚伪出自智慧，一身才能让人一生烦恼。不管是经别人传授而掌握知识，还是经自己勤学

而掌握知识，都不能说有了真智慧。什么是真智慧呢？即要明白可与不可都一样的道理。至人无智、无德、无功、无名，没有人知道他，也没有人替他传名于后世。这样的人，并不是有意要变得大智若愚，而是已经超越贤与愚、得与失的区分，达到了更高的境界。

追逐世间浮名与虚利的痴愚之人，大略就有以上几类。实质世上万事皆非，没必要在意，也不值得期盼。

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因幡国有位入道的女儿容貌非凡，来求婚的人极多。但这女子平常只吃栗子，不进米面，其父就对求婚的众人说：“我这女儿，不是寻常之人，不可以与人婚配。”就这样把前来求婚的人都回绝了。

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五月初五，驱车去贺茂神社观看赛马，到后，发现围观的人极多，车上无法观看，就下了车，想到马场的围栏边去近看。然而那里更为拥挤，根本无法靠近。

这时发现对面一棵楝树上，有个法师蹲踞在树杈中间，手扶着身旁的树枝打瞌睡。每当眼看就要掉下来时，就会惊醒过来，如此反复再三。观众中有人嘲讽说：“真是个大蠢物，在这么高的树枝上还能安心睡觉？”

我听了这话，心中忽然有所触动，便应声道：“我等又怎知死期不近在眼前呢？还不是整天在这儿观看赛马，比那法师，岂不更蠢？”

众人闻言，都回头看着我，点头说：“足下所言极是，此事确实愚蠢。”于是一边说“请进、请进”，一边为我让开一席之地，使我得以近前。

其实这道理人人都知道，只不过在这种场合下，犹如现场说法，让人听了更有当头一棒、恍然大悟之感。人非木石，触景生情是情理之中的事。

*

有志于出家参悟佛乘、圆满功德的人，心中纵有万千难以舍弃、不能心安之事，也要当即放下。有人或者会想：“这件事随手就可以办了”，“那件事也随手就能办妥”，“这些事，为了不给将来留下麻烦，也免得让人嘲笑，还是先处理妥当为好”，“这么多年都忙碌过来了，这点事也不太费时间，还是不急这一时片刻吧”。如果这样，则无可逃避的事反而会越来越多，无穷无尽，最终永无修行之日。

世间略有慧根而有心向佛的人不少，但都耽误在这样的想法中，枉度了一生。遇到火灾要逃命时，哪有说“再等一等”的道理？为了保住性命，总会顾不上羞耻，抛下家中财物就跑。生命的迫促，也像大火一样不会等人。无常相逼，比水火之灾还要紧迫，也更难逃脱。死期一到，家中的老人、幼子，身受的君恩、人情，一切难舍之人事，也都不得不舍弃了。

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书写上人，即因长诵《法华经》而臻于六根清净之境的法师。

某日，上人在旅舍进房之际，听到用豆荚煮豆时发出的咕嘟咕嘟之声，似是豆子在对豆荚说：“君等是我近亲，为何如此无情地煮我，让我痛苦难当？”豆荚的毕剥爆裂之声，似又在回答说：“这不是我等的本意，我等被烧，也已不堪忍受其苦，实在无能为力啊！求你不要出语抱怨了。”

*

听到一个人的名字，心中就在想象其相貌，待见面之后，才发现与之前的想象完全不同。

听到过去的掌故，则容易联想到今日的某户人家，且也将今日之人物，与昔日之人物相比较。这些都是人之常情，不独我如此。

又有时候，眼前的所闻所见，让自己觉得过去某个时候也同样经历过，虽然记不起确切时间，但肯定确有其事。这种感觉，恐怕也不是我才有的吧？

*

没品位的事有：坐席四周常用之物多；砚上笔多；佛堂内佛像多；庭院草木山石多；家中子孙多；与人见面话多；祈愿文中自述的善行多。

虽多而百看不厌的什物有：文车上的书卷；尘冢上的积尘。

*

我不知道人为什么要为无聊所苦。不要用心于外物，最好的办法，是一个人独处。

一旦把心放在世俗，就免不了被它迷惑，失去自主。比如和别人交谈，总想博得别人的好感，就做不到言为心声了。又不免有和人嬉闹的时候，有和人争执的时候，以至于喜怒不定，妄念丛生，得失之心就再难放下。

如此执迷于尘世，陶醉其中，且又好发痴心梦想，全不悟我佛真谛。就算无法彻悟佛理，只要能了断俗缘，让此身清净，澄清俗务，让此心安宁，也还可以暂得此生之乐。生活、人事、技艺、学问诸般，都得放下，《摩诃止观》如是说。

*

有世上盛传的事，非当事之人，却知之甚详，一边与人说，一边向人打听，好不奇怪。偏远地区的和尚们尤其有此嗜好，尽皆热衷于打听俗事，好像是自己的事一样，然后滔滔不绝地说与他人听，真不知其何以知道得如此详尽！

*

对俗世盛传的奇闻异事津津乐道，实在是无聊。也有种人，当事情已流传很久了，他还懵然不知，是为清雅之人也。彼此熟稔的人之间经常谈论的话题、物事，只消片言只语，便能相互会意。

初来乍到者，则不知其所云，遂有身在局外之窘。此种情况，未免于人情世故有所不合，而品流低下的人必犯此病。

*

有人说：“书籍墨宝用薄绢装裱，容易损坏，真是没有办法。”顿阿听了说：“薄绢装裱的东西，两端有所破损，或其螺钿卷轴上的贝壳有所脱落，都是可喜的事。”真是超人一等的见识。又有人说，一部草子中的各册装帧不统一，看着令人极不舒服。弘融僧都却说：“把什么都弄得整齐划一，是无聊人才会做的事。就要参差残缺才好。”这话也品之有味。

把什么都弄得规整如一，确实令人难以忍受。没有完成的东西，保持其没有完成的样子，不仅别具趣味，还有意犹未尽之妙。又有人说：“建造皇宫时必定会留下若干未曾完成的地方。”

先贤所著的内外典籍中，也有不少残章断文。

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大纳言法印有一童仆，名叫乙鹤丸，常与某贵人相往来。

有天，乙鹤丸从那贵人处回来，法印问：“到哪里去了？”童仆答：“去某贵人家了。”“他是俗家人还是出家人？”

童仆两袖拢在胸前期期艾艾地说：“不……不太清楚，没见到他的头顶。”

不过，我倒想知道——为什么他不提议看看贵人身体的其他部分呢？ [5]

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关于赤舌日的诸种说法，阴阳道未曾提及。古人于此并不忌讳，近来有人说起，才讲究起来。民间的说法是：此日百事不顺。做事都不能圆满，到手之物也会放脱，有什么谋划都要落空。如此等等都是愚昧无知的迷信。在吉日里办的事，其顺利的和不顺利的，数量其实大致相当。

原因在于，世间本是变化无常的所在，各种可能都存在。人一旦开始做某事，就对结果满心期待。但人心是变幻不定的，事物的结果也因而不能确定，随时都在随人心而变化。这个道理，常人都不明白。古人云，吉日为恶必凶，凶日行善必吉，吉凶皆由人定，而非由日期定。

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有人初学射箭，就一次拿上两支箭瞄准箭靶。

师父说：“初学者不要一次拿两支箭。想到后面还有一箭的机会，对第一箭，就不会用全心。射箭时心中不能患得患失，要专注于这一箭，而且要志在必得。”师父当前，就算只发两箭，也不能忽略其中之一。这中间的懈怠之心，自己可能并未意识到，但师父却能洞察。同样的道理，可以用在其他事情上。

学道之人，晚上惦记着明早的功课，早晨又惦记着当晚的功课，看起来是日催一日，勤奋精进，但其间有刹那的懈怠之心，自己恐怕是没有察觉的吧？为何只专注于当前的一念一世，就这么难呢？

*

有人在闲聊中说：“有个买牛的人，与卖牛的人说好明日付钱后就把牛牵走，不料当晚牛就死了。这样的事，对买者有利，对卖者则是损失。”

旁边有人听了说：“牛主人确实有损失，但未必没有大利。具体说来，生者是料想不到死期逼近的，牛如此，人也如此。牛的死，是意料之外的事；牛主人的生死，恐怕一样难料，但与牛相比，已多得一日之生。一日的生命，值过万金，一头牛的价钱与之相比，简直轻如鸿毛。所以损失一钱而得到万金，谈不上什么损失吧？”

众人听了都嘲笑他说：“这道理怕不仅适用于牛主人吧！”

那人又说：“怕死的话，就该爱惜生命，故理当日日享受生之愉悦。但愚弩之人忘了生命本身的愉悦，不辞劳苦地追逐身外之乐；忘了生命本身即财宝，而不顾生死地贪求身外之财，从不满足。既不知生的乐趣，又害怕死的到来，这两种情况是不会并存的。人活得不快乐，恰恰是因为不怕死；人不是不怕死，而是忘记了死就是眼前的事。只有超越了死生，才算得参透真谛。”

听了这段宏论，众人益发嘲笑他了。

*

有个女子，幽居在荒僻无人的地方，也不知是在逃避什么。某傍晚时分，月色朦胧之际，一名男子悄然来访，惹得犬儿汪汪地叫起来，侍女出门探视，问：“是何方的贵客呢？”乃把他引入院中。

见到一派凄凉景象，他不由得心中黯然，寻思道：此地岂宜佳人久居？随后在屋前粗陋的木板上立候了片刻，听得里面一个恬静稚细的声音传来：“请进吧！”才拉开已不灵便的门走进去。

室内的情形，却不似外面那么荒凉，别有一番幽雅景致。炉火摇曳，微光影绰，四壁之物皆因之熠熠生辉；暗盈的薰香，却不是为来客新燃起的，闻着倍觉亲切。

又听女主人说：“烦请将门关好，怕是要下雨了。车可停于门下，诸随从的住宿也请妥善安排。”随从皆嗡嗡窃语道：“到。”

于是相对絮语，把近况一一说与她听。不知不觉间，就听到了第一声鸡鸣，但意兴仍然浓厚，继续倾心交谈，于过去、未来莫不畅所欲言。不久，又听到雄鸡高唱，想必天亮了吧？不过此地是僻静之所，不必如别处需趁暗夜匆匆离去。所以等亮光已从门隙间透入时，才从容起身辞别。

出来时已是四月初夏的曙色，树梢与庭草都深翠欲滴，景色绝美。登车之后，一夜的深情相晤，还萦回于心，恋恋不舍中，回首门前之大桂树，一直到车儿渐行渐远，再看不到为止。

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一位攀树的名手叫某人到树的高处去砍伐树枝，当攀树的人爬到很高的地方时，他在下面一言不发；当攀树的人下到如屋檐高的地方时，他才说：“小心点，别掉下来了。”

我好奇地问他：“已到此处，一跃而下都无妨，为何还提醒他呢？”

他回答说：“恰好要在此处提醒呢。人到了高处，会感觉头晕目

眩，看着又高又细的树条，自己都会警惕起来，所以不需要提醒。但失误多出现在感觉轻松的地方，所以必须提醒他。”

虽然是身份卑微之人，说出的道理，却颇合乎圣人的训诫。

蹴鞠也是同样的道理，把高难度的动作对付了，如果掉以轻心，球则必然掉在地上。

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不宜结交为友的人有：一、地位尊贵的人；二、年纪太轻的人；三、健壮无病的人；四、嗜酒的人；五、勇武暴躁的人；六、爱说谎的人；七、贪欲太盛的人。

可结为良友的人有：一、乐善好施的人；二、医师；三、有慧根灵性的人。

*

人常饲养的家畜是马与牛，套上枷轭后，终日奴役，实在可叹。然而马与牛又是日常不可或缺的东西，莫奈何也。狗能够守夜防盗，比人还能干，也是不可或缺的，故每家都养，但不必搜求更多来喂养。

其余各种鸟兽就没有什么实际用途了。把走兽带回家中，锁上铁链，把飞鸟剪掉羽毛，放进鸟笼，让它们那思恋云霄、怀想山野的愁苦永无尽头，如果换作人，恐怕也难忍受吧？所以有心之人，怎能以此为乐呢？残害生灵来娱乐自己的人，其心与桀纣何异？

王子猷爱鸟，称林中嬉戏的鸟儿为逍遥之友。他不会把鸟儿捉回家让它痛苦的。《尚书》云：“珍禽奇兽不育于国。”

*

雅房大纳言才学俱佳，品行高卓，皇上准备升任他为大将军，但身边的近臣却说：“最近看到些见不得人的事。”

皇上问：“什么事呢？”回答说：“我从墙壁的缝隙间，看见雅房卿割下活犬的脚来喂鹰。”

皇上听了心中大为厌恶，对雅房的印象顿时改变，升迁之事也就搁置了。

其实犬足饲鹰等等，全属乌有之事。遭人诽谤，固然不幸，但君王听说有这种事，心生憎恶之情，其仁爱之心也甚为感人。

总而言之，以杀戮、折磨动物为乐的人，就像以自相残杀为乐的

牲畜。上自鸟兽，下至昆虫，如果细心观察它们的行为的话，就看得出它们也爱护幼子、关怀亲人，有夫有妻，会嫉妒、会发火，有七情六欲，也爱惜生命，甚至比人还执迷痴愚。折磨它们的身体、夺去它们的生命，实在令人痛心。对世间一切众生不怀慈悲之心者，不能视之为为人。

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颜回的志向是不将自己的意志强加于人。大体说来，残虐生灵之事不可为，贱民的意志，也不能剥夺。

有人喜欢用谎话来哄骗、恫吓和戏谑幼童，这些谎话，在成人看来，也许并不觉得有什么，但对幼童的心灵，则有深刻的影响。他们会感到恐惧、羞耻、悲痛，好像亲身经历了那样的事一样。用别人的痛苦来让自己开心的人，是没有慈悲之心的人。

成人的喜怒哀乐都是心中的虚妄，但人都当作实有之相来在意。

伤害心灵，比伤害身体更为严重。病痛多半来自心中，少有来自外界。服药发汗，有时会没有效果；而心中羞愧恐惧时，则必定要出汗。由此可见心的作用，书凌云之额而忽然白头的典故，即是先例。

*

盛开的樱花和明朗的月色，世人所能观赏的，难道仅此二者？不论对阴雨而怀明月，抑或垂帘幽居不问春归何处，都是极有情趣的事。而如含苞待放的树梢、落花遍地的庭院等等，可供观赏之处还多着呢。和歌之小序中有“本要看花而花已零落”或“无奈没能前去赏花”的话，其难道不比“赏着了花”之类更有味吗？花殒月沉，皆为之惋惜嗟叹，这是人之常情，但只有俗不可耐的人才说得这样的话说：“这儿的花没了，那儿的花也没了，没什么看头了！”

世上的事，最令人回味的，是始和终这两端。男女恋爱，也是如此。恋爱之真味，不只在日日相会长相厮守。有时要因暂难相会而忧虑重重，有时要悲叹缘分之变幻莫测，有时独自辗转到天明，有时遥寄相思于远地，有时则远避他乡而追怀往日，凡此种种，都体验过了，才敢说明白了恋爱的真谛。

发皎洁之光而令人一望千里的满月，不如期盼了一夜，到天快亮时才姗姗而来的月有意味。此时的月，略带青苍之色，或在远山之杉树梢间隐现，或为天上之雨云遮断，都极其有味。一丛丛的椎木与白橡树，叶面如洗，辉映在月光下，望之沁人心脾。此情此景，岂能无会心者共赏？不禁怀想起京中的诸友来。

大体说来，可观赏者，岂只限于眼前所见之月与花？春日闭门家

中，或月夜静处室内时，于心中想象其风致，也别有兴味。

品流高尚的人物虽好物而不溺于物，虽兴致颇高也能淡然处之。只有那些不解风雅的村夫俗子，才于游赏时力求尽兴。赏花时拥挤在花下，或凑近盯着花看，要饮酒，要作连歌，末了手持折下的花枝，欢欢喜喜地打道回府；路过泉水时，一定要把手足都泡进去；遇到下雪时，一定要在雪地上踩踏，留下自己的足印。总之凡有景致处，决不悠然旁观，一定要去耍弄一番才甘心。

此辈观看贺茂祭的情形，也是妙不可言。“祭神的行列要有一阵才过来呢，这会儿待在看台上有什么意思？”说罢就拥入看台后的人家里，饮酒、大嚼，下围棋、双六。待到外面放风之人喊道“行列过来了！”才又一拥而出，你推我搡地挤上看台，连看台上的布帘也似要被其挤落了。在观看时，此辈绝不错过任何细节，且都要评头论足一番。当一个行列过去后，就说：“咱回去等下一轮吧。”又钻回台后的屋子去戏耍了。此辈人眼中，只认实在之物。

比较起来，京都人士就要文雅得多。彼等做闭目养神状，似乎并不热衷于观看。职位较低的年轻侍从们紧随其主，立于身后，也没有谁探身引颈做粗俗状。总之这群人中，没有一个表现出一定要看个清楚才甘心的样子。

现场到处悬挂着葵叶，秀雅可人，而驾车前来者，已在天色未明之际悄然云集于此，车中人不时左右探望，看看有无旧识，打打招呼。众车错杂相陈，有的妙趣横生，有的光彩夺目，颇富观赏趣味，在等待时，细加观玩，倒颇能解闷。然而到了日暮时分，一排排牛车与拥挤不堪的人群便突然不知去向，变得稀疏零落，看台上的布帘与坐垫也纷纷被取走了，眼前呈现一片凄凉景象，让人联想到世道的盛衰，不禁感慨有加。把大路上的情景，这样看下来，才可以说观了贺茂祭。

聚集于看台之上的众人中，相识的人不少，可知世上的人，其实并不太多。假设我须等到众人死后才最后死去，实在也等不了太久。在一个大容器中盛满水，在它的底部凿开一个小孔，水于是往下流。这孔虽然细小，但如果长流不止，也不需要太久，水就会流尽。京都的人虽多，但每日都有人死去，且不止一二人。鸟部野、舟冈及众多无名野山上，只见过送葬之人众多的时候，没见过无人前去送葬的时候。因此卖棺材者的棺材做好不久就能卖出，不论老幼强弱，皆死期难料，侥幸能活到今天，实在是不可思议的奇妙之事。所以人生在世，来日方长的想法，是片刻都不能有的。

可尝试将双六的棋子排作“继子立”的形状，当其首尾成列之后，起初不知从何处下手取子。等数下数来，则依数取出一子；其他诸

子，似乎还安然无事；然而再数、再取，最终会一子不剩。人死也是如此：死是必然的，所不同者先后而已。战士在阵前，知道死亡就在眼前，所以能身家两忘，不顾一切。遁世之人长住茅庵，静享林泉之趣，如果自以为与战士阵前迥乎不同，那就太不明智了。深山里虽然静僻，难道“无常”这个敌人就不会挟常胜之势来攻打你？此时与死面对，与战士在战场上的情形，并无不同。

*

留下身后之财，是智者不为的事。积蓄不好的东西没有意义，而好东西再舍不得也终不能带走。一生积蓄太多，反而是件苦事。口称“我一定要得到它”，而争夺人死后遗物的行径，尤其丑恶。凡想于身后留给某人的东西，最好在在世的时候就给他。

人除了日常必需品外，别的东西就不用再有了。

*

看起来毫无情趣的人，只言片语中，偶尔也有可取之处。

有个乡村武士，凶神恶煞的样子，有次问旁边的人：“你有子女吗？”那人回答说：“一个也没有。”

武士就说：“没有子女的人是不懂人间真情的。如此说来，你真是个冷酷无情的人，可怕呀！”

这可谓至理名言。不懂恩爱的人，心中就没有慈悲之心。不懂得孝养的人，有了子女后，才会明白父母之心。

舍世出家的人，孑然一身，与万事不相关联，常常鄙视羁縻尘世、谄人媚上、欲望深重的人，其实也不应当。若换了自己，为了至爱的亲人与妻儿，就算不顾廉耻地沦为盗贼，也必然会愿意的。缉拿盗贼，因他所犯的恶行而治他的罪，不如把国家治理好，让世人免于饥寒。人无恒产，则无恒心，人穷则为盗，如果国家治理不善，人民会受饥寒之苦，犯罪之人也难以绝迹。把人置于苦难之中，使其犯法，又绳之以法，真是可悲的做法。

然而如何才能普惠众生呢？上能摒弃奢靡，下能抚民劝农，则天下必得其利。倘有人在衣食能保的情况下，还要为非作恶，那就是真正的盗贼了。

*

御随身秦重躬在谈到北面武士下野入道信愿时，说：“这人是落马之相，当慎之又慎！”但信愿一向不以此为然，最后果然落马而

亡。秦重躬真是精于此道的人，一句话，就让人视之为神人。

后来有人请教他：“什么叫作落马之相呢？”他回答说：“此人的臀部状似桃核，又好骑沛艾之马，故有落马之相。看来我这话，是说中了。”

*

没什么要紧的事，到别人家里去盘桓，是不好的。最好有事才去，事了之后就回来。在别人家中待得太久，也特别让人讨厌。

坐在一起后，话必定就多，令人身体疲惫，心中烦乱，既耽误做事，又浪费时间，于人于己都无益处。对客人感厌烦时，也不宜说话烦躁。如果不喜欢来客久坐，就明白地告诉他也无妨。

至于情趣相投，愿意畅谈的人，如果正好无事可忙，就可以说：“请不妨安坐，今日可以做一长谈。”阮籍的青眼、白眼，恐怕人人都有吧。

如果没什么事，过来坐坐，悠然闲谈一阵，然后回去，也不错。或者修书一封，说“久未奉教”云云，也颇为愉快。

*

少年时血气旺盛，心易动，多情欲，此时恰如落地而走的珍珠，容易触物而碎，常有性命之危。年少的时候，总会做一些耽误自己的事：或者贪好美艳之物而不惜钱财；或者心血来潮舍红尘而着僧衣；或者逞强斗狠，既耻于不如人，又羡慕别人比自己强，喜好多变，每日不同；或者沉溺女色，感情用事，讲究仗义而误了大事；或者竟然效仿他人而不惜一死，从不知爱惜生命以求长寿；又或者因好色之名而饱受物议。

老年人精神衰退，嗜欲清淡，对于外物，能够无动于衷，心中自然平静，不会做无益之事，要爱惜身体，既不自烦，也不扰人。年老后，智慧胜过年轻时，就好比年轻时容貌风采胜过老年。

*

世上有许多不可思议的事。

但凡有事，一定要喝酒，且喜欢强行劝酒，真不知道理何在。被劝酒的人，端着酒杯，皱着眉头，一脸为难之色，直想趁人不备扔下酒杯逃走。然而被发现后，则牵裳捉臂地被留在座上，强行灌饮。结果本来稳重端庄的人，变得疯疯癫癫，一味丢人现眼；本来正常的人，变成病重的人，醉得分不清前后左右，倒头便睡。这样的事如果

发生在喜庆的场合，更是令人咂舌。大醉的次日醒来，头痛欲裂，粒米难进，躺在床上痛苦呻吟，昨日的事仿佛发生在前世，一点也记不得了。公私大事都被耽误，造成诸多不便。让人落到这地步的人，既不仁，也无礼；而遭此不幸的人，对强行灌酒的人，又岂能不心生怨恨？假如这样的陋习，只在外国有，而我国没有，我们听起来，一定会觉得匪夷所思吧。

酒席上的众生相，若只是旁观，也会觉得不堪入目：体面而有教养的人，在酒席上却放肆笑骂，说起话来喋喋不休，乌帽歪着，上衣敞着，下装高卷，双腿裸裎，全然不顾体统，与平时的举止大相径庭；女人则撩起头发，不知羞耻地媚笑撒娇，掰开那端着酒的粗人的嘴巴，往里面塞进菜肴，自己也大嚼不已，真是丑态难当；一众人尽力吼叫着，自歌自舞，甚至叫来年长的法师，光着污黑的臂膀，一副不堪入目的恶俗样，连兴致勃勃的旁观者都觉得再也看不下去。

有人喝醉了喜欢夸夸其谈，吹嘘自己，还强迫身边的人洗耳恭听；有人喝醉了就哭泣；贱人们则相互谩骂，大打出手，让人既惊又怕。接下来就开始为非作歹，强取别人之物，或摔倒在屋檐下，或自马及车上坠落受伤。无车可乘的人，就跌跌撞撞地走在大路上，到土墙下或别人门前去行那方便之事。还有身着袈裟的年长法师，扶着小童的肩，满口胡言、步履蹒跚，看着让人心生怜悯。

如此等等，倘有益于今生来世，倒也无话可说；但实际而言，酒之于今生，是令人犯错误、损财货、生疾病之物。虽然号称“百药之长”，但百病皆因酒而生；虽然号称可以解忧，但醉后反易让人伤心而泣。于来世而言，酒让人丧失心智，如被火烧去善根，恶胆顿生，破除诸戒，最终必堕入地狱。佛祖云：“若以己手持酒器与人饮者，五百世轮回中无手。”

然而酒虽有如上可厌处，也有其可爱而难舍时。月之夜、雪之朝、花之下，与人悠然闲谈，举杯小饮，可以助清兴，发雅趣；闲暇之日，友人意外来访，则端出酒食，小加款待，心情也甚为愉快。在高贵之人家里，酒食出于庖厨，经美人之手端来席上，感觉也颇不错。

隆冬之日，斗室之中，于火上小煮点什么，与亲密知己举杯豪饮，是极有味的事。在旅舍或山野间，口中说着“何不上酒肴”，而径直在草地上坐下饮用，也有趣。不善饮者，为人所强劝，则少许饮下一点，是不错的事。此时座中有身份的人端起酒杯自言自语：“那么我就再来一杯如何？反正酒已不多了。”听着令人高兴。若自己酒量甚豪，席上又有极愿结识的人在，则与之杯盏相亲，也是十分可喜的事。

善饮的人，其实也天真可爱，颇为有趣。在别人家中醉卧不起，早上，主人家拉开纸窗时，他顿时手脚慌乱，睡眼惺忪，细髻曝露，都来不及穿衣，一把抱在手上就狼狈而逃。看着他穿着短衣短裤的背影和长满毛发的瘦腿，实在是有趣，还真像个醉汉的模样。

*

男子不应有妻。

我每听人说“我一向独居”，就觉得其人不俗；听说其为某人女婿或要带回某女同住，就极其反感。我猜想，那人其实没什么头脑，竟把平常女子认作美人，一定要迎娶回家。如果女子确实是美人，则那人必定全心全意地侍奉着，就像我侍奉佛祖一样。我这想法大体是没有错的。主持家政的女人尤其让人讨厌，生儿育女，百般宠爱，也是毫无意义的事。男人死后，女人削发为尼，其年老之丑状，就算男人死了，也很难让人接受。

不管是何种女人，与她相处久了，也会心生厌恶。从女方看来，不谈婚娶，就有悬空而无着落之感。但不同住而经常往来的男女，反而可能成为感情持久、至死不渝的伴侣。不期然而来，留宿一夜，可于双方都保有新鲜之感。

*

所谓入夜则无物可观的说法，是不足取的。

万物的光华、装饰与色彩，在夜晚看来更觉不同凡响。白天的装束可以简淡朴素一点，到了晚上，则以绚丽华美为佳。灯光之下，人的容颜神采看上去会美上加美。别人的谈话，在暗处听来，也更觉优雅而有味。各种香味与音乐，都在夜晚更加动人。

平时有夜深来访之人，觉得别有一番清新韵致，颇为有味。青年人无时不在打量着他人的装束容貌，特别在可以放任的场合，不分便装与盛装，都是用心打扮了的。美男子在日暮时分才开始梳头，女子也是在夜色渐深的时候才离开座位，拿出镜子来化妆。这些都很有味道。

*

德大寺右大臣大人任检非违使的时候，有一日在中门使厅讨论官厅公事，官人章兼牛车上的牛走脱了，来到使厅，径直走上大理所坐的滨床，卧床反刍。这是少有的怪事，众人都说应该把牛牵到阴阳师那里断一断吉凶。

大理之父相国说：“牛又不晓得人事，既然有脚，哪里不能去？”

因为这点意外就要没收小吏的牛，真是岂有此理！”于是将牛归还其主人，更换掉卧席，此后并无不吉利之事发生。

这正是“见怪不怪，其怪自败”。

*

世事无常，万物都不足以长久倚赖。执迷不悟的人深信此生有物可恃，必争为己有，于是心生怨怒之情。

实则权势不可倚赖，因为强者先亡；财富不可倚赖，因为可以轻易散尽；才学不可倚赖，因为孔子也有怀才不遇的时候；德行不可倚赖，因为颜回也是不幸之人；君王的宠幸不可倚赖，因为说不准何时会有杀身之祸；奴仆的恭顺不可倚赖，因为难免有叛逃的事发生；人的志向不可倚赖，因为志向总有变化的时候；说好的事，不可倚赖，因为守信的人太少。

既然自己与他人都不可靠，那么时运来时固然可喜，时运背时也不要抱怨。左右广大才无障碍，前后远阔方能通畅。若置身于逼仄处，则容易有冲突毁损；若用心于狭隘处，则不能舒坦通泰；拂逆他人而与之相争，则容易伤及身体。若能心宽而性柔，才可以毫发无损。

人为天地灵长，天地无限，人之心性也一样。人心如能广大无垠，则不为喜怒所羁绊，也不为外物所烦扰。

*

丹波有个地方叫出云，有个大神社迁移来此，建筑极为雄伟。此地是名为志太的人的任职之地，到了秋天，这个志太就邀请圣海上人等一众人，说：“敬请光临出云之神社，将以萩饼款待诸君。”于是带着众人来到了神社。众人于社中各处参拜，深为震服，无不肃然起敬。

神社前有一狮子和一狛犬之石像，二者相背而立。上人看了极为感动，含着眼泪说：“善哉善哉，这狮犬的立向，实为罕见，必有其深意在，诸君若不注意此稀有之景，实在可惜！”

众人也觉得奇怪，都说：“确实和别的地方不同，回去后一定要把这地方的胜景告诉都中人士。”

上人还想追究它的来由，就叫来一位看着体体面面、博学多闻的神官，问道：“贵社的狮子如此安放，是有什么来由的吧？愿闻其详。”

神官回答说：“这实在是顽童所为，真是岂有此理！”于是上前将

狮子与狍犬的方向调回到正面相对的原状。

上人的感动之泪，算是白流了。

*

男女之于暗夜私会，既怕人见到，又怕人听到，但心中恋情之强烈，不见不行。此种情形于日后必然永难忘怀。如是那种经父母兄弟同意了明媒正娶，就让人扫兴得很了。

有迫于生计的女子，因贪慕钱财，就托人对根本不相配的老法师或乡巴佬说：“愿奉君之箕帚。”媒人也两头说好话，尽力撮合，于是把这素不相识的女子迎娶回来。这真是难以接受的事。这样的夫妇之间，有什么话可说呢？夫妇之间，能够一起回忆当年恋爱如何辛苦，如何担惊受怕地只求一见的情形，那才叫情深意永呢。

凡是由他人撮合的夫妇，不免会厌恶对方，常常闹得不愉快。若本是品貌俱无的老朽，把年轻貌美的女子娶回来，想着这么个美女竟下嫁我这副德行的人，心中恐怕也会不太自在吧？品貌都不如人，相比之下，必定会自惭形秽，这样过着真没什么意思。

梅香暗吐、月色朦胧之夜，伫立在她身旁；或任由宅垣旁的草露沾湿了衣裳，和她一起踏着晓月回去——没有这些可供追忆的往事，还不如不要谈情说爱。

*

十五的满月瞬间即亏，不留心观察的人是看不到月在一夜中的变化的。

人在重病之时，病况也是时刻都在变化，不觉就濒于死亡。

当病情还不至于致命，就习惯性地想着存世之日还长久，还可以完成若干心愿，然后再潜心修佛；当病情加重，快迈进鬼门关时，自己还一事无成，才后悔一向的懈怠，想着这次若能痊愈，保住一命，一定要夜以继日、勇猛精进，完成这件事、那件事；虽然发了这些誓，但病情突然恶化，神志不清，行为失控，最终还是过世了。世上的人，以这样的人居多。所以最紧要而需要牢记的事是：

人都想完成了各种心愿后，再把余下的时间用以事佛，但人的心愿是无穷无尽的。在变幻莫测的一生中，能做成什么事呢？一切愿望都是妄想。愿望的产生，源于心的迷乱，所以一桩也不要去做。要立即放下一切，一心向佛，心中才坦然无碍；只有一无所为，才能保全身心的宁静。

我八岁的时候曾问家父：“什么是佛？”

家父回答：“佛是人所化。”

我又问：“人怎么才能化为佛呢？”

家父又回答说：“遵从佛的教诲就可以成佛。”

我又问：“教人的佛，又是谁教的呢？”

家父又回答说：“是他之前的佛教的。”

我又问：“那么第一个教人成佛的佛是什么样的呢？”

家父大笑着说：“要不是从天上掉下来的，就是从地里冒出来的，谁知道呢！”

后来家父在与众人笑谈时说：“追问到这地步，就实在无法回答了。”

[1] 摄政是指在天皇年幼时，帮助处理国政的大臣官职，关白则是在天皇成年后，帮助处理国政的大臣官职。此处意指一人担任了两种职务，也可简称为“摄关”。（说明：书中脚注除特别标明的之外，均为编者注。）

[2] 此处指的应是后德大寺左大臣藤原实定。他的祖父因修建德大寺而被称为“德大寺左大臣”。

[3] 日本民间将一年划分为十二个月，相当于我们的农历节气，神无月对应的是农历十月。

[4] 大袂即大袂式，每年日本各大神社都会举行两次的祭祀仪式。一次在夏越晦日，另一次在大晦日（过年之袂）。夏越大袂旨在将上半年积累的晦气和过错清除，平安的迎来下半年，也顺利度过容易生病的夏季。

[5] 此处微妙暗示了男色关系。日本自古以来男色文化兴盛，尤以稚子受人欢迎。——译者注

Kenkō

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

A Cup of Sake
Beneath the
Cherry Trees

N° 08

‘It is a most
wonderful
comfort to sit
alone beneath a
lamp, book spread
before you,
and commune
with someone
from the past
whom you have
never met.’

A Cup of Sake Beneath the Cherry Trees

What strange folly, to beguile the tedious hours like this all day before my ink stone, jotting down at random the idle thoughts that cross my mind . . .

*

To be born into this world of ours, it seems, brings with it so much to long for.

The rank of emperor is, of course, unspeakably exalted; even his remotest descendants fill one with awe, having sprung from no mere human seed.

Needless to say, the great ruler, and even the lesser nobles who are granted attendant guards to serve them, are also thoroughly magnificent. Their children and grandchildren too are still impressive, even if they have come down in the world. As for those of lesser degree, although they may make good according to their rank, and put on airs and consider themselves special, they are really quite pathetic.

No one could be less enviable than a monk. Sei Shōnagon wrote that people treat them like unfeeling lumps of wood, and this is perfectly true. And there is nothing impressive about the way those with power will throw their weight around. As the holy man Sōga, I think, remarked, fame and fortune are an affliction for a monk, and violate the Buddha's teachings.

There is much to admire, though, in a dedicated recluse.

It is most important to present well, in both appearance and bearing. One never tires of spending time with someone whose speech is attractive and pleasing to the ear, and who does not talk overmuch. There is nothing worse than when someone you thought impressive reveals himself as lacking in sensibility. Status and personal appearance are things one is born with, after all, but surely the inner man can always be improved with effort. It is a great shame to see a fine upstanding fellow fall in with low and ugly

types who easily run rings round him, and all for want of cultivation and learning.

A man should learn the orthodox literature, write poetry in Chinese as well as Japanese, and study music, and should ideally also be a model to others in his familiarity with ceremonial court customs and precedents. He should write a smooth, fair hand, carry the rhythm well when songs are sung at banquets, and when offered sake, make a show of declining it but nevertheless be able to drink.

*

No matter how splendid in every way, there is something dreadfully lacking in a man who does not pursue the art of love. He is, to coin the old phrase, like a beautiful wine cup that lacks a base.

The elegant thing is for a lover to wander aimlessly hither and yon, drenched with the frosts or dews of night, tormented by fears of his parents' reproaches and the censure of the world, the heart beset with uncertainties, yet for all that sleeping often alone, though always fitfully.

On the other hand, he shouldn't lose himself to love too thoroughly, or gain the reputation of being putty in women's hands.

*

If our life did not fade and vanish like the dews of Adashino's graves or the drifting smoke from Toribe's burning grounds, but lingered on for ever, how little the world would move us. It is the ephemeral nature of things that makes them wonderful.

Among all living creatures, it is man that lives longest. The brief dayfly dies before evening; summer's cicada knows neither spring nor autumn. What a glorious luxury it is to taste life to the full for even a single year. If you constantly regret life's passing, even a thousand long years will seem but the dream of a night.

Why cling to a life which cannot last for ever, only to arrive at ugly old age? The longer you live, the greater your share of shame. It is most seemly to die before forty at the latest. Once past this age, people develop an urge to mix with others without the least shame at their own unsightliness; they spend their dwindling years fussing

adoringly over their children and grandchildren, hoping to live long enough to see them make good in the world. Their greed for the things of this world grows ever deeper, till they lose all ability to be moved by life's pathos, and become really quite disgraceful.

*

Nothing so distracts the human heart as sexual desire. How foolish men's hearts are!

Aroma, for instance, is a mere transient thing, yet a whiff of delightful incense from a woman's robes will always excite a man, though he knows perfectly well that it is just a passing effect of robe-smoking.

The wizard priest of Kume is said to have lost his supernatural powers when he spied the white legs of a woman as she squatted washing clothes. I can quite believe it – after all, the beautiful, plump, glowing flesh of a woman's arm or leg is quite a different matter from some artificial allurements.

*

Beautiful hair on a woman will draw a man's gaze – but we can judge what manner of person she is and the nature of her sensibility even by simply hearing her speak from behind a screen. A mere unintended glimpse of a woman can distract a man's heart; and if a woman sleeps fitfully, and is prepared to endure impossible difficulties heedless of her own well-being, it is all because her mind is on love.

Yes indeed, the ways of love lie deep in us. Many are the allurements of our senses, yet we can distance ourselves from them all. But among them this one alone seems without exception to plague us all, young and old, wise and foolish.

So it is that we have those tales of how a woman's hair can snare and hold even an elephant, or how the rutting stag of autumn will always be drawn by the sound of a flute made from the wood of a woman's shoe.

We must discipline ourselves to be constantly prudent and vigilant lest we fall into this trap.

Though a home is of course merely a transient habitation, a place that is set up in beautiful taste to suit its owner is a delightful thing.

Even the moonlight is so much the more moving when it shines into a house where a refined person dwells in tranquil elegance. There is nothing fashionable or showy about the place, it is true, yet the grove of trees is redolent of age, the plants in the carefully untended garden carry a hint of delicate feelings, while the veranda and openweave fence are tastefully done, and inside the house the casually disposed things have a tranquil, old-fashioned air. It is all most refined.

How ugly and depressing to see a house that has employed a bevy of craftsmen to work everything up to a fine finish, where all the household items set out for proud display are rare and precious foreign or Japanese objects, and where even the plants in the garden are clipped and contorted rather than left to grow as they will. How could anyone live for long in such a place? The merest glimpse will provoke the thought that all this could go up in smoke in an instant.

Yes, on the whole you can tell a great deal about the owner from his home.

The Later Tokudaiji Minister once had rope strung over the roof of the main house to stop the kites from roosting on it. 'What could be wrong with having kites on your roof? This shows what manner of man he is!' exclaimed the poet-monk Saigyō, and it is said he never called there again. I was reminded of this story when I noticed once that Prince Ayanokōji had laid rope over his Kosaka residence. Someone told me, however, that it was because he pitied the frogs in his pond when he observed how crows gathered on the roof to catch them. I was most impressed. Perhaps the Tokudaiji Minister too might have had some such reason for acting as he did?

One day in the tenth month, I went to call on someone in a remote mountain village beyond Kurusuno.

Making my way along the mossy path, I came at length to the

lonely hut where he lived. There was not a sound except for the soft drip of water from a bamboo pipe buried deep in fallen leaves. The vase on the altar shelf with its haphazard assortment of chrysanthemums and sprigs of autumn leaves bespoke someone's presence.

Moved, I said to myself, 'One could live like this' – but my mood was then somewhat spoiled by noticing at the far end of the garden a large mandarin tree, branches bowed with fruit, that was firmly protected by a stout fence. If only that tree weren't there! I thought.

*

What happiness to sit in intimate conversation with someone of like mind, warmed by candid discussion of the amusing and fleeting ways of this world . . . but such a friend is hard to find, and instead you sit there doing your best to fit in with whatever the other is saying, feeling deeply alone.

There is some pleasure to be had from agreeing with the other in general talk that interests you both, but it's better if he takes a slightly different position from yours. 'No, I can't agree with that,' you'll say to each other combatively, and you'll fall into arguing the matter out. This sort of lively discussion is a pleasant way to pass the idle hours, but in fact most people tend to grumble about things different from oneself, and though you can put up with the usual boring platitudes, such men are far indeed from the true friend after your own heart, and leave you feeling quite forlorn.

*

It is a most wonderful comfort to sit alone beneath a lamp, book spread before you, and commune with someone from the past whom you have never met.

As to books – those moving volumes of *Wenxuan*, the *Wenji* of Bai Juyi, the words of Laozi and *Zhuangzi*. There are many moving works from our own land, too, by scholars of former times.

*

It is an excellent thing to live modestly, shun luxury and wealth and not lust after fame and fortune. Rare has been the wise man

who was rich.

In China once there was a man by the name of Xu You, who owned nothing and even drank directly from his cupped hands. Seeing this, someone gave him a 'singing gourd' to use as a cup; he hung it in a tree, but when he heard it singing in the wind one day he threw it away, annoyed by the noise it made, and went back to drinking his water from his hands. What a free, pure spirit!

Sun Chen had no bedclothes to sleep under in the winter months, only a bundle of straw which he slept in at night and put away again each morning.

The Chinese wrote these stories to hand down to later times because they found them so impressive. No one bothers to tell such tales in our country.

*

The changing seasons are moving in every way.

Everyone seems to feel that 'it is above all autumn that moves the heart to tears', and there is some truth in this, yet surely it is spring that stirs the heart more profoundly. Then, birdsong is full of the feel of spring, the plants beneath the hedges bud into leaf in the warm sunlight, the slowly deepening season brings soft mists, while the blossoms at last begin to open, only to meet with ceaseless winds and rain that send them flurrying restlessly to earth. Until the leaves appear on the boughs, the heart is endlessly perturbed.

The scented flowering orange is famously evocative, but it is above all plum blossom that has the power to carry you back to moments of cherished memory. The exquisite kerria, the hazy clusters of wisteria blossom – all these things linger in the heart.

Someone has said that at the time of the Buddha's birthday and the Kamo festival in the fourth month, when the trees are cool with luxuriant new leaf, one is particularly moved by the pathos of things and by a longing for others, and indeed it is true. And who could not be touched to melancholy in the fifth month, when the sweet flag iris leaves are laid on roofs, and the rice seedlings are planted out, and the water rail's knocking call is heard? The sixth month is also moving, with white evening- glory blooming over the walls of poor dwellings, and the smoke from smouldering smudge

fires. The purifications of the sixth month are also delightful.

The festival of Tanabata is wonderfully elegant. Indeed so many things happen together in autumn – the nights grow slowly more chill, wild geese come crying over, and when the bush clover begins to yellow the early rice is harvested and hung to dry. The morning after a typhoon has blown through is also delightful.

Writing this, I realize that all this has already been spoken of long ago in *The Tale of Genji* and *The Pillow Book* – but that is no reason not to say it again. After all, things thought but left unsaid only fester inside you. So I let my brush run on like this for my own foolish solace; these pages deserve to be torn up and discarded, after all, and are not something others will ever see.

To continue – the sight of a bare wintry landscape is almost as lovely as autumn. It is delightful to see fallen autumn leaves scattered among the plants by the water's edge, or vapour rising from the garden stream on a morning white with frost. It is also especially moving to observe everyone bustling about at year's end, preparing for the new year. And then there is the forlornly touching sight of the waning moon around the twentieth day, hung in a clear, cold sky, although people consider it too dreary to look at. The Litany of Buddha Names and the Presentation of Tributes are thoroughly moving and magnificent, and in fact all the numerous court ceremonies and events at around this time, taking place as they do amidst the general end- of- year bustle, present an impressive sight. The way the Worship of the Four Directions follows so quickly upon the Great Demon Expulsion is wonderful too.

In the thick darkness of New Year's Eve, people light pine torches and rush about, so fast that their feet virtually skim the ground, making an extraordinary racket for some reason, and knocking on everyone's doors until late at night – but then at last around dawn all grows quiet, and you savour the touching moment of saying farewell to the old year. I was moved to find that in the East they still perform the ritual for dead souls on the night when the dead are said to return, although these days this has ceased to be done in the capital.

And so, watching the new year dawn in the sky, you are stirred by a sense of utter newness, although the sky looks no different

from yesterday's. It is also touching to see the happy sight of new year pines gaily decorating the houses all along the main streets.

*

A certain recluse monk once remarked, 'I have relinquished all that ties me to the world, but the one thing that still haunts me is the beauty of the sky.' I can quite see why he would feel this.

*

How mutable the flower of the human heart, a fluttering blossom gone before the breeze's touch – so we recall the bygone years when the heart of another was our close companion, each dear word that stirred us then still unforgotten; and yet, it is the way of things that the beloved should move into worlds beyond our own, a parting far sadder than from the dead. Thus did Mozi grieve over a white thread that the dye would alter for ever, and at the crossroads Yang Zhu lamented the path's parting ways.

In Retired Emperor Horikawa's collection of one hundred poems, we read:

Where once I called on her	<i>mukashi mishi</i>
the garden fence is now in ruins–	<i>imo ga kakine wa</i>
flowering there I find	<i>arenikeri</i>
only wild violets, woven through <i>no</i>	<i>tsubana majiri</i>
with rank spring grasses. <i>shite</i>	<i>sumire nomi</i>

Such is the desolate scene that once must have met the poet's eye.

*

Nothing is sadder than the aftermath of a death.

How trying it is to be jammed in together in some cramped and inconvenient mountain establishment for the forty- nine- day

mourning period, performing the services for the dead. Never have the days passed faster. On the final day everyone is gruff and uncommunicative; each becomes engrossed in the importance of his own tidying and packing, then all go their separate ways. Once home again, the family will face all manner of fresh sorrows.

People go about warning each other of the various things that should be ritually avoided for the sake of the family. What a way to talk, at such a time! Really, what a wretched thing the human heart is!

Even with the passage of time the deceased is in no way forgotten, of course, but 'the dead grow more distant with each day', as the saying goes. And so, for all the memories, it seems our sorrow is no longer as acute as at death, for we begin to chatter idly and laugh again.

The corpse is buried on some deserted mountainside, we visit it only at the prescribed times, and soon moss has covered the grave marker, the grave is buried under fallen leaves, and only the howling evening winds and the moon at night come calling there.

It is all very well while there are those who remember and mourn the dead, but soon they too pass away; the descendants only know of him by hearsay, so they are hardly likely to grieve over his death. Finally, all ceremonies for him cease, no one any longer knows who he was or even his name, and only the grasses of each passing spring grow there to move the sensitive to pity; at length even the graveyard pine that sobbed in stormy winds is cut for firewood before its thousand years are up, the ancient mound is levelled by the plough, and the place becomes a field. The last trace of the grave itself has finally disappeared. It is sad to think of.

*

One morning after a beautiful fall of snow, I had reason to write a letter to an acquaintance, but I omitted to make any mention of the snow. I was delighted when she responded, 'Do you expect me to pay any attention to the words of someone so perverse that he fails to enquire how I find this snowy landscape? What deplorable insensitivity!'

The lady is no longer alive, so I treasure even this trifling memory.

*

Around the twentieth day of the ninth month, someone invited me along to view the moon with him. We wandered and gazed until first light. Along the way, my companion came upon a house he remembered. He had his name announced, and in he went. In the unkempt and dew- drenched garden, a hint of casual incense lingered in the air. It was all movingly redolent of a secluded life.

In due course my companion emerged, but the elegance of the scene led me to stay a little longer and watch from the shadows. Soon the double doors opened a fraction wider; it seemed the lady was gazing at the moon. It would have been very disappointing had she immediately bolted the doors as soon as the visit was over. She could not know that someone would still be watching. Such sensibility could only be the fruit of a habitual attitude of mind.

I heard that this lady died not long after.

*

It is foolish to be in thrall to fame and fortune, engaged in painful striving all your life with never a moment of peace and tranquillity.

Great wealth will drive you to neglect your own well- being in pursuit of it. It is asking for harm and tempting trouble. Though you leave behind at your death a mountain of gold high enough to prop up the North Star itself, it will only cause problems for those who come after you. Nor is there any point in all those pleasures that delight the eyes of fools. Big carriages, fat horses, glittering gold and jewels – any man of sensibility would view such things as gross stupidity. Toss your gold away in the mountains; hurl your jewels into the deep. Only a complete fool is led astray by avarice.

Everyone would like to leave their name unburied for posterity – but the high- born and exalted are not necessarily fine people, surely. A dull, stupid person can be born into a good house, attain high status thanks to opportunity and live in the height of luxury, while many wonderfully wise and saintly men choose to remain in lowly positions, and end their days without ever having met with good fortune. A fierce craving for high status and position is next in folly to the lust for fortune.

We long to leave a name for our exceptional wisdom and sensibility – but when you really think about it, desire for a good reputation is merely revelling in the praise of others. Neither those who praise us nor those who denigrate will remain in the world for long, and others who hear their opinions will be gone in short order as well. Just who should we feel ashamed before, then? Whose is the recognition we should crave? Fame in fact attracts abuse and slander. No, there is nothing to be gained from leaving a lasting name. The lust for fame is the third folly.

Let me now say a few words, however, to those who dedicate themselves to the search for knowledge and the desire for understanding. Knowledge leads to deception; talent and ability only serve to increase earthly desires. Knowledge acquired by listening to others or through study is not true knowledge. So what then should we call knowledge? Right and wrong are simply part of a single continuum. What should we call good? One who is truly wise has no knowledge or virtue, nor honour nor fame. Who then will know of him, and speak of him to others? This is not because he hides his virtue and pretends foolishness – he is beyond all distinctions such as wise and foolish, gain and loss.

I have been speaking of what it is to cling to one's delusions and seek after fame and fortune. All things of this phenomenal world are mere illusion. They are worth neither discussing nor desiring.

*

A certain novice monk in Inaba was rumoured to have a beautiful daughter, and many men came asking for her hand. But the girl ate nothing but chestnuts and never touched grains, so her father declared that she was too eccentric to be marriageable, and rejected them all.

*

When I went to see the horse racing at the Kamo Shrine on the fifth day of the fifth month, the view from our carriage was blocked by a throng of common folk. We all got down and moved towards the fence for a better view, but that area was particularly crowded and we couldn't make our way through.

We then noticed a priest who had climbed a chinaberry tree across the way to sit in its fork and watch from there. He was so sleepy as he clung there that he kept nodding off, and only just managed to start awake in time to save himself from falling each time. Those who saw him couldn't believe their eyes. 'What an extraordinary fool!' they all sneered. 'How can a man who's perched up there so precariously among the branches relax so much that he falls asleep?'

A thought suddenly occurred to me. 'Any of us may die from one instant to the next,' I said, 'and in fact we are far more foolish than this priest – here we are, contentedly watching the world go by, oblivious to death.'

'That's so true,' said those in front of me. 'It's really very stupid, isn't it,' and they turned around and invited me in and made room for me.

Anyone can have this sort of insight, but at that particular moment it came as a shock, which is no doubt why people were so struck by it. Humans are not mere insensate beings like trees or rocks, after all, and on occasion things can really strike home.

*

Those who feel the impulse to pursue the path of enlightenment should immediately take the step, and not defer it while they attend to all the other things on their mind. If you say to yourself, 'Let's just wait until after this is over,' or 'While I'm at it I'll just see to that,' or 'People will criticize me about such- and- such so I should make sure it's all dealt with and causes no problem later,' or 'There's been time enough so far, after all, and it won't take long just to wait a little longer while I do this. Let's not rush into things,' one imperative thing after another will occur to detain you. There will be no end to it all, and the day of decision will never come.

In general, I find that reasonably sensitive and intelligent people will pass their whole life without taking the step they know they should. Would anyone with a fire close behind him choose to pause before fleeing? In a matter of life and death, one casts aside shame, abandons riches and runs. Does mortality wait on our choosing? Death comes upon us more swiftly than fire or flood.

There is no escaping it. Who at that moment can refuse to part with all they love – aged parents, beloved children, lord and master, or the love of others?

*

The holy man of Shosha had accumulated such merit through recitations of *The Lotus Sutra* that he had attained purity of the Six Senses.

Once, on a journey, he entered the lodging where he was to stay the night and heard the bubbling of a pot of beans being boiled over a fire made from their husks. 'We're so closely related and yet you boil us so brutally!' they were crying, and the bean husks crackling in the flames seemed to him to reply, 'Do you imagine we're boiling you on purpose? It's excruciating for us to be burning like this, heaven knows, but we're powerless to stop. Enough of these recriminations!'

*

As soon as I hear someone's name, I feel I can picture their face, but when I actually meet them no one ever looks as I had been imagining all that time.

Also, I wonder if everyone, on hearing some old tale, imagines it as taking place in a certain part of some house he knows, and identifies the characters with people he sees in life, as I do.

And is it just I who sometimes feels a conviction that what someone is saying, or what you're seeing or thinking just then, has already happened before, though you cannot remember when?

*

Unpleasant things – a great many things cluttering up the area where someone is sitting. A lot of brushes lying on an ink stone. A crowd of Buddhist images in a private worship hall. A large collection of stones and plants in a garden. Too many children and grandchildren in a house. Too much talk when meeting others. A long list of one's virtuous acts in a supplicatory prayer.

Things that are not unpleasant in large amounts are books on a book cart, and rubbish on a rubbish heap.

*

What kind of man will feel depressed at being idle? There is nothing finer than to be alone with nothing to distract you.

If you follow the ways of the world, your heart will be drawn to its sensual defilements and easily led astray; if you go among people, your words will be guided by others' responses rather than come from the heart. There is nothing firm or stable in a life spent between larking about together and quarrelling, exuberant one moment, aggrieved and resentful the next. You are forever pondering pros and cons, endlessly absorbed in questions of gain and loss. And on top of delusion comes drunkenness, and in that drunkenness you dream.

Scurrying and bustling, heedless and forgetful – such are all men. Even if you do not yet understand the True Way, you can achieve what could be termed temporary happiness at least by removing yourself from outside influences, taking no part in the affairs of the world, calming yourself and stilling the mind. As *The Great Cessation and Insight* says, we must 'break all ties with everyday life, human affairs, the arts and scholarship'.

*

I cannot bear the way people will make it their business to know all the details of some current rumour, even though it has nothing to do with them, and then proceed to pass the story on and do their best to learn more. Wandering monks up from some provincial backwater seem particularly adept at prying into tales about others as if it was their own concern, and spreading the word in such detail that you wonder how on earth they came to know so much.

*

Nor can I bear the way people will spread excited rumours about the latest marvels. A refined person will not learn of things until the rumours are old and stale.

If someone new comes visiting, the boorish and insensitive will always manage to make the visitor feel ignorant by exchanging cryptic remarks about something they all know among themselves, some story or name, chuckling and exchanging knowing glances.

*

When someone complained that it was a great shame the way fine silk covers are so soon damaged, Ton'a replied, 'It is only after the top and bottom edges of the silk have frayed, or when the mother-of-pearl has peeled off the roller, that a scroll is truly impressive' – an astonishingly fine remark, I felt. Similarly, an unmatched set of bound books can be considered unattractive, but Bishop Kōyū impressed me deeply by saying that only a boring man will always want things to match; real quality lies in irregularity – another excellent remark.

In all things, perfect regularity is tasteless. Something left not quite finished is very appealing, a gesture towards the future. Someone told me that even in the construction of the imperial palace, some part is always left uncompleted.

In the Buddhist scriptures and other works written by the great men of old there are also a number of missing sections.

*

The Dainagon Abbot employed a young acolyte by the name of Otozuru-maru, who came to be on intimate terms with one Yasura-dono and was constantly coming and going to visit him.

One day, seeing the lad return, the abbot asked where he had been. 'I've been to see Yasura-dono,' he replied.

'Is this Yasura-dono a layman, or a monk?' enquired the abbot.

Bringing his sleeves together in a polite bow, the acolyte replied, 'I really don't know, sir. I've never seen his head.'

I wonder why not – after all, he would have seen the rest of him.

*

The Yin- Yang masters do not concern themselves with those days of the calendar marked 'Red Tongue Days'. Nor did people of old treat the day as unpropitious. It seems someone more recently has declared it unlucky, and now everyone has begun to avoid it, believing that things undertaken on this day will miscarry. This idea – that whatever is said or done on this day will fail, that objects

gained on the day will be lost and plans made will go awry – is ridiculous. If you count the number of failures that happen on an auspicious day, you will find there are just as many.

This is because, in this transient phenomenal world with its constant change, what appears to exist in fact does not. What is begun has no end. Aims go unfulfilled, yet desire is endless. The human heart changes ceaselessly. All things are passing illusion. What is there that remains unchanging? The folly of such beliefs springs from people's inability to understand this.

It is said that evil performed on an auspicious day is always ill-fated, while good performed on an inauspicious one will be blessed by good fortune. It is people who create good fortune and misfortune, not the calendar.

*

A man who was studying archery took two arrows in his hand and stood before the target.

'A beginner should not hold two arrows,' his teacher told him. 'You will be careless with the first, knowing you have a second. You must always be determined to hit the target with the single arrow you shoot, and have no thought beyond this.' With only two arrows, and standing before his master, would he really be inclined to be slapdash with one of them? Yet although he may not have been aware of his own carelessness, his teacher was. The same injunction surely applies in all matters.

A man engaged in Buddhist practice will tell himself at night that there is always the morning, or in the morning will anticipate the night, always intending to make more effort later. And if such are your days, how much less aware must you be of the passing moment's indolence. Why should it be so difficult to carry something out right now when you think of it, to seize the instant?

*

Someone told the following tale. A man sells an ox. The buyer says he will come in the morning to pay and take the beast. But during the night, the ox dies. 'The buyer thus gained, while the seller lost,' he concluded.

But a bystander remarked, 'The owner did indeed lose on the transaction, but he profited greatly in another way. Let me tell you why. Living creatures have no knowledge of the nearness of death. Such was the ox, and such too are we humans. As it happened, the ox died that night; as it happened, the owner lived on. One day's life is more precious than a fortune's worth of money, while an ox's worth weighs no more than a goose feather. One cannot say that a man who gains a fortune while losing a coin or two has made a loss.'

Everyone laughed at this. 'That reasoning doesn't only apply to the owner of the ox,' they scoffed.

The man went on. 'Well then, if people hate death they should love life. Should we not relish each day the joy of survival? Fools forget this – they go striving after other enjoyments, cease to appreciate the fortune they have and risk all to lay their hands on fresh wealth. Their desires are never sated. There is a deep contradiction in failing to enjoy life and yet fearing death when faced with it. It is because they have no fear of death that people fail to enjoy life – no, not that they don't fear it, but rather they forget its nearness. Of course, it must be said that the ultimate gain lies in transcending the relative world with its distinction between life and death.'

At this, everyone jeered more than ever.

*

A lady who had reason to withdraw from the world for a time had retired to a lonely tumbledown house, where she was idling away the long days of her seclusion, when one dimly moonlit evening a certain man decided to call; but as he was creeping stealthily to her door, a dog set up a fierce barking. This brought one of the maidservants. 'Where do you hail from?' she enquired. The man promptly announced himself, and was shown in.

His heart was heavy as he took in his forlorn surroundings. How must she spend her time here? He stood hesitating on the veranda's rough wooden boards. 'This way,' came a wonderfully serene and youthful voice, so he slid open the door with some difficulty and entered.

The place was not so shabby after all, but was modest and

refined. At the far end a lamp shone softly, revealing the beauty of the furnishings, and the scent of incense lit some time earlier imbued the place with an evocative and beguiling air.

He heard orders being given among the servants – ‘Take care to lock the gate. It may rain. Put the carriage under the shelter of the gate roof’ – and talk of where his retainers should spend the night. Then one added, in a soft murmur that nevertheless reached his ears because he was quite close, ‘Tonight at least we can sleep easy.’

The two spoke together of all that had happened since they last met, until the first cock crowed while it was yet night. On they talked earnestly, of matters past and to come, and now the cock’s crow was loud and persistent. The day must by now have dawned, he thought, but this was not a place he must hasten to leave before light, so he lingered on a little, until sunlight whitened the cracks in the door. At last, with promises not to forget her, he departed.

Recalling the enchanting scene, he remembers how beautifully green the trees and garden plants glowed in that early summer daybreak, and even now, whenever he passes the house, he turns to gaze until the great camphor tree in the garden is lost to sight.

*

A man famed for his tree- climbing skills once directed another to climb a tall tree and cut branches. While the fellow was precariously balanced aloft, the tree- climber watched without a word, but when he was descending and had reached the height of the eaves the expert called to him, ‘Careful how you go! Take care coming down!’

‘Why do you say that? He’s so far down now that he could leap to the ground from there,’ I said.

‘Just so,’ replied the tree- climber. ‘While he’s up there among the treacherous branches I need not say a word –his fear is enough to guide him. It’s in the easy places that mistakes will always occur.’

Lowly commoner though he was, his words echoed the warnings of the sages.

Apparently one of the laws of kickball also states that if you relax after achieving a difficult kick, this is the moment when the ball will always fall to the ground.

*

There are seven types of people one should not have as a friend.

The first is an exalted and high-ranking person. The second, somebody young. The third, anyone strong and in perfect health. The fourth, a man who loves drink. The fifth, a brave and daring warrior. The sixth, a liar. The seventh, an avaricious man.

The three to choose as friends are – one who gives gifts, a doctor and a wise man.

*

The domestic animals are the horse and the ox. It is a shame to tether the poor things and make them suffer, but it can't be helped, since they are indispensable to us. One should most certainly have a dog, as they are better than men at guarding the house. However, since all the houses around you will have dogs, you probably don't need to go out of your way to get one yourself.

All other creatures, be it bird or beast, are useless. When you lock an animal that runs free into a cage or chain it up, when you snip the wings of a flying bird and confine it, the beast will ceaselessly pine for the wild and the bird for the clouds. Surely no one with a heart to imagine how unbearable he himself would find it could take pleasure in these creatures' torment. It would take the stony heart of a Jie or a Zhou to enjoy witnessing the suffering of a living creature.

Wang Huizhi loved birds. He watched them frolicking happily in the forest, and made them his companions in his rambles. He did not catch them and make them suffer. We should follow the words of the classic: 'Do not cultivate rare birds or strange beasts in your own land.'

*

Grand Counsellor Masafusa was a fine, scholarly man, and the retired emperor was planning to promote him to Commander of the Guards, when someone in close service informed His Majesty that he had just witnessed something dreadful.

'What was it?' His Majesty enquired.

‘I watched through a gap in the fence as Count Masafusa cut off the leg of a live dog to feed to his hawk,’ the man replied.

His Majesty was appalled. The thought of Masafusa revolted him, and he was not promoted after all.

It is extraordinary that such a man would own a hawk, and the story of the dog’s leg is absolutely unfounded. The lie was most unfortunate, but how splendid of His Majesty to have reacted with such disgust when he heard the tale.

Overall, it must be said that those who kill or harm living creatures, or set them up to fight each other for their own pleasure, are no better than wild beasts themselves. If you pause and look carefully at the birds and animals, and even the little insects, you will see that they love their children, feel affection for their parents, live in couples, are jealous, angry, full of desire, self-protecting and fearful for their lives, and far more so than men, since they lack all intelligence. Surely one should pity them when they are killed or made to suffer? If you can look on any sentient being without compassion, you are less than human.

*

Yan Hui’s firm belief was that he must avoid burdening others. One should not cause suffering and pain to others, nor undermine the will of the humble man.

Some will take pleasure in deceiving, frightening or mocking little children. Adults treat such tales lightly, knowing that they are quite unfounded, but those words will strike deep into the heart of a poor little child, and humiliate, terrify or appal it. It is heartless to enjoy tormenting children in this way.

The joys, angers, sorrows and pleasures of adults too are all based on illusion, but who among us is not attached to the seeming reality of this life?

It harms a man more to wound his heart than to hurt his body. Illness, too, often originates in the mind. Few illnesses come from without. There are times when medicine cannot produce the intended sweat, but shame or fear will always bring one on, which should prove to us that such things come from the mind. We find examples in the classics, after all – think of the man who was

hoisted up the Ling Yun Tower to write its signboard, whose hair turned white from fear at the height.

*

Should we look at the spring blossoms only in full flower, or the moon only when cloudless and clear? To long for the moon with the rain before you, or to lie curtained in your room while the spring passes unseen, is yet more poignant and deeply moving. A branch of blossoms on the verge of opening, a garden strewn with fading petals, have more to please the eye. Could poems on the themes of 'Going to view the blossoms to find them already fallen' or 'Written when I was prevented from going to see the flowers' be deemed inferior to 'On seeing the blossoms'? It is natural human feeling to yearn over the falling blossoms and the setting moon – yet some, it seems, are so insensitive that they will declare that since this branch and that have already shed their flowers, there is nothing worth seeing any longer.

In all things, the beginning and end are the most engaging. Does the love of man and woman suggest only their embraces? No, the sorrow of lovers parted before they met, laments over promises betrayed, long lonely nights spent sleepless until dawn, pining thoughts for one in some far place, a woman left sighing over past love in her tumbledown abode – it is these, surely, that embody the romance of love.

Rather than gazing on a clear full moon that shines over a thousand leagues, it is infinitely more moving to see the moon near dawn and after long anticipation, tinged with most beautiful palest blue, a moon glimpsed among cedar branches deep in the mountains, its light now hidden again by the gathering clouds of an autumn shower. The moist glint of moonlight on the glossy leaves of the forest *shii* oak or the white oak pierces the heart, and makes you yearn for the distant capital and a friend of true sensibility to share the moment with you.

Are blossoms and the moon merely things to be gazed at with the eye? No, it brings more contentment and delight to stay inside the house in spring and, there in your bedroom, let your heart go out to the unseen moonlit night.

The man of quality never appears entranced by anything; he

savours things with a casual air. Country bumpkins, however, take flamboyant pleasure in everything. They will wriggle their way in through the crowd and stand there endlessly gaping up at the blossoms, sit about under the trees drinking sake and indulging in linked verse- making together and, finally, oafishly break off great branches of blossom to carry away. They will dip their hands and feet into clear spring water, get down to stand in unsullied snow and leave their footprints everywhere, and in short throw themselves into everything with uninhibited glee.

I have observed such people behaving quite astonishingly when they came to see the Kamo festival. Declaring that the procession was horribly late so there was no point in hanging around on the viewing stand, a group retired to a house behind the stands and settled down to eat, drink and play *go* and *sugoroku*, leaving one of their number back on the stand to keep watch. 'It's coming by!' he shouted, whereupon they all leaped frantically to their feet and dashed back, elbowing each other out of the way as they scrambled up, nearly tumbling off in their eagerness to thrust aside the blinds for a better look, jostling for position and craning to miss nothing, and commenting volubly on everything they saw. Then, when that section of the procession had passed, off they went again, declaring they'd be back for the next one. They were clearly only there to see the spectacle.

The upper echelons from the capital, on the other hand, will sit there dozing without so much as a glance at the scene. Young gentlemen of lesser rank are constantly rising to wait on their superiors, while those seated in the back rows never rudely lean forward, and no one goes out of his way to watch as the procession passes.

On the day of the festival everything is elegantly strewn with the emblematic *aoi* leaves, and even before dawn the carriages quietly begin to arrive to secure a good viewing position, everyone intrigued about which carriage is whose, sometimes identifying them by an accompanying servant or ox- boy they recognize. It is endlessly fascinating to watch the carriages come and go, some charming, others more showy. By the time evening draws in, all those rows of carriages and the people who were crammed into the stands have disappeared, and hardly a soul is left. Once the chaos of departing carriages is over, the blinds and matting are taken down

from the stands as you watch, and the place is left bare and forlorn, moving you to a poignant sense of the brevity of worldly things. It is this that is the real point of seeing the festival.

Among the people coming and going in front of the stands there are many you recognize, making you realize there are not really so many people in this world. Even if you were destined to die after all these others, clearly your own death cannot be far away. When a large vessel filled with water is pierced with a tiny hole, though each drop is small it will go on relentlessly leaking until soon the vessel is empty. The city is filled with people, but not a day would go by without someone dying. And is it only one or two a day? There are times when the corpses on the pyres of Toribe, Funaoka and elsewhere further afield are piled high, but no day passes without a funeral. And so the coffin sellers no sooner make one than it is sold. Be they young, be they strong, the time of death comes upon all unawares. It is an extraordinary miracle that we have escaped it until now. Can we ever, even briefly, have peace of mind in this world?

It is like the game of *mamakodate*, played with *sugoroku* pieces, in which no one knows which in the line of pieces will be removed next – when the count is made and a piece is taken, the rest seem to have escaped, but the count goes on and more are picked off in turn, so that no piece is finally spared. Soldiers going into battle, aware of the closeness of death, forget their home and their own safety. And it is sheer folly for a man who lives secluded from the world in his lowly hut, spending his days in idle delight in his garden, to pass off such matters as irrelevant to himself. Do you imagine that the enemy Impermanence will not come forcing its way into your peaceful mountain retreat? The recluse faces death as surely as the soldier setting forth to battle.

*

A sensible man will not die leaving valuables behind. A collection of vulgar objects looks bad, while good ones will suggest a futile attachment to worldly things. And it is even more unfortunate to leave behind a vast accumulation. There will be ugly fights over it after your death, with everyone determined to get things for himself. If you plan to leave something to a particular person, you should pass it on while you are still alive.

Some things are necessary for day- to- day living, but one should have nothing else.

*

Even people who seem to lack any finer feelings will sometimes say something impressive.

An alarming- looking ruffian from the eastern provinces once turned to the man beside him and asked if he had any children. 'Not one,' the man replied.

'Well then,' said the Easterner, 'you'll not know what true depth of feeling is. It frightens me to think of a man unacquainted with tenderness. It's having your own children that brings home to you the poignant beauty of life.'

This is indeed true. Without familial love, would such a man as this be able to feel compassion? Even a man who lacks all filial piety will discover how a parent feels when he himself has children.

It is wrong for a man who has taken the tonsure and cast all away to despise those he sees around him encumbered with worldly ties, who go crawling abjectly after this person and that and are full of craving. If you imagined yourself in his place, you would see how he might abase himself so far as to steal for the sake of his beloved parents or wife and children. Rather than seizing thieves and punishing their crimes, it would be better to make the world a place where people did not go hungry or cold. A man without stable means is a man whose heart is unstable. People steal from extremity. There will be no end to crime while the world is not governed well, and men suffer from cold and starvation. It is cruel to make people suffer and drive them to break the law, then treat the poor creatures as criminals.

As for how to improve people's lives, there can be no doubt that it would benefit those below if people in high positions were to cease their luxurious and wasteful ways and instead were kind and tender to the people, and encouraged agriculture. The true criminal must be defined as a man who commits a crime though he is as decently fed and clothed as others.

*

The imperial bodyguard Hada no Shigemi once said of one of the retired emperor's guard, the Shimotsuke Novice Shingan, 'He has the mark of one prone to falling from horses. He should take great care.' Shingan thought this very unlikely, but he did indeed fall from his horse and die. Everyone then decided that the words issuing from such an expert in his field were divinely prophetic.

So just what was this mark? people asked him. 'He showed all the signs by having a very poor riding seat, and favouring horses that tend to buck,' replied the guard. 'Have I ever been wrong?'

*

It is not good to call on someone if you have no particular reason. Even if you go with some purpose, you should leave promptly once your business is accomplished. It is very annoying if a visit drags on.

There is so much talking when people get together. It is exhausting, disturbs the peace of mind and wastes time better spent on other things. There is nothing to be gained for either party. It is bad, too, to feel irritable as you talk. When you don't care for something, you should come right out and say so.

The exception to all this is when someone after your own heart, whom you feel inclined to talk with, is at a loose end and encourages you to stay a while longer for a peaceful chat. No doubt we all have Ruan Ji's 'welcoming green eyes' from time to time.

It is very nice when a friend simply drops in, has a quiet talk with you, and then leaves. It is also wonderfully pleasing to receive a letter that simply begins, 'I write because it's been some time since I sent news,' or some such.

*

A young man overflows with vigour, things stir his heart, and he is prone to passions. Like a flung ball, such a youth courts danger and physical harm. Riches are wasted in pursuit of magnificence, then all this is suddenly abandoned for the wretched robes of the monk; he is full of fervour and fight, suffers agonies of shame or bitterness, and his fancies are constantly shifting from day to day. He will devote himself to women and pursue infatuations, or take his example from those who have died with no thought to their

own safety or longevity, behaving with such reckless daring that 'a long life lies ruined', or let himself be drawn wherever his heart urges, becoming the cause of talk for many years to come. It is indeed in youth that we make our mistakes.

In age, on the other hand, the spirit weakens, we become indifferent and apathetic, and nothing rouses us. The heart grows naturally calm, so that we no longer act in futile ways but instead tend to our bodies, live free of discontent and try to avoid troubling others. Age has more wisdom than youth, just as youth has more beauty than does age.

*

There are many incomprehensible things in this world.

I cannot understand why people will seize any occasion to immediately bring out the sake, delighting in forcing someone else to drink. The other will frown and grimace in painful protest, attempt to throw it away when no one's looking or do his best to escape, but this man will seize him, pin him down and make him swallow cup after cup. A genteel man will quickly be transformed into a madman and start acting the fool; a vigorous, healthy fellow will before your very eyes become shockingly afflicted and fall senseless to the floor. What a thing to do, on a day of celebration! Right into the next day his head hurts, he can't eat, and he lies there groaning with all memory of the previous day gone as if it were a former life. He neglects essential duties both public and private, with disastrous effects. It is both boorish and cruel to subject someone to this sort of misery. Surely a man who has had this bitter experience will be filled with regret and loathing. Anyone from a land that lacked this custom would be amazed and appalled to hear of its existence in another country.

It is depressing enough just to witness this happening to another. A man who had always seemed thoughtful and refined will burst into mindless laughter, prattle on and on, his lacquered court cap askew, the ties of his robes loosened and the skirts hauled up above his shins, and generally behave so obliviously that he seems a changed man. A woman will blatantly push her hair up away from her face, throw back her head and laugh quite shamelessly, and seize the hand of the person with the sake, while the more uncouth

might grab one of the snacks and hold it to someone else's mouth or eat it herself – a quite disgraceful sight. People bellow at the top of their lungs, everyone sings and prances about, and an old monk is called in, who proceeds to bare his filthy black shoulder and writhe about so that you can hardly stand to watch, and you loathe just as much the others who sit there enjoying the spectacle.

Some will make you cringe by the way they sing their own praises, others will cry into their drink, while the lower orders abuse each other and get into quite shocking and appalling fights. Finally, after all manner of disgraceful and pitiful behaviour, the drunkard will seize things without permission, then end up hurting himself by rolling off the veranda or tumbling from his horse or carriage. If he's of a class that goes on foot he'll stagger away down the high road, doing unspeakable things against people's walls or gates as he goes. It is quite disgusting to see the old monk in his black robe stumbling off, steadying himself with his hand on the shoulder of the lad beside him and rambling on incomprehensibly.

If drinking like this profited us in this world or the next, what could one say? But in this world it leads to all manner of error, and causes both illness and loss of wealth. Wine has been called 'the greatest of medicines', but in fact all sickness springs from it. It is claimed that you forget your sorrows in drink, but from what I can see, men in their cups will in fact weep to recall their past unhappiness. As for the next world – having lost the wisdom you were born with, reduced all your good karma to ashes, built up a store of wickedness and broken all the Buddhist precepts, you are destined for hell. Remember, the Buddha teaches that those who lift the wine glass either to their own lips or to others' will spend five hundred lifetimes without hands.

Yet, loathsome though one finds it, there are situations when a cup of sake is hard to resist. On a moonlit night, a snowy morning, or beneath the flowering cherry trees, it increases all the pleasures of the moment to bring out the sake cups and settle down to talk serenely together over a drink. It is also a great comfort to have a drink together if an unexpected friend calls round when time is hanging heavy on your hands. And it is quite wonderful when sake and snacks are elegantly served from behind her curtains by some remote and exalted lady.

It is also quite delightful to sit across from a close friend in some cosy little nook in winter, roasting food over the coals and drinking lots of sake together. And delightful too on a journey to sit about on the grass together in some wayside hut or out in the wild, drinking and lamenting the lack of a suitable snack. And it's a fine thing when someone who really hates having sake pressed on them is forced to have just a little. You are thrilled when some grand person singles you out and offers to refill your cup, urging, 'Do have more. You've barely drunk.' And it is also very pleasing when someone you would like to get to know better is a drinker and becomes very pally with you in his cups.

All things considered, a drunkard is so entertaining he can be forgiven his sins. Think of the charming scene when a master throws open the door on his servant, who is sound asleep next morning after an exhausting night on the drink. The poor befuddled fellow rushes off, rubbing his bleary eyes, topknot exposed on his hatless head, only half dressed and clutching the rest of his trailing clothes, his hairy shins sticking out below his lifted skirts as he scampers into the distance – a typical drunk.

*

The one thing a man should not have is a wife.

One is impressed to hear that a certain man always lives alone, while someone who is reported to have married into this or that family, or to have taken a wife and be living together, will find himself quite looked down on. 'He must have married that nondescript girl because he thought she was something special,' people will say scornfully, or if she is a good woman they will think, 'He'll be so besotted that he treats her like his own personal buddha.' The impression is even more dreary when she runs the house well. It is depressing to watch her bear children and fuss over them, and things don't end with his death, for then you have the shameful sight of her growing old and decrepit as a nun.

No matter who the woman may be, you would grow to hate her if you lived with her and saw her day in day out, and the woman must become dissatisfied too. But if you lived separately and sometimes visited her, your feelings for each other would surely remain unchanged through the years. It keeps the

relationship fresh to just drop in from time to time on impulse and spend the night.

*

What a shame it is to hear someone declare that things lose their beauty at night! All lustre, ornamentation and brilliance come into their own at night.

In daylight, one can keep things simple and dress sedately. But the best clothing for night is showy and dazzling formal wear. The same goes for people – a good-looking person will look still finer by lamplight, and it's charming to hear a careful voice speaking in darkness. Scents and music too are still lovelier at night.

It is a fine thing to see a man who calls on some great household looking his best late on an uneventful evening. Young people who pay attention to such things will always notice one's appearance no matter what the hour, so it is wise to dress well whatever the situation, whether formal or informal, and most especially at times when one is inclined to relax and unwind. Particularly delightful is when a fine gentleman has bothered to plaster down his hair though it is after dark, or when a lady slips from the room late at night to take up a mirror and see to her face before rejoining the company.

*

When the now-deceased Tokudaiji Minister of the Right was Superintendent of Police, he was one day holding court at his central gate when the ox of one of the officers, Akikane, broke loose, got into the court room, scrambled up on to the Superintendent's seating platform and there settled down to chew its cud. This was deemed a disturbingly untoward event, and everyone present declared that the beast should be taken off for Yin-Yang divination to determine the meaning.

However, when the Superintendent's father the Minister heard of this, he declared, 'An ox has no understanding. It has its four legs which can take it anywhere. There is no reason to impound a skinny beast that happens to have brought some lowly official here.' He had the ox returned to its master, and changed the matting where the ox had lain. There were no ill consequences from the

event.

It is sometimes said that if you see something sinister and choose to treat it as normal, you will thereby avert whatever it portended.

*

Nothing in this world can be trusted. Fools put all their faith in things, and so become angry and bitter.

The powerful should place no faith in their powerful position. The strong are the first to go. The rich should never depend on their wealth. A fortune can easily disappear from one moment to the next. A scholar should never be complacent about his skills. Even Confucius did not meet with the reception he deserved. The virtuous should not rely on their virtue. Even the exemplary Yan Hui met with misfortune. Nor should those favoured by the emperor be smug. You may at any time find yourself instead faced with execution for some crime. Never rely on your servants to be loyal. They can rebel and flee. Never put your faith in others' goodwill. They will inevitably change their minds. Never depend on a promise made. People seldom keep their word.

If you rely neither on yourself nor on others, you will rejoice when things go well, and not be aggrieved when they don't. Maintain a clear space on either side, and nothing will obstruct you; keep open before and behind you, and you will be unimpeded. If you let yourself be hemmed in, you can be squeezed to breaking point. Without care and flexibility in your dealings with the world, you will find yourself in conflict and be damaged, while if you live calmly and serenely, not a hair on your head will come to harm.

Humans are the most miraculous and exalted of all things in heaven and earth. And heaven and earth are boundless. How, then, could we differ in essence? If our spirit is open and boundless, neither fear nor joy will obstruct it, and we will remain untroubled by the world.

*

There is a place in Tamba called Izumo, where the deity of the great Izumo Shrine has been installed in a magnificent shrine building. The area is ruled by a certain Shida, who one autumn

invited a great many people, including the holy man Shōkai. 'Come and pray to Izumo,' he said, 'and let us feast on rice cakes.' He led them to the shrine, and every one of them prayed and was filled with faith.

The holy man was immensely moved by the sight of the guardian Chinese lion and Korean dog, which were placed back to back and facing backwards. 'How marvellous!' he exclaimed, close to tears. 'Such an unusual position to stand them in! There must be some deep reason behind it.' Then he turned to the others. 'How can you not have noticed this wonder?' he cried. 'I'm amazed at you.'

They were very struck. 'Yes indeed,' they all declared, 'they *are* different from elsewhere. We'll tell this to everyone back in the capital.'

The holy man now wished to learn more, so he called over an elderly and wise-looking shrine priest. 'There must be some interesting tale explaining the placement of these images,' he said. 'Do be so kind as to tell us.'

'Indeed there is,' replied the priest. 'Some naughty children did it. A disgraceful business,' and so saying he went over to the statues, set them to rights and walked off.

The holy man's tears of delight had been for nothing.

*

He whose deep love spurs him to dare all and go to his beloved, though 'watchful eyes surround the stealthy lover' and 'guards are set to snare him in the dark', will leave them both replete with powerful memories of all the moments when they tasted life's poignancy to the full. It must feel very awkward and unromantic for the woman, however, if a man simply takes her as his wife with the full consent of the family and without further ado.

How dreary it is when a woman hard up in the world announces that she will 'answer the call of any current' so long as he is well-off, be it some unsuitable old priest or an uncouth Easterner, and a go-between sets about singing the praises of each to the other, with the result that she comes to someone's house as a bride without either knowing the other at all. What on earth would

they say to each other when they first come face to face? On the other hand, a couple can find endless conversation in the memories of long hardships overcome, 'forging their way through the dense autumn woods' to be together at last.

It can generally be said that a great deal of dissatisfaction results from a marriage set up by a third party. If the wife is excellent and the man a lowly and ugly old fellow, he will despise her for allowing herself to be thrown away on the likes of himself, and feel ashamed in her presence – a deplorable situation.

If you can never linger beneath the clouded moon on a plum-scented evening, nor find yourself recalling the dawns when you made your way home through the dew-soaked grasses by her gate after a night of love, you had best not aspire to be a lover at all.

*

The full moon's perfect roundness lasts barely a moment, and in no time is lost. Those with no eye for such things, it seems, fail to see how it changes in the course of a night.

An illness will grow graver as each moment passes, and death is already close at hand, yet while the sickness is still mild and you are not yet confronting death, you are lulled by your accustomed assumptions of a normal life in an unchanging world, and choose to wait until you have accomplished all you want in life before calmly turning your thoughts to salvation and a Buddhist practice, with the result that when you fall ill and confront death, none of your dreams has been fulfilled. Now, too late, you repent of your long years of negligence, and swear that if only you were to recover you would dedicate yourself unstintingly day and night to this thing and that – but for all your prayers your illness grows graver, until you lose your senses and die a raving death. It happens to so many of us. We must fully grasp this, here and now.

If you plan to turn your thoughts to the Buddhist Way after you have fulfilled all your desires, you will find that those desires are endless. What could be achieved, in this illusory life of ours? All desire is delusion. If desires arise within you, realize that they spring from your lost and deluded mind, and ignore them all. Relinquish all today and turn to the Buddhist path, and you will be freed of all obstruction, released from the need for action, and

lasting peace will be yours body and soul.

*

The year I turned eight, I asked my father, 'What sort of thing is a buddha?'

'A buddha is what a human becomes,' he replied.

'How does a human become a buddha?' I asked.

'You become a buddha by following the Buddha's teaching,' he answered.

'So who taught the Buddha?' I asked.

'He became a buddha by following the teaching of previous buddhas,' he said.

'So what sort of buddha was the first one who began the teaching?' I asked.

My father laughed and replied, 'I suppose he just fell from the sky like rain or rose out of the earth like water.'

He used to enjoy recounting this story to others, adding, 'He had me cornered. I couldn't think what to reply.'



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张炽恒 / 译

PENGUIN CLASSICS

N° 09

虎！虎！

中信出版集团

虎！虎！

企鹅经典：小黑书 第一辑

[英] 威廉·布莱克/著

张炽恒/译

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P E N G U I N



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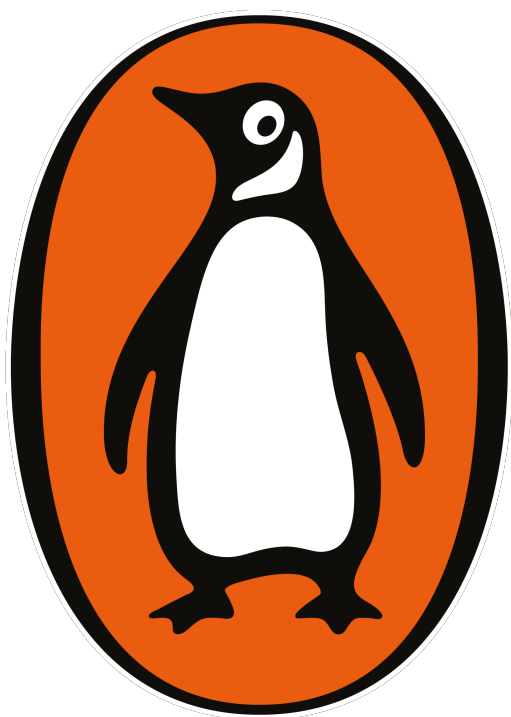
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Songs of Innocence

Songs of Experience

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“为了欢乐而出世的鸟儿
怎能坐在笼中歌唱？”



PENGUIN
LITTLE BLACK
CLASSICS

《弥尔顿》序诗

要是远古时那些圣足
曾在英格兰的群山上徜徉；
要是那神圣的上帝的羊羔
到过英格兰的快乐的牧场！

那张神圣的脸庞可曾
照亮我们阴云中的山峦？
耶路撒冷可曾建起，在这些
昏暗的撒旦的磨坊 ^[1] 之间？

把我那灼亮的金弓带给我，
把我那愿望的箭矢带给我，
带给我长矛，招展的云彩呀！
把我那烈火的战车带给我！

我不会停止内心的战斗，
我的剑也不会手中安眠，
直到我们建立起耶路撒冷，
在英格兰青翠而快乐的地面。

[1] “磨坊”一语双关，原文mill也指工厂。（说明：书中脚注除特别标明的之外均为译者注。）

我看见一座全金的教堂

我看见一座全金的教堂，
谁也没有胆量进去，
许多人悲叹着站在外面，
悲叹，哀哭，膜拜顶礼。

我看见一条巨蛇出现
在那些白色门柱中间，
他用力挤呀挤呀挤呀，
终于挤落了黄金的铰链。

沿着可爱的，铺满珍珠
以及灿灿宝石的通道，
他伸直他那黏滑的蛇身，
直伸到白色的祭坛上面。

他向外喷射出他的毒液，
喷在面包和啤酒上面，
于是我折进了一个猪圈，
躺在那些猪猡中间。

“我死了，我死了。”母亲说道

“我死了，我死了。”母亲说道，
“我的孩子们将因饥馑而亡！
那不仁的暴君还说了些什么？”
修士坐在她冰硬的床上。

他眼睛枯涩，泪已哭干，
一声长叹道破了悲伤。
他在床上瑟瑟地颤抖，
最后无力地开始哭讲：

“在勤学的深夜，当这双手
受命于上帝而写作的时候，
他说我写下的一切将证明
尘世间我所爱的一切的毒性。

“我兄弟求生无门而饿死，
他的孩子们哭得我心悸；
我嘲笑那嘎嘎响的破旧锁链，
我伛偻的身体嘲笑酷刑的熬煎。

“你父亲在北方拔出利剑，
率万千壮士奋勇向前；
你兄弟已操起钢铁的武器，
要报复你的孩子们所受的冤屈。

“但利剑和弓矢无济于我们，
它们永不能打倒战争；
唯隐士的祈祷和寡妇的泪滴
才能使这世界摆脱恐惧。”

复仇的手在那床上搜，
穿紫袍的暴君闻声逃走。
铁手捏碎了暴君的头颈，
又取而代之成了暴君。

天真之歌

(1789)

／

序诗

吹着笛儿，我走下野谷，
欢乐的笛声随风轻飘。
我看见云彩上有个小孩 [\[1\]](#)，
孩子他笑着，向我说道：

“吹个歌唱小羊羔的歌！”
我兴高采烈地吹了一曲。
“再吹，再吹一次那歌儿！”
我又吹时他淌下了泪滴。

“放下笛儿，那快乐的笛儿，
唱吧，唱唱那快乐的小曲。”
于是我就唱，唱那首歌，
他听着，淌下了喜悦的泪滴。

“吹笛的人，坐下来写吧，
写成一本书，大家都能看。”
他刚说完，便隐去了形象，
我折下一根空心的芦管。

做出来一支土造水笔，
在笔中注满清清河水，
我用它写下快乐的歌谣，
孩子们都能高兴地听到。

[1] 指耶稣。

牧羊人

牧人的好运多么美妙！
从早到晚他到处游荡；
他须整天跟随着羊群，
他的口中要充满颂扬——

他听到羔羊天真地叫，
他听到母羊纤柔地嚷；
他警觉着：它们安然无忧——
因为知道牧人就在近旁。

回音草坪

太阳升起，
使天空欢喜；
钟声欢鸣，
将春天欢迎；
云雀和鸫鸟，
灌木林中的小鸟，
到处高声唱——
和着欢欣的钟鸣；
我们就开始游戏
在那回音草坪。

满头白发的老约翰
无忧无虑地笑着，
坐在橡树下面，
坐在老人们中间；
他们笑我们嬉闹，
不久他们都说道：
“这样，这样作乐还是
当我们，全都年纪轻轻，
还是孩子时干的事，
在这回音草坪。”

直到小家伙们倦了，
再也提不起兴致；

太阳也落山了，
游戏才跟着完事。
妈妈们的裙兜周围，
围满了兄弟姐妹；
像鸟儿回到了窝里，
即将进入梦境；
看不到还有人游戏
在那渐黑的草坪。

羔羊

小羊羔儿，谁造了你？

你可知道是谁造了你？

给了你生命，吩咐你吃草，
在流水旁边，遍青青草地；
给了你人见人爱的衣裳，
茸茸的衣裳，鲜艳又柔软；
给了你那么柔和的声音，
让所有的溪谷听了都喜欢；

小羊羔儿，谁造了你？

你可知道是谁造了你？

小羊羔儿，我来告诉你，

小羊羔儿，我来告诉你：

他的名字和你的一样，
因为他叫自己羊羔羔儿；
他又柔顺，他又温和，
他变成了一个小小孩儿：
我是小孩儿，你是羊羔儿，
我们全都叫他的名儿。

小羊羔儿，上帝保佑你。

小羊羔儿，上帝保佑你。

黑人小孩

我妈妈生我在南方荒凉的地方，
我黑，可是啊！我的灵魂洁白；
白得像天使的是英国人的孩子，
可我黑，黑得好像失去了光彩。

在白昼的暑热中，妈妈坐着，
在一棵树下面她谆谆教导我；
她将我抱在膝上，把我亲吻，
她指着东方，开始对我诉说。

“看升起的太阳！那儿住着上帝，
他放射出光明，放射出热；
花草树木、飞禽走兽和人们
清晨得安慰，正午时分得欢乐。

“我们被安置在一块小小的天地，
我们可学着感受爱的光辉；
而这黑黑的肢体，晒黑的面容，
只是一片云，也像是多荫的树丛。

“当我们的灵魂学会忍受暑热，
那云会消散，他将召唤我们：
‘走出树林来吧，我的爱和担忧，
羔羊般快乐地围着我金色的帐篷。’”

妈妈亲着我，对我说了这些话。
我便这样对英国人的孩子谈讲：
当从黑云 [1]、他从白云 [2] 得到解放，
羔羊般快乐地围着上帝的篷帐，

我会为他遮阴，到他能忍受热，
能够快乐地倚着父亲 [3] 的膝盖；
我将站着，抚摸着他的银发，
变得像他一样，得到他的爱。

[1] 指躯体。

[2] 指躯体。

[3] 指上帝。

鲜花

欢乐的欢乐的小雀，
在那么绿的叶子下面，
一朵幸福的花儿
见到你箭一样迅捷，
寻找你狭小的巢穴，
靠近我的心儿。

美丽的美丽的欧鸽，
在那么绿的叶子下面，
一朵幸福的花儿
听到你啜泣，啜泣，
美丽的美丽的欧鸽，
靠近我的心儿。

扫烟囱的孩子

我妈死去的时候我还很小，
我爸卖了我，那时我的小嘴
还叫不出“扫，扫，扫，扫”，
于是你的烟囱我扫，烟灰里我睡。

有个小汤姆长着羊毛般的鬃发，
剃光头时他哭得伤心，我就对他说：
“嘘，别介意，汤姆，光着头就知道
烟灰糟蹋不了你淡色的头发啦。”

他安静了下来。就在那天夜里，
汤姆在梦中见到这样的景象：
扫烟囱的孩子迪克、乔、小凯……
千万个全被关进黑洞洞的棺材。

后来，来了个带着亮钥匙的天使，
他打开棺材，让他们自由地离去，
他们穿过原野，跳呀，笑呀，
在清清河水中洗澡，在阳光中沐浴。
再光着白净的身子，扔了烟灰袋，
升上云端，在风中追逐游戏；
天使告诉汤姆，只要是好孩子，
就会有上帝做父亲，再不缺欢娱。

汤姆醒了，我们在黑暗中起身，
背着烟灰袋，拿起扫帚去干活。
早晨虽冷，汤姆却又暖和又愉快，
所以尽本分了，就不必怕受到伤害。

男童之失

“爸爸，爸爸，你去哪儿呀？
你别走这么快啊。
讲话呀爸爸，和你的儿讲话，
不然我会迷失啦。”

天黑了，哪里有什么爸爸。
孩子被露水沾湿了。
泥泞很深，孩子哭起来，
幻象也跟着消失了。

男童之得

小男孩迷失在孤寂的沼泽里，
向摇曳的灯光走去，
他哭着，但永在的上帝出现了，
像父亲，穿着白衣。

他吻了孩子，搀着他的手，
带领他去妈妈那里：
她正愁苦地在孤寂的山谷中
哭泣着找她的孩子。

笑歌

当绿色的树林以欢快的声音笑着，
那微波荡漾的流水笑着跑过，
当大气以我们的欢声笑语笑着，
绿色的山冈以它的喧声笑着，

当草地以它生动的绿色笑着，
蚱蜢在那欢乐的景象中笑着，
当玛丽，苏珊，还有爱弥丽她们
以甜蜜的小嘴唱着：“哈哈——嗨！”

当色彩瑰丽的鸟儿在林荫中笑着，
放着樱桃和栗子的餐桌已摆开，
来住下吧，高高兴兴，和我一块儿，
齐声欢唱那悦耳的：“哈哈——嗨！”

摇篮曲

甜蜜的梦儿，成一片暗影
罩在我可爱的婴儿头顶；
甜蜜地梦见怡人的流水，
借着幸福的静月的光辉。

甜蜜的睡眠，用柔软的绒羽
将你的眉编织成童稚花冠。
甜蜜的睡眠啊温柔的天使，
在幸福的孩儿上空盘旋。

甜蜜的微笑，在这夜间
在我的欢乐之上空盘旋；
甜蜜的微笑啊母亲的微笑，
哄走整个漫长的夜晚。

甜蜜的呻吟和温柔的叹息
不会驱走你眼中的睡意。
甜蜜的呻吟和更甜的微笑
哄走所有温柔的喁语。

睡吧，睡吧，幸福的孩子，
天地万物已微笑着安憩；
睡吧，睡吧，幸福地睡吧，
俯望着你，妈妈在哭泣。

甜蜜的宝贝，在你脸上
我能看到神圣的形象。
甜蜜的宝贝，曾经像你
造物主躺着，为我哭泣。

为我哭泣，为你，为全体，
那时他还是个小小的幼婴，
你永远看见他的形象——
超凡的面容微笑吟吟。

向你微笑，向我，向全体，
他变成过一个小小的幼婴，
童稚的微笑是他的真容，
将天国和尘世哄慰入静。

至上的形象

向仁慈、和平、怜悯与爱，
所有忧伤者恳切祈祷，
对这些蕴含着欢乐的美德，
他们以感激予以回报。

因仁慈、和平、怜悯与爱，
是上帝，我们亲爱的父，
仁慈、和平、怜悯与爱，
也是人——他的孩子和关注。

因为仁慈有一颗人心，
怜悯，有一张人的脸庞，
爱，有着至上的人形，
和平，有一套人的服装。

所以每一块地方每一个
处于忧伤之中的祈祷者，
都向至上的人形祈求
爱与仁慈与怜悯与和平。

所有人都应爱人的形象，
爱犹太人，土耳其人，土著，
它寓有仁慈与爱与怜悯，
上帝也在其中居住。

升天节

升天节到了，天真的脸蛋洗得干干净净，
孩子们一对对走着，穿着红黄绿各色衣裙，
灰发的助理牧师在前，执着雪一样白的手杖，
像泰晤士河水一样，他们流进了圣保罗大厅 [1]。

这么一大群孩子啊！这些伦敦市的花朵！
他们神采奕奕，自动地结伴坐在一起，
一大群响着嗡嗡的声音，只是一大群羔羊哦，
无数男孩和女孩，举起了天真的手臂。

他们向天国扬起的歌声，就像劲风一样，
宛若天国的席位间悦耳的雷声飞驰。
他们后面是成年人——穷人贤明的保护者，
此刻你要心怀怜悯，免得以门前赶走天使。

[1] 指圣保罗大教堂。

夜

夕阳沉落西山，
晚星闪耀在天上，
鸟儿在巢中安眠，
我也要將我的巢寻访。
月亮，像一朵花儿，
静静地怀着喜悦；
它安憩在高高的天庭，
对夜微笑吟吟。

别了啊，碧野和绿林，
这儿曾有欣欣
羊群，羔羊啃青，
欢快的天使脚步轻盈。
他们将欢乐和祝福
无形地不断倾注
在每朵鲜花和蓓蕾上，
在所有沉睡的胸上。

他们探遍不慎的鸟巢，
把鸟儿盖得和和暖暖；
他们访遍动物的洞穴，
使它们不受伤残；
他们若见谁哭泣，
谁就会熟睡过去——

洒睡眠于它们头上，
还坐在它们身旁。

当虎狼发出捕食的吼声，
他们就站住，哀然而泣——
试图驱散它们的渴望，
使它们免害群羊；
但它们若可怕地冲过去，
天使们就小心翼翼
接受每一个柔魂
去将新世界继承。

那里狮子红色的眼睛
将会流出金色的泪水，
并怜悯那些纤弱的呼叫，
漫步在羊群周围
说道：“狂怒，被他的
柔顺；疾病，被他的
健康，驱逐出了
我们的永恒之世。

“在你身旁，咩咩的羔羊啊，
我现在能够躺下睡去；
或想着有你名字的他，
在后面吃草和哭泣——
经过生命河的洗礼，
我的闪亮的鬃毛
将永远闪耀如金，

当我守护着羊群。”

春

吹起长笛！
正当沉寂。
鸟儿嘻闹
白天夜里。
夜莺夜莺
溪谷中鸣，
云雀凌空，
欢乐地，
欢乐地，欢乐地，迎接新年。

小男孩儿
欢天喜地，
小女孩儿
可爱伶俐，
雄鸡欢叫，
你也欢叫。
欢乐之声，
童之喧声，
欢乐地，欢乐地，迎接新年。

小羔羊儿，
我在这儿，
过来舔舔
我雪白的脖儿，

让我拉拉

你柔软的毛儿，

让我亲亲

你柔软的脸儿，

欢乐地，欢乐地，我们迎接新年。

保姆之歌

当孩子们的声音从草坪传来，
欢笑声声飘荡在山冈，
我的心中就一片安宁，
周身都觉得宁静安详。

“该回来了，我的孩子，太阳下山了，
夜间的露水也已经出来；
得了，得了，快走吧，别玩了，
到明天天亮再来。”

“不，不，让我们玩嘛，还是白天呐，
我们一点也不想上床；
还有，小鸟儿还在天上飞翔，
满山遍野布满了绵羊。”

“唉，唉，去玩吧，玩到看不见了，
你们再回家睡觉去。”
小家伙跳啊，叫啊，笑啊，
山丘间回音四起。

童稚的欢乐

“我没有姓名，
出生只有两天。”
那我怎么叫你？
“我幸福欢欣，
欢乐是我的名。”
甜蜜的欢乐降给你！

美妙的欢乐！
甜蜜的欢乐才两天，
“甜蜜的欢乐”，我称你，
你甜甜地笑了，
我歌唱那一刻，
甜蜜的欢乐降给你！

一个梦

曾有一个梦编着树荫，
在我那天使守护的床顶；
我看见一只迷路的蚂蚁，
在我所躺的那片草地。

她苦恼，困惑，又孤凄，
夜色昏黑，她力尽精疲；
她翻过许多纠结的草茎，
我听到她心胆俱裂的声音：

“我的孩子啊！他们在哭泣？
他们可听到父亲在叹息？
他们一定四处去找我，
然后回去，为我哭泣。”

我流下了眼泪，为她哀恸；
但突然看到了一只萤火虫。
它应道：“是谁在哀哀地哭着，
哀哀地呼唤夜的巡察者？

“我是被派来照亮地面的，
还有甲虫在到处巡察；
好了，循着甲虫的声音，
小小迷路者，赶紧回家。”

对别人的悲伤

我会见到别人的苦恼
而不随之陷入伤悲？
我会见到别人的不幸
不为之寻求亲切的安慰？

我会见到滴落的泪珠
不感到在将悲伤分担？
会有父亲看到孩子
哭泣，不充满悲戚之感？

难道会有母亲坐视着
婴儿发出恐惧的呻吟？
不，不！永远不会，
永远，永远不会。

对一切都微笑的他 [\[1\]](#) 难道
会听到鹪鹩有一丝悲伤，
听到小鸟有不幸和烦恼，
听到婴儿忍受着苦恼，

而不坐在鸟巢旁边，
倾注同情于它们心里；
而不坐在摇篮旁边，
同婴儿眼泪流在一起；

而不日日夜夜地坐着，
将我们的眼泪全都擦去？
啊，不！永远不会，
永远，永远不会。

他将欢乐分给了全体，
他变成了一个小小的婴孩，
他变成了一个有苦恼的人，
他也感到了忧伤和悲哀。

别以为你有一次叹息
造物主他会不在前后，
别以为你有一次流泪
造物主他会不在左右。

啊！他 [2] 给了我们愉悦，
我们的悲伤他会消灭；
他总是坐在一旁叹息，
直等到我们的不幸离去。

[1] 指耶稣，耶稣投胎于圣母玛利亚腹内，变成了婴儿。

[2] 指造物主——上帝，与前面的“他”——耶稣并不矛盾，按“三位一体”之说，上帝为圣父，耶稣为圣子，为一体。

经验之歌

(1794)

／

序诗

听吟游诗人之声！
他看到现在、未来和过去，
他已听见
神明之言
漫步在古老的树林子里，

呼唤迷失的灵魂，
哭泣而涕下夜间的露水，
或许会操纵
北极明星
重新射出泯灭的光辉！

“地母啊，重现吧，地母！
请从露湿的草地上升起；
夜已消尽，
而那黎明
已从昏睡的氛围中升起。

“别再背转你的脸，
你为何还要把脸背过去？
星照的地面，
潮湿的海岸，
在破晓之前一直付与你。”

地母的回答

地母抬起了她的头，
从可怕而阴郁的黑暗之上。
她的光逃隐，
恐怖得寒心！
她的头发上是灰色的绝望。

“我囚于潮湿的海岸，
繁星的嫉妒使我的脏巢
寒冷又霉烂，
我泪水哭干
才听到古人的父亲 [\[1\]](#) 来到，

“因自私而善妒，胆怯，
人类的这个自私的父亲哟，
你用黑夜
链住欢悦，
少女和黎明怎能忍受？

“春天藏起了欢乐吗，
在蓓蕾和鲜花生长的时候？
播种者在夜间
播种的吗？
耕犁者在暗中耕犁的吗？

“砸碎这沉重的锁链！
它僵住了我周身的筋骨，
自私！愚蠢！
永恒的毒根！
用奴役把自由的爱捆住。”

[1] 指上帝。

土块和卵石

“爱不图自己满意欢喜，
也不为自己小心留意，
却为了他人献出安逸，
在地狱的绝望中将天堂建起。”

一个小黏土块这样唱着，
被粘在牛脚上踏着踩着，
与一块溪中的卵石相遇，
它婉转地唱出这些韵律：

“爱只图自己满意欢喜，
强求于别人自己惬意，
取乐于他人失去安逸，
在天堂的憎恶中将地狱建起。”

升天节

难道这能算是至善，
在富饶多产的土地上——
婴儿的境遇悲惨，
被冰冷的放债的手喂养？

那嘶哭能算是歌声？
能算是欢乐的歌曲？
那么多孩子不幸啊，
那是块贫瘠的土地！——

那里见不着阳光，
土地荒芜不毛，
道路为荆棘所网，
冰雪四季不消。

哪里有了阳光，
哪里有雨露滋润，
婴儿就不会挨饿，
不会有令人心悸的贫困。

幼女之失

我预见
未来的大地
将从睡梦中
(请深深铭记)

起来和寻觅
她温顺的造物主：
荒原将变为
和暖的花园。

在那南国之疆，
那夏日之精华
永不凋谢的地方，
躺着可爱的丽卡。

我们可爱的丽卡，
好像已经过七夏；
她听着野鸟歌唱，
迷失的时间已很长。

“美丽的梦，快来吧，
我在这棵树的下面，
爸爸妈妈在哭吗——
哪儿丽卡能睡眠？

“你们幼小的孩儿，
已在荒原里迷路，
丽卡怎么能睡呢，
要是她妈妈在哭？

“要是妈妈心在痛，
就让丽卡醒着；
要是妈妈已安睡，
就不要让我伤悲。

“愁眉不展的夜啊，
快升起你的月吧，
在这莽莽荒原，
当我合上双眼。”

丽卡躺下睡了，
寻食的野兽来了，
从深深的大洞出来，
见到梦中的女孩。

那为王的狮子站着，
朝那处女看着；
然后来回地转，
在那片圣地上跳着。

虎豹围着她嬉戏，
学她躺着的姿势，

而那年老的狮子，
垂下金灿灿的鬃丝，

他的火眼含泪，
他舔着她的胸脯，
他的宝石般的泪水，
落在她的颈部。

于是那些个狮子，
为她解开了薄衣，
裸着梦中的少女，
把她抬往洞里。

幼女之得

丽卡的父亲和母亲，
整夜地悲痛伤心，
寻遍了深深的山谷，
荒野为他们悲哭。

他们疲惫又愁闷，
呻吟得哑了嗓门，
他们相依为命地
在荒原里摸索了七日。

七夜他们都睡在
浓浓的树荫里面，
梦见他们的女孩
饿死在荒原中间。

梦见她边哭边走，
在荒野中迷失了方向，
虚弱加上饥饿，
哭声嘶哑而凄凉。

睡不安只得起身，
那妇人直打哆嗦，
无奈凄惨的双脚，
乏得再不能往前挪。

他双臂将她抱紧，
一步一声悲叹，
一只狮子忽现，
正卧在他们路前。

回转去已是徒劳：
他用厚厚的鬃毛，
将他们掀倒在地，
又大步绕来绕去。

他嗅着他的猎物，
他们却稍稍胆壮；
他舔着他们的手，
静静地站在了一旁。

他们看他的眼睛，
感到无比地震惊：
他们惊奇地见到
一个金色的精灵。

他头上戴着王冠，
毛发从肩上披下；
他的毛发如金，
他们的忧虑消尽。

“跟我来吧，”他说道，
“别再为姑娘哭了，

在我的深宫里面
丽卡已安然入眠。”

那尤物前面走着，
他们在后面跟着，
他们见到孩子，
在猛虎中间躺着。

他们直到今天，
都住在孤寂的山谷，
既不怕狼的嚎叫，
也不惧狮子的咆哮。

扫烟囱的孩子

雪地里一个小黑点，
哭着“扫，扫”，叫人怜！
“你的爹妈在哪儿？说呀！”
“他们都去礼拜堂祈祷啦。

“我在荒野里曾经很快乐，
还在冬天的雪里欢笑，
他们就让我穿上黑衣，
叫我唱起悲伤的小调。

“我还是快乐，又跳又唱，
爹妈就以为没把我害够，
就去赞美上帝、神父和国王——
是他们在我们的苦难上建起天堂。”

保姆之歌

当孩子们的声音从草坪传来，
喁语阵阵轻飘在山谷，
我的春光就生动地浮现在脑海：
我的脸发青，一会儿又泛白。

该回来了，我的孩子，太阳落山了，
夜间的露水也已经出来，
你们的春光和白昼在游戏中荒废了，
你们的白昼和夜晚在借口中浪费了。

枯萎的玫瑰

玫瑰啊，你枯萎了！

飞行在黑夜里

那无形的飞虫

在呼啸的风暴中

找到了你的

绯红色喜悦的床，

他的隐秘的爱情

毁了你的生命。

蝇

小小的蝇儿
你夏日的游戏
已被我的手
不慎拂去了。

难道我不是
你一样的蝇吗？
你不也是
我一样的人吗？

我喝酒跳舞，
唱唱歌曲，
直到盲目的手
擦伤我羽翼。

若思想是生命、
力量和呼吸，
而思想贫乏
就等于死去，

那我就是只
幸福的蝇，
不管我活着
还是死了。

天使

我做了个梦，它什么意思？
在梦中我是个未婚女王，
由一个温柔的天使守护：
愚蠢的悲哀，怎么也止不住！——

我日日夜夜不停地哭泣，
天使他替我擦去泪滴，
日日夜夜我不停地哭泣，
躲开他我才心中欢喜。

天使他拍起翅膀消失了，
黎明呈现出了玫瑰红，
我擦干眼泪，用十万盾矛
来压住我的惶惑惊恐。

不久，我的天使又来了，
我戒备着，他白来一趟——
我的青春已经消逝，
头上已是白发苍苍。

虎

虎，虎，光焰灼灼
燃烧在黑夜之林，
什么样的神手和神眼
构造出你可畏的匀称？

在海与天多深的地方，
燃着造你眼睛的火？
凭什么翅膀他敢追它，
凭什么手他敢捕捉？

凭什么肩膀，什么技艺，
才能拧成你的心肌？
何等可怖的手与脚才能
让你的心开始搏击？

用什么锤子，什么铁链，
在什么炉中将你的脑冶炼？
用什么砧子，何等铁手，
敢抓那令凡人致命的物件？

当天上的群星投下长矛，
用泪水浸湿了天空，
他在看着他的成果微笑？
是造耶稣的他将你创造？

虎，虎，光焰灼灼
燃烧在黑夜之林，
什么样的神手和神眼
构造出你可畏的匀称？

我美丽的玫瑰树

有人献给我一朵花儿，
一朵五月里见不到的花儿；
但我说“我有棵美丽的玫瑰树”，
我放弃了那朵可爱的花儿。

我走向我美丽的玫瑰树，
日日夜夜我将她照顾，
但是她疑忌地转过脸去，
她的刺成了我唯一的乐处。

太阳花

太阳花啊！厌倦了时间，
竟然数点起太阳的脚步，
寻找那美妙的金色所在，
漫游者结束旅程之处：

那里，因情欲而憔悴的青年，
和裹着冰雪的苍白的处女
却都从墓中起来，向往
我的太阳花想去的地方。

百合

羞怯的玫瑰竖着她的刺，
温驯的绵羊叉着吓人的角，
而洁白的百合会用怡人的爱——
不用刺也不用角，来点染她辉煌的美。

爱的花园

我来到爱的花园里面，
看到我从未见过的情形：
一座小教堂建在中央，
那儿原是我游戏的草坪。

这座小教堂大门紧闭，
门上写着“不许”的字样，
我于是转向爱的花园，
许多花曾在那儿吐送芬芳。

现在我看到的却是坟丘，
墓碑取代了昔日的花朵；
穿黑袍的神父来回转悠，
用刺蔷薇捆我的情欲和欢乐。

小流浪者

好妈妈，好妈妈，教堂里真冷，
酒吧里却惬意暖和又益身；
我习惯待着的还有别的地方，
那样的受用天堂里也比不上。

但若在礼拜堂能给我们点啤酒，
给一盆好火烤起我们的精神，
我们愿一辈子天天祷告歌唱，
一次也不想跑出去漂泊流浪。

牧师就可以讲道、喝酒和唱歌，
我们会像春天的小鸟一样快乐；
庄重的暗监夫人——她常在教堂，
就不会让罗圈腿的孩子挨打挨饿。

上帝会像一位父亲，高高兴兴，
看到孩子们跟自己同样地幸福，
再不会跟那个魔王或酒桶争吵，
而是亲吻他，给他酒又给他衣服。

伦敦

我走过每一条特辖大街，
附近特辖的泰晤士河在流淌，
我遇到的每一张脸上的痕迹，
都表露出虚弱，表露出哀伤。

在每个人的每一声呼叫之中，
在每个婴儿害怕的哭声里，
在一声一响，道道禁令中，
我听到精神之枷锁的碰击：

扫烟囱的孩子的哭叫多么
使每一个阴森的教堂惧怕，
还有那不幸的士兵的叹息
化成了鲜血从宫墙上淌下。

更不堪的是在夜半大街上
年轻妓女瘟疫般的诅咒，
它吞噬了新生婴儿的哭声，
将结婚喜榻变成了灵柩。

人之抽象

再也不会存在仁慈，
若大家像我们一样幸福；
同样也不会有怜悯存在，
如果不使有的人穷苦。

彼此间的恐惧产生和睦，
一直到自私的爱增长；
于是残忍就编织罗网，
细心地将诱饵播撒散布。

他怀着无比的敬畏坐下，
用他的泪水浇灌大地，
于是谦卑就在他脚下
伸出了它的虬结的根须。

不久他的头顶上方
蔓延开了神秘的暗影；
对于那些毛虫和苍蝇，
神秘正是它们的食粮。

它 [1] 终于结出欺诈之果，
红艳香甜，无比可口；
用它那浓密至极的树荫，
渡鸦 [2] 将自己的巢穴造就。

陆上和海里诸多神祇
寻遍自然寻找此树，
但他们全都是枉费辛苦：
人脑之中长着一株。

[1] 指“谦卑”。

[2] 可能指神父。

婴儿的悲伤

我妈妈呻吟！我爸爸哭泣，
我跳进了这个危险世界里。
赤条条无力自助，哭嚎着，
像魔鬼藏在一片阴影里。

在我爸爸手中挣扎着，
跟我的襁褓拼命反抗着，
又被裹着，又累，我只想
在我妈妈的乳房上解气。

有毒的树

我对朋友愤怒，
我表明愤怒，怒气就没了；
我对敌人愤怒，
我不予表露，这怒气长着。

我提心吊胆将它浇灌，
日夜浇灌着泪滴；
我用微笑来将它照耀，
用软软的狡诈的诡计。

它日日夜夜地生长，
终于结出了鲜亮的苹果；
我的敌人看到它闪光，
他知道那苹果属于我。

当夜色将树身遮掩，
他就溜进园子里偷食：
早晨我高兴地看到
我的敌人在树下挺尸。

少年之失

“没有人爱别人像爱自己，
也谈不上那样尊重别人，
比思想本身知道得更多，
对思想来说也不可能。

“父亲1啊，我怎能更加爱你，
或者更爱我的兄弟？
我爱你就像小小的鸟雀，
在门前啄食面包的碎屑。”

神父坐在他旁边谛听，
激动地抓住他的头发：
他拽着小外衣揪牢这孩子，
大家都佩服他神父的心机。

他站在高高的祭坛之上：
“瞧，这儿有个恶魔！”
他说：“他竟捏造出论据
来指责我们最神圣的神秘。”

听不见哭着的孩子的声音，
哭着的双亲枉然地哭泣；
他被剥得只剩件小衬衣，
被人用一根铁链子捆起。

在一处圣地他被焚烧，
从前那儿焚烧过多人，
哭着的双亲枉然地哭泣，
这种事阿尔比恩 [\[1\]](#) 海岸有吗？

[\[1\]](#) 英格兰的古称。

少女之失

未来时代的孩子们
读着这愤慨的一页，
会知道从前的时候，
爱！甜蜜的爱！被当作罪孽。

在那黄金时代，
没有冬天的寒冷，
欢快的青年男女，
于神圣的灯 [\[1\]](#) 下
在和煦的光中裸着游戏。

曾有对青年男女，
充满了柔情蜜意，
相会在明亮的花园，
当神圣的灯，
刚刚拉去那夜的幕帘。

升起的曙光之中
他们在草地上游戏；
父母们不在近前，
陌生人远离此地，
不久姑娘就忘记了恐惧。

亲够了甜蜜的吻，

他们约定要重逢，
在那安谧的睡梦
飘拂过深空，
而疲惫的旅人悲叹的时辰。

善意的父亲跟前，
来了欢快的少女；
但他那疼爱的神色
就像圣经一般，
她害怕得娇躯抖抖瑟瑟。

“欧娜！你脸色苍白！
快对你父亲坦白，
真让人心儿发抖！
哦，忧愁啊，
真要把我的灰发愁白！”

[1] 指太阳。

致特拉 [1]

出身于凡胎的芸芸众生，
都将毁灭，消失躯体。
摆脱生殖而自由地复活：
那我何必和你在一起？

男女们出生于羞耻和骄傲，
在早晨开花，在黄昏死去；
但仁慈令死亡变成了安眠，
男女们复活了，激动哭泣。

你，我的凡体的母亲，
用残忍套住了我的心灵，
用那欺人又自欺的眼泪，
裹住我的鼻耳和眼睛：

用无知的泥土堵住我嘴，
使我背叛了尘世的生命；
耶稣之死使我无羁： [2]
那我何必和你在一起？

[1] 不详。可能指下文“我的凡体的母亲”。

[2] 这是一个灵魂的复活。——原注

小学生

我爱在夏天的清晨起床，
当鸟儿鸣啭在棵棵树上；
猎人远远地吹着号角，
云雀儿伴我歌唱，
啊！多美妙的伙伴。

但要在夏天的清晨上学，
唉！这把兴致都扫尽；
在那严厉昏花的眼底，
小同学们垂头丧气地
把一天苦熬过去。

唉！我有时得颓丧地坐着，
度过许多个急人的钟点，
我得不到快乐，无论从书中
或是和一帮无聊的讨厌鬼
同坐在书斋里挨时间。

为了欢乐而出世的鸟儿
怎能坐在笼中歌唱？
孩子怎能一受惊扰就
垂下他娇嫩的翅膀，
忘记了朝气蓬勃的春天？

爸爸妈妈啊，若花蕾被摘，
花儿被刮落在地，
若是嫩弱的幼苗被悲哀
和满腹的重重心事夺去
他们春天里的欢愉，

夏天怎么会高兴地露头，
夏天的果实怎么会露脸？
怎收拾悲伤所毁的一切，
如何祝福丰美的一年，
当冬天的狂风出现？

古代吟游诗人之声

到这里来吧，快乐的年轻人，
看这展布着的黎明，
真理新生的象征。

疑惑消失了，及理性的阴影，
及无知的争辩和狡猾的戏弄。

愚蠢是一条无尽的迷途，
纠结的根蔓困着她的路，
多少人在那里绊倒！

他们整夜在尸骨上跌蹶，
却自认为想知道的无不知晓，
他们需要引导，却好为人师。

至上的形象

残忍据有人的心灵；
嫉妒据有人的脸庞；
恐怖据有至上的人形，
隐秘据有人的服装。

人的服装是锻过的铁器，
人的外形是熊熊的锻炉，
人的脸庞是封闭的熔炉，
人心是它的饥饿的胃部。

内心旅行者

我途经一个男人的国度，
这国度里有男人也有女人；
我所见闻的骇人的事情，
乃冷漠的尘世旅行者所未闻。

那里的婴儿出生于欢乐，
然而受孕于不幸的伤悲；
正如我们欢乐地收割，
播种时却洒下悲酸之泪。

如果那婴儿生而为男，
他就被交给一个老妇，
她将他钉在石头上，
用金杯接他那尖声的嚎哭。

她用铁蒺藜捆住他的手，
她将他的手和脚全刺穿，
她割下他的心放在旁边，
让它对热与冷都有所体验。

她的手把每根神经都数过，
就像吝啬鬼查点黄金；
她靠他的哭嚎生活：
他愈益年长，她愈益年轻。

最后他变成个流血的青年，
她则变成了鲜艳的处女，
然后他将他的手铐砸烂，
为了取乐将她捆起。

他用她全部的神经来育己，
像丈夫种他的模型一般；
她变成了他的居住之地
和一个七十倍丰产的果园。

他很快衰老成老年的影子，
绕着尘世的小屋踱步，
他身上装满黄金和宝石，
那是他勤劳所致的财富。

这是人类灵魂的宝石，
是相思的眼睛里的珍珠和红玉，
是痛苦的心灵中的无数金子，
是殉难者的呻吟和情人的叹息。

这是他的食物和饮料；
他以此款待穷人和乞丐，
款待徒步旅行的旅人：
他的门永远对他们敞开。

他的苦是他们永恒的欢乐；
他们使屋顶和墙壁唱歌；

直到荒原上的野火之中
出生了一个女性的婴儿。

她整个身体是固体的火焰、
宝石和黄金。婴儿的身体
他不敢伸手抚摸，也不敢
将她包裹在襁褓里面。

但她找来了她所爱的男人，
不管穷或富，青年或老年；
他们很快驱逐了年老的主人，
让他行乞于他人的门前。

他流着泪漂泊，走向远方，
最后他被人收留供养，
他又老又驼、浑身痛、眼睛瞎，
最后他赢得了一位姑娘。

为了减轻他冻僵的年纪，
这可怜人将她抱在怀里，
小屋在他面前渐渐凋敝，
花园也失去了可爱的魅力。

变化的景色改变了一切，
于是旅客遍布于九州；
感官恐惧地到处乱滚，
平坦的大地变成了圆球。

日月星辰，全部消隐，
荒原茫茫，无边也无沿，
食物没有了，水也没有，
四周全是茫茫的荒原。

她的微笑里面的面包，
她的稚嫩双唇上的甘蜜，
她流盼的眼睛里任性的游戏，
将他哄向婴儿时期。

因为他每天又吃又喝，
所以他变得愈益年轻；
在荒野上面，他们两个
恐惧而沮丧地四处漂零。

她像野鹿一样地逃走，
用恐惧种下了许多野灌木丛；
他追赶着她，日夜不休，
被各种爱情的艺术所诓哄。

他受骗于各种爱和恨的艺术，
终于，在广阔的荒野上面
布满了任性的爱情的迷宫，
野猪、狮和狼漫游其间。

终于，她变成个哭泣的老妇，
他则变成了任性的婴儿，
太阳和星辰更近地运转着，

许多的情侣漫游到这儿。

树上结出了甜蜜的狂喜，
奉给荒野的每一位游客；
终于建起了许多城市，
许多牧人的快乐的家舍。

可他们发现了那皱眉的婴儿，
整个地区被恐怖所笼罩，
“那个婴儿！婴儿出生了！”
他们逃了，连滚带跑。

因为谁敢摸那皱眉的形象，
手臂就会枯萎无遗；
野猪和狮狼齐吼着奔逃，
每棵树木都凋落了果实。

除非那人是一个老妇，
没人敢摸那皱眉的形象；
她将他钉在石头上面，
诸事完毕，如我叙说过的那样。

译者说明

此译本内容皆选自我1981年至1983年初所译《布莱克诗集》。此前该诗集已出版过三个版本：上海三联书店1999年版、台湾书林出版有限公司2007年英汉对照版（《布雷克诗选》）和上海社会科学院出版社2017年版。

该诗集译自*William Blake's Poems and Prophecies* (Everyman's Library, 1927)，并参照*Selected Poems of William Blake* (Oxford University, 1957)；*The Poetical Works of William Blake* (Oxford University, 1913)；*Blake's Poetry and Designs* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1979)。

在很长一段时间里，布莱克的诗作大部分是以手稿形式存世的，后英美多家出版社在出版时各自进行了整理和校勘，所以各版本之间互有不同。为此，译者今依照企鹅兰登版的英文，对译文做了些许相应的改动。

张炽恒

2018年3月18日于上海

William Blake

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

Tyger, Tyger

Nº 09

‘How can the bird
that is born for
joy
Sit in a cage
and sing?’

MILTON

a Poem in 2 Books

To Justify the Ways of God to Men

([London:] The Author & Printer W Blake 1804)

Preface

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green;
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen!

And did the Countenance Divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here,
Among these dark Satanic Mills?

Bring me my Bow of burning gold:
Bring me my Arrows of desire:
Bring me my Spear: O clouds, unfold:
Bring me my Chariot of Fire!

I will not cease from Mental Fight,
Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand:
Till we have built Jerusalem,
In England's green & pleasant Land.

'Would to God that all the Lord's people were Prophets.'
Numbers XI Ch 29 v.

‘I saw a chapel all of gold’

I saw a chapel all of gold
That none did dare to enter in
And many weeping stood without
Weeping, mourning, worshipping.

I saw a serpent rise between
The white pillars of the door
And he forcd & forcd & forcd
Down the golden hinges tore
And along the pavement sweet
Set with pearls & rubies bright
All his slimy length he drew
Till upon the altar white

Vomiting his poisons out
On the bread & on the wine.
So I turnd into a sty
And laid me down among the swine.

‘ “I die I die” the Mother said’

‘I die I die’ the Mother said,
‘My Children will die for lack of bread!
What more has the merciless tyrant said?’
The Monk sat down on her stony bed.

His Eye was dry, no tear could flow.
A hollow groan first spoke his woe.
He trembled & shudderd upon the bed.
At length with a feeble cry he said

‘When God commanded this hand to write
In the studious hours of deep midnight
He told me that All I wrote should prove
The bane of all that on Earth I love.

‘My brother starvd between two walls,
His children’s cry my soul appalls.
I mockd at the wrack & griding chain,
My bent body mocks at their torturing pain.

‘Thy father drew his sword in the north,
With his thousands strong he is marched forth.
Thy brother has armed himself in steel
To revenge the wrongs thy Children feel.

'But vain the sword & vain the bow,
They never can work war's overthrow!
The Hermit's prayer & the widow's tear
Alone can free the world from fear.'

The hand of vengeance sought the bed
To which the purple tyrant fled.
The iron hand crushd the tyrant's head
And became a tyrant in his stead.

Songs of Innocence and of Experience

Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul

Songs of Innocence

([London:] The Author & Printer W Blake 1789)

INTRODUCTION

Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:

‘Pipe a song about a Lamb:’
So I piped with merry chear.
‘Piper pipe that song again;’
So I piped, he wept to hear.

‘Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
Sing thy songs of happy chear.’
So I sung the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

‘Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book that all may read.’
So he vanish’d from my sight
And I pluck’d a hollow reed

And I made a rural pen,
And I stain’d the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

THE SHEPHERD

How sweet is the Shepherd's sweet lot!
From the morn to the evening he strays;
He shall follow his sheep all the day
And his tongue shall be filled with praise.

For he hears the lamb's innocent call,
And he hears the ewe's tender reply.
He is watchful while they are in peace,
For they know when their Shepherd is nigh.

THE ECCHOING GREEN

The Sun does arise,
And make happy the skies.
The merry bells ring
To welcome the Spring.
The sky- lark and thrush,
The birds of the bush,
Sing louder around,
To the bells' chearful sound,
While our sports shall be seen
On the Ecchoing Green.

Old John with white hair
Does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak,
Among the old folk.
They laugh at our play,
And soon they all say:
'Such such were the joys
When we all girls & boys,
In our youth- time were seen
On the Ecchoing Green.'

Till the little ones weary
No more can be merry;

The sun does descend,
And our sports have an end:
Round the laps of their mothers
Many sisters and brothers,
Like birds in their nest,
Are ready for rest:
And sport no more seen,
On the darkening Green.

THE LAMB

Little Lamb, who made thee?

Does thou know who made thee?

Gave thee life & bid thee feed
By the stream & o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing wooly bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice;

Little Lamb, who made thee?

Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:

He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb:
He is meek & he is mild,
He became a little child:
I a child & thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.

Little Lamb, God bless thee.

Little Lamb, God bless thee.

THE LITTLE BLACK BOY

My mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but O! my soul is white.
White as an angel is the English child:
But I am black as if bereav'd of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree
And sitting down before the heat of day
She took me on her lap and kissed me
And pointing to the east began to say:

'Look on the rising sun! there God does live
And gives his light and gives his heat away;
And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive
Comfort in morning, joy in the noon day.

'And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love;
And these black bodies and this sun- burnt face
Is but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

'For when our souls have learn'd the heat to bear
The cloud will vanish; we shall hear his voice
Saying: "come out from the grove my love & care
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice." '

Thus did my mother say and kissed me,
And thus I say to little English boy:
When I from black and he from white cloud free,
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy:

I'll shade him from the heat till he can bear
To lean in joy upon our father's knee
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair
And be like him and he will then love me.

THE BLOSSOM

Merry Merry Sparrow
Under leaves so green
A happy Blossom
Sees you swift as arrow
Seek your cradle narrow
Near my Bosom.

Pretty Pretty Robin
Under leaves so green
A happy Blossom
Hears you sobbing sobbing
Pretty Pretty Robin
Near my Bosom.

THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry ‘weep weep weep weep,’
So your chimneys I sweep & in soot I sleep.

There’s little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head
That curl’d like a lamb’s back was shav’d, so I said:
‘Hush Tom, never mind it, for when your head’s bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.’

And so he was quiet, & that very night,
As Tom was asleeping he had such a sight,
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned & Jack
Were all of them lock’d up in coffins of black,
And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
And he open’d the coffins & set them all free.
Then down a green plain leaping laughing they run
And wash in a river and shine in the Sun.

Then naked & white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind.
And the Angel told Tom if he’d be a good boy,
He’d have God for his father & never want joy.

And so Tom awoke and we rose in the dark
And got with our bags & our brushes to work.
Tho' the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm.
So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

THE LITTLE BOY LOST

'Father, father, where are you going?

O do not walk so fast.

Speak, father, speak to your little boy

Or else I shall be lost.'

The night was dark, no father was there;

The child was wet with dew.

The mire was deep, & the child did weep

And away the vapour flew.

THE LITTLE BOY FOUND

The little boy lost in the lonely fen,
Led by the wand'ring light,
Began to cry, but God ever nigh,
Appeard like his father in white.

He kissed the child & by the hand led
And to his mother brought,
Who in sorrow pale thro' the lonely dale
Her little boy weeping sought.

LAUGHING SONG

When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by,
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it,

When the meadows laugh with lively green
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene,
When Mary and Susan and Emily
With their sweet round mouths sing ‘Ha, Ha, He,’

When the painted birds laugh in the shade
Where our table with cherries and nuts is spread,
Come live & be merry and join with me,
To sing the sweet chorus of ‘Ha, Ha, He.’

A CRADLE SONG

Sweet dreams form a shade
O'er my lovely infant's head.
Sweet dreams of pleasant streams,
By happy silent moony beams.

Sweet sleep with soft down
Weave thy brows an infant crown.
Sweet sleep Angel mild,
Hover o'er my happy child.

Sweet smiles in the night,
Hover over my delight
Sweet smiles, Mother's smiles
All the livelong night beguiles.

Sweet moans, dovelike sighs,
Chase not slumber from thy eyes.
Sweet moans, sweeter smiles,
All the dovelike moans beguiles.

Sleep, sleep, happy child.
All creation slept and smil'd.
Sleep, sleep, happy sleep,
While o'er thee thy mother weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face,
Holy image I can trace.
Sweet babe, once like thee
Thy maker lay and wept for me,

Wept for me, for thee, for all,
When he was an infant small.
Thou his image ever see,
Heavenly face that smiles on thee,

Smiles on thee, on me, on all,
Who became an infant small.
Infant smiles are his own smiles;
Heaven & earth to peace beguiles.

THE DIVINE IMAGE

To Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love
All pray in their distress:
And to these virtues of delight
Return their thankfulness.
For Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love
Is God our father dear:
And Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love
Is Man his child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart,
Pity a human face:
And Love, the human form divine,
And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man of every clime,
That prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form,
In heathen, turk or jew.
Where Mercy, Love & Pity dwell
There God is dwelling too.

HOLY THURSDAY

Twas on a Holy Thursday, their innocent faces clean,
The children walking two & two in red & blue & green;
Grey headed beadles walkd before with wands as white as
snow

Till into the high dome of Paul's they like Thames waters flow.

O what a multitude they seemd these flowers of London town!
Seated in companies they sit, with radiance all their own.
The hum of multitudes was there but multitudes of lambs,
Thousands of little boys & girls raising their innocent hands.

Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the voice of song,
Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of heaven among.
Beneath them sit the aged men, wise guardians of the poor;
Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door.

NIGHT

The sun descending in the west,
The evening star does shine.
The birds are silent in their nest,
And I must seek for mine,
The moon like a flower
In heaven's high bower;
With silent delight
Sits and smiles on the night.

Farewell green fields and happy groves,
Where flocks have took delight;
Where lambs have nibbled, silent moves
The feet of angels bright;
Unseen they pour blessing,
And joy without ceasing,
On each bud and blossom,
And each sleeping bosom.

They look in every thoughtless nest,
Where birds are covered warm;
They visit caves of every beast
To keep them all from harm:
If they see any weeping
That should have been sleeping

They pour sleep on their head
And sit down by their bed.

When wolves and tygers howl for prey
They pitying stand and weep;
Seeking to drive their thirst away,
And keep them from the sheep.
But if they rush dreadful,
The angels most heedful
Recieve each mild spirit
New worlds to inherit.

And there the lion's ruddy eyes
Shall flow with tears of gold:
And pitying the tender cries,
And walking round the fold:
Saying: 'Wrath by his meekness
And by his health sickness,
Is driven away
From our immortal day.

'And now beside thee, bleating lamb,
I can lie down and sleep;
Or think on him who bore thy name,
Graze after thee and weep.
For wash'd in life's river,
My bright mane for ever
Shall shine like the gold,

As I guard o'er the fold.'

SPRING

Sound the Flute!

Now it's mute.

Birds delight

Day and Night.

Nightingale

In the dale,

Lark in Sky

Merrily

Merrily Merrily to welcome in the Year.

Little Boy

Full of joy;

Little Girl

Sweet and small;

Cock does crow,

So do you.

Merry voice,

Infant noise,

Merrily Merrily to welcome in the Year.

Little Lamb,

Here I am;

Come and lick

My white neck.

Let me pull

Your soft Wool.

Let me kiss

Your soft face,

Merrily Merrily we welcome in the Year.

NURSE'S SONG

When the voices of children are heard on the green
And laughing is heard on the hill,
My heart is at rest within my breast
And everything else is still.

‘Then come home my children, the sun is gone down
And the dews of night arise;
Come, come, leave off play and let us away
Till the morning appears in the skies.’

‘No no, let us play, for it is yet day
And we cannot go to sleep;
Besides in the sky, the little birds fly
And the hills are all covered with sheep.’

‘Well well go & play till the light fades away
And then go home to bed.’
The little ones leaped & shouted & laugh’d
And all the hills echoed.

INFANT JOY

'I have no name;
I am but two days old.'
What shall I call thee?
'I happy am,
Joy is my name,'
Sweet joy befall thee!

Pretty joy!
Sweet joy but two days old,
Sweet joy I call thee;
Thou dost smile,
I sing the while,
Sweet joy befall thee.

A DREAM

Once a dream did weave a shade
O'er my Angel- guarded bed,
That an Emmet lost its way
Where on grass methought I lay.

Troubled, wilder and forlorn,
Dark benighted, travel- worn,
Over many a tangled spray
All heart- broke I heard her say:

'O my children! do they cry?
Do they hear their father sigh?
Now they look abroad to see,
Now return and weep for me.'

Pitying I drop'd a tear:
But I saw a glow- worm near
Who replied: 'What wailing wight
Calls the watchman of the night?

'I am set to light the ground,
While the beetle goes his round:
Follow now the beetle's hum.
Little wanderer, hie thee home.'

ON ANOTHER'S SORROW

Can I see another's woe,
And not be in sorrow too?
Can I see another's grief
And not seek for kind relief?

Can I see a falling tear,
And not feel my sorrow's share,
Can a father see his child
Weep, nor be with sorrow filld?

Can a mother sit and hear
An infant groan, an infant fear?
No, no, never can it be.
Never never can it be.

And can he who smiles on all
Hear the wren with sorrows small,
Hear the small birds grief & care,
Hear the woes that infants bear

And not sit beside the nest
Pouring pity in their breast;
And not sit the cradle near
Weeping tear on infant's tear;

And not sit both night & day,
Wiping all our tears away?
O! no never can it be.
Never never can it be.

He doth give his joy to all.
He becomes an infant small.
He becomes a man of woe;
He doth feel the sorrow too.

Think not thou canst sigh a sigh,
And thy maker is not by.
Think not thou canst weep a tear
And thy maker is not near.

O! he gives to us his joy,
That our grief he may destroy;
Till our grief is fled & gone
He doth sit by us and moan.

THE LITTLE GIRL LOST

In futurity
I prophetic see,
That the earth from sleep
(Grave the sentence deep)

Shall arise and seek
For her maker meek:
And the desart wild
Become a garden mild.

In the southern clime,
Where the summer's prime
Never fades away,
Lovely Lyca lay.

Seven summers old
Lovely Lyca told,
She had wanderd long
Hearing wild birds' song.

'Sweet sleep come to me
Underneath this tree;
Do father, mother weep?
Where can Lyca sleep?

'Lost in desert wild
Is your little child,
How can Lyca sleep,
If her mother weep:

'If her heart does ake,
Then let Lyca wake:
If my mother sleep,
Lyca shall not weep.

'Frowning frowning night,
O'er this desert bright,
Let thy moon arise
While I close my eyes.'

Sleeping Lyca lay;
While the beasts of prey,
Come from caverns deep,
View'd the maid asleep.

The kingly lion stood
And the virgin view'd,
Then he gambold round
O'er the hallowd ground:

Leopards, tygers play,
Round her as she lay;

While the lion old
Bow'd his mane of gold,

And her bosom lick,
And upon her neck,
From his eyes of flame,
Ruby tears there came;

While the lioness
Loos'd her slender dress,
And naked they convey'd
To caves the sleeping maid.

THE LITTLE GIRL FOUND

All the night in woe,
Lyca's parents go:
Over vallies deep
While the desarts weep.

Tired and woe- begone,
Hoarse with making moan:
Arm in arm seven days
They trac'd the desert ways.

Seven nights they sleep
Among shadows deep
And dream they see their child
Starv'd in desert wild.

Pale thro' pathless ways
The fancied image strays,
Famish'd, weeping, weak
With hollow piteous shriek.
Rising from unrest,
The trembling woman prest,
With feet of weary woe;
She could no further go.

In his arms he bore
Her arm'd with sorrow sore:
Till before their way
A couching lion lay.

Turning back was vain.
Soon his heavy mane
Bore them to the ground;
Then he stalk'd around

And smelling to his prey,
But their fears allay,
When he licks their hands:
And silent by them stands.

They look upon his eyes
Fill'd with deep surprise:
And wondering behold
A spirit arm'd in gold.

On his head a crown,
On his shoulders down
Flow'd his golden hair.
Gone was all their care.

'Follow me' he said,
'Weep not for the maid;

In my palace deep,
Lyca lies asleep.'

Then they followed
Where the vision led;
And saw their sleeping child,
Among tygers wild.

To this day they dwell
In a lonely dell
Nor fear the wolvish howl,
Nor the lions growl.

THE SCHOOL BOY

I love to rise in a summer morn,
When the birds sing on every tree;
The distant huntsman winds his horn,
And the sky-lark sings with me.
O! what sweet company.

But to go to school in a summer morn,
O! it drives all joy away:
Under a cruel eye outworn,
The little ones spend the day
In sighing and dismay.

Ah! then at times I drooping sit,
And spend many an anxious hour,
Nor in my book can I take delight,
Nor sit in learning's bower,
Worn thro' with the dreary shower.

How can the bird that is born for joy
Sit in a cage and sing?
How can a child when fears annoy
But droop his tender wing
And forget his youthful spring?

O! father & mother, if buds are nip'd,
And blossoms blown away,
And if the tender plants are strip'd
Of their joy in the springing day,
By sorrow and cares dismay,

How shall the summer arise in joy,
Or the summer fruits appear?
Or how shall we gather what griefs destroy
Or bless the mellowing year,
When the blasts of winter appear?

THE VOICE OF THE ANCIENT BARD

Youth of delight, come hither
And see the opening morn,
Image of truth new- born.
Doubt is fled & clouds of reason
Dark disputes & artful teasing.
Folly is an endless maze,
Tangled roots perplex her ways.
How many have fallen there!
They stumble all night over bones of the dead:
And feel they know not what but care;
And wish to lead others when they should be led.

Songs Of Experience

([Lambeth:] The Author & Printer W. Blake, 1794)

INTRODUCTION

Hear the voice of the Bard!
Who Present, Past, & Future sees;
Whose ears have heard
The Holy Word
That walk'd among the ancient trees,

Calling the lapsed Soul
And weeping in the evening dew:
That might controll
The starry pole;
And fallen fallen light renew!

'O Earth O Earth return
Arise from out the dewy grass;
Night is worn,
And the morn
Rises from the slumberous mass.

'Turn away no more:
Why wilt thou turn away?
The starry floor,
The watry shore
Is giv'n thee till the break of day.'

EARTH'S ANSWER

Earth raised up her head
From the darkness dread & drear.
Her light fled:
Stony dread!
And her locks cover'd with grey despair.

'Prison'd on watry shore
Starry Jealousy does keep my den;
Cold and hoar
Weeping o'er
I hear the father of the ancient men.

'Selfish father of men!
Cruel jealous selfish fear!
Can delight
Chain'd in night
The virgins of youth and morning bear?

'Does spring hide its joy
When buds and blossoms grow?
Does the sower
Sow by night
Or the plowman in darkness plow?

'Break this heavy chain
That does freeze my bones around.
Selfish! vain!
Eternal bane!
That free Love with bondage bound.'

THE CLOD & THE PEBBLE

'Love seeketh not Itself to please,
Nor for itself hath any care;
But for another gives its ease,
And builds a Heaven in Hell's despair.'

So sang a little Clod of Clay,
Trodden with the cattle's feet:
But a Pebble of the brook
Warbled out these metres meet:

'Love seeketh only Self to please
To bind another to Its delight;
Joys in another's loss of ease,
And builds a Hell in Heaven's despite.'

HOLY THURSDAY

Is this a holy thing to see,
In a rich and fruitful land,
Babes reduced to misery,
Fed with cold and usurous hand?

Is that trembling cry a song?
Can it be a song of joy?
And so many children poor?
It is a land of poverty!

And their sun does never shine,
And their fields are bleak and bare,
And their ways are fill'd with thorns:
It is eternal winter there.

For where- e'er the sun does shine,
And where- e'er the rain does fall:
Babe can never hunger there,
Nor poverty the mind appall.

THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER

A little black thing among the snow:
Crying 'weep, weep,' in notes of woe!
'Where are thy father & mother? say?'
'They are both gone up to the church to pray.

'Because I was happy upon the heath,
And smil'd among the winter's snow:
They clothed me in the clothes of death,
And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

'And because I am happy & dance & sing,
They think they have done me no injury:
And are gone to praise God & his Priest & King
Who make up a heaven of our misery.'

NURSE'S SONG

When the voices of children are heard on the green
And whisprings are in the dale:
The days of my youth rise fresh in my mind,
My face turns green and pale.

Then come home my children, the sun is gone down
And the dews of night arise;
Your spring & your day are wasted in play
And your winter and night in disguise.

THE SICK ROSE

O Rose, thou art sick,
The invisible worm,
That flies in the night
In the howling storm:

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy:
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

THE FLY

Little Fly

Thy summer's play
My thoughtless hand
Has brush'd away.

Am not I

A fly like thee?
Or art not thou
A man like me?

For I dance

And drink & sing:
Till some blind hand
Shall brush my wing.

If thought is life

And strength & breath:
And the want
Of thought is death;

Then am I

A happy fly,
If I live,
Or if I die.

THE ANGEL

I dreamt a Dream! what can it mean?
And that I was a maiden Queen:
Guarded by an Angel mild:
Witless woe was neer beguil'd!

And I wept both night and day
And he wip'd my tears away
And I wept both day and night
And hid from him my heart's delight

So he took his wings and fled:
Then the morn blush'd rosy red:
I dried my tears & armd my fears
With ten thousand shields and spears.

Soon my Angel came again;
I was arm'd, he came in vain:
For the time of youth was fled
And grey hairs were on my head.

THE TYGER

Tyger, Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!
When the stars threw down their spears
And waterd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger, Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

MY PRETTY ROSE TREE

A flower was offerd to me;
Such a flower as May never bore,
But I said 'T've a Pretty Rose- tree,'
And I passed the sweet flower o'er.

Then I went to my Pretty Rose- tree
To tend her by day and by night,
But my Rose turnd away with jealousy
And her thorns were my only delight.

AH! SUN FLOWER

Ah Sun- flower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the Sun:
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the traveller's journey is done;

Where the Youth pined away with desire,
And the pale Virgin shrouded in snow
Arise from their graves and aspire
Where my Sun- flower wishes to go.

THE LILLY

The modest Rose puts forth a thorn:

The humble Sheep a threatning horn:

While the Lilly white shall in Love delight,

Nor a thorn nor a threat stain her beauty bright.

THE GARDEN OF LOVE

I went to the Garden of Love,
And saw what I never had seen:
A Chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green.

And the gates of this Chapel were shut,
And 'Thou shalt not' writ over the door;
So I turn'd to the Garden of Love,
That so many sweet flowers bore,

And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tomb- stones where flowers should be:
And Priests in black gowns were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars my joys & desires.

THE LITTLE VAGABOND

Dear Mother, dear Mother, the Church is cold,
But the Ale- house is healthy & pleasant & warm:
Besides I can tell where I am used well,
Such usage in heaven will never do well.

But if at the Church they would give us some Ale,
And a pleasant fire our souls to regale:
We'd sing and we'd pray all the live- long day;
Nor ever once wish from the Church to stray.

Then the Parson might preach & drink & sing,
And we'd be as happy as birds in the spring:
And modest dame Lurch, who is always at Church
Would not have bandy children nor fasting nor birch.

And God like a father rejoicing to see
His children as pleasant and happy as he;
Would have no more quarrel with the Devil or the Barrel
But kiss him & give him both drink and apparel.

LONDON

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,
In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice; in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear.

How the Chimney-sweepers cry
Every blackning Church appalls,
And the hapless Soldiers sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls

But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlots curse
Blasts the new-born Infants tear
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.

THE HUMAN ABSTRACT

Pity would be no more
If we did not make somebody Poor:
And Mercy no more could be
If all were as happy as we;
And mutual fear brings peace;
Till the selfish loves increase.
Then Cruelty knits a snare,
And spreads his baits with care.

He sits down with holy fears,
And waters the ground with tears;
Then Humility takes its root
Underneath his foot.

Soon spreads the dismal shade
Of Mystery over his head;
And the Catterpillar and Fly
Feed on the Mystery.

And it bears the fruit of Deceit,
Ruddy and sweet to eat;
And the Raven his nest has made
In its thickest shade.

The Gods of the earth and sea
Sought thro' Nature to find this Tree
But their search was all in vain:
There grows one in the Human Brain.

INFANT SORROW

My mother groand! My father wept.
Into the dangerous world I leapt:
Helpless, naked, piping loud:
Like a fiend hid in a cloud.

Struggling in my father's hands:
Striving against my swadling bands:
Bound and weary I thought best
To sulk upon my mother's breast.

A POISON TREE

I was angry with my friend:
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I waterd it in fears,
Night & morning with my tears:
And I sunned it with smiles,
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,
Till it bore an apple bright,
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine,

And into my garden stole,
When the night had veild the pole:
In the morning glad I see
My foe outstretchd beneath the tree.

A LITTLE BOY LOST

'Nought loves another as itself
Nor venerates another so,
Nor is it possible to Thought
A greater than itself to know:

'And Father, how can I love you,
Or any of my brothers more?
I love you like the little bird
That picks up crumbs around the door.'

The Priest saw by and heard the child,
In trembling zeal he siez'd his hair:
He led him by his little coat;
And all admir'd the Priestly care.

And standing on the altar high,
'Lo what a fiend is here!' said he:
'One who sets reason up for judge
Of our most holy Mystery.'

The weeping child could not be heard.
The weeping parents wept in vain:
They strip'd him to his little shirt
And bound him in an iron chain,

And burn'd him in a holy place,
Where many had been burn'd before:
The weeping parents wept in vain.
Are such things done on Albion's shore?

A LITTLE GIRL LOST

Children of the future Age,
Reading this indignant page;
Know that in a former time,
Love! sweet Love! was thought a crime.

In the Age of Gold,
Free from winter's cold
Youth and maiden bright
To the holy light,
Naked in the sunny beams delight.

Once a youthful pair
Fill'd with softest care
Met in garden bright,
Where the holy light
Had just removd the curtains of the night.

There in rising day
On the grass they play:
Parents were afar:
Strangers came not near:
And the maiden soon forgot her fear.

Tired with kisses sweet

They agree to meet,
When the silent sleep
Waves o'er heaven's deep:
And the weary tired wanderers weep.

To her father white
Came the maiden bright:
But his loving look,
Like the holy book,
All her tender limbs with terror shook.

'Ona! pale and weak!
To thy father speak:
O the trembling fear!
O the dismal care!
That shakes the blossoms of my hoary hair.'

TO TIRZAH

Whate'er is Born of Mortal Birth
Must be consumed with the Earth
To rise from Generation free:
Then what have I to do with thee?

The Sexes sprung from Shame & Pride,
Blowd in the morn; in evening died
But Mercy changd Death into Sleep;
The Sexes rose to work & weep.

Thou Mother of my Mortal part
With cruelty didst mould my Heart
And with false self- decieving tears
Didst bind my Nostrils, Eyes & Ears,

Didst close my Tongue in senseless clay
And me to Mortal Life betray:
The Death of Jesus set me free,
Then what have I to do with thee?

A DIVINE IMAGE

Cruelty has a Human Heart
And Jealousy a Human Face,
Terror the Human Form Divine
And Secrecy the Human Dress.

The Human Dress is forged Iron,
The Human Form a fiery Forge,
The Human Face a Furnace seal'd,
The Human Heart its hungry Gorge.

THE BALLADS (OR PICKERING) MANUSCRIPT

([?after 1807])

The Mental Traveller

I traveld thro' a Land of Men,
A Land of Men & Women too
And heard & saw such dreadful things
As cold Earth wanderers never knew

For there the Babe is born in joy
That was begotten in dire woe
Just as we Reap in joy the fruit
Which we in bitter tears did Sow

And if the Babe is born a Boy
He's given to a Woman Old
Who nails him down upon a rock,
Catches his Shrieks in Cups of gold.

She binds iron thorns around his head,
She pierces both his hands & feet,
She cuts his heart out at his side
To make it feel both cold & heat.

Her fingers number every Nerve
Just as a Miser counts his gold;
She lives upon his shrieks & cries
And She grows young as he grows old

Till he becomes a bleeding youth
And she becomes a Virgin bright;
Then he rends up his Manacles
And binds her down for his delight.

He plants himself in all her Nerves
Just as a Husbandman his mould
And She becomes his dwelling place
And Garden fruitful Seventy fold.

An aged Shadow soon he fades
Wandering round an Earthly Cot
Full filled all with gems & gold
Which he by industry had got

And these are the gems of the Human Soul,
The rubies & pearls of a lovesick eye,
The countless gold of the akeing heart,
The martyr's groan & the lover's sigh.

They are his meat, they are his drink;
He feeds the Beggar & the Poor

And the way faring Traveller;
For ever open is his door.

His grief is their eternal joy;
They make the roofs & walls to ring
Till from the fire on the hearth
A little Female Babe does spring

And she is all of solid fire
And gems & gold that none his hand
Dares stretch to touch her Baby form
Or wrap her in his swaddling- band

But She comes to the Man she loves
If young or old or rich or poor;
They soon drive out the aged Host
A Beggar at another's door.

He wanders weeping far away
Untill some other take him in
Oft blind & age- bent, sore distrest
Until he can a Maiden win

And to allay his freezing Age
The Poor Man takes her in his arms;
The Cottage fades before his Sight,
The garden & its lovely Charms.

The Guests are scatterd thro' the land
For the Eye altering alters all;
The Senses roll themselves in fear
And the flat Earth becomes a Ball;
The Stars, Sun, Moon all shrink away
A desert vast without a bound
And nothing left to eat or drink
And a dark desert all around.

The honey of her Infant lips,
The bread & wine of her sweet smile,
The wild game of her roving Eye
Does him to Infancy beguile

For as he eats & drinks he grows
Younger & younger every day
And on the desert wild they both
Wander in terror & dismay.

Like the wild Stag she flees away,
Her fear plants many a thicket wild
While he pursues her night & day
By various arts of Love beguild,

By various arts of Love & Hate
Till the wide desert planted oer
With Labyrinths of wayward Love

Where roams the Lion, Wolf & Boar

Till he becomes a wayward Babe
And she a weeping Woman Old.
Then many a Lover wanders here;
The Sun & Stars are nearer rolld.

The tree brings forth sweet Extacy
To all who in the desert roam
Till many a City there is Built
And many a pleasant Shepherd's home

But when they find the frowning Babe
Terror strikes thro the region wide;
They cry 'the Babe, the Babe is Born'
And flee away on Every side

For who dare touch the frowning form
His arm is witherd to its root;
Lions, Boars, Wolves all howling flee
And every Tree does shed its fruit

And none can touch the frowning form
Except it be a Woman Old;
She nails him down upon the Rock
And all is done as I have told.



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中信出版集团

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[奥] 里尔克/著

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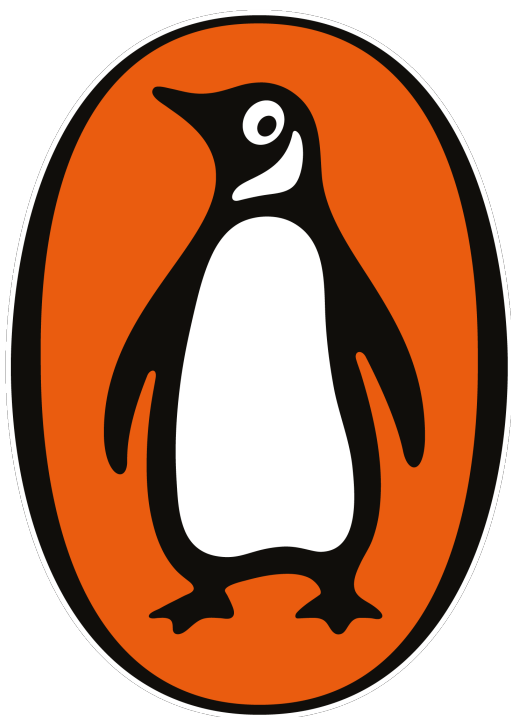
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Preface

Paris, 17 February 1903

Viareggio near Pisa (Italy), 5 April 1903

Viareggio near Pisa (Italy), 23 April 1903

at present in Worpswede near Bremen, 16 July 1903

Rome, 29 October 1903

Rome, 23 December 1903

Rome, 14 May 1904

Borgeby gård, Flädie, Sweden, 12 August 1904

Furuborg, Jonsered, Sweden, 4 November 1904

Paris, on the second day of Christmas 1908

“一切都要亲身生活。
现在你就在这些问题里
‘生活’吧。”



PENGUIN
LITTLE BLACK
CLASSICS

*此中文译本译自德语原文

译者序

这十封信是赖内·马利亚·里尔克（Rainer Maria Rilke，1875—1926）在他三十岁左右时写给一个青年诗人的。里尔克除却他诗人的天职外，还是一个永不疲倦的书简家；他一生写过无数比这十封更亲切、更美的信。但是这十封信却浑然天成，无形中自有首尾；向着青年说得最多。里边他论到诗和艺术，论到两性的爱，严肃和冷嘲，悲哀和怀疑，论到生活和职业的艰难——这都是青年人心里时常起伏的问题。

人们爱把青年比作春，这比喻是正确的。可是彼此的相似点与其说是青年人的晴朗有如春阳的明丽，倒不如从另一方面看，青年人的愁苦、青年人的生长，更像那在阴云暗淡的风里、雨里、寒里演变着的春。因为后者比前者更漫长、沉重而更有意义。我时常在任何一个青年的面前，便联想起荷兰画家梵·高的一幅题作《春》的画：那幅画背景是几所矮小、狭窄的房屋，中央立着一棵桃树或杏树，杈丫的枝干上寂寞地开着几朵粉红色的花。我想，这棵树是经过了长期的风雨，如今还在忍受着春寒，四围是一个穷乏的世界，在枝干内却流动着生命的汁浆。这是一个真实的、没有夸耀的春天！青年人又何尝不是这样呢，生命无时不需要生长，而外边却不永远是日光和温暖的风。他们要担当许多的寒冷和无情、淡漠和误解。他们一切都充满了新鲜的生气，而社会的习俗却是腐旧的，腐旧得像是洗染了许多遍的衣衫。他们觉得内心和外界无法协调，处处受着限制，同时又不能像植物似的那样沉默，他们要向人告诉——他们寻找能够听取他们的话的人，他们寻找能从他们表现力不很充足的话里体会出他们的本意而给以解答的过来人。在这样的寻找中几乎是一百个青年有一百个失望了。但是有一人，本来是一时的兴会，写出一封抒发自己内心状况的信，寄给一个不相识的诗人，那诗人读完了信有所会心，想起自己的青少年时代，仿佛在抚摸他过去身上的伤痕，随即来一封，回答一封，对于每个问题都给一个精辟的回答和分析——同时他却一再声明，人人都要自己料理，旁人是很难给以一些帮助的。

可是他告诉我们，人到世上来，是艰难而孤单。一个个的人在世上好似园里的那些并排着的树。枝枝叶叶也许有些呼应吧，但是它们的根，它们盘结在地下摄取营养的根却各不相干，又沉静，又孤单。人每每为了无谓的喧嚣，忘却生命的根蒂，不能在寂寞中、在对草木鸟兽（它们和我们一样都是生物）的观察中体验一些生的意义，只在

人生的表面上永远往下滑过去。这样，自然无所谓艰难，也无所谓孤单，只是隐瞒和欺骗。欺骗和隐瞒的工具，里尔克告诉我们说，是社会的习俗。人在遇见了艰难，遇见了恐怖，遇见了严重的事物而无法应付时，便会躲在习俗的下边去求它的庇护。它成了人们的避难所，却不是安身立命的地方——谁若是要真实地生活，就必须脱离开现成的习俗，自己独立成为一个生存者，担当生活上种种的问题，和我们的始祖所担当过的一样，不能容有一些儿代替。

在这几封信里，处处流露着这种意义，使读者最受感动。当我于1931年的春天，第一次读到这一小册书信时，觉得字字都好似从自己心里流出来，又流回到自己心里，感到一种满足，一种兴奋，禁不住读完一封，便翻译一封，为的是寄给不能读德文的远方的朋友。如今已经过了六年，原书不知又重版多少次，而我的译稿则在行篋内睡了几年觉，始终没有印成书。现在我把它取出来，略加修改付印，仍然是献给不能读德文原文的朋友。

关于里尔克的一生和他的著作，不能在这短短的序中有所叙述。去年他去世十周年纪念时，上海的《新诗》月刊第一卷第三期，曾为他出了一个特辑，读者可以参看。他的作品有一部分已由卞之琳、梁宗岱、冯至译成中文，散见《沉钟》半月刊、《华胥社论文集》、《新诗》月刊、大公报的《文艺》和《艺术周刊》中。

至于收信人的身世，我知道得很少，大半正如他的《引言》上所说的一样，后来生活把他“赶入了正是这位诗人温暖、和蔼而多情的关怀”所为他“防护的境地”了。

1937年5月1日

收信人引言

1902年的深秋——我在维也纳·新城陆军学校的校园里，坐在古老的栗树下读着一本书。我读时是这样专心，几乎没有注意到，那位在我们学校中唯一不是军官的教授、博学而慈祥的校内牧师荷拉捷克（Horaček）是怎样走近我的身边。他从我的手里取去那本书，看看封面，摇摇头。“赖内·马利亚·里尔克的诗？”他深思着问。随后他翻了几页，读了几行，望着远方出神，最后才点头说道：“勒内·里尔克 [1] 从陆军学生变成一个诗人了。”

于是我知道一些关于这个瘦弱苍白的儿童的事，十五年前他的父母希望他将来做军官，把他送到圣波尔腾（Sankt-Pölten）的陆军初级学校读书。那时荷拉捷克在那里当牧师，他还能清清楚楚想得起这个陆军学生。他说他是一个平静、严肃、天资很高的少年，喜欢寂寞，忍受着宿舍生活的压抑，四年后跟别的学生一齐升入梅里史·外司克尔心（Mäbrisch-Weisskirchen）地方的陆军高级中学。可是他的体格担受不起，于是他的父母把他从学校里召回，教他在故乡布拉格继续读书。此后他的生活怎样发展，荷拉捷克就不知道了。

按照这一切很容易了解，这时我立即决定把我的诗的试作寄给赖内·马利亚·里尔克，请他批评。我还没有满二十岁，就逼近一种职业的门槛，我正觉得这职业与我的意趣相违，我希望，如果向旁人去寻求理解，就不如向这位《自庆》 [2] 的作者去寻求了。我无意中在寄诗时还附加一封信，信上自述是这样坦白，我在这以前和以后从不曾向第二个人做过。

几个星期过去，回信来了。信上印着巴黎的戳记，握在手里很沉重；从头至尾写着与信封上同样清晰美丽而固定的字体。于是我同赖内·马利亚·里尔克开始了不断的通信，继续到1908年才渐渐稀疏，因为生活把我赶入了正是诗人的温暖、和蔼而多情的关怀所为我防护的境地。

这些事并不重要。所重要的是下边的这十封信，为了理解里尔克所生活所创造的世界是重要的，为了今日和明天许多生长者和完成者也是重要的。一个伟大的人、旷百世而一遇的人说话的地方，小人物必须沉默。

弗兰斯·克萨厄尔·卡卜斯
(Franz Xaver Kappus)

[1] 里尔克少年时名勒内·里尔克（René Rilke）。（说明：书中脚注均为译者注。）

[2] 《自庆》（*Mir zur Feier*），里尔克早年的诗集，1899年出版。

第一封信

尊敬的先生：

你的信前几天才转到我这里。我要感谢你信里博大而亲爱的信赖。此外我能做的事很少。我不能评论你的诗艺；因为每个批评的意图都离我太远。再没有比批评的文字那样同一件艺术品隔膜的了；同时总是演出来较多或较少的凑巧的误解。一切事物都不是像人们要我们相信的那样可言传的，它们完全在一个语言从未达到过的空间；可是比一切更不可言传的是艺术品，它们是神秘的生存，它们的生命在我们无常的生命之外赓续着。

我既然预先写出这样的意见，可是我还得向你说，你的诗没有自己的特点，自然暗中也静静地潜伏着向着个性发展的趋势。我感到这种情形最明显的是在最后一首《我的灵魂》里，这首诗字里行间显示出一些自己的东西。还有那首优美的诗《给雷渥琶地》^[1]也洋溢着一种同这位伟大而寂寞的诗人精神上的契合。虽然如此，你的诗本身还不能算什么，还不是独立的，就是那最后的一首和《给雷渥琶地》也不是。我读你的诗感到有些不能明确说出的缺陷，可是你随诗寄来的亲切的信，却把这些缺陷无形中给我说明了。

你在信里问你的诗好不好。你问我。你从前也问过别人。你把它们寄给杂志。你把你的诗跟别人的比较；若是某些编辑部退回了你的试作，你就不安。那么（因为你允许我向你劝告），我请你，把这一切放弃吧！你向外看，是你现在最不应该做的事。没有人能给你出主意，没有人能够帮助你。只有一个唯一的方法。请你走向内心。探索那叫你写作的缘由，考察它的根是不是盘在你心的深处；你要坦白承认，万一你写不出来，是不是必得因此而死去。这是最重要的——在你夜深最寂静的时刻问问自己：我必须写吗？你要在自身内挖掘一个深的答复。若是这个答复表示同意，而你也能够以一种坚强、单纯的“我必须”来对答那个严肃的问题，那么，你就根据这个需要去建造你的生活吧；你的生活直到它最寻常最细琐的时刻，都必须是这个创造冲动的标志和证明。然后你接近自然。你要像一个原人似的练习去说你所见、所体验、所爱以及所遗失的事物。不要写爱情诗，先要回避那些太流行、太普通的格式：它们是最难的，因为那里聚有大量好的或是一部分精美的流传下来的作品，从中再表现出自己的特点则需要一种巨大而熟练的力量。所以你要躲开那些普遍的题材，而归依于你自己日常生活呈现给你的事物；你描写你的悲哀与愿望，流逝的思

想与对于某一种美的信念——用深幽、寂静、谦虚的真诚描写这一切，用你周围的事物、梦中的图影、回忆中的对象表现自己。如果你觉得你的日常生活很贫乏，你不要抱怨它；还是怨你自己吧，怨你还不够做一个诗人来呼唤生活的宝藏，因为对于创造者没有贫乏，也没有贫瘠不关痛痒的地方。即使你自已是在一座监狱里，狱墙使人世间的喧嚣和你的官感隔离——你不还永远据有你的童年吗，这贵重的富丽的宝藏，回忆的宝库？你往那方面多多用心吧！试行拾捡起过去久已消沉了的动人的往事；你的个性将渐渐固定，你的寂寞将渐渐扩大，成为一所朦胧的住室，别人的喧扰只远远地从旁走过——如果从这收视反听，从这向自己世界的深处产生出“诗”来，你一定不会再想问别人，这是不是好诗。你也不会再尝试让杂志去注意这些作品，因为你将在作品里看到你亲爱的天然产物，你生活的断片与声音。一件艺术品是好的，只要它是从“必要”里产生的。在它这样的根源里就含有对它的评判：别无他途。所以，尊敬的先生，除此以外我也没有别的劝告：走向内心，探索你生活发源的深处，在它的发源处你将会得到问题的答案，是不是“必须”创造。它怎么说，你怎么接受，不必加以说明。它也许告诉你，你的职责是艺术家。那么你就接受这个命运，承担起它的重负和伟大，不要关心从外边来的报酬。因为创造者必须自己是一个完整的世界，在自身和自身所联接的自然界里得到一切。

但也许经过一番向自己、向寂寞的探索之后，你就断念做一个诗人了（那也够了，感到自己不写也能够生活时，就可以使我们决然不再去尝试）；就是这样，我向你所请求的反思也不是徒然的。无论如何，你的生活将从此寻得自己的道路，并且那该是良好、丰富、广阔的道路，我所愿望于你的比我所能说出的多得多。

我还应该向你说什么呢？我觉得一切都本其自然；归结我也只是这样劝你，静静地严肃地从你的发展中成长起来；没有比向外看和从外面等待回答会更严重地伤害你的发展了，你要知道，你的问题也许只是你最深的情感在你最微妙的时刻所能回答的。

我很高兴，在你的信里见到了荷拉捷克教授的名字；我对于这位亲切的学者怀有很大的敬意和多年不变的感激。请你替我向他致意；他至今还记得我，我实在引为荣幸。

你盛意寄给我的诗，现奉还。我再一次感谢你对我信赖的博大与忠诚；我本来是个陌生人，不能有所帮助，但我要通过这封本着良知写的忠实的回信报答你的依赖于万一。

以一切的忠诚与关怀：

赖内·马利亚·里尔克
1903年2月18日，巴黎

[1] 雷渥琶地（ Giacomo Leopardi , 1798—1837 ），意大利著名诗人。

第二封信

请你原谅我，亲爱的、尊敬的先生，我直到今天才感谢地想到你2月24日的来信：这段时间我很苦恼，不是病，但是一种流行性感冒类的衰弱困扰我做什么都没有力气。最后，这种现象一点也没变，我才来到这曾经疗养过我一次的南方的海滨。但是我还未康复，写作还困难，你只得接受这封短信代替我更多的心意。

你自然必须知道，你的每封信都永远使我欢喜，可是你要宽恕我的回答，它也许对你没有什么帮助；因为在根本处，也正是在那最深邃、最重要的事物上我们是无名地孤单；要是一个人能够对别人劝告，甚至帮助时，彼此间必须有许多事情实现了，完成了，一切事物必须有一个完整的安排，才会有一次的效验。

今天我只要向你谈两件事：第一是“暗嘲”（Ironie）^[1]：

你不要让你被它支配，尤其是在创造力贫乏的时刻。在创造力丰富的时候你可以试行运用它，当作一种方法去理解人生。纯洁地用，它就是纯洁的，不必因为它而感到羞愧；如果你觉得你同它过于亲密，又怕同它的亲密日见增长，那么你就转向伟大、严肃的事物吧，在它们面前它会变得又渺小又可怜。寻求事物的深处：在深处暗嘲是走不下去的——若是你把它引近伟大的边缘，你应该立即考量这个理解的方式（暗嘲）是不是发自你本性的一种需要。因为在严肃事物的影响下（如果它是偶然发生的），它会脱离了你（如果它真是天生就属于你），它就会强固成为一个严正的工具，而列入你创作艺术的一些方法的行列中。

第二件我今天要向你说的：

在我所有的书中只有少数的几本是不能离身的，有两部书甚至无论我走到哪里都在我的行囊里。此刻它们也在我的身边：一部是《圣经》，一部是丹麦伟大诗人茵斯·彼得·雅阔布生^[2]的书。我忽然想起，不知你读过他的著作没有。这很容易买到，因为有一部分很好的翻译在雷克拉木（Reclam）万有文库中出版。你去买他的《六篇短篇小说》和他的长篇《尼尔·律内》（Niels Lyhne）。你先读前一本的第一篇《摩根斯》（Mogens）。一个世界将要展现在你的面前，一个世界的幸福、丰富、不可捉摸的伟大。请你在这两本书里体验一些时，学你以为值得学的事物，但最重要的是你要爱它们。这种爱将为你得到千千万万的回报，并且，无论你的生活取怎样的途径——我确

信它将穿过你的成长的丝纶，在你一切经验、失望与欢悦的线索中成为最重要的一条。

如果我应该说，从谁那里我体验到一些关于创作的本质以及它的深奥与它的永恒的意义，那么我只能说出两个名字：一个是雅阔布生，伟大的诗人；一个是奥古斯特·罗丹 [3]，那在现存的艺术家中无人能与比拟的雕刻家。

愿你前途一切成功！

你的：赖内·马利亚·里尔克
1903年4月5日，意大利
比萨（Pisa），维亚雷焦（Viareggio）

[1] Ironie，一译“反讽”。

[2] 茵斯·彼得·雅阔布生（Jens Peter Jacobsen，1847—1885），丹麦小说家、诗人，著有长、短篇小说及诗、随笔等。

[3] 奥古斯特·罗丹（Auguste Rodin，1840—1917），法国雕刻家，里尔克于1902年赴巴黎，拜访罗丹，于1906年曾短期任罗丹秘书。

第三封信

亲爱的、尊敬的先生，你复活节的来信给我许多欢喜；因为它告诉我许多关于你的好消息，并且像你对雅阔布生伟大而可爱的艺术所抒发的意见也可以证明，我把你的生活和生活中的许多问题引到这丰富的世界里来，我并没有做错。

现在你该读《尼尔·律内》了，那是一部壮丽而深刻的书；越读越好像一切都在书中，从生命最轻妙的芬芳到它沉重的果实的厚味。这里没有一件事不能被我们去理解、领会、经验，以及在回忆的余韵中亲切地认识；没有一种体验是过于渺小的，就是很小的事件的开展都像是一个大的命运，并且这命运本身像是一块奇异的广大的织物，每条线都被一只无限温柔的手引来，排在另一条线的旁边，千百条互相持衡。你将要得到首次读这本书时的大幸福，通过无数意料不到的惊奇仿佛在一个新的梦里。可是我能够向你说，往后我们读这些书时永远是个惊讶者，它们永不能失去它们的魅力，连它们首次给予读者的童话的境界也不会失掉。

我们只在那些书中享受日深，感激日笃，观察更为明确而单纯，对于生的信仰更为深沉，在生活里也更幸福博大——

往后你要读那部叙述马丽·葛鲁伯夫人的命运与渴望的奇书^[1]，还有雅阔布生的信札、日记、片断，最后还有他的诗（纵使是平庸的德文翻译），也自有不能磨灭的声韵（这时我要劝告你，遇机会时可以去买一部雅阔布生的全集，一切都在里边。共三册，译文很好，莱比锡外根·笛得利许（Eugen Diederichs）书店出版，每册据我所知只卖五六个马克）。

关于那篇非常细腻而精练的短篇小说《这里该有蔷薇……》，你对于作者不同的意见实在很对。顺便我劝你尽可能少读审美批评的文字——它们多半是一偏之见，已经枯僵在没有生命的硬化中，毫无意义；不然就是乖巧地卖弄笔墨，今天这派得势，明天又是相反的那派。艺术品都是源于无穷的寂寞，没有比批评更难望其边际的了。只有爱能够理解它们，把住它们，认识它们的价值——面对每个这样的说明、评论或导言，你要相信你自己和你的感觉；万一你错误了，你内在的生命自然的成长会慢慢地随时使你认识你的错误，把你引到另外的一条路上。让你的判断力静静地发展，发展跟每个进步一样，是深深地从内心出来，既不能强迫，也不能催促。一切都是时至才能产

生。让每个印象与一种情感的萌芽在自身里、在暗中、在不能言说，不知不觉、个人理解所不能达到的地方完成。以深深的谦虚与忍耐去期待一个新的豁然贯通的时刻：这才是艺术地生活，无论是理解或是创造，都一样。

不能计算时间，年月都无效，就是十年有时也等于虚无。艺术家是：不算，不数；像树木似的成熟，不勉强挤它的汁液，满怀信心地立在春日的暴风雨中，也不担心后边没有夏天来到。夏天终归是会来的。但它只向着忍耐的人们走来；他们在这里，好像永恒总在他們面前，无忧无虑地寂静而广大。我天天学习，在我所感谢的痛苦中学习：“忍耐”是一切！

谈到理洽特·德美尔 [2]：他的书（同时也可以说他这个人，我泛泛地认识他），我觉得是这样，每逢我读到他的一页好诗时，我常常怕读到第二页，又把前边的一切破坏，将可爱之处变得索然无味。你把他的性格刻画得很对：“情欲地生活，情欲地创作。”——其实艺术家的体验是这样不可思议地接近于性的体验，接近于它的痛苦与它的快乐，这两种现象本来只是同一渴望与幸福的不同的形式。若是可以不说“情欲”——而说是“性”，是博大的、纯洁的、没有被教会的谬误所诋毁的意义中的“性”，那么他的艺术或者会很博大而永久地重要。他诗人的力是博大的，坚强似一种原始的冲动，在他自身内有勇往直前的韵律爆发出来，像是从雄浑的山中。

但我觉得，这个力并不永远是完全直率的，不无装腔作态（这对于创造者实在是一个严峻的考验，他必须永远不曾意识到、不曾预感到他最好的美德，如果他要保持住那美德的自然而混元的境地）。现在这个鼓动着他的本性的力向性的方面进发，但是它却没有找到它所需要的那个纯洁的人。那里没有一个成熟而纯洁的性的世界，只有一个缺乏广泛的“人性”，而只限于“男性”的世界，充满了情欲、迷醉与不安，为男人旧日的成见与傲慢的心所累，使爱失却了本来的面目。因为他只是作为男人去爱，不是作为人去爱，所以在他的性的感觉中有一些狭窄、粗糙、仇恨、无常，没有永久性的成分存在，减低艺术的价值，使艺术支离晦涩。这样的艺术不会没有污点，它被时代与情欲所渲染，很少能持续存在（多数的艺术却都是这样）。虽然，我们也可以享受其中一些卓绝的地方，可是不要沉溺迷失，变成德美尔世界中的信徒；他的世界是这样无穷地烦恼，充满了奸情、迷乱，同真实的命运距离太远了；真实的命运比起这些暂时的忧郁使人更多地忍受痛苦，但也给人以更多的机会走向伟大，更多的勇气向着永恒。

最后关于我的书，我很愿意送你一整份你所喜欢的。但我很穷，并且我的书一出版就不属于我了。我自己不能买，虽然我常常想赠给能够对于我的书表示爱好的人们。

所以我在另纸上写给你我最近出版的书名和出版的书局（只限于最近的；若是算上从前的共有十二三种），亲爱的先生，我把这书单给你，遇机会时你任意订购好了。

我愿意我的书在你的身边。

珍重！

你的：赖内·马利亚·里尔克
1903年4月23日，意大利
比萨，维亚雷焦

[1] 指雅阔布生的长篇小说《马丽·葛鲁伯夫人》（*Frau Marie Crubbe*）。

[2] 理查特·德美尔（Richard Dehmel，1863—1920），德国诗人，当时享有盛名。

第四封信

十天前我又苦恼又疲倦地离开了巴黎，到了一处广大的北方的平原，它的旷远、寂静与天空本应使我恢复健康。可是我却走入一个雨的季节，直到今天在风势不定的田野上才闪透出光来；于是我就用这第一瞬间的光明来问候你，亲爱的先生。

亲爱的卡卜斯先生：我很久没有答复你的信，我并没有忘记它——反而它是常常使我从许多信中检出来再读一遍的，并且在你的信里我认识你非常亲切。那是你5月2日的信，你一定记得起这封信。我现在在这远方无边寂静中重读你的信，你那对于生活的美好的忧虑感动我，比我在巴黎时已经感到的还深；在巴黎因为过分的喧嚣，一切都发出异样的声音，使万物战栗。这里周围是伟大的田野，从海上吹来阵阵的风，这里我觉得，那些问题与情感在它们的深处自有它们本来的生命，没有人能够给你解答；因为就是最好的字句也要失去真意，如果它们要解释那最轻妙、几乎不可言说的事物。虽然，我却相信你不会永远得不到解决，若是你委身于那同现在使我的眼目为之一新的相类似的事物。若是你依托自然，依托自然中的单纯，依托于那几乎没人注意到的渺小，这渺小会不知不觉地变得庞大而不能测度；若是你对于微小都怀有这样的爱，作为一个侍奉者质朴地去赢得一些好像贫穷的事物的信赖，那么，一切对于你就较为轻易、较为一致、较为容易和解了，也许不是在那惊讶着退却的理智中，而是在你最深的意识、觉醒与悟解中得到和解。你是这样年轻，一切都在开始，亲爱的先生，我要尽我的所能请求你，对于你心里一切的疑难要多多忍耐，要去爱这些“问题的本身”，像是爱一间锁闭了的房屋，或是一本用别种文字写成的书。现在你不要去追求那些你还不能得到的答案，因为你还不能在生活里体验到它们。一切都要亲身生活。现在你就在这些问题里“生活”吧。或者，不大注意，渐渐会有那遥远的一天，你生活到了能解答这些问题的境地。也许你自身内就负有可能性：去组织、去形成一种特别幸福与纯洁的生活方式；你要向那方面修养——但是，无论什么来到，你都要以广大的信任领受；如果它是从你的意志里、从任何一种内身的窘困里产生的，那么你要好好地负担着它，什么也不要憎恶——“性”，是很难的。可是我们分内的事都很难；其实一切严肃的事都是艰难的，而一切又是严肃的。如果你认识了这一层，并且肯这样从你自身，从你的禀性，从你的经验、你的童年、你的生命力出发，得到一种完全自己的（不是被因袭和习俗所影响的）对于“性”的关系，那么你就不要怕你有所迷惑，或是玷污了你最好的

所有。

身体的快感是一种感官的体验，与净洁的观赏或是一个甜美的果实放在我们舌上的净洁的感觉没有什么不同；它是我们所应得的丰富而无穷的经验，是一种对于世界的领悟，是一切领悟的丰富与光华。我们感受身体的快感并不是坏事。所不好的是：几乎一切都错用了、浪费了这种经验，把它放在生命疲倦的地方当作刺激，当作疏散，而不当作向着顶点的聚精会神。就是饮食，也有许多人使之失去了本意：一方面是“不足”，另一方面是“过度”，都搅混了这个需要的明朗；同样搅混的，是那些生命借以自新的一切深的、单纯的需要。但是一个“个人”能够把它认清，很清晰地生活（如果因为“个人”是要有条件的，那么我们就说是“寂寞的人”），他能够想起，动物和植物中一切的美就是一种爱与渴望的、静静延续着的形式；他能够同看植物一样去看动物，它们忍耐而驯顺地结合、增殖、生长，不是由于生理的享乐也不是由于生理的痛苦，只是顺从需要，这个需要是要比享乐与痛苦伟大，比意志与抵抗还有力。啊，人们要更谦虚地去接受、更严肃地负担这充满大地一直到极小的物体的神秘，并且去承受和感觉，它是怎样重大的艰难，不要把它看得过于容易！对于那只有“一个”的果实，不管它是身体的或是精神的，要有敬畏的心；因为精神的创造也是源于生理的创造，同属于一个本质，并且只像是一种身体快感的更轻妙、更兴奋、更有永久性的再现。至于你所说的“那个思想，去当创造者，去生产、去制作”，绝不能缺少他在世界中得到不断的伟大的证明和实现，也不能缺少从物与动物那里得来的千应万诺——他的享受也只是因此才这样难以形容地美丽而丰富，因为他具有从数百万制作与生产中遗传下来的回忆。在一个创造者思想里会有千百个被人忘记的爱情的良宵又重新苏醒，它们以崇高的情绪填实这个思想。并且那夜间幽会、结合在狂欢中的爱人们，是在做一种严肃的工作，聚集起无数的温存，为任何一个将来后起的诗人的诗歌预备下深厚的力量，去说那难于言说的欢乐。他们把“将来”唤来；纵使他们迷惑，盲目地拥抱，“将来”终于是要到的，一个新人在生长，这里完成一个偶然，在偶然的根处有永恒的规律醒来，一颗富于抵抗的种子就以这个规律闯入那对面迎来的卵球。你不要为表面所误；在深处一切都成为规律。那些把这种神秘虚伪而错误地去生活的人（这样的人本来很多），只是自己失掉了它，而把它往下传递，像是密封的信件，并不知它的内容。你也不要被名称的繁多和事物的复杂所迷惑。超越一切的也许是一个伟大的“母性”作为共同的渴望。那少女的、一种“还无所作为”（你这样说的很好）的本性的美是，它预感着、准备着，悚惧着、渴望着的母性。母亲的美是正在尽职的母性；一个丰富的回忆则存在于老妇的身内。但我以为在男人身内也有母性，无论是身体的或是精神的；他的创造也是一种生产，只要是从最内在的丰满中创造出来的便是生产。大半两性间的关系比人们平素所想的更密

切，也许这世界伟大的革新就在于这一点：男人同女人从一切错误的感觉与嫌忌里解放出来，不作为对立面互相寻找，而彼此是兄妹或邻居一般，共同以“人”的立场去工作，以便简捷地、严肃而忍耐地负担那放在他们肩上的艰难的“性”。

凡是将来有一天许多人或能实现的事，现在寂寞的人已经可以开始准备了，用他比较确切的双手来建造。亲爱的先生，所以你要爱你的寂寞，负担那它以悠扬的怨诉给你引来的痛苦。你说，你身边的都同你疏远了，其实这就是你周围扩大的开始。如果你的亲近都离远了，那么你的旷远已经在星空下开展得很广大；你要为你的成长欢喜，可是向那里你不能带进来一个人，要好好对待那些落在后边的人，在他们面前你要稳定自若，不要用你的怀疑苦恼他们，也不要利用你的信心或欢悦惊吓他们，这是他们所不能了解的。同他们寻找出一种简单而诚挚的谐和，这种谐和，任凭你自己将来怎么转变，都无须更改；要爱惜他们那种生疏方式的生活，要谅解那些进入老境的人；他们对于你所信任的孤独是畏惧的。要避免去给那在父母与子女间常演出的戏剧增加材料；这要费去许多子女的力，消蚀许多父母的爱，纵使他们的爱不了解我们；究竟是在爱着、温暖着我们。不要向他们问计，也不要计较了解；但要相信那种为你保存下来像是一份遗产似的爱，你要信任在这爱中自有力量存在，自有一种幸福，无须脱离这个幸福才能扩大你的世界。

那很好，你先进入一个职业 [1]，它使你成为独立的人，事事完全由你自己料理。你耐心地等着吧，看你内心的生活是不是由于这职业的形式而受到限制。我认为这职业是很艰难很不容易对付的，因为它被广大的习俗所累，并且不容人对于它的问题有个人的意见存在。但是你的寂寞将在这些很生疏的关系中间是你的立足点和家乡，从这里出来你将寻得你一切的道路。

我一切的祝愿都在陪伴着你，我信任你。

你的：赖内·马利亚·里尔克

1903年7月16日，不来梅（Bremen）

沃普斯韦德（Worpswede）

[1] 卡卜斯被任命为奥地利军官。

第五封信

亲爱的、尊敬的先生：

我在佛罗伦萨收到你8月29日的信，现在——两个月了——我才写回信告诉你。请你原谅我的迟延——我在路上不喜欢写信，因为我写信除去必需的纸笔外还要用：一些幽静、寂寞和一个不太生疏的时刻。

我们在六个星期前到了罗马，那时还是个空虚、炎热、时疫流行的罗马，这种环境又添上许多现实生活上安排的困难，更助长围绕我们的不安，简直没有终结，使我们尝尽了异乡漂泊的痛苦。更加之以：罗马（如果我们还不认识它）在我们到达的头几天真令人窒闷悲哀——由于它放射出来的死气沉沉忧郁的博物馆的空气；由于它精华已尽，而又勉强保持着的过去时代的储存（从中滋养着一个可怜的现在）；由于这些，无名的、被学者和语言学家们所维护、经常不断的意大利旅游者所效仿的、对于一切改头换面或是毁败了的物品的过分的估价，根本这些物品也不过是另一个时代另一种生活的偶然的残余，这生活已经不是我们的了，而也不应该是我们的。在日日担心防范的几个星期后，虽还有些纷乱，却终于回到自己的世界，我们才说：这里并不比别的地方有更多的美，这些被世代代所叹赏的对象，都经过俗手的修补，没有意义，无所包含，没有精神，没有价值——但这里也自有许多美，因为无论什么地方都有它的美。永远生动的流水从古老的沟渠流入这座大城，它们在许多广场的白石盘上欢舞，散入宽阔的贮水池中，昼间泠泠有声，夜晚的声音更为清澈，这里的夜色广大而星光灿烂，拂着习习轻风。并且有许多名园，使人难忘的林荫路与石阶——米霞盎基罗 [1] 所设计的石阶，那是按着向下流水的姿势建筑的石阶：宽宽地向下一层生出一层，像是后浪接着前浪。由于这样的印象，我们凝聚精神，从那些傲慢的、谈谈讲讲的“多数”（那是多么爱饶舌呀！）回到自身内，慢慢地学习认识“少数”，在少数的事物里延绵着我们所爱的永恒和我们轻轻地分担着的寂寞。

现在我还住在城内卡皮托丘上 [2]，离那最美的从罗马艺术中保存下来的马克·奥雷尔 [3] 骑马式的石像不远；但是在几个星期后我将迁入一个寂静而简单的地方，是一座老的望楼，它深深地消失在一片大园林里，足以躲避城市的喧嚣与纷扰。我将要在那里住一冬，享受那无边的寂静，从这寂静中我期待着良好而丰盛的时间的赠品……

到那时我将常常在家，再给你写较长的信，还要谈到关于你信中的事。今天我必须告诉你的是（这已经是不对了，我没有早一点告诉你），你信中提到的那本书（其中想必有你的作品）没有寄到。是不是从沃普斯韦德给你退回去了（因为包裹不能转到外国）？退回是最好的，我愿意得到证实。希望不要遗失——这在意大利的邮务并不是例外的事——可惜。

我很愿意接到这本书（像是我愿意接到你所写的一切一样）；还有你最近的诗（如果你寄给我），我要永远尽我的所能诚心地一读再读，好好体验。

以多多的愿望和祝福：

你的赖内·马利亚·里尔克
1903年10月29日，罗马

[1] 米霄盎基罗（Michelangelo，1475—1564），意大利文艺复兴时期的雕刻家、画家兼诗人。

[2] 卡皮托（Kapitoe），罗马七座山丘中的一座。

[3] 马克·奥雷尔（Marc Aurel，118—180），罗马皇帝，著有《随感录》流传后世。

第六封信

我的亲爱的卡卜斯先生：

你不会得不到我的祝愿，如果圣诞节到了，你在这节日中比往日更深沉地负担着你的寂寞。若是你觉得它过于广大，那么你要因此而欢喜（你问你自己吧），哪有寂寞，不是广大的呢；我们只有“一个”寂寞又大又不容易负担，并且几乎人人都有这危险的时刻，他们情愿把寂寞和任何一种庸俗无聊的社交，和与任何一个不相配的人勉强谐和的假象去交换……但也许正是这些时候，寂寞在生长；它的生长是痛苦的，像是男孩的发育，是悲哀的，像是春的开始。你不要为此而迷惑。我们最需要的却只是：寂寞，广大的内心的寂寞。“走向内心”，长时期不遇一人——这我们必须能够做到。居于寂寞，像人们在儿童时那样寂寞，大人们来来往往，跟一些好像很重要的事务纠缠，大人们是那样匆忙，可是儿童并不懂得他们做些什么事。

如果一天我们洞察到他们的事务是贫乏的，他们的职业是枯燥的，跟生命没有关联，那么我们为什么不从自己世界的深处，从自己寂寞的广处（这寂寞的本身就是工作、地位、职业），和儿童一样把它们当作一种生疏的事去观看呢？为什么把一个儿童聪明的“不解”抛开，而对于许多事物采取防御和蔑视的态度呢？“不解”是居于寂寞；防御与蔑视虽说是设法和这些事物隔离，同时却是和它们发生纠葛了。

亲爱的先生，你去思考你自身负担着的世界；至于怎样称呼这思考，那就随你的心意了；不管是自己童年的回忆，或是对于自己将来的想望——只是要多多注意从你生命里出现的事物，要把它放在你周围所看到的一切之上。你最内心的事物值得你全心全意地去爱，你必须为它多方工作；并且不要浪费许多时间和精力去解释你对于人们的态度。“到底谁向你说，你本来有一个态度呢？——我知道你的职业是枯燥的，处处和你相违背，我早已看出你的苦恼，我知道，它将要来了。现在它来了，我不能排解你的苦恼，我只能劝你去想一想，是不是一切职业都是这样，向个人尽是无理的要求，尽是敌意，它同样也饱受了许多低声忍气、不满于那枯燥的职责的人们的憎恶。你要知道，你现在必须应付的职业并不见得比旁的职业被什么习俗呀、偏见呀、谬误呀连累得更厉害；若是真有些炫耀着一种更大的自由的职业，那就不会有职业在它自身内广远而宽阔，和那些从中组成真实生

活的伟大事物相通了。只有寂寞的个人，他跟一个“物”一样被放置在深邃的自然规律下，当他走向刚破晓的早晨，或是向外望那充满非常事件的夜晚，当他感觉到那里发生什么事，一切地位便会脱离了他，像是脱离一个死者，纵使他正处在真正的生活的中途。亲爱的卡卜斯先生，凡是你现在做军官所必须经验的，你也许在任何一种现有的职业里都会感到，甚至纵使你脱离各种职务，独自同社会寻找一种轻易而独立的接触，这种压迫之感也不会对你有什么减轻——到处都是一样，但是这并不足使我们恐惧悲哀；如果你在人我之间没有谐和，你就试行与物接近，它们不会遗弃你；还有夜，还有风——那吹过树林、掠过田野的风；在物中间和动物那里，一切都充满了你可以分担的事；还有儿童，他们同你在儿时所经验过的一样，又悲哀，又幸福——如果你想起你的童年，你就又在那些寂寞的儿童中间了，成人人们是无所谓的，他们的尊严没有价值。

若是你因为对于童年时到处可以出现的神已经不能信仰，想到童年，想到与它相连的那种单纯和寂静，而感到苦恼不安，那么，亲爱的卡卜斯先生，你问一问自己，你是不是真把神失落了？也许正相反，你从来没有得到他？什么时候应该有过神呢？你相信吗，关于神，一个儿童能够把住他，成人只能费力去负担他，而他的重量足以把老人压倒？你相信吗，谁当真有他，又能把他像一块小石片似的失落？或者你也不以为吗，谁有过他，还只能被他丢掉？——但如果你认识到，他在你的童年不曾有过，从前也没有生存过；如果你觉得基督是被他的渴望所欺，穆罕默德是被他的骄傲所骗——如果你惊愕地感到，就是现在，就是我们谈他的这个时刻，他也没有存在——那么，什么给你以权利，觉得缺少这从来不曾有过的神像是丧失一个亡人，并且寻找他像是找一件遗失的物品呢？

你为什么 not 这样想，想他是将要来到的，他要从永恒里降生，是一棵树上最后的果实，我们不过是这树上的树叶？是谁阻拦你，不让你把他的诞生放在将来转变的时代，不让你度过你的一生像是度过这伟大的孕期内又痛苦又美丽的一日？你没有看见吗，一切发生的事怎样总是重新开始？那就不能是神的开始吗？啊，开端的本身永远是这般美丽！如果 he 是最完全的，那么较为微小的事物在他以前就不应该存在吗，以便他从丰满与过剩中能够有所选择？——他不应该是个最后者吗，将一切握诸怀抱？若是我们所希求的他早已过去了，那我们还有什么意义呢？

像是蜜蜂酿蜜那样，我们从万物中采撷最甜美的资料来建造我们的神。我们甚至以渺小，没有光彩的事物开始（只要是出于爱），我们以工作，继之以休息，以一种沉默，或是以一种微小的寂寞的欢悦，以我们没有朋友、没有同伴单独所做的一切来建造他，他，我们并不能看到，正如我们的祖先不能看见我们一样。可是那些久已逝去

的人，依然存在于我们的生命里，作为我们的禀赋，作为我们命运的负担，作为循环着的血液，作为从时间的深处升发出来的姿态。

现在你所希望不到的事，将来不会有一天在最遥远、最终极的神的那里实现吗？

亲爱的卡卜斯先生，在这虔诚的情感中庆祝你的圣诞节吧，也许神正要用你这生命的恐惧来开始；你过的这几天也许正是一切在你生命里为他工作的时期，正如你在儿时已经有一次很辛苦地为他工作过一样。好好地忍耐，不要沮丧，你想，如果春天要来，大地就使它一点点地完成，我们所能做的最少量的工作，不会使神的生成比起大地之于春天更为艰难。

祝你快乐，勇敢！

你的：赖内·马利亚·里尔克
1903年12月23日，罗马

第七封信

我的亲爱的卡卜斯先生：

自从我接到你上次的来信，已经过了许久。请你不要见怪。先是工作，随后是事务的干扰，最后是小病，总阻挡着我给你写回信，因为我给你写信是要在良好平静的时刻。现在我觉得好些了（初春的恶劣多变的过渡时期在这里也使人觉得很 discomfort），亲爱的卡卜斯先生，我问候你，并且（这是我衷心愿做的事）就我所知道的来回答你。

你看，我把你的十四行诗抄下来了，因为我觉得它美丽简练，是在很适当的形式里产生的。在我所读到的你的诗中，这是最好的一首。现在我又把它誊抄给你，因为我以为这很有意义，并且充满新鲜的体验，在别人的笔下又看到自己的作品。你读这首诗，像是别人作的，可是你将要在最深处感到它怎样更是你的。

这是我的一种快乐，常常读这首十四行诗和你的来信；为了这两件事我感谢你。

在寂寞中你不要徬徨迷惑，由于你自身内有一些愿望要从这寂寞里脱身——也正是这个愿望，如果你平静地、卓越地，像一件工具似的去运用它，它就会帮助你把你的寂寞扩展到广远的地方。一般人（用因袭的帮助）把一切都轻易地去解决，而且按着轻易中最轻易的方面；但这是很显然的，我们必须认定艰难；凡是生存者都认定，自然界中一切都是按照自己的方式生长，防御，表现出来自己，无论如何都要生存，抵抗一切反对的力量。我们知道的很少；但我们必须委身于艰难却是一件永不会丢开我们的信念。寂寞地生存是好的，因为寂寞是艰难的；只要是艰难的事，就有使我们更有理由为它工作。

爱，很好，因为爱是艰难的。以人去爱人：这也许是给与我们的最艰难、最重大的事，是最后的实验与考试，是最高工作，别的工作都不过是为它而做的准备。所以一切正在开始的青年们还不能爱；他们必须学习。他们必须用他们整个的生命、用一切的力量，集聚他们寂寞、痛苦和向上激动的心去学习爱。可是学习的时期永远是一个长久的专心致志的时期，爱就长期地深深地侵入生命——寂寞，增强而深入的孤独生活，是为了爱着的人。爱的要义并不是什么倾心、献身、与第二者结合（那该是怎样的一个结合呢，如果是一种不明了，无所成就、不关重要的结合？），它对于个人是一种崇高的动力，去

成熟，在自身内有所完成，去完成一个世界，是为了另一个人完成一个自己的世界，这对于他是一个巨大的、不让步的要求，把他选择出来，向广远召唤。青年们只应在把这当作课业去工作的意义中（“昼夜不停地探索，去锤炼”）去使用那给予他们的爱。至于倾心、献身，以及一切的结合，还不是他们的事（他们还须长时间地节省、聚集），那是最后的终点，也许是人的生活现在还几乎不能达到的境地。

但是青年们在这方面常常错误得这样深（因为在他们本性中没有忍耐），如果爱到了他们身上，他们便把生命任意抛掷，甚至陷入窒闷、颠倒、紊乱的状态——但随后又该怎样呢？这支离破碎的聚合（他们自己叫作结合，还愿意称为幸福），还能使生活有什么成就吗？能过得去吗？他们的将来呢？这其间每个人都为了别人失掉自己，同时也失掉别人，并且失掉许多还要来到的别人，失掉许多广远与可能性；把那些轻微的充满预感的物体的接近与疏远，改换成一个日暮穷途的景况，什么也不能产生：无非是一些厌恶、失望与贫乏，不得已时便在因袭中寻求补救，有大宗因袭的条例早已准备好了，像是避祸亭一般在这危险的路旁。在各种人类的生活中没有比爱被因袭的习俗附饰得更多的了，是无所不用其极地发明许多救生圈、游泳袋、救护船；社会上的理解用各种样式设备下避难所，因为它倾向于把爱的生活也看作一种娱乐，所以必须轻率地把它形成一种简易、平稳、毫无险阻的生活，跟一切公开的娱乐一样。

诚然也有许多青年错误地去爱，即随随便便地赠予，不能寂寞（一般总是止于这种境地——），他们感到一种失误的压迫，要按照他们自己个人的方式使他们已经陷入的境域变得富有生力和成果——因为他们的天性告诉他们，爱的众多问题还比不上其他的重要的事物，它们可以公开地按照这样或那样的约定来解决；都不过是人与人之间切身问题，它们需要一个在各种情况下都新鲜而特殊、“只是”个人的回答——但，他们已经互相抛掷在一起，再也不能辨别、区分，再也不据有自己的所有，他们怎么能够从他们自身内从这已经埋没的寂寞的深处寻得一条出路呢？

他们的行为都是在通常无可告援的情势下产生的，如果他们以最好的意愿要躲避那落在他们身上的习俗（譬如说结婚），也还是陷入一种不寻常，但仍同样是死气沉沉限于习俗的解决的网中。因为他们周围的一切都是——习俗：从一种很早就聚在一起、暗淡的结合中表演出来的只是种种限于习俗的行动；这样的紊乱昏迷之所趋的每个关系，都有它的习俗，即使是那最不常见的（普通的意义叫作不道德的）也在内；是的，甚至于“分离”也几乎是一种习俗的步骤，是一种非个性的偶然的决断，没有力量，没有成果。

谁严肃地看，谁就感到，同对于艰难的“死”一样，对于这艰难的“爱”还没有启蒙，还没有解决，还没有什么指示与道路被认识；并且为了我们蒙蔽着、负担着、传递下去，还没有显现的这两个任务，也没有共同的、协议可靠的规律供我们探讨。但是在我们只作为单独的个人起始练习生活的程度内，这些伟大的事物将同单独的个人们在更接近的亲切中相遇。艰难的爱的工作对于我们发展过程的要求是无限的广大，我们作为信从者对于那些要求还不能胜任。但是，如果我们坚持忍耐，把爱作为重担和学业担在肩上，而不在任何浅易和轻浮的游戏中失掉自己（许多人都是一到他们生存中最严肃的严肃面前，便隐藏在游戏的身后）——那么将来继我们而来的人们或许会感到一点小小的进步与减轻；这就够好了。

可是我们现在正应该对于一个单独的人和另一个单独的人的关系，没有成见、如实地观察；我们试验着在这种关系里生活，面前并没有前例。可是在时代的变更中已经有些事，对于我们小心翼翼的开端能有所帮助了。

少女和妇女，在她们新近自己的发展中，只暂时成为男人恶习与特性的模仿者，男人职业的重演者。经过这样不稳定的过程后，事实会告诉我们，妇女只是从那（常常很可笑的）乔装的成功与变化中走过，以便把她们自己的天性从男性歪曲的影响中洗净。至于真的生命是更直接、更丰富、更亲切地在妇女的身内，根本上她们早应该变成比男人更纯净、更人性的人；男人没有身体的果实，只生活于生活的表面之下，傲慢而急躁，看轻他们要去爱的事物。如果妇女将来把这“只是女性”的习俗在她们外生活的转变中脱去，随后那从痛苦与压迫里产生出的妇女的“人性”就要见诸天日了，这是男人们现在还没有感到的，到那时他们将从中受到惊奇和打击。有一天（现在北欧的国家里已经有确切的证明）新的少女来到，并且所谓妇女这个名词，她不只是当作男人的对立体来讲，却含有一些独立的意义，使我们不再想到“补充”与“界限”，只想到生命与生存——女性的人。

这个进步将要把现在谬误的爱的生活转变（违背着落伍的男人们的意志），从根本更改，形成一种人对于人，不是男人对于女人的关系。并且这更人性的爱（它无限地谨慎而精细，良好而明晰地在结合与解脱中完成），它将要同我们辛辛苦苦地预备着的爱相似，它存在于这样的情况里：两个寂寞相爱护，相区分，相敬重。

还有：你不要以为，那在你童年曾经有过一次的伟大的爱已经失却了；你能说吗，那时并没有伟大的良好的愿望在你的生命里成熟，而且现在你还从中吸取养分？我相信那个爱是强有力地永在你的回忆中，因为它是你第一次的深的寂寞，也是你为你生命所做的第一次的内心的工作——祝你一切安好，亲爱的卡卜斯先生！

你的：赖内·马利亚·里尔克
1904年5月14日，罗马

十四行诗

我生命里有一缕阴深的苦恼
颤动，它不叹息，也不抱怨。
我梦里边雪一般的花片
是我寂静的长日的祭祷。

但是大问题梗住我的小道。
我变得渺小而凄凉
像是走过一座湖旁，
我不敢量一量湖水的波涛。

一种悲哀侵袭我，这般愁惨
好似暗淡的夏夜的苍茫
时时闪露出一星光；

于是我的双手向着爱试探，
因为我想祈求那样的声调，
我热烈的口边还不能找到……

（弗兰斯·卡卜斯）

第八封信

亲爱的卡卜斯先生，我想再和你谈一谈，虽然我几乎不能说对你有所帮助以及对你有一些用处的话。你有过很多大的悲哀，这些悲哀都已过去了。你说，这悲哀的过去也使你非常苦恼。但是，请你想一想，是不是这些大的悲哀并不曾由你生命的中心走过？当你悲哀的时候，是不是在你生命里并没有许多变化，在你本性的任何地方也无所改变？危险而恶劣的是那些悲哀，我们把它们运送到人群中，以遮盖它们的声音；像是敷衍治疗的病症，只是暂时退却，过些时又更可怕地发作；它们聚集在体内，成为一种没有生活过、被摈斥、被遗弃的生命，能使我们死去。如果我们能比我们平素的知识所能达到的地方看得更远一点，稍微越过我们预感的前哨，那么也许我们将会以比担当我们的欢悦更大的信赖去担当我们的悲哀。因为它们（悲哀）都是那些时刻，正当一些新的、陌生的事物侵入我们的生命；我们的情感蜷伏于怯懦的局促的状态里，一切都退却，形成一种寂静，于是这无人认识的“新”就立在中间，沉默无语。

我相信几乎我们一切的悲哀都是紧张的瞬间，这时我们感到麻木，因为我们不再听到诧异的情感生存。因为我们要同这生疏的闯入者独自周旋；因为我们平素所信任的与习惯的都暂时离开了我们；因为我们正处在一个不能容我们立足的过程中。可是一旦这不期而至的新事物迈进我们的生命，走进我们的心房，在心的最深处化为无有，溶解在我们的血液中，悲哀也就因此过去了。我们再也经验不到当时的情形。这很容易使我们相信前此并没有什么发生；其实我们却是改变了，正如一所房子，走进一位新客，它改变了。我们不能说，是谁来了，我们往后也许不知道，可是有许多迹象告诉我们，在“未来”还没有发生之前，它就以这样的方式潜入我们的生命，以便在我们身内变化。所以我们在悲哀的时刻要安于寂寞，多注意，这是很重要的，因为当我们的“未来”潜入我们的生命的瞬间，好像是空虚而枯僵，但与那从外边来的、为我们发生的喧嚣而意外的时刻相比，是同生命接近得多。我们悲哀时越沉静，越忍耐，越坦白，这新的事物也越深、越清晰地走进我们的生命，我们也就更好地保护它，它也就更多地成为我们自己的命运；将来有一天它“发生”了（就是说：它从我们的生命里出来向着别人走进），我们将在最内心的地方感到我们同它亲切而接近。并且这是必要的。是必要的——我们将渐渐地向那方面发展——凡是迎面而来的事，是没有生疏的，都早已属于我们了。人们已经变换过这么多运转的定义，将来会渐渐认清，我们所谓的命运是从

我们“人”里出来，并不是从外边向着我们“人”走进。只因为有许多人，当命运在他们身内生存时，他们不曾把它吸收，化为己有，所以他们也认不清，有什么从他们身内出现；甚至如此生疏，他们在仓皇恐惧之际，以为命运一定是正在这时走进他们的生命，因为他们确信自己从来没有见过这样类似的事物。正如对于太阳的运转曾经有过长期的蒙惑那样，现在人们对于未来的运转，也还在同样地自欺自蔽。其实“未来”站得很稳，亲爱的卡卜斯先生，但是我们动转在这无穷无尽的空间。

我们怎么能不感觉困难呢？

如果我们再谈到寂寞，那就会更明显，它根本不是我们所能选择或弃舍的事物。我们都是寂寞的。人能够自欺，好像并不寂寞。只不过如此而已。但是，那有多么好呢，如果我们一旦看出，我们都正在脱开这欺骗的局面。在其间我们自然要发生眩昏；因为平素我们的眼睛看惯了的一切这时都忽然失去，再也没有亲近的事物，一切的远方都是无穷的旷远。谁从他的屋内没有准备，没有过程，忽然被移置在一脉高山的顶上，他必会有类似的感觉；一种无与伦比的不安被交付给无名的事物，几乎要把他毁灭。他或许想象会跌落，或者相信会被抛掷在天空，或者粉身碎骨，他的头脑必须发现多么大的谎话，去补救、去说明他官感迷失的状态。一切的距离与尺度对于那寂寞的人就有了变化；从这些变化中忽然会有许多变化发生。跟在山顶上的那个人一样，生出许多非常的想象与稀奇的感觉，它们好像超越了一切能够担当的事体。但那是必要的，我们也体验这种情况。我们必须尽量广阔地承受我们的生存；一切，甚至闻所未闻的事物，都可能在里边存在。根本那是我们被要求的唯一的勇气：勇敢地面对我们所能遇到的最稀奇、最吃惊、最不可解的事物。就因为许多人在这意义中是怯懦的，所以使生活受了无限的损伤；人们称作“奇象”的那些体验、所谓“幽灵世界”、死，以及一切同我们相关联的事物，它们都被我们日常的防御挤出生活之外，甚至我们能够接受它们的感官都枯萎了。关于“神”，简直就不能谈论了。但是对于不可解的事物的恐惧，不仅使个人的生存更为贫乏，并且人与人的关系也因之受到限制，正如从有无限可能性的河床里捞出来，放在一块荒芜不毛的岸上。因为这不仅是一种惰性，使人间的关系极为单调而陈腐地把旧事一再重演，而且是对于任何一种不能预测、不堪胜任的新的生活的畏缩。但是如果有人对于一切有了准备，无论什么，甚至最大的哑谜，也不置之度外，那么他就会把同别人的关系，当作生动着的事物去体验，甚至充分理解自己的存在。正如我们把各个人的存在看成一块较大或较小的空间，那么大部分人却只认识了他们空间的一角、一块窗前的空地，或是他们走来走去的一条窄道。这样他们就有一定的安定。可是那危险的不安定是更人性的，它能促使爱伦·坡 [1] 的故事里的囚犯摸索他们

可怕的牢狱的形状，而熟悉他们住处内不可言喻的恐怖。但我们不是囚犯，没有人在我们周围布置了陷阱，没有什么来恐吓我们，苦恼我们。我们在生活中像是在最适合于我们的原素里，况且我们经过几千年之久的适应和生活这样地相似了，如果我们静止不动，凭借一种成功的模拟，便很难同我们周围的一切有所区分。我们没有理由不信任我们的世界，因为它并不敌对我们。如果它有恐惧，就是我们的恐惧；它有难测的深渊，这深渊是属于我们的；有危险，我们就必须试行去爱这些危险。若是我们把我们的生活，按照那叫我们必须永远把握艰难的原则来处理，那么现在还最生疏的事物就会变得最亲切、最忠实的了。我们怎么能忘却那各民族原始时都有过的神话呢；恶龙在最紧急的瞬间变成公主的那段神话；也许我们生活中一切的恶龙都是公主们，她们只是等候着，美丽而勇敢地看一看我们。也许一切恐怖的事物在最深处是无助的，向我们要求救助。

亲爱的卡卜斯先生，如果有一种悲哀在你面前出现，它是从未见过的那样广大，如果有一种不安，像光与云影似的掠过你的行为与一切工作，你不要恐惧。你必须想，那是有些事在你身边发生了；那是生活没有忘记你，它把你握在手中，它永不会让你失落。为什么你要把一种不安、一种痛苦、一种忧郁置于你的生活之外呢，可是你还不知道，这些情况在为你做什么工作。为什么你要这样追问，这一切是从哪里来，要向哪里去呢？可是你要知道，你是在过渡中，要愿望自己有所变化。如果你的过程里有一些是病态的，你要想一想，病就是一种方法，有机体用以从生疏的事物中解放出来；所以我们只需让它生病，使它有整个的病发作，因为这才是进步。亲爱的卡卜斯先生，现在你自身内有这么多的事发生，你要像一个病人似的忍耐，又像一个康复者似的自信；你也许同时是这两个人。并且你还须是看护自己的医生。但是在病中常常有许多天，医生除了等候以外，什么事也不能做。这就是（尽你是你的医生的时候），现在首先必须做的事。

对于自己不要过甚地观察。不要从对你发生的事物中求得很快的结论，让它们单纯地自生自长吧。不然你就很容易用种种（所谓道德的）谴责回顾你的过去，这些过去自然和你现在遇到的一切很有关系。凡是从你童年的迷途、愿望、渴望中在你身内继续影响着的事，它们并不让你回忆，供你评判。一个寂寞而孤单的童年非常的情况是这样艰难，这样复杂，受到这么多外来的影响，同时又这样脱开了一切现实生活的关联，纵使在童年有罪恶，我们也不该简捷了当地称作罪恶。对于许多名称，必须多多注意；常常只是犯罪的名称使生命为之破碎，而不是那无名的、个人的行为本身，至于这个行为也许是生活中规定的必要，能被生活轻易接受的。因为你把胜利估量得过高，所以你觉得力的消耗如此巨大；胜利并不是你认为已经完成的“伟大”，纵使你觉得正确；“伟大”是你能以一些真的、实在的事物代替欺

骗。不然你的胜利也不过是一种道德上的反应，没有广大的意义，但是它却成为你生活的一个段落。亲爱的卡卜斯先生，关于你的生活，我有很多的愿望。你还记得吗，这个生活是怎样从童年里出来，向着“伟大”渴望？我看着，它现在又从这些伟大前进，渴望更伟大的事物。所以艰难的生活永无止境，但因此生长也无止境。

如果我还应该向你说一件事，那么就是：你不要相信，那试行劝慰你的人是无忧无虑地生活在那些有时对你有益的简单而平静的几句话里。他的生活有许多的辛苦与悲哀，他远远地专诚帮助你。不然，他就绝不能找到那几句话。

你的：赖内·马利亚·里尔克

1904年8月12日，瑞典

弗拉底（Flädie），波格比庄园（Borgeby Càrb）

[1] 爱伦·坡（Allan Poe，1809—1849），美国小说家、诗人，以描写神秘恐怖故事知名。这里指的是他的一篇小说《深坑和钟摆》（*The Pit and the Pendulum*），描述一个被判处死刑的人在黑暗的牢狱里摸索墙壁、猜度牢狱形状的恐怖情况。

第九封信

我亲爱的卡卜斯先生：

在这没有通信的时期内，我一半是在旅途上，一半是事务匆忙，使我不能写信。今天我写信也是困难的，因为我已经写了许多封，手都疲倦了。若是我能以口述给旁人写，我还能向你说许多，可是现在你只好接受这寥寥几行来报答你的长信。

亲爱的卡卜斯先生，我常常思念你，并且以这样专诚的愿望思念你，总要对你有所帮助。但是我的信到底能不能帮助你，我却常常怀疑。你不要说：它们能够帮助你。你只安心接受这些信吧，不必说感谢的话，让我们等着，看将要有什么事情来到。

现在我对于你信里个别的字句加以探讨，大半是没有用的；因为我关于你疑惑的倾向，关于体内外生活和谐的不可能，关于另外苦恼着你的一切——我所能说的，还依然是我已经说过的话：还是愿你自己有充分的忍耐去担当，有充分单纯的心去信仰；你将会越来越信任艰难的事物和你在众人中间感到的寂寞。以外就是让生活自然进展。请你相信：无论如何，生活是合理的。

谈到情感：凡是使你集中向上的情感都是纯洁的；但那只捉住你本性的一方面，对你有所伤害的情感是不纯洁的。凡是在你童年能想到的事都是好的。凡能够使你比你从前最美好的时刻还更丰富的，都是对的。各种提高都是好的，如果它是在你“全”血液中，如果它不是迷醉，不是忧郁，而是透明到底的欢悦。你了解我的意思吗？

就是你的怀疑也可以成为一种好的特性，若是你好好“培养”它。它必须成为明智的，它必须成为批判——当它要伤害你一些事物时，你要问它，这些事物“为什么”丑恶，向它要求证据，考问它，你也许见它仓皇失措，也许见它表示异议。但你不要让步，你同它辩论，每一回都要多多注意，立定脚步，终于有一天它会从一个破坏者变成你的一个最好的工作者——或许在一切从事于建设你的生活的工作中它是最聪明的一个。

亲爱的卡卜斯先生，这是我今天所能向你说的一切。我附寄给我一篇短的作品抽印本 ^[1]，这是在布拉格出版的《德意志工作》中发表的。在那里我继续着同你谈生和死，以及它们的伟大与美丽。

你的：赖内·马利亚·里尔克

1904年11月4日，瑞典
永瑟勒德（Jonsered），弗卢堡（Fruburg）

[1] 系里尔克的散文诗《旗手克里斯多夫·里尔克的爱与死之歌》
(*Die Weise Von Liebe und Tod des Cornets Christoph Rilke*)。

第十封信

亲爱的卡卜斯先生，你该知道，我得你这封美好的信，我是多么欢喜。你给我的消息是真实、诚挚，又像你从前那样，我觉得很好，我越想越感到那实在是好的消息。我本来想在圣诞节的晚间给你写信，但是这一冬我多方从事没有间断的工作，这古老的节日是这样快地走来了，使我没有时间去做我必须处理的事，更少写信。

但是在节日里我常常思念你，我设想你是怎样寂静地在你寂寞的军垒中生活，两旁是空旷的高山，大风从南方袭来，好像要把这些山整块地吞了下去。

这种寂静必须是广大无边，好容许这样的风声风势得以驰骋，如果我想到了，更加上那辽远的海也在你面前同时共奏，像是太古的谐音中最深处的旋律，那么我就希望你能忠实地、忍耐地让这大规模的寂寞在你身上工作，它不再能从你的生命中消灭；在一切你要去生活要去从事的事物中，它永远赓续着像是一种无名的势力，并且将确切地影响你，有如祖先的血在我们身内不断地流动，和我们自己的血混为唯一的、绝无仅有的一体，在我们生命的无论哪一个转折。

是的：我很欢喜，你据有这个固定的、可以言传的存在，有职称，有制服，有任务，有一切把得定、范围得住的事物，它们在这同样孤立而人数不多的军队环境中，接受严肃与必要的工作，它们超越军队职业的游戏与消遣意味着一种警醒的运用，它们不仅容许，而且正好培养自主的注意力。我们要在那些为我们工作、时时置我们于伟大而自然的事物面前的情况中生活，这是必要的一切。

艺术也是一种生活方式，无论我们怎样生活，都能不知不觉地为它准备；每个真实的生活都比那些虚假的、以艺术为号召的职业跟艺术更为接近，它们炫耀一种近似的艺术，实际上却否定了、损伤了艺术的存在，如整个的报章文字、几乎一切的批评界、四分之三号称文学和要号称文学的作品，都是这样。我很高兴，简捷地说，是因为你经受了易于陷入的危险，寂寞而勇敢地生活在任何一处无情的现实中。即将来到的一年会使你在这样的生活里更为坚定。

你的：赖内·马利亚·里尔克
1908年，圣诞节第二日，巴黎

Rainer Maria Rilke

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

Letters to a Young Poet

Nº 10

‘What matters is
to live everything.
Live the questions
for now.’

Preface

In late autumn 1902 it was – I was sitting under ancient chestnut trees in the gardens of the Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt with a book. I was so absorbed by my reading that I hardly noticed it when the only one of our teachers who was not an army officer, Horaček, the learned and good-natured chaplain of the Academy, came and joined me. He took the volume from my hand, looked at the cover and shook his head. ‘Poems by Rainer Maria Rilke?’ he asked thoughtfully. He leafed through its pages, ran his eyes over a few verses, looked reflectively into the distance and finally nodded. ‘So, our pupil René Rilke has become a poet.’

And I was told about the slight, pale boy sent by his parents more than fifteen years before to the Military Lower School in Sankt Pölten so that he might later become an officer. In those days Horaček had worked there as the chaplain and he still remembered his former pupil well. He described him as a quiet, serious, highly gifted child, who liked to keep himself to himself, put up with the discipline of boarding-school life patiently and after the fourth year moved on with the others to the Military Upper School in Mährisch-Weiskirchen. There his constitution proved not to be resilient enough, and so his parents took him out of the establishment and had him continue his studies at home in Prague. What path his career had taken after that Horaček was unable to say.

Given all this it is probably not difficult to understand that I decided that very hour to send my poetic efforts to Rainer Maria Rilke and ask him for his verdict. Not yet twenty years old and on the verge of going into a profession which I felt was directly opposed to my true inclinations, I thought that if anyone was going to understand my situation it was the author of the book To Celebrate Myself. And without its being my express intention, my verses were accompanied by a letter in which I revealed myself more unreservedly than to anyone ever before, or to anyone since.

Many weeks went by before an answer came. The letter with its blue seal bore a Paris postmark, weighed heavy in the hand and displayed on the envelope the same clarity, beauty and assurance of

hand with which the content itself was written from the first line to the last. And so my regular correspondence with Rainer Maria Rilke began, lasting until 1908 and then gradually petering out because life forced me into domains which the poet's warm, tender and moving concern had precisely wanted to protect me from.

But that is unimportant. The only important thing is the ten letters that follow, important for the insight they give into the world in which Rainer Maria Rilke lived and worked, and important too for many people engaged in growth and change, today and in the future. And where a great and unique person speaks, the rest of us should be silent.

Franz Xaver Kappus

Berlin, June 1929

Paris, 17 February 1903

Dear Sir,

Your letter only reached me a few days ago. Let me thank you for the great and endearing trust it shows. There is little more I can do. I cannot go into the nature of your verses, for any critical intention is too remote from me. There is nothing less apt to touch a work of art than critical words: all we end up with there is more or less felicitous misunderstandings. Things are not all as graspable and sayable as on the whole we are led to believe; most events are unsayable, occur in a space that no word has ever penetrated, and most unsayable of all are works of art, mysterious existences whose life endures alongside ours, which passes away.

Having begun with this preliminary remark, all I will go on to say is that your verses have no identity of their own, though they do have tacit and concealed hints of something personal. I feel that most clearly in the last poem, 'My Soul'. There something individual is trying to come into words, to find its manner. And in the lovely poem 'To Leopardi' perhaps a kind of affinity with this great and solitary man develops. Still, the poems are not yet anything in themselves, nothing self sufficient, not even the last one and the one to Leopardi. The kind letter you wrote accompanying them does not fail to make many of the shortcomings I sensed in reading your verses explicable, without for all that being able to give them a name.

You ask whether your verses are good. You ask me that. You have asked others, before. You send them to magazines. You compare them with other poems, and you worry when certain editors turn your efforts down. Now(since you have allowed me to offer you advice) let me ask you to give up all that. You are looking to the outside, and that above all you should not be doing now. Nobody can advise you and help you, nobody. There is only one way. Go into yourself. Examine the reason that bids you to write; check whether it reaches its roots into the deepest region of your heart, admit to yourself whether you would die if it should be

denied you to write. This above all: ask yourself in your night's quietest hour: *must* I write? Dig down into yourself for a deep answer. And if it should be affirmative, if it is given to you to respond to this serious question with a loud and simple '*I must*', then construct your life according to this necessity; your life right into its most inconsequential and slightest hour must become a sign and witness of this urge. Then approach nature. Then try, like the first human being, to say what you see and experience and love and lose. Don't write love poems; avoid at first those forms which are too familiar and habitual: they are the hardest, for you need great maturity and strength to produce something of your own in a domain where good and sometimes brilliant examples have been handed down to us in abundance. For this reason, flee general subjects and take refuge in those offered by your own day to day life; depict your sadnesses and desires, passing thoughts and faith in some kind of beauty – depict all this with intense, quiet, humble sincerity and make use of whatever you find about you to express yourself, the images from your dreams and the things in your memory. If your everyday life seems to lack material, do not blame it; blame yourself, tell yourself that you are not poet enough to summon up its riches, for there is no lack for him who creates and no poor, trivial place. And even if you were in a prison whose walls did not let any of the sounds of the world outside reach your senses – would you not have your childhood still, this marvellous, lavish source, this treasure house of memories? Turn your attention towards that. Attempt to raise the sunken sensations of this distant past; your self will become the stronger for it, your loneliness will open up and become a twilight dwelling in which the noise other people make is only heard far off. And if from this turn inwards, from this submersion in your own world, there come *verses*, then it will not occur to you to ask anyone whether they are good verses. Nor will you attempt to interest magazines in these bits of work: for in them you will see your beloved natural possessions, a piece, and a voice, of your life. A work of art is good if it has arisen out of necessity. The verdict on it lies in this nature of its origin: there is no other. For this reason, my dear Sir, the only advice I have is this: to go into yourself and to examine the depths from which your life springs; at its source you will find the answer to the question of whether you *have* to write. Accept this answer as it is, without seeking to interpret it. Perhaps it will turn out that you are called to

be an artist. Then assume this fate and bear it, its burden and its greatness, without ever asking after the rewards that may come from outside. For he who creates must be a world of his own and find everything within himself and in the natural world that he has elected to follow.

But perhaps even after this descent into yourself and into your solitariness you will have to give up the idea of becoming a poet (the feeling that one could live without writing is enough, as I said, to make it something one should never do). But even then, to have taken pause in the way I am asking you to will not have been in vain. Whatever happens, your life will find its own paths from that point on, and that they may be good, productive and far reaching is something I wish for you more than I can say.

What else should I say to you? I think everything has been emphasized as it should be; and all I wanted to do in the end was advise you to go through your development quietly and seriously; you cannot disrupt it more than by looking outwards and expecting answers from without to questions that only your innermost instinct in your quietest moments will perhaps be able to answer.

I was delighted to find Professor Horaček's name in your letter; I retain a great admiration for this kindhearted scholar, a gratitude that has endured over the years. Could you please pass on these sentiments to him; it is very kind of him still to remember me, and I much appreciate it.

The verses you were so good as to entrust me with I am sending back to you along with this letter. Thank you again for the extent and the warmth of your trust – as well as I can, I have attempted with this sincere reply to make myself a little worthier of it than, as a stranger, I really am.

With all devotion and sympathy,

Rainer Maria Rilke

Viareggio near Pisa (Italy), 5 April 1903

You must forgive me, my dear Sir, for only attending to your letter of 24 February today: the whole time I have been under the weather, not ill exactly but oppressed by an influenza like feebleness which has made me incapable of anything. And in the end, when all else had failed, I travelled down to this southern coast, whose beneficial effects have helped me in the past. But I'm still not well again, writing is difficult, and so you must take these few lines as if there were more of them.

First of all you should know that every letter from you will always be a pleasure, and you only need to be understanding with regard to the replies, which often, maybe, will leave you with empty hands; for at bottom, and particularly in the deepest and most important things, we are unutterably alone, and for one person to be able to advise, let alone help, another, a great deal must come about, a great deal must come right, a whole constellation of things must concur for it to be possible at all.

There are just two things I wanted to say to you today:

Irony: don't let yourself be ruled by it, especially not in uncreative moments. In creative ones try to make use of it as one means among many to get a grasp on life. Used purely, it too is pure, and there is no need to be ashamed of it; and if you feel too familiar with it, if you fear your intimacy is growing too much, then turn towards great and serious subjects, next to which irony becomes small and helpless. Seek out the depths of things: irony will never reach down there – and if in so doing you come up against something truly great, inquire whether this way of relating to things originates in a necessary part of your being. For under the influence of serious things irony will either fall away (if it is something incidental) or on the contrary (if it really belongs to you in a native way) it will gain strength and so become a serious tool and take its place among the means with which you will be bound to create your art.

And the second thing I wanted to tell you today is this:

Of all my books there are only a few I cannot do without, and two are always among my effects, wherever I am. I have them with me here: the Bible, and the books of the great Danish writer *Jens Peter Jacobsen*. I wonder whether you know his works. They are easy to get hold of, because a number of them are available in good translations in Reclam's Universal Bibliothek. Get hold of the little volume *Six Novellas* by J. P. Jacobsen, and his novel *Niels Lyhne*, and begin with the first story in the first of these volumes which is called 'Mogens'. A world will come over you, the joy, the richness, the incomprehensible greatness of a new world. Live in these books for a while, learn from them what seems to be worth learning, but above all love them. This love will be repaid you thousands and thousands of times, and however your life may turn out – this love, I am sure of it, will run through the weave of your becoming as one of the most important threads of all among the other threads of your experiences, disappointments and joys.

If I had to say from whom I have learnt anything about the nature of artistic creation, about its profundity and eternity, there are only two names I can give: *Jacobsen's*, the great, great poet, and *Auguste Rodin's*, the sculptor who has no equal among all artists now alive. –

All success on your paths! Yours,

Rainer Maria Rilke

Viareggio near Pisa (Italy), 23 April 1903

Your Easter letter, my dear Sir, gave me a great deal of pleasure, for it had many good things to report, and the way you spoke about Jacobsen's great and generous art showed me that I was not mistaken in conducting your life and its many questions to this source of plenty.

Now *Niels Lyhne* will reveal itself to you, a book full of splendours and depths; the more often one reads it, it seems to contain everything, from life's faintest scent to the full, grand savour of its heaviest fruits. There is nothing in it that has not been understood, grasped, lived, and known in memory's trembling, lingering resonance; no experience is too slight, and the merest occurrence unfolds like a fate, and fate itself is like a wonderful, vast fabric in which every thread is drawn by an infinitely tender hand and laid next to another, held in place and supported by a hundred others. You will experience the immense pleasure of reading this book for the first time, and will pass through its innumerable surprises as if in a new dream. But I can tell you that later too one always traverses these books with the same astonishment and that they lose nothing of the wondrous power, relinquish none of the magical qualities, which they lavish on the reader the first time round.

One just takes more and more enjoyment in them, one grows ever more grateful and somehow better and simpler in seeing the world, deeper in one's faith in life and happier and larger in living.

—

And later you must read the wonderful book of the fate and longings of *Marie Grubbe* and Jacobsen's letters and diaries and fragments and finally his verse which (even if the translations are only moderate) has an infinite resonance. (To do so, I'd suggest you buy the lovely collected edition of Jacobsen's works – which has all this in it – if you get the opportunity. It came out in three volumes and in good translations with Eugen Diederichs in Leipzig and costs, I believe, only 5 or 6 marks a volume.)

In your opinion on 'Here roses should stand . . .' (a work of such incomparable subtlety and form) you are of course absolutely in the right, and inviolably so, whatever the author of the preface may have to say. And let me at once make this request: read as little as possible in the way of aesthetics and criticism – it will either be partisan views, fossilized and made meaningless in its lifeless rigidity, or it will be neat wordplay, where one opinion will triumph one day and the opposite the next. Works of art are infinitely solitary and nothing is less likely to reach them than criticism. Only love can grasp them and hold them and do them justice. – With regard to any such disquisition, review or introduction, trust yourself and your instincts; even if you go wrong in your judgement, the natural growth of your inner life will gradually, over time, lead you to other insights. Allow your verdicts their own quiet untroubled development which like all progress must come from deep within and cannot be forced or accelerated. *Everything* must be carried to term before it is born. To let every impression and the germ of every feeling come to completion inside, in the dark, in the unsayable, the unconscious, in what is unattainable to one's own intellect, and to wait with deep humility and patience for the hour when a new clarity is delivered: that alone is to live as an artist, in the understanding and in one's creative work.

These things cannot be measured by time, a year has no meaning, and ten years are nothing. To be an artist means: not to calculate and count; to grow and ripen like a tree which does not hurry the flow of its sap and stands at ease in the spring gales without fearing that no summer may follow. It will come. But it comes only to those who are patient, who are simply there in their vast, quiet tranquillity, as if eternity lay before them. It is a lesson I learn every day amid hardships I am thankful for: *patience* is all!

richard dehmel: With his books (as also, by the way, with the man himself whom I know slightly) I always find myself, when I've come upon one of his best pages, fearful of the next, which can always undo it all again and turn what was so lovely into something base. You sum him up very well with your phrase about 'living and writing in rut'. – And indeed artistic experience lies so incredibly close to sexual experience, to its pains and pleasures, that both phenomena are really just different forms of one and the same

desire and felicity. And if instead of speaking of 'rut' we could say 'sex', sex in the large, capacious, pure sense, not rendered suspect by any misapprehensions stemming from the Church, his art would be very great and infinitely important. His poetic power is immense, as vigorous as instinct; it has its own reckless rhythms running through it and bursts out of him as if from a mountain.

But this power seems not always to be quite genuine and free of affectation. (But then that is one of the severest tests of an artist: he must always remain innocent and unconscious of his greatest virtues if he is to avoid depriving them of their uninhibitedness and purity.) And when this power, coursing through his being, reaches his sexuality, it doesn't find quite the pure human being it needs. The world of sexuality it finds is not entirely mature and pure, it is not *human* enough, only *virile*, rut, intoxication, restlessness, and weighed down by the old prejudices and arrogance with which men have disfigured and overburdened love. Because he loves *only* as a man, not as a human being, there is in his sense of sexuality something narrow, seemingly savage, hateful, time bound, uneternal that diminishes his art and makes it ambivalent and doubtful. It is not without blemish, it is marked by the times and by passion, and little of it will prevail and endure. (But that's the case with most art!) In spite of all this one can still take deep pleasure in what is great about his work and must just make sure not to lose oneself to it and become an acolyte of this Dehmel world which is so full of anxiety, of adultery and confusion, and remote from the real destinies, which create more suffering than these passing afflictions but also give more opportunity for greatness and more courage to make something that will last.

To come to my own books, really I'd like to send you all those that might give pleasure. But I am very poor, and as soon as my books have appeared they cease to belong to me. I cannot buy them myself and, as I'd so often like to, give them to those who would value and look after them.

For that reason I have written down for you on a slip of paper the titles (and publishing houses) of my recent books (that is the very newest, altogether I must have published 12 or 13) and must leave it to you, dear Sir, to order one or two of them if they take your fancy.

I shall be glad to know that my books are with you.

All good wishes,

Yours,

Rainer Maria Rilke

at present in Worpswede near Bremen, 16 July 1903

About ten days ago I left Paris, ailing and very weary, and travelled to these great northern plains whose vastness and quiet and sky are supposed to return my health to me. But I drove into unceasing rain which only today is beginning to clear a bit over the restless, windswept land; and I'm using this first moment of brightness to send you a greeting, my dear Sir.

My dear Mr Kappus: I have left your letter unanswered for a long time – not that I had forgotten it; on the contrary, it was the kind of letter one reads again, coming across it among one's papers, and I recognized you in it as if I were in your presence. It was your letter of the second of May – I'm sure you remember it. When, as I do now, I read it in the great calm of these expanses, I am touched by your fine concern for life, even more than I was in Paris where everything has a different tone and gets lost in the immense din which sets things trembling. Here, surrounded as I am by a mighty stretch of land over which the winds blow in from seas, here I feel that no human being anywhere can respond to those questions and feelings that have a profound life of their own; for even the best of us get the words wrong when we want them to express such intangible and almost unsayable things. But all the same I believe that you need not remain without solution if you hold to things like those now refreshing my eyes. If you hold close to nature, to what is simple in it, to the small things people hardly see and which all of a sudden can become great and immeasurable; if you have this love for what is slight, and quite unassumingly, as a servant, seek to win the confidence of what seems poor – then everything will grow easier, more unified and somehow more conciliatory, not perhaps in the intellect, which, amazed, remains a step behind, but in your deepest consciousness, watchfulness and knowledge. You are so young, all still lies ahead of you, and I should like to ask you, as best I can, dear Sir, to be patient towards all that is unresolved in your heart and to try to love *the questions themselves* like locked

rooms, like books written in a foreign tongue. Do not now strive to uncover answers: they cannot be given you because you have not been able to live them. And what matters is to live everything. *Live* the questions for now. Perhaps then you will gradually, without noticing it, live your way into the answer, one distant day in the future. Perhaps you do carry within yourself the possibility of forming and creating, as a particularly happy and pure way of living. School yourself for it, but take what comes in complete trust, and as long as it is a product of your will, of some kind of inner necessity, accept it and do not despise it. Sex is difficult, true. But difficult things are what we were set to do, almost everything serious is difficult, and everything is serious. If you only acknowledge this and manage from your own resources, from your own disposition and nature, from your own experience and childhood and strength, to win your way towards a relationship to sex that is wholly your own (*not* influenced by convention and custom), then you have no need to fear losing yourself and becoming unworthy of your best possession.

Physical desire is a sensual experience, no different from pure contemplation or the pure sensation with which a fine fruit sates the tongue; it is a great and endless feeling which is granted to us, a way of knowing the world, the fullness and the splendour of all knowledge. And that we receive this pleasure cannot be a bad thing; what is bad is the way almost all of us misuse the experience and waste it and apply it as a stimulus to the tired parts of our lives, as a distraction instead of as a concentration of ourselves into climactic points. Eating, too, has been turned away from its true nature: want on the one hand and superfluity on the other have troubled the clarity of this need, and all the profound, simple necessities in which life renews itself have similarly been obscured. But the individual can clarify them for himself and live in this clearness (and if not the individual, who is too dependent, then at least the solitary). He can remind himself that all beauty in plants and animals is a quiet and durable form of love and longing, and he can see the animal, as also the plant, patiently and willingly joining and multiplying and growing, not from physical pleasure, not from physical suffering, but bowing to necessities which are greater than pleasure and pain and more powerful than desire and resistance. Oh if only mankind could embrace this mystery, which penetrates the earth right into its smallest elements, with more humility, and bear

and sustain it with more gravity and know how terribly heavy it is, instead of taking it lightly. If only mankind could hold its own fertility in awe, which is one and the same whether it manifests itself in the spirit or in the flesh. For creativity of the spirit has its origin in the physical kind, is of one nature with it and only a more delicate, more rapt and less fleeting version of the carnal sort of sex. 'The desire to be a creator, to engender, to give form' is nothing without its continuing, palpable confirmation and realization in the world, nothing without the myriad expressions of assent coming from animals and things. And the pleasure it gives is only as unutterably fine and abundant as it is because it is full of inherited memories of the engendering and bearing of millions. In one creative thought a thousand forgotten nights of love revive and lend it grandeur and height. And those who come together in the night time and are entwined in a cradle of desire are carrying out a serious work in collecting sweetness, profundity and strength for the song of some poet yet to come, who will rise up to speak unutterable pleasures. And they summon up the future; and even if they err and embrace one another blindly, the future will come all the same, a new creature will appear, and based on the chance act that seems to be accomplished here the law comes into being according to which a resistant and vigorous seed forces its way through to the egg moving forward to receive it. Do not be distracted by surfaces; it is in the depths that all laws obtain. And those who live the mystery falsely and badly (and there are many of them) forfeit it only for themselves and still hand it on like a sealed letter, unwittingly. And don't be put off by the multiplicity of names and the complexity of the various cases. Perhaps a great maternity lies over everything, as a shared longing. The beauty of the virgin, of a being, who, as you put it so well, 'has not yet achieved anything', is maternity divining and preparing itself, anxious and full of longing. And the beauty of a mother is maternity at work, and that of the old woman a great memory. And in the man too there is maternity, as it seems to me, physical and spiritual; his engendering is also a kind of giving birth, and it is an act of birth when he creates out of his inmost resources. And perhaps the sexes are more closely related than we think, and the great renewal of the world will perhaps consist in man and woman, freed of all sense of error and disappointment, seeking one another out not as opposites but as brothers and sisters and neighbours, and they will join

together as *human beings* , to share the heavy weight of sexuality that is laid upon them with simplicity, gravity and patience.

But everything which one day will perhaps be possible for many, the solitary individual can prepare for and build now with his hands which are more unerring. For this reason, dear Mr Kappus, love your solitude and bear the pain it causes you with melody wrought with lament. For the people who are close to you, you tell me, are far away, and that shows that you are beginning to create a wider space around you. And if what is close is far, then the space around you is wide indeed and already among the stars; take pleasure in your growth, in which no one can accompany you, and be kind hearted towards those you leave behind, and be assured and gentle with them and do not plague them with your doubts or frighten them with your confidence or your joyfulness, which they cannot understand. Look for some kind of simple and loyal way of being together with them which does not necessarily have to alter however much you may change; love in them a form of life different from your own and show understanding for the older ones who fear precisely the solitude in which you trust. Avoid providing material for the drama which always spans between parents and their children; it saps much of the children's strength and consumes that parental love which works and warms even when it does not comprehend. Ask no advice of them and reckon with no understanding; but believe in a love which is stored up for you like an inheritance, and trust that in this love there is a strength and a benediction out of whose sphere you do not need to issue even if your journey is a long one.

It is good that for the moment you are going into a profession which will make you independent and mean you only have yourself to rely on, in every sense. Have the patience to wait and see whether your inmost life feels confined by the form of this occupation. I consider it a very difficult and a very demanding one, as it is burdened by powerful conventions and leaves almost no room to interpret its duties according to your own lights. But your solitude, even in the midst of quite foreign circumstances, will be a hold and a home for you, and leading from it you will find all the paths you need. All my good wishes are ready to accompany you, and you have all my confidence and trust.

Yours,

Rainer Maria Rilke

Rome, 29 October 1903

My dear Sir,

Your letter of 29 August reached me in Florence, and only now – two months on – do I give you news of it. Forgive me this delay, but I prefer not to write letters when I'm travelling because letter writing requires more of me than just the basic wherewithal: some quiet and time on my own and a moment when I feel relatively at home.

We arrived in Rome about six weeks ago, at a time when it was still the empty, hot city, the Rome supposedly ridden with fevers, and this circumstance, together with other practical difficulties to do with settling in, meant that the unrest surrounding us went on and on and the foreignness of the place lay on us with the weight of homelessness. On top of that you have to remember that Rome (if one is not yet acquainted with it) seems oppressively sad when one first arrives: the lifeless and drear museum atmosphere it breathes, the abundance of fragments of the past (on which a tiny present nourishes itself) that have been fetched out of the ground and laboriously maintained, the unspeakable excess of esteem, nourished by academics and philologists with the help of run of the mill tourists, given to all these disfigured and spoilt objects which after all are basically nothing more than accidental vestiges of another age and of a life that is not our own and is not meant to be. At last, after weeks of daily fending off, you get your bearings back, and somewhat dazed you tell yourself: No, there is not *more* beauty here than elsewhere, and all these objects which generation after generation have continued to admire, which inexpert hands have mended and restored, they mean nothing, are nothing and have no heart and no value; but there is a great deal of beauty here, because there is beauty everywhere. Infinitely lively waters go over the old aqueducts into the city and on the many squares dance over bowls of white stone and fill broad capacious basins and murmur all day and raise their murmur into the night, which is vast and starry and soft with winds. And there are gardens here, unforgettable avenues

and flights of steps, steps conceived by Michelangelo, steps built to resemble cascades of flowing water – giving birth to step after broad step like wave after wave as they descend the incline. With the help of such impressions you regain your composure, win your way back out of the demands of the talking and chattering multitude(how voluble it is!), and you slowly learn to recognize the very few things in which something everlasting can be felt, something you can love, something solitary in which you can take part in silence.

I'm still living in the city, on the Capitol, not far from the finest equestrian statue that has come down to us from Roman art – that of Marcus Aurelius. But in a few weeks I shall be moving into a quiet, simple room, an old summer house lost in the depths of a great park, hidden away from the city with its noise and its inconsequentiality. I'll live there for the whole winter and take pleasure in the great stillness from which I expect the gift of good and productive hours . . .

From there, where I shall feel more at home, I'll write you a longer letter in which I'll also have something to say about your writing. Today I must just mention (and it was perhaps wrong of me not to have done so before) that the book you announced in your letter (which you said contained pieces by you) has not arrived here. Has it been sent back to you, perhaps from Worpswede? (For: packets cannot be forwarded abroad.) This is the best explanation, which it would be nice to have confirmed. I hope it has not gone astray, which given the Italian postal service cannot be ruled out – alas.

I should have been glad to receive the book (as with everything that gives some sign of you); and any verse you have written since I shall always (if you entrust me with it) read and reread and take in as well and as completely as I can. With good wishes and greetings,

Yours,

Rainer Maria Rilke

Rome, 23 December 1903

My dear Mr Kappus,

You shall not go without greetings from me at Christmas time, when you are perhaps finding your solitude harder than usual to bear among all the festivities. But if you notice that it is great, then be glad of it; for what (you must ask yourself) would a solitude be that was not great? There is only *one* solitude, and it is vast and not easy to bear and almost everyone has moments when they would happily exchange it for some form of company, be it ever so banal or trivial, for the illusion of some slight correspondence with whoever one happens to come across, however unworthy . . . But perhaps those are precisely the hours when solitude grows, for its growth is painful like the growth of boys and sad like the beginning of spring. But that must not put you off. What is needed is this, and this alone: solitude, great inner loneliness. Going into oneself and not meeting anyone for hours –that is what one must arrive at. Loneliness of the kind one knew as a child, when the grown ups went back and forth bound up in things which seemed grave and weighty because they looked so busy, and because one had no idea what they were up to.

And when one day you realize that their preoccupations are meagre, their professions barren and no longer connected to life, why not continue to look on them like a child, as if on something alien, drawing on the depths of your own world, on the expanse of your own solitude, which itself is work and achievement and a vocation? Why wish to exchange a child's wise incomprehension for rejection and contempt, when incomprehension is solitude, whereas rejection and contempt are ways of participating in what, by precisely these means, you want to sever yourself from?

Think, dear Mr Kappus, of the world that you carry within you, and call this thinking whatever you like. Whether it is memory of your own childhood or longing for your own future – just be attentive towards what rises up inside you, and place it above everything that you notice round about. What goes on in your

innermost being is worth all your love, this is what you must work on however you can and not waste too much time and too much energy on clarifying your attitude to other people. Who says you have such an attitude at all? – I know, your profession is hard and goes against you, and I had foreseen your complaints and knew they would come. Now that they have come I cannot assuage them; I can only advise you to consider whether all professions are not like that, full of demands, full of hostility for the individual, steeped as it were in the hatred of those who with sullen resentment have settled for a life of sober duty. The station you are now obliged to occupy is no more heavily burdened with conventions, prejudices and misapprehensions than any other, and if there are some domains that make a show of greater freedom there are none that are vast and spacious and in contact with the great things of which real life consists. Only the solitary individual is subject, like a thing, to the fundamental laws, and if someone goes out into the morning as it is breaking, or looks out into the evening full of occurrence, and if he feels what is happening there, every hint of station slips from him as if from a dead man, although he is standing in the midst of life itself. Dear Mr Kappus, something similar to what you now have to undergo as an officer would have affected you in any of the existing professions, and even if, outside of any position, you had sought only fleeting and non committal contact with society, you would not have been spared this feeling of constraint. – It is the same everywhere; but that is no reason for anxiety or sadness; if there is no communal feeling between you and other people, try to be near to things – they will not abandon you. The nights are still there and the winds that go through the trees and over the many lands; among things and among animals all is still full of happenings in which you can take part; and the children are still as you were when you were a child, just as sad and happy, and whenever you think of your childhood you live among them again, among the lonely children, and adults are nothing and their dignity has no worth.

And if it frightens and pains you to think of your childhood and of the simplicity and stillness that go together with it, because you can no longer believe in God, who is everywhere present in it, then ask yourself, dear Mr Kappus, whether you have really lost God after all? Is it not rather the case that you have never yet possessed him? For when was it supposed to have been? Do you think a child

can hold him, him whom grown men only bear with difficulty and whose weight bows down the old? Do you believe that anyone who really has him could lose him like a little pebble, or don't you think that whoever had him could only be lost by him alone? – But if you acknowledge that he was not present in your childhood, and not before that, if you suspect that Christ was deceived by his longing and Mohammed betrayed by his pride, and if you feel with horror that even now he is not present, at the moment when we are talking about him, what then gives you the right to miss him who never was, as if he had disappeared, and to search for him as if he were lost?

Why don't you think of him as a coming god, who since eternity has lain ahead of us, the future one, the eventual fruit of a tree of which we are the leaves? What prevents you from casting his birth out into the times of becoming and from living your life like a painful and beautiful day in the history of a great pregnancy? Don't you see how everything that happens is always a beginning again, and could it not be *His* beginning, given that beginnings are in themselves always so beautiful? If he is the complete being, must not slighter things come before him, so that he can pick himself out of fullness and abundance? – Must he not be the last in order to encompass all things in himself, and what significance would we have if the one whom we hanker for had already been?

As the bees collect honey together, so we fetch the sweetness out of everything and build *Him*. We begin with the very slightest things, with what is barely noticeable (as long as it comes about through love), with our work and the repose that comes after, with a moment of silence or with a small solitary joy, with everything that we do on our own without helpers and accomplices, we begin him whom we shall never know, just as our ancestors could not live to know us. And yet they are in us, these people long since passed away, as a disposition, as a load weighing on our destinies, as a murmur in the blood and as a gesture that rises up out of the depths of time.

Is there anything that can strip you of the hope of dwelling one day in him, the most remote, the most extreme?

Dear Mr Kappus, celebrate Christmas in the piety of the feeling that He perhaps requires of you precisely this existential anxiety in

order to begin. Precisely these days of transition are perhaps the period when everything in you is working on him, just as before, as a child, you worked on him with bated breath. Be patient and even tempered and remember that the least we can do is not make his becoming more difficult than the earth makes it for spring when it decides to come.

And I wish you happiness and confidence.

Yours,

Rainer Maria Rilke

Rome, 14 May 1904

My dear Mr Kappus,

Much time has gone past since I received your last letter. Don't hold that against me; first it was work, then disruptions and finally ill health that kept me from replying, whereas I wanted to write to you out of good, peaceful days. Now I feel a little better again (even here the beginning of spring with its bad and fickle transitions was hard to bear) and can manage to send you greetings, dear Mr Kappus, and (as I am very glad to do) say this and that about your letter, as best I can.

You will see: I have copied out your sonnet because I found that it had beauty and simplicity and a native form in which it unfolds with such quiet propriety. It is the best of the verses of yours I have been permitted to read. And I'm giving you this copy now because I know that it is important and a whole new experience to come across a work of one's own in a foreign hand. Read the lines as if they were unknown to you, and you will feel in your inmost self how very much they are yours. –

It has been a pleasure for me to read this sonnet and your letter, which I did often. I thank you for both.

And you must not let yourself be diverted out of your solitude by the fact that something in you wants to escape from it. Precisely this desire, if you use it calmly and judiciously, as a kind of tool, will help you to extend your solitude over a greater expanse of ground. People have tended (with the help of conventions) to resolve everything in the direction of easiness, of the light, and on the lightest side of the light; but it is clear that we must hold to the heavy, the difficult. All living things do this, everything in nature grows and defends itself according to its kind and is a distinct creature from out of its own resources, strives to be so at any cost and in the face of all resistance. We know little, but that we must hold fast to what is difficult is a certainty that will never forsake us. It is good to be alone, for solitude is difficult; that something is

difficult should be one more reason to do it.

To love is also good, for love is hard. Love between one person and another: that is perhaps the hardest thing it is laid on us to do, the utmost, the ultimate trial and test, the work for which all other work is just preparation. For this reason young people, who are beginners in everything, do not yet *know* how to love: they must learn. With their whole being, with all their strength, concerted on their solitary, fearful, upward beating hearts, they have to learn to love. An apprenticeship though is always a long, secluded period, and love too is for a great long time and far into life: solitariness, heightened and deepened loneliness for the one in love. Love at first has nothing to do with unfolding, abandon and uniting with another person (for what would be the sense in a union of what is unrefined and unfinished, still second order?); for the individual it is a grand opportunity to mature, to become something in himself, to become a world, to become a world in himself for another's sake; it is a great immoderate demand made upon the self, something that singles him out and summons him to vast designs. Only in this sense, as a duty to work on themselves ('to hearken and to hammer day and night'), should young people use the love that is given them. The unfolding, the abandon and any kind of togetherness is not for them (who for a long time yet will have to scrimp and save). They are the culmination, and perhaps that for which a human life now is hardly sufficient.

But there young people so often and so badly go wrong: in that they (who by nature have no patience) fling themselves at one another when love comes over them, scatter themselves just as they are in all their troubledness, disorder, confusion . . . But what can come of that? What is life supposed to do with this heap of half broken things that they call their togetherness and would like to call their happiness, were it possible, their future? Each person loses himself then for the other's sake and loses the other and many more who were yet to come. And loses the expanses and possibilities, exchanges the nearing and fleeing of delicate, mysterious things for a sterile helplessness of which nothing more can come; nothing but a bit of disgust, disappointment and deprivation and the escape into one of the many conventions which like public shelters are set up in great numbers along this most dangerous of paths. No area of human experience is so well furnished with conventions as this:

there are lifebelts of the most various invention, dinghies and buoyancy devices; society in its wisdom has found ways of constructing refuges of all kinds, for since it has been disposed to make the love life a pastime, it has also felt obliged to trivialize it, to make it cheap, risk free and secure, as public pleasures usually are.

It is true that many young people who love wrongly, that is, simply with abandon and not in solitude (and your average person will never move beyond this), feel the oppression of having failed at something and do want to make the state into which they have got liveable and productive in their own, personal way; for their nature tells them that questions of love, even less than all other important matters, cannot be solved publicly and by following this or that consensus; that they are questions that touch the quick of what it is to be human and which in every case require a new, particular and *purely* private response: but how can people who have already flung together and no longer set themselves any limits or tell one another apart, and who therefore possess nothing of their own any more, how on earth can they find a way out of themselves, out of the depths of a solitude that has already been spilt and squandered?

They act out of a shared helplessness, and if they do their best to escape the convention they happen to have noticed (as marriage for example), they fall into the clutches of a less obvious but just as deadly conventional solution; for all around them there is nothing but –convention; when an action derives from a precipitately arrived at and unwitting union, it is *always* conventional; every relationship which is the product of such confusion has its conventions, however unusual (that is, immoral in the generally accepted sense) it may be; yes, even separation would in such a case be a conventional step, an impersonal, fortuitous decision without force and without point.

Whoever looks at the matter seriously finds that, as for death, which is difficult, no explanation, no solution, has yet been discovered for love, which is difficult too: there are no directions, no path. And for these two problems that we carry round with us in a sealed packet and hand on without opening, it will always be impossible to locate a common rule, resting on consensus. But to the same extent that we begin as individuals to venture onto life, these great things will encounter us, on our own, at ever closer

quarters. The demands that the hard work of love makes on our development are larger than life, and as beginners we are not a match for them. But if we can hold out and take this love upon us as a burden and an apprenticeship, instead of losing ourselves in all the trivial and frivolous games behind which people have hidden from the utter seriousness of their existence, then perhaps a small advance and some relief will be sensible to those who come long after us. That would mean a great deal.

We are only now just coming to the point where we can consider the relationship of one human individual to another objectively and without prejudice, and our attempts to live such a relation have no model to go on. And yet in the shifting of the times there are already a few things that can help our tentative beginnings.

Girls and women, in their new, particular unfolding, will only in passing imitate men's behaviour and misbehaviour and follow in male professions. Once the uncertainty of such transitions is over it will emerge that women have only passed through the spectrum and the variety of those (often laughable) disguises in order to purify their truest natures from the distorting influences of the other sex. Women, in whom life abides and dwells more immediately, more fruitfully and more trustingly, are bound to have ripened more thoroughly, become more human human beings, than a man, who is all too light and has not been pulled down beneath the surface of life by the weight of a bodily fruit and who, in his arrogance and impatience, undervalues what he thinks he loves. This humanity which inhabits woman, brought to term in pain and humiliation, will, once she has shrugged off the conventions of mere femininity through the transformations of her outward status, come clearly to light, and men, who today do not yet feel it approaching, will be taken by surprise and struck down by it. One day (there are already reliable signs which speak for it and which begin to spread their light, especially in the northern countries), one day there will be girls and women whose name will no longer just signify the opposite of the male but something in their own right, something which does not make one think of any supplement or limit but only of life and existence: the female human being.

This step forward (at first right against the will of the men who are left behind) will transform the experience of love, which is now

full of error, alter it root and branch, reshape it into a relation between two human beings and no longer between man and woman. And this more human form of love (which will be performed in infinitely gentle and considerate fashion, true and clear in its creating of bonds and dissolving of them) will resemble the one we are struggling and toiling to prepare the way for, the love that consists in two solitudes protecting, defining and welcoming one another.

And one more thing: do not believe that that abundance of love which was once, as a boy, bestowed on you is now lost. Can you tell whether back then great and good desires did not ripen within you, and resolutions which you still live by today? I believe that love remains so strong and powerful in your memory because it was your first deep experience of solitariness and the first inner work that you undertook on your life. – All good wishes to you, dear Mr Kappus!

Yours,

Rainer Maria Rilke

Sonnet

Through my life there trembles unlamenting
suffering dark and deep, without a sigh.

Pure as snow the blossoming of my dreams
consecrates the stillest of my days.

Often though a question's gravity
cuts across my path. I seem to shrink,
pass coldly on as if beside a lake
whose waters are too vast for me to measure.

And then a sadness settles, dim, opaque,
like the grey of pallid summer nights,
shimmered through with stars – now and then – :

love then is what my hands attempt to grasp
because I want to say a prayer whose sounds
my burning mouth, my lips, cannot bring forth . . .

}blr}{Franz Kappus)

Borgeby gård, Flådie, Sweden, 12 August 1904

I want to talk to you again for a while, dear Mr Kappus, although I can say almost nothing that is of any help, hardly anything useful. You have had many great sadnesses which have now passed by. And you say that their passing was also hard and upsetting for you. But I ask you to consider whether these great unhappinesses did not rather pass *through* you. Whether much within you has not changed, whether somewhere, in some part of your being, you were not transformed while you were unhappy? The only sorrows which are harmful and bad are those one takes among people in order to drown them out. Like diseases which are treated superficially and inexpertly, they only abate, and after a short pause break out again with more terrible force, and accumulate inside and are life, un-lived, rejected, lost life – from which we can die. If it were possible for us to see further than our knowledge reaches, and a little beyond the outworks of our intuitions, perhaps we should then bear our sadnesses with greater assurance than our joys. For they are the moments when something new enters into us, something unknown to us; our feelings, shy and inhibited, fall silent, everything in us withdraws, a stillness settles on us, and at the centre of it is the new presence that nobody yet knows, making no sound.

I believe that almost all our sadnesses are periods of tautening that we experience as numbness because we can no longer hear the stirring of our feelings, which have become foreign to us. Because we are alone with the strange thing that has entered into us; because everything familiar and accustomed is taken away from us for a moment; because we are in the middle of a transition where we cannot stand still. And that is why sadness passes: what is new in us, the thing that has supervened, has entered into our heart, penetrated to its innermost chamber and not lingered even there – it is already in our blood. And we never quite know what it was. One might easily suppose that nothing had happened, but we have

altered the way a house alters when a guest enters it. We cannot say who has come, perhaps we shall never know, but there are many indications that it is the future that enters into us like this, in order to be transformed within us, long before it actually occurs. And that is why it is so important to be solitary and attentive when one is sad: because the apparently uneventful and static moment when our future comes upon us is so much closer to life than that other noisy and accidental point when it happens to us as if from the outside. The quieter, the more patient and open we are in our sadness, the deeper and more unerringly the new will penetrate into us, the better we shall acquire it, the more it will be *our* fate, and when one day in the future it 'takes place' (that is, steps out of us towards others) we shall feel related and close to it in our inmost hearts. And that is necessary. It is necessary –and little by little our development will tend in this direction – that nothing alien should happen to us, but only what has long been part of us. We have already had to adjust our understanding of so many theories of planetary motion, and so too we shall gradually learn to recognize that what we call fate originates in ourselves, in humankind, and does not work on us from the outside. Only because so many people did not absorb their fates while they were inhabited by them, and did not make them a part of themselves, only because of this did they fail to recognize what emerged from them. It was so foreign to them that in their confused panic they assumed it must just have entered into them, for they swore never to have found anything of the sort in themselves before. Just as for a long time people were deceived about the movement of the sun, so we are still deceived about the movement of what is to come. The future is fixed, dear Mr Kappus, but we move around in infinite space.

How could things not be difficult for us?

And if we come back to solitude, it grows ever clearer that fundamentally it is not something that one can take or leave. We *are* solitary. It is possible to deceive yourself and act as if it were not the case. That is all. How much better though, to see and accept that that is what we are, and even to take it as our starting point. If we do, the effect is admittedly one of giddiness; for all the points on which we are accustomed to rest our eyes are taken away from us, there is no longer anything close by, and everything remote is infinitely so. Someone transported from his room, almost without

warning and interval, onto the top of a high mountain would feel something like it: he would be virtually destroyed by an unparalleled sense of insecurity, by an exposure to something nameless. He would think he was falling or believe himself to be hurtling out into space or shattered into a thousand pieces: what a monstrous lie his brain would have to invent to rein in and clarify the state of his senses. In the same way all distances, all measurements, alter for the one who becomes solitary; many such changes suddenly take place at once and, as with the man on the mountaintop, unusual imaginings and curious sensations occur which seem to take on dimensions greater than can be tolerated. But it is necessary for us to experience this too. We must accept our existence in as *wide* a sense as can be; everything, even the unheard of, must be possible within it. That, when you come down to it, is the only kind of courage that is demanded of us: the courage for the oddest, the most unexpected, the most inexplicable things that we may encounter. That human beings have been cowardly in this regard has done life endless harm; the experiences we describe as 'apparitions', the entire so called 'spirit world', death, all those things so closely akin to us have by our daily rejection of them been forced so far out of our lives that the senses with which we might apprehend them have atrophied. To say nothing of God. But the fear of the inexplicable has not just rendered the individual existence poorer; relations *between* people, too, have been restricted, as it were lifted out of the river bed of endless possibilities and placed on a deserted bank where nothing happens. For it is not lethargy alone which causes human relationships to repeat themselves in the same old way with such unspeakable monotony in instance after instance; it is the fearful shying away from any kind of new, unforeseeable experience which we think we may not be equal to. But only someone who is ready for anything and rules nothing out, not even the most enigmatic things, will experience the relationship with another as a living thing and will himself live his own existence to the full. For imagining an individual's existence as a larger or smaller room reveals to us that most people are only acquainted with one corner of their particular room, a place by the window, a little area to pace up and down. That way, they have a certain security. And yet the perilous uncertainty that drives the prisoners in Poe's tales to grope out the outlines of their terrible dungeons and so to know the unspeakable horrors of their

surroundings, is so much more human. But we are not prisoners. There are no traps or snares set up around us, and there is nothing that should frighten or torment us. We are placed into life as into the element with which we have the most affinity, and moreover we have after thousands of years of adaptation come to resemble this life so closely that if we keep still we can, thanks to our facility for mimicry, hardly be distinguished from all that surrounds us. We have no reason to be mistrustful of our world, for it is not against us. If it holds terrors they are *our* terrors, if it has its abysses these abysses belong to us, if there are dangers then we must try to love them. And if we only organize our life according to the principle which teaches us always to hold to what is difficult, then what now still appears most foreign will become our most intimate and most reliable experience. How can we forget those ancient myths found at the beginnings of all peoples? The myths about the dragons who at the last moment turn into princesses? Perhaps all the dragons in our lives are princesses, only waiting for the day when they will see us handsome and brave? Perhaps everything terrifying is deep down a helpless thing that needs our help.

So, dear Mr Kappus, you shouldn't be dismayed if a sadness rises up in front of you, greater than any you have ever seen before; or if a disquiet plays over your hands and over all your doings like light and cloud shadow. You must think that something is happening with you, that life has not forgotten you, that it holds you in its hand; it will not let you fall. Why should you want to exclude from your life all unsettling, all pain, all depression of spirit, when you don't know what work it is these states are performing within you? Why do you want to persecute yourself with the question of where it all comes from and where it is leading? You well know you are in a period of transition and want nothing more than to be transformed. If there is something ailing in the way you go about things, then remember that sickness is the means by which an organism rids itself of something foreign to it. All one has to do is help it to be ill, to have its whole illness and let it break out, for that is how it mends itself. There is so much, my dear Mr Kappus, going on in you now. You must be patient as an invalid and trusting as a convalescent, for you are perhaps both. And more than that: you are also the doctor responsible for looking after himself. But with all illnesses there are many days when the doctor can do nothing but wait. And inasfar as you are your own

doctor, this above all is what you must do now.

Do not watch yourself too closely. Do not draw overrapid conclusions from what is happening to you. Simply let it happen. Otherwise you will too readily find yourself looking on your past, which is of course not uninvolved with everything that is going on in you now, reproachfully (that is, moralistically). But what now affects you from among the divagations, desires and longings of your boyhood is not what you will recall and condemn. The extraordinary circumstances of a solitary and helpless childhood are so difficult, so complicated, exposed to so many influences and at the same time removed from any real life context, that if a vice enters into it we must not be too quick to call it a vice. We should in general be very careful with names; it is so often the name of a crime which destroys a life, not the nameless and personal act itself, which was perhaps completely necessary to that life and could have been absorbed by it without difficulty. And the expenditure of energy only seems so great because you put too much importance on the victory. It is not victory that is the 'great thing' you think you have achieved, though the feeling itself is not in error. What is great is that there was already something there that you were able to set in place of that deception, something true and real. Without it, your victory would only have been a moral reaction with no further significance, but as it is it has become a segment of your life. Of your life, dear Mr Kappus, which I am thinking of with so many hopes and wishes. Do you remember how this life of yours longed in childhood to belong to the 'grown ups'? I can see that it now longs to move on from them and is drawn to those who are greater yet. That is why it does not cease to be difficult, but also why it will not cease to grow.

And if I have anything else to say to you it is this: do not think that the person who is trying to console you lives effortlessly among the simple, quiet words that sometimes make you feel better. His life is full of troubles and sadness and falls far short of them. But if it were any different he could never have found the words that he did.

Yours,

Rainer Maria Rilke

**Furuborg, Jonsered, Sweden, 4 November
1904**

My dear Mr Kappus,

During this time that has passed without a letter I was partly travelling and partly too busy to be able to write. And even today writing is not going to be easy because I have had to write a good number of letters already and my hand is tired. If I had someone to dictate to I'd have plenty to say, but as it is you'll have to make do with just a few words in return for your long letter.

I think of you often, dear Mr Kappus, and with such a concentration of good wishes that really in some way it ought to help. Whether my letters can really be a help to you, well, I have my doubts. Do not say: Yes, they are. Just let them sink in quietly and without any particular sense of gratitude, and let's wait and see what will come of it.

There's not perhaps much purpose in my dealing with the detail of what you wrote, for what I might be able to say about your tendency towards self doubt or your inability to reconcile your inner and outer life, or about anything else that assails you – it all comes down to what I have said before: the same desire that you might find enough patience in you to endure, and simplicity enough to have faith; that you might gain more and more trust in what is hard and in your own loneliness among other people. And otherwise let life take its course. Believe me: life is right, whatever happens.

And as to feelings: all feelings are pure that focus you and raise you up. An impure feeling is one that only comprises *one* side of your nature and so distorts you. Any thoughts that match up to your childhood are good. Everything that makes *more* of you than you have hitherto been in your best moments is right. Every heightening is good if it occurs in the quick of your bloodstream, if it is not an intoxication, not a troubling but a joy one can see right to the bottom of. Do you understand what I mean?

And your doubts can become a good quality if you *school* them. They must grow to be *knowledgeable* , they must learn to be critical. As soon as they begin to spoil something for you ask them *why* a thing is ugly, demand hard evidence, test them, and you will perhaps find them at a loss and short of an answer, or perhaps mutinous. But do not give in, request arguments, and act with this kind of attentiveness and consistency every single time, and the day will come when instead of being demolishers they will be among your best workers – perhaps the canniest of all those at work on the building of your life.

That is all, dear Mr Kappus, that I can say to you for today. But I'm also sending you the off print of a little work that has just appeared in the Prague journal *Deutsche Arbeit*. There I continue to speak to you of life and of death and of the greatness and splendour of both.

Yours,

Rainer Maria Rilke

Paris, on the second day of Christmas 1908

You ought to know, dear Mr Kappus, how happy I was to get this lovely letter from you. The news you give me, actual and articulate as it now is, seems good to me, and the more I thought about it the more it struck me as incontrovertibly good. I really wanted to write you this in time for Christmas Eve; but what with the work that has been occupying me variously and without interruption this winter the old festival came up so quickly that I hardly had time enough to make the most necessary purchases, much less to write a letter.

But during these Christmas days I have often thought of you and imagined how quiet you must be in your solitary fort up among the empty mountains over which those great south winds rush as if they wanted to devour them in mighty chunks.

The silence must be immense to be able to receive such sounds and movements, and when one thinks that they are joined by the noise of the sea, present in the distance, perhaps the most inward note in this prehistoric harmony, one can only hope that you have the trust and patience to let this marvellous solitude work on you, a solitude which will never be deleted from your life. In all that lies before you to experience and do, it will continue as an anonymous influence and have a subtly decisive effect, perhaps like the way the blood of our ancestors moves unceasingly within us and mingles with our own to make us the unique, not to be repeated being that we are at every turn of our lives.

Yes: I am glad that you have this firm, utterable form of existence, the rank, the uniform, the duty, all these tangible and well defined things that in such surroundings, with an equally isolated and not numerous company of men, take on a seriousness and necessity; and which, over and above the aspects of play and pastime that are also part of the military profession, make for a certain vigilance and not only permit an individual attentiveness but actually teach it. And to be in circumstances that work on us,

that set us before great natural phenomena from time to time, is all we need.

Art too is only a way of living, and it is possible, however one lives, to prepare oneself for it without knowing; in every real situation we are nearer to it, better neighbours, than in the unreal half artistic professions which by pretending to be close to art in fact deny and hurt its very existence, as for example is the case with the whole of journalism and almost all criticism and three quarters of what passes for literature. I am glad, in a word, that you have withstood the dangers of slipping into all this, and that somewhere you are living alone and courageous in a rough reality. May the year to come maintain and strengthen you in it.

Ever yours,

R. M. Rilke



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Only Dull People Are Brilliant at Breakfast

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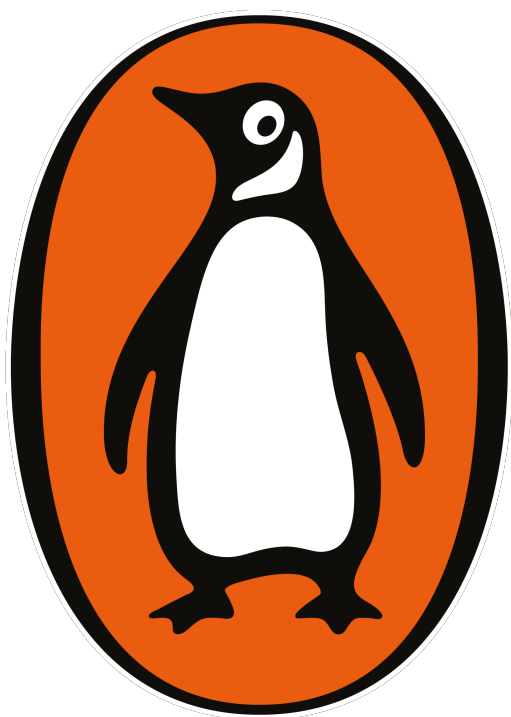
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只有乏味的人会在早餐时才华横溢

Only Dull People are Brilliant at Breakfast

“期望别人
和自己一样出色
是不公平的。”



PENGUIN
LITTLE BLACK
CLASSICS

只有乏味的人会在早餐时才华横溢

对他们的伟人一无所知，是英国教育的必要元素之一。

我们人人都花时间寻找生活的秘诀。其实，生活的秘诀在艺术之中。

生活的至高目标是生活。很少人在生活。实现自己的完美状态，把自己的梦想逐一变为现实，那才叫生活。

商人早早起床吃了第一餐，赶火车进城，在昏暗无光、灰灰蒙蒙的商业世界混上一天，夜晚回到家里，吃完晚餐就睡觉，这种生活以我看来比奴工都不如——捆绑他的不是铁链，是金枷。

劣等艺术比没有艺术还要差远了。

.....没有什么是值得做的，除了世人都说无法成功的事。

做一份美味沙拉相当于做一个优秀的外交家——两者涉及的问题完全相同：得知道应该往醋里掺多少油。

生活是太重要的事，不能认真地谈论它。

贵族政治里的金钱永远多于头脑。

好国王是唯一对现代民主政治构成威胁的敌人。

我一向认为，只有缺乏想象力的人会死守“始终如一”的立场.....

.....典型的英国厨子是个蠢女人，她的罪过是从来没学会如何放盐，为此她应该变成一根盐柱。 [1]

关于莎士比亚，可以说他是第一个明白男式紧身上衣的戏剧价值，也知道如何运用一件裙撑托起一个高潮。

.....舞台不单是各种艺术形式交会的地方，而且是艺术向生活回归的地方。

真正的戏剧家.....向我们展现艺术条件下的生活，而不是生活形式的艺术。

.....我们普通的英国小说家.....没有做到.....风格凝练。他们的人物过于能说会道，谈得自己也精疲力尽。我们想要的是多一点的现实，少一点的修辞.....我们情愿他们谈得少些、想得些。

它们领着我们穿越一片废话连连的荒漠，去到一座据说是人生的海市蜃楼：我们漫无目的地游走于词语的不毛之地，追寻一点点自然。不过，也别对英国小说太苛刻了；它们是智力空虚者的唯一消遣。

没有什么能打垮一个诗人，除了一处印刷错误。

.....不神经质的诗人是稀有的。

美国没有蠢材。许多美国人招人厌烦、趣味庸俗、举止唐突、鲁莽无礼，这也同样是许多英国人爱犯的毛病；但愚蠢并不在美国人的缺点之列。真的，美国没有蠢材生存的土壤。美国人期许擦鞋的也有头脑，事实也不负所望。

至于婚姻，那是他们最流行的制度之一。美国男人早早结婚，美国女人常常结婚；这两种人是天作之合。

美洲始终不能原谅欧洲，因为在历史上它比自己被发现的时间早了一些。

.....假如人要专门学习如何说话，那真会是一件功德。语言是我们拥有的最高贵的工具，既能揭示思想又能掩饰思想；讲话本身是一种精神化的行动，交谈则是最可爱的一门艺术。

唯一不会让真实人物显得突兀的杜撰之作是历史。

她在人生早年发现了一条重要的道理：一切都没有放浪那么看似天真；于是，借着一系列大胆的越轨行为（其中一半是无甚损害的），她获取了一个名人能有的各种特权。她不止一次换过丈夫；狄布列特说她有三场婚姻呢；但因为她们从来没有换过情人，社会上早已不再流传她的丑闻了。

除非有钱，否则迷人的气质毫无用处。风流韵事是富人的特权，不是无业者的职业。穷人应当实际而本分。有一份持久收入比气质诱人更好。

哪怕在外郡 [2]，也绝对不该容许在宴席上向人抛出一个纯属数学的智力问题。提这种问题，跟忽然询问人家灵魂的状况一样糟糕。

如果人不能畅所欲言，所谓良好的友谊又何在？人人都可以说动听的话去取悦和奉承，但是真朋友说的永远是逆耳的话，而且不担心令对方痛苦。的确，真朋友宁愿如此，因为这样一来他就会知道自己有益处。

觉得别人全都远远不如自己，这种意识是唯一叫人活得下去的东西，而我向来悉心培育这样的感觉。

我如此聪明，以至于有时我正在说的话，我自己一个词儿都听不

懂。

我一向认为，操劳不过是无所事事者的救命稻草。

以“世纪末”这个词为人所知的一切，我都特别佩服和喜爱。这是我们的文明绽放的一朵娇花：唯有它才令世界不至于沦入平庸、粗俗、野蛮。

福楼拜没有写法语文章，他写的是一位艺术大师的文章，作者刚好是法国人。

今天早晨我在床上想着，法国远远胜过英国的地方在于法国的资产阶级个个想当艺术家，而英国的艺术家个个想当资产阶级。

祈祷永远不能得到应答：否则哪还是祈祷，岂不成了通信。

我有一个重大发现……充分饮酒，足以产生沉醉的全部效果。

传教士呀，乖乖！难道你们不懂，传教士对又穷又饿的食人族来说是神赐的美食？每当他们快到饥馑边缘的时候，大慈大悲的老天就给他们送去一个白白胖胖的传教士。

哲学教我们心平气和地应对他人的不幸。

我个人的经验是我们越多研究艺术，就越少在乎自然……艺术是我们精神饱满的抗议，是我们要自然安守本分的英勇尝试。

思考是世界上最不健康的事，它像别的疾病一样可以夺人性命。谢天谢地，思考不会传染——至少在英国如此。

在文学中我们需要优异、魅力、美感和想象的魄力。我们不希望作品把下等阶级的所作所为描述一番，令人难受和恶心。

我完全承认现代小说有许多优点。我只不过坚持，作为一类书，它们没法读。

艺术本身就是一种夸张；艺术的精神在于甄选，它正是过度强调的一种强化模式。

事实不仅在历史中找到立足之地，而且逐渐在篡夺幻想的领域，并已经占领了传奇的王国。它们令人寒心地触碰着一切。它们让人类愈加庸俗。

社会迟早必须重投入它失去的领袖——那高雅迷人的说谎者的怀抱。

生活模仿艺术，远多于艺术模仿生活……生活向艺术举起镜子，要么复制画家或雕塑家想象的某种奇异事物，要么实现小说中的幻梦。

.....模仿可以成为最恳切的一种侮辱。

昨晚阿伦德尔太太坚持要我走去窗前，看看她所谓的“天上荣光”。我当然不得不看。她是那种漂亮得不可理喻的俗人，你没法不答应她的任何要求。结果呢？那不过是一幅非常二流的透纳油画，属于透纳较差的时期，此画家最糟糕的缺点全都遭到夸张和过分的强调。

一种艺术越是抽象，越是理想化，就越可以向我们揭示它所属时代的气质。如果我们想通过艺术来了解一个国家，不妨看它的建筑，听它的音乐。

其实，我们完全仰赖了艺术的中介来回望历史，幸好，艺术从来就没有一次把真相告诉过我们。

成为一件艺术品是生活的宗旨。

英国人总把真实降级为事实。当真实变作事实的时候，就失去了它全部的智力价值。

小说从尾读起的好处一言难尽。最后一页通常最有兴味，当读者从灾难或结局开始，就会感到和作者平起平坐的愉悦，好比去剧场后台探班一样。人不再沉迷于故事，男主角绝处逢生，女主角呼天抢地，都完全令人无动于衷。读者知道了精心埋藏的秘密，那么，面对小说中傀儡们义不容辞地表现出的不必要的焦灼，就大可一笑而过。

一切风采翩翩的人，我猜，都是被惯坏了的。这是他们有魅力的秘诀。

给人建议总是一桩愚行，给人以好的建议则绝对是致命的。我希望你永远不犯这种错。否则，你将会追悔莫及。

你忘了，一件事并不由于有人为它丧命便是真实的。

艺术，哪怕是视野最完整、景象最开阔的艺术，也从未真的向我们呈现外在世界。它向我们呈现的只是我们自己的灵魂，那个我们唯一具有真切认识的世界.....只有艺术能让我们发现自己。

评论家应当学会在评论一件艺术品的时候不谈及作者的个性。这其实是评论的开始。

如今每一个大人物都有门徒，而给他写传记的永远是犹太。

旁征博引的谈话要么是无知者的做作，要么是精神空虚者的专业。

教育是一件可敬的事。但最好不要忘了，值得了解的事情都不是能教的。

谁都能写一部三卷本的小说。这只需要对生活和文学全然无知。

谁都能创造历史。只有伟人能把它写出来。

有时听人说，艺术家生涯的悲剧在于他不能实现理想。但是大多数艺术家一路走来，妨碍他们的真正悲剧却在于他们把理想实现得太彻底。因为当理想实现时，它就失去了它的奇妙和神秘，仅仅变成了另一个理想的新起点。音乐是完美的艺术，这是原因所在。

交谈的话题，应该无所不触及，又无所偏重。

.....生活极度缺乏形式。它的灾祸以错误方式发生在错误的人身上。它的喜剧有一种怪诞的恐怖，它的悲剧似乎以胡闹为高潮。人走近它的时候永远是受伤的。各种过程要么漫长，要么匆促。

.....一切艺术都无关道德，除了较低层次的感官艺术或说教艺术，只有它们才会企图激起或邪恶或正义的行动。因为任何行动都属于道德领域。艺术的目标仅止于造成一种情绪。

世界上没有哪个国家像我们国家这样需要不切实际的人。在我们这儿，思想由于一直跟实践相联系而遭受贬低.....我们活在一个工作过度，而又教养不足的时代；这时代的人勤勤恳恳，以至于变得愚不可及。

通向对生活无知的不二法门，是努力让自己有用。

人多么容易同情困苦，多么难同情思想。

一个不危险的观念根本不配称作观念。

人以自己的身份说话时最是言不由衷。给他一副面具，他就会道出真情。

因为何谓真实？在宗教方面，它不过是胜出的观点。在科学方面，它是最终的感觉。在艺术方面，它是人上一次的情绪。

不爱艺术有两种方式.....一种是不爱它。另一种是理智地爱它。

一点点真诚会带来危险，大量的真诚绝对要致命。

看出美丽的事物蕴含着丑恶的意义，这样的人既堕落又不讨人喜欢。这是一种缺点。

看出美丽的事物蕴含着美丽的意义，这样的人有教养。他们身上有希望。

所谓道德的书和不道德的书都是无稽之谈。书要么写得好，要么写得糟。仅此而已。

恶习和美德对艺术家来说是艺术的素材。

一切艺术都兼具表面和象征。

揭开表面的人，风险自负。

解读象征的人，风险自负。

艺术之镜真正映出的是观者，不是生活。

评论家莫衷一是的时候，艺术家与自己达成了一致。

我们能原谅别人制作一件有用之物，只要他不欣赏它。制作一件无用之物的唯一理由是对它欣赏备至。

经验并没有伦理价值。大家只是用它来称呼自己犯过的错罢了。

一个人不再爱另一个人以后，对方表现出的感情总显得荒唐可笑。

自责含有一种奢侈。我们责备自己的时候，觉得别人都无权责备我们。给我们赦罪的是忏悔，不是神父。

不真诚有那么可怕？我不觉得。它只不过是一种令我们个性倍增的手段。

随着私有财产的废除，我们将会迎来真正、美好而健康的个人主义。将来不再有人会把生命浪费于积累物品和物品的符号上。人将会生活。生活是世界上最稀有的。多数人只是在生存，仅此而已。

社会之中只有一个阶级想钱比富人想得还多，那就是穷人。穷人没有别的可想。这是贫穷的痛苦。

民主一度被寄以厚望，但民主不过是代表人民者对人民的压迫。

[3]

其实，文明需要奴隶。古希腊人的做法不无道理。除非有奴隶去做丑陋、可怕、无聊的工作，否则文化和沉思都遥不可及。人类奴隶制是错误、不安全且令人颓丧的。世界的未来有赖于机械奴隶制，有赖于奴役机器。

一件艺术品是一种独特心性的独到成果……艺术家一旦留意别人想要什么，并尝试有求必应的时候，他就不再是艺术家，而成了一个沉闷或逗笑的工匠，一个诚实或不诚实的买卖人。

艺术永远不应当努力做到通俗。公众应当努力学会鉴赏。

在英国，幸免于难的艺术，以那些不令公众感兴趣的艺术为最。诗歌这个例子可以佐证我的话。英国之所以继续有好诗，是因为公众不读诗，对它没有影响。

昔年人民受刑具之苦。如今他们被报章所误。

在英国，除了几个众所周知没有发展到粗暴无度的事例，报业依然是一个重要因素、一股可观的力量。它有意施于民众私生活的专横统治，以我看来非同寻常。其实，公众的好奇心是没有餍足的，他们什么都想知道，唯独对有价值的东西不感兴趣。报业深明此理，而且长于商人之道，对他们有求必应。在我们之前的很多个世纪，公众把记者的耳朵钉在水泵上。这骇人听闻。本世纪，记者把耳朵牢牢贴近钥匙孔。这样更加不堪。

谁都能够同情一个受苦的朋友，但同情一个成功的朋友，这就得有一种极好的性格——实际上，得有一个真正的个人主义者的性格。

工作是本国饮酒阶级的诅咒。

唯独没有想法的地方才有民意。

本身美丽的题材不能给艺术家以启发。它少了缺憾。

艺术是世界上唯一认真的事。艺术家是唯一从来不认真的人。

可以安慰穷人的只有挥霍。可以安慰富人的只有省俭。

人永远不该聆听。聆听意味着对你的听众漠不关心。

生活的头一件义务在于尽可能地做到人工化。第二件义务何在，迄今无人发现。

“坏”是好人杜撰的一种迷思，以此解释别人为何有奇异的魅力。

认为灵魂和肉体有区别的人这两样都没有。

一朵别在扣眼上的工艺精致的花，是艺术和自然的唯一联系。

宗教死于它们得到证实的时候。科学是已死宗教的记录。

上等人反驳别人。智者反驳自己。

真实发生的事，没有一桩是无足轻重的。

沉闷是严肃的成年阶段。

在所有不重要的事情上，风格而非诚意是基本要素；在所有重要的事情上，风格而非诚意是基本要素。

如果人说了真话，肯定是迟早要被识穿的。

人只该为了享受活着。幸福是最快变味的。

没有罪恶是粗俗的，但一切粗俗都是罪恶。粗俗是他人的行为举止。

唯独浅薄的人有自知之明。

时间是浪费金钱。

人永远应该有点不合常规。

一切良好的决心都有一个致命伤。那就是决心全都下得太快。

偶尔盛装过度只有一种补救，那就是，永远要绝对地表现出过度的学问。

执着于行为的对错观念，显示出智力发育的不完全。

“有野心”是失败的最后一种遁词。

人应该要么当一件艺术品，要么穿戴一件艺术品。

只有肤浅的性格才持久。人类较深沉的本性总被迅速识破。

产业是一切丑陋的根源。

各个时代以时空错杂的途径活在历史之中。

老年人无所不信，中年人无所不疑，青年人无所不晓。

完美性的条件是悠闲，完美性的目标是青春。

只有文体大师曾经成功地做到晦涩。

爱自己是终生浪漫之始。

啊，男人有一套律法，女人另有一套律法，这真是遗憾之至。我觉得，谁都应该无法无天才是。

第一杯之后，你看见的东西如你所愿。第二杯之后，你看见的东西似是而非。最后你看见了各种东西的本相，这是世界上最可怕的事。（谈苦艾酒）

我的存在是一桩丑闻。

生活中真实的悲剧，往往以一种难以言喻的方式发生，其伤人之处在于它们粗鲁的暴力、绝对的不连贯、荒谬的缺乏意义、彻底的没有风格。

一切同伴关系，不管婚姻还是友谊，纽带终究是谈话……

肉体的罪孽何足挂齿。它们只是让医生治疗的疾病，如果该治的话。只有灵魂的罪孽才可耻。

爱的目标就是去爱：不多，也不少。

对体验感到后悔是故步自封。否定自己的体验，是在个人生活的唇齿间放进一个谎言。那样无异于灵魂上的否定。

艺术家始终追寻的是灵肉合一而不相分割的存在模式：外在可以

表现内在；形式即揭示。

依我如今看来，某个类型的爱恋，是人世间苦难深重的唯一合理解释。

大多数人是别人。他们的想法是别人的见解，他们的生活是一种模仿，他们的热情是一种照搬。

每件艺术品都是一个预言的实现：因为每件艺术品都是观念向形象转化而成的。

……一切伟大的观念都是危险的。

模仿结束的地方才是艺术开始之处……

一切糟糕的艺术都源于良好的意图。

出于天性和选择，我极其懒惰。

我从不推迟到明天——既然是可以后天做的事。

我天生属于例外，不属于规律。

赞美使我谦卑，但是谩骂纷起之际，我知道我摘到了星辰。

这一切何去何从呢？半个世界不相信上帝，另外半个世界不相信我。

假设我孤身一人滞留荒岛，而物品齐全的话，我每天晚餐时都会盛装打扮。

我有最单纯的品味。我向来只满意最好的。

由于爱国而身陷牢狱的爱国者爱他的国家，由于爱男孩子而坐牢的诗人爱男孩子。如果要改变我的人生，等于要我承认同性爱是不高贵的。我坚持认为它高贵，比其他形式的爱更高贵。

我进监狱时心如铁石，只考虑自己的享受，但现在我的心已被击碎，怜悯进入了我的心；我现在知道怜悯是世间最伟大也最美好的事物。所以，我无法怨恨那些控告我的人，也并不怨恨任何人，因为从前的我不会懂得这一切。

我不是一个为自己曾经坐牢感到羞愧的败类。令我羞愧难当的是那种把我送进牢狱的物质至上的生活。它跟一个艺术家大不相称。

我喜欢表演。它比生活真实太多。

人一旦上了年纪，活到看透的份儿上，就什么也看不透了。

老年的悲剧并不是人老迈，而是人稚嫩。

我会不惜一切来重获青春，除了锻炼身体、早起和循规蹈矩。

友善地对待自己毫不关心的人总是不难。

法律应该明文禁止自我牺牲。为别人牺牲自己，会极大地损害别人的志气。

英国人对美国的粗野兴致勃勃，对美国的文明兴味索然。

一件称身的衣物，对于两性都同样称身，根本没有什么分明属于女性的衣装。

实在是唯独有闲阶级才衣着不堪。任何需要体力劳动的时候，用到的服装通常都无比称身，因为劳动得有自由，而没有自由，就谈不上衣着之美。

穿上一身晚礼服，任何人，哪怕是证券经纪，也可以博得文雅之名。

只有浅薄的人才会不凭借外表作判断。

天然无饰只不过是一种姿态，据我所知是最讨厌的故作姿态。

也许人最自在的状态，莫过于他得要扮演某个角色的时候。

我觉得人应该虚构关于自己的神话。

一切艺术都毫无用处。

伟大的艺术家从来不会如实地观看事物。若然，他就不再是艺术家。

对美的欲望，不外乎生命欲望的一种高级形态。

挥霍是穷人的奢侈，吝啬是富人的奢侈。

世人常说，穷人对慈善感恩。当然有些人是感恩的，但是最优秀的穷人从来不会感恩。他们不感恩，愤愤不平，抗命，反叛。他们很有理由如此。

向穷人提倡节俭是既怪诞又无礼的。这好比建议挨饿的人减食。

他们（穷人）干吗要对从富人桌上洒落的面包屑感恩戴德？他们有平起平坐的权利，也渐渐知道了这一点。

穷人真正的悲剧在于，他们除了克己忘我就什么都没有条件做。美丽的罪孽，犹如美好的事物一样，是富人的特权。

狂恋是无所事事者的特权。一个国家的有闲阶级的用途莫不如此。

民族里代代相传的愚蠢——英国人健全的常识。

谁都能有常识，只要缺乏想象力。

我热衷于迷信。它们是思维和想象力的彩色元素。它们是常识的对手。

现在大多数人不知不觉地被一种常识拘禁终生，太晚才意识到人只对自己做错的事无悔。

自私不是过自己想过的生活，而是要求别人过自己想过的生活。

谈话属于最可爱的艺术之列。

谈话的目标在于消遣，不在于赐教。

“如果同伴乏味，那是你的错”这句格言，叫我们觉得未免乐观了些。

晚宴上遇见一位天才、一位公爵，这种时候，善谈者会试着把自己提升到天才的高度，而把公爵拉低到他自己的高度。要在社交场上高自己一等的人中间成功，你必须毫不犹豫地反驳他们。

一个人能在伦敦的晚宴上抢尽风头，就能在全世界抢尽风头。

我迷恋它们（伦敦的晚宴）。聪明人从不听别人说，蠢材从不开口。

向来只有智力上迷失的人要争辩。

相信是很无趣的。怀疑是引人入胜的。保持警醒是活着，沉陷于安全感是死去。

现在我从不赞成或反对什么。那样的人生态度是荒唐的。我们降生到世界上，并不是为了炫耀我们的道德偏见。

使人笃信不疑的事物从来都不真实。那是信仰的致命伤，和传奇的教训。

没有人殉身他了解的真实。人殉身他们期望的真实，殉身他们内心深处恐怖地知道并不真实的东西。

谋杀总是错的。人不该做任何一件不能在晚宴后谈起的事。

现代罪案的元祖是贫困，不是罪孽。

习惯性地用惩罚来治理会造成社区野蛮化，其恶果远远大于偶尔发生的罪案。

牢狱生涯叫人如实地看见人和事物。所以监狱使人变得冷酷。监狱外的人被幻象所迷惑，才以为生活在不断变动。

对身在狱中的人，眼泪属于日常的体验。在监狱里不曾哭泣的一天是心灵冷酷的一天，并不是心灵快乐的一天。

（牢狱生涯）最可怕的事不是它令人心碎——心天生是易碎的——而是它令人心如铁石。

正因为一个人没有能力做某件事，他才适合做这件事的裁判。

玩火唯一的好处……是玩火者永远不会被灼伤。不懂玩火的才是会被烧伤的人。

何谓犬儒主义者 [4] ？他们知道所有东西的价格，却不知道任何东西的价值。

感伤主义者内心永远是个犬儒主义者。没错，感伤主义不过是犬儒主义者休假的表现。

感伤主义者不过是个想要情感的奢侈又不愿为之付出的人。

他是个典型的英国人，永远乏味，时常粗暴。

像所有要把一个话题说尽的人那样，他说到听众全都筋疲力尽。

她举止像是个美人儿。美国女性大多如此。这是她们的魅力之源。

她努力打扮得像幅画，结果却显得景象凌乱。

（她）滔滔不绝而言语空洞，比我见识过的任何人更甚。她是个天生的演说家。

一个土气、乏味的姑娘，长着某一种典型的英国面孔，叫人一见之下再也回忆不起来。

不满是驱使一个人或一个民族前进的第一步。

在任何一个熟知历史的人看来，抗命是人类的原德 [5] 。进步是通过抗命——抗命和反叛——取得的。

如同在政治的领域一样，艺术领域的革命全都出自一个来源，那就是人追求一种更高贵的生活形态、更自由的表达方式和机会的愿望。

一个绅士的首要责任是梦想。

梦想家是只能借着月光认路的人，他受到的惩罚在于他比全世界更早看见曙光。

社会往往宽恕罪犯；它从不宽恕梦想家。

唯一比梦想家有更多幻觉的人是行动家。

我对自己的责任是让自己乐趣无穷。

世人从不考虑培育少女的想象力。这是现代教育的重大缺点。

我们教人记诵，我们从不教他们成长。

牛津在夏季学期开课传授闲逸这一门精妙的艺术，这是任何大学能传授的最重要的东西之一。

生活的秘诀是永远不要怀着不得体的情感。

只有浅薄的人，才需要用很多年来摆脱一份情感。能放能收的人了断一种哀愁，跟他生发一种快乐同样轻易。

啤酒、《圣经》和七宗致命的美德 [6]，造就了我们今天的英格兰。

英国公众在听一个庸才讲话的时候永远感到无比舒服。

家庭真是一种可怕的妨碍，尤其是当人未婚的时候。

时装不过是一种难以承受的丑陋，我们忍无可忍，只好每半年改换它一次。

始于一句夸奖的相识必然会深化为真正的友谊。以这种方式开始是对的。

一场友谊从笑声开始一点也不赖，而且它绝对是友谊最好的收尾。

我对新朋友总想无所不知，对老朋友总想一无所知。

礼俗客套会让亲密友谊变得紧张。

儿女最初爱恋父母。过些年，他们评判父母。他们绝少（哪怕真有）会原谅父母。

我们这个灰蒙蒙的、又大又丑的伦敦呀，容纳着它难以计数的居民、它龌龊的罪人，和它辉煌的罪恶。

我不喜欢瑞士：它只出产过神学家和侍者。

对于专制者可以说一句好话：他是一个人，因此可能有教养，而乌合之众是一头怪物，绝无教养。

历史从不自我重复。历史学家们互相重复。

我们对历史的唯一义务是重写它。

我们全都喜欢把别人设想得很好，原因是我们全都替自己担忧。乐观主义的基础在于纯然的恐惧。

笑是对待生命的原初态度——这种模式只在艺术家和罪犯身上依然存在。

什么都不做是世界上最困难的事——最困难且最智性的。

生活的目标是自我完善。去完美地实现个人的天性——我们人人都为此而生。

有时候人会多年来浑浑噩噩地活着，然后在一个钟点之内经历生命的密集冲撞。

我们在生活中顶多只会有一种伟大的体验，而生活的秘诀就在于尽可能频繁地重复那体验。

别跟我说你榨干了生活的可能性。一个男人这么说，旁人便知道是生活榨干了他。

变成自己生活的旁观者，就是逃逸出生活的苦难。

生活用影子来玩弄我们。我们向它求取享受。它给我们享受，继之以苦恼和失望。

文学总是预言了生活。它不抄袭生活，而是照它的目标来塑造生活。我们所知的19世纪，一大半是巴尔扎克发明的。

我讨厌文学中的庸俗写实主义。实话照说的人应该被逼着拿起铁锹 [7]。

难道没有一些书让我们在一小时内获得生命的丰收，盖过我们二十年乏善可陈的人生？

把真人放进小说或戏剧，意味着想象力贫乏的头脑、粗糙而不老练的观察、文体的完全缺失。

世人称为伤风败俗的书，是一些把世界的可耻面目展示出来的书。

没有人能经受高估，要毁掉一个作者的声望，最有力的手段莫过于一味地赞美他、过分地颂扬他。

所有爱情都是一场悲剧。

误会……是爱情的基础。

忠贞者只知道爱情琐碎的一面；不忠者才知道爱情的悲剧。

在感情生活方面忠贞，正如在智力生活方面见解始终不变——不外乎承认失败。

性欲……使人爱恋自己憎恶的一切。

人很难不对所爱的不公平。

人应该永远恋爱。因此之故，人应该永远不结婚。

婚姻的适当基础是互相误会。

婚姻生活只是一个习惯，一个坏习惯。

婚姻多么能毁掉男人！它跟香烟一样令人丧志，而价格贵得多。

已婚男人的幸福……取决于他没有娶的那些人。

婚姻只有一个魅力，那就是它让双方完全必要地过上哄骗的生活。

任何看似幸福婚姻的东西，现在都会引来世界的深深怀疑。

一个丈夫如今在公共场合对妻子注目是最危险的。旁人看了，总会认为这丈夫在夫妇独处的时候殴打妻子。

这年头所有人妒忌所有人，当然，无人妒忌夫妻。

谈二十年恋爱，女人看上去会像一座废墟；结二十年婚，她会变成公共建筑一类的东西。

姑娘从来不跟调情的对象结婚。姑娘觉得这样不对。

男人结婚是因为疲倦；女人是因为好奇。两者都感到失望。

男人太早懂得生活……女人太晚懂得生活。这是男女的区别。

女人只有一个改造男人的办法：令他彻底厌倦，以至他对生活完全失去兴趣。

男人一旦爱过一个女人，就会为她做任何事，但继续爱她除外。

男人跟任何女人在一起都能够快乐，只要是他不爱的女人。

男人总想做女人的初恋。那是他们笨拙的虚荣……女人对事物有较为精细的本能。（她们）喜欢的是做男人的最后一段罗曼史。

女人的生活中只有一个真正的悲剧：过去永远是她的爱人，而她的将来一成不变的是她的丈夫。

男女之间没有友谊。有激情、敌意、崇拜、爱，但没有友谊。

女人对事物有一种奇妙的本能。她们能发现一切，偏偏看不到最明显的。

人永远不该信任说出自己真实年龄的女人。连这个都说的女人，是无所不言的。

藏起面孔的女人总是要么奇丑，要么极美。

如果女人想控制一个男人，只需勾起他最坏的本性。

我旅行必带日记。坐火车，手上永远应该有一本耸动视听的读物。

假如我们不怕有人捡，我们会丢掉的东西有很多。

人何以落得身败名裂？毁灭何以有这样的魅力？

人需要不幸才能幸福地生活。

要活得幸福，你必须知道人生的某些不幸福。

世界上幸福的人有他们的价值，但仅仅是反衬作用的负值。他们令不幸福者的美感和魅力格外突出。

火烧而不毁的，益加坚固。

苦难和苦难的共同体使人们善良。

虽然打算成为更好的人是种没有科学根据的空谈，但曾经受苦的人确实独具优势，可以变成更有深度的人。

哀愁是无与伦比的真实。有些时候，我觉得哀愁是唯一的真实。

一切放纵，与一切克制相同，都会自食其果。

过度会带来无与伦比的成功。

形式上纯粹的现代性总是带有庸俗的倾向。

没什么比做得太现代更危险：它容易一下子就过时。

电话的价值，在于两人要说的话的价值。

只有一样东西始终叫我迷恋不已：情绪的奥秘。做这些情绪的主人是美妙的，凭它们做主又更加妙不可言。

你们这些标榜自己始终如一的人，跟别人会有一样多的情绪。仅有的差别在于你们的情绪没什么意义。

没有一种情绪是人不能感同身受的，没有一种暮气沉沉的生活是不能重焕朝气的。

道德只是我们对自己反感的人作出的姿态。

道德属于无稽之谈，因为心灵的健康没有通用法则；它是全然个人的，因人而异。

现代道德无非是接受生当其时的标准。我认为，任何有教养的人接受生当其时的标准，都是一种最重大的不道德行径。

举止风度比道德准则重要。

道德教训再明显不过。

我遇到的满腔道德感的人，没有一个不是硬心肠、冷酷、报复心重、愚蠢不堪、缺乏丝毫人情味的。所谓道德人士，是些简单的禽

兽。

音乐这门艺术……最完全地实现了艺术的观念，它处于其他一切艺术时时在追求的境界。

音乐……给人开创了一个先前自己不知晓的过去，使人内心充满流泪时未曾体会的各种哀愁。

如果你弹奏出优美的音乐，人们会充耳不闻，如果你弹奏出糟糕的音乐，人们会一言不发。

我偏爱瓦格纳的音乐胜过别人的。它大吵大闹，由始至终你都可以谈话，又不会被人听见说了什么。

音乐界的人蛮不讲理。他们总是偏偏在你渴望完全耳聋的时候，希望你哑口无声。

天地万物并不属于我们；我们怎样领受的，就该怎样留给子孙。

至少在我而言，自然之中有治愈的力量。

我们全都对自然审视太多，与她共生太少。

假如自然令人舒适，人类就永远不会发明建筑。

自然令一切不会常驻，它永远在自我循环，好让造化的一切都不消失。

自然总是落后于时代。

每当我们回归于生活和自然，我们的作品总会变得粗俗、平庸、无趣。

只有两种人真正有魅力——无所不知的，和一无所知的。

我当然剽窃。这是赏识者的特权。

缺乏想象力的人方才杜撰。真艺术家的标志，就在于他把东西据为己有的手法，而他把一切都据为己有。

一出戏里的每一个词都既有智力上的也有音韵上的价值，它得传达出某种情感。

我从不给任何人写戏。我写戏是自娱自乐。过后，如果有人想演它，我有时会予以准许。

你可以用两种方式不欣赏我的话剧：要么统统不欣赏，要么欣赏《不可儿戏》^[8]。

愉悦是大自然的测验，是她表达赞许的信号。人觉得开心，就是他跟自己和环境都和谐共处的时候。

没有文明人会去懊悔一次享受，粗鄙者从来不知享受为何物。

我钟爱简单的享受。它们是复杂之人最后的避难所。

一支烟就是一次完美享受的完美体现。它精致，又叫人意犹未尽，还奢求什么呢？

我没有一刻后悔过自己为了享受而活。我这样生活做到了极致，因为每个人都应该把自己做的事做到极致。我体验过的享受无所不有。

我喜欢人多于原则，我喜欢没有原则的人多于世上的一切。

我不喜欢原则……我宁可要偏见。

驱动时代的是人物，不是原则。

我纳闷是谁把人定义为理性动物。这是古往今来最不成熟的定义了。人是什么，一言难尽，但人并不理性。

我很想把人定义为理性动物——这种理性动物一到需要依照理性的指令行事时就发脾气。

期望别人和自己一样出色是不公平的。

只有乏味的人会在早餐时才华横溢。

[1] 《圣经·创世记》中，罗得的妻子未遵从天使的告诫，回望了自己所逃出的罪恶之城，化作盐柱。（说明：书中脚注均为译者注。）

[2] 外郡原文是provinces，指伦敦地区以外的各郡，一般认为外郡的人不如首都的人那么练达。

[3] 原文“democracy means simply the bludgeoning of the people by the people for the people”套用美国总统林肯葛底斯堡演说的名言“民有，民治，民享”（of the people, by the people, for the people）而去掉了其中的逗号铸成新意，有特殊的幽默感。

[4] 犬儒主义（Cynicism）是古希腊的一个哲学流派，英文中大写的Cynic译为“犬儒”。在近现代，小写的cynicism则泛称这样一种人生态度：不相信世间有超越自私自利之心的高贵品质。它近乎“理想主义”的反义词。

[5] 与基督教的概念“原罪”相对。

[6] 天主教中有七美德，是相对于七宗罪而提出的。“致命的”（deadly）原是七宗罪，挪用来形容“七美德”有揶揄之意。

[7] “实话照说”的原文“call a spade a spade”是一句古老的俗语，字面意义即“把铁锹叫成铁锹”。

[8] 原文剧名用简称*Earnest*，全称为*The Importance of Being Earnest*。

Oscar Wilde

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

Only Dull People
Are Brilliant at
Breakfast

Nº 11

‘It would be
unfair to expect
other people to
be as remarkable
as oneself.’

Only Dull People are Brilliant at Breakfast

To know nothing about their great men is one of the necessary elements of English education.

We spend our days, each one of us, in looking for the secret of life. Well, the secret of life is in art.

The supreme object of life is to live. Few people live. It is true life only to realize one's own perfection, to make one's every dream a reality.

To me the life of the businessman who eats his breakfast early in the morning, catches a train for the city, stays there in the dingy, dusty atmosphere of the commercial world, and goes back to his house in the evening, and after supper to sleep, is worse than the life of the galley slave – his chains are golden instead of iron.

Bad art is a great deal worse than no art at all.

. . . nothing is worth doing except what the world says is impossible.

To make a good salad is to be a brilliant diplomatist –the problem is entirely the same in both cases. To know exactly how much oil one must put with one's vinegar.

Life is much too important a thing ever to talk seriously about it.

There is always more brass than brains in an aristocracy.

Good kings are the only dangerous enemies that modern democracy has.

I have always been of the opinion that consistency is the last refuge of the unimaginative . . .

. . . the British cook is a foolish woman, who should be turned, for her iniquities, into a pillar of that salt which she never knows how to use.

Of Shakespeare it may be said he was the first to see the

dramatic value of doublets, and that a climax may depend on a crinoline.

. . . the stage is not merely the meeting- place of all the arts, but is also the return of art to life.

The true dramatist . . . shows us life under the conditions of art, not art in the form of life.

. . . our ordinary English novelists . . . fail . . . in concentration of style. Their characters are far too eloquent and talk themselves to tatters. What we want is a little more reality and a little less rhetoric . . . we wish that they would talk less and think more.

They lead us through a barren desert of verbiage to a mirage that they call life: we wander aimlessly through a very wilderness of words in search of one touch of nature. However, one should not be too severe on English novels; they are the only relaxation of the intellectually unemployed.

A poet can survive everything but a misprint.

. . . a poet without hysterics is rare.

There is no such thing as a stupid American. Many Americans are horrid, vulgar, intrusive and impertinent, just as many English people are also; but stupidity is not one of the national vices. Indeed, in America there is no opening for a fool. They expect brains even from a boot- black, and get them.

As for marriage, it is one of their most popular institutions. The American man marries early, and the American woman marries often; and they get on extremely well together.

America has never quite forgiven Europe for having been discovered somewhat earlier in history than itself.

. . . it would be a very good thing if people were taught how to speak. Language is the noblest instrument we have, either for the revealing or the concealing of thought; talk itself is a sort of spiritualized action; and conversation is one of the loveliest of the arts.

The only form of fiction in which real characters do not seem out of place is history.

Early in life she had discovered the important truth that

nothing looks so like innocence as an indiscretion; and by a series of reckless escapades, half of them quite harmless, she had acquired all the privileges of a personality. She had more than once changed her husband; indeed, Debrett credits her with three marriages; but as she had never changed her lover, the world had long ago ceased to talk scandal about her.

Unless one is wealthy there is no use in being a charming fellow. Romance is the privilege of the rich, not the profession of the unemployed. The poor should be practical and prosaic. It is better to have a permanent income than to be fascinating.

Nobody, even in the provinces, should ever be allowed to ask an intelligent question about pure mathematics across a dinner table. A question of this kind is quite as bad as inquiring suddenly about the state of a man's soul . . .

But what is the good of friendship if one cannot say exactly what one means? Anybody can say charming things and try to please and to flatter, but a true friend always says unpleasant things, and does not mind giving pain. Indeed, if he is a really true friend he prefers it, for he knows that then he is doing good.

The only thing that sustains one through life is the consciousness of the immense inferiority of everybody else, and this is a feeling that I have always cultivated.

I am so clever that sometimes I don't understand a single word of what I am saying.

I have always been of opinion that hard work is simply the refuge of people who have nothing whatever to do. All that is known by that term [*fin de siècle*] I particularly admire and love. It is the fine flower of our civilization: the only thing that keeps the world from the commonplace, the coarse, the barbarous.

Flaubert did not write French prose, but the prose of a great artist who happened to be French.

I was thinking in bed this morning that the great superiority of France over England is that in France every bourgeois wants to be an artist, whereas in England every artist wants to be a bourgeois.

Prayer must never be answered: if it is, it ceases to be prayer and becomes correspondence.

I have made an important discovery . . . that alcohol, taken in sufficient quantities, produces all the effects of intoxication.

Missionaries, my dear! Don't you realize that missionaries are the divinely provided food for destitute and underfed cannibals? Whenever they are on the brink of starvation, Heaven in its infinite mercy sends them a nice plump missionary.

Philosophy teaches us to bear with equanimity the misfortunes of others.

My own experience is that the more we study Art, the less we care for Nature . . . Art is our spirited protest, our gallant attempt to teach Nature her proper place.

Thinking is the most unhealthy thing in the world, and people die of it just as they die of any other disease. Fortunately, in England at any rate, thought is not catching.

In literature we require distinction, charm, beauty and imaginative power. We don't want to be harrowed and disgusted with an account of the doings of the lower orders.

I quite admit that modern novels have many good points. All I insist on is that, as a class, they are quite unreadable.

Art itself is really a form of exaggeration; and selection, which is the very spirit of art, is nothing more than an intensified mode of over- emphasis.

Facts are not merely finding a footing- place in history, but they are usurping the domain of Fancy, and have invaded the kingdom of Romance. Their chilling touch is over everything. They are vulgarizing mankind.

Society sooner or later must return to its lost leader, the cultured and fascinating liar.

Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life . . . Life holds the mirror up to Art, and either reproduces some strange type imagined by painter or sculptor, or realizes in fact what has been dreamed in fiction.

. . . imitation can be made the sincerest form of insult.

Yesterday evening Mrs Arundel insisted on my going to the window, and looking at the glorious sky, as she called it. Of course I

had to look at it. She is one of those absurdly pretty Philistines to whom one can deny nothing. And what was it? It was simply a very second- rate Turner, a Turner of a bad period, with all the painter's worst faults exaggerated and over- emphasized.

The more abstract, the more ideal an art is, the more it reveals to us the temper of its age. If we wish to understand a nation by means of its art, let us look at its architecture or its music.

The fact is that we look back on the ages entirely through the medium of art, and art, very fortunately, has never once told us the truth.

To become a work of art is the object of living.

The English are always degrading truths into facts. When a truth becomes a fact it loses all its intellectual value.

There is a great deal to be said in favour of reading a novel backwards. The last page is as a rule the most interesting, and when one begins with the catastrophe or the dénouement one feels on pleasant terms of equality with the author. It is like going behind the scenes of a theatre. One is no longer taken in, and the hair-breadth escapes of the hero and the wild agonies of the heroine leave one absolutely unmoved. One knows the jealously guarded secret, and one can afford to smile at the quite unnecessary anxiety that the puppets of fiction always consider it their duty to display.

All charming people, I fancy, are spoiled. It is the secret of their attraction.

It is always a silly thing to give advice, but to give good advice is absolutely fatal. I hope you will never fall into that error. If you do, you will be sorry for it.

You forget that a thing is not necessarily true because a man dies for it.

Art, even the art of fullest scope and widest vision, can never really show us the external world. All that it shows us is our own soul, the one world of which we have any real cognizance . . . It is Art, and Art only, that reveals us to ourselves.

A critic should be taught to criticize a work of art without making any reference to the personality of the author. This, in fact, is the beginning of criticism.

Every great man nowadays has his disciples, and it is always Judas who writes the biography.

Learned conversation is either the affectation of the ignorant or the profession of the mentally unemployed.

Education is an admirable thing. But it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught.

Anybody can write a three- volume novel. It merely requires a complete ignorance of both life and literature.

Anybody can make history. Only a great man can write it.

It is sometimes said that the tragedy of an artist's life is that he cannot realize his ideal. But the true tragedy that dogs the steps of most artists is that they realize their ideal too absolutely. For, when the ideal is realized, it is robbed of its wonder and its mystery, and becomes simply a new starting- point for an ideal that is other than itself. This is the reason why music is the perfect type of art.

Conversation should touch everything, but should concentrate itself on nothing.

. . . life is terribly deficient in form. Its catastrophes happen in the wrong way and to the wrong people. There is a grotesque horror about its comedies, and its tragedies seem to culminate in farce. One is always wounded when one approaches it. Things last either too long or not long enough.

. . . all the arts are immoral, except those baser forms of sensual or didactic art that seek to excite to action of evil or of good. For action of every kind belongs to the sphere of ethics. The aim of art is simply to create a mood.

There is no country in the world so much in need of unpractical people as this country of ours. With us, Thought is degraded by its constant association with practice . . . We live in the age of the overworked, and the under- educated; the age in which people are so industrious that they become absolutely stupid.

The sure way of knowing nothing about life is to try to make oneself useful.

It is so easy for people to have sympathy with suffering. It is so difficult for them to have sympathy with thought.

An idea that is not dangerous is unworthy of being called an idea at all.

Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth.

For what is Truth? In matters of religion, it is simply the opinion that has survived. In matters of science, it is the ultimate sensation. In matters of art, it is one's last mood.

There are two ways of disliking art . . . One is to dislike it. The other, to like it rationally.

A little sincerity is a dangerous thing, and a great deal of it is absolutely fatal.

Those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things are corrupt without being charming. This is a fault.

Those who find beautiful meanings in beautiful things are the cultivated. For these there is hope.

There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all.

Vice and virtue are to the artist materials for an art.

All art is at once surface and symbol.

Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril.

Those who read the symbol do so at their peril.

It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors.

When critics disagree the artist is in accord with himself.

We can forgive a man for making a useful thing as long as he does not admire it. The only excuse for making a useless thing is that one admires it intensely.

Experience was of no ethical value. It was merely the name men gave to their mistakes.

There is always something ridiculous about the emotions of people whom one has ceased to love.

There is a luxury in self-reproach. When we blame ourselves we feel that no one else has a right to blame us. It is the confession, not the priest, that gives us absolution.

Is insincerity such a terrible thing? I think not. It is merely a method by which we can multiply our personalities.

With the abolition of private property, then, we shall have true, beautiful, healthy Individualism. Nobody will waste his life in accumulating things, and the symbols for things. One will live. To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all.

There is only one class in the community that thinks more about money than the rich, and that is the poor. The poor can think of nothing else. That is the misery of being poor.

High hopes were once formed of democracy; but democracy means simply the bludgeoning of the people by the people for the people.

The fact is, that civilization requires slaves. The Greeks were quite right there. Unless there are slaves to do the ugly, horrible, uninteresting work, culture and contemplation become almost impossible. Human slavery is wrong, insecure and demoralizing. On mechanical slavery, on the slavery of the machine, the future of the world depends.

A work of art is the unique result of a unique temperament . . . the moment that an artist takes notice of what other people want, and tries to supply the demand, he ceases to be an artist, and becomes a dull or an amusing craftsman, an honest or a dishonest tradesman.

Now Art should never try to be popular. The public should try to make itself artistic.

In England, the arts that have escaped best are the arts in which the public take no interest. Poetry is an instance of what I mean. We have been able to have fine poetry in England because the public do not read it, and consequently do not influence it.

In the old days men had the rack. Now they have the Press.

In England, Journalism, except in a few wellknown instances, not having been carried to such excesses of brutality, is still a great factor, a really remarkable power. The tyranny that it proposes to exercise over people's private lives seems to me to be quite extraordinary. The fact is that the public have an insatiable curiosity to know everything, except what is worth knowing.

Journalism, conscious of this, and having tradesman- like habits, supplies their demands. In centuries before ours the public nailed the ears of journalists to the pump. That was quite hideous. In this century journalists have nailed their own ears to the keyhole. That is much worse.

Anybody can sympathize with the sufferings of a friend, but it requires a very fine nature – it requires, in fact, that nature of a true Individualist – to sympathize with a friend's success.

Work is the curse of the drinking classes of this country.

Public opinion exists only where there are no ideas.

A subject that is beautiful in itself gives no suggestion to the artist. It lacks imperfection.

Art is the only serious thing in the world. And the artist is the only person who is never serious.

The only thing that can console one for being poor is extravagance. The only thing that can console one for being rich is economy.

One should never listen. To listen is a sign of indifference to one's hearers.

The first duty in life is to be as artificial as possible. What the second duty is no one has as yet discovered.

Wickedness is a myth invented by good people to account for the curious attractiveness of others.

Those who see any difference between soul and body have neither.

A really well- made buttonhole is the only link between Art and Nature.

Religions die when they are proved to be true. Science is the record of dead religions.

The well- bred contradict other people. The wise contradict themselves.

Nothing that actually occurs is of the smallest importance.

Dullness is the coming of age of seriousness.

In all unimportant matters, style, not sincerity, is the essential.
In all important matters, style, not sincerity, is the essential.

If one tells the truth, one is sure, sooner or later, to be found out.

Pleasure is the only thing one should live for. Nothing ages like happiness.

No crime is vulgar, but all vulgarity is crime. Vulgarity is the conduct of others.

Only the shallow know themselves.

Time is waste of money.

One should always be a little improbable.

There is a fatality about all good resolutions. They are invariably made too soon.

The only way to atone for being occasionally a little overdressed is by being always absolutely overeducated.

Any preoccupation with ideas of what is right or wrong in conduct shows an arrested intellectual development.

Ambition is the last refuge of the failure.

One should either be a work of art, or wear a work of art.

It is only the superficial qualities that last. Man's deeper nature is soon found out.

Industry is the root of all ugliness.

The ages live in history through their anachronisms.

The old believe everything: the middle-aged suspect everything: the young know everything.

The condition of perfection is idleness: the aim of perfection is youth.

Only the great masters of style ever succeed in being obscure.

To love oneself is the beginning of a life-long romance.

Oh, it is indeed a burning shame that there would be one law for men and another law for women. I think that there should be no law for anybody.

After the first glass, you see things as you wish they were. After the second, you see things as they are not. Finally you see things as they really are, and that is the most horrible thing in the world. (On absinthe)

My existence is a scandal.

It often happens that the real tragedies of life occur in such an inarticulate manner that they hurt one by their crude violence, their absolute incoherence, their absurd want of meaning, their entire lack of style.

Ultimately the bond of all companionship, whether in marriage or in friendship, is conversation . . .

Sins of the flesh are nothing. They are maladies for physicians to cure, if they should be cured. Sins of the soul alone are shameful.

The aim of love is to love: no more, and no less.

To regret one's own experiences is to arrest one's own development. To deny one's own experiences is to put a lie into the lips of one's own life. It is no less than a denial of the soul.

What the artist is always looking for is the mode of existence in which soul and body are one and indivisible: in which the outward is expressive of the inward: in which form reveals.

Now it seems to me that love of some kind is the only possible explanation of the extraordinary amount of suffering that there is in the world.

Most people are other people. Their thoughts are someone else's opinions, their lives a mimicry, their passions a quotation.

Every single work of art is the fulfilment of a prophecy: for every work of art is the conversion of an idea into an image.

. . . all great ideas are dangerous.

Art only begins where Imitation ends . . .

All bad art is the result of good intentions.

By nature and by choice, I am extremely indolent.

I never put off till tomorrow what I can possibly do – the day after.

I am one of those who are made for exceptions, not for laws.

Praise makes me humble, but when I am abused I know I have touched the stars.

Where will it all end? Half the world does not believe in God, and the other half does not believe in me.

If I were all alone, marooned on some desert island and had my things with me, I should dress for dinner every evening.

I have the simplest tastes. I am always satisfied with the best.

A patriot put in prison for loving his country loves his country, and a poet in prison for loving boys loves boys. To have altered my life would have been to have admitted that Uranian love is ignoble. I hold it to be noble, more noble than other forms.

I entered prison with a heart of stone, thinking only of my pleasure, but now my heart has been broken; pity has entered my heart; I now understand that pity is the greatest and the most beautiful thing that there is in the world. And that's why I can't be angry with those who condemned me, nor with anyone, because then I would not have known all that.

I am not a scrap ashamed of having been in prison. I am horribly ashamed of the materialism of the life that brought me there. It was quite unworthy of an artist.

I love acting. It is so much more real than life.

As soon as people are old enough to know better, they don't know anything at all.

The tragedy of old age is not that one is old, but that one is young.

To get back my youth I would do anything in the world, except take exercise, get up early, or be respectable.

One can always be kind to people about whom one cares nothing.

Self-sacrifice is a thing that should be put down by law. It is so demoralizing to the people for whom one sacrifices oneself.

English people are far more interested in American barbarism than they are in American civilization.

Every right article of apparel belongs equally to both sexes, and there is absolutely no such thing as a definitely feminine garment.

It is really only the idle classes who dress badly. Wherever physical labour of any kind is required, the costume used is, as a rule, absolutely right, for labour necessitates freedom, and without freedom there is no such thing as beauty in dress at all.

With an evening coat and a white tie, anybody, even a stock-broker, can gain a reputation for being civilized.

It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances.

Being natural is simply a pose, and the most irritating pose I know.

Perhaps one never seems so much at one's ease as when one has to play a part.

I think a man should invent his own myth.

All art is quite useless.

No great artist ever sees things as they really are. If he did, he would cease to be an artist.

The desire for beauty is merely a heightened form of the desire for life.

Extravagance is the luxury of the poor, penury the luxury of the rich.

We are often told that the poor are grateful for charity. Some of them are, no doubt, but the best amongst the poor are never grateful. They are ungrateful, discontented, disobedient, and rebellious. They are quite right to be so.

To recommend thrift to the poor is both grotesque and insulting. It is like advising a man who is starving to eat less.

Why should they [the poor] be grateful for the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table? They should be seated at the board, and are beginning to know it.

The real tragedy of the poor is that they can afford nothing but self-denial. Beautiful sins, like beautiful things, are the privilege of the rich.

A *grande passion* is the privilege of people who have nothing to

do. That is the one use of the idle classes of a country.

The inherited stupidity of the race – sound English common sense.

Anybody can have common sense, provided that they have no imagination.

I love superstitions. They are the colour element of thought and imagination. They are the opponents of common sense.

Nowadays most people die of a sort of creeping common sense, and discover, when it is too late, that the only thing one never regrets are one's mistakes.

Selfishness is not living as one wishes to live, it is asking others to live as one wishes to live.

Conversation is one of the loveliest of the arts.

Recreation, not instruction, is the aim of conversation.

The maxim 'If you find the company dull, blame yourself' seems to us somewhat optimistic.

In the case of meeting a genius and a duke at dinner, the good talker will try to raise himself to the level of the former and to bring the latter down to his own level. To succeed among one's social superiors one must have no hesitation in contradicting them.

A man who can dominate a London dinner table can dominate the world.

I adore them [London dinner parties]. The clever people never listen, and the stupid people never talk.

It is only the intellectually lost who ever argue.

To believe is very dull. To doubt is intensely engrossing. To be on the alert is to live, to be lulled into security is to die.

I never approve, or disapprove, of anything now. It is an absurd attitude to take towards life. We are not sent into the world to air our moral prejudices.

The things one feels absolutely certain about are never true. That is the fatality of Faith, and the lesson of Romance.

No man dies for what he knows to be true. Men die for what

they want to be true, for what some terror in their hearts tells them is not true.

Murder is always a mistake. One should never do anything that one cannot talk about after dinner.

Starvation, and not sin, is the parent of modern crime.

A community is infinitely more brutalized by the habitual employment of punishment, than it is by the occasional occurrence of crime.

Prison life makes one see people and things as they really are. That is why it turns one to stone. It is the people outside who are deceived by the illusion of a life in constant motion.

To those who are in prison, tears are a part of every day's experience. A day in prison on which one does not weep is a day on which one's heart is hard, not a day on which one's heart is happy.

The most terrible thing about it [imprisonment] is not that it breaks one's heart – hearts are made to be broken – but that it turns one's heart to stone.

It is exactly because a man cannot do a thing that he is the proper judge of it.

The one advantage of playing with fire . . . is that one never even gets singed. It is the people who don't know how to play with it who get burned up.

What is a cynic? A man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.

The sentimentalist is always a cynic at heart. Indeed sentimentality is merely the bank holiday of cynicism.

A sentimentalist is simply a man who desires to have the luxury of an emotion without paying for it.

He is a typical Englishman, always dull and usually violent.

Like all people who try to exhaust a subject, he exhausted his listeners.

She behaves as if she was beautiful. Most American women do. It is the secret of their charm.

She tried to look picturesque, but only succeeded in being

untidy.

[She] talks more and says less than anybody I ever met. She is made to be a public speaker.

A dowdy dull girl, with one of those characteristic British faces, that, once seen, are never remembered.

Discontent is the first step in the progress of a man or a nation.

Disobedience, in the eyes of anyone who has read history, is man's original virtue. It is through disobedience that progress has been made, through disobedience and through rebellion.

In art, as in politics, there is but one origin for all revolutions, a desire on the part of man for a nobler form of life, for a freer method and opportunity of expression.

It is the first duty of a gentleman to dream.

A dreamer is one who can only find his way by moonlight, and his punishment is that he sees the dawn before the rest of the world.

Society often forgives the criminal; it never forgives the dreamer.

The one person who has more illusions than the dreamer is the man of action.

My duty to myself is to amuse myself terrifically.

People never think of cultivating a young girl's imagination. It is the great defect of modern education.

We teach people how to remember, we never teach them how to grow.

In the summer term Oxford teaches the exquisite art of idleness, one of the most important things that any University can teach.

The secret of life is never to have an emotion that is unbecoming.

It is only shallow people who require years to get rid of an emotion. A man who is master of himself can end a sorrow as easily as he can invent a pleasure.

Beer, the Bible, and the seven deadly virtues have made our England what she is.

The English public always feels perfectly at its ease when a mediocrity is talking to it.

A family is a terrible encumbrance, especially when one is not married.

Fashion is merely a form of ugliness so unbearable that we are compelled to alter it every six months.

An acquaintance that begins with a compliment is sure to develop into a real friendship. It starts in the right manner.

Laughter is not at all a bad beginning for a friendship, and it is far the best ending for one.

I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones.

Formal courtesies will strain a close friendship.

Children begin by loving their parents. After a time they judge them. Rarely, if ever, do they forgive them.

This grey, monstrous London of ours, with its myriads of people, its sordid sinners, and its splendid sins.

I don't like Switzerland: it has produced nothing but theologians and waiters.

There is this to be said in favour of the despot, that he, being an individual, may have culture, while the mob, being a monster, has none.

History never repeats itself. The historians repeat each other.

The one duty we owe to history is to re- write it.

The reason we all like to think so well of others is that we are all afraid for ourselves. The basis of optimism is sheer terror.

Laughter is the primeval attitude towards life – a mode of approach that survives only in artists and criminals.

To do nothing at all is the most difficult thing in the world, the most difficult and the most intellectual.

The aim of life is self- development. To realize one's nature

perfectly – that is what each of us is here for.

One can live for years sometimes without living at all, and then all life comes crowding into one single hour.

We can have in life but one great experience at best, and the secret of life is to reproduce that experience as often as possible.

Don't tell me that you have exhausted life. When a man says that one knows that life has exhausted him.

To become the spectator of one's own life is to escape the suffering of life.

Life cheats us with shadows. We ask it for pleasure. It gives it to us, with bitterness and disappointment in its train.

Literature always anticipates life. It does not copy it, but moulds it to its purpose. The nineteenth century, as we know it, is largely an invention of Balzac.

I hate vulgar realism in literature. The man who could call a spade a spade should be compelled to use one.

Are there not books that can make us live more in one single hour than life can make us live in a score of shameful years?

To introduce real people into a novel or a play is a sign of an unimaginative mind, a coarse, untutored observation, and an entire absence of style.

The books that the world calls immoral books are books that show the world its own shame.

No one survives being over-estimated, nor is there any surer way of destroying an author's reputation than to glorify him without judgement and to praise him without tact.

All love is a tragedy.

Misunderstanding . . . is the basis of love.

Those who are faithful know only the trivial side of love: it is the faithless who know love's tragedies.

Faithfulness is to the emotional life what consistency is to the life of the intellect – simply a confession of failure.

Lust . . . makes one love all that one loathes.

It is difficult not to be unjust to what one loves.

One should always be in love. That is the reason one should never marry.

The proper basis for marriage is a mutual misunderstanding.

Married life is merely a habit, a bad habit.

How marriage ruins a man! It's as demoralizing as cigarettes, and far more expensive.

The happiness of a married man . . . depends on the people he has not married.

The one charm of marriage is that it makes a life of deception absolutely necessary for both parties.

The world has grown so suspicious of anything that looks like a happy married life.

It's most dangerous nowadays for a husband to pay attention to his wife in public. It always makes people think he beats her when they are alone.

Nowadays everybody is jealous of everyone else, except, of course, husband and wife.

Twenty years of romance make a woman look like a ruin; but twenty years of marriage make her something like a public building.

Girls never marry the men they flirt with. Girls don't think it right.

Men marry because they are tired; women because they are curious. Both are disappointed.

Men know life too early . . . Women know life too late. That is the difference between men and women.

The only way a woman can ever reform a man is by boring him so completely that he loses all possible interest in life.

When a man has once loved a woman, he will do anything for her, except continue to love her.

A man can be happy with any woman, as long as he does not love her.

Men always want to be a woman's first love. That is their clumsy vanity . . . Women have a more subtle instinct about things. What [they] like is to be a man's last romance.

There is only one real tragedy in a woman's life. The fact that the past is always her lover, and her future invariably her husband.

Between men and women there is no friendship possible. There is passion, enmity, worship, love, but no friendship.

Women have a wonderful instinct about things. They can discover everything except the obvious.

One should never trust a woman who tells one her real age. A woman who would tell one that, would tell one anything.

It is only very ugly or very beautiful women who ever hide their faces.

If a woman wants to hold a man she has merely to appeal to what is worst in him.

I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train.

There are many things that we would throw away if we were not afraid that others might pick them up.

Why is it that one runs to one's ruin? Why has destruction such a fascination?

One needs misfortunes to live happily.

To live in happiness, you must know some unhappiness in life.

The happy people of the world have their value, but only the negative value of foils. They throw up and emphasize the beauty and the fascination of the unhappy.

What fire does not destroy, it hardens.

Suffering and the community of suffering makes people kind.

While to propose to be a better man is a piece of unscientific cant, to have become a deeper man is the privilege of those who have suffered.

There is no truth comparable to Sorrow. There are times when Sorrow seems to me to be the only truth.

All excess, as well as all renunciation, brings its own punishment.

Nothing succeeds like excess.

Pure modernity of form is always somewhat vulgarizing.

Nothing is so dangerous as being too modern; one is apt to grow old-fashioned quite suddenly.

The value of the telephone is the value of what two people have to say.

Only one thing remains infinitely fascinating to me, the mystery of moods. To be master of these moods is exquisite, to be mastered by them more exquisite still.

You people who go in for being consistent have just as many moods as others have. The only difference is that your moods are rather meaningless.

There must be no mood with which one cannot sympathize, no dead mode of life that one cannot make alive.

Morality is simply the attitude we adopt towards people whom we personally dislike.

There is no such thing as morality, for there is no general rule of spiritual health; it is all personal, individual.

Modern morality consists in accepting the standard of one's age. I consider that for any man of culture to accept the standard of his age is a form of the grossest immorality.

Manners are of more importance than morals.

The moral is too obvious.

I never came across anyone in whom the moral sense was dominant who was not heartless, cruel, vindictive, log-stupid, and entirely lacking in the smallest sense of humanity. Moral people, as they are termed, are simple beasts.

Music is the art . . . which most completely realizes the artistic idea, and is the condition to which all the other arts are constantly aspiring.

Music . . . creates for one a past of which one has been ignorant, and fills one with a sense of sorrows that have been

hidden from one's tears.

If one plays good music, people don't listen, and if one plays bad music, people don't talk.

I like Wagner's music better than anybody's. It is so loud that one can talk the whole time without people hearing what one says.

Musical people are so absurdly unreasonable. They always want one to be perfectly dumb at the very moment when one is longing to be absolutely deaf.

The things of nature do not really belong to us; we should leave them to our children as we have received them.

In nature there is, for me at any rate, healing power.

We all look at Nature too much, and live with her too little.

If Nature had been comfortable, mankind would never have invented architecture.

Nature, which makes nothing durable, always repeats itself so that nothing which it makes may be lost.

Nature is always behind the age.

Whenever we have returned to Life and Nature, our work has always become vulgar, common, and uninteresting.

There are only two kinds of people who are really fascinating – people who know absolutely everything, and people who know absolutely nothing.

Of course I plagiarize. It is the privilege of the appreciative man.

It is only the unimaginative who ever invent. The true artist is known by the use he makes of what he annexes, and he annexes everything.

Every word in a play has a musical as well as an intellectual value, and must be made expressive of a certain emotion.

I never write plays for anyone. I write plays to amuse myself. After, if people want to act in them, I sometimes allow them to do so.

There are two ways of disliking my plays. One is to dislike

them, the other is to like Earnest.

Pleasure is Nature's test, her sign of approval. When man is happy he is in harmony with himself and his environment.

No civilized man ever regrets a pleasure, and no uncivilized man ever knows what a pleasure is.

I adore simple pleasures. They are the last refuge of the complex.

A cigarette is the perfect type of a perfect pleasure. It is exquisite, and it leaves one unsatisfied. What more can one want?

I don't regret for a single moment having lived for pleasure. I did it to the full, as one should do everything that one does to the full. There was no pleasure I did not experience.

I like persons better than principles, and I like persons with no principles better than anything else in the world.

I don't like principles . . . I prefer prejudices.

It is personalities, not principles, that move the age.

I wonder who it was defined man as a rational animal. It was the most premature definition ever given. Man is many things, but he is not rational.

One is tempted to define man as a rational animal who always loses his temper when he is called upon to act in accordance with the dictates of reason.

It would be unfair to expect other people to be as remarkable as oneself.



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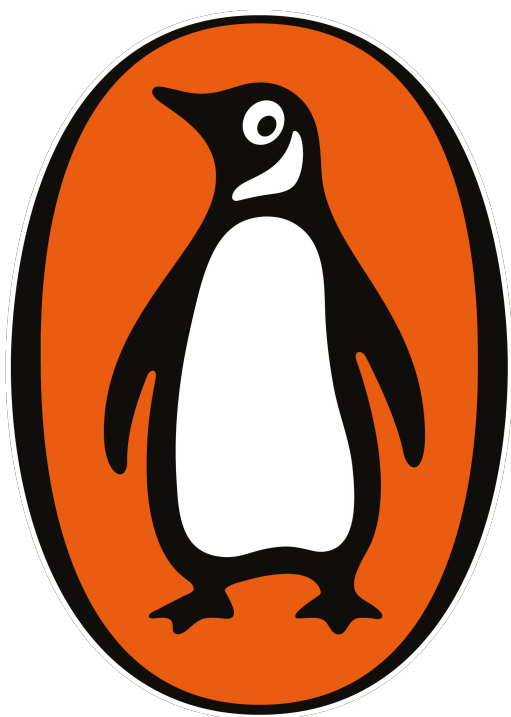
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走过，便留下那种
庸俗打扮的强烈味道。”



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雄鸡报晓

献给勒内·比约特

此前，贝尔特·德·阿旺塞勒夫人始终拒绝狂追她的约瑟夫·德·克罗瓦萨尔男爵的苦苦恳求。整个冬季在巴黎，男爵就紧追不舍，现在回到他在诺曼底的卡维尔城堡，又频频为她举办宴请聚会和出游打猎活动。

她丈夫德·阿旺塞勒先生还一如既往，对此一无所见，也一无所知。据说，他因身体衰弱，已同妻子分居。这在他夫人看来，是不可饶恕的。这个男人是个矮胖子，秃了顶，胳膊腿短，脖颈鼻子也短，全身无不奇短。

德·阿旺塞勒夫人则相反，是位高挑身材、棕发的少妇，她行事果断，冲她的先生咯咯大笑，声音洪亮，还当众称他“管家婆”。而她投向公开的追求者——约瑟夫·德·克罗瓦萨尔的目光，却含情脉脉，欣赏他那宽阔的肩膀、硕壮的颈项和长长金黄的胡须。

不过，她还什么都没有应承。男爵不惜为她倾家荡产，接二连三，不断组织晚会、打猎、各种新式娱乐活动，邀请周围一带城堡的贵族。

整个白天，大群猎犬在树林中飞奔，狂吠着追逐狐狸和野猪。而每天夜晚，烟火令人眼花缭乱，腾空的羽饰花焰，与星光交相辉映。客厅窗户灯火通明，一条条光带投向宽阔的草坪，只见人影幢幢。

入秋时节，万物一片橙黄色。落叶宛如一群群鸟雀，在草地上飞旋。空气中弥漫着卸下衣装的土地潮湿的气味，就像舞会散场之后，一位女子脱掉长裙，露出肌肤的气味。

就在今年春天，一次晚会上，德·阿旺塞勒夫人耐不住纠缠的恳求，这样答复德·克罗瓦萨尔先生：“如果我难免失足，我的朋友，在落叶之前绝不会发生。今年夏天我没有时间，要做的事情太多了。”这种大胆的笑谈，男爵念念不忘，因而他越发坚持，日甚一日，步步进逼，认为他在这位敢作敢为的美人心中已经立足，她那推却的态度，不过是装装样子而已了。

一场大型狩猎活动举办在即。前一天晚上，贝尔特夫人笑吟吟地对男爵说道：“男爵，如果您能猎杀野兽，我给您准备了点儿东西。”

天刚拂晓，他就起身，前去侦察那头独行的野猪藏身的巢穴。他让饲养猎犬的仆人们跟随，一路亲自组织部署，确保一举成功。当出发的号角一齐吹响时，他已身穿红色带金饰的紧身猎装出现了，只见他腰身束紧，虎背宽肩，目光炯炯有神，斗志昂扬，那劲头就好像刚刚起床。

猎手们出发了。那头野猪被驱逐出来，惊慌逃窜，随后紧追着吼叫的猎犬，穿过一片片荆丛；马匹也都奔跑起来，驮着男女骑手，冲进林间小径，而随行车辆驶在松软的土路上，不声不响，远远跟着打猎的队伍。

德·阿旺塞勒夫人很狡黠，留住男爵陪伴身边，在大路上缓缓前行。笔直的大道长不见尽头，排成四列橡树，枝叶树冠交织成长长的穹顶。男爵的内心，也交织着爱恋和不安，浑身不免发颤，他一只耳朵聆听少妇嘲弄般的饶舌，另一只则追踪渐行渐远的号角之声，以及猎犬的吠鸣。

“怎么，您不爱我了吗？”少妇问道。

“何出此言，怎么会呢？”男爵回应。

“然而，您的心思，似乎更顾虑打猎，而不是放在我身上。”少妇接着说道。

“还不是您命令我，亲手猎杀那只野兽吗？”男爵哀叹道。

“不错，这事我很看重，您必须当着我的面，将其猎杀。”她又正色补充了一句。

闻听此言，男爵坐在鞍上，不由得浑身一抖，他双脚一磕。他的坐骑被马刺刺痛，蹿跳起来，他也失去了耐性：

“真见鬼！夫人，我们就待在这里，这事怎么办得到！”

少妇咯咯笑起来，抛给他一句：

“真的，这可必须办到……否则的话……倒霉的是您。”

随后，她对男爵说话就柔声细语了，手搭到他的胳膊上，或者，仿佛心不在焉似的，抚弄他那匹马的鬃毛。

继而，他们就拐进右侧一条杂草丛生的小路。忽然，为了躲避一根拦路的树枝，她身子朝他一斜，靠得极近，他的脖颈都感到了她那秀发的拂痒。于是，他猛地抱住她，大胡子贴到她额角，狂热地亲吻她。

在这种冲动的爱抚下，她起初一动也不动，随后，她晃了晃，头扭了一下，似偶然又似有意，她这娇小的嘴唇，遇到他那瀑布般金黄

胡须下的嘴唇。这时，或因羞愧，或因后悔，她一鞭抽向马腹，马奔跑起来。他们就这样跑了许久，彼此甚至没有交换一下目光。

越跑越靠近狩猎的嘈杂声，短树林仿佛也随之颤动，突然，一头野猪闯开枝条，浑身是血冲出来，挣脱咬住不放的猎犬。男爵一见，登时发出胜利的欢声，嚷道：“爱我者，随我上！”说罢，他就冲进矮树林不见了，仿佛被树林吞没了。贝尔特夫人几分钟之后，赶到林间一片空地，这时男爵已经站起来，满身是泥，上装也撕破了，双手沾满了鲜血，而那头野猪则躺倒在地，肩头深深插进一把猎刀，只露出刀柄。

点起火把，享用猎物，夜色温和而又忧伤。月光映黄了火把的火焰，而燃烧树脂的烟雾又笼罩了夜空。猎犬吼叫，相互撕咬，争食野猪发臭的内脏。饲养猎犬的仆人和打猎的贵绅们，则围在野味四周，用足气力吹着号角。阵阵号角声传至树林清朗的夜空，在远处山谷中回荡，惊醒了惴惴不安的鹿群，惊得狐狸吱吱尖叫，也惊扰了在林间空地边缘嬉戏的一群小灰兔。惊飞的一群夜鸟，在狂欢的人群上空惶惶乱飞。这种场面，又甜美又凶残，女士们不由得动情，微微靠着男人的手臂，已经离群踏上小径，不待猎犬用完美餐。

这一整天，又疲倦又多情，德·阿旺塞勒夫人无精打采，对男爵说道：

“我的朋友，您愿意在院子里走一走吗？”

男爵却不应声，他浑身颤抖，双腿发软，拉走了夫人。

二人一避开人群，便拥抱在一起。他们缓步走在叶子几乎落光的树木下面，月光透着枝丫照射下来。此情此景，他们的爱恋，他们的欲望，他们对彼此的渴望，已经变得极其强烈，几乎支撑不住，就地倒在一棵树脚下了。

号角声断了，猎犬都疲惫不堪，回窝睡觉去了。

“咱们回去吧。”少妇说道。于是他们往回走。

他们走到城堡主楼前时，她的声音微弱，喃喃说道：“我累了，要去睡觉了，我的朋友。”男爵张开双臂，正要抱住她最后吻一下，她却跑开了，仿佛告别似的丢给他一句：“不，我去睡了……爱我者，跟我来！”

一小时过后，整个城堡一片死寂，男爵蹑手蹑脚，走出卧室，走到他女友的卧室，轻轻叩门，由于她没有应声，他就实施推门：没有插上门闩。

她正俯在窗台上遐想。男爵跪倒她脚下，隔着睡袍，狂热地亲吻

她的双膝，她一句话不讲，只是将她纤细的手指，爱抚一般插进男爵的头发里。她仿佛做出了重大决定，猛然脱身，一副果敢的神情，低声喃喃说了一句：“我这就回来，您等着我。”说着，她指向黑暗中，卧室里端床铺隐约白色的影子。

男爵心醉神迷，摸索着走过去，双手颤抖着脱掉衣服，钻进了新铺的床单被罩中。他躺在床上舒服极了，几乎忘记了女友，整个身子乏得不想动弹，沉浸在无比舒坦的被窝的惬意中。少妇根本就没有回来，无疑是乐得让他热切地等待。男爵闭上眼睛安享着美妙的舒适，温柔地畅想，甜美地等待梦寐以求的事情。不过，他的肢体逐渐懈怠，头脑逐渐昏沉，神思飘忽不定。他最终被强大的疲倦击垮了，沉沉睡过去了。

精疲力竭的猎手的困倦无法抵制，他睡得死死的，一直睡到拂晓。突然，栖息在附近树上的一只公鸡报晓，从半开的窗户传入响亮的鸡鸣，男爵猛地惊醒，睁开了眼睛。他感到挨着一个女人的身体，发现自己睡在他认不出来的床上，不免十分惊诧，什么也想不起来了，他刚醒就慌了神儿，讷讷问道：“怎么？我在哪儿？怎么回事儿？”

且说她通宵未眠，此刻看着这个头发蓬乱、眼睛发红、厚嘴唇的男人，她拿出对丈夫说话的那种高傲的声调，回答说：“没事儿。是一只公鸡打鸣。您接着睡吧，先生，没您的事儿。”

蛇蝎美人

蟋蟀饭店是游艇手的法伦斯泰尔^[1]，顾客慢慢散去，而门前却闹哄哄的，叫嚷和呼唤声响成一片。身穿白色运动衫的高大的小伙子，肩上扛着桨，在那里指手画脚。女人则身着浅颜色的春装，她们小心翼翼地跨上游艇，坐到船尾，整理一下衣裙。游艇场老板，一个有名的大力士、蓄留棕红胡子的壮小伙子，一边用手搀扶那些漂亮的小娘们儿，一边稳住轻飘飘的小船。

桨手们也各就各位，他们光着胳膊，挺起胸脯，给长廊里围观的人摆出架势。围观的人有节日打扮的市民、工人和士兵，他们俯在桥栏杆上，聚精会神地观赏这种场景。游艇一只接着一只离开浮桥。那些划船手身子前伏，再往后仰，动作十分均匀。在打了弯的长桨的推动下，小船在河面上迅速滑行，越驶越远，越来越小，在一座铁路桥下消失不见，顺流而下驶向青蛙滩。

只有一对伴侣留了下来。男青年还未长出胡须，身材瘦溜，脸色苍白，他搂着女伴的腰肢。女孩娇小细弱，一头棕发，走路蹦蹦跳跳。二人不时相对凝注。

老板喊道：“来呀，保罗先生，你们快点儿。”

二人应声走过去。这船场的所有顾客中，保罗先生最受喜爱，最受尊敬。他出手大方，又按期结账，而其他顾客要让人揪着耳朵催好久，还可能付不出钱就再不露面了。再说，他成了这个船场的活广告，因为他父亲是参议员。如果有个外地人问道：“那个小家伙是谁呀？他把那个小浪货搂得那么紧！”就会有一位常客，郑重而神秘的样子，悄声答道：“他就是保罗·巴隆，您不知道？参议员的儿子呀。”可是，对方总要情不自禁地感叹：“可怜的家伙，他神魂颠倒了。”蟋蟀大妈为人诚实，会做生意，管这个青年及其女伴叫作“我的一对小斑鸠”，似乎非常喜爱对她饭店有利的这一对情侣。

这对情侣缓步走过去。“玛德琳号”游艇已经准备好，可是上了船，他们又搂抱在一起，惹得聚在桥上的人都笑起来。于是，保罗先生操起桨，也朝青蛙滩划去。

划到那里，将近三点钟了，水上大咖啡厅已经坐满了顾客。水上咖啡厅是一座大木排，由木柱撑着涂了柏油的棚盖，有两座小桥通往美丽的克鲁瓦西岛，其中一座直插这个水上建筑物的正中，而另一座则连着仅长一棵树而得了“花盆”绰号的小岛，从那里上岸便是浴场管

理处。

保罗顺着木排把船拴住，攀过咖啡厅的栏杆，再把他情妇拉上来，二人在餐桌一端面对面坐下。

河对岸的纤道上车水马龙，普通出租车同豪华马车相混杂。前一种十分笨重，便便大腹压低了车弓，套的是一匹脖颈下垂、膝头弯曲的劣马；而另一种车轮轻巧，车身挺秀飘逸，套的马四肢修长挺拔，高扬起脖子，嚼口泛着雪似的白沫，车夫则一本正经，穿着号服，高领支着发僵的脑袋，腰板挺得直直的，鞭子放在一个膝头上。

堤岸上游人熙熙攘攘，有全家人或成帮结伙来的，也有成双成对或者孤身前来的。他们揪草茎，下到水里，再登上岸，回到路上，大家都来到同一地点，停下来等候摆渡的船工。小渡船满载游客，送到岛上，在两岸之间不停地来往。

水上咖啡厅所靠的一道河汊，水流极缓，仿佛在沉睡，人称死河汊。各式各样的船只——游船、赛艇、单人艇、快艇、舢板等，在静止的水面上往来如梭，交错混杂，相互碰撞，有时猛一用力让船急停，然后再突然奋臂，让船又冲出去，飞快滑行，活像一条条红色和黄色的大鱼。

从上游夏图和从下游布吉谷，还源源不断地有船划来。河面上笑声此起彼伏，呼叫、谩骂、召唤或争吵声不绝于耳。划船的人将棕色的皮肤、隆起的二头肌曝露在烈日下，坐在船尾的女士则撑开丝阳伞，红绿蓝黄，五彩缤纷，宛如盛开的异域鲜花，在水上漂流。

七月的太阳在中天燃烧，空气中似乎弥漫着灼人的欢乐。没有一丝风，杨柳的枝叶都纹丝不动。对面远远一道屏障，那便是瓦莱里昂山，它陡峭的山坡展现在强烈的阳光下。右侧秀丽的卢浮西安丘峦，则随同河流弯转，形成半圆，在那大片大片园子的苍莽黛绿中，点缀着乡下人家的白墙。

青蛙滩头有不少参天大树，使这岛上一隅成为世上最惬意的公园。大群游人在滩头的树下散步。那些黄头发的妓女，挺着过度丰满的乳房，撅着过分肥大的屁股，脸上搽的脂粉就像抹了一层白灰，嘴唇涂得血红，身上紧紧箍着系了带子的奇特怪异的衣裙，她们从绿油油的草坪上走过，便留下那种庸俗打扮的强烈味道。陪伴她们的年轻男子，一个个也都装腔作势，身穿时髦版画上的那种奇装异服，手戴浅色手套，足蹬油亮的皮鞋，拄着细绳一般的手杖，还戴着单片眼镜，愈加突出他们微笑时的愚昧。

小岛恰巧在青蛙滩这里变得狭窄，另一边也有一只渡船，将从克鲁瓦西来的游人送过来。这条河汊水流湍急，到处是漩涡、回流和浪花泡沫，大有滚滚激流的气势。一支身穿炮兵服的架桥部队驻扎在对

岸，一些士兵并排坐在一根长梁上观看流水。

水上餐厅里人声嘈杂，混乱不堪。木桌上摆满了半空的酒瓶，围着半醉的顾客，桌面上洒的饮料，形成一条条黏糊糊的细流。这里的人都在大嚷大叫，扯着嗓门儿唱歌。男的将帽子推到后脑勺儿，一个个红头涨脸，眼睛闪着醉态，他们这样肆无忌惮，咋呼鼓噪，完全是出于粗鲁的人天生的需要。那些女的，都在捕捉过夜的对象，眼下先让人请喝酒。在餐桌之间的空地上，主要站着这里的常客、好起哄的划船手们以及穿着法兰绒短裙的女伴。

他们当中有一位正在奋力弹钢琴，仿佛手脚并用。有四对人在跳四对方舞。一些漂亮端庄的年轻人在观看，如果不露出无法掩饰的破绽的话，他们还真像文雅之士。

然而破绽太明显了，一到这儿就能嗅出这全是世界渣滓，全是臭名昭著的荒淫之徒、巴黎社会一切霉烂的东西。这个大杂烩里有时新商店的伙计、蹩脚演员、下流记者、财产代管人、小额股票投机商、无耻的酒色之徒、老牌腐朽的浪荡鬼、各色各样形迹可疑的人。五分可知，五分未知，五分受人尊敬，五分声名狼藉，是些扒手、骗子、拉皮条的、冒险家。一个个却是正人君子的模样，虚张声势，那神气似乎在说：“哪个胆敢把我当成坏蛋，我就要他的命。”这里充斥着愚蠢荒唐的东西，散发着风月场的假意殷勤和无耻欺诈。在这里，男的都半斤八两。这里飘浮着廉价爱情的气味，为了一声“对”还是“不对”，就打架斗殴，动剑动枪，要维护坏透了的名声，结果名声会更臭。

附近有些居民好奇，每逢星期天来瞧瞧。每年，也有几个青年，非常年轻，来这里学习生活。还有一些人散步，路过到这里，有几个天真的人就迷不知返了。

这里叫青蛙滩也有道理。就在喝酒的水上餐厅旁边，紧挨着“花盆”的水域，有人在游泳。那些肌肤丰腴足以示人的女人，便来这里展露肉体以招徕顾客。其他女人却不屑一顾，她们身上虽然这里塞了棉花，那里撑起弹簧，这里垫高一点儿，那里改变一下，但是却以鄙夷的神气望着她们嬉水的姊妹。

游泳的人挤在一个小平台上，要头朝下扎猛子。他们的体形，有的长得像竹竿，有的圆得像柠檬，有的扭曲得像橄榄树，有的弓着腰，有的腆着肚子朝后仰，但无一例外，都丑陋不堪，他们跳水时，溅起的水花会洒到旁边喝咖啡的顾客身上。

水上咖啡厅尽管有繁茂的大树遮阴，又挨着水面，可是仍然溽暑熏蒸。洒掉饮料的气味、人体散发的气味，同爱情女贩的浓烈香水味混杂在一起，须知香水已经渗进爱情女贩的皮肤中，待在这个火炉里

便蒸发出来。不过，在这形形色色的气味掩盖下，还飘浮着一种搽面香粉的清香，时隐时现，但总能再次闻到，就好像有一只隐蔽的手在空中摇晃着一个无形的粉扑。

美妙的景观还在河上，往来如梭的游船引人注目。船上的女客半躺在圆椅里，面对着臂膀强健的男伴，带着几分蔑视的神态，望着岛上那些游荡觅食的女人。有时，一只快船飞速划过去，岸上的朋友们便高喊加油。咖啡馆里的全体观众也都突然疯狂起来，开始大吼大叫。在夏图方向的河湾上，不断出现新的游船。船划近了，越来越大，人们也渐渐认出船上人的面孔，于是又发出一阵阵吼叫。

一只篷船载着四个女人，顺水慢慢划过来。划船的女人瘦小枯干，穿着见习水手服，头发绾上去，戴着一顶漆布帽。她对面是个金发胖女人，一副男装打扮，穿着白色法兰绒上衣。她仰卧在船舱里，双腿举起搭在桨手两侧的坐凳上，嘴里叼着香烟，每当双桨用力划一下，她的胸脯和腹部就颤动、摇晃起来。后面船篷下有两个细高挑儿的漂亮姑娘，一位棕发，一位金发，两人相互搂着腰，一直看着她们的同伴。

有人从青蛙滩喊了一声：“来宝斯来啦！”于是，突然爆发一阵狂呼乱叫，大家拼命拥挤。酒杯倒了，有人登上餐桌，所有人都歇斯底里，大吼大叫：“来宝斯！来宝斯！来宝斯！”喧声滚荡，变得混杂不清，汇成一种骇人的喧嚣，继而，仿佛猛然拔地而起，冲上半空，笼罩平野，充塞大树的茂盛枝叶，扩展到远处的丘峦，并直趋高悬的太阳。

在欢呼声中，那位划船的女人从容地停住双桨，而躺在船舱里的那个金发胖姑娘，则用两肘支起身子，漫不经心地转过头去。坐在船尾的那两位美丽姑娘一边向人群致意，一边咯咯笑起来。于是，喧叫之声变本加厉，震动了水上咖啡厅。男人举起帽子，女人挥动手帕，所有人，不管尖嗓门儿还是粗嗓门儿，都齐声高呼：“来宝斯！”这场面，真像一帮堕落的人在向头头儿致敬，如同一位海军司令检阅时，船队鸣礼炮一样。成群结队的游船也向那几位女子欢呼。她们的小艇又慢悠悠地划开，到稍远一点儿的地方靠岸。

保罗先生则不然，他从兜里掏出一个薄片钥匙，用全力吹响。他那神经质的情妇脸色更加苍白，拉他胳膊叫他停下，这回，她瞪着保罗，眼睛冒火了。然而，保罗似乎恼羞成怒，表现出一种男人的嫉妒，一种深沉的、本能的而又混乱的愤怒，他气得嘴唇颤抖，结结巴巴地说：“真不要脸！就该像溺死母狗那样，在她们脖子上吊上石头沉到河里！”

这时，玛德琳突然发火了，她那小尖嗓门儿变得刺耳了，说了一

大套，仿佛是为自已辩解：“你来什么劲，这关你什么事儿？她们不欠任何人的，难道连想干什么就干什么的权利都没有吗？收起你这套吧，别烦别人，管好你自己的事儿吧……”

但是，保罗打断她的话：“这与警察局有关系，哼，我要把她们投进圣拉扎尔监狱！”

玛德琳浑身一抖。

“就你！”

“对，就我！而且，这会儿我也不准你同她们说话，听见了吧，我就是不准。”

于是，她耸了耸肩，立刻平静下来：“我的宝贝，我高兴干什么就干什么，你要是不满意，那就走开，马上走。我不是你老婆，对不对？你还是闭嘴吧。”

保罗没有回嘴，二人对视，嘴角抽搐，呼吸急促。

四个女人从木质结构的大咖啡厅另一侧进来，两个男装打扮的走在前面，一个干瘦，酷似老气横秋的小男孩，鬓颊蜡黄色；另一个肥胖，塞满白色法兰绒外衣，肥臀也撑起肥大的裤子，走路像肥鹅一般摇摆，那两条大腿胖得要命，连膝盖都显得凹进去了。她们的两个女友跟在后面。划船手都纷纷上前同她们握手。

她们四人在岸边租了一间小木屋，像两家人在一起生活。她们的淫荡是人所共知的，也是明目张胆的。大家提起来，就像谈论一件自然而然的事情，抱着几分同情的态度，私下里还讲些有关她们的离奇故事、妒火中烧的女人编造的艳事，说是知名的妇女、女演员都秘密造访河边这间小屋。一位邻居听了这些丑闻十分生气，告诉宪警。一名队长带着一名属员来调查。这任务很棘手，总的说来，这些女人根本不卖淫，并没有什么可指责的。那位队长大惑不解，甚至没怎么弄明白所怀疑的罪过是什么性质，随便询问了一些人，写了一份冗长的报告，得出无罪的结论。这个笑话都传到了圣日耳曼。

她们摆出王后的架势，缓步穿过青蛙滩的咖啡厅，那神气显然为她们的名气感到自豪，为能引人注目而感到高兴。她们傲视这群人，这帮无名鼠辈、乌合之众。玛德琳和她的情人注视她们走过来，而姑娘的眼神燃得明亮。

走在前面的两位到了长桌这一端时，玛德琳喊了一声：“波莉娜！”那个胖子回过头来，站住了，但是仍然挽着那个穿着见习水手服的女伴的胳膊，应声说道：“噢！玛德琳……我的心肝儿，过来跟我说说话。”

保罗扣在他情妇腕子上的手指又用了用力，可是她却说：“要知道，我的宝贝，你可以离开。”那语气十分坚持，保罗便不讲话了，独自留下。

她们三人站在那里，低声交谈，话讲得很快，她们的嘴唇上不时掠过快意的神情。波莉娜有时偷偷看保罗一眼，那微笑则含有讥讽与刻薄。保罗终于忍不住了，他忽地站起来，冲到玛德琳面前，四肢都在颤抖，一把抓住她的肩膀，说道：“过来，我叫你过来呢，说过不准你同这些娼妇交谈！”

可是，波莉娜却提高嗓门儿，使出市井泼妇的全套本领同他吵架。周围的人开始哄笑，都凑到近前，踮起脚，想看个究竟。脏话雨点一般地浇到他头上，保罗呆住了，觉得从那张嘴里吐出的话，就像往他身上泼屎泼尿，因此这闹剧一开场，他就退却了，掉头回去，靠到临河的栏杆上，背向那三个旗开得胜的女人。保罗俯在那里，凝望水面，有时他迅速抹一下，用神经质的手指抹掉在眼角聚成的泪珠，就好像是一把抓走似的。

这是因为他坠入情网，也不知为什么，既违背他敏锐的直觉，也违背他的良知和意愿。他坠入情网，如同人掉进泥坑里。他天生多情敏感，曾梦想过那种美妙的、理想而炽热的恋情，岂料这个瘦小的女人，跟所有妓女一样愚蠢，愚蠢得不可救药，甚至谈不上漂亮，又瘦又爱生气。就是这样一个女人将他抓住，将他俘获，从头到脚，从肉体到灵魂占有了他。他中了女性这种神秘的、威慑无比的魔力，不知道这种陌生的力量、这种神奇的牵制从何而来，是肉体之魔授予的，能让一个最明智的男人，匍匐在一个寻常女郎的脚下，根本无法解释她身上有什么天生的主宰大权。

他感到就在他身后，正策划一种可耻的举动。一阵阵笑声直刺他的心。怎么办？他完全明白，但又办不到。他定睛看着对岸一个垂钓者，守着纹丝不动的鱼线。

突然，那人猛地抬起鱼竿，只见线梢儿从水中拉出一尾摆动的银色小鱼来。接着，他要把鱼钩摘下来，拧来扭去都不成，便不耐烦了，干脆用劲一拉，将小鱼带血的喉头连同一段肠子拉出来了。保罗浑身一抖，心都撕裂了，他觉得那鱼钩就是他的爱情，要想夺走，那么铁钩尖就会把他内心深处的东西，全部从胸膛里拉出来，而拉着钓线的正是玛德琳。

一只手搭到他肩膀上，他吓了一跳，扭头看看，原来是他情妇回到了身边。二人谁也不讲话，玛德琳也像他一样，趴到栏杆上，定睛望着河水。保罗想找话说，却一句也没有想出来。他甚至弄不清心里有什么活动，只感到她回到身边、有她陪伴的快慰，也感到一种蒙

耻的懦弱、一种宽恕一切的愿望，只要她不离开，就什么都答应。

沉默了几分钟之后，他终于口气十分温和地问道：“咱们走吧，好吗？到船上更舒服些。”

玛德琳答道：“好吧，我的小猫。”

于是，保罗搀她登上游艇，紧紧抓着双手扶住她，温情脉脉，眼角还挂着泪花。玛德琳也含笑看着他，于是，二人又拥抱亲吻了。他们沿着岸边，缓缓地溯流而上。岸上绿茵覆盖，柳树成行，静悄悄的，沐浴在午后温暖的阳光里。他们回到蟋蟀饭店的时候，刚敲六点钟。他们舍船登上小岛，沿着岸边高大的杨树，穿过牧场，朝贝松走去。

高高的牧草快要开割了，遍地野花盛开，西斜的太阳在上面铺了一层橙黄色晖光。傍晚暑热稍减，青草飘香，加上河流的潮气，给空气增添一种缠绵的情调、一种淡淡的幸福感，好似令人舒坦的氤氲之气。

心扉透进一股缱绻的柔情，似乎应和黄昏这种宁静的霞光、生命勃发的这种幽微而神秘的震颤，应和这种沁人心脾的忧伤的诗意。仿佛从草木万物生发而蔓延的诗意，在这温馨而沉思的时刻，充盈着他的感官。这一切，他都感受到了，而她却毫不体悟。他们并排走着，她不耐沉默了，忽然唱起歌来。她那假嗓音有点儿刺耳，唱的是街头流行曲，残留在记忆中的一个小调，却蓦地撕破了黄昏幽深静谧的和谐。

于是，他看了她一眼，感到他们之间隔着一道不可逾越的鸿沟。她用阳伞抽打着青草，略微低头瞧着自己的脚，边走边唱，拖长音节，尝试华彩过门，敢于模仿颤音。

她那小小的、狭窄的额头，他爱得多深，居然如此空虚，如此空虚！那里面只装着这种八音盒式的音乐，即使偶尔形成一点儿思想，也类似这种音乐。她根本不理解他，他们之间的距离比不在一起还要大。难道他的吻从来没有超越嘴唇吗？

这时，她抬起眼睛看他，又微微一笑。于是，一股冲动深入骨髓，他张开手臂，以双倍的爱热烈地拥抱她。她见衣裙弄皱了，便挣脱拥抱，用呢喃的一句话给点儿补偿：“好了，我非常爱你，我的小猫。”不过，他又搂住了她的腰，发狂一般拖着她跑起来，一边欢蹦乱跳，一边吻她的脸蛋、鬓角和脖子。他们气喘吁吁，倒在被夕阳照成一片火的灌木丛脚下，二人交欢了，而她却没有领会他那份激情。

他们手拉手走回来，从树木中间，突然望见河上那四个女人的游船。胖波莉娜也瞧见他们俩，她站起来，朝玛德琳送来飞吻，接着喊

道：“今晚见！”

玛德琳答道：“今晚见！”

保罗觉得自己的心一下子浸入冰水里。他们回去用晚餐，二人坐在临水的凉棚下，开始闷头吃饭。天色黑下来，伙计送来一支点燃的蜡烛，玻璃球罩里的微弱烛光摇曳不定。二楼大餐厅里不时传来划船手的阵阵喧哗。快要上甜食的时候，保罗温存地拉起玛德琳的手，对她说道：“我非常疲乏，我的小乖乖，你要是愿意的话，咱们就早点儿睡觉。”

然而，玛德琳明白这种花招，十分暧昧地瞥了他一眼，女人眼睛的深处，往往闪现这种负情的神色。她想了一下，才回答说：“你要睡就去睡吧，我呢，已经答应人家去参加青蛙滩舞会。”

保罗凄然一笑，这是人们用以掩饰极痛深悲的一种微笑，不过，他还是用既温柔又伤感的声调答道：“你要是体贴一点儿，那么咱们俩就会待在一起了。”她摇了摇头，但没有讲出“不”字。保罗仍不死心：“求求你了，我的小鹿。”

可是，她却打断他的话：“你知道我对你说过什么。你要是不满意，门是敞开的，没人强留你。至于我，答应了，就得去。”

保罗双肘撑在桌子上，用手捂住额头，木然不动，沉浸在冥思苦想中。游船客下楼来，仍然大嚷大叫，他们要划船去参加青蛙滩舞会。玛德琳对保罗说：“快点儿决定，你要是不去，还有这些先生，我求一位送我去。”

保罗站起来，咕哝道：“走吧。”于是，他们去了。夜色弥漫，星斗满天，到处流动着灼人的气息、滞重的气浪，负载着溽暑，无形中透着一丝活力。微风受其拖累也缓慢了，似乎变得稠浓而厚重，拂面给人一种热乎乎爱抚的感觉，令人呼吸加快，乃至喘息了。一只只游船启程了，船头都挂一盏花灯。根本看不清船身，只见一盏盏小彩灯疾驰跳动，宛如狂舞的流萤。黑暗中，四面八方都流动着人声笑语。两个年轻人的游艇缓缓滑行。有时，一只快艇从旁边超过去，他们就突然瞧见划船手被灯光照亮的白色背影。他们驶过河湾，就远远望见青蛙滩了。

水上咖啡厅一派节日气氛，挂起了大花灯、小彩灯花束和葡萄灯串。几只平底大船在塞纳河上缓缓游动，五彩斑斓的灯光在空中绘成圆顶、金字塔以及复杂建筑物，形状各异。点亮的花彩一直拖到水面。有时，一盏红灯或蓝灯，高高挑在一根看不见的长竿上，好似一颗摇曳的巨星。

所有这些彩灯，照亮咖啡厅的四周，从上到下照亮岸边的大树，

只见浅灰色的树干和淡绿色的叶丛，被黑洞洞的田野和天空衬得尤为突出。乐队由五名郊区艺人组成，演奏着支离破碎的酒吧粗劣音乐，传得很远，玛德琳和着音乐歌唱。玛德琳要立刻进舞厅。保罗本来想在岛上转一圈，最后不得不让步。参加舞会的人几乎清一色是游船客，还有零星几个市民、几个携妓的青年。这场康康舞的指挥兼组织者，身穿黑色旧礼服，神气活现，满场展示他那颗兜售廉价娱乐的老商人秃头。胖波莉娜及其女伴不在那儿，保罗舒了一口气。

一对对跳舞的人面对面，发狂似的又蹦又吵，腿踢得很高，一直举到舞伴的鼻子上。那些女的大腿都要脱臼了，蹿跳时裙子飘起来，露出了内裤。她们的脚不费劲就举过头顶，令人惊叹。她们还摇晃肚子，摆动屁股，抖动乳房，向周围散发出汗馊的强烈气味。那些男的则蹲下来，学蛤蟆的样子，做出猥亵的姿势，身子弯来扭去，挤眉弄眼，丑态百出，还用手撑地倒翻跟头，或者忸怩作态，竭力装扮怪相。一名胖女招待和两名男招待送着饮料食物。

这个水上咖啡厅仅有棚盖，四面并无墙板同外面相隔，他们就在安谧的黑夜，在繁星满天的苍穹下疯狂地舞蹈。忽然间，对面瓦莱里昂山那边亮起来，仿佛山后发生了火灾。那片亮光越扩越大，越来越明亮，逐渐侵袭上空，勾画出一个光圈，先呈淡白色，继而又出现红晕，扩大开来，呈现火红色，如同铁砧上烧红的铁，再缓缓延展成圆，似乎从大地里出来。就这样，月亮很快离开地平线，冉冉升空，越升越高，绛红色随之渐淡，化为黄色，是亮晶晶的淡黄。而那星体离地面越远，也似乎越小了。

保罗久久凝望月亮，心驰神往，忘了他的情妇。等他再扭头看时，她已经不见了。

他寻找，却不见她的踪影。他那焦急不安的目光扫过一张张餐桌，他还来回奔走，问这个又问那个，谁也没有瞧见她。他担心得要命，就这样东找西找，这时，一名伙计对他说：“您是找玛德琳夫人吧？她刚才和波莉娜夫人一道走了。”

就在说话的同时，保罗望见咖啡厅的另一端，站着那个身穿见习水手服的女人和那两个漂亮姑娘，三个人相互搂着腰，一边窥视他，一边交头接耳。他明白了，立刻像疯了似的冲上小岛。他先朝夏图方向跑去，可是看到眼前一片平野，他沿原路返回，开始搜寻灌木丛，狂奔乱走，不时停下来听一听。四面八方都送来铿锵短促的蛙声。从布吉谷方面，还传来几声鸟叫，但是距离远而声音微弱。月亮的清辉洒在宽阔的草地上，仿佛白絮般的尘雾。清辉透过叶丛，沿着白杨的银色树皮流泻，看上去高高震颤的树冠就像被光雨打穿。这仲夏之夜醉人的诗意，也由不得保罗，还是透进他的心胸，穿越他惊慌失措的历程，带着残忍的嘲讽搅动他的心田；在他那颗沉思多情的灵魂上，

激起狂热的渴望，要追求理想的爱情，要在一个忠贞可爱的女子怀中倾诉炽烈的情肠。

他柔肠寸断，泣不成声，不得不停下脚步。一阵悲痛过去，他又往前走。猛然，他好像挨了一刀：树丛里有人在拥抱。他跑过去一看，原来是一对情侣，两个身影搂抱在一起吻个没完，见他走近便躲开了。他不敢呼唤，就知道她不会答应。而且，他又深恐突然发现那两个。短号声令人心碎，笛子模仿欢笑，小提琴尖声狂叫，这些组成四对方舞的老调，一下下揪他的心，加剧他的痛苦。疯狂的音乐节奏混乱，在树下流窜，随着阵风时强时弱。

他猛然想到，也许她回去了吧？不错，她肯定回去啦！为什么不会呢？实在愚蠢，这一阵他无缘无故自相惊扰，胡乱猜疑，完全昏了头。痛苦绝望的情绪，也有奇异的间歇的时候，他正好碰到这种情况，又回头朝舞场走去。

他扫视整个大厅，仍然不见她的人影儿。他绕过餐桌，又突然面对那三个女人，他那气急败坏的样子一定很怪，因为她们仨都咯咯笑起来。他赶紧逃开，又跑上小岛，喘着粗气冲进树丛里。——继而，他又谛听——听了许久，因为耳朵嗡嗡鸣响。终于，他仿佛听见不远处有尖细的笑声，是他所熟悉的。于是，他蹑手蹑脚地靠近，拨开树枝朝前爬行，心跳得十分剧烈，连呼吸都感到困难。

两个人在窃窃私语，还听不清楚，随后又不出声了。

他忽然产生一个强烈的愿望，要逃开，不想看见，不想知道，永远逃开，远离这种毁掉他的狂热恋情。他要回到夏图，乘上火车，再也不回来，再也不见她了。可是，她的形象又突然浮现，他又在意念中看见她。早晨她在他们暖烘烘的床上醒来，紧紧贴着他亲昵，双臂搂住他的脖子，蓬乱的头发稍微遮住前额，眼睛还闭着，张开嘴唇接受第一个吻。他蓦然想起这种晨起的亲昵，心中立刻充满肠断魂销的遗憾、炽热狂燃的欲火。

那二人又说话了，他弯着腰靠近，忽听近旁枝叶下轻轻叫了一声。一声叫！那正是他们欢情深烈时他听熟了的叫声。他还继续靠近，仿佛不由自主，无法抵御那种吸引，完全是下意识的……果然看见她们了。

噢！另外一个，哪怕是个男人呢！不料却这样！却这样！他就觉得自己也被扯进她们的无耻行径里了。他愣在原地，神情沮丧，意乱心烦，就好像猛然发现一具被残害的亲人尸体，发现一件伤天害理的罪案、一种亵渎神灵的行为。这时，他不由自主地一闪念，想到他看见拉出肠子的那条小鱼……忽然玛德琳轻声叫道：“波莉娜！”那声调就跟叫“保罗”一样热烈。于是，保罗心如刀绞，立刻奋力逃开了。他

撞到两棵树干，摔倒在一条树根上，爬起来又跑，忽然发觉到了河边，面对月光照亮的湍急的水流。激流形成许多巨大的漩涡，舞弄着月影。河岸形同峭壁，高踞于水面，河面如同一条宽宽的黑带，可以听见暗影中的汨汨水声。对岸是克鲁瓦西村，皎洁的月光下是一片农舍。

这一切如同梦境，保罗仿佛重温一件往事。他什么也不想，什么也不明白，自然万物，乃至他自身的存在，都变得恍惚遥远了，都忘却了，完结了。面前就是河流。他明白自己在做什么吗？他要寻死吗？他简直疯了。在这寂静的夜晚，庸俗舞曲的叠句还在微弱固执地回荡，他决然转过身，面向小岛，面向她，惨叫一声：“玛德琳！”那声音绝望、尖厉，迥非人声。

他那声撕肝裂胆的呼叫，穿过寥廓长天的沉寂，传向四面八方。接着，他纵身一跳，像野兽蹿跳那样，投进河中，溅起水花，河面随即又合拢。他消失的地方，泛起一圈圈波纹，映着月光越扩越大，一直扩展到对岸。两个女人听见了。玛德琳站起来，说道：“是保罗。”她心里萌生一丝疑虑：“他跳河了。”她冲向河边，胖波莉娜也随后赶到。

一条笨重的平底船上有两个男人，在那处水面转悠。一人划船，另一人将一根长竿探进水中，似乎在探寻什么。波莉娜嚷道：“你们干什么呢？那儿有什么？”

一个陌生的声音答道：“有个投河自杀的人。”

两个女人惊呆了，紧紧靠在一起，注视着船的移动。远处青蛙滩的音乐还在闹哄，那节拍仿佛给捞尸者的动作伴奏，而河流现在隐藏一具尸体，在月光下打漩流淌。

打捞了好长时间。可怕的等待，玛德琳瑟瑟发抖。至少过了半个钟头，其中一个人终于说道：“我钩住啦！”

他轻轻往上提竿。一样大东西终于浮出水面。另一个船员放下桨，两个人合力，拉那个不动的大坨子，拉到船上。然后，他们挑地势低并有月光的一处上岸。等他们上了岸，两个女人也赶到了。

玛德琳一见尸体，吓得连连后退。在月光下，他仿佛变绿了，嘴巴、眼睛、鼻子、衣服都沾满了污泥，合拢的僵硬的手指十分可怕，全身都糊了一层黑乎乎的泥水。脸好像肿胀了，沾了稀泥的头发上不断往下淌污水。

两个船员察看了尸体，其中一个问道：“你认识他吗？”

另一个是克鲁瓦西的摆渡人，他犹豫一下，答道：“认识，这张脸好像见过，不过你也知道，这是不容易认的。”接着，他突然说

道：“嘿，这是保罗先生啊！”

“保罗先生是谁呀？”伙伴问道。

前一个回答：

“就是保罗·巴隆先生啊，参议员的儿子，小伙子太痴情了。”

另一个则达观地补充说：

“是啊，现在他玩到头了。不过，人有钱，走了还是挺可惜的。”

玛德琳失声痛哭，瘫倒在地上。波莉娜走到尸体跟前，问道：“他真死了吗？——救不活了吗？”

那两个人耸耸肩膀：“唉！都这么长时间啦！肯定完了。”

而后，其中一个人问道：“他是住在蟋蟀饭店吗？”

“对，”另一个答道，“该送到那儿去，能给赏钱的。”

他们又上了船，划走了，但是水流太急，船行得很慢。两个女人站在原地，好久还能望见他们，听到船桨有节奏击水的声音。

这时，可怜的玛德琳还在哀痛，波莉娜搂住她，极力爱抚，久久拥抱，安慰她说：“有什么办法，这根本不是你的错，对不对？没法儿阻止男人干傻事。归根结底，他要这么干，这就活该啦！”

接着，她把玛德琳扶起来，又说道：“好啦，宝贝儿，去我那儿睡吧。今晚，你不能回蟋蟀饭店了。”她又拥抱玛德琳，说道：“好啦，我们会治好你的。”

玛德琳站起来，还一直在哭泣，但声势减弱，她的头偎在波莉娜的肩上，仿佛找到了庇护所，是一种更体贴可靠、更亲热信赖的温情，她脚步蹉跎，蹒跚而去。

[1] 法伦斯泰尔是法国空想社会主义者夏尔·傅立叶创造的一种理想城邦概念——自给自足似的乌托邦生活社区。他认为为了更好的生活状态，人们应该打破家庭的概念，用“法郎吉”来替代，这些“法郎吉”住在被称为“法伦斯泰尔”的城中。——编者注

奥托父子

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这座大庄院，半似农场，半像庄园，是混合型乡居，颇有几分领主庄园的气派，现在则居住着大庄户人家。院落苹果树上拴的几条狗守着院门，瞧见护树人和几个小青年扛着猎袋，便汪汪叫起来。

在厨房兼餐室的厅堂里，老奥托和小奥托父子，收税员贝尔蒙先生和公证人蒙达吕先生，正吃一顿便饭，喝杯红酒，就要出发打猎了，今天是正式开猎的日子。

老奥托拥有这份家产，很是得意，打猎前就先吹嘘客人到他这地盘上，能打到什么猎物。他这个诺曼底人身材高大，面色红润，特别健壮，是个能把苹果车举上肩头的汉子。他是半个农民，半个文化人，家境殷富，受人尊敬，很有影响力，也很专横。他让儿子凯撒上学受教育，念到三年级^[1]就辍学，唯恐小奥托变成文化人而忽略田产。

凯撒小奥托，几乎跟父亲一般高，但是真瘦溜儿。他是个好小伙子，听话的儿子，对什么都满意，对老奥托的意愿和见解，满心赞赏，敬重且钦佩。

收税员贝尔蒙先生，则是个矮胖子，红红的面颊上，呈现青色血脉织成的细网，仿佛地图上的红河水道。他问道：“那么，野兔呢——有野兔吗？”

老奥托回答：“您要多少就有多少，特别是到比伊萨蒂埃那片林子深处。”

“我们先从哪儿开始呢？”公证人插言道。他是个胖子，脸色苍白，作为公证人，性格随和而开朗，同样大腹便便，穿一身崭新的猎装，全身箍得紧紧的，还是上周去鲁昂买的。

“喏，就从那里，从里端开始，我们先将山鹑轰到田野里，然后就势扑上去。”

老奥托说罢，就站起身，大家也都跟着站起来，去角落操起各自的猎枪，再检查一下全套装备，又跺跺脚，确定靴子非常跟脚。靴子偏硬一点儿，等走动起来血脉一热就会软和些。接着，他们走出去，猎犬立时扯直了绳索，身子立起来，前爪在半空乱抓，发出尖厉的叫

声。

大家上路，走向林子深处。这是一道小山谷，确切点儿说，是一大道土质恶劣的沟壑，因而不能耕种。一条条细谷长满了蕨类植物，正是猎物极好的去处。猎手们拉开了距离，老奥托走右侧，小奥托走左侧，两位客人居中。猎场守护人和扛猎袋的人紧随其后。这是庄严的时刻，大家都等待打响第一枪，心跳不免有点儿加速，而紧张的手指随时准备叩动扳机。

突然，第一枪打响了！是老奥托开的枪。所有人都停下来，只见一只山鹑脱离拍打翅膀逃窜的一群，跌落到一条沟壑茂密的荆丛里。亢奋的猎手开始奔跑，跨越，挣脱挂住他的刺藤，他也消隐在矮树林中了，去寻找他的猎物。几乎紧随其后，第二声枪响了。

“嗨！嗨！这个无赖，”贝尔蒙先生叫起来，“在那下面，他很可能把一只野兔赶出窝了。”

所有人都等待，眼睛注视那片目光透不进去的茂密枝叶。公证人双手合成喊话筒，嚷道：“捉到了吗？”老奥托没有应声，于是凯撒回身对护林人说：“你去帮帮他，约瑟夫。必须一排往前推。我们等着。”

约瑟夫，干干巴巴，长得像根老树桩，疙里疙瘩，各个关节无不突显。他不慌不忙卸下装备，找准容易下脚的穴坑，像狐狸一样谨慎小心。不大工夫，听到他嚷起来，“噢！来人哪！来人哪！出乱子啦！”

所有人都跑下去，冲进荆丛里，老奥托侧身倒在地上，双手捂住肚子，只见鲜血从子弹打穿的帆布衣破洞里流到了荒草上。他在伸手去抓那只打死的山鹑时，丢下的猎枪磕到石头上，撞击走火，打出第二响，打穿了他的腹部。大家急忙上手，把他从沟里拖出来，扒开猎装，看到伤口惨不忍睹，肠子也流出来了。好歹给他包扎住伤口之后，当即抬他回家，等待早已派人请的医生以及一位神父。

医生赶来检查伤势，他神情凝重，摇了摇头，转过身来，对坐在椅子上啜泣的小奥托说道：“我可怜的小伙子，看来情况可不妙。”

不过，等伤口包扎好了，伤者动了动手指，张开嘴，睁开枯槁的双眼，目光焦虑地环顾四周。接着，他仿佛搜寻记忆，似乎想起来，明白过来了，这才咕哝一句：“妈的，这下子栽啦！”

医生拉住他的手，说道：

“哪儿的话，哪儿的话呢，休养几天就行了，没什么事。”

奥托接口道：“这下子栽啦！我肚子破开啦！我完全清楚。”

随即突然说道：“我想跟儿子谈谈，如果还来得及的话。”

小奥托不由得哭哭啼啼，像个小孩子似的反复说道：“爸爸，爸爸，可怜的爸爸！”

然而父亲，语气更加坚定，说道：“好了，别哭了，这不是时候。我有话跟你说。过这儿来，靠近前，很快就能说完，我也就放心了。你们几位，请给我一些时间。”

所有人都出去了，留下儿子面对父亲。只有父子二人了，父亲便说道：“听着，儿子，你已经二十四岁了，事情可以告诉你了。其实，我们说的，也不是什么天大的秘密。你清楚，你母亲过世已有七年了，对不对，我呢，现在不过四十五岁，当年结婚我才十九岁，对不对？”

儿子结结巴巴地回答：“对，是这样。”

“那好，你母亲过世都七年了，我呢，一直独身生活。好嘛！像我这样一个男人，不可能三十七岁就一直做个鳏父吧，对不对？”

儿子回答：“对，是这样。”

父亲喘着气，脸色惨白，面部肌肉抽搐着，他接着说道：

“天哪，疼得真邪乎！喏，你明白。男人天生就不能过独身生活，但是，我又不愿意续弦，替代你母亲，只因我向她许诺过……怎么样……你明白吧？”

“是的，父亲。”

“因此，我在鲁昂找了个小相好的，住在胡瓜鱼街，十八号，四层，二门——我对你说的这些，不要忘了，——那个小相好的很体贴人，对我一心一意，很重感情，很忠贞，是一个实实在在的女人，怎么？你懂了吧，我的孩子？”

“是的，父亲。”

“那好，如果我走了，我还欠她点儿什么，而且至关重要，能保证她生活无忧。你明白吧？”

“是的，父亲。”

“跟你说，她是个贤淑的姑娘，真的，很贤淑，如果不是有你，如果不是怀念你母亲，再说，如果没有我们三人生活过的这个家，那么，我就会带她来这里了，然后娶她，这是肯定的……你听好……听好了……我的孩子……我本可以立一份遗嘱……可我根本没有做！我不愿意……因为事情……这类事情……决不应该写下来……这太损害合法继承人了……况且，这样会全部搅乱了……这样能毁了所有人！

你瞧，印花公文纸，不需要，永远呢不要使用。如果说我富有，就因为我一辈子都没有动用过。这你明白，我的儿子！”

“是的，父亲。”

“再听我说说……听好了……就是说，我没有立遗嘱……我不愿意……而且，我了解你，你心肠好，你不吝啬，怎么说呢，不斤斤计较。我心里想好了，等临终时，我就把事情一五一十告诉你，还要恳求你别忘记那个女孩：卡罗莉娜·多奈，胡瓜鱼街十八号，四层，二门，别忘了——再有，听我说，等我一走，你立刻就去那儿——去妥善处理，免得她想起我时产生抱怨情绪。——你有钱财——你办得到……我给你留下的相当多……你挺好……平日找不到她。她在莫罗太太家里干活，博瓦西纳街。星期四你去。这一天她等着我。这是我的日子，已经六年了。可怜的姑娘，她会怎么伤心哭泣啊！……这件事，我全对你讲了，我的儿子，就因为我非常了解你。这类事情，不能当众去讲，也不能告诉公证人和本堂神父。这种事天天发生，众所周知，但是不能讲，除非到了必要的时候。因此，除了家人，外人，谁也不知道这个秘密，就因为家庭，所有人拧成一股绳。你明白了吧？”

“是的，父亲。”

“你答应吗？”

“是的，父亲。”

“你发誓？”

“是的，父亲。”

“是我求你了，恳求你了，儿子，不要忘了，这是我的心事。”

“不会忘的，父亲。”

“你要亲自去。我希望这个事情你能妥善安排。”

“是的，父亲。”

“然后，就看情况吧……你看她怎么向你解释。我呢，不能对你多讲了。发过誓了。”

“是的，父亲。”

“就这样吧，我的儿子，吻吻我。别了。我不行了，确定无疑。告诉他们进来吧。”小奥托呻吟着亲吻了父亲，他也始终顺从，打开了房门。神父进屋，他身穿宽袖白色法袍，手上拿着圣体油。然而，重危的人已经闭上眼睛，再也不肯睁开了，也不肯回答，甚至都不肯做一个他听懂了的暗示。

这个汉子，他说得够多的了，不能再讲了。况且，此刻他心里很平静，就想这样安静地死去。他已经向他的儿子，这个家庭的成员忏悔了，何必还向上帝的代表忏悔呢？

照例为他行了圣事，净除了心中的邪魔。赎了罪过，他的朋友围在身边，仆人们跪了一圈，没见他脸上有一丝征象他还活着。

表明剧痛的抽搐持续了四小时之后，他于午夜时分离世了。

二

星期天开猎，星期二下了葬。凯撒·奥托送父亲到墓地，安葬之后回家，这天余下的时间，他就只顾伤心流泪了，通宵没有怎么睡觉，醒来感到特别凄苦，心想，今后这日子怎么过下去呢？不过，到了傍晚，他还是想到要遵从父亲的遗愿，次日他一定得前往鲁昂看望卡罗莉娜·多奈那个姑娘，记得她住在胡瓜鱼街十八号，四层，二门。他像喃喃祈祷一样，低声重复这个名字和这个地址，不知念叨了多少遍，以免忘记。最后就没完没了地咕哝，停都停不下来，或者无论想什么，他的舌头和他的思维却总被这句话控制着。

第二天，约莫八点钟，他就吩咐下人备车，套上“大麦粒”，那匹诺曼底种的高头大马，他上车起程，马车飞驰在安维尔通往鲁昂的大道上。他穿上他那件黑礼服，头戴丝绸大礼帽，穿一条裤脚松紧带套在脚底的长裤。考虑当时的境况，他不愿意显露他那漂亮的礼服，就套上了蓝罩衫，迎风便鼓起来，能遮挡灰尘和脏点，到达后一跳下车，随手就脱掉。

马车驶进鲁昂城，恰好敲响十点钟。凯撒·奥托还一如既往，到三潭街“好心肠”旅馆落脚，接受老板、老板娘及其五个儿子的拥抱，因为他们得知了办丧事的消息。他还不得不详细讲述是出意外的情况，这又引起他们伤心落泪。这些人人都知道他有钱，百般殷勤招待，可是他却谢绝，甚至不吃他们的饭，这又让他们挺生气。

他掸掉帽子上的尘土，刷干净礼服，又擦亮了皮靴，便出去寻找胡瓜鱼街。他不敢向任何人打听，生怕被人认出来，引起怀疑。最终他还是没有找到，看见一名教士，认为教会的人信得过，他们在职业上就谨慎，于是向那人问路。原来，走过去不过百十来步远，就在右侧的第二条街。

这时，他倒犹豫起来。此前，他就像个粗人，一直按照死者的意愿行事。而现在，他却感到心慌意乱，迷惑起来，一想到他，作为儿子，要面对这个曾经是他父亲的姘头女人，就不免觉得丢脸。我们心中的全部道德观，是多少世纪传承教育在我们感情深处的积淀，关于生活中的坏女人，源自教理课本他所学到的一切，以及天性多疑的男

人，对这种放荡的女人，哪怕娶了一个，也必然——本人心存的蔑视，再加上他这个农民身上所具备的整个狭隘的正派观念，凡此种种，都在他内心翻腾，令他畏缩不前，令他羞愧而脸红。

不过，他还是想：“我答应了父亲，总不该失信。”于是，他推开挂着十八号牌子的半掩的楼门，发现一座昏暗的楼梯，上到四层，看到一门，又看到二门，找见门铃绳，便拉了两下。丁零丁零的铃声，在里面的房间响起，让他浑身不由得猛一战栗，房门打开了，出现在他面前的是一位年轻太太，穿戴得很好，一头棕发，肤色鲜艳，她眼神惊愕地打量他。

凯撒不知道对她说什么好，而她，还什么都不知道，等待对方开口，并不请他进屋。二人彼此端详，就这样过了将近半分钟，女主人终于问道：“你有什么事吗，先生？”

他讷讷答道：“我是奥托的儿子。”

女人惊抖了一下，脸色刷的白了，她好像早就认识他似的，结结巴巴地说道：“凯撒先生？”

“对。”

“您来有什么事吗？”

“我代表父亲，有话对您说。”

她不由得发出一声：“噢！我的上帝！”随即后退一步，让他进屋。他关上房门，跟着往里走。这时，凯撒瞧见一个四五岁的小男孩，正逗弄一只猫玩。男孩坐在地上，身后一个火炉，火上正热着菜，冒着浊气。

“请坐。”她说道。

他坐了下来。

她问道：“怎么回事呢？”

凯撒再也不敢开口了，他的目光凝视摆在屋子中央的桌子，桌子已经放好三副餐具，一副是儿童的。他看着背对着炉火的椅子，对面摆好餐巾、酒杯、开启的红葡萄酒、未开瓶的白葡萄酒，那是他父亲的座位，背对着炉火还等着他呢。凯撒看到并认出，叉子旁边是为他父亲准备的面包，已经削下硬皮，因为奥托牙口不好。接着，他抬眼，又瞧见墙上挂的大照片，奥托在巴黎世博会那年照的相，而同样一张相片，就挂在安维尔家他卧室床头的上方。

少妇又问道：“怎么回事，凯撒先生？”

凯撒看了她一眼。她惶恐焦虑，面失血色，双手害怕得发抖，还

在等待。于是，他鼓足了勇气：“是这样，小姐，星期天开猎，爸爸身亡了。”

少妇受到极大的震撼，一时动弹不得。沉默了半晌，她才喃喃说，声音低得几乎听不见：“噢！这不可能！”

继而，她眼中突然涌出泪水，她抬起双手，捂住脸，开始抽泣起来，这时，小男孩扭头看见他母亲哭了，便叫起来。接着，他看明白母亲突然悲痛，是这个陌生人引起的，便扑向凯撒，一只手揪住他的裤子，另一只手拼力打他的大腿。这对母子，一个是为他父亲痛哭的女人，一个是保卫母亲的孩子，凯撒夹在中间，手足无措又极为感动，他觉得自己也受到这种激动情绪的感染，眼睛因伤悲而肿胀起来，于是振作一下，开始讲述了：“是的，”他说道，“不幸的事件，是星期天早晨八点来钟发生的……”

他讲述，就好像她在听似的，不漏掉任何细节，以农民的那种细心，多么微不足道的情况都要讲到。而小家伙还一直打他，现在是用脚踢他脚踝了。当他说到老奥托谈她情况的时候，她听到自己的名字，双手便从脸上撤下来，请求道：

“对不起，我没有听您讲，我很想了解……如果您不介意，就再从头讲起。”

他又从头讲述，还是原来的话：“不幸的事件，是星期天早晨，八点来钟发生的……”

他全部讲了，讲了很久，中间有停顿，有句号，还时而有他的想法。她贪婪地听着，以女人神经的敏感度，领会他叙述的各种变化的情况，有时感叹一声：“噢，我的上帝！”孩子以为她平静了，就不再打凯撒了，过去拉住母亲的手，也同样倾听，就好像听懂了似的。小奥托叙述完了，又说道：“现在按照他的愿望，我们一起把事情安排一下，您听我说，我很富裕，他给我留下了财产。我不愿意安排不周让您抱怨……”

然而，她急忙打断他的话：“噢！凯撒先生，凯撒先生，今天不说了。我心如刀绞！等下次吧，改天。不，今天别谈了。如果我接受，听我说，也不是为我。不，不，不，我向您发誓。是为了孩子，而且，钱财也要落到他的名头。”

凯撒闻听此言，十分惊恐，他猜测出来，结结巴巴地说道：“这么说……是他的……这孩子？”

“当然了。”少妇回答。

小奥托注视着这个小弟弟，激动的心情很复杂，既强烈又难堪。少妇又哭起来，凯撒沉默了许久，处境十分尴尬，接着说道：“那好

吧，多奈小姐，我先走了，什么时候您愿意，我们再谈好吗？”

她高声说：“噢！不，您别走，您别走，不要丢下我一个人跟埃米尔！我会伤心死的。我什么人也没有了，除了我孩子就没人了。噢！多大的苦难，多大的苦难啊，凯撒先生，喏，您请坐，您还要对我讲一讲。您要告诉我，他在那边，平时都做什么？”

凯撒顺从惯了，他又坐下来。她挪过一把椅子给自己，靠近他也坐下来，就在一直热着菜的火炉前面。凯撒还抱起埃米尔放到膝上，女人向凯撒问起有关父亲无数的事儿，全是私生活的小事儿，看得出来，凯撒不用推理就感觉得到，这个可怜的女人，真是全心全意爱奥托。

凯撒的想法并不多，他说着话，自然又回到那个意外的不幸事件。“他肚子崩开一个大洞，能塞进去两个拳头。”凯撒讲出这种情况时，她不由得叫了一声，泪水再次涌出。凯撒受此感染，也哭起来。眼泪总能软化心弦，他俯向埃米尔，嘴唇正巧接近孩子的额头，就势亲吻了他。

母亲缓过一口气，喃喃说道：“可怜的孩子，现在成了孤儿。”

“我也一样。”凯撒说道。

随后，他们又不说话了。

忽然，家庭主妇什么都想到的习惯——这种实践的本能在这少妇心中苏醒了。

“这一上午，也许您还没有吃什么吧，凯撒先生？”

“没有，小姐。”

“唔！您肯定饿了。您还是吃点儿东西吧。”

“谢谢，”他回答，“我不饿，心里太痛苦了。”

“难过归难过，总得活下去。这事儿您不能拒绝！而且，您也可以多留下一会儿。等您一走，真不知道我会成什么样子！”

凯撒还婉拒了两句，终于退让了，他坐下来，背靠着火，面对着她，吃了一盘在炉子上炖得咕咕作响的羊肚，喝了一杯红葡萄酒，但是说什么也不让她开那瓶白葡萄酒。小孩子吃饭，满嘴巴浇汁，凯撒给他擦了好几次。他起身告辞时，问道：“您看什么时候合适，我再来谈事呢，多奈小姐？”

“下星期四吧，凯撒先生，如果对您没妨碍的话。这样我就不用耽误干活时间了。我每逢星期四休息。”

“下星期四，我也方便。”

“您来吃午饭吧，好不好？”

“哦！吃午饭嘛，我还不能应承。”

“一边吃饭一边谈事更好，时间也充裕些。”

“那好吧。还是中午。”

他离去时，又亲了亲小埃米尔，还同多奈小姐握了握手。

三

这一周，凯撒·奥托感到很漫长。他从来没有这样寂寞过，觉得难以忍受这种孤独。此前，他一直如影随形，生活在父亲身边，跟随到田间地头，监督雇工执行命令的情况，即使分开一阵工夫，吃晚饭时又见到了。晚上的时光，爷儿俩就面对面，边抽着烟斗，边谈论马、牛和羊；而早晨醒来，父子就握手问好，洋溢着深厚的亲情。

现在，凯撒独自一人了。他沿着秋天的田地游荡，始终期望从一片平展的地头，立起父亲那挥动臂膀的高大身影。他要消磨时光，就走进邻居家，向所有未听过的人讲述那次意外事件，有时还向听过的人重讲一遍。这种事情忙完了，该想的事也想过了，他就坐到路边，思索这种日子还要持续多久。

他经常想到多奈小姐。他觉得挺喜欢她，确实认为她很像样，正如他父亲所言，是一个温柔的正派姑娘。对，若说一个正派姑娘，她确实确实是一个正派的姑娘。处理这件事，他决心要出手大方：在确保孩子资产的同时，给她买下两千法郎的年金。一想到星期四又要见到她，一起安排这件事，他甚至感到有几分欣喜。再一想到这个弟弟，这个五岁的小家伙，却是他父亲的儿子，又让他忧虑，颇为烦恼，同时也让他心里热乎乎的。这个私生的娃儿，虽然算作家里人，可是永远不能姓奥托，这个家他管不管也随意，但总归令他联想到父亲。

因此，星期四早晨，前往鲁昂的路上，驾车的“大麦粒”嗒嗒的马蹄声非常响亮，他坐在车上的心情，自不幸的事件发生后，还从来没有如此轻松，如此平静。

他走进多奈小姐的套房，看到餐桌已经摆好，同上星期四一样，只有一点不同，面包没有去掉硬皮。

凯撒握了握少妇的手，亲了亲埃米尔的脸蛋，随即坐下，有点儿像到了他的家，不过心情还照样沉重。他觉得多奈小姐瘦了一点儿，脸色也苍白了些：她肯定流泪过多。现在她在凯撒面前，神态不自然了，就好像意识到了些什么，而上星期刚受不幸消息的打击时却未曾注意。她对他格外客气起来，表现出一种痛苦的谦恭、体贴的照顾，

仿佛要用关心和忠诚来回报凯撒对她的善意。他们午饭吃了好长时间，谈论他此次来要办的事。她不要这么多钱。这太多了，实在太多了。她挣的钱足够生活了，她只是希望埃米尔长大后，还能有点儿钱。凯撒执意这样做，甚至还额外赠送一千法郎，作为抚恤金。等他喝完咖啡，多奈小姐问道，“您抽烟吗？”

“抽啊……我有烟斗。”他说道。

他摸了摸口袋。糟糕，烟斗忘记带了。他正欲气恼，多奈小姐却从杆子里给他取出他父亲的烟斗。他接受了，拿起一看便认出来，还嗅了嗅，夸赞它是最好的烟斗之一，声音中还透着一丝激动。随后他往烟斗里塞满烟丝，吸几点着了。多奈小姐收拾桌子，将用过的餐具放进橱柜下层，准备等他走后清洗，他将埃米尔放到腿上，让孩子骑马玩，直到该走的时候。

快到三点时，他未免遗憾地站起身，想到该走了心里很烦。

“好啦，多奈小姐，”他说道，“希望您下午过得愉快，我很高兴看到您这种状况。”

多奈小姐伫立在他面前，脸有点儿红，显得挺激动，注视着她心里的另一个人。

“我们就再也不见面了吗？”

他回答得干脆：“可以呀，小姐，如果您愿意的话。”

“当然愿意了，凯撒先生。那好，下星期四，您方便吗？”

“方便啊，多奈小姐。”

“您来吃午饭，没错吧？”

“这，如果您乐意，我不谢绝。”

“当然乐意，凯撒先生，下星期四，中午，像今天这样。”

“星期四中午见，多奈小姐。”

[1] 相当于我国初中毕业。（说明：书中脚注除特别标明的之外，均为译者注。）

公墓妓女

五个朋友一起吃晚饭。这五个上流社会人士，都是成熟男子，富有，三人已有家室，两个仍然单身。他们这样聚会，每月一次，追忆他们的青春岁月，吃完饭便闲聊，直到凌晨两点钟。他们始终是知心密友，而且兴趣相投，也许认为这种聚会是他们一生中最美好的夜晚。他们无所不谈，谈遍了巴黎人喜闻乐见的大事小情，其实他们之间，也像大多数沙龙聚会那样，无非是重复在晨报上看到的那些社会新闻。

最愉快的要数约瑟夫·德·巴尔东。这个单身汉以别出心裁的方式全方位地过着巴黎生活。他绝非放荡之徒，也非堕落分子，而只是一个尚属年轻的好奇者、乐天派，因为他不过四十岁。说他是上流社会人士，是取这个词组最宽泛、最和善的含义。他天资聪慧，却没有多大深度；知识面很宽，又谈不上渊博；理解事物很快速，但不肯认真深入探讨。他从自己的观察、自己的奇遇，从自己所看到的、碰到的和找到的一切，提炼出哲理滑稽小说式的趣闻逸事，以及幽默的见解，从而在全城赢得了智慧的盛誉。他是饭局的演说家。他有自己的故事，每次都讲他的故事，别人也总有所期待。他不用别人请求，就开始讲起自己的故事了。

他抽着烟，两只臂肘支在餐桌上，半杯上等白兰地摆在餐盘前面，沉浸在弥漫热咖啡香味的烟雾中，仿佛就在自己家中，犹如某些生物在某时某处，绝对在自己栖息地的感觉，犹如礼拜堂里的一个虔诚的女信徒，又如鱼缸中的一只金鱼。他在吸烟的间歇，说道：

“不久之前，我有一次非常独特的艳遇。”

所有人几乎异口同声，要求道：“讲来听听。”

他便说下去。

好吧。你们都知道，我在巴黎走的地方很多，就像爱收集小摆设的人，到处探寻摆设的

橱窗那样。我则窥探热闹，窥探人，注视眼前经过的一切、发生的所有事。

且说九月中旬，一天午后我出门，去哪儿还不知道，天气好极了，就像此刻这样。男人总有一种模糊的欲

望，不期而遇一位美女，而且在脑子里挨排挑选，比较，酌量她们能引起你多大兴趣，对你施展多大魅力最终还是决定要看当天的吸引力了。不过，阳光明媚，天气温暖，往往就没什么兴致拜访人了。

阳光真是明媚，天气真是温暖，我点着一支雪茄，糊里糊涂走在环城大道上。我溜达了一会儿，便心生一念，何不一直走到蒙马特公墓，进去瞧瞧呢。我呢，很爱看公墓，能休息，也感受点儿忧伤，这是我所需要的。而且，有些好友，也在那里安息，再也没人去探视了；我呢，时而还去看望。

恰恰在这座蒙马特墓园，有我一段感情史。一个矮小的可爱女子，一个对我非常钟情也让我特别动情的相好。每每想起来，心里就难过到极点，同时也深感痛惜，百感交集的痛

惜。我就去她的墓畔静思，她走完了这一生。

此外，我也喜爱墓园，只因这是一座座大城池，居民异常密集。你们想想看，在这狭小的空间，埋葬了多少死者，世世代代的巴黎人，在这儿找到永久的归宿，关进小小的墓穴里，埋进小土坑，上面盖着一块石板或者立个十字架标志，彻彻底底成为穴居人；反之，活在世上的这些蠢货，却占据了大片地方，大肆喧哗闹腾。

再者，公墓里有些纪念性建筑物，其价值几乎不亚于博物馆的藏品。我得承认，卡芬雅克的坟墓，不用比较，就能让我联想到让·古戎的杰作——鲁昂大教堂地下礼拜堂里路易·德·布雷泽墓的全身浮雕像。先生们，凡是称得上现代和现实主义的艺术均来源于此。路易·德·布雷泽的浮雕像，比起今天在墓中所有受刑折磨的尸体，显得更为真实，更为骇人，更具有临终后痉挛且已无生命的肉体感。

不过，在蒙马特公墓，还能观赏到博丹宏伟的纪念碑，以及戈蒂埃、米尔热的墓碑。而

有一天，我看到米尔热的碑前，仅仅摆放了一个可怜的黄蜡菊花圈，是谁送的呢？也许是最后一个小女

工，如今年迈，在附近当看门人时送来的吧？这是米勒制作的一尊小雕像，很精美，但是因为无人照管而肮脏不堪。米尔热哟，歌唱青春吧！

且说我走进蒙马特公墓，忽然一阵感伤袭上心头，倒是一种不太难受的忧伤，是那种能让健康的人思考的忧伤：“这地方嘛，没多大意思，不过，我还没有到迁居这里的时候。”秋色印象，暗淡的枯叶氤氲着温暖的潮湿，微弱的阳光强化了飘浮在这上空的孤独和终结的感受，为这墓园染上了些浪漫色彩。

我漫步在这些故冢的街道上，这里的邻居们绝不往来，再不同床共枕，再也不看报了。我呢，则开始读起碑文来。读碑文，真的，这是世上最有趣的事。拉比升也好，梅拉克也罢，从来就没有滑稽得像碑文这样能引我如此发笑的文字。啊！这些大理石墓板，这些十字架上的文字，远高于保罗·德·科克的书，更能令

人捧腹大笑：父母倾诉丧失孩子的憾恨，唯愿逝者在另一个世界生活幸福，并且希望日后相聚——开什么玩笑！

不过，在这座墓园中，我尤其喜爱被遗弃的部分，非常凄清，布满紫杨和翠柏。埋葬前人的老区，用不了多久，又会重新变成新区，伐倒那些以死者遗体为养料的绿树，将新近的死者埋进排列整齐的小块大理石板下面。

我游荡了一段时间，头脑清爽了，心下明白就要感到乏味了，得赶紧到我那女友长眠的“床位”，敬献我忠诚的哀思。我走到她的墓前，感到一阵揪心。亲爱的人啊，多么可怜，生前她那么温柔，那么深情，那么白净，那么清新……而现在……如果开棺瞧瞧……隔着铁栅栏，我俯身对她低声讲述我的哀痛，当然她根本听不见了，正要离去，却瞥见旁边墓前跪着一位女子，身穿重孝，一色黑衣裙。她撩起黑纱，露出一副令人惊艳的容貌，那头金发分梳在两鬓，在她头巾的黑夜中仿佛照耀着曙光。我停下来。自不待言，她一定心潮涌动着深深

的痛苦，目光埋藏在双手里，全身僵直不动，俨然一尊沉思的雕像，行进在痛惜之路上，在遮蔽眼睛的阴影里，数着前尘往事折磨人的念珠，她自身仿佛一个死了的女人，可能在思念一个死去的男人。忽然，我看出她要哭了，只见她后背微微颤动，宛如弱风拂柳，我才做此猜想。起初她在饮泣，逐渐哭得厉害，脖颈和肩头急速抖动。猛然，她移开手，露出双眼，漫溢着泪水，很是迷人，惊慌的眼神扫视周围，处于从噩梦中醒来的状态。她瞧见我正注视她，不免有些羞愧，整张脸重又埋在双手中。这时，她的哭泣变得抽噎了，脑袋缓慢俯向大理石墓板，额头贴在上面，纱巾披散开，罩住了爱人坟墓的白衣角，仿佛新戴的孝。我听见她呜咽，继而全身瘫软，脸颊贴着石板，静止不动，失去了知觉。

我急步上前，拍打她的双手，往她眼睑吹气，同时浏览了十分简单的碑文：

“海军陆战队上尉，路易·泰奥道尔·卡雷尔之墓，战死于东京湾。为他的灵魂祈祷吧。”

数月前死去的。我也伤心为之落泪，便加倍努力救护。救护奏了效，她苏醒过来。当时我的神情很激动——我的相貌也不赖，未满四十岁——从她投来的第一眼，我就明白她是个懂礼貌、知感激的人。随后她又流了泪，讲述了身世，证明她确实是这样的人。她抽泣着，断断续续倾吐胸臆，说她是个孤女，父母双亡，这位军官出于爱情才娶她的，因为她的嫁妆勉强说得过去，不料结婚才一年，丈夫便倒在东京湾了。

我劝解，安慰她，扶她立起身，搀她站起来。然后，我对她说。

“不要在这里逗留了。跟我来吧。”

她喃喃答道：

“我走不了路了。”

“别担心，我帮您。”

“谢谢，先生，您真是好人。您来这里，也是祭拜死者吗？”

“是的，夫人。”

“死去的一位女子？”

“是的，夫人。”

“您妻子？”

“一位女友。”

“爱一位女友，也可能像爱妻子那样，爱情并无规范。”

“是的，夫人。”

于是，我们就一道走了，她偎依在我身上，在出墓园这一路，我几乎是抱着她走的。出来之后，她气息微弱，说道：“我觉得自己要病了似的。”

“要不要找个地方，您进去喝点儿什么？”

“好吧，先生。”

我看到一家饭馆，是办完丧事之后，亲友聚一聚的那种馆子。我们进去，我给她要了一杯热茶，她喝下去似乎有了点儿精神，嘴角泛起了一抹微笑，跟我谈起了她本人。要多凄凉有多凄凉啊，生活中孤单一人，在家里，白天黑夜，总是形影相吊，纵使有什么风情，信赖体恤、亲近相处的情意，也没有任何人可给予了。

这种话听来很诚恳，从她口中讲出来，也

讨人喜欢。我动了情感。她非常年轻，或许就二十岁。我恭维她几句，她坦然接受了。看看时间不早了，我提议叫辆车送她回家，她同意了。我们坐上出租马车，肩靠着肩挤在一起，体温透过衣服相交融，这种事最令人心猿意马了。

马车停到她家的楼门口，她低声问道：“我觉得单独上不了楼了，我住在五层。您这么热心，能不能搀扶我送到家呢？”

我赶忙答应了。她缓慢上楼，还气喘吁吁。到了她的家门口，她又说道：“您进屋坐一坐，好让我向您表示感谢。”

没的说，我进去了。

房间不大，甚至有点儿贫寒，但是很简朴，她家里收拾得整整齐齐。我们并排坐到小型长沙发上，她又向我提起她的孤寂。她摇铃唤女仆，要吩咐给我端上什么喝的。女仆没有来。我心下暗喜，想必那个女仆只是上午来干活，即所谓的清洁女工。她已经摘了帽子。她那双明澈的眼睛凝视我，样子确实非常可爱：那么明澈，又那么凝视，激发起我的极大欲念。

我情不自禁，一把将她搂在怀里，亲吻她那忽然闭起的眼睛，吻了又吻，吻个没够。她挣扎着推我，连声说：“行了，行了，行了！”

她这话是什么意思呢？此情此景，“行了”至少可能有两层意思。我要让她住声，就从眼睛移吻到嘴上，从而给“行了”这话赋予我喜爱的定义。她并不过分抗拒。在冒犯了对死于东京湾的上尉的纪念之后，我们重又凝视着对方时，她那样子显得倦怠、温柔、驯顺，这便驱散了我的不安情绪。

于是，我献起殷勤，因感激而更加热情。大约又交谈了一小时之后，我就问她：

“您在哪儿用晚餐？”

“在附近的一家小餐馆。”

“独自一人？”

“当然了。”

“您愿意同我共进晚餐吗？”

“去哪儿？”

“林荫大道一家好餐馆。”

她婉拒了一下，我坚持邀请，她就退让

了，给自己找了个台阶下：“我太烦闷，太烦闷了。”随后又补充一句：“我得换一条衣裙，颜色别这么暗了。”她说，走进自己的画室。再一出来，她已换成戴半孝了，穿了一条灰色连衣裙，非常朴素，突显苗条的身段更有魅力了。显而易见，她有两套装束：扫墓的孝服，出门的便装。

晚餐很开心。她喝了香槟，兴奋起来，活跃起来。我同她一道回到她家里。在墓畔结缘的这段关系，大约持续三周。可是，人做什么事都有个够，尤其是男女的事儿。我借口一趟远行推不掉，便离开了她。分手时我也出手大方，她也向我千恩万谢。她让我答应她，向她发誓，我一归来就去找她，因为，她对我似乎真的有点儿依依不舍了。

我又另寻新欢去了，大约过了一个月，我也没有多大意愿再去见墓地艳遇的那个小妞。然而，我却忘不掉她……对她的记忆萦绕心头，仿佛一个秘密，仿佛一种心理问题，又像一种困扰我们的无解的疑问。

有一天，也说不清为什么，我想象到蒙马特公墓，就能见到她，于是去了。

我在墓园久久漫步，仅仅遇见那里的常客，还没有完全斩断同死者关系的那些人。至于在东京湾阵亡的那个上尉的墓前，既不见跪在大理石上哭泣的那位女子，也没有祭奠的鲜花、花圈。

不过，在这座亡灵的大城池，我误入另一个街区，忽然发现一条狭窄的十字架林荫路尽头，有一对身穿重孝的男女朝我走过来。噢，好不惊愕！他们渐行渐近，我认出那个女的：正是她！

她看见我，脸一红，与我擦肩而过时，她还向我打了个小暗号，向我丢了个眼色，示意“装作不认识我”，

似乎还表明：“来看我呀，心爱的。”

那男人很体面，风度翩翩，佩戴着四级荣誉团勋章，年纪约有五十岁。他搀扶着她，一如我本人曾那样搀扶她走出公墓。

我走开了，不免十分惊诧，心中回味刚看

到的情景。这个墓园女猎手究竟属于哪类人，莫非就是个普通妓女，揽客有了灵感，专门在墓区拉伤心的男人，即心里还装着一个女人，妻子或情妇，还因念念不忘失去的恩爱而魂不守舍的那种男人。她是独此一家吗？抑或还有数人呢？莫非这是一种职业？在墓地也像在街头人行道那样吗？公墓妓女！再不然，唯独她发此奇想，能从哲学的深度发掘，到这种悲凄哀悼的场所，唤醒痛惜的爱情吧？

我真想知道，那天她是哪位墓主的孀妇呢？

Guy
de Maupassant

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

Femme
Fatale

N° 12

‘They trailed in all
their vulgar glory
over the fresh
green grass...’

Cockcrow

Madame Berthe d'Avancelles had rejected the advances of her admirer Baron Joseph de Croissard to such an extent that he was now in despair. He had pursued her relentlessly throughout the winter in Paris, and now at his château at Carville in Normandy he was holding a series of hunting parties in her honour.

The husband, Monsieur d'Avancelles, turned a blind eye to all this. It was rumoured that they lived separate lives on account of a physical shortcoming of his which Madame could not overlook. He was a fat little man with short arms, short legs, a short neck, short nose, short everything in fact.

Madame d'Avancelles, in contrast, was a tall, chestnuthaired, determined- looking young woman. She laughed openly at old Pipe and Slippers as she called him to his face but looked with tender indulgence on her admirer, the titled Baron Joseph de Croissard, with his broad shoulders, his sturdy neck and his fair, drooping moustache.

Until now, however, she had granted him no favours despite the fact that he was spending a fortune on her, throwing a constant round of receptions, hunting parties, and all kinds of celebrations to which he invited the local aristocracy.

All day long the woods rang to the sound of hounds in full cry after a fox or a wild boar and every night a dazzling display of fireworks spiralled upwards to join the sparkling stars. A tracery of light from the drawing- room windows shone on the huge lawns where shadowy figures occasionally passed.

It was the russet season of autumn when leaves swirled over the gardens like flocks of birds. Wafting on the air came the tang of damp, bare earth, caught as the smell of a woman's naked flesh as her gown slips down to the floor after the ball.

On an evening during a reception held the previous spring, Madame d'Avancelles had replied to an imploring Monsieur de Croissard with the words: 'If I am to fall at all, my friend, it will

certainly not be before the leaves do likewise. I've far too many things to do this summer to give it a thought.' He had remembered those daring words of hers spoken so provocatively and was now pressing his advantage. Each day he crept closer, gaining more and more of the bold beauty's heart until by this point her resistance seemed hardly more than symbolic.

Soon there was to be a great hunting party. The night before, Madame Berthe had said laughingly to the Baron: 'Tomorrow, Baron, if you manage to kill the beast I shall have something to give you.'

He was up at dawn reconnoitring where the wild boar was wallowing. He accompanied his whips, setting out the order of the hunt in such a way that he should return from the field in triumph. When the horns sounded for the meet, he appeared in a well-cut hunting costume of scarlet and gold. With his upright, broad-chested figure and flashing eyes he glowed with good health and manly vigour.

The hunt moved off. The boar was raised and ran, followed by the baying hounds rushing through the undergrowth. The horses broke into a gallop, hurtling with their riders along the narrow forest paths while far behind the following carriages drove noiselessly over the softer verges.

Teasingly, Madame d'Avancelles kept the Baron at her side, slowing down to walking pace in an interminably long, straight avenue along which four rows of oaks arched vaultlike towards each other. Trembling with both desire and frustration he listened with one ear to the young woman's light badinage, the other pricked for the hunting horns and the sound of the hounds growing fainter by the minute.

'So you love me no longer,' she was saying.

'How can you say such a thing?' he replied.

'You do seem to be more interested in the hunt than in me,' she went on. He groaned. 'You do remember your own orders don't you? To kill the beast myself.'

'Indeed I do,' she added with great seriousness. 'Before my very eyes.' At this he quivered impatiently in the saddle, spurred on his eager horse and finally lost his patience.

‘For God’s sake, Madame, not if we stay here a minute longer.’

‘That is how it has to be nevertheless,’ she cried laughingly. ‘Otherwise, you’re out of luck.’

Then she spoke to him gently, leaning her hand on his arm and, as if absentmindedly, stroking his horse’s mane. They had turned right on to a narrow path overhung with trees when, suddenly swerving to avoid one of their low branches, she leaned against him so closely that he felt her hair tickling his neck. He threw his arms around her and pressing his thick moustache to her forehead planted upon it a passionate kiss.

At first she was motionless, stunned by his ardour, then with a start she turned her head and, either by chance or design, her own delicate lips met his beneath their blond cascade. Then, out of either embarrassment or regret for the incident she spurred her horse on the flank and galloped swiftly away. For a long while they rode straight on together, without so much as exchanging a glance.

The hunt in full cry was close and the thickets seemed to shake, when suddenly, covered in blood and shaking off the hounds that clung to him, the boar went rushing past through the bushes. The Baron gave a triumphant laugh, cried ‘Let him who loves me follow me!’ and disappeared, swallowed up by the forest. When Madame d’Avancelles reached an open glade a few minutes later he was just getting up, covered with mud, his jacket torn and his hands bloody, while the animal lay full length on the ground with the Baron’s knife plunged up to the hilt in its shoulder.

The quarry was cut by torchlight on that mild and melancholy night. The moon gilded the red flames of the torches which filled the air with pine smoke. The dogs, yelping and snapping, devoured the stinking innards of the boar while the beaters and the gentlemen, standing in a circle around the spoil, blew their horns with all their might. The flourish of the hunting horns rose into the night air above the woods. Its echoes fell and were lost in the distant valleys beyond, alarming nervous stags, a barking fox and small grey rabbits at play on the edge of the glades. Terrified night birds fluttered above the crazed pack while the women, excited a little by the violence and vulnerability surrounding these events, leaned a little heavily on the men’s arms and, without waiting for the hounds to finish, drifted off with their partners down the many

forest paths. Feeling languid after all the exhausting emotion of the day Madame d'Avancelles said to the Baron: 'Would you care for a turn in the park, my friend?'

He gave no answer, but trembling and unsteady with desire pulled her to him. Instantly they kissed and as they walked very slowly under the almost leafless trees through which moonlight filtered, their love, their desire and their need for each other was so intense that they almost sank down at the foot of a tree.

The horns had fallen silent and the exhausted hounds were sleeping by now in their kennels.

'Let us go back,' the young woman said. They returned.

Just as they reached the château and were about to enter, she murmured in a faint voice: 'I'm so tired, my friend, I'm going straight to bed.' As he opened his arms for one last kiss she fled, with the parting words: 'No . . . to sleep . . . but . . . let him who loves me follow me!'

An hour later when the whole sleeping château seemed dead to the world the Baron crept on tiptoe out of his room and scratched at the door of his friend. Receiving no reply he made to open it and found it unbolted.

She was leaning dreamily with her elbows on the window ledge. He threw himself at her knees which he showered with mad kisses through her nightdress. She said nothing, but ran her dainty fingers caressingly through the Baron's hair. Suddenly, as if coming to a momentous decision, she disengaged herself and whispered provocatively: 'Wait for me. I shall be back.' Her finger raised in shadow pointed to the far end of the room where loomed the vague white shape of her bed.

With wildly trembling hands he undressed quickly by feel and slipped between the cool sheets. He stretched out in bliss and almost forgot his friend as his weary body yielded to the linen's caress. Doubtless enjoying the strain on his patience, still she did not return. He closed his eyes in exquisitely pleasurable anticipation. His most cherished dream was about to come true. Little by little his limbs relaxed, as did his mind, where thoughts drifted, vague and indistinct. He succumbed at last to the power of great fatigue and finally fell asleep.

He slept the heavy, impenetrable sleep of the exhausted huntsman. He slept indeed till dawn. Then from a nearby tree through the still half- open window came the ringing cry of a cock. Startled awake, the Baron's eyes flew open. Finding himself, to his great surprise, in a strange bed and with a woman's body lying against his he remembered nothing and stammered as he struggled into consciousness: 'What? Where am I? What is it?'

At this, she, who had not slept a wink, looked at the puffy, red-eyed and dishevelled man at her side. She answered in the same dismissive tone she took with her husband. 'Nothing,' she said, 'it's a cock. Go back to sleep, Monsieur. It's nothing to do with you.'

Femme Fatale

The restaurant, Le Grillon, Mecca of the entire local boating community, was now slowly emptying. At the main entrance a large crowd of people were calling and shouting out to each other. With oars on their shoulders, strapping great fellows in white jerseys waved and gesticulated. Women in light spring frocks were stepping cautiously into the skiffs moored alongside and, having settled themselves in the stern of each, were smoothing out their dresses. The owner of the establishment, a tough- looking, red- bearded man of legendary strength, was helping the pretty young things aboard and with a practised hand was holding steady the gently bobbing craft.

The oarsmen then took their places, playing to the gallery and showing off broad chests and muscular arms in their sleeveless vests. The gallery in this case consisted of a crowd of suburbanites in their Sunday best, as well as a few workmen and some soldiers, all leaning on the parapet of the bridge and watching the scene below with keen interest. One by one the boats cast off from the landing stage. The oarsmen leaned forward and with a regular swing pulled back. At each stroke of the long, slightly curved blades the fast skiffs sped through the water making for La Grenouillère and growing progressively smaller till they disappeared beyond the railway bridge and into the distance.

Only one couple now remained. The slim, pale- faced young man, still a relatively beardless youth, had his arm around the waist of his girl, a skinny little grasshopper of a creature with brown hair. They stopped from time to time to gaze into each other's eyes.

The owner cried: 'Come on, Monsieur Paul, get a move on!'

The couple moved down closer. Of all the customers, Monsieur Paul, who paid regularly and in full, was the best liked and most respected. Many of the others ran up bills and frequently absconded without settling them. The son of a senator, he was also an excellent advertisement for the establishment. When some stranger asked,

‘And who’s that young chap over there with his eyes glued to the girl?’ one of the regulars would murmur, in a mysterious, important sort of way, ‘Oh, that’s Paul Baron, you know, the son of the senator.’ Then the stranger would inevitably have to comment, ‘Poor young devil, he’s got it bad.’ The proprietress of Le Grillon, a good businesswoman and wise in the ways of the world, called the young man and his companion ‘my two turtle doves’ and looked with tender indulgence on the love affair which brought such glamour to her establishment.

The couple ambled slowly down to where a skiff called the Madeleine was ready. Before embarking, however, they stopped to kiss once more, much to the amusement of the audience gathered on the bridge. Finally, Monsieur Paul took up the oars and set off after the others also making for La Grenouillère.

When they arrived it was getting on for three and here too the vast floating café was swarming with people. It is in effect one huge raft with a tarpaulin roof supported by wooden columns. It is connected to the charming island of Croissy by two narrow footbridges, one of which runs right through to the centre of the café itself. The other connects at the far end with a tiny islet where a single tree grows and which is nicknamed the Pot- de- Fleurs. From there it connects with the land again via a bathing pool.

Monsieur Paul moored his boat alongside the café, climbed up to its balustrade then, holding his girl’s two hands, guided her up also. They entered, found a place for two at the end of a table and sat down opposite each other.

Lining the towpath on the opposite side of the river was a long string of vehicles. Fiacles alternated with the flashy carriages of gay young men- about- town. The first were lumbering great hulks whose bodywork crushed the springs beneath and to which were harnessed broken- down old hacks with drooping necks. The other carriages were streamlined, with light suspension and fine, delicate wheels. These were drawn by horses with slender, straight, strong legs, heads held high and bits snowy with foam. Their solemn, liveried drivers, heads held stiffly inside huge collars, sat ramrod straight with their whips resting on their knees.

The river banks were crowded with people coming and going in different kinds of configurations: family parties, groups of

friends, couples and individuals. They idly plucked at blades of grass, wandered down to the water's edge then climbed back up to the path. Having reached a certain spot they all congregated to wait for the ferryman whose heavy boat plied constantly back and forth, depositing passengers on the island.

The branch of the river, incidentally called the dead branch, which this floating bar dominates, seemed asleep, so slowly did the current move there. Flotillas of gigs, skiffs, canoes, pedaloes and river craft of all kinds streamed over the still water, mingling and intersecting, meeting and parting, running foul of each other, stopping, and with a sudden jerk of their oarsmen's arms and a tensing of their muscles, taking off again, darting this way and that like shoals of red and yellow fish.

More were arriving all the time; some from Chatou upstream, some from Bougival, downstream. Gales of contagious laughter carried from one boat to another and the air was full of insults, complaints, protestations and howls. The men in the boats exposed their muscular, tanned bodies to the glare of the sun and, like exotic water-plants, the women's parasols of red, green and yellow silk blossomed in the sterns of their craft.

The July sun blazed in the middle of the sky and the atmosphere was gay and carefree, while in the windless air not a leaf stirred in the poplars and willows lining the banks of the river. In the distance ahead, the conspicuous bulk of Mont-Valérien loomed, rearing the ramparts of its fortifications in the glare of the sun. On the right, the gentle slopes of Louveciennes, following the curve of the river, formed a semi-circle within which could be glimpsed, through the dense and shady greenery of their spacious lawns, the white-painted walls of weekend retreats.

On the land adjoining La Grenouillère strollers were sauntering under the gigantic trees which help to make this part of the island one of the most delightful parks imaginable. Busty women with peroxided hair and nipped-in waists could be seen, made up to the nines with blood red lips and black-kohled eyes. Tightly laced into their garish dresses they trailed in all their vulgar glory over the fresh green grass. They were accompanied by men whose fashion-plate accessories, light gloves, patent-leather boots, canes as slender as threads and absurd monocles made them look like

complete idiots.

The part of the island facing La Grenouillère is narrow and between it and the opposite bank where another ferry plies, bringing people over from Croissy, the current is very strong and very fast. Here it swirls and roars, raging like a torrent in a myriad of eddies and foam. A detachment of pontoon- builders wearing the uniform of artillerymen was camped on the bank and some of the soldiers, side by side on a long beam of wood, sat watching the river below.

A noisy, rambunctious crowd filled the floating restaurant. The wooden tables, sticky and awash with streams of spilt drink, were covered with half- empty glasses and surrounded by half- tipsy customers. The crowd sang and shouted and brawled. Red- faced, belligerent men, their hats tipped at the backs of their heads and their eyes glassy with booze, prowled like animals spoiling for a fight. The women, cadging free drinks in the meantime, were seeking their prey for the night. The space between the tables was filled with the usual clientèle – noisy young boating blades and their female companions in short flannel skirts.

One of the men was banging away at the piano using his feet as well as his hands. Four couples were dancing a quadrille and watching them was a group of elegantly dressed young men whose respectable appearance was ruined by the hideous incongruity of the setting.

The place reeked of vice and corruption and the dregs of Parisian society in all its rottenness gathered there: cheats, con men and cheap hacks rubbed shoulders with under- age dandies, old roués and rogues, sleazy underworld types once notorious for things best forgotten mingled with other small- time crooks and speculators, dabblers in dubious ventures, frauds, pimps, and racketeers. Cheap sex, both male and female, was on offer in this tawdry meat- market of a place where petty rivalries were exploited, and quarrels picked over nothing in an atmosphere of fake gallantry where swords or pistols at dawn settled matters of highly questionable honour in the first place.

Every Sunday, out of sheer curiosity some of the people from the surrounding countryside would drop in. Every year would bring a fresh batch of young men, extremely young men at that, keen to

make useful contacts. Casual cruisers would amble by and every so often a complete innocent would become embroiled.

La Grenouillère lived up to its name. There was a place for bathing between the tarpaulin- covered raft where drinks were served and the Pot- de- Fleurs. Women with the requisite curves came there to display their wares and their clients. Those less fortunate who required padding and corsetry to pass muster looked disdainfully on as their rivals cavorted and splashed about.

Awaiting their turn to plunge in and thronging around a small diving board were swimmers of every shape and size: some slim and straight as vine- poles, some round as pumpkins, some gnarled as olive- branches, some with bodies curved forward over pot- bellies, some whose vast stomachs threw the body backwards. Each was as ugly as the other as they leapt into the water and splashed the customers drinking at the café next door.

Despite the proximity of the river and the huge trees shading it, the place was suffocatingly hot. Mingling with the fumes of spilt drinks came the smell of flesh and the cheap perfume with which the skin of those trading in sex was drenched. Underlying all these smells was the slight but persistent aroma of talc, which wafted with varying intensity as if an unseen hand were waving some gigantic powder- puff over the entire scene.

All eyes were on the river where the comings and goings of the boats attracted everyone's attention. Girls sprawled in the stern opposite their strong- wisted menfolk looked with contempt at those still prowling about the island in search of a male to buy them dinner that night. Sometimes when a crew in full swing flashed past their friends ashore would shout and were joined by the crazy, yelling crowd inside the restaurant. At the bend of the river near Chatou boats were constantly coming into view. As they approached and grew more distinct, faces became recognizable and more shouts went up.

A boat with an awning and containing four women came slowly downstream towards them. The woman at the oars was small, lean and past her prime. She wore her hair pinned up inside an oilskin hat. Opposite her a big blonde dressed in a man's jacket was lying on her back at the bottom of the boat with a foot resting on the thwart on either side of the oarswoman. The blonde was

smoking a cigarette and with each jerk of the oars her bosom and her belly quivered. At the very stern of the boat under the awning two beautiful, tall, slender girls, one blonde the other brunette, sat with their arms round each other's waists watching their two companions.

A shout went up from La Grenouillère: 'Aye- aye! Lesbos!' and suddenly a wild clamour broke out. In the terrifying scramble to see, glasses were knocked over and people started climbing on the tables. Everyone began to chant 'Lesbos! Lesbos! Lesbos!' The words merged into a vague howl before suddenly starting up again, rising into the air, filling the plain beyond, resounding in the dense foliage of the tall surrounding trees and echoing in the distance as if aimed at the sun itself.

During this ovation the oarswoman had calmly come to a halt. The big blonde lying at the bottom of the boat turned her head languorously and raised herself on her elbows. The two in the stern started laughing and waving to the crowd. At this there was even more of a hullabaloo and the place shook with the noise. The men raised their hats and the women waved their handkerchiefs. Every voice, deep and shrill alike, chanted in unison 'Lesbos!' This motley collection of undesirables seemed to be saluting a leader, as warships give a gun salute to their passing admiral. From the flotilla of boats also there was wild acclamation for the women's boat which now continued at its leisurely pace, to land a little further off.

Monsieur Paul's reaction was unlike that of the others. Pulling a key from his pocket he started using it as a whistle and blew hard. His girl, looking nervous now and even paler than before, pulled his arm to make him stop. This time when she looked into his eyes, it was with fury. But he was beside himself with male jealousy and a deep, instinctive ungovernable rage. His lips trembling with indignation he stammered: 'Shouldn't be allowed! They should be drowned like puppies with stones round their necks!'

Madeleine suddenly lost her temper. Her shrill voice became piercing as she lashed out at him: 'Mind your own business, will you! They've got a perfect right to do whatever they want. They're not doing any harm to anyone. Why don't you just shut up and leave them alone . . .'

He cut her short. 'This a matter for the police! If it was up to me I'd have them locked up in Saint- Lazare!'

She gave a start. 'Oh you would, would you?'

'Certainly I would. And in the meantime I forbid you to have anything to do with them. I absolutely forbid it, do you understand?'

She shrugged her shoulders at this and said in a suddenly calm voice: 'Listen, dear, I shall do exactly as I please. If you don't like it you know what you can do. Get the hell out. Now. I'm not your wife, so shut up.'

He remained silent and they stood staring each other out, breathing rapidly, their mouths set.

At the other end of the café the women were now making their entrance. The two dressed as men led, one gaunt and weatherbeaten, ageing and very mannish. The other, more than amply filling the white flannel outfit with her large bottom and her huge thighs encased in the wide trousers, waddled forward like a fat, bow- legged goose. The two friends followed and the whole boating community surged forward to shake hands.

The four had rented a riverside cottage and lived together there as two couples. Their vice was public, official and perfectly obvious to all. It was referred to quite naturally as something entirely normal. There were rumours about jealous scenes that took place there and about the various actresses and other famous women who frequented the little cottage near the water's edge. One neighbour, scandalized by the goings- on, alerted the police at one stage and an inspector accompanied by one of his men came to make enquiries. It was a delicate mission: there was nothing the women could be prosecuted for, least of all prostitution. The inspector was deeply puzzled and could not understand what these alleged misdemeanours could possibly be. He asked a whole lot of pointless questions, compiled a lengthy report and dismissed the charges out of hand. The joke spread as far as Saint- Germain.

Like queens they now walked slowly the entire length of La Grenouillère. They seemed happy to be in the limelight and delighted with the attention paid to them by all this riff- raff. Madeleine and her lover watched them, and as they approached the

girl's face lit up.

When the leading couple reached their table Madeleine cried 'Pauline!' and the big girl, turning round, stopped, still arm in arm with her midshipwoman.

'Well good heavens! Madeleine! Darling! Come and join us for a bit. We must catch up!'

Paul tightened his grip on his girl's wrist but she said, 'You know what you can do, sweetheart, shove off.'

He kept quiet and let her be. Standing huddled together the women continued their animated conversation sotto voce. Pauline from time to time cast furtive glances at Paul and flashed him an evil, sardonic smile. Finally, unable to bear it a minute longer he suddenly stood up and trembling in every limb leapt towards her. He seized Madeleine by the shoulders and said: 'Come with me, do you hear? I said you were not to speak to these beastly women!'

Raising her voice, Pauline began to swear at him like a fish wife. People around started laughing. Others stood on tip-toe to get a better look. Under the hail of filthy abuse he was speechless. Feeling contaminated by it and fearing there might be worse to come he retreated, retraced his steps and went to lean on the balustrade overlooking the river, turning his back on the three triumphant women. He stayed there looking at the water and every so often brusquely wiping away the tears that sprang to his eyes.

The fact was that despite himself, without knowing why or how it had happened and very much against his better judgement, he had fallen hopelessly in love. He had fallen as if into some deep and muddy hole. By nature he was a delicate and sensitive soul. He had had ideals and dreamed of an exquisite and passionate affair. And now he had fallen for this little cricket of a creature. She was as stupid as every other woman and not even pretty to make up for it. Skinny and foul-tempered, she had taken possession of him entirely from tip to toe, body and soul. He had fallen under the omnipotent and mysterious spell of the female. He was overwhelmed by this colossal force of unknown origin, the demon in the flesh capable of hurling the most rational man in the world at the feet of a worthless harlot. There was no way he could explain its fatal and total power.

Behind his back now he could feel something evil brewing.

Their laughter pierced his heart. What should he do? He knew very well but had not the courage. He stared fixedly at the opposite bank where an angler was fishing, his line perfectly still. All of a sudden the man jerked out of the water a little silver fish which wriggled at the end of his line. Twisting and turning it this way and that he tried to extract his hook, but in vain. Losing patience he started pulling and, as he did so, tore out the entire bloody gullet of the fish with parts of its intestines attached. Paul shuddered, feeling himself equally torn apart. It seemed to him that the hook was like his own love and that if he were to tear it out he too would be gutted by a piece of curved wire hooked deep into his essential self at the end of a line held by Madeleine.

Feeling a hand on his shoulder he started and turned round. Madeleine was standing beside him. Neither spoke. She simply put her elbows on the balustrade beside him and leaned with him, staring out at the river. He tried to think of something to say but failed. He was incapable of analysing what was going on inside him. All he felt now was joy in the very nearness of her and a shameful cowardice on his own part. He wanted to forgive her, to let her do anything in the world she liked provided she never left him again.

After a while in a very gentle voice he asked, 'Would you like to leave now? We'll be better off in the boat.'

'All right my pet,' she said.

Awash with forgiveness and with tears still in his eyes he held her two hands tightly and helped her on board. Basking in the warmth of the afternoon they rowed upstream again past the willows and the grass-covered banks. When they reached Le Grillon once more it was not yet six, so, leaving their skiff, they set off on foot towards Bezons across the meadows and past the high poplars bordering the banks.

The wide hayfields waiting to be harvested were full of flowers. The sinking sun cast a mantle of russet light over all and in the gentle warmth of the day's end the fragrance of the grass wafted in on them mingling with the damp smells of the river and filling the air with easy languor and an atmosphere of blessed well-being.

He felt soft and unresistant, in communion with the calm splendour of the evening and with the vague, mysterious thrill of

life itself. He felt in tune with the all- embracing poetry of the moment in which plants and all that surrounded him revealed themselves to his senses at this lovely restful and reflective time of day. He was sensitive to it all but she appeared totally unaffected. They were walking side by side when suddenly, bored by the silence, she began to sing. In a squeaky, unmodulated voice she sang one of the catchy tunes of the day which jarred violently with the deeply serene mood of the evening. He looked at her and felt between them an unbridgeable abyss. She was swinging her parasol through the grass with her head down, looking at her feet as she sang, drawing out the notes and adding the odd little trill.

So behind the smooth little brow which he so much adored there was nothing! Absolutely nothing! Its sole concern at the moment was this caterwauling. The thoughts which from time to time passed through it were as vapid as the music. She had no understanding of him. They were as separate and distinct as if they had never met. His kisses had touched her lips only and nothing deeper within.

When, however, she raised her eyes to meet his and smiled, he felt himself melt. Opening his arms out wide to her in a surge of renewed love he clasped her passionately to him. Since he was crushing her dress as he did so, she eventually broke free saying consolingly, 'Yes, yes, I love you, my pet, now that's enough.' In a mad rush of relief he grabbed her round the waist and started to run, dragging her with him. He kissed her on the cheeks, the temples and the neck, all the time dancing with joy. They threw themselves down at the edge of a thicket incandescent in the light of the setting sun. Even before catching their breath they came together. She could not understand the rapture he felt.

Walking back hand in hand they suddenly saw through the trees the river and on it the boat containing the four women. Big Pauline must have caught sight of them at the same time since she straightened up, blew kisses at Madeleine and shouted, 'See you tonight!'

'See you tonight!' shouted Madeleine in reply.

Paul felt his heart turn suddenly to ice. They returned for dinner and settling down in one of the arbours at the side of the water they began to eat in silence. When darkness fell, a candle

enclosed in a globe was brought which shed a feeble, glimmering light on the two. All the time they could hear bursts of laughter coming from the large room on the first floor where the boat-trippers were. The couple were just about to order dessert when Paul, taking Madeleine's hand tenderly in his own, said: 'Darling, I feel so tired. Shall we make an early night of it?'

But she saw through his little ploy and shot him an enigmatic glance, one of those treacherous looks that so often appear in women's eyes. She thought for a second, then said, 'You're perfectly welcome to go to bed if you like but I've promised to go to the dance at La Grenouillère.'

Attempting to mask his misery he gave her a pitiful smile and answered in a coaxing, wheedling tone: 'Be a darling. Let's both stay here. Please.'

She shook her head without saying a word. He tried again. 'Please, sweetheart . . .'

She cut him off. 'You know what I said. If you're not happy, you know where the door is. Nobody's stopping you. But I've promised, and I'm going.'

He put his two elbows on the table, sank his head into his hands and sat brooding. The trippers were coming down the stairs, yelling as usual before setting off for the dance at La Grenouillère. Madeleine said to Paul: 'Make up your mind. If you're not coming I'll ask one of these gentlemen to take me there.'

Paul rose. 'Come on then,' he muttered before they too set off. The night was dark and the sky full of stars. Around them the air was still hot and the atmosphere heavy with seething, unseen activity. The warm breeze caressed their faces, its hot breath stifling their own and making them gasp slightly. The skiffs set off, each with a Venetian lantern in the prow. It was too dark to see anything of the boats themselves except for the little patches of colour in the night bobbing and dancing like frenzied glow-worms. Voices sounded from the shadows on all sides as the young couple's skiff glided gently along. Sometimes when another overtook they would catch the flash of the oarsman's white-jerseyed back illuminated by his lantern. As they came round the bend of the river, La Grenouillère came into sight in the distance.

In gala mood, the place was decorated with bunting and with strings, clusters and garlands of fairy lights. On the surface of the Seine large barges moved slowly about, representing domes, pyramids and all kinds of monuments picked out in variously coloured lights. Illuminated festoons hung down as far as the water itself, and here and there an enormous red or blue lantern suspended from an invisible rod hung like a huge star in the sky.

All these illuminations shone on the café and floodlit the great trees on the bank whose trunks stood out pale grey and whose leaves were milky green against the deep, pitch black of the fields and of the sky. A band consisting of five local players blared shrill, syncopated music across the water and, hearing it, Madeleine began to sing along. She wanted to go in right away. Paul would have preferred to make a tour of the island first but had to give in. The clientèle had thinned out a little by this time, still consisting mostly of boatmen with the odd sprinkling of middle- class couples and a few young men flanked by girls. The director and organizer of the can- can strutted in his faded black suit and cast round the audience the world- weary, professional eye of a cheap music- hall master of ceremonies. Paul was relieved to see that Big Pauline and her chums were nowhere to be seen.

People were dancing. Couples faced each other and capered about madly, kicking their legs as high as their partners' noses. The women, who appeared to have double- jointed legs and hips, leapt about in a frou- frou of lifted skirts, flashing their knickers and kicking their legs up over their heads with amazing agility. They wriggled their bellies and shook their bosoms, spreading about them the powerful smell of female flesh in sweat. The males squatted like toads in front of them making faces and obscene gestures. They cavorted and turned cartwheels, posturing meanwhile in hideous parody, as one strapping maid and two waiters served the audience drinks.

Since the café- boat was covered by a roof only and had no side walls to separate it from the outdoors, the whole rumbustious dance was performed against the backdrop of the peaceful night and a firmament dusted with stars. Suddenly Mont- Valérien in the distance lit up as if a fire had started behind it. The glow deepened and spread, describing a wide, luminous circle of pale light. Then a ruby- coloured shape appeared, grew large, and glowed like red-

hot metal. The circle widened further still and seemed to be emerging from the earth itself, as the moon, breaking free of the horizon, sailed gently upwards into space. As it rose, its crimson glow dimmed and turned to an increasingly light then bright yellow. As the planet climbed higher it grew smaller and smaller still in the distance.

Paul, lost in long contemplation of this sight, had become oblivious of his girl. When he turned round she had disappeared from view. He looked for her in vain. Having searched anxiously and systematically up and down the rows of tables he started asking people. No one had seen her. He then began to wander about wretchedly until one of the waiters said: 'If you're looking for Madame Madeleine, she went off a little while ago with Madame Pauline.'

Simultaneously, he caught sight of the midshipwoman and the two beautiful girls sitting at the opposite end of the café, arms round each other's waists, watching him and whispering. Realizing what had happened, he ran off like a madman towards the island. Chasing first in the direction of Chatou, he stopped at the edge of the plain, turned and retraced his steps. He began to search the dense coppices, wandering about aimlessly and stopping every so often to listen. All he could hear around him was the short, metallic croak of frogs. Towards Bougival an unfamiliar bird sang a song which reached him faintly from a distance. Over the broad fields the moon shed a soft, filmy light. It filtered through the foliage, silvering the barks of the poplars and casting a shower of brilliant moonbeams on the shimmering tops of the tallest trees. Despite himself Paul was enchanted by the intoxicating loveliness of the night. It penetrated the terrible anguish he was feeling and stirred in his heart a fierce sense of irony. He longed with all his gentle and idealistic soul for a faithful woman to worship – someone in whose arms he could express all his love and tenderness as well as his passion.

Choked by racking sobs, he had to stop in his tracks. Having recovered a little he went on, only to feel a sudden stab in his heart. There, behind that bush . . . a pair of lovers! He ran forward and saw their silhouettes united in a seemingly endless kiss before they quickly ran off at his approach. He dared not call out, knowing full well that his own girl would not respond. He was desperately afraid

now of coming upon them all of a sudden. The music of the quadrilles with its piercing solo cornets, the mock gaiety of the flute and the scraping of the fiddles pulled at his own heartstrings and deepened the pain he continued to feel.

Suddenly it occurred to him that she might have gone back in! Yes, that was it! She must have returned. He had lost all sense of proportion, he was stupid, he had been carried away by all the silly suspicions and fears that always haunted him. In one of those periods of strange calm which occur during periods of the blackest despair he turned and began to make for the café again.

He took in the whole room at a single glance. She was not there. He checked all the tables, and once again came face to face with the three women. He must have looked the picture of dejection for the three burst out laughing. Rushing out again, he ran back to the island. He threw himself into the coppices and stopped to listen once more. It was some time before he could hear anything save the roaring in his own ears. Finally, however, he thought he could hear some way ahead a shrill little laugh he knew only too well. Creeping forward he fell to his knees and crawled on, parting the branches cautiously as he went. His heart was beating so wildly in his chest that he could hardly breathe. Two voices were murmuring. He could not make out what they were saying. Then they fell silent again.

He had a sudden furious desire to run away, not to see, not to know and to keep on running to escape from the raging passion with which he was consumed. He would return to Chatou, catch a train and never come back. He would never see her again. Just as suddenly her face appeared in his mind's eye. He saw her as she was waking up next to him in their warm bed. He saw her snuggle up to him and throw her arms round his neck. Her hair was loose and a little tangled over her brow. Her eyes were still closed and her lips parted, waiting for the first kiss of the day. The thought of this morning's embrace filled him with unbearable regret and frantic desire.

They were talking again. He approached bent double. Then a cry rose from under the branches close to him. That cry! It was one of those he had come to know from their most tender, their most passionate love-making. He crept even closer, drawn irresistibly,

blindly, despite himself . . . and then he saw them.

Oh! If only the other person had been a man! But this! He was transfixed by the loathsome sight before him. He remained there overwhelmed by shock. It was as though he had just stumbled upon the mutilated body of a loved one. It was a crime against nature, a monstrous and wicked desecration. Suddenly flashing into his mind's eye this time came the image of the little fish whose entrails he had earlier seen ripped out. Madeleine was moaning 'Pauline', exactly as she used to moan 'Paul' to him. Hearing it, he felt such pain that he turned and fled. He hurtled into one tree and ricocheted into another, fell over a root, picked himself up and ran again until suddenly he found himself at the edge of the river. The raging torrent made whirls and eddies on which the moonbeams now played. On the opposite side the bank loomed over the water like a cliff, leaving a wide band of black at its foot from which the sound of the swirling water rose in the darkness. Clearly visible on the other side were the weekend homes at Croissy.

Paul saw all this as if in a dream or as something remembered. He was no longer thinking. He understood nothing now. Everything including his own existence seemed vague, distant, forgotten and finished. There was the river. Did he know what he was doing? Did he want to die? He had lost his mind. Nevertheless he turned round to face the island where she was. Into the night in which the faint but persistent beat of the dance- band still throbbed back and forth, he shouted, 'Madeleine!'

His heart- rending call pierced the great silence of the sky and echoed, lost in the distance. Then with a furious animal- like leap he plunged into the river. The water splashed then closed over the spot setting up a series of ever- widening circles which rippled in the moonlight as far as the opposite bank. The two women had heard. Madeleine got up and said, 'That's Paul.' A suspicion arose suddenly in her mind. 'He's drowned himself,' she said and rushed towards the bank where Pauline caught up with her.

A heavy punt with two men in it was circling over and over around the same spot. One of the men rowed while the other was plunging a long pole into the water evidently looking for something. Pauline shouted: 'What's happened? What are you doing?'

A stranger's voice cried: 'A man's just drowned himself.'

With haggard faces the two women huddled together and watched the boat's manoeuvres. The music from La Grenouillère pounding in the distance provided a grim counterpoint to the movements of the solemn fishermen. The river, now containing a corpse in its depths, continued to swirl in the moonlight. The search was prolonged and Madeleine, waiting in horrible suspense, shivered. Finally, after a good half- hour, one of the men announced: 'I've got him!'

Very gradually he pulled in the boathook. A large mass appeared at the surface of the water. The other boatman left his oars and between the two, each heaving with all his strength, they managed to haul the inert body and bring it tumbling into the boat. They soon reached the bank and found an open, flat space in the moonlight. As they landed, the women approached.

As soon as she saw him Madeleine recoiled in horror. In the light of the moon's rays he looked green already and his mouth, his eyes, his nose and his clothes were full of the river's slime. The stiff fingers of his clenched fist looked hideous. Black, liquid silt covered his entire body. The face looked swollen and from his hair now plastered down with ooze a stream of filthy water ran. The two men examined him.

'You know him?' asked one.

The other, the Croissy ferryman, hesitated.

'Seems to me I know the face . . .,' he said, 'but it's difficult to tell seeing him like this . . .'

Then suddenly: 'Oh! I know! It's Monsieur Paul!'

'Who's Monsieur Paul?' his friend asked.

The first went on: 'You know! Monsieur Paul Baron. Son of that senator. The kid who was so hooked on that girl, you remember?'

The other added philosophically: 'No more girls for him now, eh? Poor sod. And with all that money too!'

Madeleine, having collapsed on the ground, was sobbing. Pauline approached the body and said, 'I suppose he really is dead . . there's no chance he might . . . ?'

The men shrugged their shoulders.

‘After that length of time no question.’

Then one of them asked: ‘Was he staying at Le Grillon?’

‘Yes,’ said the other. ‘We’d better take him back there. Handsome tip, mate.’ Re-embarking they set off, moving slowly against the rapid current. Long after they had disappeared from the two women’s sight the regular sound of their oars could still be heard.

Pauline took poor, weeping Madeleine in her arms, kissed and rocked her for a long time and then said: ‘Now look. As long as you know it’s not your fault. You can’t stop men doing stupid things. It was his decision so it’s just too bad, that’s all.’

Then lifting her to her feet, she added, ‘Come on darling! Come and sleep at the house. You can’t go back to Le Grillon tonight.’ She kissed her again. ‘Come on, you’ll feel better with us,’ she said.

Madeleine got up, still sobbing, but less violently. She leaned her head on Pauline’s shoulder. Seeming to find there a safer, warmer refuge and a closer, more intimate affection, she walked slowly away from the scene.

Hautot & Son

The house, half farm and half manor, was one of those combinations often found in the country of a property once vaguely seigneurial and now owned by farmers themselves rich in land. In front of it the dogs tied to the farmyard apple trees were barking and yelping as the keeper and some small boys arrived carrying gamebags.

It was the opening day of the season and in the vast kitchen which served as dining room Hautot senior, Hautot junior, Monsieur Bermont the tax- collector and Monsieur Mondaru the lawyer were having a drink and a bite to eat before setting off on the day's shoot. Hautot senior, very proud of his property, was telling his guests ahead of time what excellent game they would find on his land. He was a big- boned, ruddy- faced Norman, the powerfully built sort of man who can carry a whole barrel of apples on his shoulders. Somewhat authoritarian in manner, he was wealthy, respected and highly influential. He had sent his son César to school up to the fourth form so that he should have some education, then removed him lest he become so much of a gentleman that he no longer cared about his land.

César Hautot was nearly as tall as his father, but leaner. He was an easy- going, happy- go- lucky young man, a good son to his father whom he greatly admired and to whose every wish and opinion he was happy to defer.

Monsieur Bermont, the tax- collector, was a stout little man on whose red cheeks a maze of violet- coloured veins looked like a network of tortuous rivers and tributaries as might be seen on maps in an atlas. He asked, 'And hare? Will there be . . . hare?'

Hautot senior replied, 'As much as you like! Specially round PuySATIER.'

'Where shall we start?' enquired the lawyer, a portly, well- fed man trussed up now in a new shooting jacket bought the previous week in Rouen.

‘Down at the bottom, I think. We’ll get the partridge out on the plain and then put them up from there.’

With this, Hautot senior rose. Following suit they all stood up and stamped their feet to bring warmth and suppleness to the leather of their newly- donned and tight- fitting boots. They collected the guns propped up in various corners of the room, examined the locks, then left the house. Outside, the dogs, still leashed, were now jumping up on their hind legs, yelping shrilly and pawing the air.

They set off towards the lower grounds and a small valley which was no more than a dip of poor- quality land left purposely uncultivated. It was criss- crossed with gullies and covered with fern – an excellent place for game. The guns spread out, with Hautot senior on the far right, Hautot junior on the far left and the two guests in the middle. The keeper and two gamebag carriers followed. Nervously fingering their triggers and with their hearts beating fast they stopped and stood waiting in solemn silence for the first shot of the season to ring out.

There it was! Hautot senior had fired. They saw one partridge fall away from the headlong flight of birds and come down in a gully covered with thick brush. Highly excited, Hautot leapt up and ran off, tearing up everything in his way and finally disappearing into the undergrowth to pick up his quarry. Almost immediately a second shot rang out.

‘The lucky devil!’ cried old Bermont. ‘He’s picked off a hare while he’s at it!’

They all waited, eyes fixed on the dense, impenetrable under growth. Cupping his hands round his mouth, the lawyer yelled: ‘Have you got them?’

Since no answer came from Hautot senior, César, turning to the keeper, said: ‘Go and give him a hand, Joseph, will you? We must spread out in line. We’ll wait for you.’

Joseph, a great gnarled tree- trunk of a man, set off calmly down towards the gully. Like a fox he carefully reconnoitred the easiest way through the brush. Having found it and disappeared, he cried out suddenly: ‘Come quick! Quick! There’s been an accident!’

Each man tore through the bushes towards the scene. When

they got there they saw Hautot lying on his side, unconscious, clasp- ing his stomach from which long streams of blood were flowing inside his bullet- torn jacket and into the grass. His fallen partridge within reach, Hautot must have dropped the gun to pick it up and in so doing triggered a second shot which shattered his own entrails. They dragged him from the ditch and on removing some of his clothing found a terrible wound now spilling out his intestines. They ligatured him as best they could and carried him home where the doctor they had sent for was waiting, along with a priest.

When the doctor saw him he shook his head gravely, and turning to Hautot's son who was sobbing in a chair, said, 'My poor boy, I'm afraid it doesn't look at all good.'

But when a dressing had been applied, the injured man moved his fingers, opened his mouth, then a pair of haggard eyes, and cast a few anxious glances around him. He seemed to be searching his mind for something and then, when the whole sequence of events came flooding back, murmured: 'Christ almighty! I've had it now.'

The doctor took his hand.

'No! Certainly not! All you need is a few days' rest and you'll be absolutely fine.'

Hautot went on: 'No, I know the score. Shattered stomach. I've had it.'

Then suddenly: 'I want to talk to my son if I've got time.'

Young Hautot whimpered like a little boy: 'Papa! Papa! Oh, poor Papa!'

In a firmer tone his father said: 'Listen, stop crying. Doesn't help. I've got to talk to you. Come close, it'll only take a minute. Then I'll feel much better. You lot, can we have a minute or two if you don't mind?'

The others went out of the room, leaving father and son together. As soon as they were alone the father spoke: 'Listen, my boy, you're twenty- four, I can tell you everything now. Not that there's much to tell. Anyway you know when your mother died seven years ago I was . . . well I'm forty- five now. I was married at nineteen by the way, right?'

'Yes I know.'

'So when she died she left me a widower at thirty- seven. Can you imagine? Chap like me. Can't be a permanent widower at thirty- seven, can you my boy?'

'No father, of course not.'

The father's face was pale and contorted with pain.

'God, I'm in agony here. Anyway, to continue. A chap can't live entirely on his own yet I couldn't remarry. I'd promised your mum. So . . . are you following?'

'Yes father.'

'So. I took up with this girl in Rouen. Rue de l'Éperlan, number 18, third floor, second door. You are taking all this in I hope? This girl, she's been so good to me, you know. I couldn't have wished for a sweeter little wife. Loving, devoted, you get the picture my boy?'

'Yes father.'

'Well, anyway, if I should pop off I reckon I owe her. A lot. Enough to set her up. You understand?'

'Yes, father.'

'When I say she's a good kid, I mean really good. If it hadn't been for you, and out of respect for your mother's memory, if it hadn't been for this house, and us having lived here, the three of us, I'd have brought her home here and married her, no question. Listen, listen, my boy. I could have made a will but I didn't. Didn't want to. Never put things down in writing. Not that sort of thing anyway. Upsets the family. Makes everything too complicated. Everybody at each other's throats. Who needs legal documents? Don't ever use them. That's how I've made my money, such as it is. Understand, my boy?'

'Yes, father.'

'Listen again, carefully. So I haven't made a will. Didn't need to. Because I know you. You've got a good heart, you're not . . . careful . . . tight- fisted, you know what I mean? So I thought when the end came I'd just tell you how things stood and I'd ask you not to forget the girl: Caroline Donet, rue de l'Éperlan, number 18, third floor, second door, don't forget. Listen again. Go straight there when I've gone . . . and make sure she's seen all right by me. You'll

have plenty. You can do it. I'm leaving you enough. Listen. She won't be there most of the week, she works for Madame Moreau, rue Beauvoisine. But go on Thursday. That's when she expects me. That's my day, has been for six years now. Oh the poor girl! She's going to be so upset! I'm telling you all this because I know you, my boy. Not the sort of thing you tell everybody. Not the lawyer and not the curé. It happens, everybody knows that, but you don't discuss it. Not unless you have to. So, no strangers in on it. Just the family that's all. You understand?'

'Yes father.'

'Promise?'

'Yes father.'

'Swear?'

'Yes, father.'

'I beg of you, my boy, please. Please don't forget. You mustn't.'

'I won't father.'

'Go in person. You're in charge of everything.'

'Yes, father.'

'Then you'll see what she says. I can't talk any more. Swear to me.'

'Yes father.'

'That's good, my boy. Come and give me a kiss goodbye. I'm nearly finished. This is it. Tell them they can come in.'

Moaning, the younger Hautot kissed his father and, obedient as always, opened the door. The priest appeared wearing a white surplice and carrying the holy oils. But the dying man had closed his eyes and refused to open them again. He refused to reply and refused to give any sign that he knew what was going on.

He had talked enough and could not say another word. Besides, he felt relieved now. He could die in peace. What need was there for him to confess to this delegate of God since he had already confessed to his own son who really was family?

The last rites were administered, and he was given communion in the midst of his kneeling friends and servants with never a

movement of his face to indicate that he was still alive. He died at around midnight after four hours of spasms indicative of appalling pain.

The season had opened on the Sunday and Hautot was buried the following Tuesday. Having returned from taking his father to the cemetery, César Hautot spent the rest of the day in tears. He hardly slept that night and was so miserable the next day that he wondered how he could carry on living. Nevertheless he spent the whole day thinking that, if his father's last wish was to be carried out, he should go to Rouen the following day and see this Caroline Donet at the rue de l'Éperlan, number 18, third floor, second door. He had repeated this like a mantra so many times so as not to forget it, that now he could think of little else. Both his mind and his ear were hypnotized by the phrase. Accordingly, the next morning around eight o'clock, having ordered Graindorge harnessed to the tilbury, he set off at a brisk pace behind the heavy Norman horse on the main road from Ainville to Rouen. He was wearing his black frock- coat, a tall silk topper and his trousers with the straps under the soles. In the circumstances he decided not to wear over his handsome suit the loose blue smock which, flapping in the wind, protected his better clothes against any dust or spots and which he normally shed as soon as he jumped down on arriving at his destination.

He got to Rouen just as ten o'clock was striking and went as usual to the Hôtel des Bons- Enfants, rue des Trois Mares. There he was embraced by the proprietor, the proprietor's wife and their five sons, all of whom had heard the sad news. After that he had to tell them exactly how the accident had happened and this set him off crying again. He turned down their offers of comfort, all the more insistent now that he was a man of substance, and even refused their invitation to dinner, which really offended them.

Having dusted off his hat, brushed down his frock- coat and given his boots a quick wipe, he set out to find the rue de l'Éperlan. He dared not ask for directions lest he be recognized and suspicions raised. Finally drawing a complete blank, he spotted a priest and counting on the professional discretion of a clergyman found out from him the way to the address. It was very close. In the next

street on the right in fact.

He began to feel a little hesitant. Until this moment he had been blindly following his dead father's instructions. Now he felt a confusing mixture of sorrow and shame as he thought of himself, a son, soon to be face to face with the woman who had been his father's mistress. All the old moral strictures lying buried in his unconscious under layer after layer of conventional, received wisdom handed down from generation to generation, everything he had learned from his catechism years and since about loose women and the instinctive mistrust men have of them even if they marry one – all these ignorant, peasant values clamoured inside him, held him back and brought a blush of shame to his cheeks.

Nevertheless, he thought, I promised my father. Mustn't let him down. The door marked 18 was ajar so he pushed it open and saw beyond it a dark stairway which he climbed as far as the third floor. There he saw first one door, then a second with a bell- pull which he now tugged. The tinkle which he heard echo into the room beyond made his heart sink. The door was opened and he found himself standing opposite a very well- dressed, fresh- faced brunette who was staring at him in astonishment.

He had no idea what to say and she, unaware of anything untoward and expecting his father any minute, did not invite him in. They looked at each other for a full thirty seconds, at the end of which she said: 'Can I help you, monsieur?'

He murmured, 'I'm Hautot, the son.'

She started, turned pale and stammered as if she had known him all her life: 'Oh! Monsieur César?'

'Yes.'

'What . . . what's . . . ?'

'I have a message for you from my father.'

She said, 'Oh my God!' and took a step backwards to let him in. He then saw a little boy playing with a cat on the floor in front of a stove where several dishes were cooking.

'Sit down,' she said.

He sat down.

‘Well?’ she asked.

He was struck dumb, his eyes on the table in the middle of the room laid for three including a child. He looked at the chair with its back to the fire, the plate, the napkin, the glasses, one bottle of red wine, already drunk from, and one unopened bottle of white. That must be his father’s usual place with his back to the fire! He was still expected by her! That would have been his father’s bread with all the crust removed because of his poor teeth. Raising his eyes, he saw hanging on the wall a large photograph of his father taken at the Paris Exhibition, the duplicate of one which hung over the bed in the master bedroom at Ainville.

The young woman went on: ‘So? Monsieur César?’

He looked at her. She was pale with dread and her hands were trembling fearfully as she waited for him to speak. Eventually he gathered up enough courage to do so. ‘Well Mam’zelle, I’m afraid Papa died on Sunday on the opening day of the shooting season.’

She was shocked literally rigid. After a few moments’ silence she said in a barely audible voice, ‘Oh no! He can’t have!’

Then suddenly her eyes filled with tears. She raised her hands to cover her face and began to sob. The little boy, seeing his mother burst into tears and deducing that this stranger was the cause, hurled himself on César, grabbed him by the trouser- leg with one hand and started smacking him on the thigh as hard as he could with the other. César, frantic with grief himself, his own eyes still swollen with crying, was moved at the sight of this woman weeping for his father and the little boy defending the mother. He felt almost overwhelmed with emotion and, in order to keep from breaking down himself, started to speak: ‘Yes,’ he said, ‘the tragedy occurred on Sunday morning at eight o’clock . . .’

He went on, assuming she was hearing it all and forgetting no detail, omitting not the smallest incident in a painstaking, plodding peasant way. The little boy continued to smack him and had now begun to kick him on the ankles. When Hautot junior came to the part where Hautot senior had talked about her, the young woman, hearing her own name, uncovered her face and asked: ‘I’m sorry. Could you start again please? I wasn’t taking it in . . . I really want to know what happened . . .’

He began again, using exactly the same words: 'The tragedy occurred on Sunday morning at eight o'clock . . .'

Again he told her everything, stopping every now and then to punctuate the story with little asides of his own. She listened attentively. With the sensitive perception of a woman, she seized every implication of each twist and turn of events, shuddering with horror and saying 'Oh my God' from time to time. The little boy, seeing his mother had calmed down, stopped hitting César and was now holding her hand, listening too as if he understood every word. When he came to the end Hautot junior said: 'And now what we must do is make sure his wishes are carried out. I'm in a comfortable position. He's left me property so . . . I wouldn't want you to feel in any need . . .'

She broke in abruptly: 'Oh, please, please, Monsieur César! Not today! My heart's breaking! Another time, another day, perhaps. But not today. And if I were to accept, I do want you to know it would not be for me, oh no, no, no, I swear I wouldn't want anything for myself but for the little one. We'll put any money in his name.'

César was aghast. Then the penny dropped. He stammered, 'You mean . . . he's his?'

'Oh yes,' she said.

Hautot junior looked at his half-brother with a mixture of emotions, all deeply painful. After a long silence, for she had begun to weep again, César was at a complete loss as to what to do. He said: 'Well then, Mam'zelle Donet, I'd better be going. When would you like us to meet and talk about arrangements?'

She cried out: 'Oh don't go! Please! Please don't leave me and Émile on our own. I'd die of grief. I've got nobody now except my little boy. Oh it's awful, Monsieur César, it's terrible! Please, please sit down! Talk to me some more. Tell me about what he used to do when he was away from here, when he was back home with you.'

And so César, obedient as always, sat down again. She drew her chair up close to his in front of the stove where the food was still cooking. She put Émile on her lap and asked César hundreds of little intimate questions about his father from which he could see or rather feel instinctively that this poor young woman had loved

Hautot with all her heart.

The conversation naturally kept returning to the accident and he told her all over again what had happened, in the same detail. When he said, 'The hole in his stomach was so big you could have put both hands in it', she gave a sort of cry and began sobbing yet again. This time César too broke down with her and started to weep. Softened by his own tears he leaned down towards Émile whose forehead was within reach and kissed it. His mother struggled to get her breath back.

'Poor little mite,' she said, 'he's fatherless now.'

'Me too,' said César.

At this, each stopped talking. Suddenly the young woman became the practical housewife who thinks of everything and everyone.

'I don't suppose you've eaten a thing all morning, have you, Monsieur César?'

'No, Mam'zelle.'

'Oh, you must be hungry! Will you have something to eat?'

'No thank you,' he said, 'I'm not hungry. Too upset.'

'Oh, but you've got to eat in spite of everything, you'll grant me that. Do stay a bit longer. I don't know what I'll do when you leave.'

After a few attempts at resistance, he sat down opposite her, and in the chair with its back to the fire he settled down to a dish of the tripe that had been sizzling in the oven, and to a glass of red wine. Several times he wiped the mouth of the little boy who had dribbled sauce all over his chin. As he rose to leave, he said: 'When would you like me to come back and talk business, Mam'zelle Donet?'

'If it's all the same to you, Monsieur César, next Thursday. It'll save me taking time off. I've always got Thursday off anyway.'

'That's fine with me. Next Thursday.'

'You'll have lunch, won't you?'

'Oh, I don't know . . . really.'

‘It’s much easier to talk over a meal. Saves time too.’

‘All right then. Let’s say twelve o’clock.’

After giving little Émile another kiss and shaking Mademoiselle Donet’s hand he left.

The week passed very slowly for César Hautot. He had never been on his own before and solitude seemed unbearable to him. Until then, he had shadowed his father all his life, following him into the fields, seeing that his orders were carried out, then, after a little while apart, he would see him again at dinner. In the evenings they would sit opposite each other smoking their pipes and talking about horses, cows and sheep. Their morning handshake was an expression of deep family attachment.

And now César was alone. He wandered about in the ploughed fields of autumn, all the time expecting to see the tall silhouette of his father waving to him from some field or other. To kill time he would drop in on neighbours, describe the accident to anyone who had not heard what had happened, and retell the story to those who had. Sometimes when he had run out of things that needed thinking about or doing he would sit down at the side of a cart track and wonder how much longer he could carry on.

He thought often of Mademoiselle Donet. He had liked her very much. He thought she was a very nice person indeed, a good, kind girl as his father had said. Yes, she was a lovely girl. A really lovely girl. He was determined to do her proud and to give her 2,000 francs in interest on capital to be settled on the child. He was rather pleased that he had to go and see her the following Thursday to sort things out with her. The thought of this brother, this new little fellow was a bit of a worry. It bothered him a little, yet at the same time it gave him a warm sort of feeling. There was a bit of kin for him there. The kid born on the other side of the blanket would never be called Hautot, but he was a bit of family with no pressure attached, a bit of his father after all.

When he found himself once more on the way to Rouen on Thursday morning, with these and similar thoughts in his head and the sound of Graindorge’s rhythmical clip- clop, his heart was lighter and his mind calmer than at any time since the accident. As

he entered Mademoiselle Donet's apartment he saw that everything was laid exactly as it had been the previous Thursday with one single exception – the crust of the bread at his place had not been removed.

He shook hands with the young woman, kissed Émile on both cheeks and sat down feeling both very much at home and extremely emotional. Mademoiselle Donet seemed slightly thinner and slightly paler. She must have cried her little heart out. This time she was a bit awkward in her manner towards him as if she had realized something she had been unable to absorb on that first occasion when she was still taking in the enormity of what had happened. She was extremely attentive to his needs and humble in her approach, as if trying to pay back in devotion and service towards him some of the generosity he was showing her. They took a long time over lunch and discussed the business which had brought him there. She did not want so much money. It was too much, far too much. She earned enough to keep herself; all she wanted was that Émile might have something to look forward to when he reached his majority. César, however, stuck to his guns and even added a present for herself as a token of mourning. As he finished his coffee, she asked, 'Do you smoke?'

'Yes, I've got my pipe here . . .,' he began.

He patted his pockets. Damnation. He had left it at home! He was just about to bemoan the fact when she produced one belonging to his father which she had kept tucked away in a cupboard. He took it from her and recognized it. Sniffing it and with emotion in his voice, declaring it to be one of the best, he filled and lit it. Then he put Émile on his knee and played ride-a-cock-horse with him while she cleared the table, stacking the dirty dishes in the sideboard to wash later after he had gone.

At about three, when he rose regretfully, he hated the idea of leaving.

'Well, Mamz'elle Donet,' he said, 'I'll wish you a very good afternoon. I'm delighted to have made your acquaintance like this.'

She remained standing in front of him, blushing and near to tears. As she looked at him she thought of his father.

'Are we not to see each other again then?' she asked.

He replied simply: 'We can, Mam'zelle, if that's what you'd like.'

'It most certainly is, Monsieur César. Shall we say next Thursday, if that's convenient for you?'

'Indeed it is, Mam'zelle Donet.'

'You'll come for lunch, of course?'

'Well, if you're offering I wouldn't say no.'

'Very well, Monsieur César. Thursday next it is, at twelve o'clock, like today.'

'Twelve o'clock on Thursday then, Mam'zelle Donet!'

Laid to Rest

Five friends had been dining together. They were all rich, middle- aged men of the world, two of them bachelors, three married men. These monthly meetings of theirs were some of the happiest evenings of their lives. They had all known each other since their youth, remained close friends, enjoyed one another's company and often stayed talking till two o'clock in the morning. The conversation was about anything and everything that might interest or amuse a Parisian and, as in most drawing rooms, it was a kind of verbal version of the news in the morning papers.

One of the most footloose and fancy- free among them was Joseph de Bardon, a bachelor who exploited to the full all the attractions Paris has to offer. Though not exactly decadent or debauched in his habits, he managed to satisfy all the natural curiosity of a fun- loving man in his late thirties. A man of the world in the best and widest sense of the word, he was witty rather than profound, knowledgeable rather than wise and possessed a quick rather than a deep understanding of human nature. His experiences and encounters provided him with a fund of anecdotes, some edifying, some frankly hilarious. He had a reputation in society as a bright fellow with a good sense of humour – everyone's favourite after- dinner speaker whose tales were always the ones most looked forward to. He never needed any urging to begin, as he did on this occasion.

Certain creatures at certain times and places look absolutely in their element, let's say a goldfish in its bowl, a nun in church, or what have you. Sitting there smoking a cigar, with his elbows on the table, a half- filled glass of liqueur brandy to hand and relaxing in a warm haze of coffee and tobacco, he looked like a man in his ideal milieu. Between a couple of puffs he spoke.

'The funniest thing happened to me not so long ago . . .'

A near- instantaneous chorus replied, 'Go on, do!'

And he was off.

‘Thank you, I shall. You know I get around Paris a fair amount. As other people window- shop, I watch what’s going on. I watch the world and his brother pass by, I watch what’s going on around me. Well, some time towards the middle of last September, I left the house one afternoon with no clear idea of where I was going. You know how you always have a vague yen to go and see some pretty woman or other . . . you riffle through your little black book, you do a few mental comparisons, you weigh up the possible delights and you decide more or less on the spur of the moment. But when the sun’s shining and it’s warm outside you don’t always want to be cooped up indoors. On this particular day, it was warm and sunny and I lit a cigar before starting to stroll along the outer boulevard. As I was sauntering along I decided to make for the cemetery in Montmartre and have a little wander about there. I like cemeteries, you know. They sadden and they soothe me and I find I need that from time to time. And of course some of one’s chums are there, people nobody goes to see any more. I drop by every so often still. And as it happens, an old flame of mine is buried in Montmatre Cemetery, a lovely little lady I was very keen on at one point in my life, very attached to. So although it’s painful, I find it does me good. I mean all kinds of memories come flooding back while I’m there, letting my thoughts drift beside her grave. It’s all over for her of course . . .

‘The other reason I like cemeteries is because they’re like cities in themselves, densely populated at that. Just think how many generations of Parisians are packed in there for ever; so many people stuck in their caves, their little holes just covered with a stone or marked with a cross, while the living take up so much room and make such a stupid racket.

‘Then of course you’ve got all the monuments, some of them much more interesting than in a museum. Though I wouldn’t put them in the same league, Cavaignac’s grave reminded me so much of that masterpiece by Jean Goujon, the statue of Louis de Brézé in the underground chapel at Rouen cathedral. That’s actually the root of all so- called modern, realist art, you know. That statue of the dead Louis de Brézé is more convincing, more terrible and more suggestive of inanimate flesh still convulsed in the death- agony than any of the tortured corpses you see sculpted these days on

people's tombs.

'But in Montmartre Cemetery you can still admire the impressive monument to Baudin, the one to Gautier, and that to Murger, on which incidentally, only the other day I spotted one poor solitary wreath of helichrysums. I wonder who put that there. Perhaps the last of the *grisettes*, now a very old woman and possibly one of the local concierges. It's a pretty little statue by Millet, suffering badly from neglect and all the accumulated dirt of the years. Oh for the joys of youth, eh, Murger?

'Anyway there I was, stepping into Montmartre Cemetery, suddenly filled with sadness of a not entirely disagreeable kind, the sort that makes a healthy fellow think "Not the most cheerful of spots, but thank God I'm not stuck in here just yet." The feeling of autumn, the warm dampness of dead leaves in pale, weak sunshine heightened and romanticized the sense of solitude and finality surrounding this place of the dead.

'I wandered slowly along the streets of graves where neighbours no longer call, no longer sleep together and never hear the news. Then I started reading the epitaphs. I tell you gentlemen, they are absolutely killing. Not even Labiche or Meilhac can give me more of a laugh than the language of the headstone. When you read what the nearest and dearest have put on the marble slabs and crosses, pouring out their grief and their best wishes for the happiness of the departed in the next world, and their hopes – the liars! – for a speedy reunion, it's hilarious! Better than a Paul de Kock any day!

'But what I love most in that cemetery is the deserted, lonely part planted with all those tall yews and cypresses, the old district where those who died long ago now lie. Soon it will become the new part of town; the green trees nourished by human corpses will be felled to make room for the recently departed to be lined up in turn under their own little marble slabs.

'After I had wandered about long enough to refresh my mind, I realized I was now getting a little bored and that it was time to go to the last resting place of my old love and pay her my ever-faithful respects. By the time I reached her graveside I was feeling quite upset. Poor darling, she was so sweet, so loving, so fair and rosy . . . and now . . . if this spot were ever opened up . . . Leaning on the

iron railings I whispered to her a few sad words which I dare say she is unlikely to have heard. I was just about to leave when I saw a woman in deep mourning on her knees at the next graveside. She had lifted her crêpe veil and under it could be seen a pretty head of fair hair, a crown of bright dawn under the dark night of her head-dress. I lingered. In what was obviously deep distress she had buried her face in her hands and, stiff as a statue, was deep in meditation. Absorbed by her grief and telling the painful beads of memory behind closed and hidden eyes, she seemed herself dead to the world in her loss. Suddenly I saw that she was about to break down. I could tell from the slight movement her back made, like a willow stirring in the wind. She wept gently at first then more and more violently with her neck and shoulders shaking hard and rapidly. All of a sudden she uncovered her eyes. Full of tears they were lovely. She looked wildly about her as if waking from a nightmare. She saw me looking at her, seemed ashamed and buried her whole face once more in her hands. Then she burst into convulsive sobs and her head bent slowly down towards the marble slab. She rested her forehead on it and her veil, spreading about her, covered the white corners of her beloved sepulchre like a new mourning- cloth. I heard her moan before she collapsed with her cheek against the tombstone and lay there motionless and unconscious.

‘I rushed over to her, slapped her hands and breathed on her eyelids while reading the simple epitaph beyond:

HERE LIES LOUIS- THEODORE CARREL

Captain of Marines

Killed by the enemy at Tonkin

PRAY FOR HIS SOUL

The date of death was some months earlier. I was moved to tears and redoubled my efforts to revive her. Finally they succeeded and she came to. I’m not bad- looking, not yet forty, remember, and at that moment I must have been looking extremely solicitous. At any rate, from her first glance I realized she would be both polite and grateful to me. I was not disappointed. Between further tears

and sobs she told me about the officer who had been killed at Tonkin after they had been married for just one year. He had married her for love. She had been an orphan and possessed nothing but the smallest dowry.

‘I comforted her, consoled her, lifted her up, then helped her to her feet.

“You can’t stay here like this,” I said, “come on . . .”

“I’m not sure I can manage to walk . . .”

“I’ll help you, don’t worry.”

“Thank you, Monsieur, you’re very kind. Did you have someone here yourself you wanted to mourn?”

“Yes, Madame.”

“A lady?”

“Yes, Madame.”

“Your wife?”

“A . . . friend.”

“One can love a friend as much as a wife. Passion has its own laws.”

“Indeed so, Madame.”

‘We walked away together, she leaning on me so heavily that I was almost carrying her along the paths of the cemetery. As we were leaving it, she said: “I think I’m going to faint.”

“Would you like to go in and sit down somewhere? Let me get you something to . . .”

“Yes thank you, I would.”

‘I noticed a place nearby, one of those restaurants where the friends of the recently buried go when they have completed their grim duties. We went in and I made her drink a cup of hot tea which seemed to restore her strength somewhat. A faint smile came to her lips and she began to tell me a little about herself. How sad, how very sad it was to be all alone in the world, to be alone at home day and night, to have no one with whom to share love, trust and intimacy.

‘It all seemed sincere and so genuine the way she told it. I felt my heart softening. She was very young, twenty at most. I flattered her a little and she responded gracefully. Then, as time was getting on, I offered to take her home by cab. She accepted. In the cab we were so close to each other, shoulder to shoulder, that we could feel the warmth of each other’s bodies through our clothing – one of the most disturbing feelings in the world, as you know. When the cab drew up in front of her house she murmured: “I really don’t think I can get up the stairs on my own. I live on the fourth floor. You’ve been so kind . . . could you possibly give me your arm again, please?”

‘I said of course I could, and she went up slowly, breathing hard all the time. Then at her door she added: “Do come in for a few moments so that I can thank you.”

‘In I went, naturally.

‘It was a modest, not to say poor little apartment furnished in simple but good taste. We sat side by side on a little sofa where she started talking again about how lonely she was. She rang for her maid to bring me something to drink. No one appeared. I was delighted about this and imagined that this maid must work mornings only, in other words, she only had a cleaner. She had taken off her hat. She really was quite a charmer. Her lovely, limpid eyes were fixed on me with such a clear, direct gaze that I suddenly felt an irresistible urge. I succumbed on the spot and clasped her in my arms. On her eyelids, which had instantly closed, I rained kiss after kiss after kiss. She struggled, pushing me away and repeating: “Please . . . please . . . please . . . have done!”

‘What exactly did she mean? In the circumstances there were two ways of interpreting the words. To silence her I moved down from the eyes to the mouth and, putting my preferred interpretation on her request to please have done, complied with it. She put up little resistance and when later we looked at each other again after an insult to the memory of the captain killed at Tonkin she wore a languorous expression of tender resignation which dispelled any misgivings of my own.

‘I showed my gratitude by being gallant and attentive, and after an hour or so’s conversation asked: “Where do you normally dine?”

“At a little restaurant nearby.”

“All on your own?”

“Yes, of course.”

“Will you have dinner with me tonight?”

“Where did you have in mind?”

“Oh, a very good restaurant on the boulevard.”

‘She demurred for a while but I insisted and finally she gave in, reasoning that she would otherwise be terribly lonely again. Then she added, “I’d better change into something less severe,” and disappeared into her bedroom. When she emerged she was in half-mourning and wearing a very simple but elegant grey dress in which she looked slender and charming. She obviously had markedly different outfits for the cemetery and for town.

‘Dinner was very pleasant. She drank champagne, became very animated and excited, after which I went back to her apartment with her. This little liaison begun between the tombstones went on for some three weeks or so. But novelty, particularly with regard to women, eventually palls. I dropped her on the pretext of some unavoidable trip I had to make. I was very generous when we parted and she in turn very grateful. She made me promise, no, swear, to come back on my return and really seemed to care a little for me.

‘I lost no time in forming other attachments, however, and about a month went by without my having felt any particular desire to resume my funereal fling. But nor did I forget her. The memory of her haunted me like some unsolved mystery, a psychological teaser, one of those nagging little puzzles you can’t leave alone. One day, for some inexplicable reason, I wondered whether, if I went back to Montmartre Cemetery again, I might bump into her, and decided to return.

‘I walked around for a long time but there was no one there apart from the usual sort of people who visit the place, mourners who have not yet severed all ties with their dead. At the grave of the captain killed at Tonkin no one mourned over the marble slab, no flowers lay there, no wreaths. However, as I was walking through another district of the city of the departed I suddenly saw a

couple, a man and a woman in deep mourning, coming towards me down a narrow avenue lined with crosses. To my amazement as they approached, I recognized the woman. It was she! Seeing me she blushed. As I brushed past her she gave me a tiny signal, the merest glance, but conveying in the clearest possible way both: "Don't show you know me," and "Come back and see me, darling."

"The man with her was about fifty, distinguished- looking and well- dressed, with the rosette of the *Légion d'honneur* in his lapel. He was supporting her just as I had done when we both left the cemetery that day.

"I went off, flabbergasted by what I had just seen and trying to imagine what tribe of creatures she belonged to, hunting as she obviously did on this sepulchral terrain. Was she a single prostitute who had struck on the brilliant idea of frequenting graveyards and picking up unhappy men still haunted by the loss of a wife or a mistress and troubled by the memory of past caresses? Was she unique? Or were there more like her? Was it a professional speciality to work the cemetery like the street? The loved ones of those laid to rest! Or was she alone in having conceived the psychologically sound idea of exploiting the feelings of amorous nostalgia awakened in these mournful venues?

"I was longing to know whose widow she had chosen to be that day.'



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N° 13

打火匣

中图出版集团

打火匣

企鹅经典：小黑书 第二辑

[丹麦] 安徒生/著

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P E N G U I N



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The Tinderbox

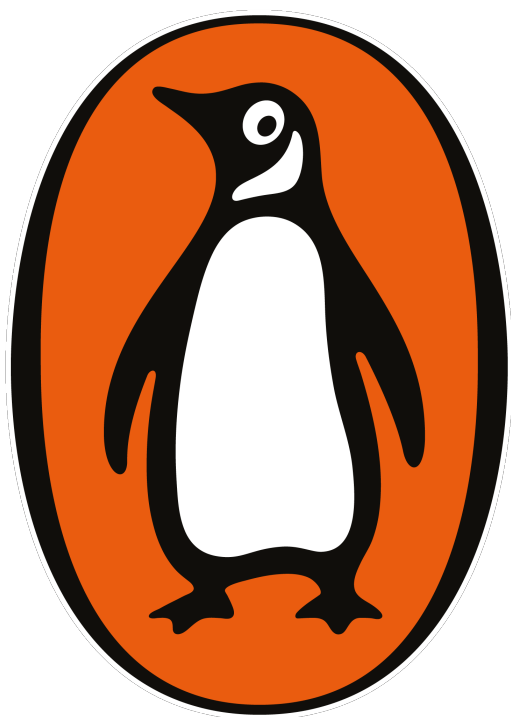
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条狗，
它有一对大如水车的
眼睛。”



PENGUIN
LITTLE BLACK
CLASSICS

* 此中文译本译自丹麦语原文

打火匣

大路上一名士兵迈着正步走来：一，二！一，二！他背着军包，挎着军刀，因为他刚打完仗，现在要回家了。然后他在大路上遇到一个老巫婆；她丑恶极了，她的下嘴唇一直垂到胸前。她说：“晚上好，士兵！你的军刀真漂亮，军包真大，你是个不折不扣的士兵！现在你想要多少钱就能有多少钱。”

“谢谢你，老巫婆！”士兵说。

“你看见那棵大树了吗？”巫婆指着他们身边的一棵树说，“里面是空的。你要爬到顶上去，那样你就会看到一个洞，你可以从那儿滑进去，进入树干深处。我会在你的腰上系一根绳子，你喊我的时候，我就可以把你再拉上来。”

“那我到树里去干什么？”士兵问。

“取钱呀！”巫婆说，“你会知道的，你钻到树底下之后，就会进入一条宽大的走廊，那儿很明亮，因为那里点着一百多盏灯。你会看到三扇门，都可以打开，门上插着钥匙。走进第一个房间，你就会看到地板中央放着一口大箱子，上面坐着一只狗，它有一对大如茶杯的眼睛，但你别把它当回事！我把我的蓝格子围裙给你，你可以把它铺在地上；尽快走过去抱住那只狗，把它放到我的围裙上，打开箱子，想拿多少钱就拿多少钱。这些钱都是铜币。但如果你想要银币的话，就得进第二个房间，但那儿也坐着一只狗，它有一对大如水车的眼睛，但你别把它当回事，把它放到我的围裙上，然后拿钱！不过，如果你想要金币的话，你也能拿到，你搬得动多少就能拿多少，进第三个房间就行。但坐在钱箱上的那只狗，有一对眼睛，每只都像‘圆塔’^[1] 那么大。那只狗可了不得！但你别把它当回事。只要把它放到我的围裙上，它就动不了你，你就从那个箱子里想拿多少金币就拿多少。”

“听上去不错，”士兵说，“但我拿什么东西给你呢，老巫婆？我想你总会要点什么吧。”

“不要，”巫婆说，“我一个铜子儿都不要！你只要替我把那个旧打火匣拿来，那是我祖母上回落在下面的！”

“一言为定！把绳子系到我腰上吧。”士兵说。

“好嘞！”巫婆说，“还有我的蓝格子围裙。”

于是士兵爬上树，跳进洞里，站起身，正如巫婆说的那样，下面的大走廊里点着上百盏灯。

现在他打开第一扇门。啊！那儿坐着那条狗，眼睛大如茶碗，正瞪着他呢。

“你个好家伙！”士兵说，然后把它抱到巫婆的围裙上，往口袋里塞满铜币，锁上箱子，再把狗儿放上去，接着他走进第二个房间。哎呀！那儿坐着的那条狗，眼睛大如水车。

“你不应该老这么看着我，”士兵说，“眼睛会看疼的！”于是他把狗抱到女巫的围裙上，但当他看到箱子里那么多银币的时候，他把他的所有铜币都扔了，然后往口袋和军包里塞满银币。随后他走进第三个房间！哎呀不好，太可怕了！那里的那条狗真有两只大如“圆塔”的眼睛！它们在它脸上打转，就像两个大转盘！

“晚上好！”士兵说，并举了举军帽，因为他从来没见过这样的狗；但瞧了它一会儿之后，他心里想，这下礼数总算够了吧，于是他把它抱到地上，打开箱子，天哪！那么多金币！用这些金币，他可以把整个哥本哈根都买下来，还有全世界所有蛋糕店的甜点，所有的锡兵、皮鞭和木马。没错，就有这么多钱！于是士兵把他口袋里、军包里装满的所有银币都倒了出来，换成了金币，是的，他的口袋、军包、军帽，还有靴子全都装满，他几乎都挪不开步。这下他可有钱了。他把狗放到箱子上，关上门，透过树干朝外喊：“把我拉上去吧，老巫婆！”

“你拿到打火匣了吗？”巫婆问。

“还真是！”士兵说。“这事儿我忘得一干二净。”于是他去拿打火匣。巫婆把他拉了上来，然后他就又回到大路上，口袋、靴子、军包、军帽里全都塞满了钱。

“你要打火匣干什么？”士兵问。

“这不关你的事，”巫婆说，“你不是已经拿到钱了嘛！把打火匣给我就行了。”

“少废话！”士兵说。“快告诉我你要它干什么，不然我就拔出军刀来，砍掉你的头！”

“不行！”巫婆说。

于是士兵就把她的头砍了下来。她倒在地上！而他把他所有的钱都包进她的围裙里，像包袱一样驮在背上，把打火匣放进口袋向城市走去。

这是一座美丽的城市，他进了一家最美丽的酒店，订了最好的房

间，点了他最喜欢吃的美食，因为他发财了，有的是钱。

要替他擦皮靴的服务员觉得，像他这样一位有钱的先生，穿这么旧的皮鞋真有些滑稽，但他还没来得及买新的；第二天他买了合适的靴子和漂亮的衣服！现在我们的士兵摇身一变成了尊贵的先生，大家把这座城市里发生的一切都告诉了他，包括他们国王的事，以及国王的女儿是一位多么美丽的公主。

“到哪儿可以看到她？”士兵问。

“她可不是随随便便就能看到的，”大家都说，“她住在一座宏伟的铜城堡里，周围壁垒森严塔楼林立！除了国王没人敢随便出入，因为有预言称，她会嫁给一个很普通的士兵，这让国王难以忍受。”

“我一定得看看她。”士兵想，但国王肯定不会允许！

如今他生活得很愉快，看看喜剧表演，逛逛国王花园，还施舍很多钱给穷人，真是一种善举！他以前深有体会，一文不名有多糟糕！现在他有钱了，有漂亮的衣服穿，交了很多朋友，大家都说他是善良的人，一位真正的骑士，这话士兵很爱听！但他每天只往外花钱，却一分钱都赚不回来，就这样，最后他只剩下两个铜币，只好从那些华丽的房间里搬出来，搬到顶楼一间小小的阁楼里去住，他只好自己动手擦靴子，自己用织补针补靴子，他的朋友没有一个来找他，因为需要爬那么多楼梯。

有一天晚上天很黑，他连一根蜡烛都买不起，但他想起来，还有一小截蜡烛装在那个打火匣里，就是那回巫婆帮他下到空树底部，他在那里拿到的那个打火匣。他拿出打火匣和那一小截蜡烛来，正当他打着火，火星从火石上冒出来的时候，房门忽然开了，他在树底下见到的那条眼睛大如茶杯的狗出现在他面前，它说：“有什么吩咐，我的主人！”

“怎么回事！”士兵说，“真是个好玩的打火匣，要是这样我就能想要什么就有什么了！给我弄点儿钱来吧。”他对那条狗说。然后“嗖”的一声，狗就不见了！又是“嗖”的一声，狗又回来了，嘴里衔着一大口袋钱。

这下士兵知道这个打火匣有多美妙了！他打一下，那条坐在铜币箱上的狗就会出现，他打两下，来的就是那条有银币的狗，要是他打三下，来的就是那条有金币的狗。现在士兵又搬回了楼下那些华丽的房间，又穿上了好衣服，他的所有朋友马上又把他认了出来，他们都好喜欢他。

有那么一天他心想：说来真是奇怪，谁都见不到那位公主！她肯定非常美丽，大家都这么说！但要是她整天只能坐在塔楼林立的铜城

堡里的话，这又有什么用？难道我真的就见不到她吗？我的打火匣在哪儿？他打起火来，“嗖”的一声，那只眼睛大如茶杯的狗就跑了出来。

“现在的确是深更半夜，”士兵说，“但我真心想见见那位公主，哪怕只见那么一小会儿。”

那条狗马上跑出了门，士兵还来不及想一想这件事，就已经看到它带着公主回来了，她躺在那条狗的背上熟睡，美得是一个人就能看出来那是个真正的公主；士兵按捺不住吻了她，因为他是个不折不扣的士兵。

然后狗就带着公主回去了，但第二天早上，国王和王后正倒着茶的时候，公主说话了，她说她晚上做了个奇怪的梦，梦见一条狗和一名士兵，她骑在狗背上，那个士兵吻了她。

“这倒是个不错的故事！”王后说。

第二天一个老宫女到公主的床边守夜，来看看这到底真是一场梦还是怎么回事。

士兵迫切地想再见一次那位美丽的公主，于是晚上狗又来了，背上她，竭尽全力飞奔，但那个老宫女穿上雨靴，在后面紧追不舍；当她看到他们跑进一幢大房子之后，她心想，这下我知道这是哪儿了，然后在大门上用一段粉笔画了个大十字。之后她就回去睡觉了，狗也把公主送了回去；但当它看到士兵住处的大门上画着个十字的时候，它也拿了一段粉笔，在全城的所有大门上都画了十字，这件事干得很聪明，因为既然所有的门上都有十字，这下老宫女就找不到正确的大门了。

第二天一大早，国王和王后，还有那个老宫女，以及所有的官员都来了，要看看公主到底去过哪儿！

“就是那儿！”国王说，他看到了第一扇画着十字的门。

“不对，是那儿，我可爱的丈夫！”王后说，她看到另一扇门上有十字。

“那儿有一个，那儿也有一个！”大家都说。不管他们往哪儿看，每扇门上都有十字。于是他们意识到，他们再怎么找也没有用。

但王后毕竟是个非常聪明的女人，她可不是只会坐坐四轮马车那么简单。她取出她的纯金大剪刀，把一大块绸缎剪成几片，缝了一个精致的小袋子，在里面装满了很细很细的荞麦粉，再绑到公主背上。绑好之后，她在袋子上剪了一个小口，这样公主不管走到哪儿，都会在地上撒上粉。

夜里狗又来了，把公主驮到背上，带着她跑到士兵那儿，他已经深深地爱上了她，他多想能成为王子，娶她为妻。

狗背着公主跳上高墙的时候，完全没有注意到，面粉跟着她从城堡一直撒到了士兵的窗口。就这样，第二天早晨，国王和王后马上就看明白他们的女儿去过什么地方，他们抓走了士兵，把他关进了大牢。

他坐在牢里。呜，里面好黑暗好无聊啊，然后大家对他说：明天你就要被绞死了。这话听起来可不好玩，而他把打火匣也忘在了酒店里。第二天早晨，他从小窗的铁栏杆里可以看见人们蜂拥出城，来看他上绞刑架。他听到鼓声，看到士兵们迈着正步。所有人都跑了出来；其中有一个鞋匠的学徒，穿着皮围裙和拖鞋，他跑得太快，一只拖鞋飞了出去，砸在士兵坐着隔着铁栏杆朝外张望的那堵墙上。

“喂，鞋匠小子！你着什么急呀，”士兵对他说，“我到场之前没什么可看的。但你能不能跑到我住的地方，把我的打火匣拿来？这样的话你能得到四个铜币！但你可得撒开腿儿呀。”鞋匠小子很想要那四个铜币，于是撒腿就跑，取来打火匣，交给士兵，这下好戏开场了。

城外架起了一座巨大的绞刑架，周围站满了士兵和成千成万的老百姓。国王和王后坐在华丽的宝座上，面前就是法官和整个议会成员。

那个士兵已经站到了梯子上。但正当他们要把绞索套到他脖子上的时候，他说，总是应该让罪犯在受刑前了却一个无辜的心愿吧。他很想抽一管烟，这将是他在这个世上抽的最后一管烟了。

国王无法拒绝这样的请求，于是士兵拿起他的打火匣，打起火来，一、二、三！三条狗都出现了，眼睛大如茶杯的那条，眼睛大如水车的那条，还有眼睛大如圆塔的那条。

“救救我，别让他们绞死我！”士兵说，于是那几条狗就朝法官和所有议员扑了过去，扯这个人腿，咬那个人鼻子，把他们抛向几丈高的天空，他们掉下来个个摔得粉身碎骨。

“我不要啊！”国王说。但最大的那条狗咬住了他和王后，跟其他所有人一样抛了出去。士兵们都吓坏了，老百姓高喊起来：“小兵，你应该做我们的国王，娶了美丽的公主吧！”

于是他们把这名士兵让进了国王的四轮马车，三条狗一齐在前面欢蹦乱跳，并高呼：“万岁！”男孩子们用手指吹起口哨，士兵们上前行礼。公主走出她的铜城堡，成了王后，对此她心满意足！婚礼持续了八天，那几条狗也坐上了饭桌，眼睛瞪得一个比一个大。

[1] 哥本哈根著名历史建筑，三一教堂的一部分。（说明：本书脚注均为译者注。）

小克劳斯和大克劳斯

很久以前，一个村子里有两个人叫同一个名字，他们都叫克劳斯，但其中一个有四匹马，而另一个只有一匹马；为了可以区分他们，人们管有四匹马的那个叫大克劳斯，而只有一匹马的那个就叫小克劳斯。现在让我们来听听他们俩之间发生了什么，因为这是个真实的故事！

整个星期小克劳斯都必须为大克劳斯耕田，并且把自己唯一的马也借给他；而大克劳斯也会把所有四匹马都拿出来帮他，但每星期只有一次，就是星期日。噶儿驾！小克劳斯挥舞着他的皮鞭同时赶着五匹马，在这一天，它们就像都是他的马一样好使。阳光明媚，所有教堂塔楼的钟一齐敲响，人们都打扮得漂漂亮亮，胳膊下夹着赞美诗集去教堂听神父布道，他们看着小克劳斯赶着五匹马耕地，他看上去那么得意，挥舞鞭子吆喝道：“驾，我的马儿们！”

“你不能这么说，”大克劳斯说，“明明只有一匹是你的！”

但又有人去教堂的路上经过的时候，小克劳斯已经忘了他不能这么说，又吆喝起来：“驾，我的马儿们！”

“好吧，这下我可不能再让你为所欲为了！”大克劳斯说，“你要再这么喊一次，我就砸你马的额头，当场把它砸死，这事儿就算完了！”

“我以后再也不这么说了！”小克劳斯说，但有人经过的时候，他们冲他点头问好，小克劳斯又得意起来，觉得这样有五匹马同时耕自己的地看上去很帅气，于是又挥舞着鞭子吆喝起来：“驾，我的马儿们！”

“就让我来驾你的马吧！”大克劳斯说着，挥起大木槌砸在小克劳斯唯一那匹马的额头上，马应声倒地，奄奄一息。

“啊，我现在一匹马都没有了！”小克劳斯说着哭了起来。之后他剥下了马皮，风干以后装进袋子里，扛在肩上去城里卖马皮。

他要走很长的路，必须穿过一大片黑漆漆的森林，天气非常恶劣；他迷了路，还没等他走上正道，天已经黑了，无论进城还是回家路都太遥远，一会儿就夜深了。

紧挨着路边有一座大农庄，窗户的挡风板掩着，但灯光还是从上

面的缝隙里透了出来。应该会让我和这儿过夜吧，小克劳斯心想，于是就走过去敲门。

农妇打开门，但当她听到了他的请求后，她让他还是赶紧上路走吧，她的丈夫不在家，她不能收留陌生人。

“那我就只能睡在门外了。”小克劳斯说，农妇在他面前关上了门。

紧挨着农庄有一大堆干草，干草和房子之间搭着一个茅草顶的小窝棚。

“我可以睡那上面！”小克劳斯看着茅草顶说，“这不就是一张舒服的床吗，希望那只鹤不会飞下来啄我的腿。”屋顶上站着一只活鹤，它在那儿筑了巢。

小克劳斯爬上窝棚，躺下来翻着身，想找个舒服的姿势。窗户的木挡板并没有挡到顶，他可以看见客厅里去。

“谁那么好口福！”小克劳斯说，朝窗户伸直了脑袋。天哪，他看到了什么，多棒的蛋糕呀！真是一桌丰盛的宴席。

这时他听见有人从大路骑着马朝农庄而来，是农妇的丈夫回来了。

丈夫是个好人，但他有一种奇怪的病，他见不得牧师；只要他一见到牧师就会大发雷霆。正巧牧师来串门，因为他知道丈夫不在家，他来给农妇问个好，农妇因此为他做了一桌美味佳肴；他们听见丈夫来了，害怕起来，农妇求牧师爬进墙脚的一个空箱子里；他照办了，因为他知道那个可怜的丈夫见不得牧师。农妇把一桌好酒好菜都藏进了烤箱里，要是让丈夫看见，他一定会问这是什么意思。

“啊哟！”小克劳斯在窝棚上叹了口气，眼睁睁地看着食物消失。

“上面有人吗？”农夫抬头看着小克劳斯问，“你躺在那儿干吗？快下来进客厅里坐！”

于是小克劳斯就把迷路的事儿都说了，并请求留宿过夜。

“当然可以！”农夫说，“但我们得先弄点东西吃。”

农妇很友好地招待了他们俩，铺了一张长桌子，给他们一大盘粥。农夫饿急了，津津有味地吃起来，但小克劳斯忍不住想起那桌美味的烤肉、肥鱼和蛋糕，他知道它们都藏在烤箱里。

桌下他的脚边放着装马皮的包，我们知道他就是为了进城卖马皮才离家出远门的。他才不要喝什么粥，于是他踩了一脚自己的包，包里干燥的马皮发出的吱嘎声还挺响。

“嘘！”小克劳斯对自己的包说，但同时又踩了一脚，这下吱嘎声比之前更响。

“哟！你袋子里装的是什？”农夫问。

“哦，里面是个魔法师！”小克劳斯说，“他说我们不用喝粥了，他变了一烤箱的烤肉、肥鱼和蛋糕。”

“什！”农夫说。然后打开烤箱，看到农妇在里面藏着的所有美味佳肴，但他以为这都是藏在袋子里的魔法师为他们变出来的。农妇一声都不敢吭，赶紧把食物都端上桌，他们把肥鱼、烤肉和蛋糕都吃得一干二净。然后小克劳斯又踩了一脚自己的袋子，马皮吱嘎响。

“他现在说什么？”农夫问。

“他说他还给我们变了三壶酒，放在烤箱旁的角落里！”这下农妇只好端出她藏的酒来，农夫喝得酣畅淋漓，小克劳斯袋子里这样的魔法师他也想要一个。

“他能把魔鬼变出来吗？”农夫问，“我倒想见见他，反正我现在高兴！”

“行啊，”小克劳斯说，“我的魔法师什么都能变，只要我开口，对不对？”他边问边踩袋子，吱嘎吱嘎，“你听见没有，他说没错。但魔鬼长得太难看，实在不值一看！”

“哦，没关系，他长什么样？”

“嗯，他看上去很像个牧师。”

“呼！”农夫说，“那太糟糕了！要知道，我是见不得牧师的！但现在无所谓了，反正我知道那是魔鬼，应该会好一点！现在我还有点勇气！但别让他靠太近。”

“我来问问我的魔法师。”小克劳斯踩踩袋子，把耳朵凑过去。

“他说什？”

“他说你可以去把那个箱子打开，就在角落里，这样你就可以看到魔鬼了，他就蹲在箱子里，但一定要抓紧盖子，别让他跑了。”

“你能搭把手吗？”农夫说着走到箱子跟前，就是农妇把真正的牧师藏起来的那个箱子，他现在就坐在箱子里害怕得要命。

农夫把箱子盖掀起一条缝，朝里瞥了一眼，“哟！”他喊了一声，向后一闪，“没错，这下我看见他了，他看上去真的挺像我们的牧师！哎呀，太吓人了！”

他不得不喝口酒压压惊，于是他们一直喝到深夜。

“这个魔法师你可得卖给我，”农夫说，“要多少钱尽管开口！对，我可以马上给你一大桶的钱！”

“不行，我可不能卖！”小克劳斯说，“你想想，这个魔法师能给我多少好处！”

“啊，但我太想要他了。”农夫说，开始央求起来。

“好吧，”小克劳斯最后说，“既然你对我这么好，还让我进屋过夜，卖就卖了吧，一大桶钱就一大桶钱，但桶一定要装满。”

“这个没问题，”农夫说，“但那边那个箱子你得带走，我一刻都不想再把它留在房子里，谁知道他是不是还坐在里面。”

小克劳斯于是就把自己那个装着干马皮的袋子给了农夫，换回满满一大桶钱。农夫还给了他一辆手推车，让他装钱和箱子。

“再见！”小克劳斯说，然后就推着他的钱和坐着牧师的大箱子上路了。

树林的另一端有一条水很深的大河，水流湍急，几乎难以逆流游泳。有人在河上造了一座崭新的大桥，小克劳斯停在桥中央，为了让箱子里的牧师听见，他大声说：

“哎呀，我拿这讨厌的箱子怎么办？又那么重，跟装着石头似的！要是再推下去我就快累趴下了，我还是把它扔河里算了，要是它漂回我家就最好，要是不行也无所谓。”

接着他用一只手托住箱子，把它举起来一点点，就想要把它翻到水里去一样。

“不要啊，”箱子里的牧师说，“让我出来吧！”

“噢！”小克劳斯说，假装吃了一惊，“他还坐在里面！我得把他扔到河里去，淹死他再说！”

“哦不，哦不！”牧师喊道，“我给你一整桶的钱，你放了我吧！”

“这就另当别论了！”小克劳斯说着打开箱子。牧师马上爬出来，把空箱子推进了水里，然后回到家里，小克劳斯在那儿又得到一整桶钱，加上他在农夫那儿得到的那桶，这下整辆手推车上都装满了钱。

“看，这匹马还让我赚了不少钱！”回到自家的客厅里后小克劳斯自言自语着，把所有的钱都倒在房间中央堆成一座小钱山，“大克劳斯要是知道我靠一匹马发这么大财该多气恼，但我不会老实告诉他！”

他派了自己的儿子去找大克劳斯借量桶。

“他要量桶干什么！”大克劳斯心想，于是他在量桶底部抹了点焦油，好粘点称的东西回来看看是什么，他还真的得逞了，当他讨回量桶的时候，桶底粘了三枚崭新的银币。

“怎么回事？”大克劳斯立刻飞奔到小克劳斯家，“你从哪儿弄到这么多钱？”

“哦，是我的马皮，我昨天把它卖了！”

“可算卖了大价钱呀！”大克劳斯说着，马上飞奔回家，拿斧子砸开了他所有四匹马的额头，扒下它们的皮来，驾车载着马皮进城去了。

“卖皮啦！卖皮啦！谁要买皮呀！”他沿街吆喝着。

所有鞋匠和皮匠都跑了出来，问他皮怎么卖。

“一桶钱一张。”大克劳斯说。

“你疯了吗？”大家都说，“你真以为我们这么有钱？”

“卖皮啦！卖皮啦！谁要买皮呀！”他继续吆喝，但不管谁问他，马皮多少钱，他都回答：“一桶钱。”

“他是在耍我们。”大家都这么说，于是鞋匠们拿起了皮带，皮匠们拿起了皮围裙，开始抽打大克劳斯。

“卖皮啦！卖皮啦！”他们嘲弄他，“我们把你这一身皮，抽出点猪血来！快滚出城去吧！”他们喊，大克劳斯只好不顾一切地逃，他可从没被谁揍得这么狼狈过。

“哼！”回到家以后他自言自语道，“这笔账得找小克劳斯算，看我不打死他！”

而小克劳斯家里也出了事，他的祖母去世了；虽然她确实一直对小克劳斯很凶很不好，但他还是很难过，他把死去的祖母放到自己温暖的床上，看看她还能不能活过来；她要在那儿躺一整夜，而他自己搬了张椅子坐到角落里，他要坐在椅子上过夜，以前也这么干过。

那天晚上他就这么在椅子上坐着，门开了，大克劳斯举着斧子闯了进来；他当然知道小克劳斯的床在什么地方，他径直走到床边，用斧子砸了已死的祖母的额头，他还以为躺在那儿的是小克劳斯。

“瞧！”他说，“这下你再也没法儿耍我了！”然后他就回家去了。

“可真是个卑鄙的恶人！”小克劳斯心想，“他竟然想打死我，幸好祖母已经死了，要不然她就死在他手上了！”

然后他给老祖母穿上节日盛装，从邻居那里借了匹马，驾上马

车，把祖母放在马车最后排的座位上，这样她就不会倒下来。就这样，他驾着马车穿过森林，太阳升起的时候，他们来到一家大客栈门前，小克劳斯停下马车进去弄点吃的。

客栈老板有许多许多钱，也是个很善良的人，但性情暴躁，就像藏了一肚子胡椒和烟草。

“早上好！”他对小克劳斯说，“你今天来得可真早，穿得也气派！”

“是呀，”小克劳斯说，“我要跟我的老祖母一起进城去，她坐在外面的马车里，我没办法让她进大厅来。你能给她一杯蜜酒吗？但你说话得大声点，因为她耳背听不清。”

“好的，我这就去！”老板说着，倒了一大杯蜜酒，捧去给死去的祖母，马车里一片寂静。

“这儿有您孙子给您的蜜酒一杯！”老板说，但那位已经死了的农妇当然一声不吭，一动不动地坐在那里！

“没听见吗！”老板使出全身力气高喊，“这儿有您孙子给您的蜜酒！”

他把同样的话喊了一遍又一遍，但她还是纹丝不动，这让他火冒三丈，把杯子往她脸上扔过去，蜜酒顺着她的鼻子淌下来，她向后一仰从马车上摔了下来，因为小克劳斯只是把她放在那儿，并没有绑牢。

“天哪！”小克劳斯喊着冲出门来，抓住客栈老板的前襟！“你杀死了我的祖母！你看见没有，她的额头上有个大窟窿！”

“哦，这是个意外！”老板喊道，双手一拍！“都怪我的暴脾气！亲爱的小克劳斯，我给你一整桶钱，还会安葬你的祖母，就像对我自己的祖母一样，但千万别声张，不然的话他们会砍掉我的头，那样就惨了！”

于是小克劳斯得到一整桶钱，客栈老板还亲自安葬了老祖母，就像那是他自己的祖母一样。

小克劳斯又一次满载而归，他马上派自己的儿子去找大克劳斯，向他借量桶。

“怎么回事？”大克劳斯说，“我不是把他打死了吗！我得亲眼看看。”然后亲自给小克劳斯送来了量桶。

“你这又是从哪里弄来的这么多钱？”他问，瞪大了眼睛看着面前的钱堆，好壮观。

“你杀死的是我的祖母，不是我！”小克劳斯说，“我把她卖掉了，赚了一桶钱。”

“这可是卖了大价钱呀！”大克劳斯说着赶回家，拿起斧子立即砸死了自己的老祖母，把她装上马车送进城，到一个药剂师家，问他要不要买死尸。

“死了的是谁，你是怎么得到尸体的？”药剂师问。

“是我的祖母！”大克劳斯说，“我把她打死了，来换一桶钱！”

“上帝饶恕我们吧！”药剂师说，“你说的什么疯话！千万别再说了，你会掉脑袋的！”然后他告诉大克劳斯他干的事多么伤天害理，他是个多邪恶的人，他应该受到惩罚；大克劳斯吓坏了，他从药剂师那儿逃出来，飞奔上了马车，抽打着马匹逃回家，但药剂师和其他人都以为他疯了，就放他走了。

“你要为此付出代价！”大克劳斯跑到大路上以后心想，“没错，你要为此付出代价，小克劳斯！”他回家以后马上拿了一个他能找到的最大的口袋来到小克劳斯家，说：“这次你又耍了我！我先是打死了我的马儿们，然后又打死了我的祖母！这全都是你的错，但你休想再耍我了。”然后他一把抱住小克劳斯的腰，把他塞进口袋里，扛到肩上，对他喊，“我这就出门把你淹死！”

去河边要走的路还挺长，小克劳斯扛着也不轻。路上经过教堂门口，传来里面美妙的风琴声和人们的歌声。于是大克劳斯把装着小克劳斯的口袋紧挨着教堂大门放好，心想，继续赶路之前，先进去听个赞美诗也不错，小克劳斯又跑不了，所有人都在教堂里，于是他就走了进去。

“啊呀！啊呀！”小克劳斯在口袋里叹气。他翻来覆去，但怎么也解不开绑绳。这时来了一个很老很老的牧羊人，满头白发，手里拄着大拐杖，用它赶着一大群牛，它们撞到了装着小克劳斯的口袋，口袋翻倒在地。

“啊呀！”小克劳斯叹息道，“我那么年轻，却马上就要上天堂了！”

“而可怜的我！”牧羊人说，“那么老了却还去不了！”

“把袋子解开！”小克劳斯喊道，“代替我钻进来，这样你很快就能上天堂了！”

“好呀，我非常乐意。”牧羊人说，帮小克劳斯解开口袋，他立刻从里面钻了出来。

“那你帮我照看我的牲口吧。”老人说，钻进袋子里，小克劳斯绑

好绑绳然后赶着所有的公牛母牛上路了。

过了一会儿，大克劳斯从教堂走出来，他又把口袋扛到肩上，感觉到口袋肯定是变轻了，因为那个老牧羊人还不到半个小克劳斯那么重！“他变得好轻呀！肯定是因为我听了赞美诗！”于是他来到河边，河又深又宽，他把装着老牧羊人的口袋扔进水里，然后冲他喊道——因为他当然还以为那是小克劳斯：“瞧！这下你没法儿再耍我了吧！”

然后他朝家走，经过岔路的时候他遇到了小克劳斯，赶着牲口迎面走来。

“怎么回事！”大克劳斯说，“我不是把你淹死了吗？”

“没错，”小克劳斯说，“你不到半小时前是把我扔到河里去了！”

“但你这么多漂亮的牲口是哪儿来的？”大克劳斯问。

“它们是海牛！”小克劳斯说，“我来把来龙去脉都讲给你听。还要感谢你，因为你把我扔到了河里，这下我的财产超过你了，而且真的发了大财，你想得到吗！我在口袋里的时候吓坏了，当时你从桥上把我扔向冰冷的河里，风在耳边呼啸。我很快沉到了河底，但我没有磕到自己，因为下面长着美丽的嫩草。我就掉在草地上，很快袋子就开了，这时来了个世界上最美丽的姑娘，穿着洁白的衣服，湿漉漉的头发上戴着绿色的花环，她拉着我的手说：‘你是小克劳斯吗？先带一些海牛去吧！沿着这条路一英里之外还有一大群，是我赠送给你的！’这下我看到了，河底是一条宽阔的大路，专供海洋人使用。他们就这样从海底或走路或驾车一直到岸上，到大河的尽头。那儿的花美极了，还有最新鲜的嫩草，还有鱼，在水底游来游去，它们在我耳边飞快地穿梭，就像这儿空中的鸟。那儿的人都好漂亮，还有那么多的牲口，漫山遍野到处走！”

“那为什么你这么快就回来了，”大克劳斯问，“下面既然那么美，换我就不回来了！”

“没错，”小克劳斯说，“这就是我机智的地方！你不是听我说了嘛：海姑娘说，沿路一英里之外——她说的路其实就是河，因为她去不了别的地方——还有一大群牲口等着我。但我知道河有多蜿蜒曲折，一会儿东一会儿西，这可是绕了大远路呀，能走捷径当然走捷径啦，上岸抄近路到河的另一边可以省掉将近一半的路程，你看我这么快就已经把我的海牛赶回来了！”

“你运气真是太好了！”大克劳斯说，“你觉得如果我也下到河底的话能不能也弄到几头海牛？”

“当然，我觉得没问题，”小克劳斯说，“但我可不能把你装进袋子里扛到河边，你对我来说太重了，你要不自己走到那儿然后钻进袋子

里，这样的话我很乐意把你扔下去。”

“谢谢你！”大克劳斯说，“但要是我得不到海牛，等我回来看我怎么收拾你，你信不信！”

“别呀！别那么恶狠狠的！”于是他们来到河边。牲口们口渴难耐，看到水立刻撒开腿奔过去喝水。

“看它们跑得多快！”小克劳斯说，“它们着急想回河底呢！”

“快先帮帮我！”大克劳斯说，“不然我揍你了啊！”说着他钻进一只驮在一头公牛背上的那个大口袋，“放块石头，不然我怕我沉不下去。”大克劳斯说。

“肯定可以！”小克劳斯说，但还是在口袋里放了一块大石头，绑紧绳子，往下一推：扑通！大克劳斯掉进河里，很快就沉到水底。

“恐怕他是找不到海牛咯！”小克劳斯说，然后赶着他的牲口回家去了。

豌豆公主

很久以前有一位王子，他想为自己找一位公主，但必须是一位真正的公主。于是他走遍了全世界，为了寻找这样一位公主，他总是到处碰壁，公主倒不少，但是不是真正的公主，他也无从考证，总是有什么地方不对劲。后来他只好闷闷不乐地回家了，他真的非常渴望得到一位真正的公主。

一天晚上，天气异常恶劣；电闪雷鸣，大雨倾盆，可怕极了！这时，有人敲响了城门，老国王过去开门。

城外站着的是一位公主。但是，老天爷呀，狂风暴雨让她看上去那么狼狈！水从她的头发和衣服上直往下淌，从鞋尖淌进去，又从鞋跟流出来，而她却说，她是一位真正的公主。

“好吧，反正我们早晚都会知道。”老王后心想。但她什么都没说，只是走进卧房，把所有的被褥都拿掉，在床板上放了一颗豌豆，然后她拿来二十张床垫，盖在豌豆上，之后又在这些垫子上盖了二十床羽绒被。

这就是公主晚上睡觉的地方。

第二天早上大家问她睡得怎么样。

“哦，糟糕透了！”公主说，“我几乎整夜都没合眼！天知道，我的床上有什么东西？我睡在什么硬邦邦的东西上面，全身青一块紫一块！吓死人了！”

这样大家就看出来，这是一位真正的公主，隔着二十张床垫和二十床羽绒被，她都能感觉到下面的豌豆。除了真正的公主，还会有谁这么敏锐。

于是王子就娶了她做妻子，因为他知道，他终于得到了一位真正的公主，而豌豆则进了国家美术馆，如果没有被人拿走的话，现在大家还能看到它。

瞧，这可是个真实的故事！

坚定的锡兵

很久以前，有二十五个锡做的士兵，他们都是兄弟，因为他们都是同一把旧锡勺生的。他们怀揣步枪、面朝前方。红红蓝蓝的制服还挺美的。他们在这个世界上听到的第一句话是：“锡兵！”他们当时正待在一个盒子里，盒盖掀开，一个农家男孩一边拍着双手一边这么喊；他们是他的礼物，因为那天是他的生日，他现在把他们一个一个摆到桌子上。士兵们个个都长得一模一样，只有一个稍有不同，他只有一条腿，因为他是最后一个铸出来的，锡不够用了；但他用一条腿站得跟别人用两条腿一样稳当，正是他最引人注目。

他们站着的桌子上，还摆着许多其他玩具，但最让人目不转睛的是一座纸糊的美丽城堡。透过那些小窗户可以望到里面的大厅。城堡外面立着几棵小树，围着一面小镜子——可以看成是一面湖。蜡制的天鹅在湖面游弋并欣赏着自己的倒影。一切都很美丽，不过最美的是一个小姑娘，她站在敞开的城堡门口。她也是纸剪出来的，但她穿着一条最纯净的棉布裙，肩上有一条窄窄的蓝丝带，就像一条披肩；场景的中央镶着一枚亮晶晶的闪片——几乎跟她整张脸一样大。小姑娘舒展着双臂——因为她是个舞者，一条腿高高举向天空，高得锡兵几乎望不到，以为她跟自己一样，也只有一条腿。

“她可以做我的妻子！”他心想，“但她太高贵了。她住的是城堡，而我只有一个盒子，而且还挤着我们二十五个人，可不是她该住的地方！尽管如此，我还是得想办法认识认识她！”于是他整个人躺平，藏在桌上的一个鼻烟壶背后；这样他正好可以看到这位漂亮的女士，她一直单腿站着，丝毫没有失去平衡。

夜幕降临的时候，其余的锡兵都回到盒子里，家里的人也都上床睡觉去了。这时候玩具们开始玩起了游戏，串门的串门，打仗的打仗，有的还开起了舞会。锡兵们也在盒子里闹腾起来，因为他们也想参加，但他们掀不开盒盖。胡桃夹子翻起了筋斗，石笔在画板上兴风作浪。骚动吵醒了金丝鸟，她说起话来，还抑扬顿挫的。没有挪窝的只有两个人，一个是锡兵，一个是小舞蹈家。她直挺挺地踮着脚尖，展开双臂。锡兵也坚定地用他的一条腿站立着，目不转睛地看着她。

这时钟敲响了十二下，鼻烟壶的盖子“咔”的一声弹开，但里面装的并不是烟草，而是一个黑黑的小妖怪，原来鼻烟壶只是个幌子。

“锡兵！”妖怪说，“管好自己的眼睛行不行！”

但锡兵假装没听见。

“好吧，明天走着瞧！”妖怪说。

第二天早晨，孩子们起床后，把锡兵摆到了窗台上。不是那个妖怪就是一阵劲风，窗一下子就吹开了，锡兵一头从三楼大厅栽了下去。这一跤跌得好险！他高举着腿，军帽顶着地，刺刀插在石铺的缝隙里。

女佣和那个男孩立刻下楼来找他，尽管他们差点从他身上踩过去，但谁都没有看见他。要是当时锡兵喊一声“我在这儿！”他们就肯定能找到他。但他觉得高声喊叫不合时宜，他还穿着制服呢。

这时下起雨来，雨点越来越密，成了瓢泼大雨；大雨过后，来了两个流浪儿。

“你瞧！”其中一个说，“那儿躺着一个锡兵！他要扬帆远航啦！”

说着他们就用报纸折了一条船，把锡兵放在中央，他就这样沿着排水沟顺流而下；两个男孩都在一旁跟着跑，还边拍着手。哎呀！排水沟里的浪真大，水流真湍急！那可是一场瓢泼大雨呀。纸船上下颠簸，时不时来个急转弯，吓得锡兵心直哆嗦；但他重新振作起来，面不改色，目视前方，紧握步枪。

突然之间，船冲进一条长长的排水管；里面一片漆黑，就像回到了他的盒子里。

“不知道我现在到哪儿了。”他想，“就是，就是，是那个妖怪的错。唉，要是那个姑娘在船里就好了，那样的话再黑一倍也没关系。”

这时突然出现了一只住在水管里的老鼠。

“你有通行证吗？”老鼠问，“交出通行证来！”

但锡兵保持沉默，并把手里的步枪握得更紧。船继续前进，老鼠紧追不舍。哟！瞧它那咬牙切齿还冲着稻草木棍大喊大叫的样子：

“抓住他！抓住他！他没交过路费！他没出示通行证！”

但水流越来越湍急！锡兵已经能看到水管开口处传进来的天光，但他也听到了一阵可怕的声音，足以让再勇敢的人都胆战心惊。想象一下：水管的尽头，水流落入一条大运河里，对他来说，这其中的危险不亚于我们坠入一座大瀑布。

现在他已经近得无法刹车了。船冲了出去，可怜的锡兵尽可能地挺直身体，谁都别想说他眨过一下眼皮子。船旋转了三四圈，里面灌满了水，一直漫到了船沿，船要沉了；锡兵站在没到脖子水中，船

越沉越深，纸也越来越松。此刻水已没过了士兵的头，这时他想起了那个美丽的小舞者，他再也见不到她了；然后锡兵的耳朵里响起了一个声音：

“前进，前进，勇敢的人！”

迎接你的是死神！”

就这样，纸破了，锡兵掉了出来，但与此同时，一条大鱼一口把他吞了下去。

哦不，里面好黑啊！比在水管里还要糟糕，而且地方很窄；但锡兵还是很坚定，直挺挺地躺着，紧握着步枪。

鱼游来游去，做着各种各样可怕的动作；后来它终于平静了下来，就像有一道闪电划过它的身躯。光线明亮起来，有人高声喊道：“锡兵！”原来鱼被人捉住，送到了集市口，卖掉之后进了厨房，女仆用一把大刀把它剖开。她用两根手指把锡兵拦腰夹住，带进客厅，大家都想看看这位在鱼肚子里驰骋过的大人物；但锡兵一点都不骄傲。他们把他放到桌子上，天哪！这世界真是无奇不有！锡兵又回到了他之前待过的同一个客厅，他看着同样的孩子，桌上放着同样的玩具；漂亮的城堡和美丽的小舞者；她仍然单腿站立着，另一条腿高高举在空中，她也很坚定；这让锡兵很感动，几乎要流出锡做的眼泪来，但他觉得这么做不合时宜。他看着她，她也看着他，但他们没有说一句话。

正在这时候，其中一个小男孩拿起锡兵，把他扔进了陶瓷壁炉。他也没有给出任何理由；一定是鼻烟壶里的小妖怪，就是他搞的鬼。

锡兵明晃晃地站在那儿，感到一股热浪，这很可怕，但热浪究竟是来自火焰还是爱情，他也不知道。色彩从他身上褪去，究竟是旅途中发生的，还是悲伤造成的，谁也说不上来。他看着那个小姑娘，她也在看着他，他感觉到自己在融化，但他仍然坚定地站着，紧握步枪。这时忽然开了一扇门，一阵风卷起了舞者，她像风精灵一样飞进陶瓷壁炉，落在锡兵身边，燃起火焰，消失了，然后锡兵也熔成一团。第二天女仆清理炉灰的时候，她发现锡兵已经变成了一颗小小的锡心；而舞者留下的只有那枚闪片，并已经烧成了黑炭。

夜莺

在中国——这你肯定知道——皇帝是个中国人，他周围的人也都是中国人。这是许多年以前的事了，正因为如此才要听听这个故事，趁它还没有被大家忘记！这位皇帝的宫殿是世界上最雄伟壮丽的，一砖一瓦都是用精美的陶瓷制作的，非常昂贵，但也非常易碎，摸起来要非常小心。花园里可以看到各种奇花异草，那些最美艳的花上都系着银铃，铃儿叮当响，为了不让经过的人们错过这些花儿。诚然，御花园里的一切都那么引人注目，花园那么大，连园丁都不知道哪里是尽头；一直走下去，就会进入到最美丽的森林，那里有很高的树和很深的湖；树林一直延伸到大海，海水蔚蓝深邃；巨大的船只可以一直行驶到树枝下，就在这里，住着一只夜莺，它的歌声如此动听，连穷苦的渔夫，哪怕再繁忙劳碌，都会在夜里收网的时候，停下手中的活静静地聆听。“天哪，实在太美了！”他说，然后他不得不继续忙碌，忘掉这只鸟；然而第二天晚上它又唱起了歌，在外劳作的渔夫又会说同样的话：“天哪！实在太美了！”

世界各地的游客来到皇帝的都城，他们叹赏着这座城市，以及宫殿和花园，但当他们听到夜莺歌唱的时候，他们都会说：“这才是最美的！”

旅行家们回家之后，都会分享他们的所见所闻，其中那些学者写了许多关于皇城、宫殿和花园的书，他们也没有忘记那只夜莺，它被放在了第一位；而那些会写诗的人，写出了最美丽的诗篇，每一首写的都是深海边森林里的那只夜莺。

这些书在全世界流传，有几本还传到了皇帝手上。他坐在自己的金龙椅上，孜孜不倦地读着，时不时点点头，因为那些关于皇城、宫殿和花园的壮美描写让他很满意。“但最美的还是那只夜莺！”书上分明写着。

“怎么回事！”皇帝说，“夜莺！朕怎么完全不知道！朕的帝国里还有这么一只鸟，而且居然就在朕的花园里！朕却从来没听到过！朕还是从书上看来的！”

于是他唤来了他的侍臣，那可是个高贵的人，要是有任何比他卑微的人，胆敢跟他说话，或问他问题，他除了“呸！”之外不会多说一个字，而这个字本身也毫无意义。

“这儿应该有一只非常引人注目的鸟，名叫夜莺！”皇帝说，“大家

都说它是朕泱泱大国中最美的东西！为什么从来没人跟朕提起过它！”

“微臣以前从没听说过这个名字！”侍臣说，“从来没人带它来上过朝！”

“朕要让它今晚到这儿来为朕唱歌！”皇帝说，“全世界都知道朕有什么，就朕不知道！”

“微臣以前从没听说过这个名字！”侍臣说，“微臣会去找，微臣会找到它！”

但到哪里去找它呢；侍臣上上下下跑遍所有楼梯，穿过大大小小的厅堂和走廊，但他遇到的人中，没有一个听说过关于夜莺的事，侍臣又跑回皇帝那儿，说这一定是写书的人编出来的寓言。“陛下不能相信书上写的东西！那都是虚构的，也就是所谓的‘无稽之谈’！”

“但朕读到它的那本书，”皇帝说，“是日本那位德高望重的天皇送的，不太可能是胡编乱造的。朕要听夜莺唱歌！今晚就要它在这里出现！这是朕的圣旨！假如它今晚不来，满朝文武吃完晚饭都得在肚子上挨板子。”

“遵旨！”侍臣说，然后又上上下下跑了一遍所有的楼梯，穿过大大小小的厅堂和走廊。半个朝廷都跟着他跑，因为他们不想肚子上挨板子。大家都在找这只奇怪的夜莺——举世闻名，但满朝文武却对它一无所知。

最后他们终于在御膳房里遇到一个贫穷的小女孩，她说：“哦，天哪，夜莺！我当然知道！是呀，它多会唱歌呀！每天晚上我都获准带一些饭桌上的剩菜回家，给我那可怜的、生病的母亲，她住在海边，我回家的路上累了，在森林里休息的时候，就会听到夜莺的歌唱！我听得热泪盈眶，感觉就像母亲吻了我一样！”

“小厨娘！”侍臣说，“我会给你御膳房的固定职位，并准你侍奉吾皇用膳，只要你带我们去找夜莺，因为有圣旨传它今晚进宫！”

于是他们一齐走进夜莺平时唱歌的那片森林；跟来半个朝廷。他们走着走着，一头母牛哞哞叫起来。

“呀！”一位年轻的朝臣说，“终于找到了！这么小的动物身上居然有这么神奇的爆发力！我以前肯定听到过这个声音！”

“不对，这是牛叫！”小厨娘说，“我们还有很长的路要走。”

这下是青蛙在池塘里呱呱叫。

“美妙！”国寺方丈说，“现在我算是听到它的声音了——就像小小的寺庙钟声。”

“不对，这是青蛙！”小厨娘说，“但我想我们很快就能听到它的声音了！”

说着夜莺就开始唱了起来。

“就是它！”小女孩说，“听！听！它就在那儿！”然后她指了指树枝上的一只灰色小鸟。

“真没想到！”侍臣说，“它居然长这样！看上去多普通！一定是因为看到自己身边围了这么多高贵的人它才失去了光彩！”

“小夜莺！”小厨娘高声喊道，“吾皇圣恩，宣你进宫唱歌。”

“荣幸之至！”夜莺说着就兴致盎然地唱了起来。

“宛如琉璃编钟！”侍臣说，“看这副小嗓音，运用得多妙！我们居然从来没听说过，真奇怪！它在宫中一定大获成功！”

“我还要为皇上再唱一次吗？”夜莺问，它还以为皇帝在场。

“我非同凡响的小夜莺！”侍臣说，“能请您入宫参加宫廷夜宴，让您为吾皇一展歌喉以悦龙颜，是在下最大的荣幸。”

“歌儿还是在绿荫下最动听！”夜莺说，但当它听说这是皇帝的希望时，还是欣然答应去了。

宫殿里装点得富丽堂皇！墙和地板都是瓷砖铺成的，被成千上万的金灯照得金碧辉煌！那些最美丽的花朵挂着铃摆在走廊上；只要有人奔跑或一阵穿堂风吹过，所有的铃就会一起叮当响起，没人能听见彼此的说话声。

皇帝正襟危坐的大殿中央，竖着一根金杆，这是给夜莺坐的；满朝文武都到齐了，小厨娘也获准在门后侍应，因为她现在已经正式获得“御厨”的封号。每个人都穿上了最华丽的盛装，大家都望着这只灰色的小鸟，皇帝冲它点点头。

夜莺的歌声如此美妙，听得皇帝热泪盈眶，泪珠从脸颊上滚落，夜莺的歌声越来越优美，动人心弦；皇帝那么高兴，他说要把他的金拖鞋挂到夜莺脖子上。但夜莺谢绝了，它已经得到了足够的酬赏。

“我见到了皇上眼里的泪珠，这对我来说是最珍贵的宝藏！皇上的泪珠有一种神奇的力量。神知道我已经得到了足够的酬赏！”然后它又用天赐的甜美歌喉唱起歌来。

“这是我见过最可爱的尤物！”周围的宫女们说，有人跟她们说话的时候，她们就故意喝口水，在嘴里发出“咯咯”声：她们以为自己也是夜莺。太监和侍女们也表了态，说他们也很满意，这很说明问题，因为这些人是最难伺候的。没错，夜莺首演大获成功。

于是它在宫中住了下来，有了自己的笼子，它还有自由出去散步的时间，白天两次，夜晚一次。每次总有十二个随从跟着，每个人手里都攥着一根系在它腿上的丝线，还都拉得紧紧的，这样散步根本谈不上享受。

整座京城的人都在谈论这只出类拔萃的鸟，两个人在路上相遇，其中一个人别的不必多说，只要说：“夜——！”另一个人就会说：“莺！”然后他们就都叹一口气，彼此心领神会了，的确有十一个小贩的孩子都起名为“夜莺”，但其中没有一个唱歌着调的。

有一天皇帝收到一个大包裹，下面写着：“夜莺”。

“又一本写我们这只名鸟的书吧！”皇帝说。但包裹里不是书，而是一件小工艺品，装在一个盒子里，一只手工制造的夜莺，它很像那只活的夜莺，但全身镶满了钻石、红宝石和蓝宝石；只要给它上好发条，它就会唱一首真的夜莺唱过的歌，尾巴上下摆动着，晶莹剔透。它的脖颈上缠着一根小丝带，上面写着：“日本皇帝的夜莺，无法与中国皇帝的夜莺媲美。”

“太美了！”大家都说。而那个送来手工夜莺的人马上受封：首席皇家夜莺使者。

“现在让它们在一起唱歌吧！那会是多动听的二重唱呀！”

就这样，它们不得不起唱歌，但怎么都不对劲，因为那只真正的夜莺有自己的风格，而人造鸟是上发条的，只会按部就班。“没关系，”乐师说，“节奏很独特，还挺对我口味！”于是人造鸟就要独唱了——它取得了和真鸟不相上下的成功，另外，它的外表要美艳得多：它像手镯和胸针一样闪闪发亮。

同样的曲目，它唱了三十三遍，并且不厌其烦：大家都愿意再听下去，但皇帝却说也该让那只活的夜莺唱点儿什么了——但它去哪儿了？谁都没有注意到，它已经飞出窗外，回它的绿森林里去了。

“这到底是怎么回事！”皇帝说。满朝官员都在咒骂，说那只夜莺是个忘恩负义的畜生。“反正我们有一只最棒的鸟！”他们说，就这样，那只人造鸟不得不又唱了起来，这是他们第三十四次听同一首歌，但他们还是学不会，因为这首歌太难，乐师对这只鸟赞不绝口，可以肯定，它比那只真的夜莺好得多，不仅衣装以及镶有这么多精美钻石的外表，还有它的内在。

“各位大人，特别是皇帝陛下，恕我直言！谁都无法捉摸那只真的夜莺会唱出什么歌来，而这只人造鸟是有定式的！该怎么样就怎么样！大家可以搞清楚它的工作原理，可以把它拆开，看看其中的匠心，发条在哪里，它是怎么转动的，怎么一步接一步工作的——！”

“我差不多也是这么想的！”大家都说。于是乐师获准在下周日向民众展示这只鸟。他们也应该听听它的歌喉，皇帝说。他们听了，也很满意，就像畅饮香茶一般——因为喝茶是件很具中国特色的事，大家都说：“哇！”一边点头一边向天空举起食指。但那些贫穷的渔夫听到过真正夜莺的歌声，他们说：“声音够优美，也很逼真，但就是缺了点什么，我也不知道缺的是什么！”

真正的夜莺已被放逐出这片国土。

人造鸟紧挨着皇帝的床在一个真丝枕头上落了脚：它得到的所有礼品，金玉珠宝，都堆在它的周围，它的封号已经升为“至尊皇家床头歌手”，等级为左手边第一位，因为皇帝认为左边最尊贵，左边是心脏的位置，哪怕是皇帝的心脏。乐师为人造鸟写了长达二十五卷的书，文章渊博而冗长，使用了最繁难的汉字，大家都说他们读过并读懂了这部书，因为不这么说就是愚蠢，肚子上要挨板子的。

就这样过了整整一年；皇帝、群臣，以及所有其余的中国人都能背得出夜莺的歌里每一处细小的转折，但正因为这样大家才觉得最妙；他们可以跟着一起唱了。流浪儿唱着“唧唧唧！咕咕咕！”，皇帝也这么唱！——没错，这样肯定很美妙！

但某天晚上，人造鸟正唱着最拿手的曲目，皇帝躺在床上听着，鸟的身体里突然“噌！”的一声；哪儿断了什么东西，“唰！”，所有轮子都飞转起来，歌声戛然而止。

皇帝立即跳下床，唤来了他的御医，但喊御医有什么用！于是又传了一个钟表匠来，几番口舌和几番检视之后，他总算把鸟修了个八九不离十，但他说这只鸟以后可要省着点用，因为它的机芯已经锈蚀，换新的机芯让音乐恢复正常是不可能的了。这是一件非常悲伤的事！大家只敢让人造鸟一年演唱一次，就这样也已经算是勉为其难了；然而乐师用那些繁难的字眼做了个简短的发言，他说一切都跟过去一样好，于是一切就都算跟过去一样好。

五年过去了，整个国家遭遇了一场最重大的悲伤，因为大家都很喜欢他们的皇帝，而他现在病了，据说不久于人世，新的皇帝已经选好，老百姓都站在大街上，向侍臣打听皇帝的病情。

“唉！”他边说边摇头。

皇帝冰冷苍白地躺在他华丽的大床上。满朝文武都以为他死了，每个人都跑去向新皇帝请安。太监们都跑出来闲言碎语，宫女们开着盛大的茶话会。所有的大厅和走廊里都铺满了布，为了有人经过的时候不发出脚步声，所以到处都很寂静，非常寂静。但皇帝还没有死，他僵硬苍白地躺在华丽的床上，长长的天鹅绒帷幔和沉重的黄金穗饰；高处开着一扇窗，月亮照进来，月光洒在皇帝和人造鸟身上。

可怜的皇帝几乎透不过气来，感觉就像胸口压着什么东西；他勉强睁开眼睛，看到死神坐在他胸口上，头上戴着金冠，一只手握着皇帝的金剑，另一只手举着他那柄华丽的令旗；他的四周，天鹅绒帷幔的褶皱里探出许多奇形怪状的脑袋来，有些很丑陋，有些很祥和：这些都是皇帝的恶业和善行，他们都瞪着他，而死神就坐在他的心坎上。

“你还记得吗？”脑袋一个接一个地低声问，“你还记得吗？”他们对他讲了许多往事，搞得他满头冷汗。

“朕从来都不知道！”皇帝说。“奏乐，奏乐，大鼓敲起来！”他喊道，“别让朕听到他们说的话！”

但他们还是挥之不去，不管说什么，死神都点头。

“奏乐，奏乐！”皇帝大叫，“你这祥瑞的小金鸟！唱呀，唱呀！朕给你穿金戴银，还亲自把朕的金拖鞋挂在你的脖颈上，唱呀，唱呀！”

但那只鸟一声不吭地站在那儿，没人来给它上发条，它也就不会唱歌；但死神仍然用他空洞的大眼睛瞪着皇帝，四周一片寂静，寂静得可怕。

就在这时，紧挨着窗传来了那最美丽的歌声，是那只活着的小夜莺，它站在窗外的树枝上；它听说皇帝病危，所以赶来用歌声送上安慰与希望。随着它的歌声，那些鬼魂越来越苍白，血液在皇帝孱弱的四肢中流淌得越来越快，连死神都在聆听，他说：“唱下去，小夜莺，唱下去吧！”

“好的，但把华丽的金剑交给我吧！把贵重的令旗也给我吧！把皇帝的金冠也给我吧！”

死神用每一件宝物交换一首歌，夜莺就一直唱下去，它唱到寂静的墓园，白色的玫瑰在那儿生长，接骨木树在那儿散发着幽香，嫩草在那儿沐浴着遗属的眼泪；这让死神怀念起自己的花园来，化作一缕冰冷的白雾，飘出窗外。

“谢谢，谢谢！”皇帝说，“你这只天使般的小鸟，朕认得你！是朕把你逐出朕的国土的！而你却用歌唱驱除了朕床边的恶灵，让死神离开朕的心坎！朕该如何酬谢你？”

“你已经酬谢过我了！”夜莺说，“第一次歌唱的时候，我已从你的眼里唱出了泪珠，我将永生不忘！那些泪珠是珍宝，让歌唱的心受益匪浅。但现在快睡吧，变得健康强壮起来！我会为你歌唱！”

于是它唱了起来——而皇帝就这么进入了甜美的梦乡，温柔而祥

和！

他醒来时感觉强健而康明，阳光从窗口洒进来，照耀着他；他的侍从一个都还没有来，因为他们以为，他死了。但夜莺仍在那里唱着歌。

“你要永远和朕在一起！”皇帝说，“只有你想唱的时候才需要唱，那只人造鸟朕要把它摔成碎片。”

“别这样！”夜莺说，“它已经尽力了！永远留着它吧！我无法在宫中安家定居，但让我想来的时候就来吧，那样我会在傍晚停在窗边的树枝上，为你歌唱，这样你就会快乐并格外地深思，我将歌唱那些幸福的人以及那些煎熬的人！我将歌唱善与恶，它们就隐藏在你的周围。我这唱歌的小鸟还要到处飞翔，去找贫穷的渔夫，去农家的屋顶，去每个远离你和你宫殿的地方。我爱你的心远胜于你的皇冠，然而皇冠本身也有某种神圣的气息！——我会前来为你歌唱！——但有一件事你必须向我承诺。”

“任何事！”皇帝说，他亲自穿上自己的龙袍站在那儿，手持沉重而闪耀的金剑抵住自己的心口。

“我只求你一件事！别告诉任何人你有一只会把什么都告诉你的小鸟，这样一切都会变得更美好。”

然后夜莺就飞走了。

侍从们进来想为他们死去的皇帝善后——他们就这么站在那儿，而皇帝却说：“早上好！”

红鞋

有个小女孩，既可爱又漂亮，但一到夏天她就不得不到哪儿都打着赤脚，因为她很穷。冬天她穿一双大木鞋，小脚背都红了，看着挺吓人。

村子的正中央住着年迈的鞋匠姥姥，她坐在那儿穿针引线，竭尽全力，用旧红布条缝出了一双小鞋，很笨拙，但很用心，这双鞋就是给那个小女孩的。小姑娘名叫卡伦。

就在她的母亲下葬的那天，她得到了那双红鞋并第一次穿上了它们；这双鞋哀悼的时候穿的确不合时宜，但她也没有别的鞋子可穿，于是她就光着脚穿着它们，跟在一口简陋的稻草棺材后面走。

这时突然出现了一辆高大的老爷车，里面坐着一位高大的老妇人，她看着这个小姑娘，心里非常地怜惜，于是就对牧师说：“听着，把这个小姑娘给我吧，我会好好待她的！”

卡伦以为这都是因为那双红鞋，但老妇人却说它们太丑了，于是就把鞋烧了。但卡伦自己却穿上了干净得体的衣服；她必须学习读书和缝纫，大家都说她很漂亮。但她的镜子说：“你岂止是漂亮，你美极了！”

有一次王后周游全国，随行的还有她的小女儿，也就是公主，人们蜂拥来到城堡门外，其中就有卡伦，小公主穿一身精致的白衣服，站在窗子里给大家欣赏；她既没有拖着长长的裙摆，也没有戴金冠，但穿着一双美丽的红色萨非皮鞋；它们确实比鞋匠姥姥为小卡伦缝的鞋好看得多。世上没有什么东西能和红鞋相提并论！

现在卡伦长大了，要参加成人礼，她得到了新衣服，还有新鞋子。城里有钱的鞋匠为她的小脚丫量了尺寸，是在他自己家的客厅里量的，厅里立着大玻璃柜，里面摆着迷人的鞋子和光鲜的靴子。那儿看上去很漂亮，但老妇人眼神不好，所以也受用不到。在这些鞋子中间有一双红鞋，像极了公主穿的那双，真是美极了！鞋匠也说这双鞋是为一位伯爵的女儿缝的，但鞋不合脚。

“一定是打光革的！”老妇人说，“好亮！”

“是的，好亮！”卡伦说。鞋子很合脚，于是她们就买了下来；但老妇人并不知道鞋是红色的，不然她决不会让卡伦穿着红鞋参加成人礼，但是她还是这么去了。

所有人都看着她的脚，当她穿过教堂的大厅走向诗班席大门的时候，她觉得就连墓碑上的古画——那些戴着硬邦邦的襕襟穿着黑色长袍的牧师和牧师夫人的肖像，都把目光锁定在她的红鞋上。牧师把手搭在她的头上，讲述神圣的洗礼，对上帝的誓约，说她已经是成年的基督徒，但哪怕这个时候，她想的还是那双鞋；风琴演奏的音乐如此庄严，优美的童声在唱，年迈的领唱也在唱，但卡伦想的只有那双红鞋。

下午连那个老妇人都知道鞋是红色的，她说这太糟糕，太不合时宜，卡伦从此以后去教堂都必须穿黑色的鞋子，哪怕是旧鞋。

下一个星期日是圣餐礼，卡伦看了看那双黑鞋，又看了看那双红鞋——然后她又看了看红鞋，拿起来穿在了脚上。

那天阳光明媚，卡伦和老妇人穿过田间小径，灰尘弥漫。

教堂门口站着一个老兵，拄着一根拐杖，留着一把奇怪的长胡子，胡子的颜色比白色要红，因为它就是红色的；他深深地鞠了个躬，脑袋几乎着了地，并问老妇人他能不能擦擦她的鞋。卡伦也把她的小脚伸了出来。“瞧，多美丽的舞鞋啊！”士兵说，“你跳舞的时候鞋也穿得牢！”说着他用手敲敲鞋底。

老妇人给士兵一个小铜币，然后带着卡伦走进教堂。

教堂里所有人都看着卡伦的红鞋，所有的画像也都在看着它们，当卡伦跪在圣坛前，把圣杯端到嘴边的时候，她想的只有她的红鞋，就像它们在圣杯中为了她游来荡去；她忘了唱赞美诗，她忘了念“亲爱的圣父”。

之后大家都走出教堂，老妇人迈进她的马车。卡伦跟在后面抬起脚，这时那个站在她们身旁的老兵说：“瞧，多美丽的舞鞋啊！”卡伦忍不住想跳几个舞步，她一开始跳起来，双腿就停不下来，就像这双鞋控制了它们；她绕着教堂一角跳了一圈，她忍不住；车夫不得不跟在她身后，跑过来一把抓住她，把她抱进马车里，但她的脚仍在舞蹈，结果她狠狠地踢了那位好心的老妇人。最后他们终于脱下了她的鞋，腿才恢复平静。

回家后，这双鞋放进了柜子里，但卡伦还是忍不住想看看它们。

后来老妇人病倒了，大家都说她将不久于人世！她需要有人照顾护理，她身边没有比卡伦更亲近的人了。但正巧城里举行盛大的舞会，也邀请了卡伦。她看了看那位老妇人，反正她将不久于人世，她又看了看那双红鞋，觉得看看也不算什么罪孽。她穿上这双红鞋，穿穿总可以吧。然而她还是去参加了舞会，并且又开始跳舞。

但她想往右，鞋偏跳向左，她想向前，鞋却偏跳向后，下楼，穿

过大街，出城门。她跳着舞，不得不跳着舞，一直跳到黑暗的森林里。

树丛中亮起一束光，她以为那是月亮，因为她看到一张脸，但那是那个红胡子老兵，他坐在那儿点着头说：“瞧，多美丽的舞鞋啊！”

她害怕起来，想把红鞋扔掉，但它们紧紧地箍着她的脚，她扯下了她的袜子，但鞋已经长在了她的脚上。她跳着舞，不得不跳舞，穿过田野和草坪，无论雨淋还是日晒，无论黑夜还是白昼，而黑夜是最可怕的。

她跳进一座开放的墓园，不过那儿的亡灵不跳舞，他们有比跳舞更重要的事要做；她想在一座长满苦涩菊蒿的陋坟上坐一下，但她根本不得安宁，于是她跳到敞开着教堂门口，在那儿她看到一位身穿白色长袍的天使。他的翅膀一直从肩膀拖到地上，他的表情庄重而严肃，他手中持着一把宽宽的剑。

“你要跳舞！”他说，“穿着你的红鞋跳舞，直到你变得苍白冰冷！直到你的肌肤萎缩，把你变成一具骨架。你要从一户人家跳到另一户人家，那些家里住着傲慢可恶的孩子，你要敲他们的门，让他们听到你的声音并怕你！你要跳舞，跳舞——！”

“宽恕我！”卡伦喊道。但她没有听到天使的回答，因为鞋把她带出了门，带到田野上，穿过大路，穿过小径，她得一直跳舞。

一天早晨她跳过一扇门，她很熟悉的门；里面传出赞美诗来，人们抬出一口棺材，上面装饰着花朵；这时她才知道老妇人死了，她觉得自己已经被所有人遗弃并受到了上帝天使的诅咒。

她跳着舞，不得不跳着舞，在漆黑的夜里跳着舞。鞋带着她穿过满是荆棘和木桩的地方，把她扎出了血；她跳着舞穿过荒地来到一座孤零零的小屋跟前。她知道那个刽子手住在这儿，她用手指敲着玻璃窗上说：“出来！——出来！——我进不来，因为我在跳舞！”

刽子手说：“你难道不知道我是谁？我会砍掉恶人的脑袋，我能感觉到我的斧子已经在颤动了！”

“别砍我的头，”卡伦说，“因为这样我就不能忏悔我的罪过了。但把我的脚砍掉吧，连我的鞋一起！”

于是她坦白了自己所有的罪孽，刽子手砍下了她穿着红鞋的脚，但鞋带着她的小脚跳着舞穿过田野，跳进了茂密的森林深处。

他为她削了一双木脚和一副拐杖，还教给她一首罪人常唱的赞美诗，她吻了那只握斧子的手，然后穿过荒地而去。

“我已经受够了那双红鞋的折磨！”她说，“现在我要去教堂，让大

家看看我！”于是她飞快地走向教堂大门，但她到那儿的时候，红鞋就在她面前跳舞，她吓坏了，只得转身离开。

整个星期她都很悲伤，流了许多沉重的眼泪，但星期天到来的时候，她说：“看吧，我已经受尽折磨竭尽全力！我觉得，我已经和那些昂首坐在教堂里的人一样善良了！”于是她勇敢地去了；但她还是只走到门口，她又看到那双红鞋在面前跳舞，她吓坏了，转过身，并打心底忏悔起她的罪过。

她走到牧师家，请求在那里服务，她会勤勤恳恳地工作，做所有力所能及的事，她无所谓报酬，只求有一个安身之处，有好人为伴。牧师夫人可怜她，收留了她。她的确很勤恳也很用心。晚上牧师朗读《圣经》的时候，她就静静地坐下来听。所有孩子都很喜欢她，但他们说起装饰、城市，以及她像皇后一样美丽的时候，她就摇头。

接下来的星期天，一家人都要去教堂，他们问她愿不愿意一起去，但她噙着眼泪，悲伤地看着她的拐杖，于是其他人都去听上帝的训诫，而她独自走进自己的小房间；地方不大，只够放一张床和一把椅子。她坐下拿起自己的赞美诗；无比虔诚地读起来，随风传来教堂的管风琴声，她抬起头，泪流满面地说：“哦，上帝，救救我！”

阳光如此明媚地照耀着，她的面前出现了上帝的白衣天使，就是那天晚上她在教堂门口见到的那位，但他手中拿着的不再是锋利的剑，而是开满玫瑰的绿枝，他用它触碰了一下天花板，天花板就高高地升了起来，凡是他触碰过的地方，都会有一颗金色的星星在闪烁，他触碰了一下墙壁，墙壁就延展开来，她看到了演奏着的管风琴，她看到了画有牧师和牧师夫人的古画；人们坐在装饰过的座位上，唱着他们的赞美诗。要不是教堂为可怜的小女孩来到这逼仄的小房间里，就是她已经进了教堂；她和牧师家的其他人一起坐在座位上，当他们唱完赞美诗抬起头的时候，他们点点头说：“你来对了，卡伦！”

“这是上帝的恩典！”她说。

风琴鸣响，童声合唱如此温柔优美。明媚的阳光温暖地透过窗户洒在卡伦坐着的教堂长椅上；她的心被阳光、平和与欢乐充盈，直至破碎；她的灵魂顺着阳光飞向上帝，在天堂再也没人问起那双红鞋。

Hans Christian Andersen

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

The Tinder Box

Nº 13

‘There sat the
dog with eyes
as big as mill
wheels.’

The T inderbox

A soldier came marching along the road: left, right! left, right! He had his knapsack on his back and a sword at his side, because he had been off to war, and now he was on his way home. Then he met an old witch on the road. She was so hideous, her lower lip hung all the way down to her breast. She said, 'Good evening, soldier. What a nice sword and big knapsack you have – you must be a real soldier! Now you shall have all the money you could ask for!'

'Well, thanks a lot, you old witch,' said the soldier.

'Do you see that big tree?' said the witch, pointing at a tree right next to them. 'It's completely hollow inside. Climb up to the top and you'll find a hole that you can slip into and slide all the way down inside the tree. I'll tie a rope around your waist so I can hoist you back up when you call me.'

'Why would I go inside that tree?' asked the soldier.

'To get the money!' said the witch. 'You see, when you reach the bottom of the tree, you'll be in a huge passageway that's very bright because it's lit by more than a hundred lamps. Then you'll see three doors, and you'll be able to open them because the keys are in the locks. If you go inside the first chamber you'll see a big chest in the middle of the room, and on top of it sits a dog. He has eyes as big as a pair of teacups, but never mind that. I'll give you my blue- checked apron that you can spread on the floor. Go right over and pick up the dog and set him on my apron. Then open the chest and take as many *skillings* as you like. They're all made of copper, but if you'd rather have silver, then go into the next room. In there is a dog with eyes as big as a pair of mill wheels, but never mind that. Set him on my apron and take the money. But if it's gold you want, you can have that too, and as much as you can carry, if you go into the third chamber. But the dog sitting on the money chest has two eyes that are each as big as the Round Tower. Now that's a real dog, believe me! But never you mind. Just set him on

my apron and he won't harm you. Then take from the chest as much gold as you like.'

'Not bad,' said the soldier. 'But what do I have to give you in return, you old witch? Because I imagine there must be something you want.'

'No,' said the witch, 'I don't want a single skilling. All you have to bring me is an old tinderbox that my grandmother left behind when she was down there last.'

'Fine. Then let's have that rope around my waist,' said the soldier.

'Here it is,' said the witch. 'And here is my blue- checked apron.'

So the soldier climbed up the tree, tumbled down the hole, and then, just as the witch had said, he stood inside the huge passageway where hundreds of lamps were burning.

He opened the first door. Ooh! There sat the dog with eyes as big as teacups, staring at him.

'You're a handsome fellow!' said the soldier and set him on the witch's apron. Then he took as many copper *skillings* as his pockets would hold, closed the chest, put the dog back, and went into the second room. Eeek! There sat the dog with eyes as big as mill wheels.

'You shouldn't look at me so hard,' said the soldier. 'You might hurt your eyes!' And then he set the dog on the witch's apron, but when he saw all the silver coins inside the chest he threw away the copper coins he was carrying and filled his pockets and his knapsack with nothing but silver. Next he went into the third chamber. Oh, how hideous! The dog in there really did have eyes as big as round towers, and they were spinning around in his head like wheels.

'Good evening,' said the soldier and doffed his cap, for he had never seen a dog like that before. But after he'd looked at him for a while, he thought to himself, 'All right, that's enough.' And he lifted him onto the floor and opened the chest. Good Lord, there was a lot of gold! Enough to buy all of Copenhagen and every single sugar-pig sold by the cake- wives, and all the tin soldiers, whips, and

rocking horses in the whole world! Yes, there was certainly plenty of money! So the soldier threw away all the silver coins that filled his pockets and knapsack and took the gold instead. Yes, all his pockets, his knapsack, his cap, and his boots were so full that he could hardly walk. Now he had money! He put the dog back on the chest, slammed the door shut, and called up through the tree:

‘Hoist me up now, you old witch!’

‘Do you have the tinderbox?’ asked the witch.

‘Oh, that’s right,’ said the soldier. ‘I forgot all about it.’ And he went over and picked it up. The witch hoisted him up and he once again stood on the road, with his pockets, boots, knapsack, and cap full of money.

‘What do you want the tinderbox for?’ asked the soldier.

‘That’s none of your business,’ said the witch. ‘You’ve got the money. Now just give me the tinderbox.’

‘Pish posh!’ said the soldier. ‘Tell me right now what you want it for or I’ll pull out my sword and chop off your head!’

‘No,’ said the witch.

So the soldier chopped off her head. There she lay! But he wrapped up all his money in her apron, slung it in a bundle over his shoulder, stuffed the tinderbox in his pocket, and headed straight for the city.

It was a lovely city, and he went inside the loveliest of inns and demanded the very best rooms and his favorite food, because now he had so much money that he was rich.

The servant who was supposed to polish his boots thought they were rather strange old boots for such a rich gentleman to be wearing, but he hadn’t yet bought himself new ones. By the next day he had a good pair of boots and fine clothes to wear. The soldier was now a distinguished gentleman, and the people told him about all the splendid things to be found in their city, and about their king and what a charming princess his daughter was.

‘Where might I catch a glimpse of her?’ asked the soldier.

‘It’s impossible to catch a glimpse of her,’ they all said. ‘She lives in an enormous copper palace surrounded by dozens of walls

and towers. No one but the king dares visit her, because it was foretold that she would marry a simple soldier, and that certainly did not please the king.'

'She's someone I'd like to see,' thought the soldier, but that wasn't possible.

He was now leading a merry life, going to the theater, taking drives in the king's gardens, and giving away a great deal of money to the poor, which was a very nice gesture. No doubt he remembered from the old days how miserable it was not to have even a *skilling*. He was now rich and wore fine clothes, and had so many friends who all said that he was a pleasant fellow, a real gentleman, and that certainly pleased the soldier. But since he was spending money each day and not taking any in, he finally had no more than two *skillings* left and had to move out of the beautiful rooms where he had been living and into a tiny little garret room right under the roof. He had to brush his own boots and mend them with a darning needle, and none of his friends came to see him because there were too many stairs to climb.

It was a very dark evening, and he couldn't even afford to buy a candle, but then he remembered there was a little stump of one in the tinderbox he had taken from the hollow tree when the witch had helped him inside. He took out the tinderbox and the candle stump, but the minute he struck fire and sparks leaped from the flint, the door flew open and the dog that he had seen inside the tree, the one with eyes as big as two teacups, stood before him and said, 'What is my master's command?'

'What's this?' said the soldier. 'What an amusing tinderbox, if I can wish for whatever I want! Bring me some money,' he said to the dog, and zip, he was gone; zip, he was back, holding a big sack of skillings in his mouth.

Now the soldier realized what a wonderful tinderbox it was. If he struck it once, the dog who sat on the chest of copper coins came; if he struck it twice, the one with the silver coins came; and if he struck it three times, the one with the gold came. Now the soldier moved back downstairs to the beautiful rooms, dressed in fine clothing, and all his friends recognized him again, because they were so fond of him.

One day he thought, 'How odd that no one is allowed to see that princess. Everyone says she's supposed to be so lovely. But what good is it if she's always kept inside that enormous copper palace with all the towers? Couldn't I possibly have a look at her? Where's my tinderbox?' And then he struck fire and zip, the dog with eyes as big as teacups appeared.

'I know it's the middle of the night,' said the soldier, 'but I have such a great desire to see the princess, if only for a moment.'

The dog was out the door at once, and before the soldier knew it, he was back with the princess. She was sitting on the dog's back, asleep, and she was so lovely that anyone could see she was a real princess. The soldier couldn't resist, he had to kiss her, because he was a real soldier.

Then the dog ran back with the princess, but when morning came and the king and queen were pouring their tea, the princess said that she'd had a strange dream in the night about a dog and a soldier. She was riding on the dog's back, and the soldier had kissed her.

'That's certainly a fine story!' said the queen.

One of the old ladies- in- waiting was then ordered to keep watch at the bedside of the princess on the following night, to see if it was really a dream, or what else it might be.

The soldier was longing terribly to see the lovely princess once more, so the dog appeared in the night, picked her up, and ran as fast as he could, but the old lady- in- waiting put on her wading boots and ran just as swiftly right behind. When she saw them disappear inside a large building, she thought to herself: Now I know where it is. And with a piece of chalk she drew a big cross on the door. Then she returned home and went to bed, and the dog came back too, bringing the princess. But when he saw that a cross had been drawn on the door where the soldier lived, he took another piece of chalk and put a cross on all the doors in the whole city. That was a clever thing to do, because now the lady- in- waiting wouldn't be able to find the right door, since there were crosses on all of them.

Early the next morning the king and queen, the old lady- in- waiting, and all the officers went out to see where the princess had

been.

‘There it is!’ said the king when he saw the first door with a cross on it.

‘No, it’s over there, my dear husband,’ said the queen, who saw another door with a cross on it.

‘But there’s one there, and one there!’ they all said. Wherever they looked, there was a cross on every door. Then they realized it was no use to go on searching.

But the queen was a very clever woman who was capable of more than just riding around in a coach. She took her big golden scissors, cut a large piece of silk into pieces, and then stitched together a charming little pouch, which she filled with fine grains of buckwheat. She tied it to the back of the princess, and when that was done, she cut a tiny hole in the pouch so the grains would sprinkle out wherever the princess went.

That night the dog appeared once again, put the princess on his back, and ran off with her to the soldier, who loved her so much and wanted dearly to be a prince so that he could make her his wife.

The dog didn’t notice the grain sprinkling out all the way from the palace to the soldier’s window, as he ran along the wall, carrying the princess. In the morning the king and queen could see quite well where their daughter had been, and they seized the soldier and threw him into jail.

And there he sat. Oh, how dark and dreary it was, and then they told him, ‘Tomorrow you will hang.’ That was not a pleasant thing to hear, and he had left his tinderbox behind at the inn. In the morning he could see through the iron bars on the little window that people were hurrying to the outskirts of the city to watch him hang. He heard the drums and saw the marching soldiers. Everyone was in a great rush, including a shoemaker’s apprentice wearing a leather apron and slippers. He was moving along at such a gallop that one of his slippers flew off and struck the wall right where the soldier was sitting, peering out through the iron bars.

‘Hey, shoemaker’s apprentice! You don’t have to be in such a rush,’ said the soldier. ‘Nothing’s going to happen until I get there. But if you run over to the place where I was staying and bring me

my tinderbox, I'll give you four *skillings* . But you have to be quick about it!' The shoemaker's apprentice wanted those four *skillings* , so he raced off to get the tinderbox, brought it to the soldier, and . . . well, let's hear what happened.

Outside the city a huge gallows had been built, and around it stood the soldiers and many hundreds of thousands of people. The king and queen sat on a lovely throne right across from the judge and the entire council.

The soldier was already standing on the ladder, but as they were about to put the rope around his neck, he said that before a sinner faced his punishment he was always allowed one harmless request. He dearly wanted to smoke a pipe of tobacco; it would be the last pipe he had in this world.

Now, that was not something the king could refuse, and so the soldier took out his tinderbox and struck fire, one, two, three! And there stood all three dogs: the one with eyes as big as teacups, the one with eyes like mill wheels, and the one with eyes as big as the Round Tower.

'Help me now, so I won't be hanged!' said the soldier, and then the dogs rushed at the judge and the entire council, seizing one by the leg and one by the nose, and flinging them high into the air so they fell back down and were crushed to bits.

'Not me!' said the king, but the biggest dog seized both him and the queen and tossed them after all the others. Then the soldiers were afraid, and all the people shouted, 'Little soldier, you shall be our king and wed the lovely princess!'

They put the soldier in the king's coach, and all three dogs danced before it, shouting, 'Hurrah!' The boys whistled through their fingers, and the soldiers presented arms. The princess came out of the copper palace and became queen, and that certainly pleased her! The wedding celebration lasted for a week, and the dogs sat at the table too, making big eyes.

Little Claus and Big Claus

There was a town where two men had the very same name. Both of them were named Claus, but one owned four horses while the other had only one. In order to tell them apart, people called the man with four horses Big Claus, and the man with only one horse Little Claus. Now we're going to hear what happened between those two, because this is a real story!

All week long Little Claus had to do the plowing for Big Claus, lending him his only horse. Then Big Claus would help him in return with all four of his horses, but only once a week, and that was on Sunday. Hee- ya! How Little Claus would crack his whip at all five horses. They might as well have belonged to him on that one day. The sun shone so wondrously, and all the bells in the tower rang, summoning people to church. Everyone was dressed in their best, walking with their hymnals under their arms, on their way to hear the pastor preach. And they looked at Little Claus, who was plowing with five horses, and he was so pleased that he cracked his whip again and shouted, 'Giddy- up, all my horses!'

'You shouldn't say that,' said Big Claus. 'Only one of those horses is yours.'

But when someone else passed by on his way to church, Little Claus forgot that he wasn't supposed to say that and he shouted, 'Giddy- up, all my horses!'

'All right, now I really must ask you to stop that,' said Big Claus. 'Because if you say it one more time, I'm going to strike your horse on the forehead, and he'll drop dead on the spot, and that will be the end of him.'

'Well, I certainly won't say it again,' said Little Claus, but when people came past and nodded hello, he was so pleased and thought it looked so splendid that he had five horses plowing his field that he cracked his whip and shouted, 'Giddy- up, all my horses!'

'I'll giddy- up your horses!' said Big Claus, and he seized the tethering mallet and struck Little Claus's only horse on the forehead

so that it fell to the ground, stone dead.

‘Oh no, now I have no horse at all!’ said Little Claus and began to cry. Later he flayed the horse and let the hide dry in the wind. Then he stuffed it in a sack that he hoisted onto his back and set off for town to sell his horsehide.

He had such a long way to go. He had to pass through a big, dark forest, and a terrible storm came up. He completely lost his way, and before he found the right road, dusk had fallen, and it was much too far to reach town or to go back home before night came.

Close to the road stood a large farm. The shutters on all the windows were closed, and yet there was a glimpse of light above. Surely they’ll let me spend the night here, thought Little Claus, and he went over and knocked.

The farmer’s wife opened the door, but when she heard what he wanted, she told him to keep on going. Her husband wasn’t home, and she didn’t take in strangers.

‘Well, then I guess I’ll have to sleep outside,’ said Little Claus, and the farmer’s wife shut the door in his face.

Nearby stood a big haystack, and between the haystack and house a little shed had been built with a flat, thatched roof.

‘I can sleep up there,’ said Little Claus when he saw the roof. ‘That would make a lovely bed, and I’m sure the stork isn’t going to fly down and bite me on the leg.’ A real live stork was standing on the roof, where it had made a nest.

So Little Claus climbed up onto the shed, lay down, and turned onto his side to settle in properly. The wooden shutters on the windows of the house didn’t quite meet at the top, which meant that he could peek into the room.

A great feast had been laid out with wine and a roast and such a lovely fish. The farmer’s wife and the deacon were sitting at the table, all alone. She was pouring wine for him, and he began with the fish, because he was awfully fond of fish.

‘If only I could have a bite too,’ said Little Claus, craning his neck toward the window. Lord, what a lovely cake he could see in there. Oh yes, it was quite a feast.

Then he heard someone come riding along the road toward the house. It was the woman's husband, on his way home.

Now, it's true that he was a good man, but he had a strange affliction: He couldn't stand to see deacons. If he caught sight of a deacon, he would grow quite furious. That was also why the deacon had come to visit the woman when he knew that her husband wasn't home, and that's why the good woman had set out for him the best food she could offer. When they heard her husband coming, they were both terrified. The woman told the deacon to climb into a big empty chest that stood in the corner, which he did, because he knew full well that the poor man couldn't stand the sight of a deacon. The woman quickly hid all the wonderful food and wine inside her baking oven, because if her husband saw it, he was sure to ask what was going on.

'Oh no!' sighed Little Claus up on the shed when he saw all the food disappear.

'Is somebody up there?' asked the farmer, peering up at Little Claus. 'Why are you lying up there? Come on into the house!'

Then Little Claus told him how he had lost his way and asked if he might stay the night.

'Yes, of course,' said the farmer. 'But first we'll have a bite to eat.'

The woman welcomed them both, set dishes on a long table, and brought them a big bowl of porridge. The farmer was hungry and ate with gusto, but Little Claus couldn't help thinking about the wonderful roast, fish, and cake that he knew were hidden in the oven.

Under the table at his feet he had put the sack with the horsehide in it, because we know, after all, that this was what he had brought from home to sell in town. The porridge was not at all to his liking, and so he stepped on his sack, and the dry horsehide inside creaked quite loudly.

'Hush!' said Little Claus to his sack, but at the same instant he stepped on it again, and it creaked even louder than before.

'Tell me, what do you have in your bag?' asked the farmer.

'Oh, it's a troll,' said Little Claus. 'He says we shouldn't eat the

porridge because he has conjured a whole oven full of roast and fish and cake.'

'Is that right?' said the farmer and quickly opened the oven. There he saw all the wonderful food that his wife had hidden, but he now thought the troll in the bag had conjured it up. His wife didn't dare say a word but set the food on the table at once, and so they ate the fish and the roast and the cake. Then Little Claus stepped on his sack again, making the hide creak.

'What's he saying now?' asked the farmer.

'He says,' said Little Claus, 'that he has also conjured up three bottles of wine for us, and they're standing over in the corner by the oven.' Then the woman had to bring out the wine she had hidden, and the farmer drank and grew quite merry. A troll like the one that Little Claus had in his bag was something that he would certainly like to own.

'Can he also conjure up the Devil?' asked the farmer. 'That's someone I'd really like to see, now that I'm feeling so merry.'

'Yes,' said Little Claus, 'my troll can do anything I ask. Isn't that right?' he said as he stepped on the bag, making it creak. 'Did you hear him say yes? But the Devil looks so horrid that you wouldn't want to look at him.'

'Oh, I'm not the least bit afraid. How bad do you think he could look?'

'Well, he's going to look exactly like a deacon.'

'Whoa!' said the farmer. 'That's ghastly, all right. I must tell you that I can't stand the sight of deacons. But that doesn't matter, because I'll know it's the Devil, so it won't bother me as much. I'm feeling brave now. But don't let him come too close.'

'Let me ask my troll,' said Little Claus, and he stepped on the bag, cupping his ear.

'What does he say?'

'He says that you can go over and open the chest that's standing in the corner, and you'll see the Devil moping inside, but you have to hold on to the lid so he doesn't get out.'

'Come and help me hold on to it,' said the farmer, and he went

over to the chest where his wife had hidden the real deacon, who sat there completely terrified.

The farmer lifted the lid slightly and peeked inside. 'Whoa!' he yelled, jumping back. 'I saw him all right, and he looks just like our deacon! Oh, that was terrible!'

After that they had to have a drink, and then they kept on drinking until late into the night.

'You've got to sell me that troll,' said the farmer. 'Ask whatever price you like. Why, I'd even give you a whole bushelful of money!'

'No, I can't do that,' that Claus. 'Just think how much I'll gain from owning this troll.'

'Oh, but I'd certainly like to have it,' said the farmer, and he kept on begging.

'All right,' said Little Claus at last. 'Since you've been kind enough to give me shelter for the night, I can't refuse. You can have the troll for a bushel of money, but I want the bushel to be full to the brim.'

'And that's what you'll get,' said the farmer, 'but you have to take that chest over there with you. I refuse to have it in the house for even an hour longer. There's no telling whether he's still inside.'

Little Claus gave the farmer the sack with the dried horsehide and got in return a whole bushel of money, full to the brim. The farmer even presented him with a big wheelbarrow for carrying the money and the chest.

'Farewell!' said Little Claus, and then he set off with his money and the big chest in which the deacon was still sitting.

On the other side of the woods was a big, deep river. The water was running so fast that it was almost impossible to swim against the current. A big new bridge had been built across it. Little Claus stopped in the middle of the bridge and said very loudly so that the deacon inside the chest would hear him:

'Well, what do I need this stupid chest for? It's so heavy it feels like it's full of rocks. I'm getting awfully tired of carting it around, so I think I'll throw it in the river. If it floats home to me, that's fine, but if it doesn't, it won't matter at all.'

Then he grabbed one handle of the chest and lifted it slightly, as if he were going to shove it into the water.

‘No, stop!’ yelled the deacon inside the chest. ‘Let me out!’

‘Ooh!’ said Little Claus, pretending to be scared. ‘He’s still inside! I’ve got to toss it in the river as quick as I can so he’ll drown.’

‘Oh no, oh no!’ shouted the deacon. ‘I’ll give you a whole bushelful of money if you don’t.’

‘Well, that’s a different story,’ said Little Claus, and opened the chest. The deacon crawled out at once, shoved the empty chest into the water, and went off to his house, where he gave Little Claus a whole bushelful of money. Little Claus already had one bushel from the farmer; now his whole wheelbarrow was full of money.

‘Look at that, I certainly did get a good price for that horse,’ he said to himself when he came back to his own house and dumped all the money in a big heap in the middle of the floor. ‘Big Claus will be annoyed when he finds out how rich I’ve become from my only horse, but I’m not going to come right out and tell him about it.’

Then he sent a boy over to Big Claus to borrow a bushel measure.

‘I wonder what he wants it for,’ thought Big Claus, and smeared tar inside the bottom so that a little of whatever was being weighed would stick to it. And it did, because when he got the bushel measure back, there were three new silver eight- *skilling* coins stuck to it.

‘What’s this?’ said Big Claus and ran right over to see Little Claus. ‘Where did you get all this money?’

‘Oh, I got it for my horsehide. I sold it last night.’

‘That was certainly a good price!’ said Big Claus, and he raced back home, picked up an ax, and struck every one of his four horses on the forehead. Then he skinned them and drove into town with the hides.

‘Hides! Hides! Who wants to buy hides?’ he shouted through the streets.

All the shoemakers and tanners came running and asked him how much he wanted for the hides.

‘A bushel of money for each of them,’ said Big Claus.

‘Are you crazy?’ they all said. ‘Do you think we have bushels of money?’

‘Hides, hides! Who wants to buy hides?’ he shouted again, but to everyone who asked how much the hides cost, he replied, ‘A bushel of money.’

‘He’s trying to make fools of us,’ they all said. Then the shoemakers picked up their straps and the tanners their leather aprons, and they all started beating Big Claus.

‘Hides, hides!’ they jeered at him. ‘Oh yes, we’ll give you a hide that bleeds like a pig! Now get out of town!’ they shouted, and Big Claus had to rush off as fast as he could. He had never been beaten so badly in his life.

‘Well!’ he said when he got home. ‘Little Claus is going to pay for this. I’m going to murder him for this!’

But back at Little Claus’s house his grandmother had just died. Now, it’s true that she had been terribly ill-tempered and mean toward him, but even so he was quite sad. He took the dead woman and put her in his warm bed to see whether she might come back to life. There she would lie all night long while he slept in the corner, sitting on a chair; that was something he had done before.

As he was sitting there that night, the door opened and Big Claus came in with an ax. He knew where Little Claus’s bed stood, and he went right over and struck the dead grandmother on the forehead, thinking that it was Little Claus.

‘Take that!’ he said. ‘Now you won’t make a fool of me anymore.’ And then he went back home.

‘What a mean and evil man,’ said Little Claus. ‘He wanted to murder me, but it’s a good thing the old lady was already dead, or he would have taken her life.’

Then he dressed his old grandmother in her Sunday best, borrowed a horse from his neighbor, harnessed it to his wagon, and put his old grandmother on the back seat so that she wouldn’t fall

out when he started driving. Then they headed off through the woods. When the sun came up, they were outside a big inn, where Little Claus stopped and went inside to get a bite to eat.

The innkeeper was very, very rich, and he was also a good man, but hot-tempered, as if there were pepper and tobacco inside of him.

‘Good morning,’ he said to Little Claus. ‘You’ve put on your fine clothes awfully early today.’

‘Yes,’ said Little Claus, ‘I’m going to town with my old grandmother. She’s sitting outside in the wagon, and I can’t get her to come indoors. Would you mind taking her a glass of mead? But you’ll have to speak up because she doesn’t hear very well.’

‘Why, certainly,’ said the innkeeper. He poured a big glass of mead and took it outside to the dead grandmother, who was propped up in the wagon.

‘Here’s a glass of mead from your grandson,’ said the innkeeper, but the dead woman didn’t say a word, just sat there without moving.

‘Didn’t you hear me?’ shouted the innkeeper as loud as he could. ‘Here’s a glass of mead from your grandson!’

Once again he shouted the same thing, and then one more time, but when she didn’t budge in the slightest, he got angry and tossed the glass of mead right in her face so it ran down her nose. And she toppled over backward into the wagon, because she had merely been propped up but wasn’t tied down.

‘What’s this?’ shouted Little Claus as he came running out the door and grabbed the innkeeper by the shirtfront. ‘You’ve gone and killed my grandmother! Just look at that big hole in her forehead!’

‘Oh, what bad luck!’ cried the innkeeper, wringing his hands. ‘It’s all the fault of my bad temper. Dear Little Claus, I’ll give you a whole bushful of money and pay for your grandmother’s burial as if she were my own, but don’t say a word or they’ll chop off my head, and that would be awful!’

So Little Claus got a whole bushful of money, and the innkeeper buried the old grandmother as if she were his own.

As soon as Little Claus got back home with all the money, he at once sent his boy over to see Big Claus, to ask if he could borrow a bushel measure.

‘What’s this?’ said Big Claus. ‘I thought I killed him! I’m going to have to see this for myself.’ And so he took the bushel measure over to Little Claus in person.

‘Where on earth did you get all that money?’ he asked, opening his eyes wide when he saw how much more Little Claus had accumulated.

‘It was my grandmother, not me that you killed,’ said Little Claus. ‘But now I’ve sold her for a bushelful of money.’

‘That was certainly a good price,’ said Big Claus, and he rushed home, picked up an ax, and promptly killed his old grandmother. He put her in his wagon, drove into town to the apothecary’s shop, and asked him whether he wanted to buy a dead body.

‘Who is it, and where did you get it?’ asked the apothecary.

‘It’s my grandmother,’ said Big Claus. ‘I’ve killed her for a bushelful of money.’

‘Good Lord!’ said the apothecary. ‘You don’t know what you’re saying! Don’t say things like that or you could lose your head.’ And then he told him exactly what a dreadful, evil thing he had done, and what a bad person he was, and that he ought to be punished. Big Claus was so scared that he leaped straight from the apothecary’s shop into his wagon, cracked his whip at the horses, and raced off home. The apothecary and everyone else thought he was mad, and so they let him go where he liked.

‘You’re going to pay for this!’ said Big Claus when he was out on the road. ‘Oh yes, you’re going to pay for this, Little Claus!’ As soon as he got home he took the biggest sack he could find and went over to Little Claus and said, ‘You’ve made a fool of me again. First I killed my horses, and then my old grandmother. It’s all your fault, but you’re never going to trick me again.’ And he grabbed Little Claus around the waist and stuffed him into the sack. Then he slung him over his back and shouted, ‘Now I’m going to take you out and drown you!’

It was a long walk to reach the river, and Little Claus wasn’t

easy to carry. The road passed very close to the church, where the organ was playing and people were singing so beautifully inside. Then Big Claus put down the sack holding Little Claus right next to the church door, thinking that it might do him good to go inside and listen to a hymn first, before continuing on his way. Little Claus couldn't get out, and everyone else was in church, so Big Claus went inside.

'Oh me, oh my!' sighted Little Claus from inside the sack. He twisted and turned, but it was impossible for him to loosen the cord. At that moment an old, old cattle- driver with chalk- white hair and a big walking stick in his hand came by. He was driving a big herd of cows and bulls in front of him. They trampled over the sack that Claus was in, tumbling it onto its side.

'Oh my,' sighed Little Claus. 'I'm so young, but I'm already headed for Heaven.'

'And what a poor man am I,' said the cattle- driver. 'Here I am so old but it's not yet my time to go.'

'Open the sack!' shouted Little Claus. 'Climb in and take my place, and you'll end up in Heaven at once.'

'Oh, I'd like that very much,' said the cattle- driver, untying the sack. And Little Claus jumped right out.

'Could you take care of the cattle?' said the old man, and he climbed into the bag, which Little Claus tied up and then went on his way, taking along the cows and bulls.

A little while later Big Claus came out of the church and hoisted the sack onto his back, thinking that it certainly was a lot lighter, because the old cattle- driver was no more than half the weight of Little Claus. 'How easy it is to carry him now! Well, that's probably because I've been listening to a hymn.' Then he went over to the river, which was deep and wide, threw the sack with the old cattle- driver into the water, and shouted after him, thinking he was Little Claus, 'Take that! Now you won't be making a fool of me anymore!'

Then he headed home, but when he came to the crossroads, he met Little Claus walking along with all his cattle.

'What's this?' said Big Claus. 'Didn't I drown you?'

‘Yes, you did,’ said Little Claus. ‘You threw me in the river less than half an hour ago.’

‘But where did you get all these wonderful cattle?’ asked Big Claus.

‘They’re sea cattle,’ said Little Claus. ‘Let me tell you the whole story. And by the way, thanks for drowning me, because now I’m back on my feet and let me tell you, I’m as rich as can be! I was so scared when I was inside that sack, and the wind whistled in my ears when you threw me off the bridge and into the cold water. I sank straight to the bottom, but I didn’t hurt myself because the loveliest soft grass grows down there. That’s where I landed, and the bag was opened at once. The loveliest maiden, wearing chalk-white clothing and with a green wreath on her wet hair, took my hand and said, “Is that you, Little Claus? Well, first let me give you these cattle. Five miles up the road there’s another whole herd that I want you to have.” Then I saw that the river was a great highway for the sea folk. Down on the bottom they were walking and driving all the way from the sea toward land, to the place where the river ends. It was so lovely with flowers and the freshest of grass, and fish swimming in the water; they flitted around my ears like the birds in the air. How handsome the people were and how many cattle there were, ambling along the ditches and fences.’

‘But why did you come back to us so soon?’ asked Big Claus. ‘That’s not what I would have done if it was so charming down there.’

‘Well, you see,’ said Little Claus, ‘it was really very cunning of me. You heard me say that the mermaid told me that five miles up the road – and by road she meant the river, of course, since she can’t travel any other way – there was a whole herd of cattle waiting for me. I happen to know where the river starts to bend, first one way and then the other, making a whole detour. It’s much shorter, if you can do it, to come up here on land and head straight across to the river. That way I saved almost two and a half miles and reached my sea cattle much quicker.’

‘Oh, you certainly are a lucky man!’ said Big Claus. ‘Do you think I could get some sea cattle too, if I went down to the bottom of the river?’

‘Oh yes, I imagine so,’ said Little Claus. ‘But I can’t carry you in a sack to the river; you’re much too heavy for me. But if you walk there yourself and then climb into the bag, I’d be more than happy to throw you in.’

‘Thanks so much,’ said Big Claus. ‘But if I don’t get any sea cattle when I get there, I’m going to give you a beating, believe you me!’

‘Oh no! Don’t be so mean!’ And then they went down to the river. The cattle were so thirsty that when they saw the water, they ran as fast as they could down the slope to drink.

‘Look how fast they’re moving,’ said Little Claus. ‘They’re longing to go back down to the bottom.’

‘Yes, but help me first,’ said Big Claus. ‘Otherwise I’ll give you a beating!’ And then he climbed into the big sack that was lying across the back of one of the bulls. ‘Put a rock inside, because otherwise I’m afraid I won’t sink,’ said Big Claus.

‘Oh, I’m sure you will,’ said Little Claus, but just the same, he put a big rock in the sack, tied the cord tight, and then gave it a shove. Plop! Big Claus landed in the river and promptly sank to the bottom.

‘I’m afraid he’s not going to find any cattle,’ said Little Claus, and then he headed home with all he had.

The Princess on the Pea

Once upon a time there was a prince. He wanted a princess, but she had to be a real princess. So he traveled all over the world to find one, but wherever he went there was something wrong. There were plenty of princesses, but he wasn't quite sure if they were real princesses. There was always something that wasn't quite right. Then he went back home and was so sad because he dearly wanted to have a real princess.

One evening there was a terrible storm. Lightning flashed and thunder roared, the rain poured down, it was simply dreadful! Then there was a knock at the town gate, and the old king went to open it.

There was a princess standing outside. But good Lord how she looked because of the rain and terrible weather! Water was streaming from her hair and her clothes, running in the toes of her shoes and out of the heels. Then she said that she was a real princess.

'Well, we'll see about that,' thought the old queen, but she didn't say a word. She went into the bedroom, took off all the bedclothes, and placed a pea at the bottom of the bed. Then she took twenty mattresses and put them on top of the pea, and another twenty eiderdown quilts on top of the mattresses.

That's where the princess was to sleep that night.

The next morning they asked her how she had slept.

'Oh, dreadfully!' said the princess. 'I hardly closed my eyes all night. Lord knows what there was in my bed. I was lying on something hard, and I'm black and blue all over! It's simply dreadful!'

Then they could see that she was a real princess, since she had felt the pea through those twenty mattresses and those twenty eiderdown quilts. No one else could have such tender skin except for a real princess.

And so the prince took her as his wife, because now he knew that he had a real princess. And the pea was placed in the Royal Curiosity Cabinet, where it can still be seen today, as long as no one has taken it.

Now you see, that was a real story!

The Steadfast T in Soldier

Once upon a time there were twenty- five tin soldiers. They were brothers, because they were all born from an old tin spoon. Rifles they held at their shoulders, and their faces looked straight ahead. Red and blue, and oh so lovely were their uniforms. When the lid was removed from the box in which they lay, the very first words they heard in the world were, ‘Tin soldiers!’ That’s what a little boy cried, clapping his hands. They had been given to him because it was his birthday, and now he lined them up on the table. Each soldier looked exactly like the next, except for one who was slightly different. He had only one leg because he was the last to be cast, and there wasn’t enough tin left. Yet he stood just as firmly on one leg as the others did on two, and he’s the one who turned out to be remarkable.

On the table where they stood were many other toys, but the one that was most striking was a charming castle made of paper. Through the tiny windows you could see right into the halls. Outside stood small trees around a little mirror that was meant to look like a lake. Swans made of wax were swimming around on it, reflected in the mirror. The whole thing was so charming, and yet the most charming of all was a little maiden who stood in the open doorway to the castle. She had also been cut out of paper, but she was wearing a skirt of the sheerest tulle and a tiny narrow blue ribbon over her shoulder like a sash. In the middle sat a gleaming spangle as big as her face. The little maiden was stretching out both arms, because she was a dancer, and she was also lifting one leg so high in the air that the tin soldier couldn’t see it at all, and he thought that she had only one leg, just like him.

‘Now there’s a wife for me!’ he thought. ‘But she looks rather refined, and she lives in a castle. I have only a box, and it has to hold twenty- five of us. That’s no place for her! Still, I have to see about making her acquaintance.’ And then he stretched out full-length behind a snuff box that stood on the table. From there he could get a good look at the elegant little lady, who continued to

stand on one leg without losing her balance.

Later that evening all the other tin soldiers were put back in their box, and the people of the house went to bed. Then the toys began to play. They gave tea parties, fought battles, and danced. The tin soldiers rattled in their box because they wanted to play too, but they couldn't open the lid. The nutcracker turned somersaults, and the slate pencil scribbled all over the slate. There was such a commotion that the canary woke up and started chattering too, and in verse, of all things. The only two who didn't budge were the tin soldier and the little dancer. She held herself erect on her toes, with her arms held out. He was just as steadfast on one leg, and his eyes didn't leave her for a second.

Then the clock struck twelve, and *Bam* ! the lid of the snuff box flew open, but there was no tobacco inside – no, there was a little black troll. What a wily trick that was.

'Tin soldier!' said the troll. 'Keep your eyes to yourself!'

But the tin soldier pretended not to hear him.

'Well, just wait till morning,' said the troll.

When morning came and the children got up, the tin soldier was moved over to the windowsill, and whether it was the troll or a gust of wind, all of a sudden the window flew open and the soldier plummeted headfirst from the fourth floor. What a terrifying speed, with his leg turned upward! He landed on his cap, with his bayonet stuck between the cobblestones.

The servant girl and the little boy went downstairs at once to look for him, but even though they nearly stepped on him, they couldn't see him. If the tin soldier had shouted 'Here I am!' they probably would have found him, but he didn't think it was proper to yell when he was in uniform.

Then it started to rain. One drop came down faster than the other; it turned into a regular downpour. When it was over, two street urchins came along.

'Hey, look!' said one of them. 'There's a tin soldier lying here. Let's send him out for a sail.'

And so they made a boat out of newspaper, set the tin soldier in the middle of it, and he sailed off down the gutter. The two boys

ran alongside, clapping their hands. God save us, what waves there were in that gutter, and what a current! Well, it's true that there had just been a downpour. The paper boat pitched up and down, and at times it would spin so fast that the tin soldier swayed. But he remained steadfast, his expression unflinching, standing erect with his rifle at his shoulder.

All of a sudden the boat washed in under a plank that lay over the gutter. It grew just as dark as inside his box.

'I wonder where I'll end up now,' he thought. 'Yes, well, this is all the troll's fault. Oh, if only the little maiden were sitting here in the boat, then I wouldn't care if it was twice as dark!'

At that moment a big water rat appeared. It lived under the gutter plank.

'Have you got a travel pass?' asked the rat. 'Let's see your travel pass!'

But the tin soldier didn't say a word, holding his rifle even tighter. The boat raced along, with the rat right behind. Oh, how it gnashed its teeth, shouting to sticks and pieces of straw:

'Stop him! Stop him! He didn't pay the toll! He didn't show his travel pass!'

But the current grew stronger and stronger. The tin soldier could already glimpse daylight up ahead where the plank ended, but he also heard a roaring sound that would scare even a brave man. Just imagine: Where the plank ended, the gutter plunged right into a huge canal. For him it would be just as dangerous as for us to sail over an enormous waterfall.

He was already so close that he couldn't stop. The boat rushed forward; the poor tin soldier held himself as upright as he could. No one was going to say that he so much as blinked an eye. The boat spun around three or four times and filled with water up to the rim. It was going to sink. The tin soldier was standing in water up to his neck, and the boat sank deeper and deeper, the paper began dissolving faster and faster. Then the water was over the soldier's head. That's when he thought about the charming little dancer, whom he would never see again. And in his ears the soldier heard:

'Flee, warrior, flee!

Death is after you!’

Then the paper fell apart, and the tin soldier plunged right through. But at that very instant he was swallowed by a big fish.

Oh, how dark it was inside! It was even worse than under the gutter plank, and it was much more cramped. But the tin soldier was steadfast and stretched out full-length with his rifle at his shoulder.

The fish thrashed about, making the most terrifying movements. Finally it grew quite still, and what looked like a bolt of lightning flashed through it. The light shone so bright, and someone cried loudly, ‘Tin soldier!’ The fish had been caught, brought to market, sold, and then ended up in a kitchen where the servant girl slit it open with a big knife. Putting two fingers around his waist, she plucked out the soldier and carried him into the parlor where everyone wanted to see the remarkable man who had traveled inside the belly of a fish. But the tin soldier was not the least bit proud of himself. They set him on the table and there . . . Oh, what strange things can happen in the world! The tin soldier was in the very same parlor where he had been before. He saw the very same children and the toys on the table and the lovely castle with the charming little dancer. She was still standing on one leg with the other lifted high in the air. She too was steadfast. The tin soldier was touched, he was just about to weep tears of tin, but that wouldn’t be proper. He looked at her and she looked at him, but neither said a word.

At that moment one of the little boys picked up the soldier and tossed him right into the stove, giving no explanation at all. The troll in the box was most certainly to blame.

The tin soldier stood there, brightly lit, and felt a terrible heat, but whether it was from the actual fire or from love, he didn’t know. The paint had worn right off him, but whether this had happened on his journey or from sorrow, no one could say. He looked at the little maiden, she looked at him, and he felt himself melting. But he still stood there, steadfast, with his rifle at his shoulder. Then a door opened, the wind seized hold of the dancer, and she flew like a sylph right into the stove to the tin soldier, burst into flame, and was gone. Then the tin soldier melted into a lump, and the next day, when the servant girl took out the ashes, she

found him in the shape of a little tin heart. But all that was left of the dancer was the spangle, and that had been burned black as coal.

The Nightingale

In China, as you probably know, the Emperor is Chinese, and everyone around him is Chinese too. This story happened many years ago, but that's precisely why it's worth hearing, before it's forgotten. The Emperor's palace was the most magnificent in the world, made entirely of fine porcelain, so costly but so fragile, so delicate to the touch that you had to be extremely careful. In the garden you could see the most wondrous flowers. Tied to the most splendid of them were silver bells that jingled, and you couldn't walk past without noticing the flowers. Yes, everything was quite artful in the Emperor's garden, which stretched so far that even the gardener didn't know where it ended. If you kept on walking you would come to the loveliest forest with tall trees and deep lakes. The forest went right down to the sea, which was deep and blue. Great ships could sail right under the branches. And among the branches lived a nightingale who sang so blissfully that even the poor fisherman, who had many other things to tend to, would lie still and listen whenever he heard the nightingale as he pulled in his fishing nets at night. 'Dear Lord, how beautiful she sounds!' he said.

But then he had to go back to his work and forget about the bird. Yet the next night when she sang again and the fisherman appeared, he would say the same thing, 'Dear Lord, how beautiful she sounds!'

Travelers came from countries all over the world to admire the Emperor's city and the palace and the garden. But if they happened to hear the nightingale, they all said, 'That's the best thing of all!'

The travelers would talk about everything when they went back home, and the learned men wrote many books about the city, the palace, and the garden, but they didn't forget the nightingale; she was esteemed above all else. Those who could write poetry wrote the loveliest poems, every single one about the nightingale in the forest by the deep sea.

These books circulated around the world, and one day some of them even reached the Emperor. He sat on his golden chair, reading and reading, as he kept nodding his head, because it pleased him to hear the magnificent descriptions of the city, the palace, and the garden. 'Yet the nightingale is the best of all!' he read in the book.

'What's this?' said the Emperor. 'The nightingale? I know nothing about it! Is there such a bird in my empire, let alone in my own garden? I've never heard of her. To think I had to learn about her from a book!'

And then he called for his Lord Chamberlain, who was so refined that if anyone lower in rank dared speak to him or ask him about something, his only reply was 'P!' And that means nothing at all.

'Supposedly there is a truly extraordinary bird here called the nightingale,' said the Emperor. 'They say that she's the best thing in all my vast domain. Why hasn't anyone told me about her?'

'I've never heard her mentioned before,' said the Lord Chamberlain. 'She has never been presented at court.'

'I want her to come here tonight and sing for me,' said the Emperor. 'The whole world knows what I have, but I do not.'

'I've never heard her mentioned before,' said the Lord Chamberlain. 'I'll search for her, I'll find her!'

But where was she to be found? The Lord Chamberlain ran up and down all the stairs, through the halls and corridors. Not a single person he met had ever heard mention of the nightingale. So the Lord Chamberlain ran back to the Emperor and said that she must be a fable concocted by those who write books. 'Your Imperial Majesty should not believe what people write. It's all fabrication and what's called black magic.'

'But the book I was reading was sent to me by the mighty Emperor of Japan,' said the Emperor, 'so it must be true. I want to hear the nightingale. She must be here tonight! I bestow on her my highest favor! And if she doesn't come, then all the members of the court will be punched in the stomach after they've eaten their supper.'

'*Xing-pei!*' said the Lord Chamberlain, and once again he ran

up and down all the stairs, through all the halls and corridors. And half the court ran along with him, because they didn't want to be punched in the stomach. Everyone was asking about the remarkable nightingale that was known to the whole world but to no one at court.

Finally they came upon a poor little girl in the kitchen, and she said, 'Oh Lord, the nightingale! I know her well. Yes, how she can sing! Every evening I'm allowed to take home a few scraps from the table for my poor sick mother. She lives down near the shore, and when I walk back feeling tired, I take a rest in the forest, and then I hear the nightingale singing. It makes my eyes fill with tears. It's as if my mother were kissing me.'

'Little kitchen maid,' said the Lord Chamberlain, 'I shall arrange a permanent post for you in the kitchen and permission to watch the Emperor eat if you can lead us to the nightingale. She has been summoned here tonight.'

And so they all set off for the forest, to the place where the nightingale usually sang. Half the court went along. As they were walking, a cow began to moo.

'Oh!' said the royal squires. 'Now we've found her. What remarkable power for such a small creature! We're quite certain we've heard her before.'

'No, those are the cows mooing,' said the little kitchen maid. 'We're still quite far from the place.'

Now the frogs began croaking in the bog.

'Lovely!' said the Chinese Court Chaplain. 'Now I can hear her. It sounds just like little church bells.'

'No, those are the frogs,' said the little kitchen maid. 'But I think we'll hear her soon.'

Then the nightingale began to sing.

'There she is,' said the little girl. 'Listen! Listen! And there she sits!' And then she pointed at a little gray bird up in the branches.

'Is it possible?' said the Lord Chamberlain. 'That's not at all how I imagined her. How plain she looks! She must have lost her color from seeing so many refined people all around.'

‘Little nightingale!’ cried the little kitchen maid in a loud voice. ‘Our Most Gracious Emperor would like so much for you to sing for him.’

‘With the greatest pleasure,’ said the nightingale and sang so it was sheer delight.

‘It sounds just like glass bells,’ said the Lord Chamberlain. ‘And look at her little throat – she’s singing with all her might. It’s strange that we’ve never heard this bird before. She will be a huge success at court.’

‘Shall I sing some more for the Emperor?’ asked the nightingale, who thought the Emperor was among them.

‘My splendid little nightingale,’ said the Lord Chamberlain, ‘I have the great pleasure of summoning you to a royal celebration this evening, where you will enchant His Exalted Imperial Grace with your charming song.’

‘My song sounds best out in nature,’ said the nightingale, but she willingly went along with them when she heard that this was the Emperor’s wish.

At the palace everything had been properly cleaned and polished. The walls and floors, which were made of porcelain, gleamed with thousands of golden lamps. The loveliest flowers, the ones with bells attached, had been placed in the corridors; there was a draft and a great commotion, making all the bells ring. You couldn’t hear yourself think.

In the middle of the great hall, where the Emperor was seated, a golden perch had been placed, and that was where the nightingale was to sit. The entire court was present, and the little kitchen maid had been given permission to stand behind the door, since she now held the title of Real Kitchen Maid. Everyone was dressed in his very finest, and everyone was looking at the little gray bird, to whom the Emperor nodded.

And the nightingale sang so wondrously that tears filled the Emperor’s eyes. Tears rolled down his cheeks, and then the nightingale sang even more beautifully; the song went straight to the heart. The Emperor was so happy that he said the nightingale must wear his golden slipper around her neck. But the nightingale thanked him and said that she had already received reward enough.

'I've seen tears in the Emperor's eyes. For me that is the richest treasure. An emperor's tears have a wondrous power. God knows, that is reward enough.' And then she sang again in her sweet, blessed voice.

'This is the most lovable coquetry we've ever known,' said the women all around, and then they put water in their mouths in order to cluck whenever anyone spoke to them. They thought they too could be nightingales. Even the lackeys and chambermaids announced that they were satisfied, and that is saying a great deal because they're the most difficult of all to please. Yes, the nightingale certainly was a success!

Now she would stay at court, and have her own cage, as well as the freedom to promenade twice a day and once at night. Twelve servants were sent along, each of them holding tight to a silk ribbon attached to her leg. There wasn't the least bit of pleasure in those excursions.

The whole city was talking about the extraordinary bird. If two people met, one of them would say to the other 'Night!' and the other would say 'Gale!' and then they would sigh, fully understanding each other. Why, eleven grocers' children were named after her, but not one of them could even carry a tune.

One day a big package arrived for the Emperor. On the outside it said: 'Nightingale.'

'Here we have a new book about our famous bird,' said the Emperor. But it wasn't a book. A little work of art lay inside the box, a mechanical nightingale that was supposed to look like the live one, although it was completely encrusted with diamonds, rubies, and sapphires. As soon as they wound up the mechanical bird it sang one of the tunes that the real bird sang, and its tail moved up and down, glittering with silver and gold. Around its neck hung a little ribbon, and on it were the words: 'The Emperor of Japan's nightingale is paltry compared to the Emperor of China's.'

'It's lovely!' they all said, and the person who had brought the mechanical bird was at once given the title of Supreme Imperial Nightingale Bringer.

'Let's have them sing together. What a duet that will be!'

And then they had to sing together, but it was not a success, because the real nightingale sang in her own way, while the mechanical bird ran on cylinders. 'There's nothing wrong with that,' said the Music Master. 'It keeps perfect time and is obviously a follower of my own methods.' Then the mechanical bird had to sing alone. It brought just as much joy as the real bird, and on top of that it was much more charming in appearance. It glittered like bracelets and brooches.

Thirty- three times it sang the very same tune, and yet it never grew tired. Everyone could have listened to it all over again, but the Emperor felt that the live nightingale should also sing a little. But where was she? No one had noticed that she had flown out the open window, off to her green forests.

'Well, what sort of behavior is that?' said the Emperor. And all the members of court began scolding, saying that the nightingale was a most ungrateful creature. 'Yet we have the best bird of all,' they said, and then the mechanical bird had to sing some more, and that was the thirty- fourth time they heard the same tune. But they didn't yet know it by heart, because it was so complicated, and the Music Master lavished great praise on the bird. Yes, he assured them that it was better than the real nightingale, not only in terms of its attire and the scores of lovely diamonds, but also internally.

'For you see, ladies and gentlemen, and above all Your Imperial Highness! You can never count on what will come out of the real nightingale, but with the mechanical bird everything is certain. This is how it will sound, and no other way. You can explain it, you can open it up and demonstrate the human reasoning, how the cylinders are arranged, how they operate, and how one turns the other.'

'Those are my thoughts exactly,' they all said. And the Music Master was granted permission, on the following Sunday, to display the bird to the people. They too should hear it sing, said the Emperor. And they heard it and were as pleased as if they had drunk themselves giddy on tea; that was so typically Chinese. And everyone said 'Oh!' and held up in the air the finger that we call 'pot- licker' and then they nodded. But the poor fishermen who had heard the real nightingale said, 'It sounds nice enough, and it does look quite like it, but something is missing, we don't know what.'

The real nightingale was banished from the realm.

The mechanical bird had its place on a silk pillow close to the Emperor's bed. All the gifts it had been given, gold and precious stones, were spread around it, and in title it had risen to Supreme Imperial Nightstand Singer. In rank it was number one on the left, because the Emperor considered the side of the heart to be the most noble, and even in an Emperor the heart is on the left. The Music Master wrote twenty-five volumes about the mechanical bird, books that were so learned and so lengthy, and written in the most difficult of Chinese words, that everyone said they had read and understood them, because otherwise they would have seemed stupid and then they would have been punched in the stomach.

A whole year passed in this fashion. The Emperor, the court, and all the other Chinese people knew by heart every little cluck of the mechanical bird's song, but that was precisely why they liked it above all else. They could sing it themselves, and they did. The street urchins sang 'Xi- xi- xi! Cluck- cluck- cluck!' And the Emperor sang it too. Oh yes, it was certainly lovely!

But one evening when the mechanical bird was singing its best and the Emperor was lying in bed and listening, it went 'Clunk!' inside. Something burst. 'Buzzzzzz!' all the gears spun around, and then the music stopped.

The Emperor sprang out of bed at once and called for his royal physician, but what good could he do? Then they summoned the watchmaker. After much discussion and a great deal of study, he managed to get the bird working fairly well, but he said that it would have to be played sparingly because the cylinder pegs were worn out. It would be impossible to replace them with new ones so that the music would play properly. That was a terrible shame! Only once a year did they dare let the mechanical bird sing, and even that was almost too often. But then the Music Master gave a little speech using big words and said that it was just as good as new, and so it was just as good as new.

Five years passed, and the whole land suffered a great sadness, because everyone was truly very fond of their Emperor. Now they said he was ill and about to die. A new emperor had already been chosen, and the people stood outside on the street and asked the Lord Chamberlain how things were going with their Emperor.

'P!' he said and shook his head.

Cold and pale, the Emperor lay in his big, magnificent bed. The entire court thought he was dead, and all of them had run off to greet the new Emperor. The valets had run outside to talk about it, and the palace maids were holding a big coffee party. All around in the halls and corridors cloth had been laid down so that no one's footsteps could be heard. That's why it was so quiet, so quiet. But the Emperor was not yet dead. Rigid and pale, he lay in the magnificent bed with the long velvet curtains and the heavy gold tassels. High above, a window stood open, and the moon was shining on the Emperor and the mechanical bird.

The poor Emperor could hardly breathe; it felt as if something were sitting on his chest. He opened his eyes and saw that it was Death sitting on his chest. He had put on the gold crown and was holding in one hand the Emperor's gold sword, and in the other his magnificent banner. All around in the folds of the great velvet bed curtains peculiar heads were sticking out, some of them quite horrid, others so blessedly gentle. They were all of the Emperor's good and bad deeds, looking at him, now that Death was sitting on his heart.

'Do you remember this?' one after the other whispered. 'Do you remember this?' And then they told him so many things that the sweat poured from his brow.

'I never knew that!' said the Emperor. 'Music, music, the great Chinese drum!' he shouted. 'So I won't have to listen to everything they're saying.'

But they kept on, and Death nodded, as the Chinese do, at everything that was said.

'Music, music!' screamed the Emperor. 'You blessed little golden bird! Sing now, sing! I've given you gold and precious things. I myself have hung my golden slipper around your neck. So sing now, sing!'

But the bird stood silent. There was no one to wind it up, and otherwise it couldn't sing. But Death kept on looking at the Emperor with his big, empty eye sockets, and it was so quiet, so horribly quiet.

At that moment, close to the window, the loveliest song was heard. It was the live little nightingale, who was sitting on a branch

outside. She had heard about the Emperor's distress, and that's why she had come, to offer solace and hope. And as she sang, the figures grew more and more pale, the blood began to flow faster and faster through the Emperor's weak limbs, and Death himself listened and said, 'Keep singing, little nightingale! Keep singing!'

'Yes, if you give me the magnificent gold sword! Yes, if you give me the opulent banner! If you give me the Emperor's crown!'

And Death returned each treasure for a song, and the nightingale still kept singing. She sang of the silent churchyard where the white roses grow, where the fragrant elder tree stands, and where the fresh grass is watered by the tears of the bereaved. Then Death had such a longing for his own garden that he floated out like a cold white fog, out the window.

'Thank you, thank you!' said the Emperor. 'You heavenly little bird, of course I recognize you! You're the one I chased from my realm. And yet you have sung the evil visions away from my bed and driven Death from my heart. How shall I reward you?'

'You have already rewarded me,' said the nightingale. 'I won tears from your eyes the first time I sang. I will never forget that about you. They are the jewels that make a singer's heart glad. But sleep now and grow strong and healthy. I will sing for you.'

And she sang. The Emperor fell into a sweet slumber, so gentle and refreshing was his sleep.

The sun was shining through the windows when he awoke, strong and healthy. None of his servants had yet returned, because they all thought he was dead. But the nightingale was still sitting there, singing.

'You must stay with me forever,' said the Emperor. 'You shall only sing when you want to, and I will smash the mechanical bird into a thousand pieces.'

'Don't do that,' said the nightingale. 'It has done the best it could. Keep it as you always have. I can't live in the palace, but let me come whenever I wish. Then in the evening I will sit on the branch by your window and sing for you, to make you both joyous and pensive. I will sing about those who are happy and those who suffer. I will sing about the evil and the good that is kept hidden from you. The little songbird flies far and wide, to the poor

fisherman, to the farmer's rooftop, to everyone who is far from you and your court. I love your heart more than your crown, and yet the crown has a scent of something sacred about it. I will come, I will sing for you. But one thing you must promise me.'

'Anything!' said the Emperor, standing there in his imperial robes, which he had donned himself, and holding the sword that was heavy with gold pressed to his heart.

'One thing I ask of you. Tell no one that you have a little bird who tells you everything, and things will go even better.'

And then the nightingale flew off.

The servants came in to tend to their dead Emperor. Oh yes, there they stood. And the Emperor said, 'Good morning!'

The Red Shoes

There was a little girl who was so delicate and charming, but in the summer she always had to go barefoot because she was poor. In the winter she wore big wooden clogs that made her little ankles turn quite red, and that was awful.

In the middle of the village lived old Mother Shoemaker. She sat and sewed as best she could, using old strips of red cloth to make a little pair of shoes. Quite clumsy they were, but well-intended, and the little girl was to have them. The little girl's name was Karen.

On the very day that her mother was buried, Karen was given the red shoes, and she wore them for the first time. Now, it's true that they weren't the proper shoes for mourning, but she didn't have any others, and so she wore them on her bare feet, walking behind the humble coffin made of straw.

All at once a grand old carriage appeared, and inside sat a grand old woman. She looked at the little girl and felt sorry for her. Then she said to the pastor, 'Listen here, give me that little girl and I will be kind to her!'

Karen thought she said this because of her red shoes, but the old woman said they were awful, and they were burned, while Karen was dressed in nice, clean clothes. She had to learn to read and sew, and people said that she was charming, but the mirror said, 'You are much more than charming, you're lovely!'

Then the queen happened to travel through the land, and she brought along her little daughter, who was a princess. People came flocking to the palace, and Karen was there too. The little princess stood in a window for all to see dressed in fine white clothes. She wore neither a train nor a golden crown, but she had lovely, red kidskin shoes. Of course they were much prettier than the ones that Mother Shoemaker had sewn for little Karen. But nothing in the world could compare with red shoes!

Then Karen was old enough to be confirmed. She was given

new clothes and she was also to have new shoes. The rich shoemaker in town measured her little foot. This was at home in his own parlor, where big glass cupboards stood filled with elegant shoes and shiny boots. Everything looked charming, but the old woman didn't see well, so it gave her no pleasure. In the midst of all the shoes stood a pair of red ones just like the ones the princess had worn. How beautiful they were! The shoemaker said they had been sewn for the child of a count, but they didn't fit properly.

'They must be made of the finest leather,' said the old woman. 'How they shine!'

'Yes, how they shine!' said Karen. And they fit, so they were bought. But the old woman didn't know that they were red, because she would never have allowed Karen to be confirmed wearing red shoes, and yet she did.

Everyone looked at her feet. When she walked up the church aisle toward the chancel doorway, she thought even the old paintings on the crypts, those portraits of pastors and their wives wearing stiff collars and long black gowns, had fixed their eyes on her red shoes. And that was all she could think of when the pastor placed his hand on her head and spoke of the holy baptism, of the pact with God, and the fact that she should now be a good Christian. The organ played so solemnly, the children sang so beautifully, and the old cantor sang too, but Karen thought only of her red shoes.

By that afternoon the old woman had heard from everyone that the shoes were red, and she said how dreadful that was. It wasn't the least bit proper. From that day on, whenever Karen went to church, she would always wear black shoes, even if they were old.

The following Sunday was her first communion, and Karen looked at the black shoes, she looked at the red ones –and then she looked at the red ones again and put them on.

It was lovely sunny weather. Karen and the old woman walked along the path through the grain fields where it was rather dusty.

At the church door stood an old soldier with a crutch and a long, odd- looking beard that was more red than white; in fact, it was red. He bowed all the way to the ground and asked the old woman whether he might wipe off her shoes. Karen stretched out

her little foot too. 'Oh look, what lovely dancing shoes!' said the soldier. 'Stay on tight when you dance!' Then he slapped his hand on the soles.

The old woman gave the soldier a little skilling and then went with Karen into the church.

Everyone inside looked at Karen's red shoes; all the paintings looked at them too. And when Karen knelt before the altar and put the golden chalice to her lips, she thought only of the red shoes. They seemed to be swimming around in the chalice before her, and she forgot to sing the hymn, she forgot to say the Lord's Prayer.

Then everyone left the church, and the old woman climbed into her carriage. As Karen lifted her foot to climb in after her, the old soldier who was standing close by said, 'Oh look, what lovely dancing shoes!' And Karen couldn't help herself, she had to take a few dance steps. As soon as she started, her feet kept on dancing. It was as if the shoes had taken control. She danced around the corner of the church, she couldn't stop herself. The coachman had to run after and grab her, and he lifted her into the carriage, but her feet kept on dancing and she kicked hard at the kind old woman. Finally they managed to take off the shoes, and her feet stopped moving.

At home the shoes were put in a cupboard, but Karen couldn't help looking at them.

Then the old woman fell ill, and they said she wouldn't live long. She needed someone to nurse and tend her, and who should do it but Karen? But over in town there was to be a great ball, and Karen was invited. She looked at the old woman, who didn't have long to live, after all. She looked at the red shoes, and she didn't think there was any sin in that. She put on the red shoes. Why shouldn't she? And then she went to the ball and began to dance.

But when she wanted to turn right, the shoes danced to the left, and when she wanted to move up the floor, the shoes danced down the floor, down the stairs, along the street, and out the town gate. Dance she did, and dance she must, right out into the dark forest.

Then she saw a light overhead among the trees, and she thought it must be the moon, because it had a face, but it was the old soldier with the red beard. He sat there nodding and said, 'Oh look, what lovely dancing shoes!'

Then Karen was horrified and tried to take off the red shoes, but they wouldn't come off. She tore off her stockings, but the shoes had grown onto her feet; dance she did and dance she must, over field and meadow, in rain and in sunshine, night and day, but nighttime was the most terrible of all.

She danced into the open churchyard, but the dead weren't dancing. They had better things to do than dance. She wanted to sit down on the pauper's grave where bitter tansy grew, but for her there was no peace or rest. And when she danced toward the open church door, she saw an angel there in long white robes, with wings that reached from his shoulders to the ground. His face was stern and solemn, and in his hand he held a sword, gleaming and wide.

'Dance you shall!' he said. 'Dance in your red shoes until you turn pale and cold! Until your skin shrivels up like a mummy's! Dance from door to door. And wherever proud and vain children live, you will knock so they hear and fear you! Dance you shall, dance—!'

'Have mercy!' cried Karen. But she didn't hear what the angel replied, because her shoes carried her through the gate, out to the field, across the road, and along the path, and always she had to keep dancing.

Early one morning she danced past a door she knew quite well. Inside a hymn could be heard, and they carried out a coffin that was adorned with flowers. Then she knew that the old woman was dead, and she felt as if she had now been forsaken by everyone and cursed by the angel of God.

Dance she did, and dance she must, dance into the dark night. Her shoes carried her over thickets and stumps, her feet were worn bloody. She danced across the heath to a lonely little house. She knew that this was where the executioner lived. She tapped her finger on the windowpane and said, 'Come out! Come out! I can't come inside, because I'm dancing!'

And the executioner said, 'Don't you know who I am? I chop off the heads of evil people, and I can feel my ax is trembling!'

'Don't chop off my head,' said Karen. 'Because then I won't be able to repent my sin. But chop off my feet with the red shoes!'

Then she confessed to her sin, and the executioner chopped off

her feet with the red shoes. But the shoes kept dancing with the little feet across the fields and into the deep forest.

And he carved wooden feet and crutches for her, taught her a hymn that sinners always sing, and she kissed the hand that had wielded the ax and set out across the heath.

‘Now I’ve suffered enough for those red shoes,’ she said. ‘Now I’m going to church so they can see me.’ And she walked as fast as she could toward the church door, but when she got there, the red shoes were dancing in front of her. She was horrified and turned away.

All week long she was sad and wept many bitter tears, but when Sunday came, she said, ‘All right! Now I’ve suffered and struggled enough! I should think that I’m just as good as many of those people sitting so proudly inside the church.’ Then she set off quite boldly, but she got no farther than to the gate when she saw the red shoes dancing in front of her. She was horrified and turned away, repenting her sin with all her heart.

She went over to the parsonage and asked if she might be taken into service there. She would work hard and do everything she could. She had no wish for wages; all she asked for was a roof over her head and permission to stay with good people. The pastor’s wife felt sorry for her and gave her a position. And she was hardworking and thoughtful. Quietly she would sit and listen when the pastor read aloud from the Bible in the evening. All the children were very fond of her, but whenever they spoke of adornments and finery and being as lovely as a queen, she would shake her head.

The next Sunday they all went to church and they asked if she would like to come along, but with tears in her eyes she looked sadly at her crutches. Then the others went to hear God’s Word while she went alone into her tiny room. It was only big enough for a bed and a chair. There she sat with her hymnbook. As she began reading with a pious heart, the wind carried the tones of the organ from the church to her. She raised her tear- stained face and said, ‘Oh, help me, God!’

Then the sun shone so bright, and right in front of her stood the angel of God in the white robes, the one she had seen that night at the church door. He was no longer holding a sharp sword but a

lovely green bough that was covered with roses. He touched it to the ceiling, which raised up high, and at the spot he had touched shone a golden star. He touched the walls and they moved outward. She saw the organ that was playing; she saw the old paintings of the pastors and their wives. The congregation was sitting in the carved pews and singing from their hymnals.

The church itself had come home to the poor girl in the tiny, cramped room, or perhaps she had gone to the church. She was sitting in a pew with the others from the parsonage. When they finished the hymn and looked up, they nodded and said, 'It was right for you to come, Karen.'

'It was God's mercy,' she said.

The organ soared, and the children's voices in the choir sounded gentle and lovely. The bright, warm sunshine streamed through the window, reaching the church pew where Karen sat. Her heart was so filled with sunlight, with peace and joy, that it burst. Her soul flew on the sunlight to God, and no one asked about the red shoes.



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The Stolen White Elephant

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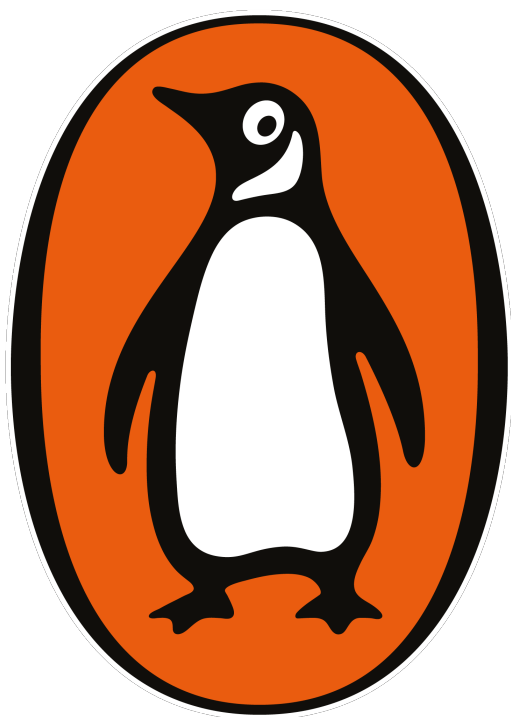
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“白色恐怖
在它前面传播，
死亡与糜烂
接踵而至！”



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被偷的白象

—

下面这个稀奇的故事是我在火车上偶然相识的一个人讲给我听的。他是一位年过七十的老先生，他那和善而斯文的面貌和真挚而诚实的态度使他嘴里说出来的每一桩事情都给人以无可置疑的真实的印象。他说：

你知道暹罗的皇家白象在那个国家是多么受人尊敬的吧。你也知道，它是国王御用的。只有国王才能养它，而且它实际上甚至比国王多少还要高出几分，因为它不仅受人尊敬，而且还受人崇拜。好吧，五年前，大不列颠和暹罗两国之间发生国界纠纷的时候，没过多久，事实就证明了错误在暹罗方面。因此一切赔偿手续被迅速执行，英国代表说他很满意，过去的嫌隙也应该忘记才行。这使暹罗国王大为安心，于是一方面为了表示感激，一方面也许是为了要消除英国对他可能还存在着的一点儿残余的不满情绪，他愿意给英国女王送一份礼物——照东方人的想法，这是与敌方和解的唯一妥当的方法。这份礼物不但应该是高贵的，而且必须是超乎一切的高贵才行。那么，还有什么礼物能比一只白象更适当呢？当时我在印度担任着一种特殊的文官职位，因此被认为特别配得上给女皇陛下献礼的荣幸任务。暹罗政府特地给我备了一只船，还配备了侍从、随员和伺候象的人。经过相当长的时间，我到了纽约港，就把我那受皇家重托的礼物安顿在泽西城，叫它住在很讲究的地方。为了恢复这只牲口的健康，然后继续航行，我们不得不停留一些时候。

过了两个星期，一切安然无事——然后我的灾祸就开始了。白象被偷了！深夜有人把我叫醒，通知我这个可怕的不幸事件。我一时简直因恐惧和焦急而发狂，我真不知如何是好。然后我渐渐平静下来，恢复了神志。我不久就想出了办法——因为事实上一个有头脑的人所能采取的有且只有一个办法。那时候虽然已经是深夜，我还是赶到纽约，找到一位警察引我到侦缉总队去。幸好我到的正是时候，侦缉队的头目、有名的督察长布朗特正准备动身回家。他是个中等身材、体格结实的人，当他深思的时候，他惯爱皱起眉头、凝神地用手指头敲着额部，这会马上给你一个印象，使你深信自己站在一个不平凡的人物面前。一看他那样子，就使我有信心、有了希望。我向他申述了我的来意。这桩事情丝毫不使他惊慌，看样子，他还是铁一般的镇定，并没有引起他多大的反应，就好像我告诉他的事情是有人偷了我

的狗一般。他挥手叫我坐下，沉着地说道：

“请让我想一会儿吧。”

他一面这么说，一面在他的办公桌前面坐下，用手托着头。好几个书记正在办公室的另一头工作，往后的六七分钟里，我所听到的声音就只有他们的笔在纸上划出的响声。同时，督察长坐在那儿，凝神沉思。最后，他抬起头来，他的面孔那种坚定的轮廓表现出一种胸有成竹的神气，这向我说明他的脑子里已经想出了主意，计划已经拟订了。他说（声音低沉而且给人深刻的印象）：

“这不是个普通案件。一切步骤都要小心周到，每一步都要站稳脚跟，然后再放胆走下一步。一定要保守秘密才行——深深的、绝对的秘密。无论对什么人都不不要谈起这件事，连对报馆记者也不要提。他们这批人归我来对付吧，我会只叫他们得到一点儿符合我的目的、故意告诉他们的消息。”他按了按铃，一个年轻人走过来。“阿拉里克，叫记者们暂时不要走。”那个小伙子出去了。“现在再继续来谈正经事吧——要有条有理地谈。干我这一行，要是不用严格和周密的方法，什么事也办不好。”

他拿起笔和纸来：“那么——象的名字？”

“哈森·本·阿里·本·赛林·阿布达拉·穆罕默德·摩伊赛·阿汉莫尔·杰姆赛杰吉布荷伊·都里普·苏丹·爱布·布德普尔。”

“好的。教名是什么？”

“大壮。”

“好的。出生的地方呢？”

“暹罗首都。”

“父母还在吗？”

“不——死了。”

“除了他而外，他们还生过别的孩子吗？”

“没有——他是独生子。”

“好的。在这一项底下，有这几点就够了。现在请你描述一下这只象的样子，千万不要遗漏细节，无论多么不重要的——这就是说，照你的看法认为不重要的。对于我们这一行的人，根本就没有什么不重要的细节，这种事情根本就不存在。”

于是我一边描述，他一边记录。我说完的时候，他说：

“好吧，你听着。要是我有弄错的地方，请你更正。”

他照下面这样念：

“身高十九英尺 [1]，身長从额顶到尾根二十六英尺，鼻长十六英尺，尾长六英尺，全长，包括鼻子和尾巴，四十八英尺，牙长九英尺，耳朵大小与这些尺寸相称。脚印好像一只桶子立在雪里印上的痕迹。象的颜色，灰白。每只耳朵上有一个装饰珠宝的洞，像碟子那么大。特别喜欢给旁观的人喷水，并且爱拿鼻子作弄

人，不仅是那些和他相识的，连完全陌生的人也是一样。右后腿略跛，左腋下因从前生过疮，有一个小疤。被偷时背上有一个包括十五个座位的乘厢，披着——一张普通地毯大小的金丝缎鞍毯。”

他写的没有错误。督察长按了按铃，把这份说明书交给阿拉里克，吩咐他说——

“把这张东西马上印五万份，寄到全州各地的侦缉队和当铺去。”阿拉里克出去了。

“哈——说了半天，总算还不错。另外我还得要一张这个东西的相片才行。”我给了他一张。他很认真地把它仔细看了一阵，说道：

“只好将就吧，反正找不到更好的。可是他把鼻子卷起来，塞在嘴里，这未免太不凑巧，一定要使人产生误会，因为他平常当然不会把鼻子卷成这个样子。”他又按了按铃。

“阿拉里克，把这张相片拿去印五万份，明天早上先办这件事，和那张说明书一同寄出。”

阿拉里克出去执行他的命令。督察长说——

“当然非悬赏不可了。那么，数目怎么样？”

“你看多少合适呢？”

“第一步，我认为——唔，先来个两万五千块钱吧。这桩事情很复杂、很难办，不知有多少逃避的路子和隐藏的机会哩。这些小偷到处都有朋友和伙伴——”

“哎呀，您知道那些人是谁吗？”

那张习惯于把思想和感情隐藏在心里的谨慎的面孔使我猜不出一点儿影子，他那说得若无其事的回答也是一样：

“那个你不用管。我可能知道，也可能不知道。我们通常都是看

犯案的人下手的方法和他所要弄到手的東西的大小，從這裡去找到一點兒巧妙的線索，推測他是誰。我們現在要對付的不是一個扒手，也不是一個普通的小偷，這個你可要弄明白。這回被偷的東西不是一個生手隨便‘扒’了去的。剛才我說過，辦這個案子是要跑許多地方的，小偷們一路往別處跑，還要隨時掩蓋他們的踪跡，查起來也很費勁，所以照這些情形來看，兩萬五千塊錢也許還太少一點兒，不過我想起頭先給這個數目還是可以的。”

於是我們就商定了這個數目，作為初步的懸賞，然後這位先生說道：

“在偵探史里有些案子說明某些犯人是根據他們的胃口方面的特點而破案的。那麼，這只象究竟吃什麼東西、吃多少分量呢？”凡是可以做線索的事情，這位先生沒有不注意的。

“啊，說到 he 吃的東西嘛——他不管什麼都吃。人也吃，《聖經》也吃——人和《聖經》之間的東西，不管什麼他都吃。”

“好——真是好得很，可是太籠統了。必須說得仔細些——干我們這一行，最講究的就是仔細。好吧，先說人。每一頓——再不然你愛說每一天也行——他要吃幾個人呢，要是新鮮的話？”

“他不管新鮮不新鮮，每一頓他要吃五個普通的人。”

“好極了！五個人，我把這個記下來。他最愛吃哪些國家的人呢？”

“他對國籍也不大在乎。他特別愛吃熟人，可是對生人也並沒有成見。”

“好極了。那麼再說《聖經》吧，他每一頓要吃幾部《聖經》呢？”

“他可以吃得下整整的一版。”

“這說得不够清楚，你指的是普通的八開本，還是家庭用的插圖本呢？”

“我想他對插圖是不在乎的。那就是說，我覺得他並不會把插圖看得比簡單的文本更寶貴。”

“不，你没听明白我的意思。我说的是本子的大小。普通八开本的《圣经》大概是两磅半重，可是带插图的四开大本有十磅到十二磅重。他每顿能吃几本多莱版的《圣经》呢？”

“你要是认识这只象的话，就不会问这些了。人家有多少他就吃多少。”

“好吧，那么照钱数来计算吧，这点我们总得大概弄清楚才行。多莱版每本要一百块钱，俄国皮子包书角的。”

“他大概要五万块钱的才够吃——就算是五百本吧。”

“对，这倒是比较明确一点儿，我把这个记下来。好吧，他爱吃人和《圣经》，这些都说得很不错。另外他还吃什么呢？我要知道详细情形。”

“他会丢开《圣经》去吃砖头，他会丢开砖头去吃瓶子，他会丢开瓶子去吃衣服，他会丢开衣服去吃猫儿，他会丢开猫儿去吃牡蛎，他会丢开牡蛎去吃火腿，他会丢开火腿去吃糖，他会丢开糖去吃馅儿饼，他会丢开馅儿饼去吃洋芋，他会丢开洋芋去吃糠皮，他会丢开糠皮去吃干草，他会丢开干草去吃燕麦，他会丢开燕麦去吃大米，因为他主要是靠这个喂大的。除了欧洲的奶油，无论什么东西他都来者不拒的，就连奶油，他要是尝出了味道，那也会吃的。”

“好极了。平常每顿的食量是……大概要……”

“噢，从四分之一吨到半吨之间，随便多少都行。”

“他爱喝……”

“凡是液体的东西都行。牛奶、水、威士忌、糖浆、蓖麻油、樟脑油、石炭酸 [2] ——这样说下去是没有用处的。你无论想到什么液体的东西都记下就是了。只要是液体的东西，他什么都喝，只除了欧洲的咖啡。”

“好极了。喝多大分量呢？”

“你就写五至十五桶吧——他口渴的程度一时一样，别的方面，他的胃口是没有变化的。”

“这些事情都非常重要。这对于寻找他应该是可以提供很好的线索。”

他按了按铃。

“阿拉里克，把伯恩斯队长找来吧。”

伯恩斯来了。布朗特督察长给他说明全部案情，一五一十地说得很详细。然后他用爽朗而果断的口吻说（由他的声调可以听出他的办法已经拟订得很清楚，而且也可以知道他是惯于下命令的）：

“伯恩斯队长，派琼斯、戴维斯、哈尔西、贝茨、哈克特他们这几个侦探去追寻这只象吧。”

“是，督察长。”

“派摩西、戴金、墨菲、罗杰斯、塔珀、希金斯和巴塞洛缪他们这几个侦探去追寻小偷。”

“是，督察长。”

“在那只象被偷出去的地方安排一个强有力的卫队——三十个精选的弟兄组成的卫队，还要三十个换班的——叫他们在那儿日夜严格守卫，没有我的书面手令，谁也不许走出去——除了记者。”

“是，督察长。”

“派些便衣侦探到火车上、轮船上和码头仓库那些地方去，还有由泽西城往外面去的大路上，命令他们搜查所有形迹可疑的人。”

“是，督察长。”

“把那只象的照片和附带的说明书拿给这些人，吩咐他们搜查所有的火车和往外开的渡船以及其他的船。”

“是，督察长。”

“象要是找到了，就把他捉住，打电报通知我。”

“是，督察长。”

“要是找出了什么线索，也要马上通知我——不管是这畜生的脚印，还是诸如此类的踪迹。”

“是，督察长。”

“发一道命令，叫港口警察留心巡逻河边一带。”

“是，督察长。”

“赶快派便衣侦探到所有的铁路上去，往北直到加拿大，往西直到俄亥俄，往南直到华盛顿。”

“是，督察长。”

“派一批专家到所有的电报局去，收听所有的电报，叫他们要求电报局把所有的密码电报都译给他们看。”

“是，督察长。”

“这些事情千万要做得极其秘密——注意，要秘密得绝对不走漏消息才行。”

“是，督察长。”

“照通常的时刻准时向我报告。”

“是，督察长。”

“去吧！”

“是，督察长。”

他走了。

布朗特督察长沉思了一会儿，没有作声，同时他眼睛里的那股子火气渐渐冷静下来，终于消失了。然后他向我转过身来，用平静的声音说道：

“我不喜欢吹牛，那不是我的习惯，可是——我们一定能找到那只象。”

我热情地和他握手，向他道谢，而且心里也确实是感谢他。我越看这位先生，就越喜欢他，也越对他这职业当中那些神秘且不可思议的事情感到羡慕和惊讶。然后我们在这天晚上暂时分手了，我回寓所的时候，比到他的办公室的时候心里快活得多了。

二

第二天早上，一切都登在报上，登得非常详细，甚至还增加了新的内容——包括：侦探甲、侦探乙和侦探丙的“推测”，估计这次的盗窃案是怎么干的，盗窃犯是谁，以及他们带着赃物到什么地方去了。一共有十一种推测，把一切可能的估计都包括了，单是这一个事实就表示侦探们是些怎样的别出心裁的思想家。没有哪两种推测是相同的，甚至连大致相似的都没有，唯一相同的只有一个显著的情节，关于这一点，十一个人的见解倒通通是绝对一致的。那就是，虽然我的房子后面被人拆开了墙，而唯一的门又照旧是锁着的，那只象却并不是由那个口子被牵出去的，而是由另外一条出路（还没有发现的）出去的。大家一致认为盗窃犯是故意拆开一个豁口，迷惑侦探们。像我或是任何其他外行，恐怕绝不会想得出这个，可是却一会儿都骗不了侦探们。所以我认为没有什么奥妙的唯一的一桩事情实际上正是我弄得最迷糊的一桩事情。十一种见解都指出了盗窃嫌疑犯，可是没有两个人说的盗窃犯是相同的，嫌疑犯总数共计三十七人。报纸上的各种记载末尾都提到了一切意见中最重要的一种——布朗特督察长的意见。这种叙述有一部分是像下面这样说的：

督察长知道两个主犯是谁，即“好汉”达菲和“红毛”麦克法登。在这次盗窃事件发生前十天，他就感觉到会
有人打算干这桩事，并

且还暗中跟踪这两个有名的坏蛋。可是不幸在事件发生的那天晚上，他们忽然去向不明，还没有来得及找到他们的下落，那家伙已经不见了——也就是那只

象。

达菲和麦克法登是干这一行的最大胆的匪徒，警察长有理由相信去年冬天在一个严寒的夜里从侦缉总队把火炉偷出去的就是他们——结果还没有到第二天早上，警察长和在场的每个侦探都归医生照料了，有些人冻坏了脚，有些人冻坏了手指头、耳朵和其他部分。

我看了这段头一半的时候，对于这位奇特的人的了不起的智慧比以前更加惊叹。他不但以明亮的眼光看透目前的一切，就连未来的事情也瞒不住他。我不久就到了他的办公室，并且对他说，我不能不认为他早该把那两个人逮捕起来，预先防止这桩麻烦事和一切损失才对。可是他的回答很简单，而且是无可辩驳的：

“预防罪行发生不是我们的责任范围以内的事，我们的任务是惩治罪行。在罪行发生之前，我们当然不能先行惩治。”

我说我们第一步的秘密被报纸破坏了，不但我们的一切事实，连我们所有的计划和目的通通被泄露了，甚至所有的嫌疑犯的名字也被宣布出来，这些人现在当然就会伪装起来，或是隐藏着不露面。

“随他们去吧。叫他们看看我的本事，知道我要是打定了主意要抓他们的时候，我的手就会落在他们身上，把他们从秘密地方捉到，就像命运之神的手那么准确。至于报纸呢，我们非和他们通声气不可。名誉、声望，经常被大家谈到——这些事就是当侦探的人的命根子。他必须发表他的事实，否则人家还以为他根本不知道什么事实；他也必须发表他的推测，因为无论什么事情也赶不上一个侦探的推测那么稀奇、那么惊人，而且这也最能使人对他敬佩万分；我们还必须发表我们的计划，因为报纸刊物非要这个不可，我们要是不给他们，就不免要得罪他们。我们必须经常让大家知道我们在干什么，否则他们就会以为我们什么也没干。我们与其让报纸上说些刻薄话，或者更糟糕，说些讽刺话，就不如让它说‘布朗特警察长的聪明和非凡的推测是如此这般’，那要痛快得多。”

“我知道您的话是很有道理的。可是我看了今天早上报纸发表的您的谈话，里面有一段说到您对某一个小小问题不肯吐露您的意见。”

“是呀，我们常来这一手，这是颇有作用的，并且我对那个问题根本还没有一定的主张哩。”

我交了一笔数目相当大的款子给警察长，作为临时开支，接着就是坐下来等待消息。现在我们随时都准备着电报会陆续拍来。我把报

纸重新拿来看，又看看我们那份说明的传单，结果发现那二万五千元的悬赏似乎是专给侦探们的。我说我认为这笔奖金应该给任何捉到那只象的人。督察长却说：

“将来找到象的总是侦探们，所以奖金反正会归给应得的人。要是别人找到这只畜生，那也无非是靠着留心侦探们的行动，利用从他们那儿偷来的线索和踪迹才办得到。那么归根结底，奖金也还是应该归侦探们得才对。奖金的正当作用是要鼓励那些贡献他们的时间和专门智慧来干这类事情的人，而不是要把好处拿给那些幸运儿，他们不过是碰巧发现一件悬赏寻找的东西，并不是靠他们的才能和辛苦来赚得这些奖金的。”

不消说，这当然是很有道理的。现在角落上的电报机开始噤噤地响起来了，结果收到下面这封急电：

纽约州，花站，上午七时半

已有线索。附近农场上发现连串足迹甚深。向东跟踪两英里 [3]，无结果；料象已西去。拟向该方追踪。

达利侦探

“达利是我们队里最得力的侦探之一，”督察长说，“我们不久就可以再接到他的消息。”

第二封电报又来了：

新泽西，巴克镇，上午七时四十分

刚到此地。玻璃工厂夜间被闯入，吞去瓶子八百只。附近唯一多水处在五英里外。必向该地前进。象必渴。所吞系空瓶。

贝克侦探

“这也表示很有希望。”督察长说，“我跟你说过这家伙的胃口可以做很好的线索吧。”

第三封电报是：

长岛，泰勒维尔，上午八时十五分

附近一干草堆夜间失踪。想系食去。已有线索，再前进。

哈伯德侦探

“你看他这么东奔西跑的！”督察长说：“我早就知道这件事情够麻烦，可是我们终归还是可以把他抓到。”

纽约州，花站，上午九时

向西跟踪三英里。足迹大而深，不整齐。适遇一农民，据云并非象脚印，乃冬寒地冻时挖出树秧之坑。请示机宜。

达利侦探

“啊哈！偷儿的同党！这事情越来越热闹了。”督察长说。

他口授了下面这封电报给达利：

逮捕此人，逼供同伙。继续跟踪——必要时直抵太平洋岸。

布朗特督察长

其后一封电报是：

宾夕法尼亚州，康尼点，上午八时四十五分

煤气公司营业部夜间被闯入，食去三个月未付款煤气账单。已获线索，续进。

墨菲侦探

“天哪！”督察长说，“他连煤气账单也吃吗？”

“他大概不知道——当然吃啰，可是这不能饱肚子。至少没有别的东西一起吃下去是不行的。”

这时候又来了这封令人兴奋的电报：

纽约州，艾恩维尔，上午九时半

初抵此。全村惊惶万状。象于今晨五时过此村。或谓象已西去，一说东行，一说北行，一说南行——但众人均称彼等未及细察。象触毙一马，已割取小块供线索。此系象鼻击毙者；由打击方式推断，似系自左方袭击。由此马卧地姿势判断，料象已沿柏克莱铁路北去。先行四小时半，拟立即跟踪追捕。

霍斯侦探

我发出了欢呼。督察长还是像一尊雕像似的不动声色。他镇静地按了按铃。

“阿拉里克，请伯恩斯队长到这儿来。”

伯恩斯来了。

“有多少人可以马上派去出勤？”

“九十六个，督察长。”

“立刻派他们往北去，叫他们集中在柏克莱铁路沿线艾恩维尔以北一带。”

“是，督察长。”

“叫他们极其秘密地行动。另外还有别的人下班的时候，马上叫他们准备出勤。”

“是，督察长。”

“去吧！”

“是，督察长。”

马上又来了另外一封电报：

纽约州，赛奇角，十时半

初抵此。八时十五分象过此地。全镇人已逃空，仅留一警察。象显然未向警察袭击，而欲击灯柱。但击中两者。已自警察尸体割肉一块做线索。

斯图曼侦探

“原来象已经转向西边去了，”督察长说，“可是他逃不掉，因为我派出的人已经在那一带地方分布到各处了。”

其后的一封电报说：

格罗佛站，十一时十五分

初抵此。全村人已逃空，仅余老弱病夫。三刻钟前象由此经过。正值反禁酒群众大会召

开，象由窗中伸入其鼻，自蓄水池吸水将大会冲散，有人遭水灌注——旋即死去，数人淹毙。侦探克洛斯与奥少夫纳西曾过此镇，但向南行——故与象相左。周围数英里地区均大为惊恐——居民均由家中逃出。

逃往各处，均遇此象，丧命者颇多。

布朗特侦探

我简直要流泪，因为这场灾难太使我难受了。可是督察长只说：

“你看——我们正在一步步把他包围起来。他觉出了我们已经来到，又往东转了。”

可是还有许多叫我们伤脑筋的消息在后面。电报又带来了这个消息：

霍艮港，十二时十九分

初到此。半小时前象行经此地，曾引起极度惊恐与兴奋。象在各街横行——装管工二人路过，一人丧命，一人得解脱，众皆悲恸。

欧弗拉赫第侦探

“这下子他可是让我的弟兄们包围住了，”督察长说，“怎么也逃不掉了。”

分布到新泽西和宾夕法尼亚各地的侦探们又拍来了一连串的电报，他们都在追踪各种线索，其中包括被蹂躏的粮仓、工厂、主日学校的图书馆，大家都怀着很大的希望——实际上这些希望简直成了确有把握的事。督察长说：

“我很想能够和他们通消息，叫他们往北去，可是这办不到。侦探只到电报局去发电报来向我报告；马上他又走了，你简直不知在哪儿找得到他。”

然后又来了这封电报：

康涅狄格州，桥港，十二时十五分

巴南愿出每年四千元代价，获使用此象供张贴流动广告之特权，由目前至侦探寻获此象时为止。拟在象身贴马戏团招贴画。盼即复。

波格斯侦探

“这简直是荒谬绝伦！”我大声地说。

“当然是啰，”督察长说，“巴南先生自以为非常精明，可是他显然还看不透我——我可看透了他。”

于是他给这封急电口授回电：

谢绝巴南所提条件。需七千元，否则作罢。

布朗特督察长

“看吧。不要等多久就会有回电。巴南先生不在家，他在电报局——他在交涉生意的时候有这个习惯。不消三分钟……”

同意。

巴南

电报机嘟嘟嘟的声音打断了督察长的谈话。我对这个非常离奇的插曲还没有来得及发表意见，下面这封急电就把我的心思引到另一个恼人的方面去了：

纽约州，波利维亚，十二时五十分

象由南方抵此，十一时五十分过此向森林

前进。途中驱散出殡行列，送葬者牺牲二人。居民放小炮击象后逃散。侦探伯克与我于十分钟后由北方赶到，但因误认若干地下土坑为象踪，致延误甚久；但终获象踪，追至森林。然后伏地爬行，继续注视象踪，追随至丛林中。伯克先行，不幸象已停步休息；故伯克因低头察看象踪，尚未发觉象在眼前，头已触其后腿。伯克即刻起立，手握象尾欢呼“奖金应归……”但出言未毕，象鼻一击已使此勇士粉身碎骨而死。我向后逃，象转身穷追，直至林边，速度惊人，我本非丧命不可，幸因老天保佑，送葬行列所余数人又与象遭遇，使其转移目标。现闻送葬者无一人还，但也不算损失过重，剩余送葬用品足以再举办另一丧葬活动。象已再行失踪。

马尔鲁尼侦探

分派到新泽西、宾夕法尼亚、得拉维尔和弗吉尼亚等地的那些苦干和有信心的侦探们都在跟着有希望的新线索追寻，我们除了从他们那里以外，始终没有得到任何消息，直到下午两点过后，才接到这封电报：

巴克斯特中心，二时十五分

象曾到此地，周身贴马戏团广告，驱散一奋兴会，将改过自新者毙伤甚多。居民将象囚于栏中，派人守

卫。其后侦探布朗与我来此，即入栏持照片与说明书对此象进行鉴定。各种特征一概相符，仅有一项不得见——即腋下疮疤。布郎为查明起见，匍匐至象体下细察，结果立即丧命——头部被击碎，但碎脑中一无所有。众皆奔逃，象亦匿去，横冲直撞，伤亡多人。象虽逃去，但因炮伤，沿途均留显著之血迹。定能再度寻获。现象已穿越茂林向南前进。

布朗特侦探

这是最后一封电报。晚上起了雾，非常之浓，以至三英尺外的东西都看不见。浓雾整夜没有散。渡船不得不停开，甚至连公共汽车都不能行驶。

三

第二天早晨，报纸上还是像从前一样，登满了侦探们的推测；我们那些惨剧也通通登出来了，另外还登了许多消息，都是报馆从各地电报通讯员方面得来的。篇幅占了一栏又一栏，一直占到一版三分之一的地位，还加上一些显眼的标题，使我看了心里发烦。这些标题一般的情状大致是这样：

白象尚未捕获！

仍在继续前进，到处闯祸！

各处村庄居民惊骇欲狂，逃避一空！

白色恐怖在他前面传播，死亡与

糜烂接踵而至！

侦探尾随其后。粮仓被毁，工厂被劫一空，收成被吃光，公众集会被驱散，酿成惨剧无法形容！侦缉队中三十四位最出色的侦探的推测！督察长布朗特的推测！

“啊哈！”督察长布朗特几乎露出兴奋的神色，说道，“这可真是了不起！这是任何侦探机关从来没有碰到过的好运道。这个案件的名声会传到天涯地角，永垂不朽，我的名字也会跟着传出去的。”

但是我没有什麼可高兴的。我觉得所有那些血案似乎都是我干出来的，那只象只不过是我不负责任的代理人罢了。受害的人数增加得

多么快呀！有一个地方，他“干涉了一次选举，弄死了五个投重票的违法选民”。在这个举动之后，他又杀害了两个不幸的人，他们名叫奥唐诺休和麦克弗兰尼根，“前一天才来到这全世界被压迫者的家乡来避难，正想要第一次运用美国公民选举投票的光荣权利，恰好遭到这个暹罗煞星的毒手而丧命了”。到另一处，他“发现了一个疯狂的兴风作浪的传教士，正在准备他新一轮的对跳舞、戏剧和其他不能还击的事物所要进行的英勇的攻击，一脚就把他踩死了”。又在另一个地方，他“杀害了一个避雷针经纪人”。遇难的人数越来越多，血腥气越来越重，伤心惨目的事件越来越多。丧命的共达六十人，受伤的二百四十人，一切记载都证明了侦探们的活动和热心，而且结尾都是说“有三十万老百姓和四个侦探看见过这个可怕的畜生，而这四个侦探之中有两个被他弄死了”。

电报机又噤噤地响起来，我简直听了就害怕。随即消息就一条一条传过来，可是这些消息的性质却使我感到快慰的失望。不久就明白了，象已不知去向。雾使他得以找到一个很好的藏身之所，没有被人发觉。从一些极荒谬的遥远地点打来的电报说是在某时某刻有人在雾里瞥见过一个隐隐约约的庞然大物，那“无疑是象”。这个隐隐约约的庞然大物曾在新港、新泽西、宾夕法尼亚、纽约州内地、布鲁克林，甚至在纽约市区，处处都曾有人瞥见过！但是处处都是这个隐隐约约的庞然大物很快就不见了，丝毫没有留下什么痕迹。强大的侦缉队分派到广大地区的那许多侦探，每人都按时来电报告，个个都有线索，而且都在跟踪，拼命往前穷追。

但是那一天过去了，并无其他结果。

第二天又是一样。

再往后一天还是一样。

报纸上的消息渐成千篇一律，其中的各种事实都是毫无价值的，各种线索都是没有结果的，各种推测几乎都是搜尽枯肠想出来故意使人惊讶、使人高兴、使人眼花缭乱的。

我遵照督察长的建议，把奖金加了一倍。

又过了四个沉闷的日子，然后那些可怜的、干得很起劲的侦探遭到了一次严重的打击——报馆记者们谢绝发表他们的推测，很冷淡地说：“让我们歇一歇吧。”

白象失踪两个星期之后，我遵照督察长的意见，把奖金增加到七万五千元。这个数目是很大的，但是我觉得我宁肯牺牲我的全部私人财产，也不要失掉我的政府对我的信任。现在侦探们倒了霉，报纸上就转过笔锋来攻击他们，对他们加以最令人难堪的讽刺。这使一些卖艺的歌手们想出了一个好主意，他们把自己打扮成侦探，在舞台上用

可笑至极的方法追寻那只象。漫画家们画出那些侦探拿着小望远镜在全国各地一处一处地仔细察看，而象却在他们背后从他们口袋里偷苹果吃。他们还把侦探们戴的徽章画成各式各样的可笑的漫画——侦探小说的封底上用金色印着这个徽章，你一定是看到过的——那是一只睁得很大的眼睛，配上“我们永远不睡”这几个字。侦探们到酒店去喝酒的时候，那故意逗笑的掌柜就恢复一句早已作废的话，说道：“您喝杯醒眼酒好吗？”空气中弥漫着浓厚的讽刺气氛。

但是有一个人在这种气氛中始终保持镇定，处之泰然，不动声色，那就是坚定不移的督察长。他那双大胆的眼睛永不表示丧气，他那沉着的信心永不动摇。他老是说：

“让他们去嘲笑吧！谁最后笑就笑得最痛快。”

我对这位先生的敬仰变成了一种崇拜。我经常在他身边。他的办公室对他而言已经成为一个不愉快的地方，现在一天比一天更加厉害了。可是他既然受得了，我当然也要撑持下去——至少是能撑多久就撑多久。所以我经常到他这里来，并且停留很久——我好像是唯一能够忍受得了的外人。大家都不知道我怎么会熬得下去。我每每似乎觉得非开小差不可，可是一到这种时候，我就看看那张沉着而且显然是满不在乎的脸，于是又坚持下去了。

白象失踪以后，大约过了三个星期，有一天早上，我正想要说我不得不息鼓收兵的时候，那位大侦探却提出一个绝妙的拿手办法来，这下子可阻止了我那个念头。

这个办法就是和窃犯们妥协。我虽然和世界上最有机智的天才有过广泛的接触，可是这位先生的思想之丰富实在是我生平从来没有见过的。他说他相信可以出十万元和对方妥协，把那只象找回来。我说我相信可以勉强凑这个数目。可是那些可怜的侦探非常忠心地努力干了一场，怎么办呢？他说：

“按照妥协的办法，他们照例得一半。”

这就打消了我唯一的反对理由，于是督察长写了两封信，内容如下：

亲爱的夫人。——你的丈夫只要和我立即约谈一次，就可以得一笔巨款（而且完全保证不受法律干涉）。

督察长布朗特

他派他信任的信差把这两封信送一封给“好汉”达菲“不知是真是假的妻子”，另一封给“红毛”麦克法登的“不知真假的妻子”。

一小时之内，来了这么两封无礼的回信：

你这老糊涂蛋：“好汉”达菲已经死了两年了。

布里奇特·马奥尼

瞎子督察长，——“红毛”麦克法登早就被绞死了，他已经升天一年半了。除了当侦探

的，随便哪个笨蛋也知道这桩事情。

玛丽·奥胡里根

“早就猜想到这些事情了，”督察长说，“这一证明足见我的直觉真是千真万确。”

一个办法刚刚行不通，他又想出另外一个主意来了。他马上写了一则广告拿到早报上去登，我把它抄了一份：

子——亥戌丑卯酉。二四二辰。未丑寅卯——辰亥三
二八成酉丑卯。寅亥申寅，——；二已！寅丑酉。
密。

他说只要偷儿还活着，见了这则广告就会到往常约会的地点去。他还说明了这个往常约会的地点是侦探和罪犯之间进行一切谈判的地方。这次的约会定在第二天晚上十二点举行。

在那个时刻来到之前，我们什么事情也不能做，所以我赶快走出这个办公室，而且心里实在因为得到这个喘息的机会而有谢天谢地的感觉。

第二天晚上十一点，我带着十万元现钞，交到督察长手里，过了一會兒他就告辞了，眼睛里流露出那勇往直前的、一向没有消失的信心。一个钟头几乎无法忍受的时光终于熬过去了，然后我听见他那可喜的脚步声，于是我喘着气站起来，一歪一倒地跑过去迎接他，他那双明亮的眼睛里发出多么得意的闪光啊！他说：

“我们妥协了！那些开玩笑的家伙明天就要改变论调了！跟我去！”

他拿着一支点着的蜡烛大步地走进一个绝大的圆顶地窖，那儿经常有六十个侦探在睡觉，这时候还有二十来个在打牌消遣。我紧跟在他后面。他飞快地一直往地窖里老远的、阴暗的那一头走过去。我正在闷得要命、简直要晕倒的时候，他一下子绊倒了，倒在一个家伙的伸开的肢体上。我听见他一面倒下去，一面欢呼道：

“我们这种高贵的职业果然是名不虚传的。你的象在这儿哪！”

我被人抬到上面那办公室里，他们用石炭酸使我清醒过来了。整个侦缉队都拥了进来，随后那一番欢天喜地的祝贺真是热闹非凡，我从来没有见过那种场面。他们把记者们邀请过来，打开一桶一桶的香槟酒来痛饮祝贺，大家握手、道贺，简直没有个完，兴头十足。当时的英雄人物当然是督察长，他的快乐到了顶点了，而且也是靠他的耐心、品德和勇敢换来的，所以叫我看了很欢喜。虽然我站在那儿，已经成了一个无家可归的穷光蛋，我受托的那个无价之宝也死了，我为本国服务的职位也完蛋了，一切都由于我向来似乎有个致命的老毛病——对于一个重大的托付老是粗心大意地执行。一双双传神的眼睛对督察长表示了深切的敬仰，还有许多侦探的声音悄悄地说：“你瞧瞧人家——实在是这一行的大王——只要给他一点儿线索就行，他就只需要这个，不管什么东西藏起来了，他没有找不着的。”大家分那五万元奖金的时候，真是兴高采烈；分完之后，督察长一面把他那一份塞进腰包，一面发表了一篇简短的谈话。他在这篇谈话里说道：“痛痛快快地享受这笔奖金吧，伙计们，因为这是你们赚来的；并且还不只这个——你们还给侦探这种职业博得了不朽的名声。”

又来了一封电报，内容是：

密歇根，孟禄，上午十时

三星期来，初遇一电报局。随象踪骑马穿过森林，抵此地时已奔波千英里，脚印日见其

重，日见其大，且日益显明。望勿急躁——至多再一星期，定能将象寻获。万无一失。

达利侦探

督察长叫大家给达利三呼喝彩，给“侦缉队里这位能手”欢呼，然后吩咐手下给他打电报去，叫他回来领取他那一份额奖金。

被偷的象这场惊人的风波就这样完结了，第二天报纸上又是满篇好听的恭维话，只有一个无聊的例外。这个报纸说：“侦探真是伟大！像一只失踪了的象这么个小小的东西，他找起来也许是慢一点儿——白天他尽管整天寻找，夜里就跟象的尸体睡在一起，一直拖到三个星期，可是他终归还是会把他找着——只要把象错放在那里的人给他说明地点就行了！”

我永远失去了可怜的大壮。炮弹给了他致命伤，他在雾里悄悄地走到那个倒霉的地方；在敌人的包围之中，又经常受到侦缉的危险，他连饿带熬，一直瘦下来，最后死神才给了他安息。

最后的妥协花掉了我十万元，侦探的费用另外花掉四万二千元，我再也没有向我本国政府去申请一个职位，我成了个倾家荡产的人，成了个落魄人间的流浪汉——可是我始终觉得那位先生是全世界空前的大侦探，我对他的敬仰至今还是没有减退，而且一辈子都不会改变。

（张友松 译）

[1] 1英尺 $\approx$ 0.3米。（说明：书中脚注除特别标明的之外，均为译者注。）

[2] 即苯酚。常温下为无色透明针状晶体。此处所指可能是石炭酸水溶液或其它含有石炭酸成分的液体。——编者注

[3] 1英里 $\approx$ 1.6公里。——编者注

一个顺风顺水的坏小子的故事

从前，有个叫吉姆的坏小子——然而，如果你留意一下，就会发现你在主日学校 [1] 读到的那些书里，几乎所有坏小子都叫詹姆斯。这着实很奇怪，不过，咱们这位主人公确实叫吉姆，千真万确。

吉姆没有一位患病的母亲——一位笃信宗教、痼疾缠身、十分乐于从此躺进坟墓长眠不起的母亲，但是，因为对儿子强烈的爱，她最终还是生下了他，心中满是焦虑，害怕自己哪天撒手人寰，她的儿子将被留下独自面对这个残暴而冷酷的世界。在主日学校的那些书里，大多数坏小子都叫詹姆斯，并且有个患病的母亲。她们会对詹姆斯说，“好，我现在躺下啦”，诸如此类的话，然后用甜蜜而哀伤的语调唱歌哄他们入睡，再给他们一个晚安吻。最后，詹姆斯入眠后，母亲则跪在他的床边哀哭。但是，我们这位主人公可不一样。他叫吉姆，母亲没病没灾——没有痼疾，也没有任何如此这般的毛病，反之，她身体还挺壮实。而且，她也并不虔诚信教。更甚者，她也没那么担心吉姆。她曾经说，吉姆要是不小心伤到了脖子，那也没什么大不了。晚上睡觉前，她经常打吉姆的屁股，且从来没给过他什么晚安吻；相反，她所谓的“晚安”就是离开前扇吉姆一顿耳光。

有一次，这个坏小子偷了食品柜的钥匙，伸手进去偷吃果酱。为了不让母亲看出来，他还往果酱罐里倒焦油来掩人耳目。不过，他做这些的时候，心里可没有突然间掠过什么糟糕的感觉，也没有一个声音在他耳边说：“我这样忤逆妈妈对吗？这么做是不是太罪恶了？那些偷吃善良母亲果酱的坏孩子后来都怎么样了？”接下来，他也没有一个人孤零零地跪在地上，心中暗暗保证再也不做坏事，继而，捧着一颗轻盈、愉悦的心站起来去找妈妈，跟她道出个中缘由并乞求原谅。不用说，他母亲也没有被感动得双眼满是骄傲的泪水，心怀感激地祝福他。不，那是其他坏小子在书本中的境遇；奇怪的是，咱们这位吉姆的遭遇可谓与众不同。他吃了果酱，还用他一贯粗鄙而应受谴责的方式说“棒呆了！”。然后，他又往里面倒了倒焦油，再次说，“棒呆了！”。接着哈哈大笑，断言道，当他母亲发现这一切，那个老婆子一定会暴跳如雷。然而，当她真的有所察觉，他坚称自己毫不知情，而她则狠狠地抽了他一顿鞭子，弄得自己号啕大哭。关于这个小男孩的一切都如此稀奇——一切都和那些在其他书中司空见惯的坏小子詹姆斯大相径庭。

有一次，他爬到橡子果园的苹果树上去偷苹果。树枝没有折断，

他也没有摔着胳膊、被农场主家的神犬咬伤，更没有因此连续几个星期卧病在床，进而在病中忏悔，从此摇身一变，成为一个乖孩子。哦，根本没有！他随心所欲地偷了好多苹果，又安然无恙地返回地面。他连怎么对付那只狗都盘算好了，当它跑过来准备咬他的时候，他举起一块砖头将它砸了个四仰八叉。这实在太奇怪了，其他那些劝人向善的书里（通常封底绘有大理石花纹，插图里满是身穿燕尾服、短马裤，头戴大檐帽的男士，以及长裙的腰线在胳膊以下、没有加束腰的女士），可从来没发生过这种事儿。主日学校的书里从来没有这档子事儿。

有一次，他偷了老师的铅笔刀。一想到被发现就要挨一顿鞭子，吉姆不禁十分害怕，于是，他将铅笔刀塞进了乔治·威尔逊的帽子里——可怜的威尔逊，寡妇威尔逊太太的孩子，道德小标兵，全村公认的好孩子。威尔逊总是很听妈妈的话，从不说谎，勤奋好学，对主日学校简直着了迷。当那把小刀从威尔逊的帽子里掉出来，这个可怜的小男孩一下垂下头，羞红了脸，好像自己真的犯了错。气急败坏的老师认定他就是小偷，就在老师的戒尺马上要打到威尔逊瑟瑟发抖的肩膀上时，他们中间并没有突然出现一位纯属虚构的白发太平绅士 [2]，更见不到他拿腔拿调地说：“放了那个高尚的小男孩——那个真正犯错的懦夫就在这里！课间休息的时候，我正好路过校门口，没人注意到我，而我却看到了真正偷东西的人！”没有这样的事情发生，吉姆也没有因此挨一顿揍。自然，那位受人尊敬的绅士也没有在这些哭哭啼啼、感激涕零的师生面前进行什么长篇的说教。他也没有牵起乔治的手说，这样的小男孩值得被夸奖，然后邀请他上门与自己同住，让他帮忙打扫办公室，生上火，跑跑腿，砍砍柴，之后，再让乔治去学法律，平时帮自己的妻子做做家务，再空出些时间去消遣，最后，这个小男孩月入四十美分，幸福无忧。不，故事本该是这样的，但吉姆的版本不是这样的。没有一位爱管闲事的老绅士突然闯入，找吉姆的麻烦，所以，好孩子乔治挨了打，吉姆则在一旁幸灾乐祸。因为，你知道的，吉姆讨厌好孩子。吉姆说：“他看不起那些没种的。”多么粗鄙的语言啊，这个又坏又疏于管教的臭小子。

然而，吉姆身上最让人啧啧称奇的地方就是当他星期日 [3] 去划船的时候，居然没有溺水；又一个星期天，吉姆去钓鱼，正赶上暴风雨，却没有被闪电击中。怎么会这样？你也许翻了又翻，翻遍了主日学校的书，然而，从现在到下一个圣诞节你也找不到一个相似的故事。哦，不！你能找到的那些星期日去划船的坏小子全都会无一例外地溺水；而他们如果星期日去钓鱼，则一定会遭雷击。那些星期日载着小坏蛋的船都不太好过。而当那些小坏蛋在安息日 [4] 跑去钓鱼，则十有八九会遭遇暴风雨。咱们这位吉姆是怎么躲过这一切的，对我来说可真是个谜。

这位吉姆的日子过得有如神助——一准儿是这样。什么都伤不到他。有一次，他甚至给兽栏里的大象喂了一块口嚼烟，也没有被大象用鼻子敲得脑袋落地。他在橱柜里翻翻拣拣，找一瓶薄荷露，可从来没有因此把硝酸喝进肚。他偷走了父亲的枪，在安息日那天跑出去打猎，也没有崩掉自己三四根手指。他一时气急，挥拳打向自己妹妹的太阳穴，但她也没有因此整个夏天都病恹恹，接着不幸离世，更没有在弥留之际，留下温柔宽恕的蜜语，让他备受谴责的内心更受打击。不，她挺过来了。故事的最后，他离开了，走到海边，再也没有回来。他发现自己在这个世界上悲伤而孤独，他心爱的人都已经长眠地下，而他孩童时代那藤蔓掩映中的家也已经轰隆隆倒塌，走向破败。啊，不！这些都没有发生。他回来了，醉醺醺的，像个浪人似的，先进了警察局。

他长大了，结婚了，拥有了一个庞大的家庭。一天晚上，他用斧头一个个敲碎了他们的脑袋。后来，他凭着一整套的偷奸耍滑发了家，现在已经成了村子里最可鄙、最恶毒的无赖了。可他广受尊敬，已经是州议会的一员了。

所以，你看到了，主日学校那些书里的可从来没有一个詹姆斯能有咱们这位有如神助的坏蛋吉姆的好运气。

（郭宇萌 译）

[1] 主日学校：英、美等诸国为贫民开办的初等教育机构，通常周日开课。兴起于18世纪末，盛行于19世纪上半期。

[2] 太平绅士是一种源于英国，由政府委任民间人士担任维持社区安宁、防止非法刑罚及处理一些较简单的法律程序的职衔，多半是适用在英美法系的国家或是曾使用英美法系的地区。

[3] 根据当时的习俗，星期日，教徒应该去教堂做礼拜。

[4] 安息日（the Sabbath）被普遍认为是犹太教（Judaism）主要节日之一。Sabbath一词源于阿卡德语，本意为“七”，希伯来语意为“休息”“停止工作”，犹太历每周的第七日（每逢星期五日落到星期六日落）。犹太人谨守安息日为圣日，不许工作。

一个不得善终的好孩子的故事

本文是在几个文友的坚持之下写就的，他们认为，如果我之前写的道德小品《一个顺风顺水的坏小子的故事》值得被印制发售并保存上几个星期，那么，一个合理而不带偏见的姊妹篇理应获得同样的不朽。

——写在前面的话

从前，有个叫雅各布·比利文斯的好孩子。他总是很听父母的话，无论他们的要求多么不可理喻，他总是认真读书，去主日学校的时候从来没有迟到过。他不会逃学，即使冷静下来想想，发现逃学将是他能做到的最有利可图的事儿。从来没有一个小孩能把他约出来玩，他实在太奇怪了。无论谎言多么便利，他也不会撒谎。他只是说撒谎是不对的，而这个理由对他来说就足够了。他太诚实，简直有些可笑了。雅各布这套古怪的行为方式简直超越了世间万物。他不会在星期天玩弹球，不会掏鸟窝，也不会给街头艺人的猴子们几枚辣味糖果；他看上去对一切合情合理的娱乐活动都兴致缺乏。因此，其他几个男孩总是试图推测并理解他，可是他们完全得不出任何令人满意的答案；就像我之前说过的一样，他们只能得出一些模模糊糊的答案——他一定是“有毛病”了。因此，他们将他纳入自己的保护，从不允许任何人伤害他。

这个好孩子读了主日学校所有的书，这些书是他最大的慰藉——这就是全部奥秘所在了。他相信主日学校书里那些优秀的小男孩，并对他们充满信心，希望可以邂逅他们中的一员；但他从来没有真的遇到过。也许，他们全都在他出生前就去世了吧。无论什么时候，只要他读到一个好孩子的故事，马上就会翻到结局去看这个孩子结局如何，因为他想不远万里地去找他，好好端详端详他。但这些都无济于事，那些好孩子全都在故事结尾过世了。你能在书页里看到一张葬礼的图片——所有亲朋好友和主日学校的孩子都来了，他们穿着十分短小的马裤，搭配过大的女帽，站在墓碑前，每个人都拿着一码半长的纸巾哭哭啼啼。他经常这样寻不到结果，从来没有亲眼见过任何一个好孩子，谁让他们在故事最后都死了呢。

雅各布有一个崇高的理想——他希望被写进主日学校的书里。他希望被写进去，再配上一幅画，画面中，他满怀光荣地坚决不肯对自己的母亲撒谎，而她则因为他的“成就”喜极而泣；或者另一幅画，画

中，他站在门廊上，给一位可怜兮兮、抚养着六个孩子、无家可归的女乞丐一便士，告诉她想怎么花就怎么花，但是不能挥霍无度，因为挥霍可是一种罪行；抑或另一幅画，画面中，他宽宏大量地拒不告发一个坏小子，而这家伙总是在雅各布从学校出来的路上躲在拐角处等着他，抄起一块板子猛打他的脑袋，一路“嘿！嘿！”地大叫，追着雅各布回家。这就是年轻的雅各布·比利文斯的志向——他渴望被写入主日学校的书里。但是，有时当他想起所有好孩子都死了的时候，心里多多少少有些不舒服。他喜欢活着，你知道的，而那些主日学校书里的好孩子却都死了，这实在是“成为他们”最让人感到不舒服的地方了。他知道，做个好孩子是有损健康的；他知道，想要和书里那些好孩子一样好到不可思议的程度可是比得了痼疾还要致命的；他知道，他们之中没有一个人能够活得长久，而一想到如果他真的被写进书里自己也看不到，他就十分痛苦；然而，如果他们在他去世之前就出了书，那这本书可就流行不起来了——没有葬礼画面可不行。如果书里不写上他弥留之际给身边人的箴言，那可算不上一本主日学校藏书。所以，到了最后一刻，他当然只好拿定了主意，竭尽全力，好好活着，尽量坚持，并且在死期将近时准备好自己的遗言。

但是，不知为何，这个好孩子一直诸事不顺，发生在他身上的事儿和其他书里那些好孩子的经历一直大相径庭。那些好孩子一路顺风顺水，而坏小子们都摔断了腿；但是，在他的故事里，一定是哪颗螺母松动了，哪里出了岔子，一切都对不上。他发现吉姆^[1]·布莱克在偷苹果，便走到树下，给他讲书里那些坏小子的下场——从邻居家的树上摔下来，伤了胳膊。吉姆也从树上摔了下来，但是，吉姆摔到了他身上，伤到了他的胳膊，自己却毫发无伤。雅各布搞不懂这是怎么回事。书里可从来没发生过这种事。

还有一次，那些坏小子将一位盲人推到泥坑里，雅各布冲上去帮忙，满心以为会得到盲人的祝福。然而，那个盲人根本毫无谢意，而是举起拐杖狠狠打了他的脑瓜子一下，并称下次雅各布要是再敢先推他、再假意帮助他，他就要抓他个现行——这和哪本书里写的都对不上，雅各布把所有书都重新看了一遍。

雅各布一直想要找一只无家可归、饥肠辘辘且饱受折磨的牧羊犬。他想把它带回家，好好喂养，并得到狗狗长久的感激。终于被他找到了一只，雅各布高兴坏了。他把它带回家喂养，不过，正当他想要好好摸摸它的时候，那只狗猛地扑向他，咬碎了他身上所有的衣服，只有前裆的布片还稍有保留，让他狠狠出了个大洋相。这可够奇怪的。它和书里的狗是同一种品种，但习性却大相径庭。这个男孩无论做什么都会弄得一团糟。那些书里的孩子屡屡被嘉奖的地方，恰恰成了雅各布最徒劳倒霉的地方。

有一次，他在去主日学校的路上看到一群坏小子出发去划帆船。他吓坏了，要知道，在他受过的教育里那些星期日去开帆船的男孩无一例外都溺水了。所以，他赶紧划着一个小木筏去警告他们，不过，一根原木挡了他的路，他脚下一滑，栽进了水里。很快，有人把他捞出水里，医生帮他身体里的水挤出来，大吼着将他叫醒了。但他还是感冒了，足足卧床了九个星期。最莫名其妙的就是，那些坏小子倒是一整天都玩得很尽兴，最后活蹦乱跳地回家了，实在不可思议。雅各布·比利文斯说，书里可从来没有发生过这样的事。他完全惊呆了。

痊愈后，雅各布有些心灰意冷。但无论如何，他还是决定继续干下去。他知道，直到目前为止，他的经历还不足以成书。他还没有过上好孩子的生活，如果他可以坚持到最后，那么他希望有一天可以做到最好。如果一切都不尽如人意，他还能靠着临终遗言扳回一城。

看过书，雅各布发现现在是他出海去当船上侍者的时候了。他拜访了一位船长，提出了自己的申请。当船长管他要介绍信的时候，他骄傲地掏出一个小册子，指着上面的话：“致雅各布·比利文斯，来自他慈爱的老师”。但那位船长是个粗鄙野蛮的汉子，他说道，“哦！这算什么！”这根本证明不了雅各布能刷好盘子、使好饮料机。他可不需要雅各布。这简直是雅各布一生中最不可理喻的一件事了。在如何唤起船长的恻隐之心这方面，一本写着老师溢美之词的小册子可从来没有失手过，它们通常能为被推荐者带来各种既光荣又赚钱的职务——他从来没在任何一本书上读到自己这种境遇。他实在无法相信发生在自己身上的事。

这个男孩总是四处碰壁。发生在他身上的事儿从来都和书上对不上。终于有一天，当他正四处寻觅坏孩子想要加以劝诫时，他发现他们都聚在一个老铸铁厂里，正在拿十四五只狗取乐。他们将这群狗拴成长长的一列，正准备往它们的尾巴上紧紧地系上空炸药罐。雅各布心有所动。他坐在一个罐子上，使命将至，他毫不介意沾上油腻。他抓住打头那只狗的脖子，转眼充满责备地望着最调皮的汤姆·琼斯。但就在此时，麦克沃尔特总督盛怒着走进来了。所有坏小子都跑了，雅各布却特意满脸无辜地站起来，并开始了主日学校书里那一套庄重的发言，开头不外乎“哦，先生！”。然而，现实中，无论乖小孩还是坏小子都没能就着“哦，先生！”来一番高谈阔论。总督根本等不及听下面的话。他抓着雅各布的耳朵就将其提起来转了个圈儿，举起手狠狠打了他背后一下，瞬间，雅各布被弹出屋顶，朝着太阳一路高飞，那些狗则像风筝一样跟着他飞。地面上，一点儿总督和老铸铁厂的影子都看不见了。而雅各布·比利文斯呢，他根本没机会留下精心准备的遗言了，除非是说给鸟听。最后，虽然他身体的主要部分算是落在了邻郡树顶上，他身体的其他部分却散落在四个小镇上，所以，人们不得不验了五次尸来看他是不是死了，是怎么死的。从来没有一个男孩被

这么惨烈地分尸过。

这个已故的好孩子，事事竭尽全力，却从来得不到书中的待遇。除了他之外，其他男孩照他那么做都兴旺发达了。他的故事实在卓绝，个中缘由也许永远也弄不清了。

（郭宇萌 译）

[1] 可能是对应上一篇文章提到的，所有“坏小子都叫吉姆”的说法。

加利维拉县有名的跳蛙

有一位朋友从东部给我写信，托我去拜访和蔼而多话的西蒙·惠勒老先生，探听我朋友的朋友留尼达·斯迈利的消息。我遵照他的嘱咐去拜访，下面所写的故事就是这次拜访的结果。我内心至今有一个疑团。总觉得所谓留尼达·斯迈利是一位乌有先生，我的朋友根本不认识这么一个人物。大概是他猜想着我要是向惠勒老先生问起他，就会使他联想到他那位无聊的吉姆·斯迈利，于是他就会打开话匣子，搬出关于那个人的一些令人生气的回忆，说得又长又讨厌，对我也毫无益处，徒然把我烦得要命。如果我的朋友的话是这样，结果是很成功的。

找到西蒙·惠勒的时候，发现他正在那业已衰落的安奇尔矿区市镇上一所快要坍塌的酒店里酒吧间的火炉旁边舒舒服服地打盹，我看出他是个肥胖和秃头的人，在他那安闲的面容上，露出一一种可亲的温和朴实的表情，他醒过来给我问好。我告诉他说，我有一位朋友托我来探访他并打听他少年时代的一个名叫留尼达·斯迈利的亲爱的伴侣——留尼达·斯迈利牧师，福音会的一个年轻的牧师，我的朋友听说他曾有一个时期住在安奇尔矿区镇上，我还说惠勒先生如果能够告诉我一点儿关于这位留尼达·斯迈利牧师的消息，我是很感谢他的。

西蒙·惠勒把我逼到一个角落里，用他的椅子把我拦住，然后坐下来，喋喋不休地叙述这一段后面接着的那个单调的故事。他一直不笑，不皱眉头，甚至不改变声音，始终保持着他开始说第一句话所用的那种细水长流似的音调，一直没有丝毫起劲的表现；可是在他叙述这个冗长的故事的时候，从头到尾，老有一股令人感动的认真和诚恳的情调，这使我分明地体会到他虽然决不认为他这个故事有什么可笑或好玩的地方，他可是把它当作一桩重要事情，并且还佩服那里面的两位主角，觉得他们是斗智的奇才。我让他随意地说下去，一次也没有打搅过他。

留尼达牧师，嗯，留尼达牧师——唉，这儿从前有过一个家伙，叫作吉姆·斯迈利，那是在1849年冬天——也许是1850年春天吧——不知怎么的，我记不清楚了，不过我之所以觉得反正总是那两个年头，是因为我记得他初到这市镇上来的时候，那道大水槽还没有修成。可是不管怎样，你在这儿再也找不出一个比他更奇怪的人，他无论碰到什么事情，只要找得到一个人在对立方下赌注，他就要和人家打赌；要是找不到，他就换到另外一边来也行。别人乐意怎么赌，他

就怎么赌——只要他能和人家打成赌，他就心满意足。可是虽然这样，他还是运气好，简直好得不得了。差不多老是他赌赢了。他老是一心一意找机会；不管一桩什么事情，只要有人提起，那家伙就要和人家打赌，随你挑选哪一边都行，就像我刚才说的那样。要是举行赛马，赛完的时候你就会发现他大赢特赢或是赌得两手空空；要是有人斗狗，他也要赌；有人斗猫，他也要赌；有人斗鸡，他也要赌；嗯，哪怕有两只鸟落在篱笆上，他也要和你赌一赌哪一只先飞；要是举行野外的布道会，他一定准时到场，拿华克尔牧师来打赌，照他看来，华克尔牧师是这一带地方讲道讲得最好的，本来也是，他的确是好人。他哪怕是看见一只屎壳郎在往什么地方走，他也要和你赌一赌它走多大工夫才走得到它要去的地方，要是你答应和他打赌，他就跟着那只屎壳郎一直到墨西哥去，也要弄清楚它究竟到什么地方，以及它在路上走多久。这儿有许多小伙子看见过那个斯迈利，都可以给你谈谈他的事情。嗯，不管是什么，对他都是一样——他赌什么都行——那才是个顶有趣的角色哩。有一回华克尔牧师的太太得了一场大病，病了很久，好像是没有救了。可是有一天早上他走进来，斯迈利马上跑过去问他的太太的病怎么样，他说她好得多了——感谢天主无限的慈悲——看情形大有起色，靠老天的保佑，她还可以恢复健康。可是斯迈利连想也没有想一下，就冲口而出地说：“嗯，我敢跟你赌两块半钱，准保她决不会好。”

这个斯迈利买了一匹母马——小伙子们把它叫作十五分钟的老爷马，可是那不过是开玩笑，你明白吗，因为它当然比这跑得快些——而且他还常常靠那匹马赢钱，虽然它跑得慢，并且老害气喘病，或是害瘟热病，要不就害肺病，或是这一类的毛病。他们老是让它先跑两三百码，然后把它撵过去；可是每次到了比赛的终点，它就上了劲头，简直是拼命地跑，一跳一跳地赶着大步往上撵，它把腿轻快地乱甩，一时甩到空中，一时甩到一边，踢到围栏上，掀起的灰尘越来越多，它的咳嗽、打喷嚏和喷鼻息的声音越来越响——结果每次老是赶到裁判台前，恰好赶过人家一个脖子那么点儿远，刚刚叫它能够算得清楚。

他还有一只小斗狗，你看它那样子，还会以为它一钱不值，只会坐在那儿闲着，显得古里古怪的神气，光等着找机会偷东西吃。可是只要给它押上了赌注，它马上就不同了：它那下半边嘴巴就伸出来，活像一只轮船前面的水手舱那样，它的牙齿也就露出来，像火炉那样发亮。别的狗尽管抓住它、欺负它、咬它，接二连三地把它甩过肩头。可是安得鲁·杰克逊——这是那小狗的名字——老是装出并没有什么不满意的样子，好像是情愿受欺负——那么大家一直在它的手那一边下赌注，一倍又一倍地往上加，一直把钱都押光了。这时候它才突然一下子咬住对方那只狗的后腿拐子，死咬住不放——并不嚼，你明

白吗，光只咬住不松嘴，直到人家认输的时候，哪怕拖一年它也不在乎。斯迈利拿这个小狗儿打赌，老是赢，直到后来有一次它干上了一只没有后腿的狗，因为它的腿让圆锯给锯掉了。等到斗了好一阵的时候，赌注通通押上了，杰克逊就去咬它最爱咬的地方，它马上就看出它上了当，知道另外那只狗叫它扑了个空。可以这么说吧，它好像吃了一惊，这下子它就有点儿泄气的样子，再也不打算斗赢了，所以它就吃了个大亏。它望了斯迈利一眼，好像是说它伤心透了，觉得这是他的错，不应该弄一只没有后腿的狗来叫它去斗，因为它斗起来就专靠咬人家的后腿，后来它就一瘸一瘸地走到一边，躺在地下死了。那是个很好的小狗儿，那安得鲁·杰克逊，它要是活着的话，一定是出了名，因为它有一套本事，还很聪明——这我知道，因为它根本说不上有什么占便宜的地方，要是它不聪明的话，碰到那些厉害的对手还能斗得过，那实在说不通。我一想起它最后斗的那一场，心里就难受。

嗯，这个斯迈利还养了捉耗子的小狗、小雄鸡和公猫，还有别的这类东西，简直叫你赌个没完，不管你拿什么和他打赌，他准和你做对手。有一天他捉到一只青蛙，就把它带回家来，他说他打算教一教它。所以他整整三个月，什么事也没干，专在后院里教那青蛙跳。果然不错，他真把它教会了。他在后面推一下，马上你就看见那青蛙在空中打转，好像一块炸面卷似的——看见它翻一个筋斗，要是劲头使对了，也许还能翻两下，再好好地落下来，稳稳当当地，就像一只猫那样。他又教它学会了捉苍蝇，常常叫它练习，后来它每回都能把苍蝇捉到，不管多远，只要它能看得见。斯迈利说青蛙只要教一教就行，它差不多什么事都会干——我相信他说的不错。嘿，我看见过他把丹尼尔·韦伯斯特放在这儿的地板上——那只青蛙的名字叫作丹尼尔·韦伯斯特——大声叫起来：“苍蝇，丹尼尔，苍蝇！”你简直还来不及眨一下眼睛，它就往上一跳，从那个柜台上捉住一只苍蝇，吧嗒一下掉在地下，就像一团泥似的，这下子它就拿后腿抓它的脑袋旁边，简直就跟没有那回事一样，好像它根本不觉得它比别的青蛙本事大。它虽然那么聪明，可是你再也找不到像它那么谦虚、那么爽快的青蛙。要是规规矩矩从平地跳起来的时候，它使一把劲往上一跳，就比你看到过的和它同类的动物随便哪一个都跳得高。从平地往上一跳是它的拿手戏，你明白吗？赛起这个来的时候，斯迈利就拼命在他这一边押赌注，连最后一个钱都押上。斯迈利对他这个青蛙简直是得意得要命，也难怪，因为那些到各处跑过码头、见过世面的人都说它比他们看见过的青蛙随便哪一只都强。

嗯，斯迈利把这小家伙放在一只小笼子里，有时候就把它带到城里去，跟人家打赌。有一天来了一个人——他还是头一次到这市镇上来的——他碰见斯迈利拿着那只小笼子，就说：

“你那小笼子里装着什么好东西呀？”

斯迈利爱理不理地说：“照说这也许是只鸚鵡，也许是只金丝雀，这很难说，可就偏不是——这倒偏偏是只青蛙。”

那位老兄把这小笼子接过来，仔细看了一阵，把它转来转去，他说：“哼，原来是这么回事，它有什么用处呀？”

“噢，”斯迈利满不在乎地说，“它有一个本事很了不起，据我看——它能比加利维拉县随便哪只青蛙都跳得高。”

这家伙又把小笼子拿过来，再仔仔细细地看了好一阵，又把它交还斯迈利，从从容容地说：“哼，”他说，“我可看不出这只青蛙有什么了不起，还不是和别的青蛙一样嘛。”

“也许你是看不出，”斯迈利说，“也许你对青蛙是内行，也许是外行；也许你有经验，也许你不过是个客串，不客气地说。可是不管怎样，我有我的看法，我敢跟你赌四十块钱，管保它比加利维拉县随便哪一只青蛙都跳得高。”

那个人盘算了一会儿，后来就显得有点儿为难的样子，他说：“嘿，我在这儿是个陌生人，没带着青蛙；我要是有青蛙的话，那我就愿意和你赌一下。”

于是斯迈利就说：“那不要紧——那不要紧——你要是能替我把这小笼子拿一会儿，我就去给你抓一只青蛙来。”所以那位老兄就拿着那只小笼子，取出四十块钱来和斯迈利的放在一起，坐下来等着。

他在那儿坐了很久，心里翻来覆去地想，后来他就把那青蛙拿出来，把它的嘴撬开，拿一只茶匙给它灌了一肚子打鹌鹑用的弹子——差不多给它灌得齐了下巴那儿——然后把它放在地上。斯迈利跑到了泥塘里去，在烂泥里稀里哗啦找了一阵，终归抓到了一只青蛙，就把它拿进来，交给那个人，他说：

“好吧，你要是预备好了的话，就把它跟丹尼尔并排放着，让它的前脚和丹尼尔的一般齐，我来发口令。”于是他就说：“一——二——三——跳！”他和那个人都从后面轻轻地推了推他们的青蛙，新抓来的那只青蛙就跳得很有劲头，可是丹尼尔鼓了一把劲，耸起肩膀——像这样——就和一个法国人似的，可是没有用——它连动也不能动。它稳稳地蹲在那儿，好像一座教堂，它再也不能动弹了，跟一只船抛了锚一样。斯迈利简直莫名其妙，他还觉得很伤脑筋，可是他当然一点儿也不明白究竟是怎么回事。

那个人拿起钱就走，当他走出门去的时候，他从肩膀上伸出大拇指——像这样——向着丹尼尔摆一摆，很从容地再说了一遍：“哼，我可看不出这只青蛙有什么了不起，还不是和别的青蛙一样嘛。”

斯迈利就站着直挠头，朝着地下的丹尼尔望了很久，后来他

说：“我实在不懂这个青蛙这回究竟为什么泄了气——说不定它出了什么毛病——它好像是肚子胀得很大哩。”于是他就揪住丹尼尔的脖子上面，把它拿起来掂了一下分量，说：“嗨，它要没有五磅重才怪哪！”他就把它倒起来提着，它呼噜呼噜吐出了两把弹子。这下他才明白是怎么回事，简直气疯了——他把青蛙放下，赶快跑出去追那个坏蛋，可是他始终没有追着。后来……

西蒙·惠勒说到这里，听见前院里有人叫他的名字，他就站起来去看外面有什么事情要找他。他一面往外走，一面转过脸来对我说：“你就在那儿坐着别动吧，先生，请你别着急——我马上就回来。”

可是对不起，我觉得他再把那个有赌癖的流氓吉姆·斯迈利的故事说下去，也不能给我多少关于留尼达·斯迈利牧师的消息，所以我就开步走了。

我在门口碰见那个好客的惠勒回来了，他把我留住，又往下说：

“噢，这位斯迈利有一头一只眼的黄牛，没有尾巴，矮墩墩的，像只香蕉似的，并且……”

可是我既没有工夫，也没有兴致，所以我没有在他那儿等着听他讲那头倒霉的牛的故事。就告辞了。

（张友松 译）

Mark Twain

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

The Stolen
White Elephant

N^o 14

‘PALE TERROR
GOES BEFORE
HIM, DEATH
AND
DEVASTATION
FOLLOW
AFTER!’

The Stolen White Elephant

1

The following curious history was related to me by a chance railway acquaintance. He was a gentleman more than seventy years of age, and his thoroughly good and gentle face and earnest and sincere manner imprinted the unmistakable stamp of truth upon every statement which fell from his lips. He said:

You know in what reverence the royal white elephant of Siam is held by the people of that country. You know it is sacred to kings, only kings may possess it, and that it is indeed in a measure even superior to kings, since it receives not merely honour but worship. Very well; five years ago, when the troubles concerning the frontier line arose between Great Britain and Siam, it was presently manifest that Siam had been in the wrong. Therefore every reparation was quickly made, and the British representative stated that he was satisfied and the past should be forgotten. This greatly relieved the King of Siam, and partly as a token of gratitude, but partly also, perhaps, to wipe out any little remaining vestige of unpleasantness which England might feel toward him, he wished to send the Queen a present – the sole sure way of propitiating an enemy, according to Oriental ideas. This present ought not only to be a royal one, but transcendently royal. Wherefore, what offering could be so meet as that of a white elephant? My position in the Indian civil service was such that I was deemed peculiarly worthy of the honour of conveying the present to her Majesty. A ship was fitted out for me and my servants and the officers and attendants of the elephant, and in due time I arrived in New York harbour and placed my royal charge in admirable quarters in Jersey City. It was necessary to remain awhile in order to recruit the animal's health before resuming the voyage.

All went well during a fortnight – then my calamities began. The white elephant was stolen! I was called up at dead of night and informed of this fearful misfortune. For some moments I was beside myself with terror and anxiety; I was helpless. Then I grew calmer

and collected my faculties. I soon saw my course – for indeed there was but the one course for an intelligent man to pursue. Late as it was, I flew to New York and got a policeman to conduct me to the headquarters of the detective force. Fortunately I arrived in time, though the chief of the force, the celebrated Inspector Blunt, was just on the point of leaving for his home. He was a man of middle size and compact frame, and when he was thinking deeply he had a way of knitting his brows and tapping his forehead reflectively with his finger, which impressed you at once with the conviction that you stood in the presence of a person of no common order. The very sight of him gave me confidence and made me hopeful. I stated my errand. It did not flurry him in the least; it had no more visible effect upon his iron self-possession than if I had told him somebody had stolen my dog. He motioned me to a seat, and said calmly, ‘Allow me to think a moment, please.’

So saying, he sat down at his office table and leaned his head upon his hand. Several clerks were at work at the other end of the room; the scratching of their pens was all the sound I heard during the next six or seven minutes. Meantime the inspector sat there, buried in thought. Finally he raised his head, and there was that in the firm lines of his face which showed me that his brain had done its work and his plan was made. Said he – and his voice was low and impressive, ‘This is no ordinary case. Every step must be warily taken; each step must be made sure before the next is ventured. And secrecy must be observed – secrecy profound and absolute. Speak to no one about the matter, not even the reporters. I will take care of *them* ; I will see that they get only what it may suit my ends to let them know.’ He touched a bell; a youth appeared. ‘Alaric, tell the reporters to remain for the present.’ The boy retired.

‘Now let us proceed to business – and systematically. Nothing can be accomplished in this trade of mine without strict and minute method.’

He took a pen and some paper. ‘Now – name of the elephant?’

‘Hassan Ben Ali Ben Selim Abdallah Mohammed Moisé Alhammal Jamsetjeebhoy Dhuleep Sultan Ebu Bhudpoor.’

‘Very well. Given name?’

‘Jumbo.’

‘Very well. Place of birth?’

‘The capital city of Siam.’

‘Parents living?’

‘No – dead.’

‘Had they any other issue besides this one?’

‘None. He was an only child.’

‘Very well. These matters are sufficient under that head. Now please describe the elephant, and leave out no particular, however insignificant – that is, insignificant from your point of view. To men in my profession there are no insignificant particulars; they do not exist.’

I described – he wrote. When I was done, he said, ‘Now listen. If I have made any mistakes, correct me.’

He read as follows:

‘Height, 19 feet; length from apex of forehead to insertion of tail, 26 feet; length of trunk, 16 feet; length of tail, 6 feet; total length, including trunk and tail, 48 feet; length of tusks, 9 feet; ears in keeping with these dimensions;

footprint resembles the mark left when one up-ends a barrel in the snow; colour of the elephant, a dull white; has a hole the size of a plate in each ear for the insertion of jewellery, and possesses the habit in a remarkable degree of squirting water upon spectators and of maltreating with his trunk not only such persons as he is acquainted with, but even entire strangers; limps slightly with his right hind leg, and has a small scar in his left armpit caused by a former boil; had on, when stolen, a castle containing seats for fifteen persons, and a gold- cloth saddle- blanket the size of an ordinary carpet.’

There were no mistakes. The inspector touched the bell, handed the description to Alaric, and said, ‘Have fifty thousand

copies of this printed at once and mailed to every detective office and pawnbroker's shop on the continent.' Alaric retired. 'There – so far, so good. Next, I must have a photograph of the property.'

I gave him one. He examined it critically, and said, 'It must do, since we can do no better; but he has his trunk curled up and tucked into his mouth. That is unfortunate, and is calculated to mislead, for of course he does not usually have it in that position.' He touched his bell.

'Alaric, have fifty thousand copies of this photograph made, the first thing in the morning, and mail them with the descriptive circulars.'

Alaric retired to execute his orders. The inspector said, 'It will be necessary to offer a reward, of course. Now as to the amount?'

'What sum would you suggest?'

'To *begin* with, I should say – well, twenty- five thousand dollars. It is an intricate and difficult business; there are a thousand avenues of escape and opportunities of concealment. These thieves have friends and pals everywhere –'

'Bless me, do you know who they are?'

The wary face, practised in concealing the thoughts and feelings within, gave me no token, nor yet the replying words, so quietly uttered: 'Never mind about that. I may, and I may not. We generally gather a pretty shrewd inkling of who our man is by the manner of his work and the size of the game he goes after. We are not dealing with a pickpocket or a hall thief, now, make up your mind to that. This property was not "lifted" by a novice. But, as I was saying, considering the amount of travel which will have to be done, and the diligence with which the thieves will cover up their traces as they move along, twenty- five thousand may be too small a sum to offer, yet I think it worthwhile to start with that.'

So we determined upon that figure, as a beginning. Then this man, whom nothing escaped which could by any possibility be made to serve as a clue, said: 'There are cases in detective history to show that criminals have been detected through peculiarities in their appetites. Now, what does this elephant eat, and how much?'

'Well, as to *what* he eats – he will eat *anything*. He will eat a

man, he will eat a Bible – he will eat anything *between* a man and a Bible.’

‘Good – very good indeed, but too general. Details are necessary, details are the only valuable things in our trade. Very well – as to men. At one meal – or, if you prefer, during one day – how many men will he eat, if fresh?’

‘He would not care whether they were fresh or not; at a single meal he would eat five ordinary men.’

‘Very good; five men; we will put that down. What nationalities would he prefer?’

‘He is indifferent about nationalities. He prefers acquaintances, but is not prejudiced against strangers.’

‘Very good. Now, as to Bibles. How many Bibles would he eat at a meal?’

‘He would eat an entire edition.’

‘It is hardly succinct enough. Do you mean the ordinary octavo, or the family illustrated?’

‘I think he would be indifferent to illustrations; that is, I think he would not value illustrations above simple letter-press.’

‘No, you do not get my idea. I refer to bulk. The ordinary octavo Bible weighs about two pounds and a half, while the great quarto with the illustrations weighs ten or twelve. How many Doré Bibles would he eat at a meal?’

‘If you knew this elephant, you could not ask. He would take what they had.’

‘Well, put it in dollars and cents, then. We must get at it somehow. The Doré costs a hundred dollars a copy, Russia leather, bevelled.’

‘He would require about fifty thousand dollars’ worth –say an edition of five hundred copies.’

‘Now that is more exact. I will put that down. Very well; he likes men and Bibles; so far, so good. What else will he eat? I want particulars.’

‘He will leave Bibles to eat bricks, he will leave bricks to eat

bottles, he will leave bottles to eat clothing, he will leave clothing to eat cats, he will leave cats to eat oysters, he will leave oysters to eat ham, he will leave ham to eat sugar, he will leave sugar to eat pie, he will leave pie to eat potatoes, he will leave potatoes to eat bran, he will leave bran to eat hay, he will leave hay to eat oats, he will leave oats to eat rice, for he was mainly raised on it. There is nothing whatever that he will not eat but European butter, and he would eat that if he could taste it.'

'Very good. General quantity at a meal – say about –'

'Well, anywhere from a quarter to half a ton.'

'And he drinks –'

'Everything that is fluid. Milk, water, whiskey, molasses, castor oil, camphene, carbolic acid – it is no use to go into particulars; whatever fluid occurs to you set it down. He will drink anything that is fluid, except European coffee.'

'Very good. As to quantity?'

'Put it down five to fifteen barrels – his thirst varies; his other appetites do not.'

'These things are unusual. They ought to furnish quite good clues toward tracing him.'

He touched the bell. 'Alaric, summon Captain Burns.'

Burns appeared. Inspector Blunt unfolded the whole matter to him, detail by detail. Then he said in the clear, decisive tones of a man whose plans are clearly defined in his head, and who is accustomed to command, 'Captain Burns, detail Detectives Jones, Davis, Halsey, Bates, and Hackett to shadow the elephant.'

'Yes, sir.'

'Detail Detectives Moses, Dakin, Murphy, Rogers, Tupper, Higgins, and Bartholomew to shadow the thieves.'

'Yes, sir.'

'Place a strong guard – a guard of thirty picked men, with a relief of thirty – over the place from whence the elephant was stolen, to keep strict watch there night and day, and allow none to approach – except reporters –without written authority from me.'

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Place detectives in plain clothes in the railway, steamship, and ferry depots, and upon all roadways leading out of Jersey City, with orders to search all suspicious persons.’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Furnish all these men with photograph and accompanying description of the elephant, and instruct them to search all trains and outgoing ferry- boats and other vessels.’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘If the elephant should be found, let him be seized, and the information forwarded to me by telegraph.’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Let me be informed at once if any clues should be found – footprints of the animal, or anything of that kind.’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Get an order commanding the harbour police to patrol the frontages vigilantly.’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Despatch detectives in plain clothes over all the railways, north as far as Canada, west as far as Ohio, south as far as Washington.’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Place experts in all the telegraph offices to listen to all messages; and let them require that all cipher despatches be interpreted to them.’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Let all these things be done with the utmost secrecy –mind, the most impenetrable secrecy.’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Report to me promptly at the usual hour.’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Go!’

‘Yes, sir.’

He was gone.

Inspector Blunt was silent and thoughtful a moment, while the fire in his eye cooled down and faded out. Then he turned to me and said in a placid voice, ‘I am not given to boasting, it is not my habit but – we shall find the elephant.’

I shook him warmly by the hand and thanked him; and I *felt* my thanks, too. The more I had seen of the man the more I liked him, and the more I admired him and marvelled over the mysterious wonders of his profession. Then we parted for the night, and I went home with a far happier heart than I had carried with me to his office.

2

Next morning it was all in the newspapers, in the minutest detail. It even had additions – consisting of Detective This, Detective That, and Detective The Other’s ‘Theory’as to how the robbery was done, who the robbers were, and whither they had flown with their booty. There were eleven of these theories, and they covered all the possibilities; and this single fact shows what independent thinkers detectives are. No two theories were alike, or even much resembled each other, save in one striking particular, and in that one all the eleven theories were absolutely agreed. That was, that although the rear of my building was torn out and the only door remained locked, the elephant had not been removed through the rent, but by some other(undiscovered) outlet. All agreed that the robbers had made that rent only to mislead the detectives. That never would have occurred to me or to any other layman, perhaps, but it had not deceived the detectives for a moment. Thus, what I had supposed was the only thing that had no mystery about it was in fact the very thing I had gone furthest astray in. The eleven theories all named the supposed robbers, but no two named the same robbers; the total number of suspected persons was thirty- seven. The various newspaper accounts all closed with the most important opinion of all – that of Chief Inspector Blunt. A portion of this statement read as follows:

The chief knows who the two principals are, namely, ‘Brick’ Duffy and ‘Red’ McFadden. Ten days

before the robbery was achieved he was already aware that it was to be attempted, and had quietly proceeded to shadow these two noted villains; but unfortunately on the night in question their track was lost, and before it could be found again the bird was flown – that is, the elephant.

Duffy and McFadden are the boldest scoundrels in the profession; the chief has reasons for believing that they are the men who stole the stove out of the detective headquarters on a bitter night last winter – in consequence of which the chief and every detective present were in the hands of the physicians before morning, some with frozen feet, others with frozen fingers, ears, and other members.

When I read the first half of that I was more astonished than ever at the wonderful sagacity of this strange man. He not only saw everything in the present with a clear eye, but even the future could not be hidden from him. I was soon at his office, and said I could not help wishing he had had those men arrested, and so prevented the trouble and loss; but his reply was simple and unanswerable: ‘It is not our province to prevent crime, but to punish it. We cannot punish it until it is committed.’

I remarked that the secrecy with which we had begun had been marred by the newspapers; not only all our facts but all our plans and purposes had been revealed; even all the suspected persons had been named; these would doubtless disguise themselves now, or go into hiding.

‘Let them. They will find that when I am ready for them my hand will descend upon them, in their secret places, as unerringly as the hand of fate. As to the newspapers, we must keep in with them. Fame, reputation, constant public mention – these are the detective’s bread and butter. He must publish his facts, else he will be supposed to have none; he must publish his theory, for nothing is so strange or striking as a detective’s theory, or brings him so much wondering respect; we must publish our plans, for these the journals insist upon having, and we could not deny them without

offending. We must constantly show the public what we are doing, or they will believe we are doing nothing. It is much pleasanter to have a newspaper say, "Inspector Blunt's ingenious and extraordinary theory is as follows," than to have it say some harsh thing, or, worse still, some sarcastic one.'

'I see the force of what you say. But I noticed that in one part of your remarks in the papers this morning you refused to reveal your opinion upon a certain minor point.'

'Yes, we always do that; it has a good effect. Besides, I had not formed any opinion on that point, anyway.'

I deposited a considerable sum of money with the inspector, to meet current expenses, and sat down to wait for news. We were expecting the telegrams to begin to arrive at any moment now. Meantime I reread the newspapers and also our descriptive circular, and observed that our \$25,000 reward seemed to be offered only to detectives. I said I thought it ought to be offered to anybody who would catch the elephant. The inspector said: 'It is the detectives who will find the elephant, hence the reward will go to the right place. If other people found the animal, it would only be by watching the detectives and taking advantage of clues and indications stolen from them, and that would entitle the detectives to the reward, after all. The proper office of a reward is to stimulate the men who deliver up their time and their trained sagacities to this sort of work, and not to confer benefits upon chance citizens who stumble upon a capture without having earned the benefits by their own merits and labours.'

This was reasonable enough, certainly. Now the telegraphic machine in the corner began to click, and the following despatch was the result:

Flower Station, N.Y., 7.30 a.M.

Have got a clue. Found a succession of deep tracks across a farm near here. Followed them two miles east without

result; think elephant went west. Shall now shadow him in that direction.

Darley, *Detective*

‘Darley’s one of the best men on the force,’ said the inspector. ‘We shall hear from him again before long.’ Telegram No. 2 came:

Barker’s, N.J., 7.40 a.M.

Just arrived. Glass factory broken open here during night, and eight hundred bottles taken. Only water in large quantity near here is five miles distant. Shall strike for there. Elephant will be thirsty. Bottles were empty.

Baker, *Detective*

‘That promises well, too,’ said the inspector. ‘I told you the creature’s appetites would not be bad clues.’

Telegram No. 3:

Taylorville, L.I., 8.15 a.M.

A haystack near here disappeared during night. Probably eaten. Have got a clue, and am off.

Hubbard, *Detective*

‘How he does move around!’ said the inspector. ‘I knew we had a difficult job on hand, but we shall catch him yet.’

Flower Station, N.Y., 9 a.M.

Shadowed the tracks three miles westward. Large, deep, and ragged. Have just met a farmer who says they are not elephant tracks. Says they are holes where he dug up

saplings for shade- trees when ground was frozen last winter. Give me orders how to proceed.

Darley, *Detective*

‘Aha! a confederate of the thieves! The thing grows warm,’ said the inspector.

He dictated the following telegram to Darley:

Arrest the man and force him to name his pals.

Continue to follow the tracks – to the Pacific, if necessary.

Chief Blunt

Next telegram:

Coney Point, PA., 8.45 a.M.

Gas office broken open here during night and three months' unpaid gas bills taken. Have got a clue and am away.

Murphy, Detective

'Heavens!' said the inspector; 'would he eat gas bills?'

'Through ignorance – yes; but they cannot support life. At least, unassisted.'

Now came this exciting telegram:

Ironville, N.Y., 9.30 a.M.

Just arrived. This village in consternation. Elephant passed through here at five this morning. Some say he went east, some say west, some north, some south – but all say they did not wait to notice particularly. He killed a horse; have secured a piece of it for a clue. Killed it with his trunk; from style of blow, think he struck it left-handed. From

position in which horse lies, think elephant travelled northward along line of Berkley railway. Has four and a half hours' start, but I move on his track at once.

Hawes, Detective

I uttered exclamations of joy. The inspector was as self-contained as a graven image. He calmly touched his bell.

'Alaric, send Captain Burns here.'

Burns appeared.

'How many men are ready for instant orders?'

‘Ninety- six, sir.’

‘Send them north at once. Let them concentrate along the line of the Berkley road north of Ironville.’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Let them conduct their movements with the utmost secrecy. As fast as others are at liberty, hold them for orders.’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Go!’

‘Yes, sir.’

Presently came another telegram:

Sage Corners, N.Y., 10.30 a.M.

Just arrived. Elephant passed through here at 8.15. All escaped from the town but a policeman. Apparently elephant did not strike at policeman, but at the lamp-post. Got both. I have secured a portion of the policeman as clue.

StuMM, *Detective*

‘So the elephant has turned westward,’ said the inspector. ‘However, he will not escape, for my men are scattered all over that region.’

The next telegram said:

Glover’s, 11.15 a.M.

Just arrived. Village deserted, except sick and aged. Elephant passed through three quarters of an hour ago. The anti- temperance mass meeting was in session; he put his trunk in at a window and washed it out with water from cistern. Some swallowed it – since dead; several drowned. Detectives Cross and O’Shaughnessy were passing through town, but going south – so missed elephant. Whole region for many miles around in terror – people flying from their homes. Wherever

they turn they meet elephant, and many are killed.

Brant, *Detective*

I could have shed tears, this havoc so distressed me. But the inspector only said, 'You see – we are closing in on him. He feels our presence; he has turned eastward again.'

Yet further troublous news was in store for us. The telegraph brought this:

Hoganport, 12.19 p.M.

Just arrived. Elephant passed through half an hour ago, creating wildest fright and excitement. Elephant raged around streets; two plumbers going by, killed one – other escaped. Regret general.

O'Flaherty, *Detective*

'Now he is right in the midst of my men,' said the inspector. 'Nothing can save him.'

A succession of telegrams came from detectives who were scattered through New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and who were following clues consisting of ravaged barns, factories, and Sunday-school libraries, with high hopes – hopes amounting to certainties, indeed. The inspector said, 'I wish I could communicate with them and order them north, but that is impossible. A detective only visits a telegraph office to send his report; then he is off again, and you don't know where to put your hand on him.'

Now came this despatch:

Bridgeport, CT., 12.15 p.M.

Barnum offers rate of \$4,000 a year for exclusive privilege

of using elephant as travelling advertising medium from

now till detectives find him. Wants to paste circus-posters

on him. Desires immediate answer.

Boggs, *Detective*

‘That is perfectly absurd!’ I exclaimed. ‘Of course it is,’ said the inspector. ‘Evidently Mr Barnum, who thinks he is so sharp, does not know me – but I know him.’

Then he dictated this answer to the despatch:

Mr Barnum’s offer declined. Make it \$7,000 or nothing.

Chief Blunt

‘There. We shall not have to wait long for an answer. Mr Barnum is not at home; he is in the telegraph office – it is his way when he has business on hand. Inside of three –’

Done. – P. T. Barnum.

So interrupted the clicking telegraphic instrument. Before I could make a comment upon this extra ordinary episode, the following despatch carried my thoughts into another and very distressing channel:

Bolivia, N.Y., 12.50 p.M.

Elephant arrived here from the south and passed through toward the forest at 11.50, dispersing a funeral on the way, and diminishing the mourners by two. Citizens fired some small cannonballs into him, and then fled. Detective Burke and I arrived ten minutes later, from the north, but mistook some excavations for footprints, and so lost a good deal of time; but at last we struck the right trail and followed it to the woods. We then got down on our hands and knees and continued to keep a sharp eye on the track, and so shadowed it into the brush. Burke was in advance. Unfortunately the animal had stopped to rest; therefore, Burke having his head down, intent upon the track, burred up against the elephant’s hind legs before he was aware of his vicinity. Burke instantly rose to his

feet, seized the tail, and exclaimed joyfully, 'I claim the re -' but got no further, for a single blow of the huge trunk laid the brave fellow's fragments low in death. I fled rearward, and the elephant turned and shadowed me to the edge of the wood,

making tremendous speed, and I should inevitably have been lost, but that the remains of the funeral providentially intervened again and diverted his attention. I have just learned that nothing of that funeral is now left; but this is no loss, for there is an abundance of material for another. Meantime, the elephant has disappeared again.

Mulrooney, *Detective*

We heard no news except from the diligent and confident detectives scattered about New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Virginia – who were all following fresh and encouraging clues – until shortly after 2 p.m., when this telegram came:

Baxter Center, 2.15 p.M.

Elephant been here, plastered over with circus-bills, and broke up a revival, striking down and damaging many who were on the point of entering upon a better life. Citizens penned him up, and established a guard. When Detective Brown and I arrived, sometime after, we entered enclosure and proceeded to identify elephant by photograph and description. All marks tallied exactly except one, which we could not see – the boil- scar under armpit. To make sure, Brown crept under to look, and was immediately brained – that is, head crushed and destroyed, though nothing issued from debris. All fled; so did elephant, striking right and left with much effect. Has escaped, but left bold blood- track from cannon- wounds.

Rediscovery certain. He broke southward, through a dense forest.

Brent, *Detective*

That was the last telegram. At nightfall a fog shut down which was so dense that objects but three feet away could not be discerned. This lasted all night. The ferry- boats and even the omnibuses had to stop running.

3

Next morning the papers were as full of detective theories as before; they had all our tragic facts in detail also, and a great many more which they had received from their telegraphic correspondents. Column after column was occupied, a third of its way down, with glaring headlines, which it made my heart sick to read. Their general tone was like this:

‘THE WHITE ELEPHANT AT LARGE!

HE MOVES UPON HIS FATAL MARCH!

WHOLE VILLAGES DESERTED BY THEIR FRIGHT-

STRICKEN OCCUPANTS!

PALE TERROR GOES BEFORE HIM, DEATH AND

DEVASTATION FOLLOW AFTER!

AFTER THESE, THE DETECTIVES.

BARNS DESTROYED, FACTORIES GUTTED, HARVESTS

DEVOURED, PUBLIC ASSEMBLAGES DISPERSED,

ACCOMPANIED BY SCENES OF CARNAGE IMPOSSIBLE

TO DESCRIBE!

THEORIES OF THIRTY- FOUR OF THE MOST

DISTINGUISHED DETECTIVES ON THE FORCE!

THEORY OF CHIEF BLUNT!’

‘There!’ said Inspector Blunt, almost betrayed into excitement, ‘this is magnificent! This is the greatest windfall that any detective organisation ever had. The fame of it will travel to the ends of the earth, and endure to the end of time, and my name with it.’

But there was no joy for me. I felt as if I had committed all those red crimes, and that the elephant was only my irresponsible agent. And how the list had grown! In one place he had ‘interfered with an election and killed five repeaters.’ He had followed this act with the destruction of two poor fellows, named O’Donohue and McFlannigan, who had ‘found a refuge in the home of the oppressed of all lands only the day before, and were in the act of exercising for the first time the noble right of American citizens at the polls, when stricken down by the relentless hand of the Scourge of Siam.’ In another, he had ‘found a crazy sensation- preacher preparing his next season’s heroic attacks on the dance, the theatre, and other things which can’t strike back, and had stepped on him.’ And in still another place he had ‘killed a lightning- rod agent.’ And so the list went on, growing redder and redder, and more and more heartbreaking. Sixty persons had been killed, and two hundred and forty wounded. All the accounts bore just testimony to the activity and devotion of the detectives, and all closed with the remark that ‘three hundred thousand citizens and four detectives saw the dread creature, and two of the latter he destroyed.’

I dreaded to hear the telegraphic instrument begin to click again. By and by the messages began to pour in, but I was happily disappointed in their nature. It was soon apparent that all trace of the elephant was lost. The fog had enabled him to search out a good hiding place unobserved. Telegrams from the most absurdly distant points reported that a dim vast mass had been glimpsed there through the fog at such and such an hour, and was ‘undoubtedly the elephant.’ This dim vast mass had been glimpsed in New Haven, in New Jersey, in Pennsylvania, in interior New York, in Brooklyn, and even in the city of New York itself! But in all cases the dim vast mass had vanished quickly and left no trace. Every detective of the large force scattered over this huge extent of country sent his hourly report, and each and every one of them had a clue, and was shadowing something, and was hot upon the heels of it.

But the day passed without other result.

The next day the same.

The next just the same.

The newspaper reports began to grow monotonous with facts that amounted to nothing, clues which led to nothing, and theories which had nearly exhausted the elements which surprise and delight and dazzle.

By advice of the inspector I doubled the reward.

Four more dull days followed. Then came a bitter blow to the poor, hard- working detectives – the journalists declined to print their theories, and coldly said, ‘Give us a rest.’

Two weeks after the elephant’s disappearance I raised the reward to \$75,000 by the inspector’s advice. It was a great sum, but I felt that I would rather sacrifice my whole private fortune than lose my credit with my government. Now that the detectives were in adversity, the newspapers turned upon them, and began to fling the most stinging sarcasms at them. This gave the minstrels an idea, and they dressed themselves as detectives and hunted the elephant on the stage in the most extravagant way. The caricaturists made pictures of detectives scanning the country with spyglasses, while the elephant, at their backs, stole apples out of their pockets. And they made all sorts of ridiculous pictures of the detective badge – you have seen that badge printed in gold on the back of detective novels, no doubt – it is a wide- staring eye, with the legend, ‘*We Never Sleep* .’ When detectives called for a drink, the would- be facetious bar- keeper resurrected an obsolete form of expression and said, ‘Will you have an eye- opener?’ All the air was thick with sarcasms. But there was one man who moved calm, untouched, unaffected, through it all. It was that heart of oak, the Chief Inspector. His brave eye never drooped, his serene confidence never wavered. He always said, ‘Let them rail on; he laughs best who laughs last.’

My admiration for the man grew into a species of worship. I was at his side always. His office had become an unpleasant place to me, and now became daily more and more so. Yet if he could endure it I meant to do so also; at least, as long as I could. So I came regularly, and stayed –the only outsider who seemed to be capable of it. Everybody wondered how I could; and often it seemed

to me that I must desert, but at such times I looked into that calm and apparently unconscious face, and held my ground.

About three weeks after the elephant's disappearance, I was about to say one morning that I should have to strike my colours and retire, when the great detective arrested the thought by proposing one more superb and masterly move.

This was to compromise with the robbers. The fertility of this man's invention exceeded anything I have ever seen, and I have had a wide intercourse with the world's finest minds. He said he was confident he could compromise for \$100,000 and recover the elephant. I said I believed I could scrape the amount together, but what would become of the poor detectives who had worked so faithfully? He said, 'In compromises they always get half.'

This removed my only objection. So the inspector wrote two notes, in this form:

Dear MadaM – Your husband can make a large sum of money (and be entirely protected from the law) by making an immediate appointment with me. Chief Blunt

He sent one of these by his confidential messenger to the 'reputed wife' of Brick Duffy, and the other to the reputed wife of Red McFadden.

Within the hour these offensive answers came:

YE OWLD FOOL: brick McDuffys bin ded 2 yere.

Bridget Mahoney

CHIEF Bat – Red McFadden is hung and in heving 18 month. Any Ass but a detective knose that.

Mary O'Hooligan

'I had long suspected these facts,' said the inspector; 'this testimony proves the unerring accuracy of my instinct.'

The moment one resource failed him he was ready with another. He immediately wrote an advertisement for the morning papers, and I kept a copy of it:

A. – xwblv. 242 N. Tjnd – fz328wmlg. Ozpo – ; 2

He said that if the thief was alive this would bring him to the usual rendezvous. He further explained that the usual rendezvous was a place where all business affairs between detectives and criminals were conducted. This meeting would take place at twelve the next night.

We could do nothing till then, and I lost no time in getting out of the office, and was grateful indeed for the privilege.

At 11 the next night I brought \$100,000 in banknotes and put them into the chief's hands, and shortly afterward he took his leave, with the brave old undimmed confidence in his eye. An almost intolerable hour dragged to a close; then I heard his welcome tread, and rose gasping and tottered to meet him. How his fine eyes flamed with triumph! He said, 'We've compromised! The jokers will sing a different tune tomorrow! Follow me!'

He took a lighted candle and strode down into the vast vaulted basement where sixty detectives always slept, and where a score were now playing cards to while the time. I followed close after him. He walked swiftly down to the dim remote end of the place, and just as I succumbed to the pangs of suffocation and was swooning away he stumbled and fell over the outlying members of a mighty object, and I heard him exclaim as he went down, 'Our noble profession is vindicated. Here is your elephant!'

I was carried to the office above and restored with carbolic acid. The whole detective force swarmed in, and such another season of triumphant rejoicing ensued as I had never witnessed before. The reporters were called, baskets of champagne were opened, toasts were drunk, the hand-shakings and congratulations were continuous and enthusiastic. Naturally the chief was the hero of the hour, and his happiness was so complete and had been so patiently and worthily and bravely won that it made me happy to see it, though I stood there a homeless beggar, my priceless charge dead, and my position in my country's service lost to me through what would always seem my fatally careless execution of a great trust. Many an eloquent eye testified its deep admiration for the chief, and many a detective's voice murmured, 'Look at him – just the king of the profession – only give him a clue, it's all he wants,

and there ain't anything hid that he can't find.' The dividing of the \$50,000 made great pleasure; when it was finished the chief made a little speech while he put his share in his pocket, in which he said, 'Enjoy it, boys, for you've earned it; and more than that you've earned for the detective profession undying fame.'

A telegram arrived, which read:

Monroe, MiCh., 10 p.M.

First time I've struck a telegraph office in over three weeks. Have followed those footprints, horseback, through the woods, a thousand miles to here, and they get stronger and bigger and fresher every day. Don't worry – inside of another week I'll have the elephant. This is dead sure.

Darley, *Detective*

The chief ordered three cheers for 'Darley, one of the finest minds on the force', and then commanded that he be telegraphed to come home and receive his share of the reward.

So ended that marvellous episode of the stolen elephant. The newspapers were pleasant with praises once more, the next day, with one contemptible exception. This sheet said, 'Great is the detective! He may be a little slow in finding a little thing like a mislaid elephant – he may hunt him all day and sleep with his rotting carcass all night for three weeks, but he will find him at last – if he can get the man who mislaid him to show him the place!'

Poor Hassan was lost to me forever. The cannon- shots had wounded him fatally, he had crept to that unfriendly place in the fog, and there, surrounded by his enemies and in constant danger of detection, he had wasted away with hunger and suffering till death gave him peace.

The compromise cost me \$100,000; my detective expenses were \$42,000 more; I never applied for a place again under my government; I am a ruined man and a wanderer in the earth – but my admiration for that man, whom I believe to be the greatest detective the world has ever produced, remains undimmed to this day, and will so remain unto the end.

The Story of the Bad Little Boy Who Didn't Come to Grief

Once there was a bad little boy, whose name was Jim –though, if you will notice, you will find that bad little boys are nearly always called James in your Sunday- school books. It was very strange, but still it was true, that this one was called Jim.

He didn't have any sick mother, either – a sick mother who was pious and had the consumption, and would be glad to lie down in the grave and be at rest, but for the strong love she bore her boy, and the anxiety she felt that the world would be harsh and cold toward him when she was gone. Most bad boys in the Sunday books are named James, and have sick mothers, who teach them to say, 'Now I lay me down,' etc., and sing them to sleep with sweet plaintive voices, and then kiss them goodnight, and kneel down by the bedside and weep. But it was different with this fellow. He was named Jim, and there wasn't anything the matter with his mother – no consumption, nor anything of that kind. She was rather stout than otherwise, and she was not pious; moreover, she was not anxious on Jim's account. She said if he were to break his neck, it wouldn't be much loss. She always spanked Jim to sleep, and she never kissed him goodnight; on the contrary, she boxed his ears when she was ready to leave him.

Once this little bad boy stole the key of the pantry and slipped in there and helped himself to some jam, and filled up the vessel with tar, so that his mother would never know the difference; but all at once a terrible feeling didn't come over him, and something didn't seem to whisper to him, 'Is it right to disobey my mother? Isn't it sinful to do this? Where do bad little boys go who gobble up their good kind mother's jam?' and then he didn't kneel down all alone and promise never to be wicked anymore, and rise up with a light, happy heart, and go and tell his mother all about it, and beg her forgiveness, and be blessed by her with tears of pride and thankfulness in her eyes. No; that is the way with all other bad boys in the books; but it happened otherwise with this Jim, strangely

enough. He ate that jam, and said it was bully, in his sinful, vulgar way; and he put in the tar, and said that was bully also, and laughed, and observed that 'the old woman would get up and snort' when she found it out; and when she did find it out, he denied knowing anything about it, and she whipped him severely, and he did the crying himself. Everything about this boy was curious – everything turned out differently with him from the way it does to the bad Jameses in the books.

Once he climbed up in Farmer Acorn's apple- tree to steal apples, and the limb didn't break, and he didn't fall and break his arm, and get torn by the farmer's great dog, and then languish on a sickbed for weeks, and repent and become good. Oh! no; he stole as many apples as he wanted, and came down all right; and he was all ready for the dog, too, and knocked him endways with a brick when he came to tear him. It was very strange – nothing like it ever happened in those mild little books with marbled backs, and with pictures in them of men with swallow- tailed coats, and bell-crowned hats, and pantaloons that are short in the legs, and women with the waists of their dresses under their arms and no hoops on. Nothing like it in any of the Sunday- school books.

Once he stole the teacher's penknife, and when he was afraid it would be found out, and he would get whipped, he slipped it into George Wilson's cap – poor Widow Wilson's son, the moral boy, the good little boy of the village, who always obeyed his mother, and never told an untruth, and was fond of his lessons and infatuated with Sunday- school. And when the knife dropped from the cap, and poor George hung his head and blushed, as if in conscious guilt, and the grieved teacher charged the theft upon him, and was just in the very act of bringing the switch down upon his trembling shoulders, a white- haired improbable justice of the peace did not suddenly appear in their midst and strike an attitude and say, 'spare this noble boy – there stands the cowering culprit! I was passing the school- door at recess, and, unseen myself, I saw the theft committed!' And then Jim didn't get whaled, and the venerable justice didn't read the tearful school a homily, and take George by the hand and say such a boy deserved to be exalted, and then tell him to come and make his home with him, and sweep out the office, and make fires, and run errands, and chop wood, and study law, and help his wife do household labours, and have all the

balance of the time to play, and get forty cents a month, and be happy. No; it would have happened that way in the books, but it didn't happen that way to Jim. No meddling old clam of a justice dropped in to make trouble, and so the model boy George got thrashed, and Jim was glad of it; because, you know, Jim hated moral boys. Jim said he was 'down on them milksops.' Such was the coarse language of this bad, neglected boy.

But the strangest thing that ever happened to Jim was the time he went boating on Sunday and didn't get drowned, and that other time that he got caught out in the storm when he was fishing on Sunday, and didn't get struck by lightning. Why, you might look, and look, all through the Sunday-school books, from now till next Christmas and you would never come across anything like this. Oh! no; you would find that all the bad boys who go boating on Sunday invariably get drowned; and all the bad boys who get caught out in storms, when they are fishing on Sunday, infallibly get struck by lightning. Boats with bad boys in them always upset on Sunday, and it always storms when bad boys go fishing on the Sabbath. How this Jim ever escaped is a mystery to me.

This Jim bore a charmed life – that must have been the way of it. Nothing could hurt him. He even gave the elephant in the menagerie a plug of tobacco, and the elephant didn't knock the top of his head off with his trunk. He browsed around the cupboard after essence of peppermint, and didn't make a mistake and drink aqua fortis. He stole his father's gun and went hunting on the Sabbath, and didn't shoot three or four of his fingers off. He struck his little sister on the temple with his fist when he was angry, and she didn't linger in pain through long summer days, and die with sweet words of forgiveness upon her lips that redoubled the anguish of his breaking heart. No; she got over it. He ran off and went to sea at last, and didn't come back and find himself sad and alone in the world, his loved ones sleeping in the quiet churchyard, and the vine-embowered home of his boyhood rumbled down and gone to decay. Ah! no; he came home drunk as a piper, and got into the station house the first thing.

And he grew up, and married, and raised a large family, and brained them all with an axe one night, and got wealthy by all manner of cheating and rascality, and now he is the infernalesst wickedest scoundrel in his native village, and is universally

respected, and belongs to the Legislature.

So you see there never was a bad James in the Sunday- school books that had such a streak of luck as this sinful Jim with the charmed life.

The Story of the Good Little Boy Who Did Not Prosper

[The following has been written at the insistence of several literary friends, who thought that if the history of 'The Bad Little Boy Who Didn't Come to Grief' (a moral sketch which I published five or six years ago) was worthy of preservation several weeks in print, a fair and unprejudiced companion piece to it would deserve a similar immortality.

editorial MeMorandum]

Once there was a good little boy by the name of Jacob Blivens. He always obeyed his parents, no matter how absurd and unreasonable their demands were; and he always learned his book, and never was late at Sabbath school. He would not play hookey, even when his sober judgment told him it was the most profitable thing he could do. None of the other boys could ever make that boy out, he acted so strangely. He wouldn't lie, no matter how convenient it was. He just said it was wrong to lie, and that was sufficient for him. And he was so honest that he was simply ridiculous. The curious ways that that Jacob had surpassed everything. He wouldn't play marbles on Sunday, he wouldn't rob birds' nests, he wouldn't give hot pennies to organ-grinders' monkeys; he didn't seem to take any interest in any kind of rational amusement. So the other boys used to try to reason it out and come to an understanding of him, but they couldn't arrive at any satisfactory conclusion; as I said before, they could only figure out a sort of vague idea that he was 'afflicted,' and so they took him under their protection, and never allowed any harm to come to him.

This good little boy read all the Sunday-school books; they were his greatest delight. This was the whole secret of it. He believed in the good little boys they put in the Sunday-school books; he had every confidence in them. He longed to come across one of them alive, once; but he never did. They all died before his time, maybe. Whenever he read about a particularly good one, he

turned over quickly to the end to see what became of him, because he wanted to travel thousands of miles and gaze on him; but it wasn't any use; that good little boy always died in the last chapter, and there was a picture of the funeral, with all his relations and the Sunday- school children standing around the grave in pantaloons that were too short, and bonnets that were too large, and everybody crying into handkerchiefs that had as much as a yard and a half of stuff in them. He was always headed off in this way. He never could see one of those good little boys, on account of his always dying in the last chapter.

Jacob had a noble ambition to be put in a Sunday- school book. He wanted to be put in, with pictures representing him gloriously declining to lie to his mother, and she weeping for joy about it; and pictures representing him standing on the doorstep giving a penny to a poor beggar- woman with six children, and telling her to spend it freely, but not to be extravagant, because extravagance is a sin; and pictures of him magnanimously refusing to tell on the bad boy who always lay in wait for him around the corner, as he came from school, and welted him over the head with a lath, and then chased him home, saying 'Hi! hi!' as he proceeded. That was the ambition of young Jacob Blivens. He wished to be put in a Sunday- school book. It made him feel a little uncomfortable sometimes when he reflected that the good little boys always died. He loved to live, you know, and this was the most unpleasant feature about being a Sunday- school- book boy. He knew it was not healthy to be good. He knew it was more fatal than consumption to be so supernaturally good as the boys in the books were; he knew that none of them had ever been able to stand it long, and it pained him to think that if they put him in a book he wouldn't ever see it, or even if they did get the book out before he died, it wouldn't be popular without any picture of his funeral in the back part of it. It couldn't be much of a Sunday- school book that couldn't tell about the advice he gave to the community when he was dying. So, at last, of course he had to make up his mind to do the best he could under the circumstances – to live right, and hang on as long as he could, and have his dying speech all ready when his time came.

But somehow, nothing ever went right with this good little boy; nothing ever turned out with him the way it turned out with the good little boys in the books. They always had a good time, and the

bad boys had the broken legs; but in his case there was a screw loose somewhere, and it all happened just the other way. When he found Jim Blake stealing apples, and went under the tree to read to him about the bad little boy who fell out of a neighbour's apple tree, and broke his arm, Jim fell out of the tree too, but he fell on *him* , and broke *his* arm, and Jim wasn't hurt at all. Jacob couldn't understand that. There wasn't anything in the books like it.

And once, when some bad boys pushed a blind man over in the mud, and Jacob ran to help him up and receive his blessing, the blind man did not give him any blessing at all, but whacked him over the head with his stick and said he would like to catch him shoving *him* again and then pretending to help him up. This was not in accordance with any of the books. Jacob looked them all over to see.

One thing that Jacob wanted to do was to find a lame dog that hadn't any place to stay, and was hungry and persecuted, and bring him home and pet him and have that dog's imperishable gratitude. And at last he found one, and was happy; and he brought him home and fed him, but when he was going to pet him the dog flew at him and tore all the clothes off him except those that were in front, and made a spectacle of him that was astonishing. He examined authorities, but he could not understand the matter. It was of the same breed of dogs that was in the books, but it acted very differently. Whatever this boy did, he got into trouble. The very things the boys in the books got rewarded for turned out to be about the most unprofitable things he could invest in.

Once when he was on his way to Sunday- school he saw some bad boys starting off pleasuring in a sailboat. He was filled with consternation, because he knew from his teaching that boys who went sailing on Sunday invariably got drowned. So he ran out on a raft to warn them, but a log turned with him and slid him into the river. A man got him out pretty soon, and the doctor pumped the water out of him and gave him a fresh start with his bellows, but he caught cold and lay sick abed nine weeks. But the most unaccountable thing about it was that the bad boys in the boat had a good time all day, and then reached home alive and well, in the most surprising manner. Jacob Blivens said there was nothing like these things in the books. He was perfectly dumbfounded.

When he got well he was a little discouraged, but he resolved to keep on trying, anyhow. He knew that so far his experiences wouldn't do to go in a book, but he hadn't yet reached the allotted term of life for good little boys, and he hoped to be able to make a record yet, if he could hold on till his time was fully up. If everything else failed, he had his dying speech to fall back on.

He examined his authorities, and found that it was now time for him to go to sea as a cabin boy. He called on a ship captain and made his application, and when the captain asked for his recommendations he proudly drew out a tract and pointed to the words: 'To Jacob Blivens, from his affectionate teacher.' But the captain was a coarse, vulgar man, and he said, 'Oh, that be blowed!' *That* wasn't any proof that he knew how to wash dishes or handle a slush- bucket, and he guessed he didn't want him. This was altogether the most extraordinary thing that ever had happened to Jacob in all his life. A compliment from a teacher, on a tract, had never failed to move the tenderest of emotions of ship captains and open the way to all offices of honour and profit in their gift – it never had in any book that ever *he* had read. He could hardly believe his senses.

This boy always had a hard time of it. Nothing ever came out according to the authorities with him. At last, one day, when he was around hunting up bad little boys to admonish, he found a lot of them in the old iron foundry fixing up a little joke on fourteen or fifteen dogs, which they had tied together in long procession and were going to ornament with empty nitroglycerine cans made fast to their tails. Jacob's heart was touched. He sat down on one of those cans – for he never minded grease when duty was before him – and he took hold of the foremost dog by the collar, and turned his reproving eye upon wicked Tom Jones. But just at that moment Alderman McWelter, full of wrath, stepped in. All the bad boys ran away; but Jacob Blivens rose in conscious innocence and began one of those stately little Sunday- school- book speeches which always commence with 'Oh, Sir!' in dead opposition to the fact that no boy, good or bad, ever starts a remark with 'Oh, Sir!' But the Alderman never waited to hear the rest. He took Jacob Blivens by the ear and turned him around, and hit him a whack in the rear with the flat of his hand; and in an instant that good little boy shot out through the roof and soared away toward the sun, with the fragments of those

fifteen dogs stringing after him like the tail of a kite. And there wasn't a sign of that Alderman or that old iron foundry left on the face of the earth; and as for young Jacob Blivens, he never got a chance to make his last dying speech after all his trouble fixing it up, unless he made it to the birds; because, although the bulk of him came down all right in a treetop in an adjoining county, the rest of him was apportioned around among four townships, and so they had to hold five inquests on him to find out whether he was dead or not, and how it occurred. You never saw a boy scattered so.

Thus perished the good little boy who did the best he could, but didn't come out according to the books. Every boy who ever did as he did prospered, except him. His case is truly remarkable. It will probably never be accounted for.

The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County

Mr A. Ward,

Dear Sir: – Well, I called on good- natured, garrulous old Simon Wheeler, and I inquired after your friend Leonidas W. Smiley, as you requested me to do, and I hereunto append the result. If you can get any information out of it you are cordially welcome to it. I have a lurking suspicion that your Leonidas W. Smiley is a myth – that you never knew such a personage, and that you only conjectured that if I asked old Wheeler about him it would remind him of his infamous Jim Smiley, and he would go to work and bore me nearly to death with some infernal reminiscence of him as long and tedious as it should be useless to me. If that was your design, Mr Ward, it will gratify you to know that it succeeded.

I found Simon Wheeler dozing comfortably by the barroom stove of the little old dilapidated tavern in the ancient mining camp of Boomerang, and I noticed that he was fat and bald- headed, and had an expression of winning gentleness and simplicity upon his tranquil countenance. He roused up and gave me good- day. I told him a friend of mine had commissioned me to make some inquiries about a cherished companion of his boyhood named Leonidas W. Smiley – Rev Leonidas W. Smiley – a young minister of the gospel, who he had heard was at one time a resident of this village of Boomerang. I added that if Mr Wheeler could tell me anything about this Rev Leonidas W. Smiley, I would feel under many obligations to him.

Simon Wheeler backed me into a corner and blockaded me there with his chair – and then sat down and reeled off the monotonous narrative which follows this paragraph. He never smiled, he never frowned, he never changed his voice from the quiet, gently- flowing key to which he tuned the initial sentence, he never betrayed the slightest suspicion of enthusiasm – but all through the interminable narrative there ran a vein of impressive earnestness and sincerity, which showed me plainly that so far from

his imagining that there was anything ridiculous or funny about his story, he regarded it as a really important matter, and admired its two heroes as men of transcendent genius in finesse. To me, the spectacle of a man drifting serenely along through such a queer yarn without ever smiling was exquisitely absurd. As I said before, I asked him to tell me what he knew of Rev Leonidas W. Smiley, and he replied as follows. I let him go on in his own way, and never interrupted him once.

There was a feller here once by the name of *Jim* Smiley, in the winter of '49 – or maybe it was the spring of '50 – I don't recollect exactly, somehow, though what makes me think it was one or the other is because I remember the big flume wasn't finished when he first come to the camp; but anyway, he was the curiousest man about always betting on anything that turned up you ever see, if he could get anybody to bet on the other side, and if he couldn't he'd change sides – any way that suited the other man would suit *him* – any way just so's *he* got a bet, he was satisfied. But still, he was lucky – uncommon lucky; he most always come out winner. He was always ready and laying for a chance; there couldn't be no solitary thing mentioned but what that feller'd offer to bet on it – and take any side you please, as I was just telling you: if there was a horse race, you'd find him flush or you find him busted at the end of it; if there was a dogfight, he'd bet on it; if there was a catfight, he'd bet on it; if there was a chickenfight, he'd bet on it; why if there was two birds setting on a fence, he would bet you which one would fly first – or if there was a camp meeting he would be there reglar to bet on parson Walker, which he judged to be the best exhorter about here, and so he was, too, and a good man; if he even see a straddle- bug start to go anywheres, he would bet you how long it would take him to get wherever he was going to, and if you took him up he would foller that straddle- bug to Mexico but what he would find out where he was bound for and how long he was on the road. Lots of the boys here has seen that Smiley and can tell you about him. Why, it never made no difference to him – he would bet on anything – the dangdest feller. Parson Walker's wife laid very sick, once, for a good while, and it seemed as if they warn't going to save her; but one morning he come in and Smiley asked him how she was, and he said she was considerable better – thank the Lord for his inf'nit mercy – and coming on so smart that with the blessing of Providence she'd get well yet – and Smiley, before he thought,

says, 'Well, I'll resk two and a half that she don't anyway.'

Thish- yer Smiley had a mare – the boys called her the fifteen-minute nag, but that was only in fun, you know, because, of course, she was faster than that – and he used to win money on that horse, for all she was so slow and always had the asthma, or the distemper, or the consumption, or something of that kind. They used to give her two or three hundred yards' start, and then pass her under way; but always at the fag- end of the race she'd get excited and desperate- like, and come cavorting and spraddling up, and scattering her legs around limber, sometimes in the air, and sometimes out to one side amongst the fences, and kicking up m- o- r- e dust, and raising m- o- r- e racket with her coughing and sneezing and blowing her nose – and always fetch up at the stand just about a neck ahead, as near as you could cipher it down.

And he had a little small bull- pup, that to look at him you'd think he warn't worth a cent, but to set around and look ornery, and lay for a chance to steal something. But as soon as money was up on him he was a different dog –his under- jaw'd begin to stick out like the for'castle of a steamboat, and his teeth would uncover, and shine savage like the furnaces. And a dog might tackle him, and bully- rag him, and bite him, and throw him over his shoulder two or three times, and Andrew Jackson – which was the name of the pup – Andrew Jackson would never let on but what he was satisfied, and hadn't expected nothing else – and the bets being doubled and doubled on the other side all the time, till the money was all up –and then all of a sudden he would grab that other dog just by the joint of his hind legs and freeze to it – not chaw, you understand, but only just grip and hang on till they throwed up the sponge, if it was a year. Smiley always came out winner on that pup till he harnessed a dog once that didn't have no hind legs, because they'd been sawed off in a circular saw, and when the thing had gone along far enough, and the money was all up, and he came to make a snatch for his pet holt, he saw in a minute how he'd been imposed on, and how the other dog had him in the door, so to speak, and he 'peared surprised, and then he looked sorter discouraged like, and didn't try no more to win the fight, and so he got shucked out bad. He gave Smiley a look as much as to say his heart was broke, and it was *his* fault, for putting up a dog that hadn't no hind legs for him to take holt of, which was his main

dependence in a fight, and then he limped off a piece, and laid down and died. It was a good pup, was that Andrew Jackson, and would have made a name for hisself if he'd lived, for the stuff was in him, and he had genius – I know it, because he hadn't had no opportunities to speak of, and it don't stand to reason that a dog could make such a fight as he could under them circumstances, if he hadn't no talent. It always makes me feel sorry when I think of that last fight of his'on, and the way it turned out.

Well, thish- yer Smiley had rat- terriers and chicken cocks, and tomcats, and all them kind of things, till you couldn't rest, and you couldn't fetch nothing for him to bet on but he'd match you. He ketched a frog one day and took him home and said he cal'lated to educate him; and so he never done nothing for three months but set in his back yard and learn that frog to jump. And you bet you he did learn him, too. He'd give him a little hunch behind, and the next minute you'd see that frog whirling in the air like a doughnut – see him turn one summerset, or maybe a couple, if he got a good start, and come down flat- footed and all right, like a cat. He got him up so in the matter of ketching flies, and kept him in practice so constant, that he'd nail a fly every time as far as he could see him. Smiley said all a frog wanted was education, and he could do most anything – and I believe him. Why, I've seen him set Dan'l Webster down here on this floor –Dan'l Webster was the name of the frog – and sing out, 'Flies! Dan'l, flies,' and quicker'n you could wink, he'd spring straight up, and snake a fly off'n the counter there, and flop down on the floor again as solid as a gob of mud, and fall to scratching the side of his head with his hind foot as indifferent as if he hadn't no idea he'd done any more'n any frog might do. You never see a frog so modest and straightfor'ard as he was, for all he was so gifted. And when it come to fair- and- square jumping on a dead level, he could get over more ground at one straddle than any animal of his breed you ever see. Jumping on a dead level was his strong suit, you understand, and when it come to that, Smiley would ante up money on him as long as he had a red. Smiley was monstrous proud of his frog, and well he might be, for fellers that had travelled and ben everywheres all said he laid over any frog that ever *they* see.

Well, Smiley kept the beast in a little lattice box, and he used to fetch him downtown sometimes and lay for a bet.

One day a feller – a stranger in the camp, he was – come across him with his box, and says: ‘What might it be that you’ve got in the box?’

And Smiley says, sorter indifferent like, ‘It might be a parrot, or it might be a canary, maybe, but it ain’t – it’s only just a frog.’

And the feller took it, and looked at it careful, and turned it round this way and that, and says, ‘H’m – so’tis. Well, what’s *he* good for?’

‘Well,’ Smiley says, easy and careless, ‘he’s good enough for *one* thing I should judge – he can out- jump any frog in Calaveras county.’

The feller took the box again, and took another long, particular look, and give it back to Smiley and says, very deliberate, ‘Well – I don’t see no points about that frog that’s any better’n any other frog.’

‘Maybe you don’t,’ Smiley says. ‘Maybe you understand frogs, and maybe you don’t understand ’em; maybe you’ve had experience, and maybe you ain’t only a amature, as it were. Anyways, I’ve got my opinion, and I’ll resk forty dollars that he can out- jump any frog in Calaveras county.’

And the feller studied a minute, and then says, kinder sad, like, ‘Well – I’m only a stranger here, and I ain’t got no frog – but if I had a frog I’d bet you.’

And then Smiley says, ‘That’s all right – that’s all right – if you’ll hold my box a minute I’ll go and get you a frog;’ and so the feller took the box, and put up his forty dollars along with Smiley’s, and set down to wait.

So he set there a good while thinking and thinking to hisself, and then he got the frog out and prised his mouth open and took a teaspoon and filled him full of quail- shot – filled him pretty near up to his chin – and set him on the floor. Smiley he went out to the swamp and slopped around in the mud for a long time, and finally he ketched a frog and fetched him in and give him to this feller and says:

‘Now if you’re ready, set him alongside of Dan’l, with his forepaws just even with Dan’l’s, and I’ll give the word.’ Then he

says, 'One – two – three – jump!' and him and the feller touched up the frogs from behind, and the new frog hopped off lively, but Dan'l give a heave, and hysted up his shoulders – so – like a Frenchman, but it wasn't no use – he couldn't budge; he was planted as solid as an anvil, and he couldn't no more stir than if he was anchored out. Smiley was a good deal surprised, and he was disgusted too, but he didn't have no idea what the matter was, of course.

The feller took the money and started away, and when he was going out at the door he sorter jerked his thumb over his shoulder – this way – at Dan'l, and says again, very deliberate, 'Well – *I* don't see no points about that frog that's any better'n any other frog.'

Smiley he stood scratching his head and looking down at Dan'l a long time, and at last he says, 'I do wonder what in the nation that frog throwed off for – I wonder if there ain't something the matter with him – he 'pears to look might baggy, somehow' – and he ketched Dan'l by the nap of the neck, and lifted him up and says, 'Why blame my cats if he don't weigh five pound' – and turned him upside down, and he belched out about a double- handful of shot. And then he see how it was, and he was the maddest man – he set the frog down and took out after that feller, but he never ketched him. And –

[Here Simon Wheeler heard his name called from the front yard, and got up to go and see what was wanted.] And turning to me as he moved away, he said: 'Just sit where you are, stranger, and rest easy – I ain't going to be gone a second.'

But by your leave, I did not think that a continuation of the history of the enterprising vagabond Jim Smiley would be likely to afford me much information concerning the Rev Leonidas W. Smiley, and so I started away.

At the door I met the sociable Wheeler returning, and he buttonholed me and recommenced: 'Well, this- yer Smiley had a yaller one- eyed cow that didn't have no tail only just a short stump like a bannanner, and –'

'O, curse Smiley and his afflicted cow!' I muttered, good-naturedly, and bidding the old gentleman good- day, I departed.

Yours, truly,

Mark Twain



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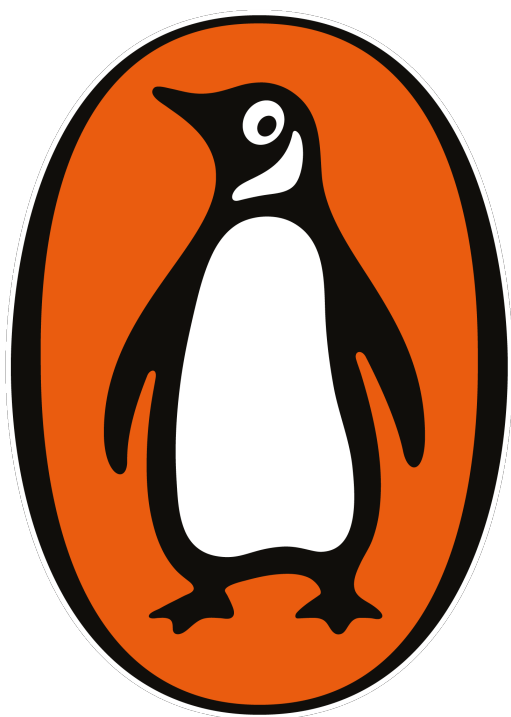
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“这和圣母怀孕同样神秘，
光这件事就可以使
一个医生对一切
都怀疑了。”



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无神论者做弥撒

献给奥居斯特·博尔热

——他的朋友德·巴尔扎克

皮安训大夫是一个以出色的生理学理论对科学做出贡献的医生，他年纪轻轻，就跻身于巴黎大学医学院名教授的行列，而这个医学院是欧洲医学界人士敬仰的中心。在行医以前，皮安训大夫曾经在很长的一段时间内在外科实习。他早期的实习，受法国最伟大的外科医生，声名显赫的德斯普兰指导。德斯普兰在科学界的出现，就像流星一样转瞬即逝。连他的敌人也承认，他把一种不能传授的方法带进坟墓里了。像所有的天才一样，他也没有继承人，他的一切与生俱来，又随身带走。外科医生的光荣，好像演员的光荣一样，只在他们活着的时候存在，人一死，他们的天才就再也不受重视了。因此演员、外科医生、伟大的歌手，还有以他们的演奏使音乐的威力增加十倍的天才乐师，都是些一时的英雄。德斯普兰自己就可以证明这些短暂的天才的命运是相同的。他的名字，昨天还那么震耳，今天几乎被忘却了，只能在他自己的专业内流传，而不能越出界外。是否要有一些非常特殊的环境，才能使一个科学家的名字越出科学界而进入人类史册呢？德斯普兰有那么广泛的知识，使他能够成为一个世纪的“声音”或者“代表人物”吗？德斯普兰具有神奇的眼光：他能凭先天的或后天培养的直觉，一眼看透病人和他的毛病。他凭这种直觉，能够对一个人的病情了如指掌。他能够考虑到环境气氛和病人的气质、情绪等条件，决定动手术的准确时间，可以具体到几点钟和几分钟。难道他紧跟大自然的步子，研究过生命和基本养分的不断结合——这种养分蕴藏在空气中，或者由大地提供给人类，人类吸收、消化以后会流露出一种特殊的表情吗？还是他运用演绎法和类推法，像天才的居维埃

[1] 那样呢？不管怎样，这个人深知“人体”的秘密，他能根据现在看透它的过去和未来。他有没有把整个科学汇总于一身，像希波克拉底、加利安 [2]、亚里士多德那样呢？他有没有领导一个新学派走向新世界呢？没有。我们不得不承认这个人体化学变化的永恒观察者掌握古代魔术，换句话说，就是具有元素融合的知识，懂得生命的起源，未有生命以前的生命，和生命的将来。但是，可惜的是他的一切都是个人的：他活着的时候利己心使他与世隔绝，到了今天，利己心又消灭了他的荣誉。他的坟上没有竖立一个能够传声的雕像，可以将“天才”利用他来找寻的秘密复述给将来一代听。不过德斯普兰的天

才也许同他的信仰有连带关系，因而也是可以死亡的。他认为地球的大气层是一种有生殖力的液汁，地球好像是蛋壳里面的鸡蛋，既然他不能够断定到底是先有鸡，还是先有蛋，他就既不承认鸡，也不承认蛋。他既不相信人性以前的兽性，也不相信人性以后的灵性。德斯普兰并不怀疑，他肯定。他纯粹而坦率的无神论同许多学者的无神论相同，这些学者是世界上最好的人，然而也是顽固的无神论者，顽固的程度与有宗教信仰的人不相信世间有无神论者相同。像德斯普兰这样的人，不可能有别的信仰，因为他从年轻时起便习惯于解剖人，从人有生命以前，到有生命期间，以至生命消失以后，他都解剖过，他搜遍了人体的一切组织，却找不到在宗教理论上占唯一重要地位的靈魂。他认为人体有一个大脑中枢、一个神经中枢、一个血气中枢，前两者互相交替补充得那么密切，以至于到他临死前几天，他坚信听的官能对听觉并非绝对必要，视的官能对视觉也不是绝对必要的，太阳神经丛可以代替它们，代替了还不容易使人发觉。德斯普兰既然在人身找到两个灵魂，便用这个事实证实了他的无神论，虽然他对于上帝是没有丝毫成见的。据说这个人临死前并没有忏悔和认罪，像许多伟大的天才一样可怜地死去，请上帝宽恕他们吧。

这么一位伟大的人物的一生，却有许多渺小的地方。“渺小”是他的仇人的用语，这些仇人想尽量损害他的名声，比较确切的说法应该是显然的矛盾。忌妒的人或者愚蠢的人由于从来不知道才智高明者行为的动机，总是马上抓住一些表面矛盾来提出指控，暂时将才智高明的人列为被告。等到后来如果被他们攻击的事业反而获得成功，他们就来证明以前的准备工作和结果之间的相互关系，使得先前的诽谤总有一部分留存下来。因此，在我们的时代，拿破仑想将他的雄鹰的翅膀伸展到英国去的时候，他便被与他同时代的人攻击。事实上，要等到1822年才能解释1804年和布洛尼厄的平底船 [3]。

在德斯普兰身上，荣誉和科学知识既然无懈可击，他的仇人只好攻击他的古怪脾气和他的性格；他也有英国人称为“怪癖” [4] 的那种品质。有时他的衣着非常考究，穿得有点像悲剧诗人克雷比庸 [5] 那样，有时却故意不修边幅，有时人们看见他坐车子，有时人们看见他步行。他有时粗鲁，有时和善；外表看来既狠心又吝啬，而他却能够把财产献给他的流亡在国外的老师，这些老师们也领他的情，有好些日子都受着他的捐助。没有人比他更能引起各种互相矛盾的批评了。虽然他为了获得一枚一般医生所不应希冀的圣米歇尔勋章 [6]，可以在宫廷里让一本祈祷书从他的衣袋里掉下来，可是请你相信他的心里是嘲笑这一切的。他从上到下观察过人类，在人生最庄严的行为和最卑鄙的行为中发现过他们的真面目，因此他对人类有极大的轻蔑。在一个伟人身上，所有品质往往是有连带关系的。如果这些巨人中有一个人才能比见识高，那么他的见识起码也比仅仅被人称

为“有见识的人”的见识广泛得多。一切天才都有一个道德观，这个道德观能够适用于一种专业，可是凡是看见花儿的人，都应该看见太阳。这位大夫听见被自己救活的外交官问：“皇帝健康如何？”居然回答：“朝臣已恢复了健康，他也会随着恢复！”他不仅是一位外科或内科医生，而且是绝顶聪明的人。因此耐心而热诚地观察人类的人，会原谅德斯普兰的过度自负，而且会跟德斯普兰一样，相信他能当一个伟大的部长，正如他是一个伟大的外科医生一样。

德斯普兰的几个同时代人认为德斯普兰的一生中有几件令人迷惑不解的事情，我们选择了其中最令人感兴趣的一件叙述于下，因为这件事的谜底就在故事的结尾，而且可以为他澄清某些愚蠢的诽谤。

在医院的所有学生中，德斯普兰最疼爱的是荷拉斯·皮安训。在进入市立医院当实习医生以前，荷拉斯·皮安训是一个医科大学生，寄居在拉丁区一所名为伏盖公寓的破旧宿舍里。这个可怜的青年在那里经受贫困的煎熬，仿佛落在一个炽热的熔炉里，而许多伟大的天才人物都从这类熔炉里毫无损伤和纯洁无瑕地走出来，好像金刚钻不论怎样磕碰也不致碎裂一样。他们奔放的热情像一团烈火，他们从烈火中锻炼出永恒的正直。他们不断地工作，用工作来抑制住自己不能满足的欲望，从工作中养成了斗争的习惯，这些斗争是天才人物必然要遇到的。荷拉斯是一个正直的青年，在荣誉问题上从不转弯抹角，总是单刀直入，一针见血。既肯为朋友当掉自己的大衣，又肯为朋友牺牲自己的时间，甚至彻夜不眠。总之，荷拉斯是这样一种朋友：他们从不计较给予人家的和从人家那里接受的是否相等，因为他们肯定自己得到的一定比付出的多。荷拉斯的大多数朋友都从内心对他崇敬，因为他有一种毫不夸张的美德，其中有些朋友甚至害怕他的谴责。荷拉斯显示他的优点的时候，丝毫不带学究气。他既不是一个清教徒，也不是一个宣教士，他给你忠告的时候也很自然地骂街，有机会的时候，他也会愉快地大吃一顿。他是个好伙伴，像大兵那样不会假作正经，行动又痛快又坦率，但又不像水手，因为这年头的水手都是狡猾的外交家，他像一个事无不可对人言的诚实青年，走起路来总是昂着头，心情舒畅。总之，用一句话概括，荷拉斯是许多奥莱斯特的比拉德，债主们就是古代复仇三女神在今天的最真实的形象^[7]。他带着高兴的心情来忍受贫困，这种心情也许就是使他勇气百倍的主要原因之一，何况他又像一切身无长物的人一样，欠的债很少。他像骆驼那样少食，像牡鹿那样轻灵，他的思想和行为却都非常坚定。他的缺点正如他的优点一样，使荷拉斯·皮安训大夫在他的朋友们的心目中倍觉可亲。自德斯普兰确实掌握了皮安训的优点和缺点那天起，皮安训的幸福生活便开始了。正如人家说的，一个诊所的主任医师把一个青年人带在身边，这个青年人便开始飞黄腾达了。德斯普兰每次到富贵人家出诊的时候，总要带着皮安训做他的助手，而且几乎每次都有一些礼

金落到这位助手的钱袋里。巴黎生活的秘密也在那里不知不觉地展现在这位外省青年的眼前。德斯普兰门诊的时候，也把皮安训留在诊所里，而且派他工作。有时，他会派他陪同一个有钱的病人到矿泉去疗养。总之，他总在为他安排好的雇主。这样做的结果就是过了一段日子，这位外科的暴君，便有了一个忠心耿耿的塞伊德 [8]。这两个人，一个在地位上和学问上都已登峰造极，享有巨大的财富和无限的光荣，另一个则是刚起步的无名小卒 [9]，既没有钱也没有名，这两个人竟成了密友。伟大的德斯普兰什么事都告诉他的弟子；他的弟子也知道哪个妇女曾经在老师旁边的椅子上坐过，或者在诊所里那张尽人皆知的、德斯普兰在上面睡觉的长躺椅上坐过。皮安训熟知这个狮子兼雄牛的体质的秘密，这个体质终于使这位伟大人物的上半身无限扩大，最后由于心脏扩张而死。他研究他忙碌一生中的奇闻逸事，研究他怪吝的计划，他具有政治头脑的科学家的希望。他的心即使不是冷酷的，也是久经考验的，心里埋藏着唯一的一种感情，皮安训能预见到等待着这种感情的是幻灭。

有一天，皮安训告诉德斯普兰：圣雅克区有一个穷苦的挑水夫由于疲劳和贫困得了很严重的病。这个可怜的挑水夫是奥韦尼省人 [10]，在1821年漫长的冬天里只吃得上土豆。德斯普兰马上扔下所有的病人，驾着马车，由皮安训跟随着，冒着把马累死的危险，飞驰到病人那里，亲自把他运送到著名的杜博瓦 [11] 在圣丹尼郊区创立的疗养院里去。他每天去医治病人，等到病人恢复健康以后，他又给了病人一笔钱使他够买一匹马和一只水桶。这个奥韦尼省挑水夫有一点特别的地方。每逢他有一个朋友病了，他马上就把朋友带到德斯普兰那里去，对他的恩人说：“我决不让他到别的大夫那里去。”德斯普兰虽然脾气很坏，在这种时候却总是和挑水夫握握手，对他说：“把他们全都带来给我吧。”于是他便让这个康塔尔的子孙 [12] 住进了市立医院，而且对他尽心医治。皮安训已经有好几次注意到他的老师对奥韦尼省人，尤其是对挑水夫，有一种偏爱。可是由于德斯普兰对于他在市立医院的医疗工作颇为自豪，因此学生也就不觉得这中间有什么特别可怪的了。

有一天，皮安训约在上午九点钟穿过圣絮尔皮斯广场 [13] 的时候，瞥见他的老师正在走进教堂。德斯普兰向来是没有他的二轮马车连一步都不肯走的，这时候却在步行，偷偷摸摸地从小狮街那道门走进去，仿佛走进暗栈私寮似的。实习医生是深知他的老师的信仰的，而且他自己也是一个百分之一百二十的卡巴尼斯主义者 [14]，自然觉得非常奇怪。皮安训也潜进了圣絮尔皮斯教堂，一看吃惊得非同小可。原来伟大的德斯普兰，这位对天使们毫无感情的无神论者，因为天使们既不受制于解剖刀，又不会患痔瘡或者胃炎，总之，这位无畏的嘲弄鬼神的人，竟恭恭敬敬地跪在……跪在什么地方？跪在圣母小

教堂前面，在那里参加弥撒，付弥撒费，接济贫困，态度非常严肃，仿佛在动手术似的。

“他肯定不是来弄清楚关于圣母生孩子的问题的吧？”皮安训这样想，他的惊讶达到了想象不到的程度，“如果我在圣体节看见他在游行的人丛中持着遮盖圣体的天帏的一根流苏，那只不过是开玩笑的吧，可是在这时候，独自一个人，没有人看见，那就耐人寻味了！”

皮安训不愿意显得像是在侦察市立医院外科主任医生的行动，便走开了。凑巧这一天德斯普兰请他吃晚饭，不是在家里吃，而是在饭馆里。吃到梨子和奶酪的时候，皮安训用巧妙的办法，把话题转到弥撒上面，将弥撒比拟为虚伪的礼节，一种滑稽剧。

“这种滑稽剧，”德斯普兰说，“使基督徒流过的血比拿破仑的所有战役和布鲁塞的所有水蛭 [15] 所付出的血还要多！弥撒是教皇创立的，最早出现于6世纪，它的根据是Hoc est corpus [16]。为了建立圣体节，不知流尽了多少血！罗马教廷想借这个节日的建立，证明他们在圣餐是耶稣的血和肉这个有争议的问题上得到了胜利，这个有争议的问题曾经使教会纷乱了三个世纪！德·图卢兹伯爵和阿耳比人的战争 [17]，就是这一事件的尾声。沃杜瓦教派 [18] 和阿耳比教派的信徒都拒绝承认这个新事物。”

接着德斯普兰兴高采烈地大肆发挥无神论者的想象力，说了一长串伏尔泰式的笑话 [19]，或者更正确点说，是可恶地引用了一大套《语录》 [20] 上的话。

“噢？”皮安训心里想，“今天早上那个虔诚的信徒哪里去了？”

他没有问出口，他怀疑自己有没有在圣絮尔皮斯教堂看见他的上司。德斯普兰用不着对皮安训说谎：他们彼此相知太深了，他们在类似的严肃问题上交换过思想，讨论过《事物本性》 [21] 的各种学说，深入地探讨过这些问题，或者用不信鬼神的利刃和解剖刀将它们剖析过。三个月过去了。皮安训没有追究这件事，虽然这件事已经深深地印在他的记忆里。同一年，有一天，市立医院的一个大夫当着皮安训的面抓住德斯普兰的胳膊，似乎要审问他。

“我亲爱的老师，您到圣絮尔皮斯教堂去干什么？”他问他。

“到那里去看一位膝盖上生骨疽的教士，是安古兰末公爵夫人介绍给我的病人。”德斯普兰回答。

提问的大夫满意了，皮安训却不然。

“咳！他到教堂去看膝盖生病的病人！他去听他的弥撒！”实习医生心里想。

皮安训决定侦察德斯普兰，他记住他看见老师走进圣絮尔皮斯教堂的日子和时刻，打定主意在来年同一日子、同一时刻再来看看，看是否能再遇见他的老师。如果再遇见了，他的周期性的宗教信仰就值得做一次科学调查了，因为在这样一个人物身上，他的思想和行为之间不应该有这样直接的矛盾。

第二年，皮安训已经不再是德斯普兰的实习医生，在同一日期和时刻，皮安训看见外科医生的二轮马车停在图尔农街和小狮街的街角，他的朋友从车上下来，诚惶诚恐地沿着墙走进圣絮尔皮斯教堂，又在圣母小教堂参加了弥撒。这的确是德斯普兰！的确是那位外科主任医生，秘密的 [22] 无神论者，偶然的信徒。事情复杂化了。这位著名科学家的固执的行为使一切都陷入混乱。等到德斯普兰走出去以后，皮安训走到圣器监守人的身边，监守人正走过来收拾小堂里的圣器，皮安训问他那位先生是否常到这里来。

“我在这里二十年了，”圣器监守人说，“二十年以来德斯普兰先生每年四次到这儿来参加这个弥撒，这场弥撒是他举办的 [23] 。”

“他举办的弥撒！”皮安训一边走开，一边想，“这和圣母怀孕同样神秘，光这件事就可以使一个医生对一切都怀疑了。”

皮安训虽然是德斯普兰的朋友，后来过了好久却还没有机会同他谈谈他生活中的这件怪事。即使他们在诊病的时候或者在交际场中遇见了，也很难找到两个人可以把脚搁在火炉的薪架上、头靠在沙发的靠背上，清静地、推心置腹地谈心的机会。最后，过了七年，经过1830年的革命 [24] 以后，当人民冲进大主教官邸 [25] 的时候，当民主的思潮促使人民摧毁那些在房屋的海洋上像闪电似的直指天空的金色十字架的时候，当反宗教和叛乱盘踞在各处街道上的时候，皮安训又一次出其不意地发现德斯普兰走进圣絮尔皮斯教堂。皮安训马上跟着他进去，跪在他旁边，德斯普兰见到他没有丝毫表示，也没有表现出惊讶。两个人一起参加了他举办的那场弥撒。

“亲爱的老师，”他们走出教堂以后皮安训对德斯普兰说，“您能告诉我您这样过分虔诚的理由吗？我已经三次发现您来参加弥撒了，的确是您！您要告诉我这个秘密，解释给我听为什么在您的信仰和行为之间有这样明显的矛盾。您不相信上帝，而您参加弥撒！我亲爱的老师，您一定要回答我！”

“我跟许多信徒，许多外表上非常虔诚的人相似，其实他们心里同你和我一样，都是无神论者。”

接着他便对几个政治上的大人物 [26] 大肆讽刺，其中最著名的一个可以让我们在本世纪内写一本新版的莫里哀的《伪君子》。

“我要问您的不是这些，”皮安训说，“我想知道的是：为什么您要

到这儿来？为什么您要举办这场弥撒？”

“说老实话，我亲爱的朋友，”德斯普兰说，“我已经到了坟墓的边缘，我当然可以对你谈谈我早期的生活。”

这时候，皮安训和那位伟人正走到四风街上，这条街是巴黎最糟的街道之一。德斯普兰指给他看一座形状像方尖塔的房屋第七层楼，这座房屋的角门通向一条甬道，甬道的尽头有一道曲曲折折的楼梯，被邻墙上小窗透进的光线照亮，这种小窗很恰当地被称为“气窗”。这是一座暗绿色的房屋，底层住着一个家具商人，这个商人似乎使他的每一层楼都寄居着一种不同类型的贫困。德斯普兰举起臂膀，做了一个有力的手势，对皮安训说：“我在那上面住过两年！”

“我知道，德·阿泰兹也在这里住过，我年轻时几乎天天来这里，当时我们把这阁楼称为熔炼伟人的短颈大口瓶！后来呢？”

“我刚才听弥撒，跟我当时住在阁楼里发生的事情有关。您对我说，德·阿泰兹也住过那间阁楼，就是窗口摆着一盆花，上面荡着一根绳子，晾满了衣物那一间。亲爱的皮安训，早年我生活非常艰难，巴黎的困苦生活就数我忍受得多。我样样苦都熬过：饥饿，口渴，缺钱，没有外衣、鞋子和内衣，贫困交加，一一尝遍。我曾在这熔炼伟人的短颈大口瓶里，哈着冻僵的手指。我真想同您一起再去看看这个阁楼。整个冬天，我在用功时看见自己脑袋冒烟，只见一片热气，就像结冰的日子里马身上冒出来的热气一样。我才知道怎么才能支撑住，忍受这种生活。我孑然一身，孤苦无援，无钱去买书和支付学医的费用。我没有朋友：我的性格暴躁易怒，疑心重重，不安好动，帮了我的倒忙。没有人愿意看到，在我的一触即怒中，有着一个想从社会底层挣扎到上面来的人的苦恼和劳累。在您面前我用不着遮遮掩掩，我可以告诉您，我本性善良，非常敏感，这始终会成为意志坚强，在贫困的沼泽里长期跋涉，然后攀登上高峰的人具有的特性。除了一笔人们给我的、不够用的膳宿费以外，我从我的家庭和故乡什么也得不到。总之，在那个时期，我每天早上吃一块小面包，是小狮街的面包店老板贱卖给我的，因为面包是隔日或前天的，我掰碎了浸在牛奶中——这样，我的早饭只花两个苏。我每隔一天在一家膳宿公寓吃晚饭，每顿晚饭花十六个苏。这样，我平均每天只花九个苏。您跟我一样清楚，我对自己的衣服和鞋子多么爱惜！我不知道后来您和我，我们被同行暗算时，心里感到的难过，是否抵得上当初看到一只脱了线的鞋咧嘴怪笑，或听到礼服袖笼绷开的响声那样的难受。我只喝清水，我对咖啡馆敬而远之。对我来说，佐皮咖啡馆好像一块乐土，只有拉丁语国家吕库吕斯那样的人才有权出入。我有时心想：‘我也能在里面喝一杯牛奶咖啡，玩一局多米诺骨牌吗？’总之，我把贫困使我产生的狂热转化为用功。我千方百计获得有用的知识，使自身拥

有巨大的价值，一旦我摆脱了默默无闻，便能配得上那时所达到的地位。我点灯用掉的油多过吃掉的面包：在那些苦读的夜晚，我用于照明的费用超过了我的伙食费。这场战斗是漫长、持久、得不到安慰的。我没有唤起周围人的任何同情。要有朋友，不就是结交年轻人，身上有几个钱好跟他们去品尝几杯，到大学生们想去的地方嘛！我身无分文！在巴黎，没有人想象得出一无所有意味着什么。当有人看出我的贫穷时，我的喉咙便感到一种神经性的痉挛，这种痉挛常使病人以为，有一样圆东西从食道升到喉咙。后来我遇到一些生来有钱的人，他们从来没有短缺过什么。这些有钱的傻瓜问我：‘那时您为什么要欠债呢？您为什么借利息那么高的债呢？’他们使我想起那位王后，她听说老百姓饿得要命时，这样说：‘为什么他们不去买点奶油圆球蛋糕呢？’我很想看到一个富人，抱怨我给他动手术收费昂贵。他在巴黎孤零零，一文不名，没有朋友，告贷无门，不得不靠自己的五根手指干活谋生。怎么办呢？他将怎样解除他的饥饿呢？皮安训，如果有时你看见我刻薄无情，那是因为我将早年我经受的痛苦，加到我在上流社会所经历的几千次的无情和自私上面；或者是因为我想起了仇恨、贪欲、嫉妒、诽谤在成功和我之间所树立起的障碍。在巴黎，有人看见你踏镫上马开始发迹的时候，马上有些人来扯住你的衣襟，另一些人松开马肚带的扣子，使你跌下来摔破脑袋。这一个除去你的马蹄铁，那一个偷去你的马鞭子。最不阴险的还算是那个跑过来对准你用手枪打你一枪的人。你相当有天赋，我的亲爱的孩子，你不久就可以知道那些庸俗的人对有天赋的人所发动的可怕的、无休止的战争：如果你在一天晚上输掉二十五个路易，第二天人家便咬定你是一个赌徒，你的最好的朋友会说你昨天晚上输掉了二万五千法郎；如果你头痛两下，人家便认为你有神经病；如果你态度生硬一点，人家便说你难以交往；如果你集中优势兵力来对付这些侏儒，你的最好的朋友便要叫嚷，说你想鲸吞一切，说你有意横行霸道，压制别人。总之，你的优点都会变成缺点，你的缺点变成罪恶，而你的德行都成了犯罪。如果你救了一个人，人家会说你的本意是想杀死他；如果你的病人没有死，人家肯定会说你为了保证他的现在，损害了他的将来。他现在没有死，将来也会死的。只要你稍一踉跄，你便会跌倒在地上爬不起来！随便你发明什么，只要你主张你的权利，人家就会说你是个喜欢刁难的人，是个狡猾的人，不肯让青年人有飞黄腾达的机会。因此，我的朋友，如果我不相信上帝，我更不相信人类。你难道看不出在我身上有一个与被每一个人恶语中伤的德斯普兰完全不同的德斯普兰吗？可是这些不堪回首的往事，不去想它也罢。却说我住在那所房子里，正在用功读书，准备我的第一次考试，我身边没有一个子儿。你知道，我已经到了要说‘我当兵去’那种穷途末路了！我只有一个希望。我正等待着一箱子从我故乡运来的衬衣，这是那些老姑母们送给我的，她们因为不认识巴黎，以为她们的侄子每月花三十个法郎就可

以整天吃山珍海味，所以只想着你的衬衫。箱子运到时，我正在医学院里，搬运费要四十个法郎，看门人是一个德国鞋匠，住在小阁楼里，代我付了运费，把箱子留在他那里。我一个人在福塞圣日耳曼草场街和医学院街走来走去，想不出一个计策来取回箱子，使我可以先不付那四十个法郎，等我卖了那些衬衣再付。我在这种事情上的愚蠢使我明白了除了当外科医生，我不能干别的职业。我的朋友，有些高尚的心灵，他们的能力只适合在较高级的范围中发挥，他们缺少阴谋诡计的机智，这种机智能产生种种手段和计划；他们的才气靠运气：他们本身不去找寻，他们靠偶然碰上。总之，到了晚上，我回家了，这时候，我的邻居，一个名叫布尔雅的挑水夫，是圣夫卢尔 [27] 人，也回来了。我们中间的交情也不过是同住在一层楼的不同房间，每天听见彼此睡觉、咳嗽、穿衣的声音而终于彼此习惯下来的两个互相认识的房客而已。我的邻居告诉我说，我欠了房东三个月租金，房东赶我搬家，我第二天就要搬走。他自己也因他从事的职业被赶搬家。那天晚上是我生平最痛苦的一夜。‘到哪里去找一个搬运工人来搬走我那些不值钱的行李和书籍呢？拿什么来付给那个搬运工人和看门人呢？搬到哪里去呢？’这些不能解决的问题，我含着眼泪将它们说了一遍又一遍，像疯子总是重复他习惯的那两句话一样。我睡了。困苦的人自有他们充满甜蜜的梦的美妙睡眠。第二天早上，我正在吃着我那碗牛奶浸面包的时候，布尔雅走进来用发音和语法都不准确的法语对我说：‘大学生先生，我是一个穷苦的人，是圣夫卢尔医院的一个孤儿，无父无母，穷得娶不起亲。您的亲戚也不多，钱也不多吧。您听我说，楼下有一辆手推车，是我按每个钟头两个苏的价钱租来的，我们俩所有的东西都能装得下，假使您愿意，我们可以合起来到别处租房子住，既然这儿已经将我们赶了出来。这儿到底不是地上乐园呀！’我知道，我的好布尔雅，我对他说，‘可是我在发愁，在楼下我有一个箱子，装着的衬衫内衣值一百个艾居 [28]，我可以拿来付清欠租和还钱给看门人，可是我连一百个苏也没有。’‘好吧，我这里面还有点钱，’布尔雅愉快地回答我，指给我看一个沾满油污的破旧皮包，‘留着您的衬衣吧。’于是布尔雅替我付清了三个月欠租，付了自己的租金，而且还了钱给看门人。然后他把我的家具和衬衫装到他的手推车上，推着车穿街走巷，看见有出租牌子就停下来。我呢，我走上楼去看看出租的房间对我们是否合适。到了中午我们还在拉丁区徘徊，一无所获。租金是最大的障碍。布尔雅向我提议在一家酒铺里吃午饭，我们把手推车停放在酒铺门口。快到黄昏时分，我终于发现在商业胡同、罗昂大院一家房子的顶层，屋顶下面有两个被楼梯隔开的房间。我们每人每年只要付六十个法郎的房租。于是我同我那位微贱的朋友便安顿下来了。我们一起吃饭。布尔雅每天约可赚到五十个苏，已经有差不多一百艾居的存款，不久便可实现他的野心，买一只水桶和一匹马了。他用一种狡猾的方法和亲切的态度把我的秘密都挖

了出来，他的亲切态度一直到现在回忆起来都使我的心震动。等到他知道我的全部情况以后，他就暂时放弃他憧憬了一生的野心：布尔雅当挑水夫已经二十二年了，他为了我的前途牺牲了他的一百艾居。”

说到这里德斯普兰紧紧抓住皮安训的胳膊。

“他给了我必要的钱，让我准备考试！我的朋友，这个人懂得我有一个使命，知道我的才智的需要比他的需要更重要。他照顾我，管我叫他的‘孩子’，借给我必要的钱让我买书，有时还蹑手蹑脚地走过来看我用功，最后，他还像慈母般采取措施，把我以前不得不吃的数量不足、质量低劣的食物，换成卫生可口、数量充足的食物。布尔雅是一个四十岁左右的人，相貌很像中世纪时的市民，前额突出，脑袋可以给一个画家用来作为李居尔格 [29] 的模特儿。这个可怜的人觉得自己心中充满爱，无处发泄。他从来没有被人爱过，只有不久以前死去的一只卷毛狗爱过他。他经常对我谈起这只狗，总是问我是否相信天主教堂会同意为它的灵魂的安息举办弥撒。据他说，他的狗是一个真正的教徒，十二年来，一直跟随他到教堂去，从来不吠一声，总是闭着嘴聆听风琴的乐声，蹲在他的身边，那样子使他相信它正在同他一起祈祷。这个人把他的全部的爱倾注到我身上：他把我当作一个孤独的、受苦的人，他变成了我的无微不至的慈母，面面俱到的恩人，总之，他是无私地做好事的典型。每当我在街上遇见他，他总向我会意地望上一眼，眼光里充满难以想象的崇高的感情。那时候他就装出不在挑水的样子走着，他看见我身体健康，衣服齐整，似乎显得很高兴。他的所作所为，是普通人的献身精神和村姑的爱情应用到高一级的范围。布尔雅替我办事，晚上在约好的钟点把我叫醒，为我揩拭灯罩，擦我们的地板，他既是好仆人，又是好父亲，而且像个英国姑娘那么干净。他负责我们的家务。像菲洛珀芒 [30] 一样，他锯我们自己的木柴，他做一切事情都简单、自然，同时保持他的尊严，因为他似乎明白只要目的高贵，便连带使一切都高贵起来。当我离开这个老实人进入市立医院当实习医生的时候，他一想到再也不能同我一起生活了，便感到异乎寻常的悲痛，可是他还自我安慰，希望积些钱来为我准备论文，而且叫我答应在休息的日子去看他。布尔雅为我感到骄傲，他爱我是为了我也为他自己。如果你翻开我的论文，你一定会看到这是献给他的。在我当实习医生的最后一年，我攒了足够的钱，可以买一匹马和一只水桶，以偿还我欠这位可敬的奥韦尼人的一切。他知道我花了许多钱，非常生气，然而看见他的希望实现了，又非常高兴。他一边笑一边责备我，他凝视着他的水桶和他的马，一边抹去眼泪一边对我说：‘这不好！啊！多漂亮的水桶！你做错了，这马真和一个奥韦尼人一样结实。’我从来没有见过比这更动人的场面。布尔雅一定要给我买一个医用器械包，就是你在我的诊所里看见的镶银的那一个，这对我是生平最宝贵的东西。虽然他对我早期的成功感到万分兴

奋，但是他从来不漏出一句话、一个手势表示：‘这个人多亏了我！’而事实上没有他，贫困早已要了我的命。这个可怜的人为我牺牲了他自己。为了使我有咖啡喝来开夜车，他只吃大蒜抹面包。他病了，你想象得出，我在他的床头守夜，第一次我把他救过来了。可是两年以后病又复发，尽管有热情的照顾，有医学上的种种巨大努力，他终于还是一病不起。国王从来也没有像他那样受到医疗照料。是的，皮安训，为了从死神手里夺回这条生命，我尝试过从来没有试过的方法。我想让他活下去，使他能够看到他亲手促成的成果，看到他的愿望全部实现，同时满足充斥我心中的唯一感恩之情，从而熄灭至今还燃烧着我的火焰！”

“布尔雅，”德斯普兰显然非常激动，停顿了一会儿又说，“我的第二个父亲，死在我的怀里，用遗嘱把他的全部财产遗留给我。遗嘱是他找一个街头代书人写的，订立的日期是我们搬进罗昂大院的那一年。这个人的宗教信仰天真而单纯。他爱圣母仿佛爱他自己的妻子。他是虔诚的天主教徒，但是对我的无宗教信仰从来不发一言。他病危的时候，他求我用尽一切方法使他得到教会的帮助。我叫教堂每天为他奉献一场弥撒。他经常在夜里向我表达他对来世的恐惧，他害怕他今世的生活还过得不够圣洁。可怜的人！他从早到晚劳动。假如真有天堂的话，除了他还有什么人能进天堂呢？他像一个圣者一样接受了临终圣事，他的死配得上他的一生。送殡的人，除了我没有别人。我将我唯一的恩人埋葬以后，我考虑用什么方法可以报他的恩，我发觉他既没有家庭，也没有朋友、妻子、儿女。但是他信上帝！他有一个宗教信仰，我有权利和他争辩吗？他曾经小心翼翼地和我谈起过用弥撒来使死者的亡灵安息，但是他不想把这个负担加到我的身上，因为他认为这就等于叫我报他的恩。因此等到我有财力可以举办一场弥撒的时候，我就给了圣絮尔皮斯教堂足够的钱，使他们每年举行四次弥撒。我唯一可以献给布尔雅的，就是满足他的虔诚的愿望。因此每季度的开始，举行这场弥撒的日子，我就以他的名义去参加弥撒，而且背诵他所希望背诵的经文。我以一个无神论者的诚意祷告：‘我的上帝啊，如果你有一个地方去安置那些生前十全十美的人，请你想到善良的布尔雅吧。如果你要叫他受苦，请把痛苦给我，使他得以更快地进入人们所谓的天堂吧。’我的朋友，这就是像我这样有非宗教信仰的人所能做的一切。上帝应该是一个善良的家伙，他不会因此而恨我的。我向你发誓，如果有人能使布尔雅的信仰进入我的脑子，我愿意将我的全部财产送给他。”

皮安训在德斯普兰最后一次生病的时候看护过德斯普兰，现在他不敢肯定这位著名的外科医生死时还是个无神论者。信神的人们也许喜欢想象那位微贱的奥韦尼人会来给他打开天国的门，正如从前他曾为他打开地上神殿的门一样，这神殿 [31] 的门楣上写着：“祖国感谢

所有的伟人”！

1836年1月，巴黎
(郑永慧 译)

[1] 居维埃 (Cuvier, 1769—1832)，法国动物学家，古生物学家。按照居维埃的方法，可以根据破碎的骨头，断定它是哪个世纪哪种动物的遗骸。(说明：书中脚注均为译者注。)

[2] 加利安 (Galien, 131—约201)，希腊名医，在解剖学上曾有重要发明。

[3] 拿破仑于1805在布洛尼厄滨海省集中大军，造平底船，准备在英国登陆。之所以说“要等到1822年才能解释1804年……”，大概是指拿破仑死于1821年，死后拿破仑的回忆录发表，对于他的政治活动做过很多新的解释，因此对1804年他的所作所为要做新的评价。

[4] “怪癖”，原文是英语eccentricity。

[5] 克雷比庸 (P.J. Crébillon, 1674—1762)，法国悲剧诗人。

[6] 圣米歇尔勋章，又名黑绸带，创立于1469年，1816年路易十八予以恢复，专门奖给科学家。

[7] 奥莱斯特 (Oreste) 是希腊神话中阿伽门农的儿子，同比拉德 (Pylade) 结为生死之交，他们的友谊传为千古美谈。复仇三女神 (Les Furies) 专司惩罚人类的罪行。奥莱斯特为父报仇，杀死亲母，被复仇女神追逐，受到比拉德的救助和保护。这里是说荷拉斯·皮安训帮助许多朋友不受债主的追逼。

[8] 塞伊德 (Seide)，穆罕默德的奴隶，盲目地忠于他的主人，他的名字象征狂热的忠诚。

[9] 无名小卒，原文是奥米伽 (Oméga)，是希腊文字母表的最后一个字母，这里做专有名词用，指皮安训在医学界的事业刚刚开始。

[10] 奥韦尼省 (Auvergne)，过去法国的省份，首府是克勒蒙菲朗，包括现在的多姆山省、康塔尔省和上卢瓦尔省的一部分。

[11] 杜博瓦 (Antoirre Dubois, 1756—1837)，法国著名的外科医生。

[12] 康塔尔 (Cantal)，奥韦尼省的一部分，以有康塔尔山脉而得名。这就是说，这个病人也是奥韦尼省人。

[13] 圣絮尔皮斯广场上有圣絮尔皮斯教堂，因而得名。

[14] 卡巴尼斯主义者，信仰卡巴尼斯学说的人。卡巴尼斯（Pierre Jean Georges Cabanis，1757—1808），法国医生，唯物主义哲学家，是个激烈的无神论者。

[15] 布鲁塞（Francois Broussais，1772—1838），著名的法国医生，他的治疗以放血、节食为主，常使用水蛭放血。

[16] Hoc est corpus，拉丁文，意思是：“这是我的躯体。”相传是耶稣的话。照天主教的说法，圣餐里面的面包和酒，包含着耶稣的圣体、圣血和圣神。这种说法使教会分裂成两派：一派相信，另一派不相信。1264年教皇于班四世建立圣体节，加深了教会内两派之争。

[17] 指普罗旺斯的宗教战争，阿耳比人开创了一个新教派，11世纪时在法国南部流传甚广，被天主教会下令讨伐，血战数年，才镇压下去。

[18] 沃杜瓦教派也流传于法国南部，与阿耳比教派同受迫害。

[19] 伏尔泰以攻击教会闻名于世。

[20] 《语录》（*Citateur*，1803），法国作家皮戈-勒勃伦（Pigault-Lebrun，1753—1835）所写的书，书中集中了无数揭穿天主教教士的假面具的语录，王政复古时期曾被没收和焚毁。

[21] 《事物本性》（*de natur arerum*），原文是拉丁文，是著名拉丁诗人吕克拉新（Lucretius，约公元前98—前55）的一首诗的题目。

[22] 秘密的（*in petto*），原文是意大利文。

[23] 举办一场弥撒，指付一笔款子给教士，使教士在指定的日期、为特定的目的做弥撒。

[24] 1830年7月，巴黎人民筑起街垒，在三天之内推翻了波旁王朝的专制统治，但胜利果实被资产阶级篡夺，银行家们拥立路易·菲利普为国王。

[25] 1832年在悼念反动的德·贝里公爵（Le due de Berry）被暗杀的弥撒礼仪上，复辟党人为1830年七月革命中受伤的王室卫士募捐。巴黎人民知道以后，立即冲向教堂，将教堂砸烂。接着又冲向天主教官邸，将官邸抢劫一空。

[26] 这个最著名的人物大概是指苏尔元帅（Soult，1769—1851），他曾经几次当内阁总理，平时热衷于参加宗教游行，因过分热衷，使人产生怀疑。

[27] 圣夫卢尔（Saint Flour）是奥韦尼省的一个城市。

[28] 艾居（écu），法国古币单位，每个值三法郎。

[29] 李居尔格（Lycurgue），根据历代传说，是斯巴达的立法者，约活在公元前9世纪。

[30] 菲洛珀芒（Philopemen，公元前253—前189），古希腊的军事统帅，以正直和勤劳享有盛名。

[31] 神殿指巴黎的先贤祠（Panthéon），建于1754至1780年，自1791年起，专门收受对国家有贡献的著名人物的骨灰，文学家雨果、左拉等人的骨灰，都在这个大门上有“祖国感谢所有的伟人”的题词的神殿里。

新兵

他们发现，有些时候，借助某个想法或举动，他可以在时间与距离两种模式中废除空间，一种是思想的，另一种是物理的。

——《路易·朗贝尔的思想史》

1793年11月的一个晚上，卡朗唐镇的重要人士都聚集在戴伊夫人家的客厅，集会每天在这里进行。有些事情，在大城市不会引起一丁点的注意，但是，在小城镇却会牵动所有人的神经。这种常规性的集会在小地方就格外引人注目。两天前，戴伊夫人以身体不适为由，闭门谢客，前一天也没有接待任何人。普普通通的日子里，这两件事情在卡朗唐产生的影响，堪比巴黎所有的剧院关门停演。这样的生活好像是不完整的。然而，在1793年，戴伊夫人的举动无疑会招来最致命的后果。对于贵族来说，即便是很小的冒险举动，都可能变成关乎生存与死亡的问题。这一晚，诺曼底人的脸上挂着强烈的好奇和高度的敏感，为了清楚了解诺曼底人的反应，尤其是戴伊夫人内心的挣扎，有必要解释一下她在卡朗唐扮演的角色。她此刻的危险处境，许多人在革命期间也经历过。此外，读者的怜悯之心也会使这个故事更加有声有色。

戴伊夫人，是个寡妇，在贵族流亡时期离开了宫廷，她已故的丈夫是一位中将，曾获骑士勋章。她在卡朗唐一带拥有大量财产，避难于此，期许躲避恐怖浪潮的影响。基于对小镇的充分了解，她的预期十分准确。革命没有对下诺曼底地区带来大面积的破坏。尽管从前戴伊夫人只是在巡视自己的地产时与当地的贵族有过几面之缘，但是，现在她决计向当地的大资本家和新权威人士敞开家门，努力让他们因能和自己攀上关系而感到沾沾自喜，又不引起仇恨和嫉妒。优雅、和善，骨子带着不可言喻的温柔，她不必奴颜婢膝，也无须求天告地，便可以轻松取悦他人。借助巧妙的策略，她成功赢得了广泛的尊重。机敏的性格使得她在微妙之处也游刃有余，满足不同社会阶级要求的同时，既不伤害倔强的新贵的自尊心，也不冒犯老朋友。

不同于下诺曼底女子的光鲜、丰满的美，三十八岁的她有着纤弱的美，或者说贵族的高雅。外貌俊美、端庄；体态轻盈、纤细。说起话来，苍白的脸色就会变得光彩照人，充满活力。黑色的大眼睛散发着和蔼与亲切，平静与虔诚的眼神又仿佛在昭示，她的人生已经由不

得她了。在如花的年纪嫁给了一个年老又多疑的军人。丈夫在风流宫廷中有名无实的地位在她脸上罩上了深沉的忧郁。曾经这张脸上肯定也焕发过迷人的魅力和爱情的活力。她不得不始终压抑女人的天真与任性，尽管依旧感受得到，只是不去想，总之，在她心底埋藏着少女的激情。其实她的魅力源于这种内在的青春。只是，有时候内在的青春会在神情上出卖她，让人觉得是内心欲望的天真表达。她的眼神使人生敬，举止言谈中却总是夹杂着少女对未知的将来的渴望与冲动；很快，再不敏感的男人也会爱上她，尽管如此，迫于她端庄的举止，也只能敬而远之。她的心灵生而高贵，又因经历多番残酷斗争的磨砺，超乎众人，连男人都自叹不如。这般性格势必内含某种强大的激情。戴伊夫人的爱都集中一处——母爱。嫁为人妻，她在对儿子过分的疼爱中找回被生活剥夺的幸福与快乐。她不仅仅以纯洁、无私的母爱去爱他，还带着情人的妩媚，妻子的嫉妒。儿子不在眼前时，她就感到难过。儿子不在家时，她就坐立不安。永远也看不够，她只因儿子活着，也只为他活着。为了让大体会这种情感的力量，只需要略做一点补充，这孩子不单单是戴伊夫人唯一的儿子，也是她在世上唯一的亲人，她唯一可以寄托人生的忧虑、期望、快乐的人。已故的丈夫戴伊伯爵是家族最后的香火，她也是自己家族最后的继承人。人世利益的盘算和人心灵深处最崇高的渴望相并而行，使得在女人身上本来就很强烈的情感，在伯爵夫人心里越燃越烈。她对儿子百般呵护，养儿的艰辛也使得孩子对她来说更加宝贵；医生不止一次预言，她可能会失去他，但是，她只相信自己的直觉，从不灰心。不管医生怎么说，她还是幸福地陪着儿子闯过童年的难关，看他身体日益强壮，有种不可名状的开心。

多亏她持续不断的照料，孩子日渐长大，长成风度优雅的小伙子。二十岁的时候，就已经是凡尔赛镇最出色的骑兵之一。诚然，不是所有母亲的付出都会得到回报，但是戴伊夫人很幸运，她的儿子非常爱她；他们心灵共通，情同挚友。即便没有血缘关系，他们也一定可以像兄弟一样相互感知，这种友谊在生活中是十分罕见的。十八岁时，这位年轻的伯爵被任命为龙骑兵团少尉，依当时的处境，为了捍卫荣誉，不得不跟随贵族流亡。

戴伊夫人，高贵、富有，作为流亡贵族的母亲，不可能对自己严峻的处境视而不见。除了给儿子保留一笔丰厚的财产，别无他求。她放弃了与他一同流亡的幸福。当读到那些严苛的法条，得知共和派每天都依照它们没收卡朗唐流亡贵族的家产时，她为自己大胆的举动拍手叫好。难道她不是冒着生命危险来守护儿子的财富吗？后来，听说国民议会判决残忍的死刑时，她确认自己唯一的宝贝安好，远离危险、远离断头台，便安心地睡了。她快乐地认为自己做出了最明智的选择，可以同时保全所有的财产。保守着自己心中的秘密，对不幸的

年代做出所有必需的妥协，为了不损害女人的尊严和牺牲贵族信念，她把自己的痛苦包裹在冷酷的神秘中。在卡朗唐等待她的重重困难，她早已了然于心。在这里占居首户，岂不是每天都有被推上断头台的可能？可是，被作为母亲所拥有的勇气支撑，她知道如何平等对待穷人，减轻他们的痛苦，以赢得拥护；她也知道如何保护富人的财产，取悦他们，让自己变得不可或缺。她接待市镇检察官、镇长、地方法院庭长、公诉人，甚至革命法庭的法官。这群人中，前面四位都未婚，百般献殷勤，想要娶她为妻。为了得到她，他们不是恐吓她，自己可以给她带来多少麻烦，就是告诉她，自己可以向她提供怎样的庇护。这位公诉人是卡昂的前任律师，从前负责照管伯爵夫人的财产利益，试图以忠心与慷慨，博得她的爱情。危险的手段！他是所有追求者中，最可怕的一位。他也是唯一对伯爵夫人巨额财产状况了如指掌的人，因为她曾经是他的客户。仗着拥有巨大的权力，可以说是这个地区的生杀大权，他的贪婪与日俱增。这个男人，尚年轻，举止如此高贵优雅，以至于戴伊夫人无法辨清他的为人。然而，无视与诺曼底人明争暗斗的危险，她运用女人天生的才智和狡黠，使情敌之间相互牵制。竭力争取时间，她希望可以安然无损地度过混乱期。当时，国内保皇主义分子每天自信地认为革命结束指日可待，而这一执念断送了他们其中很多人的性命。

尽管困难重重，戴伊夫人还是很巧妙地保持着自身的独立，直到这一天，以一种令人费解的轻率，她毫无顾忌地关上了家门。她的反常举动勾起了大家浓厚、真切的兴趣。当晚来访的客人得知伯爵夫人无法接待他们的时候，表现出强烈的不安。再者，出于当地人特有的、赤裸裸的好奇，他们打探戴伊夫人是遭遇了不幸，遇到了烦心事，还是得了重病。名叫布丽吉特的老管家解答了大家的疑惑。她说，夫人把自己关在房间里，谁也不想见，甚至家仆。生活在修道院似的小镇，人们养成了分析和解释他人行为举止的习惯。自然，在对戴伊夫人略表同情之后，不知道她到底是高兴还是悲伤，每个人都开始搜寻她突然闭门谢客的原因。

“如果她生病了，她应该打发人去找医生，”第一个好奇者揣测道，“但是医生今天一天都在我家下棋。他笑着对我说，现今只有一种病……并且这种病无药可救。”

他小心翼翼地抛出这个笑话。于是，女人、男人、老人和年轻的女孩开始了形形色色的猜测。每个人都觉得自己瞥见了一个秘密，这个秘密充满了大胆的想象。第二天，他们的猜疑持续加重。一如小镇的生活很难掩人耳目，女人们首先察觉到布丽吉特采购的食物比往常要多得多。这一点无可争议。一大早，就有人在集市上看见了老管家，不同往常的是，她买了市场上唯一的野兔。小镇上的人都知道，戴伊夫人不喜欢吃野味。野兔也就成了种种猜疑的出发点。与平常一

样，老人们出来散散步，他们察觉伯爵夫人家里可能正在进行某种秘密集会，家仆的谨小慎微和遮遮掩掩可以提供佐证。仆人在花园里拍打地毯，要是在前一天，没有人会注意这件事情，可是现在，这张地毯成了故事的线索，大家都借此发挥。每个人都有自己的版本。第二天，听说戴伊夫人自称身体不适，当晚，卡朗唐所有的大人物聚集在镇长的兄弟家。他是一位已婚的老商人，为人正直，受人敬重，连戴伊夫人都很尊重他。聚会中，这位富有孀妇的追求者们都讲出了自己大大小小的猜测；每个人都想让此次迫使她名誉受损的神秘事件对自己有利。公诉人编了一整出戏，故事的结局是戴伊夫人的儿子连夜赶回了家中。镇长认为是有一位旺代的反抗派教士，逃亡于此，请求庇护。但是，这天是周五，买野兔的事情让镇长觉得很尴尬。地方法院庭长则坚信她收留的是被严密追捕的朱安党人或西部保皇党人的某个头目。其他人觉得她收留的是一个从巴黎监狱逃脱的贵族。总之，大家都怀疑伯爵夫人做出了一个大胆的举动，而这一举动依照当时的法律是重罪，足以把她送上断头台。公诉人小声说，大家最好保守这个秘密，尽力去拯救这个大步迈向深渊的不幸女人。

“如果你们散播这件事，”他补充道，“我就不得不介入，去搜查她的家，这样的话……”他没有把话说完，但是大家都明白他的意思。

伯爵夫人的挚友都十分担心她，以至于第三天的一大早，镇行政长官让他的妻子给她写信，鼓励她当晚像往常一样接待客人。更果断的是老商人，这天早上，他直接去了戴伊夫人家。他决心伸出援手，执意要见她，不过令他感到吃惊的是，当他看到戴伊夫人时，她正忙着在小花园里摘花，准备把它们插在花瓶里。

“她肯定在庇护她的情人。”老商人自言自语道，突然十分同情这个迷人的女人。伯爵夫人反常的神情证实了他的猜疑。老商人被女人天生的献身精神深深打动了，因为男人都会因女人甘心为他们牺牲而感到欣喜。老商人告诉了戴伊夫人镇上关于她的流言，以及她危险的处境。

“因为，”他最后说道，“尽管有些公职人员会欣然宽恕保护神父的英勇行为，但是没有人会同情您，如果他们发现您是为爱献身。”

听了这一席话，戴伊夫人用疑惑又疯狂的眼神盯着老商人，看得他瑟瑟发抖。

“跟我来。”她一边说一边拉着他的手往卧室走。确定只有他们两个人的时候，她从胸口掏出一封脏兮兮、皱巴巴的信。“读。”她使出全身的力气从牙缝里挤出这个字。

她瘫在扶手椅上，像丢了魂。老商人掏出眼镜擦拭时，她抬起头来，第一次用好奇的目光打量着他。她有点变腔，轻声对他说：“我

十分信任您。”

“我不是来分担您的罪行了吗？”这位老好人直率地回答道。

她浑身战栗。在这个小镇上，她第一次感到自己的灵魂与另一个灵魂相契合。老商人一下子就明白了伯爵夫人的沮丧与欢乐。她的儿子参加了格朗维勒远征，被捕，这封信是儿子在狱中写给她的。这封信给她带来的可能是喜讯，也可能是噩耗。儿子在信中说，对自己的越狱计划很有把握，这三天，他会乔装打扮回到家中。这封致命的信也预示着，如果他第三天晚上没有出现，等待伯爵夫人的将是撕心裂肺的永别。他恳请母亲给冒生命危险捎信的人一大笔钱。老商人拿着信的手不听使唤地颤抖。

“已经是第三天了！”戴伊夫人吼道，她迅速站起来，抢过信，焦急地在房间里走来走去。

“您之前太不小心了，”老商人说道，“为什么让女管家买那些食物？”

“他回来的时候可能饿得要死，累得要命，还有……”她说不下去了。

“我还是很了解我弟弟的，”老商人接过话来，“我这就去说服他站在您这边。”

在这个事情上，老商人重新找回了自己从前在生意场上的机敏，给戴伊夫人出了很谨慎又很有远见的主意。在商量妥当他们各自该说和该做的事情以后，老商人利用各种巧妙的理由，去走访卡朗唐所有的大人物，通知他们，尽管戴伊夫人身体抱恙，今晚还是会在家中接待他们。机智地与诺曼底人周旋，巧妙地回答了大家对伯爵夫人病情的询问，他成功瞒过了所有关心此神秘事件的人。他的初次走访可谓十分成功。他跟一个患痛风的老妇人说，戴伊夫人急性痛风发作，差点要了她的命。从前发生类似状况的时候，著名的特罗尚医生给她开过一个方子。在胸口上贴一张新鲜的兔皮，卧床静养。幸好及时用了这个神奇的偏方，这两天戴伊夫人才脱离生命危险。目前已经痊愈，今晚可以接待来访的客人。故事取得了惊人的效果。这位卡朗唐的医生是一位秘密保皇党人。他进一步解释了药方的原理，借助自己的声望加强了故事的影响力。尽管如此，种种猜疑已经深深扎根在一些顽固分子和理性主义者的心里，不可能一下完全消除。这天晚上，客人早早来到戴伊夫人家中，其中一些人来窥探她的脸色，另一些是出于友谊，大部分人都被她奇迹般的康复吸引而来。他们看见伯爵夫人坐在客厅的壁炉旁。戴伊夫人家的客厅和卡朗唐人家的装修一样简朴。为了不伤害来访客人的狭隘胸襟，她放弃了从前奢华的生活，房间还都是老样子，甚至接待室的地砖都没打磨。她还留着墙上灰暗的旧挂

毯，具有乡村特色的家具，点起了蜡烛。入乡随俗，在吝啬与拮据的生活面前，她没有退缩。但是她知道，她的客人会原谅她的奢华，如果是对他们有益的话。她从来不会忽略任何一个能够取悦客人的细节，比如给他们提供丰盛的晚餐。她甚至假装吝啬去迎合爱算计的人。她佯装在奢华面前做出让步，她懂得优雅地服从。所以，这天晚上七点左右，卡朗唐最优秀也是最糟糕的小集团就已经聚集在戴伊夫人家中，围坐在壁炉旁。在老商人同情、关切的目光的支持下，房间的女主人带着难以想象的勇气，应付着客人琐碎的问题、无聊愚蠢的争论。但是，每当有人敲门，或者听到路上有脚步回声时，她便会问一些关乎小镇利益的问题，以掩盖自己的不安。她引发了大家对苹果酒的热议，在老商人的积极应和下，大家似乎已经忘了去窥探她的神情，觉得她举止得体，落落大方。公诉人和其中一位革命法庭的法官则沉默不语，仔细观察着戴伊夫人面部表情的细微变化，尽管房间里十分嘈杂，他们还是静下心来仔细地听。他们多次提出了使她很尴尬的问题，但是，她都灵活应对了。这是母亲才有的勇气啊！戴伊夫人组织了牌局，大家分别围坐在牌桌前，玩波士顿、翻转棋、惠斯特牌。她自己依旧和几个年轻人攀谈，十分悠然自得，像极了老练的演员。戴伊夫人提议玩罗多游戏，假称只有自己知道游戏用具在哪儿，然后就消失了。

“亲爱的布丽吉特，我快要被闷死了。”她一边喊叫，一边擦着喷涌而出的泪水，泪光闪烁的双眸里充满了躁动、痛苦和焦虑。“他还没有来。”她接着说道，爬上楼梯，看了看卧室，“在这里，我呼吸和生存。再过几分钟，他就会来的，无论如何！因为他还活着，我确定他还活着。我的心这么对我说的。你什么也没听到吗，布丽吉特？老天爷，我愿意用我的余生作为交换，只为知道他在监狱中，还是正走在乡间的路上！我忍不住去想！”

她又一次检查房间是否布置妥当。壁炉里火烧得正旺。百叶窗关得严严实实。家具也擦得锃亮。从床铺的细节也可看出所有的东西都是她和布丽吉特一起准备的。她的期待体现在每一个精心的小细节，房间的花香里，飘荡着甜蜜的温柔和最纯洁的爱。只有母亲可以预知一个士兵的渴望，并完完全全地满足他。可口的菜肴，精心挑选的酒，鞋子，换洗衣物，总之，一个劳累的旅行者归家所需要的一切都准备好了，什么也不缺。一个母亲的爱尽现眼前。

“布丽吉特？”她用让人心碎的嗓音叫了她一声，她正把椅子挪到桌子前，仿佛她的梦想就要成真，又仿佛在加强自己的幻想。

“会的！夫人，他肯定会回来的。他肯定不远了。我保证他肯定活着，正在回来的路上。”布丽吉特回应道，“我在《圣经》里放了一把钥匙，珂丹读《约翰福音》的时候，我把钥匙捧在手上。夫人，您

知道吗？钥匙没有转动。”

“这可信吗？”伯爵夫人问道。

“当然了，夫人，很灵验的。我以我的灵魂得救向您担保，他还活着。上帝从不欺人。”

“尽管在这里等待他的是危险，我还是十分想见他。”

“可怜的奥古斯特先生，”布丽吉特哭喊道，“他肯定是靠双脚走回来的。”

“八点的钟已经敲响了！”伯爵夫人惊恐地叫道。

她担心自己在房间里待太久了，她本不应该来的。看着房间里的一切，她相信儿子还活着。她下了楼。在走进客厅之前，她在楼梯的廊柱旁停留了片刻，听听寂静的小城里是否有回声。她对守在门口的布丽吉特的丈夫笑了笑。他因为长时间集中精力听外面的动静，目光显得有些呆滞。她无论看什么，都能看见儿子的影子。她迅速回到客厅，假装一副很开心的样子，和小姑娘们一起玩罗多游戏。玩的过程中，她时不时说自己有点不舒服，就又回到了壁炉旁边的扶手椅上休息。这就是当时戴伊夫人家的活动情况和大家的精神状态。

与此同时，一个身着褐色卡马尼奥拉服的年轻人——那个年代十分典型的着装——正在从巴黎到瑟堡的路上，赶往卡朗唐。刚开始征兵的时候，没有什么规章制度。当时需求紧急，共和派没有时间给士兵提供装备，在路上碰到穿着平民便服的新兵，也不稀奇。这些年轻人，有人走在队伍的前面，有人拖在队伍的后面，他们前进的步伐主要取决于他们承受劳累的长途跋涉的方式。大家关心的“旅行者”，正走在向瑟堡进发的特遣部队前面。卡朗唐的镇长已经等了他们好几小时，想要给他们分发士兵借宿证。这位年轻人的脚步沉重又坚定，仿佛在宣示，他早已习惯了粗野的军旅生活。尽管皎洁的月光洒满卡朗唐周围丛生的杂草，他早已注意到云层积得很厚，仿佛要下雪了。害怕被暴风围困，他加快了脚步，顾不上劳累。他背上背着一个差不多空了的包，手里拿着黄杨手杖，是从高大的树篱上砍下来的，这种形状的灌木在下诺曼底地区十分常见。孤独的旅行者一走进卡朗唐，就看见沐浴在冷寂的月光中的楼塔。他的脚步声回荡在寂静无人的街上。他不得不向一个还在工作的纺织工打听镇长的住处。镇长家并不远，他很快就走到他家门廊下，申请了士兵借宿证，坐在石椅上等待。但是，他却被叫到镇长跟前，被从头到脚，仔细打量了一番。这个新兵风度翩翩，不像是一般人家的孩子，神情透露出贵族的气质，脸上的智慧也暗示着他曾经接受过良好的教育。

“你叫什么名字？”镇长一边问，一边向他投去耐人寻味的目光。

“于连·朱西厄。”新兵回答道。

“你从哪里来？”他接着问，嘴角露出一丝狐疑的微笑。

“巴黎。”

“你的战友应该离这里还有一段距离吧？”他操着诺曼底人嘲讽的口吻继续问道。

“我比大部队快十二公里。”

“一定有什么特殊的情感吸引你来到卡朗唐吧，新兵？”镇长狡猾地问道。“这样也好，”他摆手止住了将要开口讲话的年轻人，“我知道该把你送到哪里了。拿着，这是你的士兵借宿证明，走吧，公民朱西厄！”

镇长在说“公民”二字时，带着一股嘲讽的意味。借宿证上有戴伊夫人提前安排好的住处。年轻人好奇地看着地址。

“他知道他不用走太远。他出门后，要穿过广场！”年轻人离开时，镇长自己吼道，“他可真是胆大！愿上帝带领他！看来他早就想好了如何应对一切。但是，如果不是我，而是其他人要求看他的证件，他就完蛋了！”

就在这时，卡朗唐九点半的钟声响起。戴伊夫人家前厅的风灯点着了，家仆帮他们的女主人和男主人们穿好鞋子，披上外套或者斗篷。打牌的人算清账目。按照小城当地的风俗，大家一起离开。

“公诉人好像不想离开。”一位夫人说道。他们在广场上相互道别，准备各自归家时，她发现这位重要的人物不在。

事实上，这位可怕的公诉人正和伯爵夫人单独待在一起。她浑身颤抖，期待他赶紧离开。

“女公民，”在漫长、恐怖的沉寂后，他终于开了口，“我在这里是为了看看共和国的法律是如何执行的……”

戴伊夫人打了个寒战。

“您没有什么想对我说的吗？”他问道。

“没有。”她吃惊地答道。

“啊！夫人！”他一边喊一边坐在她旁边，换了另外一种口吻，继续说，“这个节骨眼上，说错一个字，你、我都有可能被送上断头台。我观察您的性格、您的精神状况、您的行为举止很久了，才不会被您今晚演的这出戏欺骗。您在等您的儿子，我确信无疑。”

伯爵夫人摆手否认。尽管她已经面色苍白，为了显示自己的坚

定，依旧紧绷着脸上的肌肉。她所有的举动都没有逃脱公诉人犀利的目光。

“那么，就接他回家吧，”这位革命的官员接着说道，“但是他最迟只能在家里待到明天早上七点。明天，天一亮，我就会带着一封起草好的告发信登门……”

她惊愕地看着他，神情足以使老虎心生怜悯。

他又用温柔的口气继续说：“我会用细致的搜查证实这封告发信是无稽之谈。有了我的报告，今后您就可以彻底摆脱大家的猜疑。我会高谈您的爱国情操，您的公民责任感，不会有任何闪失。”

戴伊夫人害怕这是一个陷阱，她一动不动，但是她的脸已经憋得通红，舌头也僵住了。突然传来了敲门声……

“天哪！”这个母亲惊恐地叫道，瘫在了地上，“救救他吧，救救他吧！”

“没有问题，我会救他的！”公诉人充满激情地答道，“就算搭上我们的性命，也要保全他。”

“我要死了！”她叫道。公诉人礼貌地扶她起来。

“夫人，”他摆出演说家的架势说，“我不想您有任何的亏欠，包括您自己。”

“夫人，他……”布丽吉特惊呼，她原本以为只有女主人一个人在家。

看见公诉人的瞬间，兴奋、开心的老仆人愣住了，吓得脸色苍白。

“谁来了，布丽吉特？”他温和、优雅地问道。

“一个新兵，镇长让他暂住这里。”仆人答道，顺手递出了士兵借宿证。

“的确，”公诉人看了证明之后说，“今天会有一个部队抵达卡朗唐！”

他离开了。

伯爵夫人此刻需要百分之百信任她的前任律师，容不得半点怀疑。尽管已经没有站立的力气，她还是迅速爬上楼。打开门，看见儿子，跌进他的怀里：“哦！我的孩子，我的孩子！”她抽泣着叫道，疯狂地亲吻他。

“夫人。”陌生人说道。

“天哪！这不是他！”她向后跌了几步，在新兵面前站定，用惊恐的目光盯着他。

“老天爷，怎么会长得如此相像！”布丽吉特惊叹道。

一瞬间，大家陷入了沉寂。年轻人看着戴伊夫人的神情紧张得发抖。

“先生，”她说，靠着布丽吉特的丈夫，痛苦侵袭了她全身，这第一次打击就足以要了她的命，“抱歉，我不能继续待在这里陪您了，如果您不介意的话，让我的家仆来服侍您。”

她被布丽吉特和她的丈夫扶下楼梯。

“怎么会这样，夫人？”老女仆一边安顿女主人，一边叫道，“这个男人竟然要睡在奥古斯特先生的床上，穿奥古斯特先生的拖鞋，吃我精心为奥古斯特先生准备的馅饼！我要是被推上断头台，我……”

“布丽吉特！”戴伊夫人吼道。

老仆人默不作声。

“闭嘴，你这个话痨，”她的丈夫小声说，“难道你想害死夫人吗？”

就在这时，新兵的房间里传出来一些动静，他准备吃饭了。

“我不能待在这里了，”戴伊夫人喊道，“我要去花房，在那里，夜间更方便听外面的声音。”

她在失去儿子的恐惧和重逢的希望之间挣扎。夜，一片可怕的死寂。当新兵大部队到达卡朗唐，每个人都找到自己的住处时，对于伯爵夫人来说，是可怕的时刻。每个脚步，每个动静都会激起她的希望，但紧跟而来的安静，又会让希望变成泡影。

清晨，伯爵夫人不得不回她自己的房间。布丽吉特留心主人的一举一动，看她没有出来，就走进房间，发现夫人已经死了。

“她肯定听见了新兵穿好衣服后，在奥古斯特先生的房间里走来走去，唱那首该死的《马赛曲》，像在马槽里一样，”布丽吉特哭喊道，“这足以要了她的命！”

导致伯爵夫人死亡的痛苦远比这个要沉重得多，很可能是可怕的幻象。戴伊夫人在卡朗唐逝世的那一刻，她的儿子在莫尔比昂被枪决了。我们可以将这出悲剧纳入所有超越法律空间，关乎同情的观察里。孤独的人们带着好奇收集的资料，有一天会成为一门新兴科学的基础，只是今天，这个天才还没有出现。

1831年2月于巴黎

(陈爽译)

Honoré
de Balzac

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

The Atheist's
Mass

N^o 15

‘This is as much
a mystery as
the Immaculate
Conception,
which of itself
must make
a doctor an
unbeliever.’

The Atheist's Mass

A doctor to whom science owes a fine physiological theory and who, while still young, achieved a place amongst the celebrities of the Paris school of medicine (that centre of enlightenment to which all the doctors of Europe pay homage), Doctor Bianchon, practised surgery for a long time before devoting himself to medicine. His early studies were directed by one of the greatest of French surgeons, by the celebrated Desplein who passed through the world of science like a meteor. Even his enemies admit that he took with him to the grave a method that could not be handed on to others. Like all men of genius he had no heirs; he carried his skill within him and he carried it away with him. A surgeon's fame is like an actor's. It exists only so long as he is alive and his talent can no longer be appreciated once he has gone. Actors and surgeons, great singers too, and virtuoso musicians who by their playing increase tenfold the power of music, are all heroes of the moment. Desplein's life is a proof of the resemblance between the destinies of these transitory geniuses. His name which was so famous yesterday is almost forgotten today. It will remain only in his own field without going beyond it. But extraordinary conditions are surely necessary for the name of a scholar to pass from the domain of Science into the general history of humanity. Did Desplein have that width of knowledge which makes a man the mouthpiece or the representative of an age? Desplein possessed a god-like glance; he understood the patient and his disease by means of a natural or acquired intuition which allowed him to appreciate the diagnosis appropriate to the individual, to decide the precise moment, the hour, the minute at which he should operate, taking into account atmospheric conditions and temperamental peculiarities. To be able to collaborate with Nature in this way, had he then studied the endless combination of beings and elemental substances contained in the atmosphere or provided by the earth for man, who absorbs them and uses them for a particular purpose? Did he use that power of deduction and analogy to which Cuvier owes his genius? However that may be, this man understood the secrets of the flesh;

he understood its past as well as its future, by studying the present. But did he contain all science in his person as did Hippocrates, Galen, Aristotle? Did he lead a whole school towards new worlds? No. If it is impossible to refuse to this constant observer of human chemistry the ancient science of Magism, that is to say, the knowledge of the elements in fusion, of the causes of life, of life before life, of what it will be, judging from its antecedents before it exists, all this unfortunately was personal to him. In his life he was isolated by egoism, and today that egoism is the death of his fame. Over his tomb there is no statue proclaiming to the future, in ringing tones, the mysteries which Genius seeks out at its own expense. But perhaps Desplein's talent was in keeping with his beliefs, and consequently mortal. For him the terrestrial atmosphere was like a generative bag; he saw the earth as if it were an egg in its shell, and unable to know whether the egg or the hen came first, he denied both the fowl and the egg. He believed neither in the animal anterior to man nor in the spirit beyond him. Desplein was not in doubt, he affirmed his opinion. He was like many other scholars in his frank, unmixed atheism. They are the best people in the world but incorrigible atheists, atheists such as religious people don't believe exist. It was hardly possible for such a man to hold a different opinion, for from his youth he was used to dissecting the living being *par excellence*, before, during and after life, and to examining all its functions without finding the unique soul that is indispensable to religious theories. Desplein recognized a cerebral centre, a nervous centre and a circulatory centre, of which the first two do duty for each other so well that at the end of his life he was convinced that the sense of hearing was not absolutely necessary to hear, nor the sense of sight absolutely necessary to see, and that the solar plexus could replace them without anyone noticing it. He thus found two souls in man and this fact confirmed his atheism, although it still tells us nothing about God. He died, they say, impenitent to the last, as unfortunately do many fine geniuses. May God forgive them!

This really great man's life exhibited many pettinesses, to use the expression of his enemies who in their jealousy wanted to diminish his fame, but it would be more appropriate to call them apparent contradictions. Envious or stupid people who do not know the reasons which explain the activities of superior minds immediately take advantage of a few superficial contradictions to

make accusations on which they obtain a momentary judgement. If, later on, the plans which have been attacked are crowned with success, when the preparations are correlated with the results, some of the calumnies which were made beforehand remain. Thus, in our own time, Napoleon was condemned by our contemporaries when he spread out the wings of his eagle over England: but we needed the events of 1822 to explain 1804 and the flat-bottomed boats at Boulogne. [1]

Since Desplein's fame and scientific knowledge were unassailable, his enemies attacked his strange disposition and his character, while in fact he was simply what the English call eccentric. At times he dressed magnificently like the tragedian Crébillon, at times he seemed unusually indifferent to clothes. Sometimes he was to be seen in a carriage, sometimes on foot. He was now sharp-tempered, now kind, apparently hard and stingy, yet capable of offering his fortune to his exiled rulers who honoured him by accepting it for a few days. No man has inspired more contradictory judgements. Although, to obtain the Order of Saint Michael (which doctors are not supposed to solicit), he was capable of dropping a Book of Hours from his pocket at Court, you can be sure that inwardly he laughed at the whole thing. He had a profound contempt for mankind, having studied them from above and from below, having surprised them without pretence, as they performed the most solemn as well as the pettiest acts of life. A great man's gifts often hang together. If one of these giants has more talent than wit, his wit is still greater than that of a man of whom one says simply, 'He is witty.' All genius presupposes moral insight. This insight may be applied to some speciality, but he who sees the flower must see the sun. The doctor who heard a diplomat whose life he had saved ask, 'How is the Emperor?', and who replied, 'The courtier is coming back to life, the man will follow!' was not only a surgeon or a physician, he was also extremely witty. Thus the close and patient observer of humanity will justify Desplein's exorbitant pretensions and will realize, as he himself realized, that he was capable of being as great a minister as he was a surgeon.

Among the riddles which Desplein's life reveals to his contemporaries we have chosen one of the most interesting, because the solution will be found at the end of this tale and will

answer some of the foolish accusations which have been made against him.

Of all the pupils whom Desplein had at his hospital, Horace Bianchon was one of those to whom he became most warmly attached. Before doing his internship at the Hôtel Dieu, [2] Horace Bianchon was a medical student, living in a miserable boarding-house in the Latin Quarter, known by the name of La Maison Vauquer. [3] There this poor young man experienced that desperate poverty which is a kind of melting-pot whence great talents emerge pure and incorruptible, just as diamonds can be subjected to any kind of shock without breaking. In the violence of their unleashed passions, they acquire the most unshakeable honesty, and by dint of the constant labour with which they have contained their balked appetites, they become used to the struggles which are the lot of genius. Horace was an upright young man, incapable of double-dealing in affairs of honour, going straight to the point without fuss, as capable of pawning his coat for his friends as of giving them his time and his night's rest. In short, Horace was one of those friends who are not worried about what they receive in exchange for what they give, certain as they are to receive in their turn more than they will give. Most of his friends had for him that inner respect which is inspired by unostentatious goodness, and several of them were afraid of his strictures. But Horace exercised these virtues without being prudish. He was neither a puritan nor a preacher; he swore quite readily when giving advice, and enjoyed a good meal in gay company when opportunity offered. He was good company, no more squeamish than a soldier, bluff and open, not like a sailor – for the sailor of today is a wily diplomatist – but like a fine young man who has nothing to hide in his life; he walked with his head high and his heart light. In a word, Horace was the Pylades of more than one Orestes, creditors being today the most real shape assumed by the ancient Furies. He wore his poverty with that gaiety which is perhaps one of the greatest elements of courage, and like all those who have nothing, he contracted few debts. Sober as a camel, brisk as a stag, he was unwavering both in his principles and in his behaviour. The happiness of Bianchon's life began on the day when the famous surgeon obtained evidence of the good qualities and failings which, the one as much as the other, made Doctor Horace Bianchon doubly precious to his friends. When a clinical chief adopts a young man, that young man has, as they say, his foot

in the stirrup. Desplein always took Bianchon with him to act as his assistant in well- to- do homes, where some reward would nearly always find its way into the student's purse, and where little by little the mysteries of Parisian life were revealed to the young provincial. Desplein also kept him in his surgery during consultations and gave him work to do there. Sometimes he would send him to accompany a rich patient to a spa. In short, he was making a practice for him. The result of all this was that after a time the lord of surgery had a devoted slave. These two men, the one at the height of his fame and leader of his profession, enjoying an immense fortune and an immense reputation, the other, a modest Omega, having neither fortune nor fame, became intimate friends. The great Desplein told his assistant everything. He knew if a certain lady had sat down on a chair beside the master, or on the famous surgery couch where Desplein slept. Bianchon knew the mysteries of that temperament, both lion- like and bull- like, which in the end expanded and abnormally developed the great man's chest and caused his death from enlargement of the heart. The student studied the eccentricities of Desplein's very busy life, the plans made by his sordid avarice, the hopes of the politician concealed behind the scientist; he foresaw the disappointments in store for the only feeling hidden in that heart which was hardened rather than hard.

One day Bianchon told Desplein that a poor watercarrier from the Saint- Jacques quarter had a horrible illness caused by fatigue and poverty; this poor Auvergnat had eaten only potatoes during the severe winter of 1821. Desplein left all his patients. At the risk of working his horse to death, he rode as fast as he could, followed by Bianchon, to the poor man's house and himself had him carried to the nursing- home founded by the famous Dubois in the Faubourg Saint- Denis. Desplein attended the man, and when he had cured him, gave him the money to buy a horse and a water-cart. This Auvergnat was remarkable for one original characteristic. One of his friends fell ill; he took him straight away to Desplein and said to his benefactor, 'I would not have allowed him to go to another doctor.' Surly as he was, Desplein grasped the water-carrier's hand and said, 'Bring them all to me.' And he had the peasant from the Cantal admitted to the Hôtel Dieu, where he took the greatest care of him. Bianchon had already noticed several times that his chief had a predilection for Auvergnats, and

especially for water- carriers. But as Desplein had a kind of pride in his treatments at the Hôtel Dieu, his pupil didn't see anything very strange in that.

One day, as Bianchon was crossing the Place Saint- Sulpice, he noticed his master going into the church about nine o'clock in the morning. Desplein, who at that period of his life never moved a step except by carriage, was on foot and slipping in by the door of the Rue du Petit- Lion, as if he had been going into a house of doubtful reputation. Bianchon's curiosity was naturally aroused, since he knew his master's opinions and that he was a 'devyl' of a Cabanist [4] (devyl with a y, which in Rabelais seems to suggest a superiority in devilry). Slipping into Saint- Sulpice, he was not a little astonished to see the great Desplein, that atheist without pity for the angels, who cannot be subjected to the surgeon's knife, who cannot have sinus or gastric trouble, that dauntless scoffer, kneeling humbly, and where? . . . in the chapel of the Virgin, where he listened to a Mass, paid for the cost of the service, gave alms for the poor, all as solemnly as if he had been performing an operation.

'He certainly didn't come to clear up questions about the Virgin birth,' said Bianchon in boundless astonishment. 'If I had seen him holding one of the tassels of the canopy on Corpus Christi day, I would have taken it as a joke; but at this hour, alone, with no one to see him, that certainly gives one food for thought!'

Bianchon did not want to look as if he was spying on the chief surgeon of the Hôtel Dieu and he went away. By chance Desplein invited him to dinner that very day, not at home but at a restaurant.

Between the fruit and the cheese, Bianchon managed skilfully to bring the conversation round to the subject of the Mass, calling it a masquerade and a farce.

'A farce,' said Desplein, 'which has cost Christendom more blood than all Napoleon's battles and all Broussais'leeches! The Mass is a papal invention which goes no further back than the sixth century and which is based on *Hoc est corpus* . What torrents of blood had to be spilt to establish Corpus Christi day! By the institution of this Feast the court of Rome intended to proclaim its victory in the matter of the Real Presence, a schism which troubled the Church for three centuries. The wars of the Counts of Toulouse and the Albigenians are the tail- end of this affair. The Vaudois and

the Albigenians [5] refused to recognize this innovation.'

In short Desplein enjoyed himself, giving free rein to his atheistic wit, and pouring out a flood of Voltairean jokes, or, to be more precise, a horrible parody of the *Citateur* . [6]

'Well,' Bianchon said to himself, 'where is the pious man I saw this morning?'

He said nothing; he had doubts whether he really had seen his chief at Saint- Sulpice. Desplein would not have bothered to lie to Bianchon. They both knew each other too well; they had already exchanged ideas on subjects which were just as serious, and they had discussed systems *de natura rerum* , probing or dissecting them with the knives and the scalpel of incredulity. Three months went by. Bianchon did not follow up the incident, although it remained stamped on his memory. One day in the course of that year, one of the doctors at the Hôtel Dieu took Desplein by the arm, in Bianchon's presence, as if to ask him a question.

'What were you going to do at Saint- Sulpice, my dear chief?' he asked.

'I went to see a priest who had a diseased knee. Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême did me the honour of recommending me,' said Desplein.

The doctor was satisfied with this excuse, but not so Bianchon.

'Oh! So he goes to see bad knees in church! He was going to hear Mass,' the student said to himself.

Bianchon determined to keep a watch on Desplein. He recalled the day and the time on which he had surprised him going in to Saint- Sulpice and he determined to go there the following year on the same day and at the same time, to find out if he would surprise him there again. If that happened, the regularity of his worship would justify a scientific investigation, for in such a man there should not be a direct contradiction between thought and deed. The following year, on the day and at the hour in question, Bianchon, who was by this time no longer Desplein's assistant, saw the surgeon's carriage stop at the corner of the Rue de Tournon and the Rue du Petit- Lion. From there his friend crept stealthily along by the walls of Saint- Sulpice where he again heard Mass at the altar of the Virgin. It was certainly Desplein, the chief surgeon, the atheist

in petto , the pious man on occasion. The plot became more involved. The famous scientist's persistence complicated everything. When Desplein had left the church, Bianchon went up to the sacristan who came to minister to the chapel, and asked him if the gentleman was a regular attendant.

'I have been here for twenty years,' said the sacristan, 'and for all that time Monsieur Desplein has been coming four times a year to hear this Mass; it was he who founded it.'

'He founded it!' said Bianchon as he walked away. 'This is as much a mystery as the Immaculate Conception, which of itself must make a doctor an unbeliever.'

Although Dr Bianchon was a friend of Desplein's, some time went by before he was in a position to speak to him about this strange circumstance of his life. If they met at a consultation or in society, it was difficult to find that moment of confidence and solitude when, with feet up on the fire-dogs and heads leaning against the backs of their chairs, two men tell each other their secrets. Finally, seven years later, after the 1830 Revolution, when the people stormed the Archbishopric, when, inspired by Republican sentiments, they destroyed the golden crosses which appeared, like flashes of lightning, in this vast sea of houses, when Disbelief and Violence swaggered together through the streets, Bianchon surprised Desplein going into Saint-Sulpice. The doctor followed him in and took a place near him without his friend making the least sign or showing the least surprise. Both of them heard the foundation Mass.

'Will you tell me, my friend,' Bianchon said to Desplein when they were outside the church, 'the reason for this display of piety? I have already caught you three times going to Mass, you! You must tell me the reason for this mysterious activity, and explain to me the flagrant discrepancy between your opinions and your behaviour. You don't believe in God, yet you go to Mass! My dear chief, you must answer me.'

'I am like many pious men, men who appear to be profoundly religious but are quite as atheistic as we are, you and I.'

And he let forth a torrent of epigrams about political personalities of whom the best known provides us in this century

with a new edition of Molière's Tartuffe.

'That's not what I am talking about,' said Bianchon. 'I want to know the reason for what you have just been doing here. Why did you found this Mass?'

'Well, my dear friend,' said Desplein, 'since I am on the brink of the grave, there is no reason why I shouldn't speak to you about the beginning of my life.'

At this moment Bianchon and the great man happened to be in the Rue des Quatre- Vents, one of the most horrible streets in Paris. Desplein pointed to the sixth storey of one of those houses which are shaped like an obelisk and have a medium- sized door opening on to a passage. At the end of the passage is a spiral staircase lit by apertures called *jours de souffrance* . The house was a greenish colour; on the ground floor lived a furniture dealer; a different kind of poverty seemed to lodge on each floor. Raising his arm with an emphatic gesture, Desplein said to Bianchon, 'I lived up there for two years.'

'I know the place; d'Arthez lived there and I came here almost every day in my youth. At that time we called it the "jar of great men"! Well, what of it?'

'The Mass that I have just heard is linked to events which took place at the time when I lived in the attic where, so you tell me, d'Arthez lived. It is the one where a line of washing is dangling at the window above a pot of flowers. I had such a difficult time to start with, my dear Bianchon, that I can dispute the palm of the sufferings of Paris with anyone. I have put up with everything, hunger, thirst, lack of money, lack of clothes, of footwear, of linen, everything that is hardest about poverty. I have blown on my numbed fingers in that "jar of great men" which I should like to visit again with you. I worked during one winter, when I could see my own head steaming and a cloud of my own breath rising like horses'breath on a frosty day. I don't know what enables a man to stand up to such a life. I was alone, without help, without a farthing either to buy books or to pay the expenses of my medical education. I had no friends and my irritable, sensitive, restless temperament did me no good. No one could see that my bad temper was caused by the difficulties and the work of a man who, from his position at the bottom of the social ladder, was striving to reach the top. But I

can tell you, you to whom I don't need to pretend, that I had that basis of good feeling and keen sensitivity which will always be the prerogative of men who, after having been stuck for a long time in the slough of poverty, are strong enough to climb to any kind of summit. I could get nothing from my family or my home beyond the inadequate allowance they made me. In short, at this period of my life, all I had to eat in the mornings was a roll which the baker in the Rue du Petit- Lion sold me more cheaply because it was yesterday's, or the day before yesterday's. I crumbled it up into some milk and so my morning meal cost me only two sous. I dined only every other day at a boarding- house where dinner cost sixteen sous. In this way I spent only nine sous a day. You know as well as I do the care I had to take of my clothes and my footwear. I don't think, later on in life, we are as much distressed by a colleague's disloyalty as you and I were when we saw the mocking grin of a shoe that was becoming unsewn, or heard the armhole of a frock-coat split. I drank only water; I had the greatest respect for cafés. Zoppi's seemed to me like a promised land which the Luculli of the Latin Quarter alone had the right to patronize. Sometimes I wondered whether I would ever be able to have a cup of white coffee there, or play a game of dominoes. In short, I transferred to my work the fury which poverty inspired in me. I tried to master scientific knowledge so that I should have an immense personal worth deserving of the place I would reach when I emerged from my obscurity. I consumed more oil than bread; the light which lit up those stubborn vigils cost me more than my food. The struggle was long, hard and unrelieved. I aroused no feelings of friendship in those around me. To make friends, you must mix with young people, have a few sous so that you can go and have a drink with them, go with them everywhere where students go. I had nothing. And no one in Paris realizes that "nothing" is "nothing". When there was any question of revealing my poverty I experienced that nervous contraction of the throat which makes our patients think that a ball is rising up from the gullet into the larynx. Later on I met people who, born rich and never having lacked for anything, don't know the problem of this rule of three: "A young man is to crime as a hundred sous piece is to X." These gilded fools say to me, "Why did you get into debt? Why did you take on such crushing obligations?" They remind me of the princess who, knowing that the people were dying of hunger, asked, "Why don't they buy

cake?" I should very much like to see one of those rich people, who complains that I charge too much for operating on him, alone in Paris, without a penny, without a friend, without credit and forced to work with his two hands to live. What would he do? Where would he satisfy his hunger? Bianchon, if at times you have seen me bitter and hard, it was because I was superimposing my early sufferings on the lack of feeling, the selfishness, of which I had thousands of examples in high places; or I was thinking of the obstacles which hatred, envy, jealousy, and calumny have placed between me and success. In Paris, when certain people see you ready to put your foot in the stirrup, some of them pull you back by the coat- tail, others loosen the buckle of the saddle- girth so that you'll fall and break your head; this one takes the shoes of your horse, that one steals your whip. The least treacherous is the one you see coming up to shoot you at point- blank range. You have enough talent, my dear fellow, soon to be acquainted with the horrible, unending battle which mediocrity wages against superiority. If one evening you lose twenty- five louis, the next day you will be accused of being a gambler and your best friends will say that the day before you lost twenty- five thousand francs. If you have a headache, you will be called a lunatic. If you have one outburst of temper, they will say you are a social misfit. If, in order to resist this army of pygmies, you muster your superior forces, your best friends will cry out that you want to eat up everything, that you claim to have the right to dominate and lord it over others. In short, your good qualities will become failings, your failings will become vices, and your virtues will be crimes. If you have saved a man, they'll say you have killed him; if your patient is in circulation again, they will affirm that you have sacrificed the future to the present; if he is not dead, he will die. Hesitate, and you will be lost! Invent anything at all, claim your just due, you will be regarded as a sly character, difficult to deal with, who is standing in the way of the young men. So, my dear fellow, if I don't believe in God, I believe still less in man. You recognize in me a Desplein very different from the Desplein everyone speaks ill of, don't you? But let's not rummage in this muck heap. Well, I used to live in this house; I was busy working to pass my first examination and I hadn't a sou. I had reached one of those extreme situations where, you know, a man says to himself, "I shall join the army." I had one last hope. I was expecting from home a trunk full of linen, a present

from old aunts of the kind who, knowing nothing of Paris, think of your shirts and imagine that with thirty francs a month their nephew lives on caviar. The trunk arrived while I was at the school; the carriage cost forty francs. The porter, a German cobbler who lived in a garret, had paid the money and was keeping the trunk. I went for a walk in the Rue des Fossés- Saint-Germain- des- Prés and in the Rue de l' Ecole- de- Médecine, but I could not think up a plan which would deliver my trunk to me without my having to pay the forty francs; naturally I would have paid them after I had sold the linen. My stupidity made me realize that I was gifted for nothing but surgery. My dear fellow, sensitive souls whose gifts are deployed in a lofty sphere are lacking in that spirit of intrigue which is so resourceful in contriving schemes. *Their* genius lies in chance; they don't seek for things, they come on them by chance. Well, I returned at nightfall at the same time that my neighbour, a water- carrier named Bourgeat, a man from Saint- Flour, was going home. We knew each other in the way two tenants do who have rooms on the same landing, and who hear each other sleeping, coughing, and dressing, till in the end they get used to one another. My neighbour informed me that the landlord, to whom I owed three quarters' rent, had turned me out; I would have to clear out the next day. He himself had been given notice because of his calling. I spent the most unhappy night of my life. Where would I find a carrier to remove my poor household affairs and my books? How would I be able to pay the carrier and the porter? Where was I to go? I kept on asking myself these unanswerable questions through my tears, like a madman repeating a refrain. I fell asleep. Poverty has in its favour an exquisite sleep filled with beautiful dreams. The next morning, just as I was eating my bowlful of crumbled bread and milk, Bourgeat came in and said in his bad French, "*Monchieur l'étudiant* , I'm a poor man, a foundling from the Chain- Flour hospital. I've no father or mother and I'm not rich enough to get married. You haven't many relations either, or much in the way of hard cash. Now listen. I've got a hand- cart downstairs which I've hired for two *chous* an hour. It'll take all our things. If you're willing, we'll look for digs together since we're turned out of here. After all, this place isn't an earthly paradise."

“ I know that alright, Bourgeat, my good fellow,” I replied. “But I'm in rather a jam. Downstairs I have a trunk containing linen worth a hundred crowns. With that I could pay the landlord and

what I owe the porter, but I haven't got a hundred sous."

"That doesn't matter, I've got some cash," Bourgeat replied cheerfully, showing me a filthy old leather purse. "Keep your linen."

'Bourgeat paid my three quarters' rent and his own and settled with the porter. Then he put our furniture and my linen on to his cart and dragged it through the streets, stopping in front of every house which had a "to let" sign hanging out. My job was to go up and see if the place to let would suit us. At midday we were still wandering about the Latin Quarter without having found anything. The price was a great difficulty. Bourgeat suggested that we should have lunch at a wine-shop; we left our cart at the door. Towards evening, I discovered in the Cour de Rohan, Passage du Commerce, two rooms, separated by the stair in the attic at the top of a house. The rent was sixty francs a year each. We were housed at last, my humble friend and I. We had dinner together. Bourgeat, who earned about fifty sous a day, had about a hundred crowns. He was soon going to be able to realize his ambition and buy a water-cart and a horse. When he learned about my situation (for he dragged my secrets out of me with a deep cunning and a good nature the memory of which still touches my heart), he gave up for some time his whole life's ambition. Bourgeat had been a street-merchant for twenty-two years; he sacrificed his hundred crowns to my future.'

Desplein gripped Bianchon's arm with emotion.

'He gave me the money I needed for my exams. My friend, that man realized that I had a mission, that the needs of my intelligence were more important than his own. He took care of me; he called me his child and lent me the money I needed to buy books. Sometimes he would come in very quietly to watch me working. Last but not least, he took care, as a mother might have done, to see that instead of the bad and insufficient food which I had been forced to put up with, I had a healthy and plentiful diet. Bourgeat, who was a man of about forty, had the face of a medieval burgess, a dome-like forehead and a head that a painter might have used as a model for Lysippus. The poor man's heart was filled with affections which had no outlet. The only creature that had ever loved him was a poodle which had died a short time before. He talked to me continually about it and asked me if I thought that the Church would be willing to say Masses for the repose of its soul. His dog

was, so he said, a true Christian and it had gone to church with him for twelve years, without ever barking there. It had listened to the organ without opening its mouth and squatted beside him with a look that made him think it was praying with him. This man transferred all his affections to me; he accepted me as a lonely and unhappy creature. He became for me the most attentive of mothers, the most tactful of benefactors, in short, the ideal of that virtue which delights in its own work. Whenever I met him in the street, he would glance at me with an understanding look filled with remarkable nobility; then he would pretend to walk as if he was carrying nothing. He seemed happy to see me in good health and well-dressed. In short, it was the devotion of a man of the people, the love of a working-girl transferred to a higher sphere. Bourgeat did my errands; he woke me up at night at the hours I asked him to. He cleaned my lamp and polished our landing. He was as good a servant as he was a father, and tidy as an English girl. He did the housework. Like Philopoemen he used to saw up our wood, doing everything with simplicity and dignity, for he seemed to realize that his objective added nobility to everything he did. When I left this good man to do my residence at the Hôtel Dieu, he felt an indescribable grief at the thought that he could no longer live with me. But he consoled himself with the prospect of saving up the money needed for the expenses of my thesis, and made me promise to come and see him on my days off. Bourgeat was proud of me; he loved me both for my sake and for his own. If you look up my thesis you will see that it was dedicated to him. During the last year of my internship, I had earned enough money to pay back everything I owed to this admirable Auvergnat, by buying him a horse and a water-cart. He was furious when he knew that I had been depriving myself of my money, and nevertheless he was delighted to see his wishes realized. He both laughed and scolded me. He looked at his cart and his horse, wiping a tear from his eyes as he said, "That's bad! Oh, what a splendid cart! You shouldn't have done it. The horse is as strong as an Auvergnat." I have never seen anything more moving than this scene. Bourgeat absolutely insisted on buying me that case of instruments mounted in silver which you have seen in my study, and which is for me the most valuable thing I have there. Although he was thrilled by my first successes, he never let slip the least word or gesture which implied, "That man's success is due to me." And yet, without him, poverty would have

killed me. The poor man had dug his own grave to help me. He had eaten nothing but bread rubbed with garlic, so that I could have coffee to help me work at night. He fell ill. As you can imagine, I spent the nights at his bedside. I pulled him through the first time, but he had a relapse two years later, and in spite of the most constant care, in spite of the greatest efforts of medical science, his end had come. No king was ever as well cared for as he was. Yes, Bianchon, to snatch that life from death I made supreme efforts. I wanted to make him live long enough for me to show him the results of his work and realize all his hopes for me; I wanted to satisfy the only gratitude which has ever filled my heart and put out a fire which still burns me today.'

After a pause, Desplein, visibly moved, resumed his tale. 'Bourgeat, my second father, died in my arms leaving me everything he possessed in a will which he had had made by a public letter-writer and dated the year when we went to live in the Cour de Rohan. This man had the simple faith of a charcoal-burner. He loved the Blessed Virgin as he would have loved his wife. Although he was an ardent Catholic, he had never said a word to me about my lack of religion. When his life was in danger, he begged me to do everything possible to enable him to have the help of the Church. I had Mass said for him every day. Often, during the night, he would express fears for his future; he was afraid that he had not lived a sufficiently holy life. Poor man! He worked from morning to night. To whom then would Paradise belong – if there is a Paradise? He received the last rites like the saint he was and his death was worthy of his life. I was the only person to attend his funeral. When I had buried my only benefactor, I tried to think of a way of paying my debt to him. I realized that he had neither family nor friends, wife nor children. But he was a believer, he had a religious conviction. Had I any right to dispute it? He had spoken to me shyly about Masses said for the repose of the dead. He didn't want to impose this duty upon me, thinking that it would be like asking payment for his services. As soon as I could establish an endowment fund, I gave Saint-Sulpice the necessary amount to have four Masses said there a year. As the only thing I can give to Bourgeat is the satisfaction of his religious wishes, the day when this Mass is said at the beginning of each season, I say with the good faith of a doubter, "Oh God, if there is a sphere where, after their death, you place all those who have been perfect, think of

good Bourgeat. And if there is anything for him to suffer, give me his sufferings so that he may enter more quickly into what is called Paradise.”That, my dear fellow, is the most that a man with my opinions can allow himself. God must be a decent chap; he couldn’t hold it against me. I swear to you, I would give my fortune to be a believer like Bourgeat.’

Bianchon, who looked after Desplein in his last illness, dares not affirm nowadays that the distinguished surgeon died an atheist. Believers will like to think that the humble Auvergnat will have opened the gate of heaven for him as, earlier, he had opened for him the gate of that earthly temple on whose doorway is written *Aux grands hommes la patrie reconnaissante* . [7]

[1] In 1804 Napoleon planned to invade England, using a fleet of flat- bottomed boats based on Boulogne. But he was unable to gain command of the sea, and abandoned this plan in favour of the land conquest of Europe. In 1822 the French Government wanted to intervene in the civil conflict in Spain, in spite of the vigorous protest of Great Britain. Balzac’s point is, however, unclear.

[2] L’ Hôtel- Dieu was one of the oldest and most important hospitals in Paris.

[3] Life in La Maison Vauquer is depicted in Balzac’s novel *Le Père Goriot*.

[4] Cabanis was the author of the *Traité du physique et du moral de l’homme* , an influential atheistic and materialistic work.

[5] The Vaudois and the Albigensians were twelfth- century heretical sects in the south of France.

[6] *Le Citateur* was an anti- clerical pamphlet by Pigault-Lebrun.

[7] These words (meaning ‘To our great men from their grateful country’) are inscribed above the doorway of the Panthéon in Paris where many of the great men of France are buried.

The Conscript

Sometimes they saw that, by a phenomenon of vision or movement, he could abolish space in its two aspects of Time and Distance, one of these being intellectual and the other physical.

Histoire Intellectuelle de Louis Lambert .

One evening in the month of November 1793, the most important people in Carentan were gathered together in the drawing- room of Madame de Dey, who received company every day. Certain circumstances, which would not have attracted attention in a large town but which were bound to arouse curiosity in a small one, gave an unwonted interest to this everyday gathering. Two days earlier, Madame de Dey had closed her doors to visitors, and she had not received any the previous day either, pretending that she was unwell. In normal times these two events would have had the same effect in Carentan as the closing of the theatres has in Paris. On such days existence is, in a way, incomplete. But in 1793 Madame de Dey's behaviour could have the most disastrous consequences. At that time if an aristocrat risked the least step, he was nearly always involved in a matter of life and death. To understand properly the eager curiosity and the narrow- minded cunning which, during that evening, were expressed on the faces of all these Norman worthies, but above all to appreciate the secret worries of Madame de Dey, the part she played at Carentan must be explained. As the critical position in which she was placed at that time was, no doubt, that of many people during the Revolution, the sympathies of more than one reader will give an emotional background to this narrative.

Madame de Dey, the widow of a lieutenant- general, a chevalier of several orders, had left the Court at the beginning of the emigration. As she owned a considerable amount of property in the Carentan region, she had taken refuge there, hoping that the influence of the Terror would be little felt in those parts. This calculation, founded on an accurate knowledge of the region, was

correct. The Revolution wrought little havoc in Lower Normandy. Although, in the past, when Madame de Dey visited her property in Normandy, she associated only with the noble families of the district, she now made a policy of opening her doors to the principal townspeople and to the new authorities, trying to make them proud of having won her over, without arousing either their hatred or their jealousy. She was charming and kind, and gifted with that indescribable gentleness which enabled her to please without having to lower herself or ask favours. She had succeeded in winning general esteem thanks to her perfect tact which enabled her to keep wisely to a narrow path, satisfying the demands of that mixed society without humiliating the touchy *amour propre* of the parvenus, or upsetting the sensibilities of her old friends.

She was about thirty- eight years old, and she still retained, not the fresh, rounded good looks which distinguish the girls of Lower Normandy, but a slender, as it were aristocratic, type of beauty. Her features were neat and delicate; her figure was graceful and slender. When she spoke, her pale face seemed to light up and come to life. Her large black eyes were full of friendliness, but their calm, religious expression seemed to show that the mainspring of her existence was no longer within herself. In the prime of her youth she had been married to a jealous old soldier, and her false position at a flirtatious court no doubt helped to spread a veil of serious melancholy over a face which must once have shone with the charms and vivacity of love. Since, at an age when a woman still feels rather than reflects, she had always had to repress her instinctive feminine feelings and emotions, passion had remained unawakened in the depths of her heart. And so her principal attraction stemmed from this inner youthfulness which was, at times, revealed in her face and which gave her thoughts an expression of innocent desire. Her appearance commanded respect, but in her bearing and in her voice there was always the expectancy of an unknown future as with a young girl. Soon after meeting her the least susceptible of men would find himself in love with her and yet retain a kind of respectful fear of her, inspired by her courteous, dignified manner. Her soul, naturally great but strengthened by cruel struggles, seemed far removed from ordinary humanity, and men recognized their inferiority. This soul needed a dominating passion. Madame de Dey's affections were thus concentrated in one single feeling, that of maternity. The happiness and the satisfactions

of which she had been deprived as a wife, she found instead in the intense love she had for her son. She loved him not only with the pure and profound devotion of a mother, but with the coquetry of a mistress and the jealousy of a wife. She was unhappy when he was away, and, anxious during his absence, she could never see enough of him and lived only through and for him. To make the reader appreciate the strength of this feeling, it will suffice to add that this son was not only Madame de Dey's only child, but also her last surviving relative, the one being on whom she could fasten the fears, the hopes and the joys of her life. The late Comte de Dey was the last of his family and she was the sole heiress of hers. Material motives and interests thus combined with the noblest needs of the soul to intensify in the countess's heart a feeling which is already so strong in women. It was only by taking the greatest of care that she had managed to bring up her son and this had made him even more dear to her. Twenty times the doctors told her she would lose him, but confident in her own hopes and instincts, she had the inexpressible joy of seeing him safely overcome the perils of childhood, and of marvelling at the improvement in his health, in spite of the doctors' verdict.

Due to her constant care, this son had grown up and developed into such a charming young man that at the age of twenty he was regarded as one of the most accomplished young courtiers at Versailles. Above all, thanks to a good fortune which does not crown the efforts of every mother, she was adored by her son; they understood each other in fraternal sympathy. If they had not already been linked by the ties of nature, they would instinctively have felt for each other that mutual friendship which one meets so rarely in life. At the age of eighteen the young count had been appointed a sub-lieutenant of dragoons and in obedience to the code of honour of the period he had followed the princes when they emigrated.

Madame de Dey, noble, rich and the mother of an *émigré*, thus could not conceal from herself the dangers of her cruel situation. As her only wish was to preserve her large fortune for her son, she had denied herself the happiness of going with him, and when she read the strict laws under which the Republic was confiscating every day the property of *émigrés* at Carentan, she congratulated herself on this act of courage. Was she not watching over her son's wealth at

the risk of her life? Then, when she heard of the terrible executions decreed by the Convention, she slept peacefully in the knowledge that her only treasure was in safety, far from the danger of the scaffold. She was happy in the belief that she had done what was best to save both her son and her fortune. To this private thought she made the concessions demanded by those unhappy times, without compromising her feminine dignity or her aristocratic convictions, but hiding her sorrows with a cold secrecy. She had understood the difficulties which awaited her at Carentan. To come there and occupy the first place, wasn't that a way of defying the scaffold every day? But, supported by the courage of a mother, she knew how to win the affection of the poor by relieving all kinds of distress without distinction, and made herself indispensable to the rich by ministering to their pleasures. She entertained at her house the *procureur* ^[1] of the commune, the mayor, the president of the district, the public prosecutor and even the judges of the revolutionary tribunal. The first four of these were unmarried and so they courted her, hoping to marry her either by making her afraid of the harm they could do her or by offering her their protection. The public prosecutor, who had been procureur at Caen and used to look after the countess's business interests, tried to make her love him, by behaving with devotion and generosity – a dangerous form of cunning! He was the most formidable of all the suitors. As she had formerly been a client of his, he was the only one who had an intimate knowledge of the state of her considerable fortune. His passion was reinforced by all the desires of avarice and supported by an immense power, the power of life and death throughout the district. This man, who was still young, behaved with such an appearance of magnanimity that Madame de Dey had not yet been able to form an opinion of him. But, despising the danger which lay in vying in cunning with Normans, she made use of the inventive craftiness with which Nature has endowed women to play off these rivals against each other. By gaining time, she hoped to survive safe and sound to the end of the revolutionary troubles. At that period, the royalists who had stayed in France deluded themselves each day that the next day would see the end of the Revolution, and this conviction caused the ruin of many of them.

In spite of these difficulties, the countess had very skilfully maintained her independence until the day on which, with

unaccountable imprudence, she took it into her head to close her door. The interest she aroused was so deep and genuine that the people who had come to her house that evening became extremely anxious when they learned that it was impossible for her to receive them. Then, with that frank curiosity which is engrained in provincial manners, they made inquiries about the misfortune, the sorrow, or the illness which Madame de Dey must be suffering from. An old servant named Brigitte answered these questions saying that her mistress had shut herself up in her room and wouldn't see anyone, not even the members of her own household. The almost cloister-like existence led by the inhabitants of a small town forms in them the habit of analysing and explaining the actions of others. This habit is naturally so invincible that after pitying Madame de Dey, and without knowing whether she was really happy or sad, everyone began to look for the causes of her sudden retreat.

'If she were ill,' said the first inquirer, 'she would have sent for the doctor. But the doctor spent the whole day at my house playing chess. He said to me jokingly that nowadays there is only one illness . . . and that unfortunately it is incurable.'

This jest was made with caution. Men and women, old men and girls then began to range over the vast field of conjectures. Each one thought he spied a secret, and this secret filled all their imaginations. The next day their suspicions had grown nastier. As life is lived in public in a small town, the women were the first to find out that Brigitte had bought more provisions than usual at the market. This fact could not be denied. Brigitte had been seen first thing in the morning in the market-square and –strange to relate – she had bought the only hare available. The whole town knew that Madame de Dey did not like game. The hare became a starting point for endless conjectures. As they took their daily walk, the old men noticed in the countess's house a kind of concentrated activity which was revealed by the very precautions taken by the servants to conceal it. The valet was beating a carpet in the garden. The previous day no one would have paid any attention to it, but this carpet became a piece of evidence in support of the fanciful tales which everyone was inventing. Each person had his own. The second day, when they heard that Madame de Dey said she was unwell, the leading inhabitants of Carentan gathered together in the

evening at the mayor's brother's house. He was a retired merchant, married, honourable, generally respected, and the countess had a high regard for him. That evening all the suitors for the hand of the rich widow had a more or less probable tale to tell, and each one of them considered how to turn to his own profit the secret event which forced her to place herself in this compromising position. The public prosecutor imagined a whole drama in which Madame de Dey's son would be brought to her house at night. The mayor thought that a non-juring priest had arrived from La Vendée and sought asylum with her. [2] But the purchase of a hare on a Friday couldn't be explained by this story. The president of the district was convinced that she was hiding a chouan [3] or a Vendéen leader who was being hotly pursued. Others thought it was a noble who had escaped from the Paris prisons. In short, everyone suspected the countess of being guilty of one of those acts of generosity which the laws of that period called a crime and which could lead to the scaffold. The public prosecutor, however, whispered that they must be silent and try to save the unfortunate woman from the abyss towards which she was hastening.

'If you make this affair known,' he added, 'I shall be obliged to intervene, to search her house, and then! . . .' He said no more but everyone understood what he meant.

The countess's real friends were so alarmed for her that, on the morning of the third day, the *procureur- syndic* [4] of the commune got his wife to write her a note urging her to receive company that evening as usual. Bolder still, the retired merchant called at Madame de Dey's house during the morning. Very conscious of the service which he wanted to render her, he insisted on being allowed in to see her, and was amazed when he caught sight of her in the garden, busy cutting the last flowers from her borders to fill her vases.

'She must have given refuge to her lover,' the old man said to himself, as he was overcome with pity for this charming woman. The strange expression of the countess's face confirmed his suspicions. The merchant was deeply moved by this devotion which is so natural to women, but which men always find touching because they are all flattered by the sacrifices which a woman makes for a man; he told the countess about the rumours which were all over the town, and of the danger in which she was placed.

‘For,’ he said in conclusion, ‘though some of our officials may be willing to forgive you for acting heroically to save a priest, nobody will pity you if they find out you are sacrificing yourself for the sake of a love affair.’

At these words, Madame de Dey looked at the old man with a distraught and crazy expression which made him shudder, despite his age.

‘Come with me,’ she said taking him by the hand and leading him into her room where, having first made sure that they were alone, she took a dirty crumpled letter from the bodice of her dress. ‘Read that,’ she cried pronouncing the words with great effort.

She collapsed into her chair, as if she were overcome. While the old merchant was looking for his glasses and cleaning them, she looked up at him, examined him for the first time with interest and said gently in a faltering voice, ‘I can trust you.’

‘Have I not come to share in your crime?’ replied the worthy man simply.

She gave a start. For the first time in this little town, her soul felt sympathy with another’s. The merchant understood at once both the dejection and the joy of the countess. Her son had taken part in the Granville expedition; [5] his letter to his mother was written from the depths of his prison, giving her one sad, yet joyful hope. He had no doubts about his means of escape, and he mentioned three days in the course of which he would come to her house, in disguise. The fatal letter contained heart- rending farewells in case he would not be at Carentan by the evening of the third day, and he begged his mother to give a fairly large sum of money to the messenger who, braving countless dangers, had undertaken to bring her this letter. The paper shook in the old man’s hands.

‘And this is the third day,’ cried Madame de Dey as she got up quickly, took back the letter, and paced up and down the room.

‘You have acted rashly,’ said the merchant. ‘Why did you have food bought in?’

‘But he might arrive, dying with hunger, exhausted, and . . .’ She said no more.

‘I can count on my brother,’ continued the old man, ‘I will go and bring him over to your side.’

In this situation the merchant deployed again all the subtlety which he had formerly used in business and gave the countess prudent and wise advice. After they had agreed on what they both should say and do, the old man, on cleverly invented pretexts, went to the principal houses in Carentan. There he announced that he had just seen Madame de Dey, who would receive company that evening, although she was not very well. As he was a good match for the cunning Norman minds who, in every family, cross-examined him about the nature of the countess’s illness, he managed to deceive nearly everybody who was interested in this mysterious affair. His first visit worked wonders. He told a gouty old lady that Madame de Dey had nearly died from an attack of stomach gout. The famous Doctor Tronchin had on a former, similar occasion advised her to lay on her chest the skin of a hare, which had been flayed alive, and to stay absolutely immobile in bed. The countess who, two days ago, had been in mortal danger, was now, after having punctiliously obeyed Tronchin’s extraordinary instructions, well enough to receive visitors that evening. This tale had an enormous success, and the Carentan doctor, a secret royalist, added to the effect by the seriousness with which he discussed the remedy. Nevertheless, suspicions had taken root too strongly in the minds of some obstinate people, or of some doubters, to be entirely dissipated. So, that evening, Madame de Dey’s visitors came eagerly, in good time, some to observe her face carefully, others out of friendship, most of them amazed at her recovery. They found the countess by the large fireplace in her drawing- room, which was almost as small as the other drawing- rooms in Carentan, for to avoid offending the narrow- minded ideas of her guests, she had denied herself the luxuries she had been used to and so had made no changes in her house. The floor of the reception room was not even polished. She left dingy old hangings on the walls, kept the local furniture, burnt tallow candles and followed the fashions of the place. She adopted provincial life, without shrinking from its most uncomfortable meannesses or its most disagreeable privations. But, as she knew that her guests would forgive her any lavishness conducive to their comfort, she left nothing undone which would minister to their personal pleasures. And so she always provided excellent dinners. She went as far as to feign meanness in order to

please these calculating minds and she skilfully admitted to certain concessions to luxury, in order to give in gracefully. And so, about seven o'clock that evening, the best of Carentan's poor society was at Madame de Dey's house and formed a large circle around the hearth. The mistress of the house, supported in her trouble by the old merchant's sympathetic glances, endured with remarkable courage her guests'detailed questioning and their frivolous and stupid arguments. But at every knock on the door, and whenever there was a sound of footsteps in the street, she hid her violent emotion by raising questions of importance to the prosperity of the district. She started off lively discussions about the quality of the ciders and was so well supported by her confidant that the company almost forgot to spy on her, since the expression of her face was so natural and her self- possession so imperturbable. Nevertheless the public prosecutor and one of the judges of the revolutionary tribunal said little, watching carefully the least changes in her expression and, in spite of the noise, listening to every sound in the house. Every now and then they asked the countess awkward questions but she answered them with admirable presence of mind. A mother has so much courage! When Madame de Dey had arranged the card- players, and settled everyone at the tables to play boston or reversis or whist, she still lingered in quite a carefree manner to chat with some young people. She was playing her part like a consummate actress. She got someone to ask for lotto, pretended to be the only person who knew where the set was, and left the room.

'I feel stifled, my dear Brigitte,' she exclaimed as she wiped the tears springing from her eyes which shone with fever, grief and impatience. 'He is not coming,' she continued, as she went upstairs and looked round the bedroom. 'Here, I can breathe and live. Yet in a few more moments he will be here! For he is alive, of that I am sure. My heart tells me so. Don't you hear anything, Brigitte? Oh! I would give the rest of my life to know whether he is in prison or walking across the countryside. I wish I could stop thinking.'

She looked round the room again to see if everything was in order. A good fire was burning brightly in the grate, the shutters were tightly closed, the polished furniture was gleaming, the way the bed had been made showed that the countess had discussed the smallest details with Brigitte. Her hopes could be discerned in the

fastidious care which had obviously been lavished on this room; in the scent of the flowers she had placed there could be sensed the gracious sweetness and the most chaste caresses of love. Only a mother could have anticipated a soldier's wants and made preparations which satisfied them so completely. A superb meal, choice wines, slippers, clean linen, in short everything that a weary traveller could need or desire was brought together so that he should lack for nothing, so that the delights of home should show him a mother's love.

'Brigitte,' cried the countess in a heart-rending voice as she went to place a chair at the table. It was as if she wanted to make her prayers come true, as if she wanted to add strength to her illusions.

'Ah, Madame, he will come. He is not far away – I am sure that he is alive and on his way. I put a key in the Bible and I kept it on my fingers while Cottin read the Gospel of St John . . . and, Madame, the key didn't turn.'

'Is that a reliable sign?' asked the countess.

'Oh, yes! Madame, it's well known. I would stake my soul he's still alive. God cannot be wrong.'

'I would love to see him, in spite of the danger he will be in when he gets here.'

'Poor Monsieur Auguste,' cried Brigitte, 'he must be on the way, on foot.'

'And there's the church clock striking eight,' exclaimed the countess in terror.

She was afraid that she had stayed longer than she should have done in this room where, as everything bore witness to her son's life, she could believe that he was still alive. She went downstairs but before going into the drawing-room, she paused for a moment under the pillars of the staircase, listening to hear if any sound disturbed the silent echoes of the town. She smiled at Brigitte's husband, who kept guard like a sentinel and seemed dazed with the effort of straining to hear the sounds of the night from the village square. She saw her son in everything and everywhere. She soon went back into the room, putting on an air of gaiety, and began to play lotto with some little girls. But every now and then she

complained of not feeling well and sat down in her armchair by the fireplace.

That is how people and things were in Madame de Dey's house while on the road from Paris to Cherbourg a young man wearing a brown *carmagnole*, the obligatory dress of the period, was making his way to Carentan. When the conscription of August 1793 first came into force, there was little or no discipline. The needs of the moment were such that the Republic could not equip its soldiers immediately, and it was not uncommon to see the roads full of conscripts still wearing their civilian clothes. These young men reached their halting places ahead of their battalions, or lagged behind, for their progress depended on their ability to endure the fatigues of a long march. The traveller in question was some way ahead of a column of conscripts which was going to Cherbourg and which the mayor of Carentan was expecting from hour to hour, intending to billet the men on the inhabitants. The young man was marching with a heavy tread, but he was still walking steadily and his bearing suggested that he had long been familiar with the hardships of military life. Although the meadow-land around Carentan was lit up by the moon, he had noticed big white clouds threatening a snowfall over the countryside. The fear of being caught in a storm probably made him walk faster, for he was going at a pace ill-suited to his fatigue. On his back he had an almost empty rucksack, and in his hand was a boxwood stick cut from one of the high, thick hedges which this shrub forms around most of the estates of Lower Normandy. A moment after the solitary traveller had caught sight of the towers of Carentan silhouetted in the eerie moonlight, he entered the town. His step aroused the echoes of the silent, deserted streets and he had to ask a weaver who was still at work the way to the mayor's house. This official did not live far away and the conscript soon found himself in the shelter of the porch of the mayor's house. He applied for a billeting order and sat down on a stone seat to wait. But he had to appear before the mayor who had sent for him and he was subjected to a scrupulous cross-examination. The soldier was a young man of good appearance who seemed to belong to a good family. His demeanour indicated that he was of noble birth and his face expressed that intelligence which comes from a good education.

'What's your name?' asked the mayor looking at him

knowingly.

‘Julien Jussien,’ replied the conscript.

‘And where do you come from?’ asked the official with an incredulous smile.

‘From Paris.’

‘Your comrades must be some distance away,’ continued the Norman half jokingly.

‘I am three miles ahead of the battalion.’

‘Some special feeling attracts you to Carentan, no doubt, *citoyen réquisitionnaire*,’ [6] said the mayor shrewdly.

‘It is all right,’ he added, as with a gesture he imposed silence on the young man who was about to speak. ‘We know where to send you. There you are,’ he added giving him his billeting order. ‘Off you go, *citoyen Jussien*.’

There was a tinge of irony in the official’s tone as he pronounced these last two words and handed out a billet order giving the address of Madame de Dey’s house. The young man read the address with an air of curiosity.

‘He knows quite well that he hasn’t far to go. And once he’s outside he’ll soon be across the square,’ exclaimed the mayor talking to himself as the young man went out. He’s got some nerve! May God guide him! He has an answer to everything. Yes, but if anyone but me had asked to see his papers, he would have been lost.’

At this moment, the Carentan clocks had just struck half past nine. The torches were being lit in Madame de Dey’s ante-chamber; the servants were helping their masters and mistresses to put on their clogs, their overcoats or their capes; the card-players had settled their accounts and they were all leaving together, according to the established custom in all little towns.

‘It looks as if the prosecutor wants to stay,’ said a lady, who noticed that this important personage was missing when, having exhausted all the formulae of leave-taking, they separated in the square to go to their respective homes.

In fact that terrible magistrate was alone with the countess who

was waiting, trembling, till he chose to go.

After a long and rather frightening silence, he said at last, 'I am here to see that the laws of the Republic are obeyed . . .'

Madame de Dey shuddered.

'Have you nothing to reveal to me?' he asked.

'Nothing,' she replied, amazed.

'Ah, Madame,' cried the prosecutor sitting down beside her and changing his tone, 'at this moment, one word could send you or me to the scaffold. I have observed your character, your feelings, your ways too closely to share the mistake into which you managed to lead your guests this evening. I have no doubt at all that you are expecting your son.'

The countess made a gesture of denial, but she had grown pale and the muscles of her face had contracted under the necessity of assuming a false air of calmness.

'Well, receive him,' continued the magistrate of the Revolution, 'but don't let him stay under your roof after seven o'clock in the morning. At daybreak, tomorrow, I shall come to your house armed with a denunciation which I shall have drawn up . . .'

She looked at him with a dazed expression which would have melted the heart of a tiger.

He went on gently, 'I shall demonstrate the falsity of the denunciation by a minute search, and by the nature of my report you will be protected from all further suspicion. I shall speak of your patriotic gifts, of your civic devotion, and we shall all be saved.'

Madame de Dey was afraid of a trap. She stood there motionless but her face was burning and her tongue was frozen. The sound of the door-knocker rang through the house.

'Ah,' cried the terrified mother, falling on her knees. 'Save him, save him!'

'Yes, let us save him!' replied the public prosecutor, looking at her passionately, 'even at the cost of *our* lives.'

'I am lost,' she cried as the prosecutor politely helped her to rise.

‘Ah! Madame,’ he replied with a fine oratorical gesture, ‘I want to owe you to nothing . . . but yourself.’

‘Madame, he’s –,’ cried Brigitte thinking her mistress was alone.

At the sight of the public prosecutor, the old servant who had been flushed with joy, became pale and motionless.

‘Who is it, Brigitte?’ asked the magistrate gently, with a knowing expression.

‘A conscript sent by the mayor to be put up here,’ replied the servant showing the billet order.

‘That’s right,’ said the prosecutor after reading the order. ‘A battalion is due in the town tonight.’ And he went out.

At that moment the countess needed so much to believe in the sincerity of her former lawyer that she could not entertain the slightest doubt of it. Quickly she went upstairs, though she scarcely had the strength to stand. Then she opened her bedroom door, saw her son, and fell half- dead into his arms. ‘Oh, my child, my child,’ she cried sobbing and covering him with wild kisses.

‘Madame,’ said the stranger.

‘Oh! It’s someone else,’ she cried. She recoiled in horror and stood in front of the conscript, gazing at him with a haggard look.

‘Oh, good God, what a strong resemblance!’ said Brigitte.

There was silence for a moment and even the stranger shuddered at the sight of Madame de Dey.

She leaned for support on Brigitte’s husband and felt the full extent of her grief; this first blow had almost killed her. ‘Monsieur,’ she said, ‘I cannot bear to see you any longer; I hope you won’t mind if my servants take my place and look after you.’

She went down to her own room half carried by Brigitte and her old manservant.

‘What, Madame!’ cried the housekeeper as she helped her mistress to sit down. ‘Is that man going to sleep in Monsieur Auguste’s bed, put on Monsieur Auguste’s slippers and eat the *pâté* that I made for Monsieur Auguste? If I were to be sent to the guillotine, I . . .’

‘Brigitte,’ cried Madame de Dey.

Brigitte said no more.

‘Be quiet, you chatterbox,’ said her husband in a low voice. ‘You’ll be the death of Madame.’

At this moment, the conscript made a noise in his room as he sat down to table.

‘I can’t stay here,’ exclaimed Madame de Dey. ‘I shall go into the conservatory. From there I shall be able to hear better what’s going on outside during the night.’

She was still wavering between the fear of having lost her son and the hope of seeing him come back. The silence of the night was horrible. When the conscript battalion came into town and each man had to seek out his lodgings, it was a terrible time for the countess. Her hopes were dashed at every footstep, at every sound; then soon the awful stillness of Nature returned. Towards morning, the countess had to go back to her own room. Brigitte, who was watching her mistress’s movements, did not see her come out; she went into the room and there found the countess dead.

‘She must have heard the conscript finishing dressing and walking about in Monsieur Auguste’s room singing their damned *Marseillaise*, as if he were in a stable,’ cried Brigitte. ‘That will have killed her!’

The countess’s death was caused by a more important feeling and, very likely, by a terrible vision. At the exact moment when Madame de Dey was dying in Carentan, her son was being shot in Le Morbihan. We can add this tragic fact to all the observations that have been made of sympathies which override the laws of space. Some learned recluses, in their curiosity, have collected this evidence in documents which will one day serve as a foundation for a new science – a science that has hitherto failed to produce its man of genius.

[1] An official elected to represent the central government on local courts and administration.

[2] The priests often helped the inhabitants of La Vendée in the west of France in their risings against the Revolution.

[3] The chouans were royalist insurgents from Western France who engaged in guerrilla warfare against the Revolution.

[4] See note 1 above.

[5] Granville is a small town, south- west of Carentan, on the other side of the Cotentin peninsula. In 1793 the Vendéens tried unsuccessfully to capture it for the royalists.

[6] *Citoyen* was a form of address during the Revolution replacing *monsieur* . A decree passed by the National Convention in 1793 called for military service all men between eighteen and twenty- five. The conscripts were known as *réquisitionnaires* .



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N° 16

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A Slip Under The Microscope

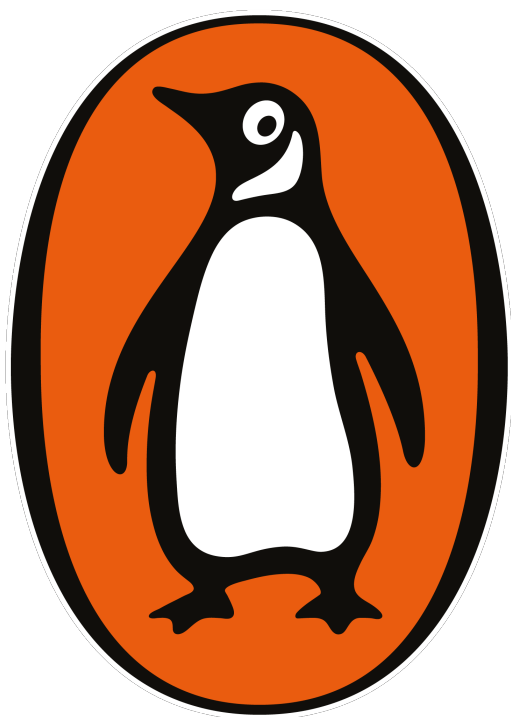
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显微镜下的失误

The Door in the Wall

A Slip under the Microscope

“我会走进去，
离开这片
尘嚣和嘈杂之地，
抛下这枯燥乏味的
耀眼虚荣，
远离这些劳神费心的
徒劳无功。
我要走进去，
永不回头。”



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墙中门

第一章

不到三个月前，莱昂内尔·华莱士在向我推心置腹那个夜晚，给我讲了“墙中门”的故事。当时，我认为至少在他看来，这是一个真实的故事。

在讲述的过程中，他那坚信不疑的态度直接而单纯，让我无法不相信他。但第二天清晨，我从自己的公寓醒来后，却有了不同的感受。我躺在床上，回忆起昨晚他告诉我的一切，剥去他诚挚而缓慢的声线魅惑，抛开那光线集中而幽暗的桌灯，在那样的夜晚，包裹着我俩的暧昧气氛，那些让人愉悦的闪闪发光的物件，我俩在晚餐间分享的甜点、酒杯以及餐巾——这所有的一切都让我们置身于彻底与现实脱离的明亮小世界当中，坦白说，我觉得这一切太难以令人相信了。“他在故弄玄虚！”我恍然大悟，“他装得也太像了！我万万没想到的是，他能装得这么好。”

随后，我起身坐在床上，啜着清晨的第一杯茶，试图从中重新品味出现实的味道，因为他的记忆太难以置信，让我不知所措，可不得不承认，它们的确在某种程度上暗示、呈现或是传达——我都不知道该用哪个词——出了只能以这种方式讲述的经历。

好吧，无论如何，现在我并不太倾向于这个解释，该怀疑的我也怀疑过了。我现在就如同昨晚一样，相信华莱士尽他最大的努力把自己秘密中最真实的部分剥离出来告诉我。但究竟他是否曾经看见，还是他自认为看到过，究竟自己是无价特权的持有者还是痴人说梦的受害者，我无法肆意妄测。就连他身亡这一事实，虽然彻底地了断了我的各种猜疑的念头，却也没有给我带来任何答案。

这只能由读者自己判断了。

我一时半会儿也想不起来，究竟是我发表过的什么意见或者是评论，能够打动如此沉默寡言的一个男人，让他产生向我吐露心声的想法。在一次重大公共运动中，我曾因为他的懈怠和不靠谱而谴责过他，那次他让我失望透顶，我觉得他当时是在为自己辩护。他突然插进来说：“我被其他事情占据了思绪……”他在停顿了一下后继续说道：“我知道，我最近有些玩忽职守。事实是——这并不是鬼魂或者是幽灵什么的——但，这实在是太难以启齿了。列德蒙，我被缠上了。我被什么东西给缠上了——它让一切都黯淡无光，它让我充满渴

求……”

他停了下来，每当我们英国人谈论到感人的、严肃的或是其他美丽事物的时候所呈现出特有的羞怯打断了他。“你一直都在圣·阿瑟尔斯坦吧。”他说道。当时在我看来，这根本毫无关联。“好吧。”他又顿了一下。然后，他起初讲话的时候支支吾吾，慢慢地顺畅起来。他开始讲述一直掩藏在生命当中，那段让他念念不忘的回忆，这段美好回忆使他内心充满幸福和无法满足的渴望，却同时也让尘世间的一切利益和奇观显得枯燥乏味和徒有其表。

既然我现在有了头绪，那时他脸上的表情其实说明了一切。我有这么一张照片，他那疏离的神情彻底呈现在照片之上，甚至更加凸显了。这让我想起有一位女士曾这样描述过他——这位女士曾深深地爱着他。“突然间，”她说，“他对一切都失去了兴趣。他忘记了你的存在，哪怕你在他鼻子底下，他也一点都不在乎……”

但是华莱士并不是一直对什么都毫无兴趣，当他全神贯注的时候，他能够设法取得巨大的成功。毫无疑问，他的事业打从一开始就非常成功。他早就把我甩在了身后；他在我身旁一飞冲天，在社会上占据了一席之地，无论如何，那是我所无法达成的。他还差一年才满四十岁，现在人们都说，如果他还活着的话，肯定能继续任职，还很有可能进入内阁。在学校的时候，他总是能够毫不费力地击败我——就好像他天生理当如此。我们是一起在西肯辛顿的圣·阿瑟尔斯坦学院上学的，一起度过了整个学生生涯。他入校的时候和我旗鼓相当，但很快就凭借奖学金和出色的表现远远地超越了我。当然我觉得我也差不多尽力了。正是在学校里，我第一次听到了“墙中门”——在他去世的一个月前，是我第二次听到它。

至少对他来说，“墙中门”是一扇真实存在的门，穿过真实存在的墙到达永恒的现实。对于这点，我现在是十分确信的。

而这扇门出现在他人生很早期，大概还是五六岁小孩的时候。我之所以记得，是因为他在向我坦白的时候，沉重而缓慢地推理和计算出了当时的日期。“当时有，”他说，“一株猩红色的五叶地锦，在琥珀色的阳光下，一整片深红色在白墙的映衬下格外显眼。我还记得，虽然不是特别清晰，绿色门外的人行道上散落着七叶树的叶子。它们是斑驳的黄绿色的，你知道，并不是棕色，也不脏，所以肯定刚从树上落下来。我觉得这意味着那是十月份。我每年都留意着七叶树树叶，我肯定知道的。”

“如果没记错的话，那我当时应该是五岁零四个月大。”

他说自己是个早熟的孩子——他学会讲话的年龄异常早，条理清晰，还有点“老派”，正如人们所说，这让他获取了其他小孩在七八岁

不可能得到的自主权。他的母亲在他两岁时去世了，家庭教师的管教相对来说没有那么严苛。他的父亲是一名严肃的、业务繁忙的律师，他的注意力没过多地放在儿子身上，却对他期待很高。我觉得作为一个聪明绝顶的小孩，他认为生活单调乏味。有一天，他溜了出去。

他已经记不清具体是谁的疏忽让他能有机会溜出来的，也记不清走的是西肯辛顿哪一条路。所有的一切都从模糊的记忆中彻底褪去。但关于白墙和绿门的记忆是清晰可见的。

追溯儿时的记忆，他记得第一眼看到那扇门，就感受到一种特别的情绪，那是一种吸引力，一种让他想要打开门走进去的欲望。但与此同时，他又确信向这吸引力屈服是不理智或是错误的——究竟是不理智还是错误，他无从知晓。自打一开始，他就知道那扇门并没有锁，而且如果他乐意，就可以走进来，为什么对这件事如此肯定，他也觉得很奇怪——当然除非这一切都是记忆和他开了一个最诡异的玩笑。

我似乎都能看见那个内心挣扎着的小男孩的样子，而且他脑袋里清楚地知道——虽然也没法儿解释他为什么会知道——如果父亲发现他进入那扇门会勃然大怒。

华莱士极其详尽地向我描述了他的犹豫不决。他走过了那扇门，双手插着口袋，笨拙地吹着口哨，溜达到了墙的尽头。他记得那里有几家寒酸、脏乱的商店，他尤其记得有一个水管工和装潢工人在卖缸瓦管、薄铅板、浮球栓和墙纸的样品簿，还有一罐瓷漆，东西都布满灰尘，堆得乱七八糟。他停下来，假装在打量这些东西，觊觎着，热烈地渴望着那扇绿色的门。

他说，接下来有一股强烈的情绪涌上心头。这一丁点的犹豫不决无法再阻挠他，他直接奔向那扇门，蓦地一冲，伸手打开绿门，只身进入，把门甩在自己身后。于是就在一转眼间，他走进了那座纠缠他至今的花园。

对华莱士来说，他很难向我表达走进那座花园的全部感受。

那里的空气中有一股让人愉悦的气氛，它让人感到轻松，有种好事将至的幸福感；它让一切颜色看起来干净、完美并且微微地透着光。人一走进这里，立刻感到快乐至极——因为在我们生活的世界里，只有在很少数的时刻，当人们在年轻和愉快的时候，才会感到快乐，而且那里的一切都那么美丽……

华莱士在告诉我之前冥思了一阵。“你看，”他的声音就像普通人讲到让人无法置信的事情时，会变得有点可疑，“那里有两头美洲豹，就在那儿，是的，长着斑点的美洲豹。而我一点都不害怕。那里

还有一条宽敞而悠长的道路，两旁的花径用的是大理石镶边，这两头柔软的野兽在那儿玩着球。有一头美洲豹抬起头，向我走来，看起来有点好奇。它径直走向我，用它柔软的圆耳朵轻轻地蹭着我伸出去的小手，发出咕噜咕噜的声响。我告诉你，这是一座施了魔法的花园。我确定。而它有多大？噢！它延绵不绝伸向四面八方。我相信在更远处还有山丘。天知道突然之间西肯辛顿跑到哪儿去了。但不知为何，那种感觉就像是回到了故乡。”

“你要知道，就在我关上那道门的那一刻，我忘记了门外飘落在道路上的七叶树树叶；我忘记了门外的马车和商人的货车；我忘记了那股像引力一样把我拉回充满纪律和服从的家中的力量；我忘记了所有的犹豫和恐惧，忘记了谨慎，忘记了现实生活中所熟悉的一切。在那一瞬间，我——在另一个世界里——成为一个快乐并且超级幸福的小男孩。那个世界有着不同的特质，那里更温暖，阳光更有穿透力却更柔软，空气里弥漫着一丝丝清澈而愉悦的味道，头顶湛蓝的天空中飘浮着一撮撮被阳光拂过的云朵。在我面前，这条又宽又长的道路延伸向前方，路两旁没有多余的杂草，花团锦簇但疏于打理，还有这两头神奇的美洲豹，仿佛都在对我发出邀请。我无畏地把双手放在它们柔软的皮毛上，轻抚着它们圆圆的耳朵和耳下敏感的地方，和它们嬉戏玩耍，那种感觉就像它们在欢迎我回家。在我脑海中，有一种强烈的回到家的感觉，紧接着一位高挑美丽的女孩出现在路上来接我，她微笑着对我说：‘来吧。’然后把我举起来亲了一口，又放了下来，拉着我往前走。当这一切发生的时候，我丝毫没有感到吃惊，反而有一种理所当然的愉悦之感，这种感觉就像是再次回忆起能够让你感到快乐的事情，而这种感觉不知为何早已被忽略。我记得那里有巨大的红色阶梯，越爬越高，映入眼帘的是一穗穗飞燕草，最后我们来到了一大片林荫道，道路两侧栽种着古老而暗沉的树木。你知道，在整条林荫道上红色的龟裂树干之间，摆放着大理石雕刻的贵宾席、雕像，还有温驯友好的白鸽……

“女伴带我走在这凉爽的林荫道上，她低头看着我——我回想起那些令人愉快的对话，她那精雕细琢的下巴和甜美的容颜——用温柔悦耳的嗓音问我问题，告诉我事情，我知道那些内容让人愉悦，虽然我再也记不起具体是些什么……不久后，一只干净的卷尾猴爬下树，它一身红棕色的毛，栗色的眼睛看起来非常友善，它靠近我们，跑到我身边，抬头看着我咧着嘴笑了起来，随后跳到了我的肩膀上。然后我俩无比快乐地继续向前走。”

他停了下来。“继续啊。”我说。“我记不住多少了，只记得我们经过了在月桂花丛中沉思的老人，还有一处栖息着各种长尾小鸮的地方，穿过了荫蔽的柱廊，来到了一个宽敞而凉爽的宫殿，在那里，四处可见的是可爱的喷泉，布满了美丽的事物，都是人们内心所向往的

特质和希望。而且那里有许多事、许多人，有的还让我记忆犹新，有的已经模糊不清，但所有人都美丽和善。某种程度来说——我也说不清为什么——我能够感受到他们对我的友好，我的到来让他们快乐，他们的一举一动都让我感到快乐，他们触碰我的双手、他们对我的热情以及他们眼中的关爱。是的……”

他沉思了一阵。“我在那儿找到了玩伴。这对我来说非常重要，因为我是一个孤独的小男孩。他们在铺着草皮的庭院中玩着有意思的游戏，那里有一个用花朵做成的日晷。那游戏让人爱不释手……”

“但奇怪的是，我的记忆中有一个空缺。我不记得我们玩了什么游戏。我从没记起过。在此以后，我在孩童时花了很长的时间试图记起让我感到如此幸福的游戏究竟是什么，我甚至因此而落泪。我想在幼儿园独自再玩一次这个游戏，可是都失败了！我唯一能记得的就是我当时感到多么幸福以及那两个一直陪我玩耍的玩伴……随后出现了一个阴郁的女人，她脸色苍白、神情严肃、眼神涣散，这个阴郁的女人穿着柔软的紫色长袍，她拿着一本书，召唤我到一边，带着我来到了大厅之上的画廊里——虽然我的小伙伴非常不情愿让我离开，他们停下了手中的游戏，站在那儿眼睁睁看着我被带走。‘回来找我们！’他们喊道，‘快回来找我们！’我抬头看着她，但她根本没留意到小伙伴的存在。她的表情温和而严肃。她把我带到画廊的一个座位边，我站在她身旁，她在膝盖上把书翻开，我准备看看书里面是些什么。打开书，她手指到哪儿，我看到哪儿，简直太神奇了，因为在栩栩如生的故事中，我看到了我自己——这是关于我的故事，里面讲述的是我从出生到现在所发生的一切……”

“这对我来说太奇妙了，因为书里面的每一页都不是照片，你知道的，它们是真实的。”

华莱士凝重地顿了顿，疑惑地看着我。“你继续说，我明白。”我说。“那些都是真实的，是的，一定没错。里面的人和物都是鲜活的，我亲爱的母亲，我几乎都快忘记她了，还有我那严厉正直的父亲、家里的仆人，幼儿园，所有家中熟悉的一切。还有家里的前门，门外忙碌的街道，街道上的车来车往。我看着书，彻底惊呆了，再次充满疑惑地抬头看着那个女人的脸庞，然后继续翻着书，为了看更多的内容，跳过了中间的几页，翻着翻着，直到最后，我看见自己站在长长的白墙中的绿门前徘徊不定、犹豫不决，我再次感到了内心的挣扎和恐惧。”

“还有呢？”

“我哭喊起来，想要继续翻页，但严肃女人冰冷的手制止了我。”

“接下来呢？”

“我坚持着，在她手中轻轻挣扎，用一个孩子那可笑的力量扳开她的手指。最后她放弃了，我翻到了下一页，与此同时她弯下腰，一层阴影笼罩在我上方，她在我额头上亲了一下。

“但接下来的书中并没有出现那魔法花园，也没有美洲豹，没有拉着我的手的女孩，更没有不情愿放我离开的玩伴们。在里面出现的是西肯辛顿冗长而灰暗的街道，在路灯点亮前的下午空旷无人。而我，这个可怜的小家伙，在那儿放声痛哭。我竭尽所能压抑自己，而我痛哭是因为不能回到我的玩伴身边了，我还能听到他们的呼唤——‘回来找我们！快回来找我们！’我在那儿，这不是书里面的某一页，而是残酷的现实，那个充满魔力的地方，我曾站在那位严肃的母亲的膝边，她制止我的手，这一切都消失了——他们都到哪里去了？”

他再次停下来，好长一段时间都只是盯着燃烧的炉火。

“噢！返回到现实世界是如此痛苦！”他喃喃自语道。“然后呢？”我等了一分多钟后问。“当时的我太可怜了！再次被带回这个灰暗的世界！当我意识到刚刚所发生的一切，便深陷于无法掌控的悲伤之中。那次在公共场合哭泣和如此丢人的回归方式给我带来的侮辱和羞愧，我直到现在还记忆犹新。我又看见那位相貌慈祥、戴着金边眼镜的老绅士，他停下来先用雨伞戳了戳我，对我说：‘可怜的小家伙，你迷路了吗？’而我不过是个五岁多大的伦敦男孩！他想必是找了一位亲切的年轻警察，在众人的围观下，把我护送回家。我害怕得边走边哭，非常引人注目，就这样从魔法花园回到了父亲住宅门前的台阶上。”

“这也就是我能记得的关于这个花园的一切——那个让我魂牵梦绕至今的花园。当然，我无法传达出那种难以描述的特质，那种清澈透明的不真实感，它与我们平常所经历到的一切完全不同，但这——这就是过去所发生的。如果这只是一场梦，我肯定它发生在大白天，而总体来说是一场非凡好梦……嗯！——自然而然，随之而来的是一系列可怕的审问，有我的姨妈、我的父亲、我的保姆，还有家教——所有人……

“我试图告诉他们，而父亲因为我说谎，第一次痛打了我一顿。之后我试着告诉姨妈，她因为我顽劣的坚持，又惩罚了我一次。之后，正如我说的，他们禁止所有人听我的故事，一个字也不准听。最后甚至把我的童话故事书也没收了一段时间——因为我的想象力太‘丰富’。呃？是的，他们真的那么做了！我父亲很保守……于是我只能自己给自己讲故事。我躺在枕头上对自己低语——枕头经常被我的口水或泪水浸湿，潮潮的、咸咸的。而我总是在每日的祷告——没那么虔诚的祷告——中加上衷心的请求：‘求求你上帝，请让我梦见那个花园。噢！把我带回到那个花园吧！’让我回到那个花园！我经常梦到那

个花园。我可能添油加醋，我不确定……所有的这一切，你要知道，都是我试图重组早年经历过的破碎记忆。在小时候的那次经历和其他连续性的回忆之间，仿佛有一道鸿沟。有一阵子，我觉得甚至不应该再提到那神奇的惊鸿一瞥。”

我问了一个显而易见的问题。

“没有，”他回答说，“在早些年我不记得曾试图重返花园。现在看来有些奇怪，但我觉得很有可能是因为在那次‘历险’过后，他们对我严加看管，以防我再次走失。不，一直到我们相识，我才再次尝试寻找那个花园。而我相信有那么一段时间——现在看起来难以置信——我彻底忘记了那个花园，大概是我八九岁的时候吧。你还记得我在圣·阿瑟尔斯坦是个怎样的小孩吗？”

“记得非常清楚！”

“在那些日子里，我并没有显露出藏着一个秘密的梦境的迹象，对吧？”

第二章

他突然笑着抬起头：“你和我玩过‘西北通道’吗？”

不，你和我当然不是一路的。

“那种游戏，”他继续说，“想象力丰富的小孩整天都在玩。大致上就是找一条通往学校的‘西北通道’。每天上学的路十分无聊，游戏目标在于找一条不那么无趣的上学之路，提前十分钟出发，选一个看起来完全无望的方向，在不熟悉的街道上探索前往学校的新径。有一天，我在坎佩切山那侧的底层街区迷了路，还以为输掉游戏的这一天终于来临了，这下上学要迟到了。绝望之中，我选了一条看起来像死胡同的路，但却在小巷尽头，找到了一个出口。希望再次燃起，我快速走了出去。‘我能行的。’我边想边走过了一排乱糟糟的商铺，这种似曾相识的感觉让人费解，天哪，那不是把我带到魔法花园的白色长墙和绿色的门吗？”

“那时的记忆有如潮水向我猛然袭来。而那花园，那美好的花园，终归不仅仅是一场梦。”

他停了下来。

“我觉得和绿门的第二次相遇标志着忙碌的中学生活和童年时期无尽的闲暇时光有着天壤之别。无论如何，第二次的时候，我完全没有想要立刻走进去。你看……首先，我一股脑儿想着的都是如何按时到达学校——为的是不能中断每天按时到校的记录。我肯定也有一点点的冲动想要去试试那扇门——是的，我肯定也感受到了那股冲动

——但在我记忆中，似乎只把那扇门的吸引力看成是阻挠我雷打不动想要准时到校的障碍。当然这次发现引起了巨大的兴趣——我满脑子都是它——可我还是继续前行。那扇门并没有让我停下脚步。我边跑边拉出怀表，发现距离上课还有十分钟，而我已经下坡回到了熟悉的环境中。我上气不接下气地赶到学校，可没骗你，我跑得一身大汗，连衣服都湿了，可我准时到校了。我还记得把大衣和帽子挂起来……就这样经过了那扇门，把它抛在身后。很奇怪，对吧？”

他若有所思地看着我。“当然我当时并不知道那扇门并不会一直在那儿。中学生的想象力有限。我觉得知道门在那儿、知道怎样走回去让我非常开心，但当时有学校拖着我。我觉得那天早晨我肯定特别心神不宁、心不在焉，回想着，如果再次与不久前见到的那些美丽的陌生人重逢会是怎样的情形。奇怪的是，当时我脑中如此确信他们再次见到我一定会感到高兴。没错，那天早晨我肯定把花园当成了一个让人可以暂时逃离紧张学业的愉快场所。”

“我那天根本没去找那扇门。第二天有半天假期，这可能影响了我的决定。或者，我漫不经心的状态给我造成了负担，让我错过了重返花园的最佳时机。我也不知道。与此同时，我只知道那个魔法花园在脑海中挥之不去，我根本无法保守这个秘密。”

“我告诉了——他叫什么名字来着？——一个长得像雪貂的小孩，我们以前管他叫呆呆。”

“小霍普金斯。”我回答说。

“就是霍普金斯。我也不想告诉他，因为总觉得告诉他是违反规矩的，但我还是说了。回家有段路我俩一起走，他太能说了，而如果我们不聊魔法花园，我们就得说点别的，而对我来说，当时脑子里根本容不下其他任何话题。我就这么说漏嘴了。”

“好吧，他把我的秘密说出去了。第二天课间玩耍的时候，我被六个高年级男生包围了，他们半开着玩笑，都想听我说更多关于魔法花园的事。其中有大块头福西特——你还记得他吗？还有卡纳比和莫雷·雷诺兹。你当时不会也在那儿吧？不，如果你在的话我应该会记得的……”

“男孩这种生物太奇特了。抛开掩藏在内心深处的自我厌恶不说，我当时对于能够得到这么多高年级生的关注，内心深处是有点沾沾自喜的，至少我是这么认为的。我记忆尤其深刻的是得到克罗肖表扬的那一刻——你记得大一点的克罗肖，作曲家克罗肖的儿子？——他说这是他所听过的最棒的谎话。可与此同时，把在我眼中如此神圣的秘密透露出去的羞耻之感有如逆流般向我袭来。福西特那个禽兽还开起了花园里女孩的玩笑……”

因为沉浸在那段羞耻的回忆当中，华莱士的声音也低沉下来。“我假装没听见他说的是什麼，”他说，“然后卡纳比突然管我叫‘小骗子’，我坚持这些都是真的，可他一点都不相信。我说我知道绿门在哪里，十分钟就可以把他们带过去。卡纳比这次已经出乎意料地善良了，他说我必须证明所说的一切，不然就要我好看。卡纳比可曾扭过你的手臂？如果有的话，那恐怕你就能理解我的处境了。我发誓我的故事是真的。当时学校里没有一个人能从卡纳比手中救下一个小屁孩，虽然克罗肖可能替我说了几句好话。卡纳比奸计得逞，我变得越来越激动，面红耳赤，也有点害怕。总体来说，我表现得就像是一个傻不拉叽的小屁孩，而最后结果就是，本该由我独自寻找的魔法花园的计划，变成了由我带领着六个恐吓我的同学一起去。他们既嘲讽，又好奇，而我则是满脸通红、耳根火热、双眼刺痛，灵魂深处饱受痛苦和屈辱的煎熬。”

“我们一直没有找到白墙和绿门……”

“你的意思是？”

“我的意思是我找不到那扇门。如果能的话，我也想找到。可就算是之后我自己一个人去，也找不到。我再也没找到过那扇门。想起来，似乎在我整个中学求学期间，都在找寻那扇门，但我再也没有见过它——再也没有。”

“那帮人——没让你好过吧？”

“卡纳比……那个禽兽，他以我荒唐的谎言为由开了会。我还记得为了不让人看见我满脸泪痕，后来我是如何悄悄回家溜上楼的。但让我哭着入睡的原因并不是卡纳比，而是那花园——我全心向往的那美丽的午后、那可爱友善的女士、那些还在等待着我的玩伴、我想要学会的游戏、遗忘的美丽游戏——我的眼泪是为它们而流的。”

“我坚信如果我没有说出去……在那之后好些日子里，我状态都很糟——无数个哭泣的黑夜和心不在焉的白日。足足有两个学期，我松懈下来了，成绩下滑。你还记得吗？你当然记得！因为是你——是你数学成绩打败我这事让我重新开始用功的。”

第三章

我的朋友安静地盯着壁炉中的火苗好一阵子。随后他开口道：“直到我十七岁时，才再次见到那扇门。”

“它第三次赫然出现在我面前——我当时正在去牛津领取奖学金的路上，路过帕丁顿，就瞥了一眼。当时我正把头伸出马车挡板外抽烟，毫无疑问，觉得自己特别老成世故，而突然间，眼前一闪而过的是那扇门和那道墙，那种无法忘怀而又触手可得的珍贵感觉。”

“马车咔嗒咔嗒地路过——我也吃了一惊，直到马车走到转弯处才让它停下。随后那一瞬间对我来说特别诡异，我内心陷入了怀疑和挣扎——我敲了敲马车顶的小门，伸出手掏出了怀表。‘是的，先生！’车夫利索地回答。‘呃，好吧，没什么。’我喊道，‘我的错。我们没多少时间了！继续走吧！’然后他继续前行……”

“我拿到了奖学金。收到通知的第二天晚上，我回到父亲家，坐在楼上我书房的壁炉前，父亲很罕见地表扬了我，他那些合理的建议在我耳边作响，我抽着最爱的烟斗——青春期陪伴着我的斗牛犬大烟斗——想的却是嵌在白色长墙上的那一扇门。‘如果我停下来了，’我想，‘那肯定就要错过奖学金、错过牛津，把未来的大好前程搅得一团糟！我头脑更加清晰起来！’虽然思绪凝重，但当时我对于为事业牺牲这件事，没有丝毫的怀疑。”

“那些亲爱的朋友和明朗的氛围的确对我很好，非常美好，却十分遥远。我的注意力现在专注于这个世界。我看到了另一扇门向我打开——事业的大门。”

他再次凝视着炉火。有那么一瞬间，他的脸庞在红色火光的映照下，露出了一丝丝坚韧的表情，可它随即便消失不见了。

“好吧，”他叹息着说道，“我已经为事业付出了很多。我非常用心地工作，非常努力。但在那之后，我上千次地梦见过那座魔法花园，也看到过那扇门，它至少四次在我面前一闪而过。在好长一段时间里，这个世界的一切看起来是如此光明而有趣，看起来是那么充满意义和可能性，而对比之下，花园日益消减的吸引力让人觉得温和而遥远。谁愿意在赶去和美丽女子、出色男子共进晚餐的途中抚摸美洲豹？我从牛津来到伦敦，必须要成就一番事业以履行我大胆的承诺。事业——当然其中也有失望……”

“我一共谈过两次恋爱——我就不细说了——但有一次和某人约会，我知道她怀疑我是否敢现身，于是我冒险抄了一条近路，那条路在伯爵阁附近，不经常走，可白墙和绿门就在那里出现了。‘奇怪，’我自言自语道，‘可我以为它在坎佩切山。那是我怎么也找不到的地方——就像数巨石阵——那个诡异的白日梦中所出现的场所。’而我心无旁骛地走过了那扇门，那天下午，它对我没有丝毫的吸引力。”

“有那么一瞬间，我有股冲动想要试着打开那扇门，最多就是再走三步——虽然心底确信那扇门会为我而开，可我随即意识到这么做就会迟到，而这关乎我的荣誉。之后我情愿自己没准时到达——我至少应该偷偷看一眼花园，向那些美洲豹招招手，但这次我清楚地认识到不应该紧抓着错过的事物不放。是的，那一次让我非常后悔……”

“在那之后，我努力工作好多年，一直也没再见过那扇门，直到

最近它才再次出现。随之而来的，我感到似乎有一层薄锈蔓延开来，笼罩着我的世界。我开始为再也看不到这扇门而感到悲伤和苦痛。或许是因为我同样也备受超负荷工作量的折磨——或许那就是别人口中的年到四十的感觉。我也不知道。但我所肯定的是，那种让人对努力工作感到轻而易举的强烈愉悦之感已经不复存在，在所有这些新政治趋势发展的时机下，正是我应该努力工作的时候。奇怪，对吧？但生活的确开始让我感到疲惫不堪，而它的回报，当那些回报慢慢变得触手可得时，我觉得它们很廉价。就在不久前，我开始迫切地渴望那个花园。是的——而我又见过它三次。”

“你走进花园了？”

“不——是那扇门！而我并没有进去！”他朝着我的方向靠向桌子，声音里承载着巨大的伤痛，“我有三次机会——三次！如果那门再出现在我面前，我发誓，我会走进去，离开这片尘嚣和嘈杂之地，抛下这枯燥乏味的耀眼虚荣，远离这些劳神费心的徒劳无功。我要走进去，永不回头。这次我会留下……我发誓，可当时机来临——我没有走进去。”

“这一年中，我有三次路过那扇门的机会，却没能走进去。去年一年有三次。”

“第一次是在租户救赎法案的紧急投票之夜，最后以三票多数票保住了政府。你还记得吗？我们这边没人——可能对方也没几个人——预料到当晚的结果。随后的讨论像蛋壳一样分崩离析。我和霍奇基斯当时正和他的表亲在布伦特福德用餐，我俩都没携伴出席。电话一打来，我们立刻开着他表亲的车出发，差点就迟到了。在赶路的时候，经过了 my 墙和门——在月光的照耀下一片苍白，刺眼的路灯在墙上投射出一大块炙热的黄斑，但不会错的。‘我的天。’我脱口而出。‘怎么了？’霍奇基斯问道。我回答说：‘没事！’然后就错过了那个时机。”

“‘我做出了极大的牺牲。’在进门的时候我告诉党鞭。‘大家都是。’他匆匆走过的时候回答道。”

“我不知道当时不这么做还能怎样。第二次机会是在我赶去父亲的床前，去跟这个严厉的老头子告别的时候。那一次也是，在生命的面前，这选择是毋庸置疑的。但第三次不一样，它发生在一周前。光是回忆起来，都让我悔恨不已。我当时和古尔克及拉尔夫在一起——现在已经不是什么秘密了，你知道的，我和古尔克谈过了。我们当时在弗罗比舍用餐，聊得越来越深入。而我在内阁重组当中的位置总游走在我们的话题之间。是的——是的。已经尘埃落定了。虽然还不能对外公布，不过我不认为需要向你保守秘密……是的——非常感谢！”

非常感谢！但让我继续给你讲我的故事。

“然后，在那个晚上，似乎一切都悬而未决。我的处境有些微妙。我非常迫切地想要从古尔克口中得到确切的答复，但拉尔夫的出现阻碍了这一切。我绞尽脑汁让那晚的对话显得轻松愉快，尽可能不把话题转移到我最关注的地方。我必须如此。拉尔夫随后的表现证实了我的谨慎是正确的。我知道拉尔夫走到肯辛顿大街就会和我们分道扬镳，之后我就可以和古尔克打开天窗说亮话。有时候人必须借助于这种小手段……而正在此时，我眼角的余光瞄见了白墙和绿门，就在路的前方。

“我们聊着天经过了那扇门。我走过了它。直到现在，我还记得古尔克醒目的侧脸所投射出的阴影，他的大礼帽向前倾斜，滑落在挺拔的鼻子上方，我们漫步在街道时，他脖间围了好几层围巾的投影总是走在我和拉尔夫的影子之前。

“路过的时候，我距离那扇门也就二十英寸¹的距离。‘如果我跟他们说晚安告别，然后走进门里，’我问自己，‘接下来会发生什么？’而我当时一心想着要和古尔克谈话。在心里被其他问题占据的同时，我没法儿回答这个问题。‘他们会以为我疯了，’我想，‘而假如我现在失踪了——杰出的政治家离奇消失事件！’这影响了我当时的决定。在那紧要关头，各种各样难以想象的尘世间琐事占据了我的思绪。

“随后古尔克转过身，抱歉地笑了笑，缓慢地说：‘我到了！’

1.1英寸约等于2.5厘米。（说明：书中脚注除特别标明的之外，均为译者注。）

“‘我到了！’他重复了一次。而我彻底失去了我的机会。一年中，有三次进入那扇门的机会——那扇引导你走向平静、走向愉悦、走向比梦境更美、走向世上无人知晓之善的大门。而我拒绝了它，雷德蒙，它现在离我而去——”

“你怎么知道？”

“我知道。我就知道。现在我被留下来面对这一切，我曾经有机会离开，当时拖着我后腿的任务把我困在此处。你说我取得了成功——这庸俗、花哨、讨人厌、惹人妒忌的东西。我得到了。”他大手拿着一个核桃。“如果这就是我的成功……”他说着，把手中的核桃捏碎了，随后把手伸出来让我看。

“让我告诉你吧，雷德蒙。这次的擦肩而过正在摧毁我。过去两个月里，到现在为止快十周了，除去那些必要和紧急的任务，我什么工作都没做。我的灵魂被无法平息的悔恨之感所占据。我在夜晚出门——那时候不太容易被认出来。我在街头游荡。是的，我好奇如果人

们知道，会怎么看我。一个内阁大臣，所有部门里最重要的负责人在大街上独自游荡——为一扇门、一座花园默哀——有时候那悲伤过于沉重，似乎都能被听到。”

第四章

直到现在，我才意识到那晚他脸色多么苍白，眼中燃起了我所不熟悉的阴郁火光。今天晚上，他在我眼中是如此鲜活。我坐在这里，回想着他的辞藻、他的语气，而最新一期的《威斯敏斯特公报》还躺在我的沙发上，里面刊登的是他的死讯。今日午餐的时候，俱乐部里人人都关注着他的死讯。除了这个，我们没有探讨任何其他事情。

他们昨天一大早在肯辛顿站附近的一个深坑里找到了他的尸首。为了连接向南延伸的铁路，工人挖了两个竖井。为了防止公众进入，在大街上用栅墙把坑遮挡起来，在墙上留了一个小门，以便住在另一侧的工人进出。而因为监工交接的失误，这扇门没有锁好，他就是穿过那扇门走了进去。

心中的疑惑和迷思让我心情越发沉重。

看起来他似乎当晚从议院一路走回家——在过去这段会期内，他经常走回家——因此，我猜，那个专注地走在空荡荡的街道上，包裹得严严实实的身影，就是他。是不是车站附近电灯那苍白的光线蒙骗了他，让他误以为粗糙的木板是白色的？是不是那扇致命的、没上锁的门唤醒了某些回忆？

究竟，是否存在着这样一面白墙，墙上嵌着一扇绿门？

我不知道。我一字不漏地把他讲的故事转述出来。有时候我也想相信华莱士不过是一个意外的受害者，被困在幻觉和无心的陷阱之中，这种情况很鲜有，却并不是毫无先例，但这肯定不是我最坚定的信念。如果要这么想的话，你或许认为我很迷信，还很傻，但实际上我更倾向于相信他是真的拥有某种非同寻常的天赋，一种感知力还是什么的，我也说不清楚，可这种感知力以墙和门为幌子，给他提供了一个出口、一个秘密的特别通道，让他可以逃到另一个更美好的世界。无论如何，你或许会说，这种力量最终还是背叛了他。可你确定吗？在那里，你碰触到这些造梦之人内心最深处的秘密，这些人有如此的远见和想象力。这个世界在我们眼中普通而平凡，就像那个栅墙和土坑。以日常准则看来，他走出安全区，走进了黑暗，走进了危险，走进了死亡。

可在他眼中，又是否如此呢？

显微镜下的失误

实验室的窗外湿雾弥漫，桌子对面分别摆放着两盏绿色的瓦斯灯，离得很近，昏黄的光线透着一丝暖意。每张桌子上都放着几个学生们做实验用的玻璃罐，里面装着龙虾、贻贝、青蛙以及豚鼠的残骸。房间另一头的架子正对着窗户，架上存放着解剖体，漂白过后，泡在酒精里。一排精美的解剖图悬挂在架子上方，它们镶嵌在白木框里，架子下方是一列方形的储物柜。实验室的每道门上都嵌着黑板，上面还写着前一天上课留下的部分图解。实验室里除了助教空无一人，他安静地坐在备课室的门附近，偌大空间内，只听见他手中的摇杆切片机在絮絮叨叨、低声细语。环视房内，不少学生曾驻足的痕迹还是随处可见：有手提包若干，亮闪闪的仪器箱数只；在某个角落还有藏在报纸下的巨大画幅；另外还有一册装帧得非常精致的《乌有乡消息》，这本书出现在这样的环境中，显得有些格格不入。学生们都赶着去隔壁的阶梯教室抢占座位，随手把这些东西摆放在桌上。紧闭的大门降低了教授的音量，让他韵律十足的腔调听起来就像是毫无生气的喃喃自语。

不久后，窗外传来了微弱的钟声，教堂的钟敲了十一下。切片机的声音停了下来，助教看了看表，站起身，双手插着口袋，穿过实验室，缓慢地走向阶梯教室的门口。他站在门口听了一会儿，随后眼光落在了一小册威廉·莫里斯的书上。他拿起书，扫了一眼标题，笑着打开书，看了看衬页上的名字，随手翻了几页，然后把书放回桌面。与此同时，阶梯课室内单调的呢喃止住了，屋内突然响起了铅笔摩擦桌面的沙沙声，嘈杂的脚步声和好几个人说话的声音混在一起。紧接着坚定的脚步声渐渐向门口靠近，门打开了，敞在那儿，而刚进来的人们的注意力似乎被依稀传来的发问声所吸引，停住了脚步。

助教转过身，缓慢地走过切片机，穿过备课室的门走出了实验室。在他走出门外的同时，学生们拿着课本一个接着一个从阶梯教室走回实验室，分散着坐在小桌前，有几个站在门口。这是异常混杂的一个群体，因为当牛津和剑桥还在回避不分阶层的教育方式所带来的窘况时，帝国理工学院先于美国，早在好些年前就采用了阶层混合式教学——社会地位也是一视同仁，因为学院声名在外，而奖学金的申请不受任何年龄限制，比那些苏格兰的大学招生范围更广。这个班上一共有二十一名学生，但有的人还留在教室向教授提问，有的赶在黑板擦干净前把上面的图示抄下来，还有人在仔细查看教授为了演示课

专门准备的标本。走进实验室的九名学生中，有三位女生，其中一位是身材娇小的漂亮女生，她戴着眼镜，衣服是灰绿色的，正盯着窗外的浓雾。其余两位都是看起来健康健康的女生，相貌平平，纷纷解开卷好的围裙，穿在身上。这种棕色的亚麻围裙是解剖时穿的。男生中，有两位直接走到他们在实验室的座位上，其中一位以前是名裁缝，苍白的脸上长着一圈深色的胡子；另一位体格健硕的年轻人二十出头，面色红润，穿着合身的棕色西装——小韦德伯恩，是眼科医生韦德伯恩的儿子。其他几个人在课室门附近挤作一团。一个戴眼镜的小矮子驼着背，坐在横木凳上；另外两位，一个是矮个子、肤色深的年轻人，另一位年轻人长着亚麻色的头发，肤色红彤彤的，他倚在板岩水槽旁；而第四个人面对着大家，是这群人中的主要发言人。

最后一个人名叫希尔，这个身体结实的年轻小伙子，和韦德伯恩年纪相仿，他肤色很白，眼珠是深灰色的，发色说不上来，五官立体，不太对称。他说话声音大于常人，双手深深地插在口袋里，衣领上有磨痕，还有粗心的洗衣女工上浆后留下的蓝色痕迹，他的衣服明显是成衣，靴子靠近脚趾的地方还有一块补丁。当他发表意见或是倾听别人讲话时，时不时地向阶梯教室的门口张望。他们在讨论今天刚上完的那节动物学入门课程，如此冗长，多么让人绝望。“高等脊椎动物的目标是从一个卵子到另一个卵子……”讲师语气忧郁地说着，同时把他画了好久的对比解剖学图画完了。戴眼镜的驼背大声重复了一次，语气中充满了欣赏，并把话题丢向了一头秀发的学生，态度明显带着挑衅。随后便开始了那种含糊不清的讨论，不用说，像这种漫无边界的讨论，相信对全世界的学生来说都非常的熟悉。

“或者，这就是我们的目标——我承认，至少从科学的角度来说，”这是一头秀发的学生对挑衅的回应，“但总有什么是凌驾在科学之上的。”

“科学，”希尔信心十足地说，“是系统的知识。一切系统外的概念，无论如何，肯定是不靠谱的。”只有当听众把他的当回事，他才能确定这话说得到底是高明还是愚蠢。

“我所不能理解的是，”驼背随意说道，“希尔究竟是不是唯物主义者。”

“有一样东西是凌驾于物质之上的，”希尔觉得这次能够更加清楚地表明自己的立场，同时也意识到有人在门背后，于是为了引起她的注意稍稍提高了音量，他迅速回答道，“那就是妄想有什么可以凌驾于物质之上。”

“所以我们终于听完你的传教了。”俊美的学生说，“我们对高于畜生的生活方式的渴求，我们对高于自身的一切所付出的努力，这所有

一切都是妄想，是吧？但看看你是多么前后不一。比如说你的社会主义，为什么还要浪费时间关心种族？为什么还要为生活在贫民窟的乞丐费心？为什么还要自找麻烦把那本书，”他用头指了指威廉·莫里斯的书，“借给实验室的所有人？”

“女生来了。”驼背含糊地嘟囔了一句，紧张地向后瞄了一眼。

那个女孩穿着褐色的衣服，眼睛也是褐色的，她走进实验室，站在桌子的另一侧，也就是驼背身边，一手拿着卷好的围裙，转头听着大家的讨论。她没注意到驼背的存在，因为她的视线游走于希尔以及和他对话的人之间。希尔刻意忽略她的存在，这暴露了自己对她的出现有多在意，女孩读懂了这一点，感到非常满意。“我不需要理由，”他说，“就因为一个人知道没有任何事物凌驾于物质之上，也不期待自己长命百岁，他就要活得像畜生？”

“为什么不呢？”一头秀发的学生问道。

“为什么要呢？”希尔回答。

“那他的奖赏是什么？”

“你们这些信教的人，对你们来说一切都和奖赏有关。难道一个人就不能接受公义，为公义而存在吗？”

现场安静了一会儿，随后秀发男挣扎着用简单的词凑数以争取时间：“但——你看——奖赏——当我说奖赏的时候……”然后驼背突然插入的问题拯救了他。驼背的问题在辩论界是臭名昭著的，因为他的问题总是一个花样——要求对方下定义。“这就是你对公义的定义？”这就是驼背当时的问题。

希尔突然失去了回答这个问题的自信，不过虽然对方把问题丢出来了，可实验室助教布鲁克斯的出现救了场，他提着一批刚宰杀的豚鼠后腿。“这是这节课最后一批材料。”之前一直没开口的年轻人说道。布鲁克斯走向实验室前方，随手把豚鼠丢在每张桌子上。班上其他学生在远处闻到了豚鼠的味道，纷纷从阶梯教室挤回实验室，之前的讨论戛然而止，本来没坐在自己位子上的学生匆忙赶回去抢占实验样品。挂在圈上的钥匙咯咯作响，有人打开了储物柜拿出了解剖器材。希尔本来就站在自己座位旁边，他的解剖刀伸到了口袋外面。褐衣女子向前走了一步，靠着他的桌子，温柔地说：“你看到我把书还给你了吧，希尔先生？”

整个过程中，在希尔的意识里，女孩和书的存在是如此之清晰，可他笨拙地假装自己刚看到那本书。“噢，是的，”他边说边拿起书，“我知道了，你喜欢这本书吗？”

“有时间的话，我想请教你几个关于这本书的问题。”

“当然没问题，”希尔说，“这是我的荣幸。”他尴尬地停顿了一下。

“你喜欢这本书吗？”他问道。

“这本书很精彩。只是有的部分我不太理解。”

突然间，实验室响起了一阵古怪刺耳的声音，随后彻底安静下来。是助教，他已经走到黑板前，准备开始指导当日的解剖。他习惯于使用这种介乎于普通交谈时所发出的“呃”和喇叭发出的巨大声响之间的某种声音来让学生闭嘴。褐衣女子溜回自己的座位，就在希尔的正前方。希尔立刻忽略了她的存在，从桌子抽屉里拿出了笔记本，快速翻开本子，从口袋里拔出一支短胖的铅笔，准备以海量的笔记记录下助教接下来要做的示范。对于大学里的学生来说，示范和讲座是他们神圣而不可侵犯的教材。除了教授的书之外，你可以，甚至最好忽略其他教材。

希尔的父亲是兰德波特的修鞋匠，一次偶然的机会，政府下达给兰德波特技术学院的蓝皮书，让希尔拿到了奖学金。他靠着每周一几尼的零用钱留在了伦敦，发现只要精打细算，这笔钱也足够支付他的置装费——偶尔买个防水衣领，还有像墨水、针线这种城市男士生活的必需品。他第一年和第一学期就是这么过下来的，而黝黑的老头子在兰德波特几处酒馆，因为吹嘘自己的儿子是“教授”而遭到了当地人的厌恶。希尔是个精力旺盛的年轻人，他内心深处暗暗蔑视着所有宗教的神职人员，胸怀着重建世界的远大志向。在他看来，获得奖学金是一次非常好的机会。他七岁就开始读书，自那时起一直坚持着，对于身边能够接触到的书籍，无论好坏都来者不拒。他为人处世的经验仅限于波特西岛，主要是靴子批发工厂。十七岁离开寄宿学校后，他每天都在那儿上班。在演讲方面，他有着很大的天赋，并且已经得到了大学辩论社的认可，集会每次都在楼下冶金学教室碾压机和矿石模型的包围下召开，你可以从希尔每次站起来讲话时，对方拍打课桌的疯狂程度中看得出其他人对他的表现的肯定。而他正处于那个特别让人激动人心的年龄，此时的人生在羊肠小道尽头豁然开朗，就好像这一整片山谷都任其支配，未来等待着他的都是神奇的新发现和巨大的成就。除了知道自己不会拉丁语和法语之外，希尔对于自己的局限一无所知。

一开始，他的兴趣点平均地分配在学校的生物学和构建社会学和神学理论上，他十分热衷于这项工作。夜幕降临的时候，如果大博物馆的图书馆没开门，他就坐在切尔西家中的床上，穿着外套、围着围巾，誊写讲座的笔记、背诵解剖备忘录，直到索普在屋外吹起口哨——房东太太拒绝为阁楼租户的访客开门——他们俩接下来一同游走于街头，那街道在煤气灯的照射下忽明忽暗，他们几乎是照本宣科，

按着刚学会的方式聊着上帝的旨意、公义、卡莱尔以及社会重组。而在所有的过程中，希尔有时赞成索普，有时赞成某个随便经过的路人的观点，但当浓妆艳抹的女性若有所思地看着他走过时，他的思绪也不免为之所动，一时迷乱，失去论点。科学和公义！但这些日子里，有那么一两次征兆，似乎他的生活中出现了第三个让他产生兴趣的事。他发现自己的注意力会从中胚层体节的命运或是胚乳的可能意义上，时不时地，游移到坐在自己前排的褐眼女孩身上。

她是自费学生，光是和他说话，她已是纡尊降贵。一想到她从小到大所接受的教育、所获得的成就，希尔的灵魂就开始感到煎熬。她第一次和希尔说话是因为兔子的翼蝶骨上有她搞不懂的地方，而这使他发现，至少在生物上，不需要自我贬低。自那以后，他们就像所有年轻人一样，随便开个头就能继续闲聊下去，而当希尔在社会主义的问题上攻击她时——本能告诉他不要直接攻击她的宗教信仰——而她则下决心，说服自己去担负起提高他审美品位的重任。她比他大一两年，虽然这对希尔来说，从来都不是问题。在《乌有乡消息》后，他们就开始频繁地把书借给彼此。希尔有个荒谬的首要原则，他从来不在诗歌上“浪费时间”，这对她来说可是很可怕的缺陷。有天在午餐的时候，她偶然撞见希尔躲在放骨架的小博物馆里吃小圆面包——这基本就是他每日的午餐，在这样的情况下被她撞见让他感到十分尴尬。难得有机会独处，她转身走出去，不一会儿，神秘兮兮地拿着一卷勃朗宁回来借给他。他侧着身子面对着她，笨手笨脚地接过了书，因为另一只手还拿着面包。事后想起来，他的语气没能像他所希望表现出来的那么愉悦爽朗。

这一切发生在比较解剖学的考试后，也是学校对外开放的最后一天，在这之后，在圣诞假期前，学校会清理所有在校生，仔细锁好校园。为了用功准备第一学期期末考试，希尔发愤图强地复习，注意力暂时从其他兴趣点上转移开来。在所有人都乐此不疲地预测这次考试以及接下来将要进行的两次考试成绩的时候，他惊奇地发现，没人认为他有竞争哈维纪念勋章的潜力。一直以来，韦德伯恩基本上默默无闻地生活在希尔认知的最边缘地带，也该轮到他以竞争对手的身份登场了。索普和希尔达成协议，在考试前的三周，不再出去夜游。而房东太太指出，以这么低的房价，她无法提供更多的灯油。于是希尔拿着帮助记忆的小纸条，往返行走于学校与住处之间，纸条上列着小龙虾的附肢、兔子的头骨还有脊椎动物的神经体统。而他也成为让反向行人十分头疼的一号人物。

可诗歌和褐眼女孩自然而然地占据了整个圣诞假期。尚未公布的考试成绩变得不再那么重要，希尔甚至为他父亲的激动而感到惊讶。

就算他想学习比较解剖学，这些书在兰德波特也无处可借，而他

太穷了，也买不起新书，但图书馆里囤积了大量诗歌，这充分地满足了希尔的需求。他让自己沉浸于朗费罗和丁尼生流畅的诗篇之中，在莎士比亚身上感受到了勇气，在蒲柏身上找到了似曾相识的灵魂，在雪莱身上见识到了大师的水平，他甚至还浅尝辄止地读了伊莱莎·库克 [1] 和希曼太太 [2] 的诱人辞藻。但他没有读勃朗宁其他的作品，因为他希望回到伦敦后能够继续向希丝曼小姐借阅。

他从住处走到学校，亮闪闪的黑包里装着一卷勃朗宁，满脑子都是和诗歌相关的好话。的确，他构思好了聊天的开场白，还打好了最后用于表达对返校的欣喜的腹稿。以伦敦的标准来说，这个早晨格外怡人，可以清晰地看到厚厚的霜冻和湛蓝的天空，薄雾轻轻地勾勒出世间万物的轮廓，一缕缕阳光洒落在街区间，在向阳那侧的街道上渲染出了琥珀色和金色。到了学校大堂，他摘下手套，手指冻得太僵，以至于他在签名那一栏写出来的，是一条颤抖的黑线。他觉得希丝曼小姐应该就在附近。转身面向楼梯时，他发现在楼梯下面围了一群人，挣扎着挤在通告栏前。这估计就是生物考试的排名。那一刻，他忘记了勃朗宁和希丝曼小姐，加入到人群当中，向中间挤去。终于，在脸快被站在上层楼梯的人的袖子挤扁之时，他看到了排名表——

一等

H.J.萨默思·韦德伯恩

威廉·希尔

随后紧接着是二等成绩的学生，目前这不在我们所关心的范围之内。以他一贯的风格，希尔根本没浪费时间去查看索普在物理班的排名，他退出拥挤的人群，陷入了一种奇怪的情绪当中，这种情绪介乎比普通二等生感到更骄傲和输给韦德伯恩的巨大失落感之间，他带着这种情绪走上了楼。上去后，他在楼道里挂好了自己的大衣，动物学的助教对他表达了衷心的祝贺，这位年轻的助教来自牛津，在此之前，他私下里认为希尔是那种最糟糕的无赖混混。

希尔在实验室门口停顿了几秒，喘了口气，随后推门而入。他的目光穿过实验室，看到五位女学生站在一起，韦德伯恩——之前沉默寡言的韦德伯恩优雅地靠在窗边，把玩着窗帘的流苏，很明显在和那五位女生聊天。好吧，希尔或许能够有勇气，甚至是有些霸气地和一个女生聊天，或者也能在满满一屋的女生面前演讲，但像韦德伯恩这样从容地站在一群女生面前享受谈话、掌握局面、机智应答，希尔知道自己是做不到的。走上楼梯的时候，他对韦德伯恩的态度还是比较慷慨的，或许还带有一丝钦佩，他愿意真心诚意地在大家面前和他握手，就像两人只是结束了第一回合对决那样。但在圣诞节前，韦德伯

恩从来没有走到实验室的那一头去聊天。希尔那一丝模糊的兴奋情绪转瞬即逝，快速地变成了对韦德伯恩明显的嫌恶。也可能是因为他的表情产生了变化。当他走近韦德伯恩时，韦德伯恩漫不经心地向希尔点头示意，其他人转身看了一眼。希丝曼小姐的视线投向了希尔，两人眼神稍作碰撞，很快又错开了。“韦德伯恩先生，我无法认同你的说法。”她说。

“我必须要恭喜你的一等成绩，希尔先生。”戴眼镜穿绿衣服的女生转过身，笑容满面地对他说。

“这没什么。”希尔回答的时候，眼神一直没离开在旁聊天的韦德伯恩和希丝曼小姐，他迫切地想听他们在聊些什么。

“我们这些可怜的二等生可不这么认为啊。”戴眼镜的女生说。

韦德伯恩在说什么？好像是和威廉·莫里斯有关。希尔没有继续回答戴眼镜的女生，脸上的笑容也渐渐消失了。他听不清楚，于是也找不到加入谈话的时机。该死的韦德伯恩！他坐下来，打开包，犹豫了一下是否应该当着全班人的面，立刻把勃朗宁还回去，最后还是决定放弃，取而代之，他拿出了下堂课的笔记本，接下来要上的是基础植物学，这门课是短期课程，二月份就结束了。与此同时，一个肥硕的男人从阶梯教室走进来，穿过实验室，他面带微笑，边走边搓着双手，看起来和蔼可亲。这个肤色白皙、眼珠淡蓝的男人名叫宾顿，是植物学的教授，他从克佑来，上一、二月份的课。

在接下来的六个星期里，希尔体验到了一种快速而异常复杂的情感成长。大多数情况下，他的注意力主要集中在韦德伯恩身上——希丝曼小姐没看出这一点。她告诉希尔（因为博物馆相对来说比较隐蔽，她在那里和希尔聊了很多关于社会主义、勃朗宁还有其他方面的话题）自己在一个熟人家碰到过韦德伯恩，而他“继承了父亲的聪明才智，因为你知道，他的父亲是位出色的眼科医生”。

“我父亲是鞋匠。”希尔回答说，这两者并没有什么关联，可从他的语气中，你能感觉到他的自尊心在作祟。但他那一闪而过的嫉妒没有让她感到不适，她能够想象得到这种情绪源自何方。他从韦德伯恩身上痛苦地感受到了不公，也意识到了自己的缺陷。这个韦德伯恩，他选了一个杰出的男人当父亲，而这个优势不会让他丢分，反而对他来说是公义的。而当希尔只能在实验室的豚鼠残肢前笨拙地和希丝曼小姐搭话时，这个韦德伯恩，已经背着他攀入了她的社交圈，恐怕还能和希丝曼小姐用高雅的上层语言交谈，希尔或许也听得懂他们的对话，但自己绝对无法使用这样的语言。当然，他也并不想使用这种语言。而对于希尔来说，像韦德伯恩这样，每天穿着合身的西服、别着崭新的袖扣、梳着整齐的发型，完美地出现在学校，这本身，就是一

种粗鲁的、轻蔑的行为。此外，韦德伯恩最初鬼鬼祟祟假装低调、假装谦虚的状态，让希尔幻想着自己理所当然能成为今年的头号人物，之后突然之间一跃而起，以这种方式毫无节制地膨胀，这种行径太过于鬼鬼祟祟。除此之外，韦德伯恩还越发表现出对希丝曼小姐的兴趣，无论她出现在哪个讨论组，他都试图加入，冒着风险找准一切时机，表达对社会主义和无神论的诋毁。他以类似某类领袖人物的个性——简洁、肤浅以及超高效率——刺激着希尔，让他变得失去理智，直到最后，希尔就像恨萧伯纳优雅的自负、恨威廉·莫里斯限量奢华的墙纸以及恨沃尔特·克兰对于工人阶级匪夷所思的看法一样，仇恨起韦德伯恩来。

实验室的研讨在上个学期还是希尔大放光彩的时刻，现在却变得危险起来，沦落成和韦德伯恩之间毫不体面的斗争，希尔之所以坚持下来，是因为他产生了这事关自己荣誉的奇怪想法。至于在辩论社，希尔清楚地认识到，伴随着雷鸣般的拍桌声，他可以轻而易举地战胜韦德伯恩。只是韦德伯恩并没有给他在辩论社击垮自己的机会——他“用餐很晚”——多么恶心的故作！

你一定不能认为所有这一切都以如此低级的状态呈现在希尔的认知当中，他天生喜欢概括总结。韦德伯恩在他眼中并不是一个独立的障碍物，而是一类人，是一个阶层突出的那一角。经济学理论经过了发酵，在希尔的脑中已经形成固有姿态，在现实中变得异常具体。这个世界中到处充斥着像韦德伯恩这样轻慢、优雅、衣着高雅、口若悬河的人，姓韦德伯恩的主教、国会议员、教授还有地主们，他们都用着腐朽的洗指碗，引述着强劲辩手们所使用的警句式遁词。在希尔的想象中，任何衣冠不整、装扮邋遢的人，从鞋匠到车夫，都亲如兄弟，是受苦受难的同胞。于是他仿佛成为底层阶级和被压迫人士的拥护者，尽管表面看起来他只是个我行我素的粗鲁年轻人，而且还是个不太成功的拥护者。在下午茶时，一次又一次的小冲突已经开始让女学生丢下希尔一个人在那儿红着脸、发脾气，而辩论社也注意到希尔的讲话中出现了挖苦式嘲讽的新特质。

现在你就能明白，如果是为了人类利益，希尔在下次考试中击垮韦德伯恩，并且在希丝曼小姐眼中把他比下去，是多么有必要的。而且你或许也能察觉，希丝曼小姐误入了某种常见的女性的认知误区。因为韦德伯恩以一种低调的方式应对希尔掩藏不住的敌意，这场希尔和韦德伯恩的争执成为对她无尽魅力的颂词——她就是这场充斥着手术刀和粗短铅笔的竞赛之中的绝世佳人。让希丝曼小姐的密友私下感到为难的是，这甚至让她良心不安，因为她是个好女孩，通过拉斯金和当代小说痛苦地认识到，男人所有的行为都是由女性的态度决定的。而如果万一希尔从未向她提及“爱情”这个话题，她也只会认为他避而不谈，只不过是过于害羞。

紧接着，第二次考试马上就要到了，希尔越发苍白的面容证实了他在发奋学习的谣言。你能在肯辛顿南站附近的加气面包 [3] 店里看到他，掰着面包，小口地嚼着牛奶，眼睛一直没有离开过面前那张记着密密麻麻笔记的纸张。在卧室的镜子周围，他贴满了芽和茎的提示，在洗手池上，如果肥皂没有遮挡的时候，有一张图表可供阅读。他缺席了几次辩论社的聚会，但他还是挤出了和希丝曼小姐碰面的时间，有时在附近宽敞的艺术博物馆里，有时在学校楼上的小博物馆里，更平常的是在学校走廊，这里更安静，不容易受到打扰。他们还特别喜欢在靠近艺术图书馆的一个小画廊里见面，里面到处是铸铁箱子和门。在那里，希尔在她崇拜的眼神鼓励下，谈论着勃朗宁还有自己的雄心壮志。她在他身上发现了一个非比寻常的特质，那就是他一点也不贪婪。他冷静地深思熟虑过，自己未来可以靠年收入一百镑过活。但他立志要出名，在被自己的同类认可的同时，要把世界变得更好。他以布拉德劳和约翰·伯恩斯为领袖和榜样，这两位都是穷困潦倒的伟人。但希丝曼小姐认为这样的生活在审美方面是有缺陷的，虽然她没意识到，但她所指的是美丽的墙纸和室内装潢、精致的书本、优雅的服装、演唱会以及精心准备的食物和恭敬的服务。

最后，第二次考试终于到来了，植物学教授是个挑剔认真的人，他把所有书桌都重新排放在一个狭长的实验室里，为的是防止抄袭。他在桌子上放了把椅子，让自己的助教坐在上面（据助教自己说，坐在上面感觉像个印度神明），这样就能够看到任何作弊的人。他还在门口贴了一张“此门不通”的告示，可根本没什么人能看得到那张告示。整个早上，从十点到下午一点，韦德伯恩的奋笔疾书——手中鹅毛笔摩擦纸张所发出的尖锐响声，就是对希尔的挑衅，教室里的其他人也不屈不挠地追赶着这两个领军人物。随后就到了下午，韦德伯恩比往常安静了一些，而希尔的双颊一整天下来都是滚烫的。他外套口袋塞满了前一分钟还在复习的课本和笔记本。第二天早上和下午都是实操考试，有一门是切片，另外一门是读玻片。希尔早上很郁闷，因为他知道自己切片切得太厚，而神秘的玻片就是在下午出现的。

这是植物学教师一直做的事情。就像报收入税一样，它提供了作弊的诱惑。这是个放在显微镜下的标本，一个小玻片，用金属压夹片固定在显微镜的载物台上，而按照规定不能移动这个玻片。每个学生轮流上去，把看到的画下来，在本子上写下自己认为正确的答案，然后回到自己的座位。好吧，如果有人手指不小心动了一下，在那一瞬间，就有可能移动整个玻片。教授之所以命令大家不能移动玻片，是因为他想让大家辨认的是某种树茎的特征。按照他所摆放的位置，很难认出这是什么植物，可是一旦移动了玻片，看到里面其他的部分后，它的属性就一目了然了。

希尔走过来，上一门考试中和染色试剂的一番搏斗让他满脸通

红。他坐在了显微镜前的小凳子上，移动反光镜寻找最佳光线。随后，只是个习惯性动作，他移动了玻片。他立刻想起来这是禁止的，于是紧接着立刻用手把玻片推了回去，他被自己的行为吓了一跳，坐在那儿一动也不敢动。

随后，他缓缓地转过头。教授在考场外，助教高坐在临时搭建的“神坛”上，读着科学期刊，其他考生背对着他，忙着答题。他是否应该坦白交代这次意外？他现在清楚地知道那个玻片上是什么，这个分类鉴定标本是皮孔，取自接骨木树。他的目光徘徊于专心答题的同学身上，突然之间，韦德伯恩转过头以一种奇怪的眼神瞄了他一眼。让希尔在过去这两天保持着士气高昂状态的精神亢奋突然被奇怪的精神压力取而代之。写答案的本子放在身边，他没有在上面写下答案，但他一边单眼看着显微镜，一边潦草地吧看到的東西画下来。突然之间，关于道德规范的怪诞难题在他脑海中翻江倒海。他到底应该写出答案，还是把这个问题的答案空出来？可如果这样的话，韦德伯恩在第二次考试中恐怕也还会排在第一。他现在怎么知道如果没移动玻片的话，自己是不是能认出里面的东西？当然，韦德伯恩也有可能认不出来。可假如他也移动了玻片呢？他抬头看了看表，还有十五分钟去做最后决定。他收起答题本和画答案用的彩色铅笔，走回到自己的座位上。

他把自己的答案从头到尾检查了一遍，然后坐在那儿思索着，啃着自己的指节。如果现在才跳出来承认，看起来会显得可疑。他必须要打败韦德伯恩。于是他忘记了像约翰·伯恩斯和布拉德劳那样耀眼绅士的榜样。而且在他看来，这种瞥见玻片其余部分的行为毕竟只是场意外，这是强加在他身上的，更像是上天的旨意而并非不公平待遇。对他来说，利用这个机会也并不见得是那么不诚实，因为像布鲁姆就相信祷告的作用，他每天都在祈祷着能够拿到第一名。“还有五分钟。”助教一边说，一边折起文章，开始仔细巡视考场。希尔盯着时钟，直到指针走到还剩两分钟交卷时，他打开答题本，两耳通红、佯装镇定地在画好的皮孔旁边写上了名称。

当第二次考试成绩公布后，韦德伯恩和希尔的排名和上一次对调了。认识助教的穿绿衣服戴眼镜的女生（助教私底下也是个普通人）告诉大家，两次考试成绩加一起，在满分是200分的情况下，希尔得了167分，以一分领先于166分的韦德伯恩。在某种意义上，每个人都佩服希尔，虽然怀疑自己“夺取别人成绩”的想法萦绕在他心头。而且希尔慢慢地发现，无论是别人的恭喜还是希丝曼小姐对他好感加剧，甚至是韦德伯恩在如日中天时明显下滑的地位，都被那不开心的回忆给玷污了。一开始，他感到全身上下充满了能量，辩论词中再次出现了民主主义迈向胜利的语句。他把大量的热情和精力投入在对比解剖学上，也在继续提升自己的审美修养。但在这一切背后，他脑海

中不断地出现这个清晰的画面——一个移动了玻片的卑鄙小人。

没有一个人看到那一幕，而他也确信没有神圣的力量能看到他的所作所为，但尽管如此，他还是很担心。记忆并不是死物，而是有生命的，如果不再碰触，它们会慢慢褪色，可如果时常为之懊恼，它们会茁壮成长成各种可疑的形态。奇怪的是，虽然当时他清楚地意识到移动玻片只是一个意外，可随着时间的流逝，他的记忆开始变得混乱，直到最后，他无法确定——虽然他向自己保证是确定的——移动玻片究竟是否是完全下意识的动作。当然，很有可能希尔的饮食习惯也导致了这种病态的自责。他早餐一般都吃得很草率，午饭吃个面包，为了方便，晚上进餐一般在五点之后，肉的选择由他的收入决定，通常是在远离布朗普顿主路的后街里面的一个小餐馆里解决。偶尔，他犒劳自己，来一份三便士或者九便士的经典套餐，而通常端上来的时候，碟子里不是缺点土豆就是少点排骨。这种自我厌恶的爆发和情绪的复苏，毫无疑问和那段时间生活上物资的匮乏有明显的关系。而抛开这对情绪的影响不算，还有就是兰德波特鞋匠——希尔那亵渎神祇的父亲，在他对希尔从儿时反反复复的暴力教育和语言灌输下，希尔对虚伪深恶痛绝。对于公开宣称自己是无神论者的人，我有一样很确定，那就是他们很可能（通常）都是傻瓜，神经大条，喜欢谩骂神职机构，说话蛮不讲理，是爱捉弄人的恶棍，但他们通常都不善于撒谎。如果他们不是这样，如果他们哪怕能做到有一丝丝的妥协，大概也就变成了自由派教徒。此外，这段记忆还破坏了他对希丝曼小姐的感情。因为比起韦德伯恩，她现在非常明显更喜欢希尔，希尔也确信自己喜欢她，于是开始以腼腆的敬慕方式来回报她对自己的关心。有一次他甚至买了一把紫罗兰，装在口袋里带到铸铁画廊，支支吾吾地解释着把花献给她，而花儿早已凋零枯萎。这记忆同样妨碍了他对于资本家不忠行为的谴责，这一直以来都是他生活的一大乐趣。而最后，它还侵蚀了击败韦德伯恩所带来的喜悦。在此之前，他一直自以为比韦德伯恩高尚，而内心燃起怒火仅仅是因为想要得到认可。现在他开始苦恼，偷偷怀疑这一切是不是源于自卑作祟。他幻想着能从勃朗宁的作品中找到对自己目前情况的辩解，但它们在分析过后就烟消云散了。终于——诡异的是，他被当初让他做出不诚实举动的相同动力所打动——他去找宾登教授，向他坦白了整个事件。因为希尔不是自费学生，宾登教授并没有招呼他坐下，他就这样站在教授的书桌前坦白了一切。

“这件事太奇怪了。”宾登教授说，随后缓慢地意识到自己对这件事的态度，怒火渐渐燃烧起来，“这件事实在太让人震惊了。我不明白你为何会做出这样的事，而我也不明白你为什么要坦白。你是那种学生……剑桥人做梦也不敢……我应该早点想到……你为什么要作弊？”

“我没有作弊。”希尔回答说。

“但你刚刚才告诉我你作弊了。”

“我以为我解释清楚了……”

“你要不就是作弊了，要不就是没有作弊……”

“我说了我的动作是无意识的。”

“我不是个形而上学者，我是科学——也就是事实——的仆人。你得到的命令是不要移动那个玻片。而你的确移动了玻片。如果这不是作弊的话……”

“如果我想作弊”，希尔的声音变得歇斯底里起来，“我为什么要来这里向你坦白？”

“你的忏悔为你挽回了一点，”宾登教授说，“但这并不能改变最初的真相。”

“的确不能，先生。”希尔彻底向自卑举旗投降。

“现在你甚至带来了很大的麻烦。考试排名必须要修正。”

“我想是的，先生。”

“你想是的？当然必须修正。而我不认为我的良心能够过得去，让你通过这次考试。”

“不让我通过？”希尔问，“要给我不及格？”

“这是所有考试的规定。不然我们还能怎么样？你还能期待什么？你不是想逃避自己的所作所为带来的后果吧？”

“我以为，或者……”希尔紧接着说，“让我挂科？我以为，如果我告诉你，你只会把玻片那一题的分数给扣掉。”

“这是不可能的！”宾登说，“而且，扣掉那题的分，你还是排在韦德伯恩前面。只是把那个分扣了？简直荒谬！学院规章制度明确地指出……”

“但我是自己坦白的，先生。”

“规章制度说，无论是什么原因或者以什么方式发现这种行为，他们只不过提供——”

“这会毁了我的，如果我这次考试不及格，他们就不会续发我的奖学金了。”

“你之前就应该想到这一点。”

“但先生，考虑到我的处境……”

“我什么也考虑不了。在这所学校里，教授也只是机器。规章制度甚至不让我们给学生推荐职位。我只是个机器，而你已经让我开始运转了。我必须这么做……”

“这太严苛了，先生。”

“可能是吧。”

“如果我这次考试没法儿通过，那我不如直接回家算了。”

“这就要由你自己考虑清楚了。”宾登的语气软了一点。他意识到自己有点不公平，假如他不是自相矛盾的话，他的确想要改正。“从个人而言，”他说，“我认为你的坦白能够大大地减轻你的过错。但你已经开启了这个机器，现在它只能尽自己的本分。我，我真的很抱歉你把真相说出来了。”

一波强烈的情绪让希尔说不出话来。突然之间，他清晰地看到兰德波特的老鞋匠——他父亲——布满皱纹的脸庞。“我的天！我太蠢了！”他突然之间激动地说道。

“我希望，”宾登说，“这能够让你吸取教训。”

但，诡异的是，他们脑海中所所谓的教训，根本不是一回事。

随后两人都没说话。

“我希望能够考虑一下，先生，之后我会告诉你我的决定——我的意思是，关于回不回家。”希尔边说边走向门口。

第二天，希尔没来上课。穿绿衣服戴眼镜的女生一如既往地抢先得到了消息。她说起这件事的时候，韦德伯恩和希丝曼小姐正在探讨诗乐协会会员的表演。

“你们听说了吗？”她问。

“听说什么？”

“上次考试抓到了作弊。”

“作弊？”韦德伯恩的脸突然红了起来，“怎么会？”

“那个玻片……”

“有人动了？不可能！”

“就是有人动了，那个我们不能动的玻片……”

“一派胡言！”韦德伯恩说，“为什么？他们怎么能发现？他们知道是谁……？”

“是希尔先生。”

“希尔！”

“希尔先生！”

“不，肯定不是那个纯洁的希尔吧？”韦德伯恩慢慢恢复正常。

“我不相信。”希丝曼小姐说，“你是怎么知道的？”

“我之前不知道，”戴眼镜的女生说，“但是现在我知道这是真的。希尔先生自己去宾登教授那儿坦白了。”

“我的天哪！”韦德伯恩说，“偏偏是希尔。不过我一直都不太信得过这些原则上的博爱主义……”

“你敢肯定？”希丝曼小姐呼吸急促地问。

“非常确定。这太可怕了，不是吗？但你知道，不然你以为呢？他父亲是个鞋匠。”

随后希丝曼小姐把戴眼镜的女生吓了一跳。

“我不在乎。我是不会相信的。”她柔和的肤色变得越来越红。“除非他自己当面告诉我，否则我不会相信的。就算那样，我也不太能相信。”然后她突然转身背对着戴眼镜的女生，走回到自己的座位去了。

“但这还是真的。”戴眼镜的女生说，微笑着盯着韦德伯恩。

但韦德伯恩没有回答。她似乎注定是那一类人——说出来的话，总是让人没有回答的欲望。

[1] 伊莱莎·库克，生于1818年12月24日，英国女诗人、作家，支持女性政治自由。

[2] 即菲利西亚·海曼斯，生于1793年9月25日，英国女诗人。

[3] 用二氧化碳充气面团制成的面包。

H. G. Wells

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

A Slip under
the Microscope

N^o 16

‘I will go in, out
of this dust and
heat, out of this
dry glitter of
vanity, out of
these toilsome
futilities. I will
go and never
return.’

The Door in the Wall

1

One confidential evening, not three months ago, Lionel Wallace told me this story of the Door in the Wall. And at the time I thought that so far as he was concerned it was a true story.

He told it me with such a direct simplicity of conviction that I could not do otherwise than believe in him. But in the morning, in my own flat, I woke to a different atmosphere; and as I lay in bed and recalled the things he had told me, stripped of the glamour of his earnest slow voice, denuded of the focused, shaded table light, the shadowy atmosphere that wrapped about him and me, and the pleasant bright things, the dessert and glasses and napery of the dinner we had shared, making them for the time a bright little world quite cut off from everyday realities, I saw it all as frankly incredible. 'He was mystifying!' I said, and then: 'How well he did it! . . . It isn't quite the thing I should have expected him, of all people, to do well.'

Afterwards as I sat up in bed and sipped my morning tea, I found myself trying to account for the flavour of reality that perplexed me in his impossible reminiscences, by supposing they did in some way suggest, present, convey – I hardly know which word to use – experiences it was otherwise impossible to tell.

Well, I don't resort to that explanation now. I have got over my intervening doubts. I believe now, as I believed at the moment of telling, that Wallace did to the very best of his ability strip the truth of his secret for me. But whether he himself saw, or only thought he saw, whether he himself was the possessor of an inestimable privilege or the victim of a fantastic dream, I cannot pretend to guess. Even the facts of his death, which ended my doubts for ever, throw no light on that.

That much the reader must judge for himself.

I forget now what chance comment or criticism of mine moved so reticent a man to confide in me. He was, I think, defending

himself against an imputation of slackness and unreliability I had made in relation to a great public movement, in which he had disappointed me. But he plunged suddenly. 'I have,' he said, 'a preoccupation—

'I know,' he went on, after a pause, 'I have been negligent. The fact is — it isn't a case of ghosts or apparitions — but — it's an odd thing to tell of, Redmond — I am haunted. I am haunted by something — that rather takes the light out of things, that fills me with longings . . .'

He paused, checked by that English shyness that so often overcomes us when we would speak of moving or grave or beautiful things. 'You were at Saint Althelstan's all through,' he said, and for a moment that seemed to me quite irrelevant. 'Well' — and he paused. Then very haltingly at first, but afterwards more easily, he began to tell of the thing that was hidden in his life, the haunting memory of a beauty and a happiness that filled his heart with insatiable longings, that made all the interests and spectacle of worldly life seem dull and tedious and vain to him.

Now that I have the clue to it, the thing seems written visibly in his face. I have a photograph in which that look of detachment has been caught and intensified. It reminds me of what a woman once said of him — a woman who had loved him greatly. 'Suddenly,' she said, 'the interest goes out of him. He forgets you. He doesn't care a rap for you — under his very nose . . .'

Yet the interest was not always out of him, and when he was holding his attention to a thing Wallace could contrive to be an extremely successful man. His career, indeed, is set with successes. He left me behind him long ago; he soared up over my head, and cut a figure in the world that I couldn't cut — anyhow. He was still a year short of forty, and they say now that he would have been in office and very probably in the new Cabinet if he had lived. At school he always beat me without effort — as it were by nature. We were at school together at Saint Althelstan's College in West Kensington for almost all our school- time. He came into the school as my co- equal, but he left far above me, in a blaze of scholarships and brilliant performance. Yet I think I made a fair average running. And it was at school I heard first of the 'Door in the Wall' — that I was to hear of a second time only a month before his death.

To him at least the Door in the Wall was a real door, leading through a real wall to immortal realities. Of that I am now quite assured.

And it came into his life quite early, when he was a little fellow between five and six. I remember how, as he sat making his confession to me with a slow gravity, he reasoned and reckoned the date of it. 'There was,' he said, 'a crimson Virginia creeper in it – all one bright uniform crimson, in a clear amber sunshine against a white wall. That came into the impression somehow, though I don't clearly remember how, and there were horse- chestnut leaves upon the clean pavement outside the green door. They were blotched yellow and green, you know, not brown nor dirty, so that they must have been new fallen. I take it that means October. I look out for horse- chestnut leaves every year and I ought to know.

'If I'm right in that, I was about five years and four months old.'

He was, he said, rather a precocious little boy – he learnt to talk at an abnormally early age, and he was so sane and ' old-fashioned', as people say, that he was permitted an amount of initiative that most children scarcely attain by seven or eight. His mother died when he was two, and he was under the less vigilant and authoritative care of a nursery governess. His father was a stern, preoccupied lawyer, who gave him little attention and expected great things of him. For all his brightness he found life grey and dull, I think. And one day he wandered.

He could not recall the particular neglect that enabled him to get away, nor the course he took among the West Ken sington roads. All that had faded among the incurable blurs of memory. But the white wall and the green door stood out quite distinctly.

As his memory of that childish experience ran, he did at the very first sight of that door experience a peculiar emotion, an attraction, a desire to get to the door and open it and walk in. And at the same time he had the clearest conviction that either it was unwise or it was wrong of him – he could not tell which – to yield to this attraction. He insisted upon it as a curious thing that he knew from the very beginning – unless memory has played him the queerest trick – that the door was unfastened, and that he could go in as he chose.

I seem to see the figure of that little boy, drawn and repelled. And it was very clear in his mind, too, though why it should be so was never explained, that his father would be very angry if he went in through that door.

Wallace described all these moments of hesitation to me with the utmost particularity. He went right past the door, and then, with his hands in his pockets and making an infantile attempt to whistle, strolled right along beyond the end of the wall. There he recalls a number of mean dirty shops, and particularly that of a plumber and decorator with a dusty disorder of earthenware pipes, sheet lead, ball taps, pattern books of wallpaper, and tins of enamel. He stood pretending to examine these things, and *coveting* , passionately desiring, the green door.

Then, he said, he had a gust of emotion. He made a run for it, lest hesitation should grip him again; he went plump with outstretched hand through the green door and let it slam behind him. And so, in a trice, he came into the garden that has haunted all his life.

It was very difficult for Wallace to give me his full sense of that garden into which he came.

There was something in the very air of it that exhilarated, that gave one a sense of lightness and good happening and well- being; there was something in the sight of it that made all its colour clean and perfect and subtly luminous. In the instant of coming into it one was exquisitely glad – as only in rare moments, and when one is young and joyful one can be glad in this world. And everything was beautiful there . . .

Wallace mused before he went on telling me. ‘You see,’ he said, with the doubtful inflection of a man who pauses at incredible things, ‘there were two great panthers there . . . Yes, spotted panthers. And I was not afraid. There was a long wide path with marble- edged flower borders on either side, and these two huge velvety beasts were playing there with a ball. One looked up and came towards me, a little curious as it seemed. It came right up to me, rubbed its soft round ear very gently against the small hand I held out, and purred. It was, I tell you, an enchanted garden. I know. And the size? Oh! it stretched far and wide, this way and that. I believe there were hills far away. Heaven knows where West

Ken sington had suddenly got to. And somehow it was just like coming home.

‘You know, in the very moment the door swung to behind me, I forgot the road with its fallen chestnut leaves, its cabs and tradesmen’s carts, I forgot the sort of gravitational pull back to the discipline and obedience of home, I forgot all hesitations and fear, forgot discretion, forgot all the intimate realities of this life. I became in a moment a very glad and wonder- happy little boy – in another world. It was a world with a different quality, a warmer, more penetrating and mellower light, with a faint clear gladness in its air, and wisps of sun- touched cloud in the blueness of its sky. And before me ran this long wide path, invitingly, with weedless beds on either side, rich with untended flowers, and these two great panthers. I put my little hands fearlessly on their soft fur, and caressed their round ears and the sensitive corners under their ears, and played with them, and it was as though they welcomed me home. There was a keen sense of homecoming in my mind, and when presently a tall, fair girl appeared in the pathway and came to meet me, smiling, and said “Well?” to me, and lifted me and kissed me, and put me down and led me by the hand, there was no amazement, but only an impression of delightful rightness, of being reminded of happy things that had in some strange way been overlooked. There were broad red steps, I remember, that came into view between spikes of delphinium, and up these we went to a great avenue between very old and shady dark trees. All down this avenue, you know, between the red chapped stems, were marble seats of honour and statuary, and very tame and friendly white doves . . .

‘Along this cool avenue my girl- friend led me, looking down – I recall the pleasant lines, the finely- modelled chin of her sweet kind face – asking me questions in a soft, agreeable voice, and telling me things, pleasant things I know, though what they were I was never able to recall . . . Presently a Capuchin monkey, very clean, with a fur of ruddy brown and kindly hazel eyes, came down a tree to us and ran beside me, looking up at me and grinning, and presently leapt to my shoulder. So we two went on our way in great happiness.’

He paused.

‘Go on,’ I said.

‘I remember little things. We passed an old man musing among laurels, I remember, and a place gay with paroquets, and came through a broad shaded colonnade to a spacious cool palace, full of pleasant fountains, full of beautiful things, full of the quality and promise of heart’s desire. And there were many things and many people, some that still seem to stand out clearly and some that are vaguer; but all these people were beautiful and kind. In some way – I don’t know how – it was conveyed to me that they all were kind to me, glad to have me there, and filling me with gladness by their gestures, by the touch of their hands, by the welcome and love in their eyes. Yes—’

He mused for a while. ‘Playmates I found there. That was very much to me, because I was a lonely little boy. They played delightful games in a grass- covered court where there was a sundial set about with flowers. And as one played one loved . . .

‘But – it’s odd – there’s a gap in my memory. I don’t remember the games we played. I never remembered. Afterwards, as a child, I spent long hours trying, even with tears, to recall the form of that happiness. I wanted to play it all over again – in my nursery – by myself. No! All I remember is the happiness and two dear playfellows who were most with me . . . Then presently came a sombre dark woman, with a grave, pale face and dreamy eyes, a sombre woman, wearing a soft long robe of pale purple, who carried a book, and beckoned and took me aside with her into a gallery above a hall – though my playmates were loth to have me go, and ceased their game and stood watching as I was carried away. “Come back to us!” they cried. “Come back to us soon!” I looked up at her face, but she heeded them not at all. Her face was very gentle and grave. She took me to a seat in the gallery, and I stood beside her, ready to look at her book as she opened it upon her knee. The pages fell open. She pointed, and I looked, marvelling, for in the living pages of that book I saw myself; it was a story about myself, and in it were all the things that had happened to me since ever I was born . . .

‘It was wonderful to me, because the pages of that book were not pictures, you understand, but realities.’

Wallace paused gravely – looked at me doubtfully.

‘Go on,’ I said. ‘I understand.’

‘They were realities – yes, they must have been; people moved and things came and went in them; my dear mother, whom I had near forgotten; then my father, stern and upright, the servants, the nursery, all the familiar things of home. Then the front door and the busy streets, with traffic to and fro. I looked and marvelled, and looked half doubtfully again into the woman’s face and turned the pages over, skipping this and that, to see more of this book and more, and so at last I came to myself hovering and hesitating outside the green door in the long white wall, and felt again the conflict and the fear.

‘ “And next?” I cried, and would have turned on, but the cool hand of the grave woman delayed me.

‘ “Next?” I insisted, and struggled gently with her hand, pulling up her fingers with all my childish strength, and as she yielded and the page came over she bent down upon me like a shadow and kissed my brow.

‘But the page did not show the enchanted garden, nor the panthers, nor the girl who had led me by the hand, nor the playfellows who had been so loth to let me go. It showed a long grey street in West Kensington, in that chill hour of afternoon before the lamps are lit; and I was there, a wretched little figure, weeping aloud, for all that I could do to restrain myself, and I was weeping because I could not return to my dear playfellows who had called after me, “Come back to us! Come back to us soon!” I was there. This was no page in a book, but harsh reality; that enchanted place and the restraining hand of the grave mother at whose knee I stood had gone – whither had they gone?’

He halted again, and remained for a time staring into the fire.

‘Oh! the woefulness of that return!’ he murmured.

‘Well?’ I said, after a minute or so.

‘Poor little wretch I was! – brought back to this grey world again! As I realized the fullness of what had happened to me, I gave way to quite ungovernable grief. And the shame and humiliation of that public weeping and my disgraceful homecoming remain with me still. I see again the benevolent-looking old gentleman in gold spectacles who stopped and spoke to me – prodding me first with

his umbrella. "Poor little chap," said he; "and are you lost then?" – and me a London boy of five and more! And he must needs bring in a kindly young policeman and make a crowd of me, and so march me home. Sobbing, conspicuous, and frightened, I came back from the enchanted garden to the steps of my father's house.

'That is as well as I can remember my vision of that garden – the garden that haunts me still. Of course, I can convey nothing of that indescribable quality of translucent unreality, that *difference* from the common things of experience that hung about it all; but that – that is what happened. If it was a dream, I am sure it was a daytime and altogether extraordinary dream . . . H'm! – naturally there followed a terrible questioning, by my aunt, my father, the nurse, the governess – everyone . . .

'I tried to tell them, and my father gave me my first thrashing for telling lies. When afterwards I tried to tell my aunt, she punished me again for my wicked persistence. Then, as I said, everyone was forbidden to listen to me, to hear a word about it. Even my fairy- tale books were taken away from me for a time – because I was too "imaginative". Eh? Yes, they did that! My father belonged to the old school . . . And my story was driven back upon myself. I whispered it to my pillow – my pillow that was often damp and salt to my whispering lips with childish tears. And I added always to my official and less fervent prayers this one heartfelt request: "Please God I may dream of the garden. Oh! take me back to my garden!" Take me back to my garden! I dreamt often of the garden. I may have added to it, I may have changed it; I do not know . . . All this, you understand, is an attempt to reconstruct from fragmentary memories a very early experience. Between that and the other consecutive memories of my boyhood there is a gulf. A time came when it seemed impossible I should ever speak of that wonder glimpse again.'

I asked an obvious question.

'No,' he said. 'I don't remember that I ever attempted to find my way back to the garden in those early years. This seems odd to me now, but I think that very probably a closer watch was kept on my movements after this misadventure to prevent my going astray. No, it wasn't till you knew me that I tried for the garden again. And I believe there was a period – incredible as it seems now –when I

forgot the garden altogether – when I was about eight or nine it may have been. Do you remember me as a kid at Saint Althelstan’s?’

‘Rather!’

‘I didn’t show any signs, did I, in those days of having a secret dream?’

2

He looked up with a sudden smile.

‘Did you ever play North- West Passage with me? . . . No, of course you didn’t come my way!

‘It was the sort of game,’ he went on, ‘that every imaginative child plays all day. The idea was the discovery of a North- West Passage to school. The way to school was plain enough; the game consisted in finding some way that wasn’t plain, starting off ten minutes early in some almost hopeless direction, and working my way round through unaccustomed streets to my goal. And one day I got entangled among some rather low- class streets on the other side of Campden Hill, and I began to think that for once the game would be against me and that I should get to school late. I tried rather desperately a street that seemed a *cul- de- sac* , and found a passage at the end. I hurried through that with renewed hope. “I shall do it yet,” I said, and passed a row of frowsy little shops that were inexplicably familiar to me, and behold! there was my long white wall and the green door that led to the enchanted garden!

‘The thing whacked upon me suddenly. Then, after all, that garden, that wonderful garden, wasn’t a dream!’

He paused.

‘I suppose my second experience with the green door marks the world of difference there is between the busy life of a schoolboy and the infinite leisure of a child. Anyhow, this second time I didn’t for a moment think of going in straight away. You see—. For one thing, my mind was full of the idea of getting to school in time – set on not breaking my record for punctuality. I must surely have felt *some* little desire at least to try the door – yes. I must have felt that . . . But I seem to remember the attraction of the door mainly as another obstacle to my overmastering determination to get to

school. I was immensely interested by this discovery I had made, of course – I went on with my mind full of it – but I went on. It didn't check me. I ran past, tugging out my watch, found I had ten minutes still to spare, and then I was going downhill into familiar surroundings. I got to school, breathless, it is true, and wet with perspiration, but in time. I can remember hanging up my coat and hat . . . Went right by it and left it behind me. Odd, eh?

He looked at me thoughtfully. 'Of course I didn't know then that it wouldn't always be there. Schoolboys have limited imaginations. I suppose I thought it was an awfully jolly thing to have it there, to know my way back to it; but there was the school tugging at me. I expect I was a good deal distraught and inattentive that morning, recalling what I could of the beautiful strange people I should presently see again. Oddly enough I had no doubt in my mind that they would be glad to see me . . . Yes, I must have thought of the garden that morning just as a jolly sort of place to which one might resort in the interludes of a strenuous scholastic career.

'I didn't go that day at all. The next day was a half- holiday, and that may have weighed with me. Perhaps, too, my state of inattention brought down impositions upon me, and docked the margin of time necessary for the *détour*. I don't know. What I do know is that in the meantime the enchanted garden was so much upon my mind that I could not keep it to myself.

'I told – what was his name? – a ferrety- looking youngster we used to call Squiff.'

'Young Hopkins,' said I.

'Hopkins it was. I did not like telling him. I had a feeling that in some way it was against the rules to tell him, but I did. He was walking part of the way home with me; he was talkative, and if we had not talked about the enchanted garden we should have talked of something else, and it was intolerable to me to think about any other subject. So I blabbed.

'Well, he told my secret. The next day in the play interval I found myself surrounded by half a dozen bigger boys, half teasing, and wholly curious to hear more of the enchanted garden. There was that big Fawcett – you remember him? – and Carnaby and

Morley Reynolds. You weren't there by any chance? No, I think I should have remembered if you were . . .

'A boy is a creature of odd feelings. I was, I really believe, in spite of my secret self- disgust, a little flattered to have the attention of these big fellows. I remember particularly a moment of pleasure caused by the praise of Crawshaw – you remember Crawshaw major, the son of Crawshaw the composer? – who said it was the best lie he had ever heard. But at the same time there was a really painful undertow of shame at telling what I felt was indeed a sacred secret. That beast Fawcett made a joke about the girl in green—'

Wallace's voice sank with the keen memory of that shame. 'I pretended not to hear,' he said. 'Well, then Carnaby suddenly called me a young liar, and disputed with me when I said the thing was true. I said I knew where to find the green door, could lead them all there in ten minutes. Carnaby became outrageously virtuous, and said I'd have to – and bear out my words or suffer. Did you ever have Carnaby twist your arm? Then perhaps you'll understand how it went with me. I swore my story was true. There was nobody in the school then to save a chap from Carnaby, though Crawshaw put in a word or so. Carnaby had got his game. I grew excited and red-eared, and a little frightened. I behaved altogether like a silly little chap, and the outcome of it all was that instead of starting alone for my enchanted garden, I led the way presently – cheeks flushed, ears hot, eyes smarting, and my soul one burning misery and shame – for a party of six mocking, curious, and threatening schoolfellows.

'We never found the white wall and the green door . . .'

'You mean—?'

'I mean I couldn't find it. I would have found it if I could.

'And afterwards when I could go alone I couldn't find it. I never found it. I seem now to have been always looking for it through my schoolboy days, but I never came upon it – never.'

'Did the fellows – make it disagreeable?'

'Beastly . . . Carnaby held a council over me for wanton lying. I remember how I sneaked home and upstairs to hide the marks of my blubbering. But when I cried myself to sleep at last it wasn't for Carnaby, but for the garden, for the beautiful afternoon I had hoped for, for the sweet friendly women and the waiting playfellows, and

the game I had hoped to learn again, that beautiful forgotten game .

..

‘I believed firmly that if I had not told— . . . I had bad times after that – crying at night and wool- gathering by day. For two terms I slacked and had bad reports. Do you remember? Of course you would! It was *you* – your beating me in mathematics that brought me back to the grind again.’

3

For a time my friend stared silently into the red heart of the fire. Then he said: ‘I never saw it again until I was seventeen.

‘It leapt upon me for the third time – as I was driving to Paddington on my way to Oxford and a scholarship. I had just one momentary glimpse. I was leaning over the apron of my hansom smoking a cigarette, and no doubt thinking myself no end of a man of the world, and suddenly there was the door, the wall, the dear sense of unforgettable and still attainable things.

‘We clattered by – I too taken by surprise to stop my cab until we were well past and round a corner. Then I had a queer moment, a double and divergent movement of my will: I tapped the little door in the roof of the cab, and brought my arm down to pull out my watch. “Yes, sir!” said the cabman, smartly. “Er – well – it’s nothing,” I cried. “My mistake! We haven’t much time! Go on!” And he went on . . .

‘I got my scholarship. And the night after I was told of that I sat over my fire in my little upper room, my study, in my father’s house, with his praise – his rare praise – and his sound counsels ringing in my ears, and I smoked my favourite pipe – the formidable bulldog of adolescence –and thought of that door in the long white wall. “If I had stopped,” I thought, “I should have missed my scholarship, I should have missed Oxford – muddled all the fine career before me! I begin to see things better!” I fell musing deeply, but I did not doubt then this career of mine was a thing that merited sacrifice.

‘Those dear friends and that clear atmosphere seemed very sweet to me, very fine but remote. My grip was fixing now upon the world. I saw another door opening – the door of my career.’

He stared again into the fire. Its red light picked out a stubborn strength in his face for just one flickering moment, and then it vanished again.

‘Well,’ he said and sighed, ‘I have served that career. I have done – much work, much hard work. But I have dreamt of the enchanted garden a thousand dreams, and seen its door, or at least glimpsed its door, four times since then. Yes – four times. For a while this world was so bright and interesting, seemed so full of meaning and opportunity, that the half-effaced charm of the garden was by comparison gentle and remote. Who wants to pat panthers on the way to dinner with pretty women and distinguished men? I came down to London from Oxford, a man of bold promise that I have done something to redeem. Something – and yet there have been disappointments . . .

‘Twice I have been in love – I will not dwell on that –but once, as I went to someone who, I knew, doubted whether I dared to come, I took a short cut at a venture through an unfrequented road near Earl’s Court, and so happened on a white wall and a familiar green door. “Odd!” said I to myself, “but I thought this place was on Campden Hill. It’s the place I never could find somehow – like counting Stonehenge – the place of that queer daydream of mine.” And I went by it intent upon my purpose. It had no appeal to me that afternoon.

‘I had just a moment’s impulse to try the door, three steps aside were needed at the most – though I was sure enough in my heart that it would open to me – and then I thought that doing so might delay me on the way to that appointment in which my honour was involved. Afterwards I was sorry for my punctuality – I might at least have peeped in and waved a hand to those panthers, but I knew enough by this time not to seek again belatedly that which is not found by seeking. Yes, that time made me very sorry . . .

‘Years of hard work after that, and never a sight of the door. It’s only recently it has come back to me. With it there has come a sense as though some thin tarnish had spread itself over my world. I began to think of it as a sorrowful and bitter thing that I should never see that door again. Perhaps I was suffering a little from overwork –perhaps it was what I’ve heard spoken of as the feeling of forty. I don’t know. But certainly the keen brightness that makes

effort easy has gone out of things recently, and that just at a time – with all these new political developments –when I ought to be working. Odd, isn't it? But I do begin to find life toilsome, its rewards, as I come near them, cheap. I began a little while ago to want the garden quite badly. Yes – and I've seen it three times.'

'The garden?'

'No – the door! And I haven't gone in!'

He leant over the table to me, with an enormous sorrow in his voice as he spoke. 'Thrice I have had my chance –*thrice* ! If ever that door offers itself to me again, I swore, I will go in, out of this dust and heat, out of this dry glitter of vanity, out of these toilsome futilities. I will go and never return. This time I will stay . . . I swore it, and when the time came – *I didn't go* .

'Three times in one year have I passed that door and failed to enter. Three times in the last year.

'The first time was on the night of the snatch division on the Tenants' Redemption Bill, on which the Government was saved by a majority of three. You remember? No one on our side – perhaps very few on the opposite side – expected the end that night. Then the debate collapsed like eggshells. I and Hotchkiss were dining with his cousin at Brentford; we were both unpaired, and we were called up by telephone, and set off at once in his cousin's motor. We got in barely in time, and on the way we passed my wall and door – livid in the moonlight, blotched with hot yellow as the glare of our lamps lit it, but unmistakable. "My God!" cried I. "What?" said Hotchkiss. "Nothing!" I answered, and the moment passed.

' "I've made a great sacrifice," I told the whip as I got in. "They all have," he said, and hurried by.

'I do not see how I could have done otherwise then. And the next occasion was as I rushed to my father's bedside to bid that stern old man farewell. Then, too, the claims of life were imperative. But the third time was different; it happened a week ago. It fills me with hot remorse to recall it. I was with Gurker and Ralphs – it's no secret now, you know, that I've had my talk with Gurker. We had been dining at Frobisher's, and the talk had become intimate between us. The question of my place in the reconstructed Ministry lay always just over the boundary of the discussion. Yes –

yes. That's all settled. It needn't be talked about yet, but there's no reason to keep a secret from you . . . Yes – thanks! thanks! But let me tell you my story.

'Then, on that night things were very much in the air. My position was a very delicate one. I was keenly anxious to get some definite word from Gurker, but was hampered by Ralphs' presence. I was using the best power of my brain to keep that light and careless talk not too obviously directed to the point that concerned me. I had to. Ralphs' behaviour since has more than justified my caution . . . Ralphs, I knew, would leave us beyond the Kensington High Street, and then I could surprise Gurker by a sudden frankness. One has sometimes to resort to these little devices . . . And then it was that in the margin of my field of vision I became aware once more of the white wall, the green door before us down the road.

'We passed it talking. I passed it. I can still see the shadow of Gurker's marked profile, his opera hat tilted forward over his prominent nose, the many folds of his neck wrap going before my shadow and Ralphs' as we sauntered past.

'I passed within twenty inches of the door. "If I say goodnight to them, and go in," I asked myself, "what will happen?" And I was all a- tingle for that word with Gurker.

'I could not answer that question in the tangle of my other problems. "They will think me mad," I thought. "And suppose I vanish now! – Amazing disappearance of a prominent politician!" That weighed with me. A thousand inconceivably petty worldlinesses weighed with me in that crisis.'

Then he turned on me with a sorrowful smile, and, speaking slowly, 'Here I am!' he said.

'Here I am!' he repeated, 'and my chance has gone from me. Three times in one year the door has been offered me – the door that goes into peace, into delight, into a beauty beyond dreaming, a kindness no man on earth can know. And I have rejected it, Redmond, and it has gone—'

'How do you know?'

'I know. I know. I am left now to work it out, to stick to the tasks that held me so strongly when my moments came. You say I

have success – this vulgar, tawdry, irksome, envied thing. I have it.’ He had a walnut in his big hand. ‘If that was my success,’ he said, and crushed it, and held it out for me to see.

‘Let me tell you something, Redmond. This loss is destroying me. For two months, for ten weeks nearly now, I have done no work at all, except the most necessary and urgent duties. My soul is full of inappeasable regrets. At nights – when it is less likely I shall be recognized – I go out. I wander. Yes. I wonder what people would think of that if they knew. A Cabinet Minister, the responsible head of that most vital of all departments, wandering alone – grieving – sometimes near audibly lamenting –for a door, for a garden!’

4

I can see now his rather pallid face, and the unfamiliar sombre fire that had come into his eyes. I see him very vividly tonight. I sit recalling his words, his tones, and last evening’s *Westminster Gazette* still lies on my sofa, containing the notice of his death. At lunch today the club was busy with his death. We talked of nothing else.

They found his body very early yesterday morning in a deep excavation near East Kensington Station. It is one of two shafts that have been made in connection with an extension of the railway southward. It is protected from the intrusion of the public by a hoarding upon the high road, in which a small doorway has been cut for the convenience of some of the workmen who live in that direction. The doorway was left unfastened through a misunderstanding between two gangers, and through it he made his way.

My mind is darkened with questions and riddles.

It would seem he walked all the way from the House that night – he has frequently walked home during the past Session – and so it is I figure his dark form coming along the late and empty streets, wrapped up, intent. And then did the pale electric lights near the station cheat the rough planking into a semblance of white? Did that fatal unfastened door awaken some memory?

Was there, after all, ever any green door in the wall at all?

I do not know. I have told his story as he told it to me. There

are times when I believe that Wallace was no more than the victim of the coincidence between a rare but not unprecedented type of hallucination and a careless trap, but that indeed is not my profoundest belief. You may think me superstitious, if you will, and foolish; but, indeed, I am more than half convinced that he had, in truth, an abnormal gift, and a sense, something – I know not what – that in the guise of wall and door offered him an outlet, a secret and peculiar passage of escape into another and altogether more beautiful world. At any rate, you will say, it betrayed him in the end. But did it betray him? There you touch the inmost mystery of these dreamers, these men of vision and the imagination. We see our world fair and common, the hoarding and the pit. By our daylight standard he walked out of security into darkness, danger, and death.

But did he see like that?

A Slip under the Microscope

Outside the laboratory windows was a watery- grey fog, and within a close warmth and the yellow light of the green- shaded gas lamps that stood two to each table down its narrow length. On each table stood a couple of glass jars containing the mangled vestiges of the crayfish, mussels, frogs, and guineapigs upon which the students had been working, and down the side of the room, facing the windows, were shelves bearing bleached dissections in spirits, surmounted by a row of beautifully executed anatomical drawings in whitewood frames and overhanging a row of cubical lockers. All the doors of the laboratory were panelled with blackboard, and on these were the half- erased diagrams of the previous day's work. The laboratory was empty, save for the demonstrator, who sat near the preparation- room door, and silent, save for a low, continuous murmur, and the clicking of the rocker microtome at which he was working. But scattered about the room were traces of numerous students: handbags, polished boxes of instruments, in one place a large drawing covered by newspaper, and in another a prettily bound copy of *News from Nowhere* , a book oddly at variance with its surroundings. These things had been put down hastily as the students had arrived and hurried at once to secure their seats in the adjacent lecture theatre. Deadened by the closed door, the measured accents of the professor sounded as a featureless muttering.

Presently, faint through the closed windows came the sound of the Oratory clock striking the hour of eleven. The clicking of the microtome ceased, and the demonstrator looked at his watch, rose, thrust his hands into his pockets, and walked slowly down the laboratory towards the lecture- theatre door. He stood listening for a moment, and then his eye fell on the little volume by William Morris. He picked it up, glanced at the title, smiled, opened it, looked at the name on the fly- leaf, ran the leaves through with his hand, and put it down. Almost immediately the even murmur of the lecturer ceased, there was a sudden burst of pencils rattling on the desks in the lecture theatre, a stirring, a scraping of feet, and a

number of voices speaking together. Then a firm footfall approached the door, which began to open, and stood ajar as some indistinctly heard question arrested the newcomer.

The demonstrator turned, walked slowly back past the microtome, and left the laboratory by the preparation- room door. As he did so, first one, and then several students carrying notebooks entered the laboratory from the lecture theatre, and distributed themselves among the little tables, or stood in a group about the doorway. They were an exceptionally heterogeneous assembly, for while Oxford and Cambridge still recoil from the blushing prospect of mixed classes, the College of Science anticipated America in the matter years ago – mixed socially too, for the prestige of the College is high, and its scholarships, free of any age limit, dredge deeper even than do those of the Scotch universities. The class numbered one- andtwenty, but some remained in the theatre questioning the professor, copying the blackboard diagrams before they were washed off, or examining the special specimens he had produced to illustrate the day's teaching. Of the nine who had come into the laboratory three were girls, one of whom, a little fair woman wearing spectacles and dressed in greyish- green, was peering out of the window at the fog, while the other two, both wholesome-looking, plain- faced schoolgirls, unrolled and put on the brown holland aprons they wore while dissecting. Of the men, two went down the laboratory to their places, one a pallid, dark- bearded man, who had once been a tailor; the other a pleasant- featured, ruddy young man of twenty, dressed in a well- fitting brown suit; young Wedderburn, the son of Wedderburn the eye specialist. The others formed a little knot near the theatre door. One of these, a dwarfed, spectacled figure with a hunchback, sat on a bent wood stool; two others, one a short, dark youngster and the other a flaxen- haired, reddish- complexioned young man, stood leaning side by side against the slate sink, while the fourth stood facing them, and maintained the larger share of the conversation.

This last person was named Hill. He was a sturdily built young fellow, of the same age as Wedderburn; he had a white face, dark grey eyes, hair of an indeterminate colour, and prominent, irregular features. He talked rather louder than was needful, and thrust his hands deeply into his pockets. His collar was frayed and blue with the starch of a careless laundress, his clothes were evidently ready-

made, and there was a patch on the side of his boot near the toe. And as he talked or listened to the others, he glanced now and again towards the lecture-theatre door. They were discussing the depressing peroration of the lecture they had just heard, the last lecture it was in the introductory course in zoology. 'From ovum to ovum is the goal of the higher vertebrata,' the lecturer had said in his melancholy tones, and so had neatly rounded off the sketch of comparative anatomy he had been developing. The spectacled hunchback had repeated it with noisy appreciation, had tossed it towards the fair-haired student with an evident provocation, and had started one of those vague, rambling discussions on generalities so unaccountably dear to the student mind all the world over.

'That is our goal, perhaps – I admit it, as far as science goes,' said the fair-haired student, rising to the challenge. 'But there are things above science.'

'Science,' said Hill confidently, 'is systematic knowledge. Ideas that don't come into the system – must anyhow – be loose ideas.' He was not quite sure whether that was a clever saying or a fatuity until his hearers took it seriously.

'The thing I cannot understand,' said the hunchback, at large, 'is whether Hill is a materialist or not.'

'There is one thing above matter,' said Hill promptly, feeling he made a better point this time, aware, too, of someone in the doorway behind him, and raising his voice a trifle for her benefit, 'and that is, the delusion that there is something above matter.'

'So we have your gospel at last,' said the fair student. 'It's all a delusion, is it? All our aspirations to lead something more than dogs' lives, all our work for anything beyond ourselves. But see how inconsistent you are. Your socialism, for instance. Why do you trouble about the interests of the race? Why do you concern yourself about the beggar in the gutter? Why are you bothering yourself to lend that book' – he indicated William Morris by a movement of the head – 'to everyone in the lab?'

'Girl,' said the hunchback indistinctly, and glanced guiltily over his shoulder.

The girl in brown, with the brown eyes, had come into the laboratory, and stood on the other side of the table behind him,

with her rolled- up apron in one hand, looking over her shoulder, listening to the discussion. She did not notice the hunchback, because she was glancing from Hill to his interlocutor. Hill's consciousness of her presence betrayed itself to her only in his studious ignoring of the fact; but she understood that, and it pleased her. 'I see no reason,' said he, 'why a man should live like a brute because he knows of nothing beyond matter, and does not expect to exist a hundred years hence.'

'Why shouldn't he?' said the fair- haired student.

'Why *should* he?' said Hill.

'What inducement has he?'

'That's the way with all you religious people. It's all a business of inducements. Cannot a man seek after righteousness for righteousness' sake?'

There was a pause. The fair man answered, with a kind of vocal padding, 'But – you see – inducement – when I said inducement,' to gain time. And then the hunchback came to his rescue and inserted a question. He was a terrible person in the debating society with his questions, and they invariably took one form – a demand for a definition. 'What's your definition of righteousness?' said the hunchback at this stage.

Hill experienced a sudden loss of complacency at this question, but even as it was asked, relief came in the person of Brooks, the laboratory attendant, who entered by the preparation- room door, carrying a number of freshly killed guineapigs by their hind legs. 'This is the last batch of material this session,' said the youngster who had not previously spoken. Brooks advanced up the laboratory, smacking down a couple of guineapigs at each table. The rest of the class, scenting the prey from afar, came crowding in by the lecture theatre door, and the discussion perished abruptly as the students who were not already in their places hurried to them to secure the choice of a specimen. There was a noise of keys rattling on split rings as lockers were opened and dissecting instruments taken out. Hill was already standing by his table, and his box of scalpels was sticking out of his pocket. The girl in brown came a step towards him, and leaning over his table said softly, 'Did you see that I returned your book, Mr Hill?'

During the whole scene she and the book had been vividly present in his consciousness; but he made a clumsy pretence of looking at the book and seeing it for the first time. 'Oh yes,' he said, taking it up. 'I see. Did you like it?'

'I want to ask you some questions about it –sometime.'

'Certainly,' said Hill. 'I shall be glad.' He stopped awkwardly. 'You liked it?' he said.

'It's a wonderful book. Only some things I don't understand.'

Then suddenly the laboratory was hushed by a curious braying noise. It was the demonstrator. He was at the blackboard ready to begin the day's instruction, and it was his custom to demand silence by a sound midway between the 'Er' of common intercourse and the blast of a trumpet. The girl in brown slipped back to her place: it was immediately in front of Hill's, and Hill, forgetting her forthwith, took a notebook out of the drawer of his table, turned over its leaves hastily, drew a stumpy pencil from his pocket, and prepared to make a copious note of the coming demonstration. For demonstrations and lectures are the sacred text of the College students. Books, saving only the Professor's own, you may – it is even expedient to – ignore.

Hill was the son of a Landport cobbler, and had been hooked by a chance blue paper the authorities had thrown out to the Landport Technical College. He kept himself in London on his allowance of a guinea a week, and found that, with proper care, this also covered his clothing allowance, an occasional waterproof collar, that is; and ink and needles and cotton and such- like necessities for a man about town. This was his first year and his first session, but the brown old man in Landport had already got himself detested in many public- houses by boasting of his son, 'the Professor'. Hill was a vigorous youngster, with a serene contempt for the clergy of all denominations, and a fine ambition to reconstruct the world. He regarded his scholarship as a brilliant opportunity. He had begun to read at seven, and had read steadily whatever came in his way, good or bad, since then. His worldly experience had been limited to the island of Portsea, and acquired chiefly in the wholesale boot factory in which he had worked by day, after passing the seventh standard of the Board school. He had a considerable gift of speech, as the College Debating Society,

which met amidst the crushing machines and mine models in the metallurgical theatre downstairs, already recognized – recognized by a violent battering of desks whenever he rose. And he was just at that fine emotional age when life opens at the end of a narrow pass like a broad valley at one's feet, full of the promise of wonderful discoveries and tremendous achievements. And his own limitations, save that he knew that he knew neither Latin nor French, were all unknown to him.

At first his interest had been divided pretty equally between his biological work at the College and social and theological theorizing, an employment which he took in deadly earnest. Of a night, when the big museum library was not open, he would sit on the bed of his room in Chelsea with his coat and a muffler on, and write out the lecture notes and revise his dissection memoranda until Thorpe called him out by a whistle – the landlady objected to open the door to attic visitors – and then the two would go prowling about the shadowy, shiny, gaslit streets, talking, very much in the fashion of the sample just given, of the God Idea and Righteousness and Carlyle and the Reorganization of Society. And in the midst of it all, Hill, arguing not only for Thorpe but for the casual passer-by, would lose the thread of his argument glancing at some pretty painted face that looked meaningly at him as he passed. Science and Righteousness! But once or twice lately there had been signs that a third interest was creeping into his life, and he had found his attention wandering from the fate of the mesoblastic somites or the probable meaning of the blastopore, to the thought of the girl with the brown eyes who sat at the table before him.

She was a paying student; she descended inconceivable social altitudes to speak to him. At the thought of the education she must have had, and the accomplishments she must possess, the soul of Hill became abject within him. She had spoken to him first over a difficulty about the alisphenoid of a rabbit's skull, and he had found that, in biology at least, he had no reason for self-abasement. And from that, after the manner of young people starting from any starting-point, they got to generalities, and while Hill attacked her upon the question of socialism, –some instinct told him to spare her a direct assault upon her religion – she was gathering resolution to undertake what she told herself was his aesthetic education. She was a year or two older than he, though the thought never occurred

to him. The loan of *News from Nowhere* was the beginning of a series of cross loans. Upon some absurd first principle of his, Hill had never 'wasted time' upon poetry, and it seemed an appalling deficiency to her. One day in the lunch hour, when she chanced upon him alone in the little museum where the skeletons were arranged, shamefully eating the bun that constituted his midday meal, she retreated, and returned to lend him, with a slightly furtive air, a volume of Browning. He stood sideways towards her and took the book rather clumsily, because he was holding the bun in the other hand. And in the retrospect his voice lacked the cheerful clearness he could have wished.

That occurred after the examination in comparative anatomy, on the day before the College turned out its students and was carefully locked up by the officials for the Christmas holidays. The excitement of cramming for the first trial of strength had for a little while dominated Hill to the exclusion of his other interests. In the forecasts of the result in which everyone indulged he was surprised to find that no one regarded him as a possible competitor for the Harvey Commemoration Medal, of which this and the two subsequent examinations disposed. It was about this time that Wedderburn, who so far had lived inconspicuously on the uttermost margin of Hill's perceptions, began to take on the appearance of an obstacle. By a mutual agreement, the nocturnal prowlings with Thorpe ceased for the three weeks before the examination, and his landlady pointed out that she really could not supply so much lamp oil at the price. He walked to and fro from the College with little slips of mnemonics in his hand, lists of crayfish appendages, rabbits' skull- bones, and vertebrate nerves, for example, and became a positive nuisance to foot passengers in the opposite direction.

But, by a natural reaction, Poetry and the girl with the brown eyes ruled the Christmas holiday. The pending results of the examination became such a secondary consideration that Hill marvelled at his father's excitement. Even had he wished it, there was no comparative anatomy to read in Landport, and he was too poor to buy books, but the stock of poets in the library was extensive, and Hill's attack was magnificently sustained. He saturated himself with the fluent numbers of Longfellow and Tennyson, and fortified himself with Shakespeare; found a kindred soul in Pope and a master in Shelley, and heard and fled the siren

voices of Eliza Cook and Mrs Hemans. But he read no more Browning, because he hoped for the loan of other volumes from Miss Haysman when he returned to London.

He walked from his lodgings to the College with that volume of Browning in his shiny black bag, and his mind teeming with the finest general propositions about poetry. Indeed, he framed first this little speech and then that with which to grace the return. The morning was an exceptionally pleasant one for London; there was a clear hard frost and undeniable blue in the sky, a thin haze softened every outline, and warm shafts of sunlight struck between the house blocks and turned the sunny side of the street to amber and gold. In the hall of the College he pulled off his glove and signed his name with fingers so stiff with cold that the characteristic dash under the signature he cultivated became a quivering line. He imagined Miss Haysman about him everywhere. He turned at the staircase, and there, below, he saw a crowd struggling at the foot of the noticeboard. This, possibly, was the biology list. He forgot Browning and Miss Haysman for the moment, and joined the scrimmage. And at last, with his cheek flattened against the sleeve of the man on the step above him, he read the list –

CLASS I

H. J. Somers Wedderburn

William Hill

and thereafter followed a second class that is outside our present sympathies. It was characteristic that he did not trouble to look for Thorpe on the physics list, but backed out of the struggle at once, and in a curious emotional state between pride over common second- class humanity and acute disappointment at Wedderburn's success, went on his way upstairs. At the top, as he was hanging up his coat in the passage, the zoological demonstrator, a young man from Oxford who secretly regarded him as a blatant 'mugger' of the very worst type, offered his heartiest congratulations.

At the laboratory door Hill stopped for a second to get his breath, and then entered. He looked straight up the laboratory and saw all five girl students grouped in their places, and Wedderburn,

the once retiring Wedderburn, leaning rather gracefully against the window, playing with the blind tassel and talking apparently to the five of them. Now, Hill could talk bravely enough and even overbearingly to one girl, and he could have made a speech to a roomful of girls, but this business of standing at ease and appreciating, fencing, and returning quick remarks round a group was, he knew, altogether beyond him. Coming up the staircase his feelings for Wedderburn had been generous, a certain admiration perhaps, a willingness to shake his hand conspicuously and heartily as one who had fought but the first round. But before Christmas Wedderburn had never gone up to that end of the room to talk. In a flash Hill's mist of vague excitement condensed abruptly to a vivid dislike of Wedderburn. Possibly his expression changed. As he came up to his place, Wedderburn nodded carelessly to him, and the others glanced round. Miss Haysman looked at him and away again, the faintest touch of her eyes. 'I can't agree with you, Mr Wedderburn,' she said.

'I must congratulate you on your first class, Mr Hill,' said the spectacled girl in green, turning round and beaming at him.

'It's nothing,' said Hill, staring at Wedderburn and Miss Haysman talking together, and eager to hear what they talked about.

'We poor folks in the second class don't think so,' said the girl in spectacles.

What was it Wedderburn was saying? Something about William Morris! Hill did not answer the girl in spectacles, and the smile died out of his face. He could not hear, and failed to see how he could 'cut in'. Confound Wedderburn! He sat down, opened his bag, hesitated whether to return the volume of Browning forthwith, in the sight of all, and instead drew out his new notebooks for the short course in elementary botany that was now beginning, and which would terminate in February. As he did so, a fat heavy man with a white face and pale grey eyes – Bindon, the professor of botany, who came up from Kew for January and February – came in by the lecture-theatre door, and passed, rubbing his hands together and smiling, in silent affability down the laboratory.

In the subsequent six weeks Hill experienced some very rapid and curiously complex emotional developments. For the most part

he had Wedderburn in focus – a fact that Miss Haysman never suspected. She told Hill (for in the comparative privacy of the museum she talked a good deal to him of socialism and Browning and general propositions) that she had met Wedderburn at the house of some people she knew, and ‘he’s inherited his cleverness; for his father, you know, is the great eye specialist’.

‘My father is a cobbler,’ said Hill, quite irrelevantly, and perceived the want of dignity even as he said it. But the gleam of jealousy did not offend her. She conceived herself the fundamental source of it. He suffered bitterly from a sense of Wedderburn’s unfairness, and a realization of his own handicap. Here was this Wedderburn had picked up a prominent man for a father, and instead of his losing so many marks on the score of that advantage, it was counted to him for righteousness! And while Hill had to introduce himself and talk to Miss Haysman clumsily over mangled guineapigs in the laboratory, this Wedderburn, in some backstairs way, had access to her social altitudes, and could converse in a polished argot that Hill understood perhaps, but felt incapable of speaking. Not, of course, that he wanted to. Then it seemed to Hill that for Wedderburn to come there day after day with cuffs unfrayed, neatly tailored, precisely barbered, quietly perfect, was in itself an ill- bred, sneering sort of proceeding. Moreover, it was a stealthy thing for Wedderburn to behave insignificantly for a space, to mock modesty, to lead Hill to fancy that he himself was beyond dispute the man of the year, and then suddenly to dart in front of him, and incontinently to swell up in this fashion. In addition to these things, Wedderburn displayed an increasing disposition to join in any conversational grouping that included Miss Haysman; and would venture, and indeed seek occasion, to pass opinions derogatory to socialism and atheism. He goaded Hill to incivilities by neat, shallow, and exceedingly effective personalities about the socialist leaders, until Hill hated Bernard Shaw’s graceful egotisms, William Morris’s limited editions and luxurious wallpapers, and Walter Crane’s charmingly absurd ideal working men, about as much as he hated Wedderburn. The dissertations in the laboratory, that had been his glory in the previous term, became a danger, degenerated into inglorious tussles with Wedderburn, and Hill kept to them only out of an obscure perception that his honour was involved. In the debating society Hill knew quite clearly that, to a thunderous accompaniment of banged desks, he could have

pulverized Wedderburn. Only Wedderburn never attended the debating society to be pulverized, because – nauseous affectation! – he ‘dined late’.

You must not imagine that these things presented themselves in quite such a crude form to Hill’s perception. Hill was a born generalizer. Wedderburn to him was not so much an individual obstacle as a type, the salient angle of a class. The economic theories that, after infinite ferment, had shaped themselves in Hill’s mind, became abruptly concrete at the contact. The world became full of easy- mannered, graceful, gracefully dressed, conversationally dexterous, finally shallow Wedderburns, Bishops Wedderburn, Wedderburn M.P.s, Professors Wedderburn, Wedderburn landlords, all with finger- bowl shibboleths and epigrammatic cities of refuge from a sturdy debater. And everyone ill- clothed or ill- dressed, from the cobbler to the cab- runner, was, to Hill’s imagination, a man and a brother, a fellow- sufferer. So that he became, as it were, a champion of the fallen and oppressed, albeit to outward seeming only a self- assertive, illmannered young man, and an unsuccessful champion at that. Again and again a skirmish over the afternoon tea that the girl students had inaugurated left Hill with flushed cheeks and a tattered temper, and the debating society noticed a new quality of sarcastic bitterness in his speeches.

You will understand now how it was necessary, if only in the interests of humanity, that Hill should demolish Wedderburn in the forthcoming examination and outshine him in the eyes of Miss Haysman; and you will perceive, too, how Miss Haysman fell into some common feminine misconceptions. The Hill–Wedderburn quarrel, for in his unostentatious way Wedderburn reciprocated Hill’s ill- veiled rivalry, became a tribute to her indefinable charm: she was the Queen of Beauty in a tournament of scalpels and stumpy pencils. To her confidential friend’s secret annoyance, it even troubled her conscience, for she was a good girl, and painfully aware, through Ruskin and contemporary fiction, how entirely men’s activities are determined by women’s attitudes. And if Hill never by any chance mentioned the topic of love to her, she only credited him with the finer modesty for that omission.

So the time came on for the second examination, and Hill’s increasing pallor confirmed the general rumour that he was

working hard. In the aerated bread shop near South Kensington Station you would see him, breaking his bun and sipping his milk with his eyes intent upon a paper of closely written notes. In his bedroom there were propositions about buds and stems round his lookingglass, a diagram to catch his eye, if soap should chance to spare it, above his washing basin. He missed several meetings of the debating society, but he found the chance encounters with Miss Haysman in the spacious ways of the adjacent art museum, or in the little museum at the top of the College, or in the College corridors, more frequent and very restful. In particular, they used to meet in a little gallery full of wrought-iron chests and gates near the art library, and there Hill used to talk, under the gentle stimulus of her flattering attention, of Browning and his personal ambitions. A characteristic she found remarkable in him was his freedom from avarice. He contemplated quite calmly the prospect of living all his life on an income below a hundred pounds a year. But he was determined to be famous, to make, recognizably in his own proper person, the world a better place to live in. He took Bradlaugh and John Burns for his leaders and models, poor, even impecunious, great men. But Miss Haysman thought that such lives were deficient on the aesthetic side, by which, though she did not know it, she meant good wallpaper and upholstery, pretty books, tasteful clothes, concerts, and meals nicely cooked and respectfully served.

At last came the day of the second examination, and the professor of botany, a fussy, conscientious man, rearranged all the tables in a long narrow laboratory to prevent copying, and put his demonstrator on a chair on a table (where he felt, he said, like a Hindu god), to see all the cheating, and stuck a notice outside the door, 'Door closed', for no earthly reason that any human being could discover. And all the morning from ten till one the quill of Wedderburn shrieked defiance at Hill's, and the quills of the others chased their leaders in a tireless pack, and so also it was in the afternoon. Wedderburn was a little quieter than usual, and Hill's face was hot all day, and his overcoat bulged with textbooks and notebooks against the last moment's revision. And the next day, in the morning and in the afternoon, was the practical examination, when sections had to be cut and slides identified. In the morning Hill was depressed because he knew he had cut a thick section, and in the afternoon came the mysterious slip.

It was just the kind of thing that the botanical professor was always doing. Like the income tax, it offered a premium to the cheat. It was a preparation under the microscope, a little glass slip, held in its place on the stage of the instrument by light steel clips, and the inscription set forth that the slip was not to be moved. Each student was to go in turn to it, sketch it, write in his book of answers what he considered it to be, and return to his place. Now, to move such a slip is a thing one can do by a chance movement of the finger, and in a fraction of a second. The professor's reason for decreeing that the slip should not be moved depended on the fact that the object he wanted identified was characteristic of a certain tree- stem. In the position in which it was placed it was a difficult thing to recognize, but once the slip was moved so as to bring other parts of the preparation into view, its nature was obvious enough.

Hill came to this, flushed from a contest with staining reagents, sat down on the little stool before the microscope, turned the mirror to get the best light, and then, out of sheer habit, shifted the slip. At once he remembered the prohibition, and, with an almost continuous motion of his hands, moved it back, and sat paralysed with astonishment at his action.

Then, slowly, he turned his head. The professor was out of the room; the demonstrator sat aloft on his impromptu rostrum, reading the *Q. Jour. Mi. Sci.*; the rest of the examinees were busy, and with their backs to him. Should he own up to the accident now? He knew quite clearly what the thing was. It was a lenticel, a characteristic preparation from the elder- tree. His eyes roved over his intent fellow- students and Wedderburn suddenly glanced over his shoulder at him with a queer expression in his eyes. The mental excitement that had kept Hill at an abnormal pitch of vigour these two days gave way to a curious nervous tension. His book of answers was beside him. He did not write down what the thing was, but with one eye at the microscope he began making a hasty sketch of it. His mind was full of this grotesque puzzle in ethics that had suddenly been sprung upon him. Should he identify it? or should he leave this question unanswered? In that case Wedderburn would probably come out first in the second result. How could he tell now whether he might not have identified the thing without shifting it? It was possible that Wedderburn had failed to recognize it, of course. Suppose Wedderburn too had shifted the slide? He looked

up at the clock. There were fifteen minutes in which to make up his mind. He gathered up his book of answers and the coloured pencils he used in illustrating his replies and walked back to his seat.

He read through his manuscript, and then sat thinking and gnawing his knuckle. It would look queer now if he owned up. He *must* beat Wedderburn. He forgot the examples of those starry gentlemen, John Burns and Bradlaugh. Besides, he reflected, the glimpse of the rest of the slip he had had was after all quite accidental, forced upon him by chance, a kind of providential revelation rather than an unfair advantage. It was not nearly so dishonest to avail himself of that as it was of Broome, who believed in the efficacy of prayer, to pray daily for a first- class. 'Five minutes more,' said the demonstrator, folding up his paper and becoming observant. Hill watched the clock hands until two minutes remained; then he opened the book of answers, and, with hot ears and an affectation of ease, gave his drawing of the lenticel its name.

When the second pass list appeared, the previous positions of Wedderburn and Hill were reversed, and the spectacled girl in green, who knew the demonstrator in private life (where he was practically human), said that in the result of the two examinations taken together Hill had the advantage of a mark – 167 to 166 out of a possible 200. Everyone admired Hill in a way, though the suspicion of 'mugging' clung to him. But Hill was to find congratulations and Miss Haysman's enhanced opinion of him, and even the decided decline in the crest of Wedderburn, tainted by an unhappy memory. He felt a remarkable access of energy at first, and the note of a democracy marching to triumph returned to his debating society speeches; he worked at his comparative anatomy with tremendous zeal and effect, and he went on with his aesthetic education. But through it all, a vivid little picture was continually coming before his mind's eye – of a sneakish person manipulating a slide.

No human being had witnessed the act, and he was cocksure that no higher power existed to see it; but for all that it worried him. Memories are not dead things, but alive; they dwindle in disuse, but they harden and develop in all sorts of queer ways if they are being continually fretted. Curiously enough, though at the time he perceived clearly that the shifting was accidental, as the

days wore on his memory became confused about it, until at last he was not sure – although he assured himself that he *was* sure – whether the movement had been absolutely involuntary. Then it is possible that Hill's dietary was conducive to morbid conscientiousness; a breakfast frequently eaten in a hurry, a midday bun, and, at such hours after five as chanced to be convenient, such meat as his means determined, usually in a chop- house in a back street off the Brompton Road. Occasionally he treated himself to threepenny or ninepenny classics, and they usually represented a suppression of potatoes or chops. It is indisputable that outbreaks of self- abasement and emotional revival have a distinct relation to periods of scarcity. But apart from this influence on the feelings, there was in Hill a distinct aversion to falsity that the blasphemous Landport cobbler had inculcated by strap and tongue from his earliest years. Of one fact about professed atheists I am convinced; they may be – they usually are – fools, void of subtlety, revilers of holy institutions, brutal speakers, and mischievous knaves, but they lie with difficulty. If it were not so, if they had the faintest grasp of the idea of compromise, they would simply be liberal churchmen. And, moreover, this memory poisoned his regard for Miss Haysman. For she now so evidently preferred him to Wedderburn that he felt sure he cared for her, and began reciprocating her attentions by timid marks of personal regard; at one time he even bought a bunch of violets, carried it about in his pocket, and produced it with a stumbling explanation, withered and dead, in the gallery of old iron. It poisoned, too, the denunciation of capitalist dishonesty that had been one of his life's pleasures. And, lastly, it poisoned his triumph in Wedderburn. Previously he had been Wedderburn's superior in his own eyes, and had raged simply at a want of recognition. Now he began to fret at the darker suspicion of positive inferiority. He fancied he found justifications for his position in Browning, but they vanished on analysis. At last – moved, curiously enough, by exactly the same motive forces that had resulted in his dishonesty – he went to Professor Bindon, and made a clean breast of the whole affair. As Hill was a paid student, Professor Bindon did not ask him to sit down, and he stood before the professor's desk as he made his confession.

'It's a curious story,' said Professor Bindon, slowly realizing how the thing reflected on himself, and then letting his anger rise, – 'A most remarkable story. I can't understand your doing it, and I

can't understand this avowal. You're a type of student – Cambridge men would never dream – I suppose I ought to have thought – Why *did* you cheat?'

'I didn't cheat,' said Hill.

'But you have just been telling me you did.'

'I thought I explained--'

'Either you cheated or you did not cheat.'--

'I said my motion was involuntary.'

'I am not a metaphysician, I am a servant of science – of fact. You were told not to move the slip. You did move the slip. If that is not cheating--'

'If I was a cheat,' said Hill, with the note of hysterics in his voice, 'should I come here and tell you?'

'Your repentance, of course, does you credit,' said Professor Bindon, 'but it does not alter the original facts.'

'No, sir,' said Hill, giving in in utter self- abasement.

'Even now you cause an enormous amount of trouble. The examination list will have to be revised.'

'I suppose so, sir.'

'Suppose so? Of course it must be revised. And I don't see how I can conscientiously pass you.'

'Not pass me?' said Hill. 'Fail me?'

'It's the rule in all examinations. Or where should we be? What else did you expect? You don't want to shirk the consequences of your own acts?'

'I thought, perhaps' – said Hill. And then, 'Fail me? I thought, as I told you, you would simply deduct the marks given for that slip.'

'Impossible!' said Bindon. 'Besides, it would still leave you above Wedderburn. Deduct only the marks –Preposterous! The Departmental Regulations distinctly say--'

'But it's my own admission, sir.'

‘The Regulations say nothing whatever of the manner in which the matter comes to light. They simply provide–’

‘It will ruin me. If I fail this examination, they won’t renew my scholarship.’

‘You should have thought of that before.’

‘But, sir, consider all my circumstances–’

‘I cannot consider anything. Professors in this College are machines. The Regulations will not even let us recommend our students for appointments. I am a machine, and you have worked me. I have to do–’

‘It’s very hard, sir.’

‘Possibly it is.’

‘If I am to be failed this examination, I might as well go home at once.’

‘That is as you think proper.’ Bindon’s voice softened a little; he perceived he had been unjust, and, provided he did not contradict himself, he was disposed to amelioration. ‘As a private person,’ he said, ‘I think this confession of yours goes far to mitigate your offence. But you have set the machinery in motion, and now it must take its course. I – I am really sorry you gave way.’

A wave of emotion prevented Hill from answering. Suddenly, very vividly, he saw the heavily lined face of the old Landport cobbler, his father. ‘Good God! What a fool I have been!’ he said hotly and abruptly.

‘I hope,’ said Bindon, ‘that it will be a lesson to you.’

But, curiously enough, they were not thinking of quite the same indiscretion.

There was a pause.

‘I would like a day to think, sir, and then I will let you know – about going home, I mean,’ said Hill, moving towards the door.

The next day Hill’s place was vacant. The spectacled girl in green was, as usual, first with the news. Wedderburn and Miss Haysman were talking of a performance of *The Meister singers* when

she came up to them.

‘Have you heard?’ she said.

‘Heard what?’

‘There was cheating in the examination.’

‘Cheating!’ said Wedderburn, with his face suddenly hot. ‘How?’

‘That slide’–

‘Moved? Never!’

‘It was. That slide that we weren’t to move’–

‘Nonsense!’ said Wedderburn. ‘Why! How could they find out? Who do they say–?’

‘It was Mr Hill.’

‘Hill!’

‘Mr Hill!’

‘Not – surely not the immaculate Hill?’ said Wedderburn, recovering.

‘I don’t believe it,’ said Miss Haysman. ‘How do you know?’

‘*I didn’t*,’ said the girl in spectacles. ‘But I know it now for a fact. Mr Hill went and confessed to Professor Bindon himself.’

‘By Jove!’ said Wedderburn. ‘Hill of all people. But I am always inclined to distrust these philanthropists- on principle’ –

‘Are you quite sure?’ said Miss Haysman, with a catch in her breath.

‘Quite. It’s dreadful, isn’t it? But, you know, what can you expect? His father is a cobbler.’

Then Miss Haysman astonished the girl in spectacles.

‘I don’t care. I will not believe it,’ she said, flushing darkly under her warm- tinted skin. ‘I will not believe it until he has told me so himself – face to face. I would scarcely believe it then,’ and abruptly she turned her back on the girl in spectacles, and walked to her own place.

‘It’s true, all the same,’ said the girl in spectacles, peering and

smiling at Wedderburn.

But Wedderburn did not answer her. She was indeed one of those people who seem destined to make unanswered remarks.



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To-Morrow

'To-morrow' was first published in 1902. This edition published in Penguin Classics 2015. The moral right of the translator has been asserted. Simplified Chinese

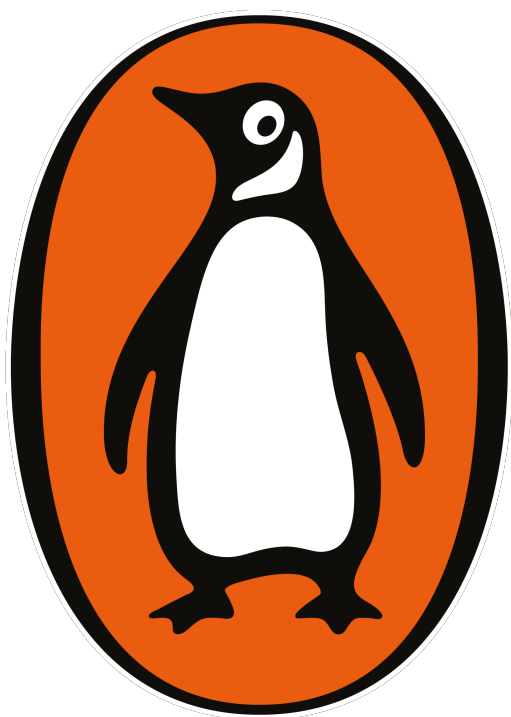
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To-morrow

“仿佛保护全镇所有家庭
的海堤已经溃决，一个
浪头正朝她劈头盖脸打
下来……”



PENGUIN
LITTLE BLACK
CLASSICS

明天

在海港小镇科尔布鲁克，汉格伯船长的名声并不好。他本是外乡人，去该地定居的动机，虽荒诞不经，却根本谈不上神秘。毕竟，当初，他很爱对人说起自己为何去该地。此外，汉格伯船长显然有些小钱，因为他买下一块地，雇人用黄砖匆匆盖起两栋难看的简陋小屋：一栋自住，一栋租给乔赛亚·卡尔维。瞎子卡尔维曾是造船工人，现已退休，因对家人专横跋扈而臭名昭著。

这两栋小屋有一堵共同的墙，前后院子分别以铁栅栏和木篱笆相隔。贝茜·卡尔维小姐理直气壮地在那道木篱笆上晾晒擦拭茶具用的茶巾、蓝色的破旧衣服或围裙，仿佛这是她的正当权利。

“贝茜啊，我的孩子，这会使木头腐烂的。”每次撞见贝茜行使此项“特权”，汉格伯船长都会隔着木篱笆，和蔼地提醒。

贝茜个子高挑，而木篱笆低矮，所以她能将胳膊肘支到木篱笆上。其双手因刚洗了东西而变得通红，但小臂白皙且匀称。她一言不发地注视着房东，沉默中透着理解、期待与渴望。

“这会使木头腐烂的。”汉格伯船长重复了一遍，接着说，“我发现这是你唯一一个浪费而粗心的习惯。为什么不在后院拉一根晾衣绳呢？”

对此，卡尔维小姐不做任何回应，只是不以为然地摇摇头。她那边的狭小后院里，有几处以石块垒就、里面是黑土的小花坛。她抽空栽种的那些普通花儿，不知怎的，生机盎然，十分繁茂，仿佛长在热带。木篱笆另一侧，却杂草蔓生。挺拔而硬朗的汉格伯船长，经常从齐膝高的草丛中突然冒出来，从头到脚以一号厚篷帆布蔽体——用这种材料制衣，实在出人意外，而一有谁对此发表意见，他就嘟哝着回道：“暂时凑合一下。”那身行头的颜色和粗粝梆硬的质地，使他整个人看上去，犹如毛糙的花岗石雕像，矗立在荒芜已久、小得连像样的台球室都做不了的院子里。这尊“石像”身材魁梧；红色的脸庞仍显英俊，蓝色的独眼目光恍惚；胡子皓白而浓密，垂至腰间，而且自到科尔布鲁克至今，从未修剪过。

七年前的一天，汉格伯船长走进港湾附近的“新酒馆”，准备购买一盎司烟叶，恰逢当地有名的巧嘴，也是理发师，傲慢地坐在酒吧间。面对理发师以打趣的口吻招徕生意，汉格伯船长一本正经地回答：“下月吧。”最后，他自袖口掏出手帕，又从手帕边角摸出三枚面

值半便士的硬币，付了账并随即离去。一等酒馆的门关闭，理发师便哈哈大笑。“不久，一老一少将胳膊挽着胳膊，一块儿溜达来我店里刮胡子。裁缝、理发师和蜡扦匠都将开始忙碌。科尔布鲁克必将重现往日盛景，绝错不了。以前，一直是‘下周’，现在变成了‘下月’；照此下去，说不定，很快就变成‘下个春天’。”

登时，理发师发现一个陌生人咧着嘴，正一脸茫然地笑着，在听自己说话，于是他边毫无顾忌地舒展双腿，边解释道：那怪老头汉格伯曾是沿海小商船的船长，现已退休，正在此地等儿子回来。那孩子很可能让父母赶出家门，然后跑去当水手，从此杳无音信。这些年中，说不定早已葬身海底。三年前，那老头急匆匆赶来科尔布鲁克：穿一身黑色细平布衣服（当时刚没了老伴），迫不及待地跳下火车三等吸烟车厢，仿佛魔鬼就在身后追赶似的。他之所以来，仅仅是因为一封信。不过，那信很可能是恶作剧。有爱开玩笑的家伙写信告诉他：据传，一位名字相似的水手正在科尔布鲁克或附近，与某个姑娘鬼混。“很可笑，对吧？”此前，那老兄一直通过伦敦各家报纸发布寻找哈里·汉格伯的启事，称对提供任何可信线索者，都会给予酬金。继而，理发师以嘲讽的口吻，兴致勃勃地描述：有人目睹那个身着丧服的外乡老头，或坐运货马车，或步行，遍访周围的乡村；向所有人诉说自己的心事；走进方圆数英里内的每一家旅店和酒馆；当路拦下行人询问；甚至查看几乎每一条沟渠。刚开始，他满怀期待，无比兴奋，后来全凭意念苦苦坚持，行动变得越来越缓慢。而且，他甚至说不清，自己儿子究竟长什么样。曾有两名水手离开一艘木材运输船，估计其中之一便是他儿子。有人看到该水手在追求某个姑娘。可根据那老头的描述，他儿子只有十四岁上下，是“一个看起来既聪明又有冲劲的男孩”。对此，听者往往一笑置之。此时，他会困惑地摸摸自己额头，接着面带愠色，逃之夭夭。自然，那老头没找到任何人，哪怕只是影子——至少，从未打探到任何可靠的消息。但不知为何，他就是待在科尔布鲁克不走。

“也许是因为找儿子未果的打击，加上刚没了老伴，他终于疯了。”理发师做出判断——说话时的神态，俨然一位心理学大师。一段时间以后，那老头不再积极寻找。他儿子显然已离开科尔布鲁克。但那老头住了下来，打算就在此地等。至少有过一次，他儿子曾选择来科尔布鲁克，而不是回家乡。这一定是有原因的，他似乎认为，一定存在什么巨大的诱惑，而这诱惑会让他儿子再次回到科尔布鲁克。

“哈，哈，哈！哎呀，当然会来科尔布鲁克。除此以外，还能去哪儿呢？英国虽大，但所有失踪已久的儿子只会选择来科尔布鲁克。于是，他卖掉在科尔切斯特 ^[1] 的老宅，来到这里。嗨，他绝对疯了，毫无疑问。要是我的哪个孩子离家出走，我绝不会发疯。我可有八个孩子呢。”在声震酒吧间的大笑中，理发师神气地夸耀自己意志

坚强。

不过，奇怪的是，这种疯症似乎具有传染性，理发师坦言——听其口吻，俨然一位聪慧过人的智者。比方说，其理发店位于港湾附近，每逢水手上门理发或刮胡子，假如是一张陌生面孔，他会立即情不自禁地想：“说不定，这人就是汉格伯老头的儿子！”说完，理发师哈哈大笑，以示自嘲。这是一种传染性很强的疯症，一度席卷整个海港小镇。对此，理发师记忆犹新。不过，他对那老兄仍抱有希望，相信能用一系列审慎的玩笑，治愈对方。而且，他一直在密切监控治疗的进展。下周——下月——明年！等那老船长把幻想儿子回来的时间推迟至明年，过不了多久，他将再也不会提及此事。对于别的事情，那老船长神志十分清楚，所以在这件事上，也一定会恢复理智。对此，理发师满怀信心。

理发师从未遭到反驳。自那以后，他的头发逐渐斑白，而汉格伯船长的胡子更是变得皓白而浓密，垂至腰间，同时天天身穿用一号厚篷帆布缝制的衣服。汉格伯船长亲手用浸过柏油的麻线，秘密缝制了那身行头，然后在一个晴朗的早晨，突然穿着那身行头出门。要知道，就在前一晚，有人看到他回家时还穿着之前的细平布丧服。汉格伯船长的这次亮相，在镇中心大街引起了轰动。众店主全部走到店门边，街上居民也纷纷抓起帽子，跑出家门。看到这番情景，汉格伯船长自己反倒大吃一惊，接着开始害怕。不过，面对好奇之人的询问，他一概惊恐而含糊地回答：“暂时凑合一下。”

当时的轰动，早已无人记得。连汉格伯船长本人，大家即便没有遗忘，也已不再理睬。这是习以为常的后果，就像谁也不会留意太阳，除非太阳把人晒得受不了。汉格伯船长的动作，瞧不出丝毫年老体衰的迹象：穿那身帆布行头的他，走起路来，四肢直挺，模样奇特而惹眼；只有目光显得比过去更加恍惚、鬼祟。不过，他举手投足间完全没了当初的兴奋与机警，而是变得困惑且羞怯，似乎在怀疑自己身上出现了有失体面、令人尴尬的怪癖，却又始终无法弄清究竟哪里不对劲。

现在，汉格伯船长不愿再与镇上居民搭话。在生活上，他得了铁公鸡、守财奴的恶名：在店里买什么东西，总要懊悔地嘟哝一阵；犹豫半天，才舍得买一点不好的边角肉。此外，他决不允许任何人提起他的那身行头。一切正如理发师所料。在别人看来，汉格伯船长的病已经痊愈，即不再抱有希望。唯有贝茜·卡尔维小姐知道，汉格伯船长之所以绝口不提等儿子回来的事，是因为在他的幻想中，那个时间已不再是“下周”“下月”甚或“明年”，而是“明天”。

在没有别人的前院或后院相遇时，汉格伯船长总和贝茜搭话，说话过程中不仅如慈父般语重心长，而且通情达理，尽管难免自以为

是，还有点武断。他俩相识，出于毫无保留的信任——表现为汉格伯船长不时满怀关爱地冲对方眨眼睛。渐渐地，贝茜开始有些期待汉格伯船长的这一举动。起初，她对此很不安，认为这个可怜的家伙疯了；后来往往一笑置之，因为对方全无恶意；如今会不由得感到快乐却又不愿相信，并微微脸红。汉格伯船长眨眼睛，毫无猥亵的意味。那张瘦削的红脸，配上高挺的鹰钩鼻，显得气宇不凡，尤其是在与贝茜说话时。因为此时，他的目光会变得更加坚定而睿智。这男人虽胡子皓白，却英俊、硬朗、挺拔、干练，使你不会留意他的年纪。他声称，其儿子打出生就长得非常像自己，和他简直是从一个模子刻出来的。

明年七月，哈里就三十一岁了，汉格伯船长说。正该找个明事理、重家庭的好姑娘结婚。哈里这孩子很有冲劲。有冲劲的丈夫最好管束。至于那些没什么能力的软蛋，你可能觉得在他们嘴里连黄油都不会融化，但其实他们才会让女人过得非常悲惨。另外，没什么能比得上自己的家——有炉火取暖、有结实屋顶的家。有了家，管它什么天气，你都不用被迫离开温暖的被窝。“对吧，亲爱的孩子？”

有一类水手所干的行当，是在看得见陆地的沿海活动。汉格伯船长便是其中之一。其父是农民，子女众多，后来破了产，于是匆匆送他去给某位海滨小商船的船长做学徒。从此，他在海滨度过了整个水手生涯。那种日子，对汉格伯船长而言，刚开始绝非易事：他从未喜欢过海上的漂泊，反而逐渐迷恋陆地、陆地上数不清的房屋和千家万户聚在炉边烤火的平静生活。许多水手基于理性考虑，不喜欢航海，并直言不讳，而汉格伯船长不喜欢航海，却是出于个人情感，且到了深恶痛绝的地步，仿佛对安稳生活的渴慕，是他家代代相传的基因。

“世人不知道，让儿子去海上讨生活，就是把他们往火坑里推。”汉格伯船长对贝茜解释，“与其那样做，还不如立即送他们去坐牢呢。”他决不信，有谁能适应航海生活。相反，年纪越大，就会越感到厌倦。这到底是一种什么行当？入了行，竟大半时间都回不成家？一旦出海，便完全无法了解家里的情况。有人可能认为，汉格伯船长之所以这么说，是因为厌倦了远洋航行。其实，就算他水手生涯最长的一次航行，也仅仅持续了两周，而且大部分时间都在抛锚停泊，躲避恶劣天气。在他妻子从自己叔叔那里继承一所房子和足够维持生计的钱财后（该叔叔生前做煤炭生意赚了一些钱，但打了一辈子光棍），他立即辞去东海岸某运煤船船长职务，并为此感到庆幸，犹如从古罗马舰队眼皮底下死里逃生一般。干了那么多年水手，汉格伯船长看不见英国的日子，两只手就能数得过来。他从未在深度超过六百英尺的深海航行，而且经常吹嘘的其中一句话，便是“我从没离开陆地超过八十英寻 [2]”。

上述这一切，贝茜·卡尔维并非首次听闻。在他们父女租住的小屋前，有一株低矮的白蜡树。夏日午后，她常常搬出椅子，坐在树底草坪上，做针线活儿。此刻，汉格伯船长总会穿着那身帆布行头，拄着铁锹。他天天在自己前院的空地挖土，每年都要把那块空地反复翻整多遍，但“暂时”——他的原话——什么也不种。

对贝茜·卡尔维，汉格伯船长会说得更加明确：“等明天我们的哈里回来再种。”这充满希望的套话，只能唤起贝茜的些许同情，因为她已听那位满怀希望的老人重复过无数遍了。

一切都如这般再三拖延，一切都是为明天而做的准备。汉格伯船长攒了满满一箱品种众多、小袋分装的花籽，以备在前院播种。“选种什么花，他肯定会听取你的意见，亲爱的孩子。”汉格伯船长隔着铁栅栏，向贝茜暗示。

贝茜小姐对此也已听过无数遍，所以仍埋头做针线活儿，不予理睬。不过，她偶尔也会起身，放下手中的活儿，缓步踱向铁栅栏。这些善意的疯话，透着某种魔力。汉格伯船长认定，儿子一旦回来，就不会再走，因为此处有个为其准备好一切的家。多年来，汉格伯船长自住的小屋逐渐塞满各种各样的家具。贝茜想象，那些家具都是崭新的，清漆完好，而且重叠堆放，如在仓库。其中，可能有几张裹着粗麻布的桌子，几捆卷成圆筒状的地毯——又粗又直，好像断柱。此外，在窗帘紧闭、一片昏暗的屋内，某些家具的白色大理石表面可能散发着淡淡的光泽。汉格伯船长每次都向贝茜详细描述购置的家具，仿佛那些也是她的合法财产。过了明天，他还要打理其杂草蔓生的后院，并浇注混凝土……

“我们不妨把木篱笆拆了。这样，你就可以拉一条晾衣绳，又绝不会碰到你的那些花儿。”汉格伯船长说着，眨了眨眼。贝茜不由得微微脸红。

贝茜心地善良，所以汉格伯船长才会对她说些疯言疯语。但这些疯话并非全是无稽之谈。万一哪天，他儿子回来了，该怎么办？但贝茜甚至不太确定，汉格伯船长是否真有儿子。就算真有儿子，那人也已久无音信。汉格伯船长说着，说着，可能变得非常激动。为使他恢复平静，贝茜会假装对他的话深信不疑，并微微一笑，以减轻心中内疚。

唯有一次，贝茜出于同情，试着对那个注定破灭的希望表达了些许疑虑，结果把自己吓了一大跳。只见汉格伯船长顿时露出既万分惊恐又不敢相信的神色，犹如目睹天空开裂。

“你——你——他不会淹死的！”

在贝茜看来，汉格伯船长平时没别人想的那么不正常，但那一

刻，她觉得后者即将彻底发疯。不过，随着失控的情绪逐渐平复，汉格伯船长变得如慈父般和蔼可亲，而且极为谦恭。

“别担心，亲爱的孩子。”汉格伯船长带着一丝狡黠说，“大海无法留住他。他也不属于大海。我们汉格伯家，世代代，从没出过属于大海的人。瞧瞧我——并未淹死在海里。再说，他压根儿不是水手。而如果不是水手，必定会回来。没有什么——”

汉格伯船长的眼神开始变得恍惚。

“——阻碍他明天回来。”

贝茜再未对汉格伯船长的希望表达过任何疑虑，以免他当场发疯。汉格伯船长完全信赖贝茜，认为她是全镇唯一明事理的人，还会当她的面，毫不掩饰地庆幸给儿子物色了这样一个头脑清楚的好妻子。曾有一次，汉格伯船长在气头上向贝茜吐露，镇上其他人脑子都不正常，绝错不了。他们瞧你的眼神、对你说话的口气，暴露无遗！这里的人，从未有谁与自己合得来。他不喜欢他们。显而易见，要不是儿子非常喜欢科尔布鲁克，他决不会离开家乡。

贝茜不做任何反驳，只是默默地站在木篱笆旁，一边耐心听汉格伯船长诉说，一边低垂眉眼，用钩针编织着什么。她面色煞白，脸红起来并不明显；浓密的红褐色头发，胡乱盘在头顶——她父亲的头发就呈橘红色，而且非常红。

贝茜身材丰满，面色总是显得疲倦而没有精神。每逢汉格伯船长大谈有个家是多么必要且应当、在自家炉边烤火又是多么幸福，她只是动动嘴唇，报以微微一笑。在人生最美好的十年，只能守在家里，伺候父亲，这便是家给予她的全部“幸福”。

从楼上窗户会传来犹如野兽发出的咆哮，打断他俩的谈话。一听到那声音，贝茜立即开始收拾手中的编织或针线活儿，但丝毫不显慌张。与此同时，呼喊她名字的咆哮仍在继续。如果恰巧有渔夫在路对面海堤上溜达，他们便会纷纷扭头，望向那两栋小屋。收起手中的活儿后，贝茜慢悠悠地走进自家前门。过了片刻，他们父女租住的小屋便陷入一片沉寂。不久，她再次现身：牵着一个男人的手，引领其走出门来。那男人肥硕而笨拙，活像河马，而且脸色极其阴沉。

那男人已丧偶，曾是造船工人；多年前，正当事业蒸蒸日上时，突然双目失明。他对待女儿的态度，就像眼睛无法治愈全都怪女儿似的。有人曾听到那鳏夫仿佛出于对上帝的藐视，声嘶力竭地吼道：他对失明毫不在乎，因为赚的钱，足够天天早餐吃火腿煎蛋。他为能过这样的生活而感谢上帝，但听其口气，更像恶魔在诅咒。

汉格伯船长极不喜欢这位租客，所以曾对贝茜小姐说：“他是个

毫不节约的家伙，亲爱的孩子。”

那天，贝茜在赶着织完给父亲穿的袜子。在其父看来，做女红是女儿的本分，但贝茜讨厌编织。由于正织到后跟部分，她不得不全神贯注地盯着手中织针。

“当然，他没有儿子需要供养。”汉格伯船长怅然若失，继续说，“女儿需要的东西，自然没那么多，唔——唔。她们也不会离家出走，亲爱的孩子。”

“是的。”贝茜平静地附和。

汉格伯船长站在翻土后形成的土堆中间，咯咯地笑。他穿着那身古怪的帆布行头，配上饱经风霜的面孔和尼普顿^[3]那样的长须，活像一位遭贬下凡、拿三叉戟换了铁锹的海神。

“他肯定认为，对你多少已尽了抚养的义务。这正是生女儿的最大好处。丈夫……”汉格伯船长眨了眨眼。专心织袜子的贝茜小姐，不由得微微脸红。

“贝茜！我的帽子！”卡尔维老头突然吼道。此前，他一直坐在树下，沉默不语，纹丝不动，酷似一尊神像——象征的是某种极为骇人的迷信。他要么不开口，一开口就大声咆哮：喊女儿，吼女儿，偶尔还骂女儿，而且尽用恶毒的词。贝茜的应对方法，是决不搭话。其父会不停地大吼大叫，直至得到回应：贝茜摇动他的胳膊，或把烟斗咬嘴插入他齿间。身为盲人还抽烟，真是少见。感觉帽子落到头顶，卡尔维老头立即停止吼叫。等女儿扶他起身后，两人便一块儿走出院子大门。

卡尔维老头把身体全部重量都压在女儿胳膊上。他俩缓慢而艰难地往前走，看起来就像是贝茜为了给自己赎罪，拖着那具虚弱、肥硕的躯体，负重而行。通常，他俩一出院子便横穿门前小路——两栋小屋坐落在港湾附近的野地里，门前有条小路通往两百码外的大街尽头。过了很久，仍能望见那对父女的身影，尽管瞧不出他俩正沿着通往海堤顶部的木台阶，费力地拾级而上。这条海堤沿英吉利海峡而修，东西横亘，犹如一段废弃已久、在人类记忆中从无列车驶过的铁路路堤。健壮的渔夫会成群结队，从天际冒出来，往前走一走，接着变得越来越矮，越来越矮，直至慢慢消失。一张张棕色渔网，平铺在杂草蔓生的堤坡上，酷似巨大的蛛网。来到大街尽头的镇上居民，抬眼望见那蹒跚而缓慢的步伐，立即便能认出卡尔维父女。在两栋小屋周围闲荡的汉格伯船长，经常抬头眺望，看看那对散步的父女走到哪儿了。

汉格伯船长仍在每逢周日出版的各家报纸发布寻找哈里·汉格伯的启事。他一方面告诉贝茜，这些报纸的读者，遍布全世界各个国家与

地区；一方面却似乎认为，儿子就在英国，离科尔布鲁克非常近，“明天”肯定会到来。对于汉格伯船长的后一念头，贝茜并未直截了当地发表意见，而是说：既然如此，就没必要每周浪费两先令六便士，发布寻人启事，汉格伯船长还不如把那些钱用于自己身上。她还称，自己不知道汉格伯船长靠什么为生。听了贝茜的话，汉格伯船长会陷入苦思，并沮丧好一会儿。“别人都这么做。”他辩解。而且，每家报纸都设有一栏，专用于刊登寻找失踪亲属的启事。他会取来报纸，向贝茜证明自己所说属实。多年来，他们夫妇一直在各家报纸发布寻人启事。可惜，他妻子不是一个有耐心的女人。她头天刚下葬，第二天就从科尔布鲁克传来了消息。要不是那么没耐心，她可能这会儿也在这里，而且顶多再等一天，就能见到儿子。“你是一个有耐心的女人，亲爱的孩子。”

“有时候，我对您真的失去了耐心。”贝茜会说。

汉格伯船长虽仍在各家报纸发布寻找儿子的启事，但对提供线索者，已不再给予任何酬金。因为，出于神志错乱之人自以为理智、实则糊涂的逻辑，他坚信以下这点是明摆着的，即自己已获得通过该途径所能获得的一切线索。他还想了解什么呢？儿子肯定会来科尔布鲁克。知道这一点，便足够了。卡尔维小姐夸其明智，令汉格伯船长大为宽慰。在他看来，贝茜不仅肯定了他那个已成痴心妄想的希望，而且也赞同他的判断——这判断使他看不见事实真相与其他可能，恰如另一栋小屋里的另一名老人，因另一种疾病而双目失明，看不见这个世界的光明与美好。

尽管如此，只要认为自己受到任何怀疑，汉格伯船长都会激动得直抽搐，并用恶毒的眼神斜睨对方：例如，向他表达赞成时口气冷淡，甚或仅仅未留意他那些计划的进展——那些计划的目的，是做好关于家庭生活的各项准备，以便儿子回来后，与儿子、儿媳共叙天伦之乐。他还会把铁锹猛地往地里一插，然后在旁边走过来，走过去。每逢此时，贝茜小姐都认为汉格伯船长在使性子，她便会用食指指着，以示责备。汉格伯船长见状，会气冲冲地远离贝茜。但等贝茜再次来到屋外，他会用眼角余光偷瞥对方，以求发现丝毫表示鼓励的暗示，好走近铁栅栏，恢复两人之间父亲对女儿、长辈对晚辈的关系。

他俩虽相熟已有几年，但每次都隔着木篱笆或铁栅栏交谈。汉格伯船长经常告诉贝茜，自己为将来一家人生活而积攒的各种家当是多么豪华，但从未邀请贝茜过去瞧一瞧。除了哈里，谁也不能先瞧。事实上，从无别人进过汉格伯船长自住的小屋。此外，汉格伯船长不仅自己做所有家务，而且偶尔去镇上买了什么家用小物件，总是揣在帆布外套里，匆匆穿过前院，偷偷带进屋，唯恐别人先于儿子瞧见。从屋里出来后，他会为自己辩解：“不过是一只小烧水壶，亲爱的孩

子。”

假如不是家务干到筋疲力尽，或不堪其父烦扰，贝茜会微微红着脸，冲汉格伯船长笑一笑，说：“没关系，汉格伯船长。我是一个有耐心的女人。”

“唔，亲爱的孩子，你不用等很久了。”汉格伯船长会如此回应，并突然变得羞怯。他不安地东张西望，仿佛早就在怀疑哪里不对劲。

每逢周一，贝茜会隔着铁栅栏，把房租递给汉格伯船长。他会贪婪地一把抓过那些先令。汉格伯船长极不情愿把钱用于必要的生活花销，哪怕仅仅一便士，而且每当告别贝茜去买东西，一到大街上，立即就像换了个人。离开贝茜的同情与鼓励，他觉得自己完全暴露于各种危险之中，所以总是肩膀贴着墙壁，沿街边行走，还认为遇到的人都很可疑。但其实，到了那会儿，就连镇上的孩童都不再追着他大呼小叫，而商店店主接待他时，也往往一言不发。汉格伯船长对自己的衣着尤为敏感：假如有谁提起，哪怕极其委婉，也会令他大感困惑和惊恐，仿佛听到什么毫无道理、匪夷所思之事。

秋天，每逢下起滂沱大雨，硕大的雨滴吧嗒吧嗒，直打在汉格伯船长那身帆布行头上。那身行头湿透后，变得几乎如铁皮般坚硬，而且雨水顺着其表面各处不断往下流淌。假如天气过于恶劣，汉格伯船长只能被迫躲在狭小的门廊下，紧贴屋门而立，眼巴巴地望着插于前院中间的铁锹。整个前院，到处挖了又挖，随着季节推移，逐渐变成一片泥淖。当地面完全冻住，他会变得忧心忡忡。哈里要是见了，会说什么呢？从另一栋小屋紧闭的窗户，不时隐隐传来卡尔维老头在屋里使唤贝茜的咆哮。由于每年这个时节，与贝茜见面的机会大为减少，汉格伯船长就对卡尔维老头的咆哮感到极为恼怒。

“那个毫不节约的家伙，为什么不给你请个用人呢？”汉格伯船长没好气地问贝茜。那天下午挺暖和，贝茜往头上随便搭了样东西，跑出来活动活动。

“我不知道。”贝茜疲惫地回答，并望向别处，眼神里全无期待。她脸色苍白，眼皮耷拉，灰色的眼睛下方总是带着两抹阴影。给人的感觉，她似乎看不到自己的人生会出现任何改变，或存在一个尽头。

“等到结婚，就好了，亲爱的孩子。”贝茜唯一的朋友边缓步走近铁栅栏，边说，“哈里会给你请一个的。”

汉格伯船长盲目乐观的疯症，在绝望的贝茜看来，是对自己赤裸裸的嘲弄。她一时激愤难当，忍不住要当场破口大骂，但最后只是像面对正常人那样自嘲道：“哎呀，汉格伯船长，说不定您儿子连瞧都不想瞧我一眼。”

汉格伯船长把脑袋往后一仰，通过喉咙，沙哑而做作地嘎嘎大笑，以示愤怒。

“什么！那小子？对方圆几英里内唯一明事理的姑娘，连瞧都不想瞧一眼？你认为，我在这里，是为了什么，亲爱的孩子？亲爱的孩子？亲爱的孩子……什么？你等着瞧吧。你等着瞧好了。明天就能见分晓。我很快就将——”

“贝茜！贝茜！贝茜！”卡尔维老头在屋里咆哮，“贝茜！我的烟斗！”那个肥硕的瞎子，懒惰到了衣来伸手、饭来张口的地步。他决不抬一抬手，自己拿女儿事先在他手肘边精心备下的东西；决不动一腿或胳膊；决不自己从椅子上起身；虽然完全能在客厅自由穿梭，犹如双目并未失明一般，但不将女儿唤至身旁，并将肥硕躯体的全部重量压到女儿肩上，决不把一只脚迈到另一只脚前；此外，决不自己吃一口东西，只等女儿去喂。失明确实带来不便，但卡尔维老头故意表现得生活完全不能自理，好尽可能地奴役女儿。黄昏中，贝茜紧咬牙关，纹丝不动地站了一会儿，然后转身，缓步回屋。

汉格伯船长走回铁锹所插之处。从卡尔维父女租住的小屋，不再传出咆哮声。没过一会儿，那栋小屋楼下客厅的窗户里亮起灯光。有个男人迈着坚定而从容的步伐，从大街尽头走来。打两栋小屋前经过时，他似乎瞧见了汉格伯船长，于是又折回来一两步。西边的天空，尚留一抹冷冰冰的白光。来人趴在院子大门上，显得饶有兴趣。

“你一定就是汉格伯船长吧。”那人从容且胸有成竹地说。

听到陌生人的声音，老人大吃一惊，随即原地转了个身，同时顺手从土里拔出铁锹。

“是的，我就是。”老人紧张地回答。

对方边冲老人微笑，边缓缓道：“你一直在报纸上发布寻找儿子的启事，对吧？”

“我儿子哈里，”汉格伯船长嘟哝着，暂时放下戒备，但仅此一次，“他明天就会回家。”

“他会回家才怪！”陌生人既非常惊讶又不以为然地高呼，并用几乎相同的语气继续道，“瞧你留的胡子，都赶上圣诞老人了！”

汉格伯船长缓缓地朝院子大门走了几步，然后拄着铁锹而立，同时身子在铁锹上方微微前倾。“走开。”他说话的语气既愤恨又羞怯，因为一直以来，他生怕遭人嘲笑。无论处于何种精神状态的人，哪怕神志错乱的疯子，皆有自尊。自尊是其保持内心平静的基础；一旦自尊受挫，便会导致不悦。另外，汉格伯船长对生活已形成一系列根深蒂固的观念，而别人的大笑令他对这些观念心生怀疑，并因此感到痛

苦。没错，看到别人冲自己大笑，非常可恶。那是在暗示什么地方不对劲。可究竟哪里不对劲呢？他弄不明白。显而易见，那陌生人正在咧嘴大笑——特意上门来这么做。在各条街上，遇到别人冲自己大笑，汉格伯船长也非常不悦，但从未如此愤怒。

陌生人并未意识到自己的脑袋差点让铁锹劈成两半，严肃地回道：“我站在这里，不算擅闯私宅，对吧？我认为，你得到的消息有误。要不让我进去再说？”

“让你进来？！”汉格伯船长嘟哝道，言语中透着无法形容的恐惧。

“我可以提供一些关于你儿子的真实情况——最新的独家消息，如果你想听的话？”

“不想听！”汉格伯船长嚷着，开始极为激动地走过来，走过去，接着又扛起铁锹，并用另一条胳膊比画各种动作。“这个咧嘴大笑的家伙，说我得到的消息有误。我知道的消息，比你多。我早就知道了所有想要知道的消息。几年前就知道了！几年前！几年前！我不再需要任何消息，只需等待明天到来。让你进来——等着吧！哈里要是知道了，会怎么说呢？”

此时，另一栋小屋楼下客厅的窗户映出贝茜·卡尔维的黑色人影。接着，伴随开门的声响，那人影从小屋前面飞掠而出：全身漆黑，头上却搭着什么白色的东西。突然听见外面这两人的说话声，屋里的贝茜激动得瞠目结舌。

汉格伯船长看上去，活像慌不择路、企图逃离牢笼的困兽。他在一片泥潭里嘎吱嘎吱地乱走——这片泥潭正是他辛勤劳动的结果；在毁坏的草坪上让坑坑洼洼绊得踉踉跄跄；还像瞎子似的乱跑，完全不顾是否撞到铁栅栏。

“喂，冷静一点！”陌生人边说，边慎重地把胳膊伸过院子大门，拽住汉格伯船长的衣袖。“有人想找到并诈骗你。嗨！你身上穿的什么东西啊？还真是厚篷帆布！”那人哈哈大笑，接着道，“哎呀，你果然是怪人！”

汉格伯船长猛地从对方手中挣脱，然后边羞怯地向后退缩，边用颓丧的语气嘟哝：“暂时凑合一下。”

“他怎么回事啊？”陌生人以解释的口吻，极其亲昵、慢条斯理地对贝茜说，“我不是故意要惊吓这老家伙的。”接着，陌生人压低声音，仿佛在和相熟多年的故友说悄悄话。“我顺道拐进一家理发店，花两便士，刮了胡子。店里那些人告诉我，他有点古怪。其实，这老家伙一辈子都是怪人。”

听到对方提及自己的衣着，汉格伯船长羞怯之下，带着铁锹，躲进屋里。冷不防响起重重的关门声，令站在院子大门处的另外两人大吃一惊。紧接着，他俩相继听到门门门的碰撞声、锁门锁的吧嗒声和咯咯的大笑声——这装腔作势的笑声在屋里回荡不止。

“我不是故意要刺激他的。”沉默了片刻，陌生人说，“这一切究竟是什么意思啊？他并未完全发疯呀。”

“这么多年来，他一直在为离家出走的儿子感到担忧。”贝茜以抱歉的口吻，低声回答。

“唔，我就是他儿子。”

“哈里！”贝茜不由得惊呼，但随即紧紧地闭住嘴。

“知道我的名字？和这老家伙是朋友，嗯？”

“他是我们的房东。”贝茜伸手抓住铁栅栏，结结巴巴地回答。

“这两栋兔笼似的小破屋都是他的，对吧？”小汉格伯不屑地说，“能让他引以为傲的，就是这些东西。明天要来的那小子是谁，你能告诉我吗？你对此肯定有所了解。我告诉你，这老家伙遇到了诈骗——绝错不了。”

贝茜一时沉默不语。她完全不知如何回答，惊愕地愣在原地：自知必须做出解释，却不可能也惧怕那么做，因为如果把整件事的来龙去脉解释清楚，似乎难免会让对方觉得，她也是疯子。

“唉——真对不起。”贝茜嗫嚅道。

“怎么回事？”小汉格伯平静地说，“别担心，我不会不高兴。另一个小子才会不高兴，因为事情的结果将完全出乎他意料。我对这事一点也不在乎。不过，明天，等那小子露面，将有好戏上演。我不是为这老家伙着想，但对就是对，错就是错。你等着瞧吧，我会痛揍那骗子，不管他是谁！”

说话过程中，小汉格伯朝贝茜走近了一些。两人隔着铁栅栏而立，男的比女的高出不少。小汉格伯瞥了眼贝茜的双手，感觉她在颤抖，并突然想到：也许，明天算计他父亲的小把戏，眼前这女人也有份。幸亏自己及时赶到，使骗子的诡计无法得逞。想到这，他不免感到一阵得意——嘲笑骗子的诡计实在拙劣，轻而易举就让自己挫败。但有生以来，无论女人耍什么花招，他一直对她们极为宽容。再说，眼前这女人确实颤抖得厉害，连头上的围巾都已滑落。“可怜的女人！”小汉格伯心想，“别管另一个小子了。他明天不一定会来。可我自己该怎么办呢？总不能在院子门口一直晃悠到明天早上吧。”

贝茜突然喊道：“是你——他等的是你！明天要来的那个人是

你！”

小汉格伯木然地嘟哝道：“啊！是我！”接着，两人似乎同时停止了呼吸。看起来，小汉格伯正在琢磨听到的话。过了一会儿，他说：“我不明白。我没给他写过信什么的。我朋友看到报纸上的寻人启事，然后告诉了我——就在今天早晨……嗯？什么？”他说话时并不气恼，但显得非常困惑。

小汉格伯低下头，把耳朵凑向贝茜，听她轻声而飞快地说了一些话。听的过程中，他不时嘟哝着回以“是的”“原来如此”。“可为什么今天不行呢？”最后，他问。

“你没懂我的意思！”贝茜不耐烦地叫道。西边，云层底下那抹明亮的白光已逐渐消失。小汉格伯再次微微低头，以便听得更清楚。这对男女——一个喃喃低语，一个侧耳倾听——完全消失在重重夜幕中。唯一隐约可见的是，两张脸亲昵地挨在一块儿，仿佛他俩正偷偷幽会，相互温存。

小汉格伯挺直肩膀。一顶宽檐帽的黑影，随随便便地搭在他头上。“很可笑，对吧？”小汉格伯对贝茜说，“明天？哈，哈！从没听说过这种事。看起来，永远都会是明天，绝不可能是今天。”

贝茜一动不动，默不作声。

“而你一直纵容他抱着这个可笑的念头。”小汉格伯说。

“我从不反驳他。”

“为什么不？”

“我为什么要反驳？”贝茜辩解，“那只会使他痛苦。他可能会丧失理智的。”

“他还有理智！”小汉格伯嘟哝道。接着，他听到贝茜短促而紧张地笑了笑。

“我不反驳，造成什么危害了吗？难道要我和这位可怜的老人吵架吗？我更愿意对他的话半信半疑。”

“是的，是的。”精明的小汉格伯略作沉思，接着说，“我估计，这老家伙说了什么花言巧语，把你哄得相信了。你心肠可真软。”

黑暗中，贝茜紧张地提起双手。“他的话可能是真的。确实是真的。那一天确实到来了。今天就是。今天就是我们一直等待的‘明天’。”

贝茜说完，深吸一口气。小汉格伯和气地说：“是啊，结果却不让人进门。我不在乎是否……你觉得，能说服他和我相认……嗯？什

么……你能说服他？你说要一星期？唔，也许你是能说服他，可在这无聊透顶的地方，你觉得我能待住一星期吗？我待不住！我希望要么拼命干活，要么恣意玩乐，再要么去比整个英国还要广阔的地方闯荡。不过，我曾来过这里一回，而且待了一个多星期。当时，这老家伙在报纸上发布寻找我的启事。有个和我在一块儿的朋友想出一个主意：写封信，胡说八道地扯上一大通，骗他几英镑。不过，那个玩笑并未得逞。因为我们不得不离开了——那回，我在这里待了好几天。但这回，有个朋友正在伦敦等我，再说……”

贝茜·卡尔维的呼吸变得急促。

“要是我去敲门，会怎么样？”小汉格伯问。

“去试一下吧。”贝茜回道。

汉格伯船长所住小屋的院子大门发出嘎吱嘎吱的声响。小汉格伯的人影在院子里走了几步，接着驻足，再次从喉咙发出低沉的笑声——与老汉格伯的笑声很像，只不过更加温柔、悦耳。贝茜听了，顿感如梦初醒，心神荡漾。

“他不爱闹腾吧？我担心不得不控制住他。大伙总说，我不知道自己的力量有多大。”

“他是有史以来最温和的人。”贝茜插嘴道。

“你要是见过他挥舞粗硬的皮鞭，一路追打我到楼上，你就不会这么说了。”小汉格伯说，“整整十六年来，我一直没忘记这件事。”

小汉格伯说完，又一次发出低沉、悦耳的笑声。贝茜感到一股暖流从头顶蔓延到脚底。随着门环发出嘭嘭嘭的声响，她的心提到了嗓子眼。

“喂，爸！开门。我是哈里，真的。快开门！我提前一天回家了。”

小屋楼上的一扇窗户咔嗒咔嗒地拉了起来。

“一个咧嘴大笑、自称有最新消息的家伙。”从黑乎乎的高处传来汉格伯船长的声音，“别和他扯上任何瓜葛。这会毁了一切的。”

贝茜听到小汉格伯喊了声“喂，爸”，又听到哐当一响。接着，小屋楼上的窗户咔嗒咔嗒地拉下了；与此同时，小汉格伯再次站在贝茜面前。

“和过去一模一样。那会儿，他差点把我活活打死，以阻止我离开家；这会儿，我回来了，他又照着我的脑袋扔下该死的铁锹，不让我进门。那该死的铁锹擦伤了我的肩膀。”

贝茜不由得一阵哆嗦。

“我不在乎。”小汉格伯接着说，“只是我身上最后几先令用来买了火车票，最后两便士又用来刮了胡子——出于对老家伙的尊敬。”

“你真是哈里·汉格伯？”贝茜立刻问，“你能证明吗？”

“我能证明吗？除了我，还有谁能证明？”小汉格伯乐呵呵地说，“用什么证明？我要证明什么？在全世界各个角落，也许英国除外，你都能找到记得我是哈里·汉格伯的人——找到记得我是哈里·汉格伯的女人，可能性更大。我比世上任何活着的人更像哈里·汉格伯。我能当即向你证明，要是你让我走进你家院子的话。”

“进来吧。”贝茜说。

于是，小汉格伯进了卡尔维父女所租小屋的前院。他魁梧的人影，大摇大摆地往前走。贝茜转身背对楼下客厅的窗户，一面等待，一面盯着不断逼近的模糊人影——那人影最真实之处，莫过于其脚步声。窗户透出的灯光中，出现一顶歪戴的帽子、半边势要撞破夜幕的强壮肩膀、一条从黑暗中迈出的腿。小汉格伯突然转身并站定，然后面朝贝茜背后亮着灯光的客厅窗户，边左右摆动脑袋，边自顾自轻声发笑。

“稍微想象一下，要是把老家伙的胡子粘到我的下巴，会是什么样。喂？快说话呀。我打小就长得非常像他，和他简直是从一个模子刻出来的。”

“的确。”贝茜低声嗫嚅道。

“不过，我俩也就外表长得像罢了。他一直都是你们这种恋家的人。哎呀，我至今仍记得，每逢要离开家去南希尔兹^[4]运煤的前三天，他就会整日愁眉苦脸。当时，他持有煤气厂发的长期执照。你可能以为，他是去远洋捕鲸，一走三年多。哈，哈！完全不是。就离家十天而已。‘海上飞掠者’是一艘不错的船。名字不赖，对吧？那艘船属于我妈的叔叔……”

小汉格伯突然转变话题，压低声音问：“我妈怎么没的，他对你提过吗？”

“提过。”贝茜小姐伤感地回答，“说是因为不够耐心。”

小汉格伯沉默片刻，接着粗鲁地说：“他俩生怕我变成一个坏人，结果反而逼得我离家出走。我妈喋喋不休地指责我游手好闲，而这老家伙说，宁可把我杀掉，也不允许我去当水手。哎呀，当时看起来，他可能真会那么做，所以我离家出走了。有时，我觉得自己投错了胎，不该出生在那个同是兔笼似的家。”

“那你本该出生在什么地方，才算投对胎呢？”贝茜不屑地打断小汉格伯。

“我本该在狂风大作的夜晚，出生于旷野之中、海滩之上。”小汉格伯倒豆子般飞快地回答，接着若有所思地缓缓道，“他俩以前就是怪人，真的。过了这么多年，这老家伙丝毫没变，对吧？该死的铁锹——听！谁在大吼大叫啊？‘贝茜，贝茜。’从你住的那栋房子传出来的。”

“那是在喊我。”贝茜漠不关心地说。

小汉格伯往旁边挪了挪，离开窗前明亮处。“你老公？”他问。听其口气，显然是惯于偷情的老手。“声音真洪亮；碰到雷电交加的暴风雨，甲板上正需要这样的人。”

“不，是我爸。我还没结婚呢。”

“你看起来是个好姑娘，亲爱的贝茜小姐。”小汉格伯立刻接嘴道。贝茜把脸转向了别处。

“嘿，我说，怎么回事？谁在谋杀他啊？”

“他想吃傍晚茶 [5] 。”贝茜侧着脑袋，面对父亲，纹丝不动地站在原地，显得十分高挑。她的双手十指交叉地紧握在一起，垂于身前。

“你最好进去一下吧？”小汉格伯说。开口前，他凝视了一会儿贝茜的后颈——一块白得耀眼的皮肤，往下是线条柔和、只见阴影的脖颈儿，再往下是若隐若现的肩膀。贝茜头上的围巾已滑落至手肘处。“不用多久，整个镇子的人都要过来了。我在这里等你一会儿。”

贝茜的围巾掉落在地。等小汉格伯俯身捡起时，贝茜已消失不见。小汉格伯把捡起的围巾往胳膊上一搭，径直走近楼下客厅的窗户，看到一个肥硕男人的庞大身躯、一盏无罩的灯、贝茜小姐的脑袋和胸部；那男人坐在扶手椅中，正张着阔嘴打哈欠，蓬乱的头发披散在大扁脸两侧。屋里的吼叫声停了，窗帘放了下来。小汉格伯不禁陷入沉思，觉得眼下的处境糟糕至极。父亲疯了，无法进门。没钱回去，正在伦敦挨饿的那个朋友，将认为他靠不住。“该死！”小汉格伯嘟哝道。他当然有本事硬闯其父的住所，但警察可能因此不问青红皂白，就把他关进监狱。真是那样，也没什么大不了，只不过他非常惧怕遭到监禁，哪怕纯粹出于误会。想到这，小汉格伯不由得感到一阵寒冷，于是在湿漉漉的草地上跺了跺脚。

“你是干什么的？水手？”一个不安的声音问。

贝茜的人影已从屋里飞掠而出。吸引她出来的，是另一个正在她

家墙角等待、显得非常鲁莽的人影。

“什么都干。包括做一名称职的普通水手。这次正是通过做水手回家的。”

“那你是打哪里来到这里的呢？”贝茜接着问。

“我刚刚恣意快活了一把，”小汉格伯回答，“然后坐从伦敦出发的火车来到这里——知道了吧？呃！我讨厌被关在火车里。不过，我对房子没那么反感。”

“啊，”贝茜说，“幸好。”

“因为在房子里的话，可以随时打开该死的门，然后直接当着你的面走掉。”

“从此再也不回来？”

“至少在十六年里，”小汉格伯大笑着回答，“不会回到一栋兔笼似的小破屋，让该死的铁锹……”

“船也不是很大呀。”贝茜讥讽道。

“是的，可大海无边无际。”

贝茜垂下脑袋。她似乎突然对世间万物的声音变得十分敏感，并听到经历昨天的大风后，波浪不断拍击海堤另一侧的沙滩。伴随阵阵涛声，整个大地都在单调而庄严地颤抖，犹如一口正在敲响的洪钟。

“再说，哎呀，船只是船。你可以随时爱上某艘船，也可以随时离开那艘船；一次航海，不同于一次婚姻。”小汉格伯轻率地引述流行于水手之间的粗话。

“航海确实不同于婚姻。”贝茜喃喃道。

“我向来行不更名，坐不改姓，而且迄今为止，从未对任何女人说过哪怕一次谎话。什么谎话？哎呀，就是：请你选择接受还是离开我；要是接受我，那么……”小汉格伯说完，倚着墙壁，轻声哼起一支水手号子的其中几句。

啊，嗨，嗨，里奥！

再见了，再见了，

年轻漂亮的姑娘，

我们正准备起航，

“这是转动绞盘、拉起船锚时唱的水手号子。”小汉格伯解释道。此时，贝茜的牙齿打了一下颤。

“你很冷吧。”小汉格伯说，“这是你掉的东西。”贝茜感觉到对方的双手在她身上移动，仔细地为她裹好围巾。“抓住前面这两头。”小汉格伯吩咐。

“你来这里干什么呢？”贝茜问着，感觉自己又要打冷战，但竭力克制住了。

“来要五英镑钱。”小汉格伯立即回答，“我们玩乐的时间稍微久了点，结果把钱花光了。”

“你一直在喝酒？”贝茜又问。

“一连三天，喝得烂醉如泥——故意的。不要以为，我是让人灌醉的。世上没有任何人或任何东西能摆布我，除非我愿意。要是不合我心意，我决不屈服。今天早晨，我朋友看到报纸上的寻人启事，于是对我说：‘快去，哈里。你爸很疼你。他肯定会给你五英镑。’于是，我俩翻遍各自的所有衣服口袋，勉强凑了来这里的车费。真是偷鸡不成蚀把米！”

“我恐怕得说，你是个铁石心肠的人。”贝茜叹息道。

“为什么这样说？因为我离家出走？哎呀！他想让我做律师的文书——纯粹为了称他的心。他是家里的老爷；而我那个死去的妈呢，一直对他煽风点火——可能是为了我好吧。好吧，既然如此，那就再见。于是，我离家出走了。不，我告诉你：我离开家当天，浑身上下青一块，紫一块，而这正是拜他那伟大的父爱所赐。啊！他一直都有点古怪。瞧瞧那把铁锹。发疯了？未必。我爸向来就是这么个人。他想让我留在家乡，无非是希望身边有个可以供他呼来喝去的人。不过，眼下，我和朋友手头有点紧，而对他来说，五英镑算得了什么呢？毕竟，在艰难的十六年中，我向他要钱，只此一回。”

“啊，我真为你的遭遇感到难过。你从来没想过回家吗？”

“做律师的文书，最后烂在家乡——烂在一个像这样的地方？”小汉格伯不屑地嚷道，“什么！要是今天这老家伙把我安顿在一个家里，我将把那个家踹成平地；要不然，我会在三天之内活活憋死。”

“除了家里，你还希望自己死在哪里呢？”

“在某处荒野；在大海上；在某个该死的山顶。要是必须选择的话。在家里？好啊！整个世界就是我的家。不过，我估计将来自己会死在医院。那又有什么关系呢？只要来世上走过一遭，死在哪里都

行。而且，我几乎干过你能想到的所有事情，除了做裁缝和当兵。我曾骑马巡视并修补牧场围栏、剪羊毛、背着行囊流浪、用鱼叉捕杀一头鲸鱼；还曾装配船帆、勘探金矿、给死牛剥皮。我舍弃的钱财，可能比这老家伙辛苦攒了一辈子的还要多。哈，哈！”

小汉格伯的话令贝茜大为震惊。她努力恢复镇定，最后勉强开口道：“该休息了。”

小汉格伯离开所倚墙壁，挺直身子，以严肃的口吻说：“我也该走了。”

但说归说，他并未迈动脚步，而是再次靠到墙上，若有所思地哼起一支古怪曲子的其中一两个小节。

贝茜感到自己忍不住要哭了。“你又开始哼你那些令人伤心的歌了。”她说。

“在墨西哥索诺拉 [7] 学的。”小汉格伯从容地说，“这是寻金人唱的歌。你没听过？就是流浪汉唱的歌。没有什么能使那些流浪汉在一个地方长待，哪怕女人也不行。过去，在希拉河以北极远处那片出产金子的地区边缘，你偶尔会遇见他们中的一个。我去过那里。在马萨特兰 [8] 的一位勘探工程师带我去的——让我帮忙照看马车。不管怎么说，身边带个水手，能为你提供许多方便。那片地区尽是沙漠，分布着一道道深不见底的裂口和一座座由岩石构成的悬崖峭壁——那些悬崖峭壁拔地而起，犹如无数高墙和教堂尖塔，只不过大上百倍。此外，各个峡谷中布满巨砾和黑色石块。整片地区，连一片草的叶子都见不着。那里的夕阳，也比我在其他任何地方见过的都要红——像血一样红，而且显得非常愤怒。真是美极了！”

“你不会还想去那里吧？”贝茜结结巴巴地问。

小汉格伯笑了笑。“不会。那片出产金子的地区不是人待的。在那里见到的景象，有时会让我不由得哆嗦。要知道，当时我们是一大帮人结伴同行。但那些寻金人总是独来独往。对于那片地区，早在任何人听说以前，他们就已经知道了。他们仿佛天生就懂勘探，而且也对寻找金子极为狂热，但似乎对金子本身不是很感兴趣。他们总能发现富含金子的地点，接着便转身离去；也许会拣上一些——足够一次玩乐——然后再次出发，寻找更多的金子。他们从不在有房屋的地方长待，他们没有妻子、没有鸡、没有家，也没有朋友。你无法和寻金人做朋友，因为他们永远都在流浪：今天在这里，明天就走了——天晓得去了哪里。他们绝不把发现金子的情况告诉任何人，也从无一个寻金人过上富裕的生活。令他们醉心的，并非金子本身，而是在遍地石头的沙漠一边流浪一边寻找金子的过程。正因为如此，他们永不停歇；也正因为如此，世上尚无任何女人能留住寻金人超过一个星期。

这就是我哼的歌。整首歌讲的是，有个漂亮姑娘想方设法留住情郎——一个寻金人——好让对方带给自己许多金子。绝不可能！最后，寻金人还是走了，而那姑娘再也没见过他。”

“那姑娘后来怎么样了？”贝茜轻声问。

“歌里没说。可能哭了一阵吧。寻金人都这样：亲了某个女人，接着就走了。不过，重点在于寻找某样东西，某样……有时，我觉得自己也是一个寻金人。”

“这么说来，没有女人能留住你。”贝茜用粗重的声音开口道，但尚未说完，她的声音便突然开始打颤。

“不会超过一个星期。”小汉格伯开玩笑地说。他愉快而温柔的笑声，牵动着贝茜的心弦。“不过，我爱她们中的每一个人。我愿意为喜欢的女人付出一切。她们害我陷入各种困境，也帮我摆脱各种困境！我对她们一见钟情。此刻，我已经爱上了你，小姐——你叫贝茜，对吧？”

贝茜微微后退，用颤抖的声音笑着说：“你还没见过我长什么样呢。”

小汉格伯殷勤地倾身向前，说：“脸色有点苍白——有些男人会喜欢。不过，你身材不错，贝茜小姐。”

贝茜的心脏怦怦直跳。从来没人对她说过这么多话。

此时，小汉格伯语气一变，说：“不过，我现在肚子有点饿。今天没吃早饭。我看到你爸在吃傍晚茶，你能弄些面包给我吃吗？或者——”

小汉格伯正想请求贝茜让他进屋，贝茜却已离去。没关系。在哪儿都一样。眼下的处境真是糟透了！他朋友会怎么想呢？

“我不是向你乞讨，”面对贝茜端来的盘子，小汉格伯边从盘中拿起一片涂着黄油的面包，边开玩笑地说，“而是把你当朋友。我爸很有钱，你也知道。”

“因为你，他一直在挨饿。”

“因为他一时的心血来潮，我也挨过饿。”小汉格伯说着，又拿起一片面包。

“他在世上拥有的一切，都是为你而准备的。”贝茜替汉格伯船长辩解。

“是啊，假如我回来，像某个洞里该死的癞蛤蟆一般，坐在他那堆东西上面。谢谢你。那把铁锹又怎么解释呢，嗯？他表达父爱的方

式总是这么古怪。”

“我能用一个星期的时间，说服他和你相认。”贝茜怯怯地说。

小汉格伯饿得只顾狼吞虎咽，并未回话。贝茜顺从地把盘子端近他手边，同时仰起头，开始轻声说话。她的语速极快，而且呼吸急促。小汉格伯听着，听着，变得十分惊奇，吃得也越来越慢，最后嘴巴完全停止了咀嚼。“这是他的诡计，对吧？”他逐渐提高嗓门，刻薄而轻蔑地说，同时不由自主地一挥胳膊，打飞贝茜端着的盘子。最后，他还恶狠狠地咒骂了一句。

贝茜以手扶墙，不断往后退缩。

“不！”小汉格伯发怒道，“他想得美！他盼我回来——好继承他那几个臭钱……谁稀罕他的房子？发疯了——他绝没有发疯！难道你不这么认为吗？他就是想让我任他摆布。过去，他要我做可悲的律师文书；现在，他又想把我关进笼子，使我变成一只该死的乖乖兔。使我变成乖乖兔！使我变成乖乖兔！”小汉格伯说完，发出一阵低沉而愤怒的笑声，令贝茜感到害怕。

“告诉你——叫什么来着——贝茜：全世界加一块儿，也才刚够我打开胳膊肘，更别提一栋小破屋里那该死的客厅了。结婚！他就想让我结婚并安定下来！而且，他很可能已为我选定一个姑娘——天哪！请问，你知道朱迪吗？”

贝茜强忍泪水，无声地抽噎，而且整个身子瑟瑟发抖，显得极为悲伤。但小汉格伯正怒不可遏，焦躁不安，所以并未注意。他咬着自己的大拇指，想着其父的独断专行，感到异常气愤。就在此时，一扇窗户咔嚓咔嚓地拉了起来。

“一个咧嘴大笑、自称有最新消息的家伙。”武断的汉格伯船长，以毫无起伏的语调，一字一顿地说。在贝茜听来，他的声音似乎使黑夜突然发病，似乎将疯病与不幸倾撒到了地面。“现在，我终于明白这里的人为什么不对劲了，亲爱的孩子。哎呀，难怪！就是这个疯子在四处作梗。别和他扯上任何瓜葛，贝茜。贝茜，听到没有！”

小汉格伯与贝茜呆立原地，默不作声，犹如哑巴。楼上窗边的老人焦躁难安，嘟哝不休。突然，他尖厉地喊道：“贝茜——我看见你了。我要告诉哈里。”

贝茜做出似要逃跑的动作，但最后收住了，并把双手举向两边耳鬓。而身影高大、模糊的小汉格伯犹如一尊青铜像，纹丝不动。在他俩头顶，发疯的黑夜借助一名老人之口，时而呜咽，时而咒骂。

“把他赶走，亲爱的孩子。他只是个流浪汉。你想要的，是一个属于自己的家，一个幸福的家。那家伙没有家——他和哈里不同。他

不可能是哈里。哈里明天就回来了。听到了吗？只要再等一天。”汉格伯船长变得更加激动，叽里咕噜地说，“你完全不用担心——哈里一定会娶你的。”

汉格伯船长的声音变得尖厉刺耳、歇斯底里。远处，波浪重重地席卷海堤外侧，发出阵阵低沉而有节奏的哗哗声，在夜空回荡不止。

“他必须娶你。我一定让他娶你。要是他不听，”汉格伯船长发下重誓，“明天，我就立遗嘱剥夺他的继承权，把一切统统留给你。我说到做到。统统留给你。让他饿死去吧。”

窗户咔嗒咔嗒地拉下了。

小汉格伯深吸一口气，接着朝贝茜走近一步。“原来你就是那姑娘。”他用低沉的声音说。贝茜没有动，仍双手夹头，半对着他。“天哪！”小汉格伯嘴角露出似笑非笑但难以觉察的表情，继续说，“我非常想留下来——”

贝茜的胳膊肘抖得厉害。

“——暂住一个星期。”小汉格伯毫不犹豫地说。

贝茜猛地用双手捂住脸。

小汉格伯走到贝茜跟前，轻轻抓住她的两只手腕。贝茜能通过耳朵感觉到对方呼出的气息。

“眼下，我陷入了困境。你必须帮我渡过难关。”小汉格伯试图把贝茜的双手从她脸上扳开，但贝茜坚决不从。于是，小汉格伯放开贝茜的手腕，微微后退。“你有钱吗？”他问，“我必须走了。”

满脸羞愧、浑身颤抖的贝茜飞快地点了点头，随即弯下脖子，开始急急忙忙地摸找连衣裙的口袋。小汉格伯把头转向别处，等待着。

“给你！”贝茜轻声说，“唉，快走！看在上帝的分儿上，快走！要是我有更多——更多——的钱，我会通通给你，好让自己忘记——好让你忘记我。”

小汉格伯伸出手，并说：“绝不可能！我从未忘记你们中的任何一个。有些不止给过我钱——不过，我现在是一个乞丐。你们女人无一例外，必定会帮我摆脱困境。”

小汉格伯大摇大摆地走近楼下客厅的窗户，然后站在从窗帘透出的暗淡灯光中，低头查看掌心的钱：一枚面值半英镑的金币。他随即将之放入衣服口袋。贝茜略微退向窗户边缘。她站在那里，低着脑袋，好像受伤了；双臂无力地垂于体侧，又好像死了。

“别以为用钱就能和我扯上瓜葛。”小汉格伯说，“别以为用钱就能

让你撇清关系。”

小汉格伯轻轻一拍，固定好头上的帽子。紧接着，贝茜发觉对方用强有力的臂膀把她整个人抱了起来，导致她双脚离地，脑袋后仰。小汉格伯对着贝茜的脸一阵狂吻。在此过程中，他一言不发，并表现出令人无力抵挡的激情，仿佛急不可耐地想触及对方的灵魂。贝茜苍白的脸颊、坚硬的额头、耷拉的眼皮、没有血色的嘴唇，他一一吻了个遍。让强有力的臂膀紧紧抱住，感受着无力抵挡的狂吻，听着上涨潮水有节奏的哗哗声：对贝茜来说，仿佛保护全镇所有家庭的海堤已经溃决，一个浪头正朝她劈头盖脸打下来。浪头终于过去了；贝茜踉跄着不断后退，直至双肩碰上墙壁。她感到筋疲力尽，仿佛不幸遭遇暴风雨引发的海难，最后让海浪冲到此地。

过了一会儿，贝茜睁开眼睛。坚定而从容的脚步声逐渐远去，带走一个俘获的灵魂。她开始整理所穿连衣裙的下摆，同时呆呆地凝望前方。突然，她冲出院子大门，冲向无边无际的黑夜和空无一人的大街。

“停下！”贝茜喊道，“别走！”

她侧耳倾听，但分不清究竟是雷鸣般的浪涛声，还是另一人要命的脚步声，在无情地击打她的心。不久，所有声音变得越来越微弱，仿佛她正慢慢化作石头。可怕的寂静逐渐笼罩大地——比死亡更可怕。贝茜聚集不断衰退的力量，喊出最后一声恳求：

“哈里！”

脚步声已经消失，连逐渐减弱的回音也听不见了。什么也听不见。拍打海堤的激浪和波涛汹涌的大海，似乎也都没了声音。万籁俱寂，死气沉沉，仿佛她正独自迷失于刚才小汉格伯提起的、遍地石头的沙漠中：许多疯子在那里一边流浪，一边寻找金子，找到后却对金子不屑一顾。

在漆黑的小屋里，汉格伯船长一直密切留意着外面的动静。一扇窗户咔嚓咔嚓地拉了起来。贝茜头顶高高的夜空中，出现一个不可理喻、充斥谎言、令人绝望却又永远透着希望的声音，打破了在遍地石头的沙漠才有的死寂。“他走了吗——那个自称有最新消息的家伙？你听到他还在附近吗，亲爱的孩子？”

贝茜忍不住流下眼泪。“不！不！不！我没再听到他的动静。”她抽泣着回答。

高处的汉格伯船长咯咯地笑了起来，听着十分得意。“你把他吓跑了。真是好姑娘。现在没事了。不要着急，亲爱的孩子。只要再等一天就好。”

在另一栋小屋里，卡尔维老头皇帝似的安坐在扶手椅中，旁边桌上点着一盏球形灯。他用恶魔般的声音吼道：“贝茜！贝茜！叫你呢，贝茜！”

最后，贝茜终于听到其父的咆哮。仿佛屈服于命运一般，她开始默默而踉跄地返回那处压抑的小小地狱——他们父女租住的小屋。那处地狱既无高耸的入口，也无可怕的铭文——用来明示所有失去的希望。贝茜不明白，自己究竟犯了什么罪。

高处的汉格伯船长吵吵嚷嚷，已乐得忘乎所以。

“进去！别吵了！”泪流满面的贝茜，站在门阶处，突然呵斥汉格伯船长。

汉格伯船长毫不理会。他正为终于摆脱使自己“哪里不对劲”的那个人而欣喜若狂：大喊大叫，对永不会到来的明天满怀希望。在贝茜听来，仿佛世上所有盲目乐观的疯子都聚到了一块儿，并集体发作，以令她感到深深的恐惧。

[1] 科尔切斯特，位于英国英格兰埃塞克斯郡。（说明：本书脚注均为译者注。）

[2] 英寻，长度单位，1英寻合6英尺或1.8288米。

[3] 尼普顿，罗马神话中的海神，也就是希腊神话中的波塞冬。

[4] 南希尔兹，英国英格兰东北部港城市。

[5] 傍晚茶，傍晚五六点钟吃的茶点。

[6] 南里奥格兰德，巴西南部的一个州。

[7] 索诺拉，墨西哥西北部的一个州。

[8] 马萨特兰，墨西哥西部港市。

Joseph
Conrad

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

To-morrow

N° 17

‘It was as if the
sea, breaking
down the wall
protecting all the
homes of the
town, had sent
a wave over
her head’ . . .

To-morrow

What was known of Captain Hagberd in the little seaport of Colebrook was not exactly in his favour. He did not belong to the place. He had come to settle there under circumstances not at all mysterious – he used to be very communicative about them at the time – but extremely morbid and unreasonable. He was possessed of some little money evidently, because he bought a plot of ground, and had a pair of ugly yellow brick cottages run up very cheaply. He occupied one of them himself and let the other to Josiah Carvil – blind Carvil, the retired boat-builder – a man of evil repute as a domestic tyrant.

These cottages had one wall in common, shared in a line of iron railing dividing their front gardens; a wooden fence separated their back gardens. Miss Bessie Carvil was allowed, as it were of right, to throw over it the tea-cloths, blue rags, or an apron that wanted drying.

‘It rots the wood, Bessie my girl,’ the captain would remark mildly, from his side of the fence, each time he saw her exercising that privilege.

She was a tall girl; the fence was low, and she could spread her elbows on the top. Her hands would be red with the bit of washing she had done, but her forearms were white and shapely, and she would look at her father’s landlord in silence – in an informed silence which had an air of knowledge, expectation, and desire.

‘It rots the wood,’ repeated Captain Hagberd. ‘It is the only unthrifty, careless habit I know in you. Why don’t you have a clothes-line out in your back yard?’

Miss Carvil would say nothing to this – she only shook her head negatively. The tiny back yard on her side had a few stone-bordered little beds of black earth, in which the simple flowers she found time to cultivate appeared somehow extravagantly overgrown, as if belonging to an exotic clime; and Captain Hagberd’s upright, hale person, clad in No. 1 sailcloth from head to foot, would be

emerging knee-deep out of rank grass and the tall weeds on his side of the fence. He appeared, with the colour and uncouth stiffness of the extraordinary material in which he chose to clothe himself – ‘for the time being,’ would be his mumbled remark to any observation on the subject – like a man roughened out of granite, standing in a wilderness not big enough for a decent billiard-room. A heavy figure of a man of stone, with a red handsome face, a blue wandering eye, and a great white beard flowing to his waist and never trimmed as far as Colebrook knew.

Seven years before, he had seriously answered, ‘Next month, I think,’ to the chaffing attempt to secure his custom made by that distinguished local wit, the Colebrook barber, who happened to be sitting insolently in the tap-room of the New Inn near the harbour, where the captain had entered to buy an ounce of tobacco. After paying for his purchase with three half-pence extracted from the corner of a handkerchief which he carried in the cuff of his sleeve, Captain Hagberd went out. As soon as the door was shut the barber laughed. ‘The old one and the young one will be strolling arm in arm to get shaved in my place presently. The tailor shall be set to work, and the barber, and the candlestick maker; high old times are coming for Colebrook; they are coming, to be sure. It used to be “next week,” now it has come to “next month,” and so on – soon it will be next spring, for all I know.’

Noticing a stranger listening to him with a vacant grin, he explained, stretching out his legs cynically, that this queer old Hagberd, a retired coastingskipper, was waiting for the return of a son of his. The boy had been driven away from home, he shouldn’t wonder; had run away to sea and had never been heard of since. Put to rest in Davy Jones’s locker this many a day, as likely as not. That old man came flying to Colebrook three years ago all in black broadcloth (had lost his wife lately then), getting out of a thirdclass smoker as if the devil had been at his heels; and the only thing that brought him down was a letter – a hoax probably. Some joker had written to him about a seafaring man with some such name who was supposed to be hanging about some girl or other, either in Colebrook or in the neighbourhood. ‘Funny, ain’t it?’ The old chap had been advertising in the London papers for Harry Hagberd, and offering rewards for any sort of likely information. And the barber would go on to describe, with sardonic gusto, how that stranger in

mourning had been seen exploring the country, in carts, on foot, taking everybody into his confidence, visiting all the inns and alehouses for miles around, stopping people on the road with his questions, looking into the very ditches almost; first in the greatest excitement, then with a plodding sort of perseverance, growing slower and slower; and he could not even tell you plainly how his son looked. The sailor was supposed to be one of two that had left a timber ship, and to have been seen dangling after some girl; but the old man described a boy of fourteen or so – ‘a clever-looking, high-spirited boy.’ And when people only smiled at this he would rub his forehead in a confused sort of way before he slunk off, looking offended. He found nobody, of course; not a trace of anybody – never heard of anything worth belief, at any rate; but he had not been able somehow to tear himself away from Colebrook.

‘It was the shock of this disappointment, perhaps, coming soon after the loss of his wife, that had driven him crazy on that point,’ the barber suggested, with an air of great psychological insight. After a time the old man abandoned the active search. His son had evidently gone away; but he settled himself to wait. His son had been once at least in Colebrook in preference to his native place. There must have been some reason for it, he seemed to think, some very powerful inducement, that would bring him back to Colebrook again.

‘Ha, ha, ha! Why, of course, Colebrook. Where else? That’s the only place in the United Kingdom for your long-lost sons. So he sold up his old home in Colchester, and down he comes here. Well, it’s a craze, like any other. Wouldn’t catch me going crazy over any of my youngsters clearing out. I’ve got eight of them at home.’ The barber was showing off his strength of mind in the midst of a laughter that shook the tap-room.

Strange, though, that sort of thing, he would confess, with the frankness of a superior intelligence, seemed to be catching. His establishment, for instance, was near the harbour, and whenever a sailorman came in for a hair-cut or a shave – if it was a strange face he couldn’t help thinking directly, ‘Suppose he’s the son of old Hagberd!’ He laughed at himself for it. It was a strong craze. He could remember the time when the whole town was full of it. But he had his hopes of the old chap yet. He would cure him by a course of judicious chaffing. He was watching the progress of the

treatment. Next week – next month – next year! When the old skipper had put off the date of that return till next year, he would be well on his way to not saying any more about it. In other matters he was quite rational, so this, too, was bound to come. Such was the barber's firm opinion.

Nobody had ever contradicted him; his own hair had gone grey since that time, and Captain Hagberd's beard had turned quite white, and had acquired a majestic flow over the No. 1 canvas suit, which he had made for himself secretly with tarred twine, and had assumed suddenly, coming out in it one fine morning, whereas the evening before he had been seen going home in his mourning of broadcloth. It caused a sensation in the High Street – shopkeepers coming to their doors, people in the houses snatching up their hats to run out – a stir at which he seemed strangely surprised at first, and then scared; but his only answer to the wondering questions was that startled and evasive, 'For the present.'

That sensation had been forgotten long ago; and Captain Hagberd himself, if not forgotten, had come to be disregarded – the penalty of dailiness – as the sun itself is disregarded unless it makes its power felt heavily. Captain Hagberd's movements showed no infirmity: he walked stiffly in his suit of canvas, a quaint and remarkable figure; only his eyes wandered more furtively perhaps than of yore. His manner abroad had lost its excitable watchfulness; it had become puzzled and diffident, as though he had suspected that there was somewhere about him something slightly compromising, some embarrassing oddity; and yet had remained unable to discover what on earth this something wrong could be.

He was unwilling now to talk with the townsfolk. He had earned for himself the reputation of an awful skinflint, of a miser, in the matter of living. He mumbled regretfully in the shops, bought inferior scraps of meat after long hesitations; and discouraged all allusions to his costume. It was as the barber had foretold. For all one could tell, he had recovered already from the disease of hope; and only Miss Bessie Carvil knew that he said nothing about his son's return because with him it was no longer 'next week,' 'next month,' or even 'next year.' It was 'to-morrow.'

In their intimacy of back yard and front garden he talked with her paternally, reasonably, and dogmatically, with a touch of

arbitrariness. They met on the ground of unreserved confidence, which was authenticated by an affectionate wink now and then. Miss Carvil had come to look forward rather to these winks. At first they had discomposed her: the poor fellow was mad. Afterwards she had learned to laugh at them: there was no harm in him. Now she was aware of an unacknowledged, pleasurable, incredulous emotion, expressed by a faint blush. He winked not in the least vulgarly; his thin red face, with a well-modelled curved nose, had a sort of distinction – the more so that when he talked to her he looked with a steadier and more intelligent glance. A handsome, hale, upright, capable man, with a white beard. You did not think of his age. His son, he affirmed, had resembled him amazingly from his earliest babyhood.

Harry would be one-and-thirty next July, he declared. Proper age to get married with a nice, sensible girl that could appreciate a good home. He was a very high-spirited boy. High-spirited husbands were the easiest to manage. These mean, soft chaps, that you would think butter wouldn't melt in their mouths, were the ones to make a woman thoroughly miserable. And there was nothing like home – a fireside – a good roof: no turning out of your warm bed in all sorts of weather. 'Eh, my dear?'

Captain Hagberd had been one of those sailors that pursue their calling within sight of land. One of the many children of a bankrupt farmer, he had been apprenticed hurriedly to a coasting-skipper, and had remained on the coast all his sea life. It must have been a hard one at first: he had never taken to it; his affection turned to the land, with its innumerable houses, with its quiet lives gathered round its firesides. Many sailors feel and profess a rational dislike for the sea, but his was a profound and emotional animosity, as if the love of the stabler element had been bred into him through many generations.

'People did not know what they let their boys in for when they let them go to sea,' he expounded to Bessie. 'As soon make convicts of them at once.' He did not believe you ever got used to it. The weariness of such a life got worse as you got older. What sort of trade was it in which more than half your time you did not put your foot inside your house? Directly you got out to sea you had no means of knowing what went on at home. One might have thought him weary of distant voyages; and the longest he had ever made

had lasted a fortnight, of which the most part had been spent at anchor, sheltering from the weather. As soon as his wife had inherited a house and enough to live on (from a bachelor uncle who had made some money in the coal business) he threw up his command of an East-coast collier with a feeling as though he had escaped from the galleys. After all these years he might have counted on the fingers of his two hands all the days he had been out of sight of England. He had never known what it was to be out of soundings. 'I have never been further than eighty fathoms from the land' was one of his boasts.

Bessie Carvil heard all these things. In front of their cottage grew an under-sized ash; and on summer afternoons she would bring out a chair on the grass-plot and sit down with her sewing. Captain Hagberd, in his canvas suit, leaned on a spade. He dug every day in his front plot. He turned it over and over several times every year, but was not going to plant anything 'just at present.'

To Bessie Carvil he would state more explicitly: 'Not till our Harry comes home to-morrow.' And she had heard this formula of hope so often that it only awakened the vaguest pity in her heart for that hopeful old man.

Everything was put off in that way, and everything was being prepared likewise for to-morrow. There was a boxful of packets of various flower-seeds to choose from, for the front garden. 'He will doubtless let you have your say about that, my dear,' Captain Hagberd intimated to her across the railing.

Miss Bessie's head remained bowed over her work. She had heard all this so many times. But now and then she would rise, lay down her sewing, and come slowly to the fence. There was a charm in these gentle ravings. He was determined that his son should not go away again for the want of a home all ready for him. He had been filling the other cottage with all sorts of furniture. She imagined it all new, fresh with varnish, piled up as in a warehouse. There would be tables wrapped up in sacking; rolls of carpets thick and vertical like fragments of columns; the gleam of white marble tops in the dimness of the drawn blinds. Captain Hagberd always described his purchases to her carefully, as to a person having a legitimate interest in them. The overgrown yard of his cottage could be laid over with concrete . . . after to-morrow.

‘We may just as well do away with the fence. You could have your drying-line out, quite clear of your flowers.’ He winked, and she would blush faintly.

This madness that had entered her life through the kind impulses of her heart had reasonable details. What if some day his son returned? But she could not even be quite sure that he ever had a son; and if he existed anywhere, he had been too long away. When Captain Hagberd got excited in his talk she would steady him by a pretence of belief, laughing a little to salve her conscience.

Only once she had tried pityingly to throw some doubt on that hope doomed to disappointment, but the effect of her attempt had scared her very much. All at once over that man’s face there came an expression of horror and incredulity, as though he had seen a crack open out in the firmament.

‘You – you – you don’t think he’s drowned!’

For a moment he seemed to her ready to go out of his mind, for in his ordinary state she thought him more sane than people gave him credit for. On that occasion the violence of the emotion was followed by a most paternal and complacent recovery.

‘Don’t alarm yourself, my dear,’ he said a little cunningly. ‘The sea can’t keep him. He does not belong to it. None of us Hagberds ever did belong to it. Look at me; I didn’t get drowned. Moreover, he isn’t a sailor at all; and if he is not a sailor, he’s bound to come back. There’s nothing to prevent him coming back . . .’

His eyes began to wander.

‘To-morrow.’

She never tried again, for fear the man should go out of his mind on the spot. He depended on her. She seemed the only sensible person in the town; and he would congratulate himself frankly before her face on having secured such a level-headed wife for his son. The rest of the town, he confided to her once, in a fit of temper, was certainly queer. The way they looked at you – the way they talked to you! He had never got on with any one in the place. Didn’t like the people. He would not have left his own country if it had not been clear that his son had taken a fancy to Colebrook.

She humoured him in silence, listening patiently by the fence;

crocheting with downcast eyes. Blushes came with difficulty on her dead-white complexion, under the negligently twisted opulence of mahoganycoloured hair. Her father was frankly carroty.

She had a full figure; a tired, unrefreshed face. When Captain Hagberd vaunted the necessity and propriety of a home and the delights of one's own fireside, she smiled a little, with her lips only. Her home delights had been confined to the nursing of her father during the ten best years of her life.

A bestial roaring coming out of an upstairs window would interrupt their talk. She would begin at once to roll up her crochet-work or fold her sewing, without the slightest sign of haste. Meanwhile the howls and roars of her name would go on, making the fishermen strolling upon the sea-wall on the other side of the road turn their heads towards the cottages. She would go in slowly at the front door, and a moment afterwards there would fall a profound silence. Presently she would reappear, leading by the hand a man, gross and unwieldy like a hippopotamus, with a bad-tempered, surly face.

He was a widowed boat-builder, whom blindness had overtaken years before in the full flush of business. He behaved to his daughter as if she had been responsible for its incurable character. He had been heard to bellow at the top of his voice, as if to defy Heaven, that he did not care: he had made enough money to have ham and eggs for his breakfast every morning. He thanked God for it, in a fiendish tone as though he were cursing.

Captain Hagberd had been so unfavourably impressed by his tenant that once he told Miss Bessie, 'He is a very extravagant fellow, my dear.'

She was knitting that day, finishing a pair of socks for her father, who expected her to keep up the supply dutifully. She hated knitting, and, as she was just at the heel part, she had to keep her eyes on her needles.

'Of course it isn't as if he had a son to provide for,' Captain Hagberd went on a little vacantly. 'Girls, of course, don't require so much - h'm - h'm. They don't run away from home, my dear.'

'No,' said Miss Bessie, quietly.

Captain Hagberd, amongst the mounds of turnedup earth,

chuckled. With his maritime rig, his weather-beaten face, his beard of Father Neptune, he resembled a deposed sea-god who had exchanged the trident for the spade.

‘And he must look upon you as already provided for, in a manner. That’s the best of it with the girls. The husbands . . .’ He winked. Miss Bessie, absorbed in her knitting, coloured faintly.

‘Bessie! my hat!’ old Carvil bellowed out suddenly. He had been sitting under the tree mute and motionless, like an idol of some remarkably monstrous superstition. He never opened his mouth but to howl for her, at her, sometimes about her; and then he did not moderate the terms of his abuse. Her system was never to answer him at all; and he kept up his shouting till he got attended to – till she shook him by the arm, or thrust the mouthpiece of his pipe between his teeth. He was one of the few blind people who smoke. When he felt the hat being put on his head he stopped his noise at once. Then he rose, and they passed together through the gate.

He weighed heavily on her arm. During their slow, toilful walks she appeared to be dragging with her for a penance the burden of that infirm bulk. Usually they crossed the road at once (the cottages stood in the fields near the harbour, two hundred yards away from the end of the street), and for a long, long time they would remain in view, ascending imperceptibly the flight of wooden steps that led to the top of the sea-wall. It ran on from east to west, shutting out the Channel like a neglected railway embankment, on which no train had ever rolled within memory of man. Groups of sturdy fishermen would emerge upon the sky, walk along for a bit, and sink without haste. Their brown nets, like the cobwebs of gigantic spiders, lay on the shabby grass of the slope; and, looking up from the end of the street, the people of the town would recognise the two Carvils by the creeping slowness of their gait. Captain Hagberd, pottering aimlessly about his cottages, would raise his head to see how they got on in their promenade.

He advertised still in the Sunday papers for Harry Hagberd. These sheets were read in foreign parts to the end of the world, he informed Bessie. At the same time he seemed to think that his son was in England –so near to Colebrook that he would of course turn up ‘to-morrow.’ Bessie, without committing herself to that opinion in so many words, argued that in that case the expense of

advertising was unnecessary; Captain Hagberd had better spend that weekly half-crown on himself. She declared she did not know what he lived on. Her argumentation would puzzle him and cast him down for a time. 'They all do it,' he pointed out. There was a whole column devoted to appeals after missing relatives. He would bring the newspaper to show her. He and his wife had advertised for years; only she was an impatient woman. The news from Colebrook had arrived the very day after her funeral; if she had not been so impatient she might have been here now, with no more than one day more to wait. 'You are not an impatient woman, my dear.'

'I've no patience with you sometimes,' she would say.

If he still advertised for his son he did not offer rewards for information any more; for, with the muddled lucidity of a mental derangement, he had reasoned himself into a conviction as clear as daylight that he had already attained all that could be expected in that way. What more could he want? Colebrook was the place, and there was no need to ask for more. Miss Carvil praised him for his good sense, and he was soothed by the part she took in his hope, which had become his delusion; in that idea which blinded his mind to truth and probability, just as the other old man in the other cottage had been made blind, by another disease, to the light and beauty of the world.

But anything he could interpret as a doubt – any coldness of assent, or even a simple inattention to the development of his projects of a home with his returned son and his son's wife – would irritate him into flings and jerks and wicked side-glances. He would dash his spade into the ground and walk to and fro before it. Miss Bessie called it his tantrums. She shook her finger at him. Then, when she came out again, after he had parted with her in anger, he would watch out of the corner of his eyes for the least sign of encouragement to approach the iron railings and resume his fatherly and patronising relations.

For all their intimacy, which had lasted some years now, they had never talked without a fence or a railing between them. He described to her all the splendours accumulated for the setting-up of their housekeeping, but had never invited her to an inspection. No human eye was to behold them till Harry had his first look. In fact,

nobody had ever been inside his cottage; he did his own housework, and he guarded his son's privilege so jealously that the small objects of domestic use he bought sometimes in the town were smuggled rapidly across the front garden under his canvas coat. Then, coming out, he would remark apologetically, 'It was only a small kettle, my dear.'

And, if not too tired with her drudgery, or worried beyond endurance by her father, she would laugh at him with a blush, and say: 'That's all right, Captain Hagberd; I am not impatient.'

'Well, my dear, you haven't long to wait now,' he would answer with a sudden bashfulness, and looking uneasily, as though he had suspected that there was something wrong somewhere.

Every Monday she paid him his rent over the railings. He clutched the shillings greedily. He grudged every penny he had to spend on his maintenance, and when he left her to make his purchases his bearing changed as soon as he got into the street. Away from the sanction of her pity, he felt himself exposed without defence. He brushed the walls with his shoulder. He mistrusted the queerness of the people; yet, by then, even the town children had left off calling after him, and the tradesmen served him without a word. The slightest allusion to his clothing had the power to puzzle and frighten especially, as if it were something utterly unwarranted and incomprehensible.

In the autumn, the driving rain drummed on his sail-cloth suit saturated almost to the stiffness of sheet-iron, with its surface flowing with water. When the weather was too bad, he retreated under the tiny porch, and, standing close against the door, looked at his spade left planted in the middle of the yard. The ground was so much dug up all over, that as the season advanced it turned to a quagmire. When it froze hard, he was disconsolate. What would Harry say? And as he could not have so much of Bessie's company at that time of the year, the roars of old Carvil, that came muffled through the closed windows, calling her indoors, exasperated him greatly.

'Why don't that extravagant fellow get you a servant?' he asked impatiently one mild afternoon. She had thrown something over her head to run out for a while.

'I don't know,' said the pale Bessie, wearily, staring away with her heavy-lidded, grey, and unexpectant glance. There were always smudgy shadows under her eyes, and she did not seem able to see any change or any end to her life.

'You wait till you get married, my dear,' said her only friend, drawing closer to the fence. 'Harry will get you one.'

His hopeful craze seemed to mock her own want of hope with so bitter an aptness that in her nervous irritation she could have screamed at him outright. But she only said in self-mockery, and speaking to him as though he had been sane, 'Why, Captain Hagberd, your son may not even want to look at me.'

He flung his head back and laughed his throaty affected cackle of anger.

'What! That boy? Not want to look at the only sensible girl for miles around? What do you think I am here for, my dear – my dear – my dear? . . . What? You wait. You just wait. You'll see to-morrow. I'll soon –'

'Bessie! Bessie! Bessie!' howled old Carvil inside. 'Bessie! – my pipe!' That fat blind man had given himself up to a very lust of laziness. He would not lift his hand to reach for the things she took care to leave at his very elbow. He would not move a limb; he would not rise from his chair; he would not put one foot before another, in that parlour (where he knew his way as well as if he had his sight), without calling her to his side and hanging all his atrocious weight on her shoulder. He would not eat one single mouthful of food without her close attendance. He had made himself helpless beyond his affliction, to enslave her better. She stood still for a moment, setting her teeth in the dusk, then turned and walked slowly indoors.

Captain Hagberd went back to his spade. The shouting in Carvil's cottage stopped, and after a while the window of the parlour downstairs was lit up. A man coming from the end of the street with a firm leisurely step passed on, but seemed to have caught sight of Captain Hagberd, because he turned back a pace or two. A cold white light lingered in the western sky. The man leaned over the gate in an interested manner.

'You must be Captain Hagberd,' he said, with easy assurance.

The old man spun round, pulling out his spade, startled by the strange voice.

‘Yes, I am,’ he answered nervously.

The other, smiling straight at him, uttered very slowly: ‘You’ve been advertising for your son, I believe?’

‘My son Harry,’ mumbled Captain Hagberd, off his guard for once. ‘He’s coming home to-morrow.’

‘The devil he is!’ The stranger marvelled greatly, and then went on, with only a slight change of tone: ‘You’ve grown a beard like Father Christmas himself.’

Captain Hagberd drew a little nearer, and leaned forward over his spade. ‘Go your way,’ he said, resentfully and timidly at the same time, because he was always afraid of being laughed at. Every mental state, even madness, has its equilibrium based upon self-esteem. Its disturbance causes unhappiness; and Captain Hagberd lived amongst a scheme of settled notions which it pained him to feel disturbed by people’s grins. Yes, people’s grins were awful. They hinted at something wrong: but what? He could not tell; and that stranger was obviously grinning – had come on purpose to grin. It was bad enough on the streets, but he had never before been outraged like this.

The stranger, unaware how near he was of having his head laid open with a spade, said seriously: ‘I am not trespassing where I stand, am I? I fancy there’s something wrong about your news. Suppose you let me come in.’

‘You come in!’ murmured old Hagberd, with inexpressible horror.

‘I could give you some real information about your son – the very latest tip, if you care to hear.’

‘No,’ shouted Hagberd. He began to pace wildly to and fro, he shouldered his spade, he gesticulated with his other arm. ‘Here’s a fellow – a grinning fellow, who says there’s something wrong. I’ve got more information than you’re aware of. I’ve all the information I want. I’ve had it for years – for years – for years – enough to last me till to-morrow. Let you come in, indeed! What would Harry say?’

Bessie Carvil's figure appeared in black silhouette on the parlour window; then, with the sound of an opening door, flitted out before the other cottage, all black, but with something white over her head. These two voices beginning to talk suddenly outside (she had heard them indoors) had given her such an emotion that she could not utter a sound.

Captain Hagberd seemed to be trying to find his way out of a cage. His feet squelched in the puddles left by his industry. He stumbled in the holes of the ruined grass-plot. He ran blindly against the fence.

'Here, steady a bit!' said the man at the gate, gravely stretching his arm over and catching him by the sleeve. 'Somebody's been trying to get at you. Hallo! what's this rig you've got on? Storm canvas, by George!' He had a big laugh. 'Well, you are a character!'

Captain Hagberd jerked himself free, and began to back away shrinkingly. 'For the present,' he muttered, in a crestfallen tone.

'What's the matter with him?' The stranger addressed Bessie with the utmost familiarity, in a deliberate, explanatory tone. 'I didn't want to startle the old man.' He lowered his voice as though he had known her for years. 'I dropped into a barber's on my way, to get a twopenny shave, and they told me there he was something of a character. The old man has been a character all his life.'

Captain Hagberd, daunted by the allusion to his clothing, had retreated inside, taking his spade with him; and the two at the gate, startled by the unexpected slamming of the door, heard the bolts being shot, the snapping of the lock, and the echo of an affected gurgling laugh within.

'I didn't want to upset him,' the man said, after a short silence. 'What's the meaning of all this? He isn't quite crazy.'

'He has been worrying a long time about his lost son,' said Bessie, in a low apologetic tone.

'Well, I am his son.'

'Harry!' she cried – and was profoundly silent.

'Know my name? Friends with the old man, eh?'

'He's our landlord,' Bessie faltered out, catching hold of the

iron railing.

‘Owns both them rabbit-hutches, does he?’ commented young Hagberd, scornfully. ‘Just the thing he would be proud of. Can you tell me who’s that chap coming to-morrow? You must know something of it. I tell you, it’s a swindle on the old man – nothing else.’

She did not answer, helpless before an insurmountable difficulty, appalled before the necessity, the impossibility and the dread of an explanation in which she and madness seemed involved together.

‘Oh – I am so sorry,’ she murmured.

‘What’s the matter?’ he said, with serenity. ‘You needn’t be afraid of upsetting me. It’s the other fellow that’ll be upset when he least expects it. I don’t care a hang; but there will be some fun when he shows his mug to-morrow. I don’t care *that* for the old man’s pieces, but right is right. You shall see me put a head on that coon – whoever he is!’

He had come nearer, and towered above her on the other side of the railings. He glanced at her hands. He fancied she was trembling, and it occurred to him that she had her part perhaps in that little game that was to be sprung on his old man to-morrow. He had come just in time to spoil their sport. He was entertained by the idea – scornful of the baffled plot. But all his life he had been full of indulgence for all sorts of women’s tricks. She really was trembling very much; her wrap had slipped off her head. ‘Poor devil!’ he thought. ‘Never mind about that chap. I daresay he’ll change his mind before to-morrow. But what about me? I can’t loaf about the gate till the morning.’

She burst out: ‘It is *you* – you yourself that he’s waiting for. It is *you* who come to-morrow.’

He murmured ‘Oh! It’s me!’ blankly, and they seemed to become breathless together. Apparently he was pondering over what he had heard; then, without irritation, but evidently perplexed, he said: ‘I don’t understand. I hadn’t written or anything. It’s my chum who saw the paper and told me – this very morning . . . Eh? what?’

He bent his ear; she whispered rapidly, and he listened for a

while, muttering the words 'yes' and 'I see' at times. Then, 'But why won't to-day do?' he queried at last.

'You didn't understand me!' she exclaimed, impatiently. The clear streak of light under the clouds died out in the west. Again he stooped slightly to hear better; and the deep night buried everything of the whispering woman and the attentive man, except the familiar contiguity of their faces, with its air of secrecy and caress.

He squared his shoulders; the broad-brimmed shadow of a hat sat cavalierly on his head. 'Awkward this, eh?' he appealed to her. 'To-morrow? Well, well! Never heard tell of anything like this. It's all to-morrow, then, without any sort of to-day, as far as I can see.'

She remained still and mute.

'And you have been encouraging this funny notion,' he said.

'I never contradicted him.'

'Why didn't you?'

'What for should I?' she defended herself. 'It would only have made him miserable. He would have gone out of his mind.'

'His mind!' he muttered, and heard a short nervous laugh from her.

'Where was the harm? Was I to quarrel with the poor old man? It was easier to half believe it myself.'

'Aye, aye,' he meditated, intelligently. 'I suppose the old chap got around you somehow with his soft talk. You are good-hearted.'

Her hands moved up in the dark nervously. 'And it might have been true. It was true. It has come. Here it is. This is the to-morrow we have been waiting for.'

She drew a breath, and he said, good-humouredly: 'Aye, with the door shut. I wouldn't care if . . . And you think he could be brought round to recognise me . . . Eh? What? . . . You could do it? In a week you say? H'm, I daresay you could – but do you think I could hold out a week in this dead-alive place? Not me! I want either hard work, or an all-fired racket, or more space than there is in the whole of England. I have been in this place, though, once before, and for more than a week. The old man was advertising for

me then, and a chum I had with me had a notion of getting a couple of quid out of him by writing a lot of silly nonsense in a letter. That lark did not come off, though. We had to clear out – and none too soon. But this time I’ve a chum waiting for me in London, and besides . . .’

Bessie Carvil was breathing quickly.

‘What if I tried a knock at the door?’ he suggested.

‘Try,’ she said.

Captain Hagberd’s gate squeaked, and the shadow of the son moved on, then stopped with another deep laugh in the throat, like the father’s, only soft and gentle, thrilling to the woman’s heart, awakening to her ears.

‘He isn’t frisky – is he? I would be afraid to lay hold of him. The chaps are always telling me I don’t know my own strength.’

‘He’s the most harmless creature that ever lived,’ she interrupted.

‘You wouldn’t say so if you had seen him chasing me upstairs with a hard leather strap,’ he said. ‘I haven’t forgotten it in sixteen years.’

She got warm from head to foot under another soft, subdued laugh. At the rat-tat-tat of the knocker her heart flew into her mouth.

‘Hey, dad! Let me in. I am Harry, I am. Straight! Come back home a day too soon.’

One of the windows upstairs ran up.

‘A grinning information fellow,’ said the voice of old Hagberd, up in the darkness. ‘Don’t you have anything to do with him. It will spoil everything.’

She heard Harry Hagberd say, ‘Hallo, dad,’ then a clanging clatter. The window rumbled down, and he stood before her again.

‘It’s just like old times. Nearly walloped the life out of me to stop me going away, and now I come back he throws a confounded shovel at my head to keep me out. It grazed my shoulder.’

She shuddered.

‘I wouldn’t care,’ he began, ‘only I spent my last shillings on the railway fare and my last twopence on a shave – out of respect for the old man.’

‘Are you really Harry Hagberd?’ she asked swiftly. ‘Can you prove it?’

‘Can I prove it? Can any one else prove it?’ he said jovially. ‘Prove with what? What do I want to prove? There isn’t a single corner in the world, barring England, perhaps, where you could not find some man, or more likely a woman, that would remember me for Harry Hagberd. I am more like Harry Hagberd than any man alive; and I can prove it to you in a minute, if you will let me step inside your gate.’

‘Come in,’ she said.

He entered then the front garden of the Carvils. His tall shadow strode with a swagger; she turned her back on the window and waited, watching the shape, of which the footfalls seemed the most material part. The light fell on a tilted hat; a powerful shoulder that seemed to cleave the darkness; on a leg stepping out. He swung about and stood still, facing the illuminated parlour window at her back, turning his head from side to side, laughing softly to himself.

‘Just fancy, for a minute, the old man’s beard stuck on to my chin. Hey? Now say. I was the very spit of him from a boy.’

‘It’s true,’ she murmured to herself.

‘And that’s about as far as it goes. He was always one of your domestic characters. Why, I remember how he used to go about looking very sick for three days before he had to leave home on one of his trips to South Shields for coal. He had a standing charter from the gas-works. You would think he was off on a whaling cruise – three years and a tail. Ha, ha! Not a bit of it. Ten days on the outside. The *Skimmer of the Seas* was a smart craft. Fine name, wasn’t it? Mother’s uncle owned her . . .’

He interrupted himself, and in a lowered voice, ‘Did he ever tell you what mother died of?’ he asked.

‘Yes,’ said Miss Bessie, bitterly: ‘from impatience.’

He made no sound for a while; then brusquely: ‘They were so afraid I would turn out badly that they fairly drove me away.’

Mother nagged at me for being idle, and the old man said he would cut my soul out of my body rather than let me go to sea. Well, it looked as if he would do it too – so I went. It looks to me sometimes as if I had been born to them by a mistake – in that other hutch of a house.'

'Where ought you to have been born by rights?' Bessie Carvil interrupted him, defiantly.

'In the open, upon a beach, on a windy night,' he said, quick as lightning. Then he mused slowly. 'They were characters, both of them, by George; and the old man keeps it up well – don't he? A damned shovel on the – Hark! who's that making that row? "Bessie, Bessie." It's in your house.'

'It's for me,' she said with indifference.

He stepped aside, out of the streak of light. 'Your husband?' he inquired, with the tone of a man accustomed to unlawful trysts. 'Fine voice for a ship's deck in a thundering squall.'

'No; my father. I am not married.'

'You seem a fine girl, Miss Bessie, dear,' he said at once. She turned her face away.

'Oh, I say, what's up? Who's murdering him?'

'He wants his tea.' She faced him, still and tall, with averted head, with her hands hanging clasped before her.

'Hadn't you better go in?' he suggested, after watching for a while the nape of her neck, a patch of dazzling white skin and soft shadow above the sombre line of her shoulders. Her wrap had slipped down to her elbows. 'You'll have all the town coming out presently. I'll wait here a bit.'

Her wrap fell to the ground, and he stooped to pick it up; she had vanished. He threw it over his arm, and approaching the window squarely he saw a monstrous form of a fat man in an arm-chair, an unshaded lamp, the yawning of an enormous mouth in a big flat face encircled by a ragged halo of hair, Miss Bessie's head and bust. The shouting stopped; the blind ran down. He lost himself in thinking how awkward it was. Father mad; no getting into the house. No money to get back; a hungry chum in London who would begin to think he had been given the go-by. 'Damn!' he muttered.

He could break the door in, certainly; but they would perhaps bundle him into chokey for that without asking questions –no great matter, only he was confoundedly afraid of being locked up, even in mistake. He turned cold at the thought. He stamped his feet on the sodden grass.

‘What are you? A sailor?’ said an agitated voice.

She had flitted out, a shadow herself, attracted by the reckless shadow waiting under the wall of her home.

‘Anything. Enough of a sailor to be worth my salt before the mast. Came home that way this time.’

‘Where do you come from?’ she asked.

‘Right away from a jolly good spree,’ he said, ‘by the London train – see? Ough! I hate being shut up in a train. I don’t mind a house so much.’

‘Ah,’ she said, ‘that’s lucky.’

‘Because in a house you can at any time open the blamed door and walk away straight before you.’

‘And never come back?’

‘Not for sixteen years at least,’ he laughed. ‘To a rabbit-hutch, and get a confounded old shovel . . .’

‘A ship is not so very big,’ she taunted.

‘No, but the sea is great.’

She dropped her head, and as if her ears had been opened to the voices of the world, she heard, beyond the rampart of sea-wall, the swell of yesterday’s gale breaking on the beach with monotonous and solemn vibrations, as if all the earth had been a tolling bell.

‘And then, why, a ship’s a ship. You love her and leave her; and a voyage isn’t a marriage.’ He quoted the sailor’s saying lightly.

‘It is not a marriage,’ she whispered.

‘I never took a false name, and I’ve never yet told a lie to a woman. What lie? Why, the lie –. Take me or leave me, I say: and if you take me, then it is . . .’ He hummed a snatch very low, leaning against the wall.

Oh, ho, ho Rio!

And fare thee well,

My bonnie young girl,

We're bound to Rio Grande.

'Capstan song,' he explained. Her teeth chattered.

'You are cold,' he said. 'Here's that affair of yours I picked up.' She felt his hands about her, wrapping her closely. 'Hold the ends together in front,' he commanded.

'What did you come here for?' she asked, repressing a shudder.

'Five quid,' he answered, promptly. 'We let our spree go on a little too long and got hard up.'

'You've been drinking?' she said.

'Blind three days; on purpose. I am not given that way – don't you think. There's nothing and nobody that can get over me unless I like. I can be as steady as a rock. My chum sees the paper this morning, and says he to me: "Go on, Harry: loving parent. That's five quid sure." So we scraped all our pockets for the fare. Devil of a lark!'

'You have a hard heart, I am afraid,' she sighed.

'What for? For running away? Why! he wanted to make a lawyer's clerk of me – just to please himself. Master in his own house; and my poor mother egged him on – for my good, I suppose. Well, then – so long; and I went. No, I tell you: the day I cleared out, I was all black and blue from his great fondness for me. Ah! he was always a bit of a character. Look at that shovel now. Off his chump? Not much. That's just exactly like my dad. He wants me here just to have somebody to order about. However, we two were hard up; and what's five quid to him – once in sixteen hard years?'

'Oh, but I am sorry for you. Did you never want to come back home?'

'Be a lawyer's clerk and rot here – in some such place as this?' he cried in contempt. 'What! if the old man set me up in a home to-day, I would kick it down about my ears – or else die there before

the third day was out.'

'And where else is it that you hope to die?'

'In the bush somewhere; in the sea; on a blamed mountaintop for choice. At home? Yes! the world's my home; but I expect I'll die in a hospital some day. What of that? Any place is good enough, as long as I've lived; and I've been everything you can think of almost but a tailor or a soldier. I've been a boundary rider; I've sheared sheep; and humped my swag; and harpooned a whale. I've rigged ships, and prospected for gold, and skinned dead bullocks – and turned my back on more money than the old man would have scraped in his whole life. Ha, ha!'

He overwhelmed her. She pulled herself together and managed to utter, 'Time to rest now.'

He straightened himself up, away from the wall, and in a severe voice said, 'Time to go.'

But he did not move. He leaned back again, and hummed thoughtfully a bar or two of an outlandish tune.

She felt as if she were about to cry. 'That's another of your cruel songs,' she said.

'Learned it in Mexico – in Sonora.' He talked easily. 'It is the song of the Gambusinos. You don't know? The song of restless men. Nothing could hold them in one place – not even a woman. You used to meet one of them now and again, in the old days, on the edge of the gold country, away north there beyond the Rio Gila. I've seen it. A prospecting engineer in Mazatlan took me along with him to help look after the waggons. A sailor's a handy chap to have about you anyhow. It's all a desert: cracks in the earth that you can't see the bottom of; and mountains – sheer rocks standing up high like walls and church spires, only a hundred times bigger. The valleys are full of boulders and black stones. There's not a blade of grass to see; and the sun sets more red over that country than I have seen it anywhere – blood-red and angry. It is fine.'

'You do not want to go back there again?' she stammered out.

He laughed a little. 'No. That's the blamed gold country. It gave me the shivers sometimes to look at it – and we were a big lot of men together, mind; but these Gambusinos wandered alone. They

knew that country before anybody had ever heard of it. They had a sort of gift for prospecting, and the fever of it was on them too; and they did not seem to want the gold very much. They would find some rich spot, and then turn their backs on it; pick up perhaps a little – enough for a spree – and then be off again, looking for more. They never stopped long where there were houses; they had no wife, no chick, no home, never a chum. You couldn't be friends with a Gambusino; they were too restless – here to-day, and gone, God knows where, to-morrow. They told no one of their finds, and there has never been a Gambusino well off. It was not for the gold they cared; it was the wandering about looking for it in the stony country that got into them and wouldn't let them rest; so that no woman yet born could hold a Gambusino for more than a week. That's what the song says. It's all about a pretty girl that tried hard to keep hold of a Gambusino lover, so that he should bring her lots of gold. No fear! Off he went, and she never saw him again.'

'What became of her?' she breathed out.

'The song don't tell. Cried a bit, I daresay. They were the fellows: kiss and go. But it's the looking for a thing – a something . . . Sometimes I think I am a sort of Gambusino myself.'

'No woman can hold you, then,' she began in a brazen voice, which quavered suddenly before the end.

'No longer than a week,' he joked, playing upon her very heartstrings with the gay, tender note of his laugh, 'and yet I am fond of them all. Anything for a woman of the right sort. The scrapes they got me into, and the scrapes they got me out of! I love them at first sight. I've fallen in love with you already, Miss – Bessie's your name – eh?'

She backed away a little, and with a trembling laugh: 'You haven't seen my face yet.'

He bent forward gallantly. 'A little pale: it suits some. But you are a fine figure of a girl, Miss Bessie.'

She was all in a flutter. Nobody had ever said so much to her before.

His tone changed. 'I am getting middling hungry, though. Had no breakfast to-day. Couldn't you scare up some bread from that tea for me, or –'

She was gone already. He had been on the point of asking her to let him come inside. No matter. Anywhere would do. Devil of a fix! What would his chum think?

‘I didn’t ask you as a beggar,’ he said, jestingly, taking a piece of bread-and-butter from the plate she held before him. ‘I asked as a friend. My dad is rich, you know.’

‘He starves himself for your sake.’

‘And I have starved for his whim,’ he said, taking up another piece.

‘All he has in the world is for you,’ she pleaded.

‘Yes, if I come here to sit on it like a dam’ toad in a hole. Thank you; and what about the shovel, eh? He always had a queer way of showing his love.’

‘I could bring him round in a week,’ she suggested timidly.

He was too hungry to answer her; and, holding the plate submissively to his hand, she began to whisper up to him in a quick, panting voice. He listened, amazed, eating slower and slower, till at last his jaws stopped altogether. ‘That’s his game, is it?’ he said, in a rising tone of scathing contempt. An ungovernable movement of his arm sent the plate flying out of her fingers. He shot out a violent curse.

She shrank from him, putting her hand against the wall.

‘No!’ he raged. ‘He expects! Expects me – for his rotten money! . . . Who wants his home? Mad – not he! Don’t you think? He wants his own way. He wanted to turn me into a miserable lawyer’s clerk, and now he wants to make of me a blamed tame rabbit in a cage. Of me! Of me!’ His subdued angry laugh frightened her now.

‘The whole world ain’t a bit too big for me to spread my elbows in, I can tell you – what’s your name – Bessie – let alone a dam’ parlour in a hutch. Marry! He wants me to marry and settle! And as likely as not he has looked out the girl too – dash my soul! And do you know the Judy, may I ask?’

She shook all over with noiseless dry sobs; but he was fuming and fretting too much to notice her distress. He bit his thumb with rage at the mere idea. A window rattled up.

‘A grinning information fellow,’ pronounced old Hagberd dogmatically, in measured tones. And the sound of his voice seemed to Bessie to make the night itself mad – to pour insanity and disaster on the earth. ‘Now I know what’s wrong with the people here, my dear. Why, of course! With this mad chap going about. Don’t you have anything to do with him, Bessie. Bessie, I say!’

They stood as if dumb. The old man fidgeted and mumbled to himself at the window. Suddenly he cried, piercingly: ‘Bessie – I see you. I’ll tell Harry.’

She made a movement as if to run away, but stopped and raised her hands to her temples. Young Hagberd, shadowy and big, stirred no more than a man of bronze. Over their heads the crazy night whimpered and scolded in an old man’s voice.

‘Send him away, my dear. He’s only a vagabond. What you want is a good home of your own. That chap has no home – he’s not like Harry. He can’t be Harry. Harry is coming to-morrow. Do you hear? One day more,’ he babbled more excitedly. ‘Never you fear – Harry shall marry you.’

His voice rose very shrill and mad against the regular deep soughing of the swell coiling heavily about the outer face of the sea-wall.

‘He will have to. I shall make him, or if not’ – he swore a great oath – ‘I’ll cut him off with a shilling to-morrow, and leave everything to you. I shall. To you. Let him starve.’

The window rattled down.

Harry drew a deep breath, and took one step towards Bessie. ‘So it’s you – the girl,’ he said, in a lowered voice. She had not moved, and she remained half turned away from him, pressing her head in the palms of her hands. ‘My world!’ he continued, with an invisible half-smile on his lips. ‘I have a great mind to stop . . .’

Her elbows were trembling violently.

‘For a week,’ he finished without a pause.

She clapped her hands to her face.

He came up quite close, and took hold of her wrists gently. She felt his breath on her ear.

‘It’s a scrape I am in – this, and it is you that must see me through.’ He was trying to uncover her face. She resisted. He let her go then, and stepping back a little, ‘Have you got any money?’ he asked. ‘I must be off now.’

She nodded quickly her shamefaced head, and he waited, looking away from her, while, trembling all over and bowing her neck, she tried to find the pocket of her dress.

‘Here it is!’ she whispered. ‘Oh, go away! Go away for God’s sake! If I had more – more – I would give it all to forget – to make you forget.’

He extended his hand. ‘No fear! I haven’t forgotten a single one of you in the world. Some gave me more than money – but I am a beggar now – and you women always had to get me out of my scrapes.’

He swaggered up to the parlour window, and in the dim light filtering through the blind, looked at the coin lying in his palm. It was a half-sovereign. He slipped it into his pocket. She stood a little on one side, with her head drooping, as if wounded; with her arms hanging passive by her side, as if dead.

‘You can’t buy me in,’ he said, ‘and you can’t buy yourself out.’

He set his hat firmly with a little tap, and next moment she felt herself lifted up in the powerful embrace of his arms. Her feet lost the ground; her head hung back; he showered kisses on her face with a silent and overmastering ardour, as if in haste to get at her very soul. He kissed her pale cheeks, her hard forehead, her heavy eyelids, her faded lips; and the measured blows and sighs of the rising tide accompanied the enfolding power of his arms, the overwhelming might of his caresses. It was as if the sea, breaking down the wall protecting all the homes of the town, had sent a wave over her head. It passed on; she staggered backwards, with her shoulders against the wall, exhausted, as if she had been stranded there after a storm and a shipwreck.

She opened her eyes after a while; and, listening to the firm, leisurely footsteps going away with their conquest, began to gather her skirts, staring all the time before her. Suddenly she darted through the open gate into the dark and deserted street.

‘Stop!’ she shouted. ‘Don’t go!’

And listening with an attentive poise of the head, she could not tell whether it was the beat of the swell or his fateful tread that seemed to fall cruelly upon her heart. Presently every sound grew fainter, as though she were slowly turning into stone. A fear of this awful silence came to her – worse than the fear of death. She called upon her ebbing strength for the final appeal:

‘Harry!’

Not even the dying echo of a footstep. Nothing. The thundering of the surf, the voice of the restless sea itself, seemed stopped. There was not a sound –no whisper of life, as though she were alone and lost in that stony country of which she had heard, where madmen go looking for gold and spurn the find.

Captain Hagberd, inside his dark house, had kept on the alert. A window ran up; and in the silence of the stony country a voice spoke above her head, high up in the black air – the voice of madness, lies and despair – the voice of inextinguishable hope. ‘Is he gone yet – that information fellow? Do you hear him about, my dear?’

She burst into tears. ‘No! no! no! I don’t hear him any more,’ she sobbed.

He began to chuckle up there triumphantly. ‘You frightened him away. Good girl. Now we shall be all right. Don’t you be impatient, my dear. One day more.’

In the other house old Carvil, wallowing regally in his arm-chair, with a globe-lamp burning by his side on the table, yelled for her, in a fiendish voice: ‘Bessie! Bessie! You, Bessie!’

She heard him at last, and, as if overcome by fate, began to totter silently back towards her stuffy little inferno of a cottage. It had no lofty portal, no terrific inscription of forfeited hopes – she did not understand wherein she had sinned.

Captain Hagberd had gradually worked himself into a state of noisy happiness up there.

‘Go in! Keep quiet!’ she turned upon him tearfully, from the doorstep below.

He rebelled against her authority in his great joy at having got rid at last of that ‘something wrong.’ It was as if all the hopeful

madness of the world had broken out to bring terror upon her heart, with the voice of that old man shouting of his trust in an everlasting to-morrow.



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N° 18

夜晚在我周围变暗

中信出版集团

夜晚在我周围变暗

企鹅经典：小黑书 第二辑

[英] 艾米莉·勃朗特 / 著

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P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

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The Night Is Darkening Round Me

Poems in this book taken from Janet Gezari's edition of The Complete Poems, first published by Penguin Books in 1992. The poem 'Often rebuked, yet always back

returning' is now widely felt to be by Charlotte Brontë, but is too wonderful to be

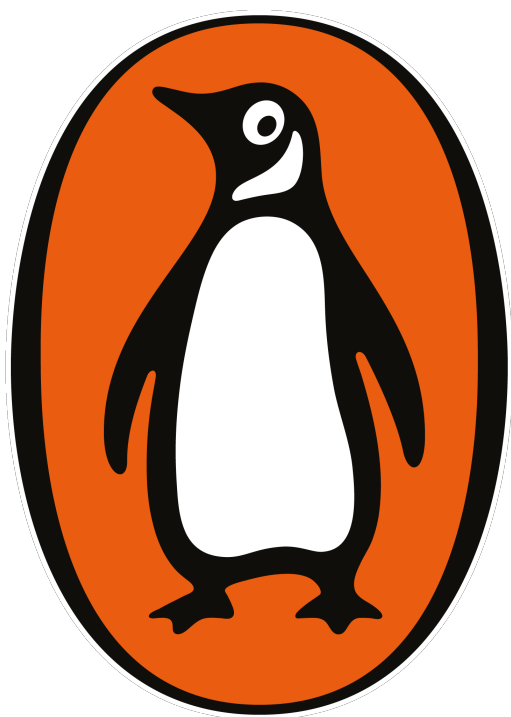
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“.....无所不在的幻影；
我的奴隶，我的挚友，
我的国君.....”



PENGUIN
LITTLE BLACK
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信仰与沮丧

“冬风萧瑟而狂烈，
亲爱的孩子，到我身边来歇；
抛开你的书本和无人陪伴的游戏；
趁夜色渐起，
让我们说着话，打发夜的愁绪。

“伊尔妮，在我们栖身的四壁周遭，
十一月的狂风正无声地呼啸；
没有一丝微风能闯进这里，
将我爱女的发丝掀动些许，
我望着炉火，心中欢喜，
她的目光也同样光彩熠熠；
我感到她那柔嫩的脸庞，
欢愉而静默地贴在我的胸膛。

“然而，纵使一切如此宁谧，
我心中仍泛起苦涩和忧虑；
绯红的火光欢快地飞舞，
我的思绪却徘徊在冰封的幽谷；
我梦见沼泽，和迷蒙的山岗，
日暮在此没入黑暗与森凉；
因为，在那些凄寒的山间，
我曾钟爱的人们正孤独长眠。
我肝肠寸断，心痛难抑，

惘然的追悔令我身心俱疲，
因为我再也无缘与他们相聚！”

“父亲啊，当我年幼，
当你远在海的那头，
这些思虑曾完全将我左右！
我时常枯坐良久，
熬过凄风苦雨的长夜悠悠，
也曾从枕上抬头，却只窥见
暗月徒然挣扎在天间；
还曾惶然聆听声声巨响，
那是惊涛拍岸，浪碎石上；
我满心惊惧，彻夜警觉，
侧耳倾听，不敢安歇。
人生在世，有如此多的恐惧，
可我的父亲啊，逝者却不必这样忧虑。

“噢！我们不必为他们忧伤，
坟茔凄凉，却实非他们的眠床；
他们的身躯虽已归入尘土，
快乐的灵魂在上帝身侧享福！
你话虽如此，却嗟叹不止，
怅惋你的挚友终有一死。
啊！亲爱的父亲，可否将原因揭示？
因为，如果一切的确如你所述，
如此伤怀岂不毫无用处；
恰似为一粒渺小的种子叹息，
只因它原本结在树上无人注意，

如今却坠入肥沃的土地，
破壳新生，焕发灿烂的生机——
深深扎根，拔地而起，
葱郁的枝条招摇在天际。

“而我，每当念及逝者已矣
却不会恐惧，也不会哭泣，——
我深知彼岸有一片神圣的天地，
 那港口正为我与至亲开启；
我凝望时间之河浩瀚无际，
 心中渴望早日抵达那圣地，
我们诞生在那里，我和你
死后也会在此与至亲相遇；
让痛苦与腐坏远离，
再度与上帝合而为一。”

“甜美可靠的孩子，你所言极是！
 你比你的父亲更加睿智；
尘世的风暴怒号不止，
 却只会增强你渴望的意志——
和你热切的期盼，去穿越风暴与波涛，
 去经受狂风呼号、海浪咆哮，
最终抵达那永恒的家园，
 那岿然不渝的彼岸！”

群星

啊！为何，当夺目的太阳
 让人间重沐欢乐，
你们却纷纷离去，
 在天上徒留荒漠？

整个夜晚，你们灿烂的双眼
 向下望进我的眼眶，
我满怀感激地慨叹，
 祝福那神圣的目光。

我平静地饮下你们的光芒
 如同饮下生命的活力；
变幻的梦境让我欣喜若狂，
 犹如海燕在洋面嬉戏。

思绪连连，星斗满天
 遍布茫茫的无垠之境；
甜蜜的感召，亦近亦远，
 那悸动证明你我心心相印！

晨曦你为何要前来打破
 这崇高而纯粹的魔力；
为何要投下你冷酷的光波，
 以烈焰炙烤那面庞的宁谧。

血红的太阳升起，他如箭的光芒
猛烈地冲击我的眉梢；
自然之灵蠢动而欢畅，
而我的灵魂却陷入了哀伤的低潮！

我垂下眼帘，但这层薄纱，
怎能挡住他炽烈的光芒，
迷蒙的山谷沐浴金色的光华，
太阳在山顶闪闪发亮。

我躺回枕上，
想唤回夜晚，
想再看你们庄严的光芒，
拨动我和我的心弦！

但无济于事——枕头在发亮，
屋顶与地板也都闪耀光辉；
树上的鸟鸣清脆嘹亮，
清风微微掀动门扉；

帘帷翻飞，苏醒的蚊蝇
在我房中振翅低吟，
宛如囚徒，直到我起身，
放它们自由飞行。

噢，星辰、梦境，和温柔的夜晚；
噢，归来吧，群星与暗夜！

来为我遮蔽这不速的光线，
他毫不温暖，唯有灼热；

他将苦难者的鲜血榨干；
饮下的不是甘露，而是泪水；
就让我在他刺目的统治下酣眠，
醒来时只与你们相随！

哲人

“停止思索吧，哲人！

你沉湎幻梦已经太久
闭塞地囿于这暗室阴沉，
不顾夏日的艳阳当头！
环视宇宙的灵魂啊，你的这番思悟
又将以怎样的悲歌结束？”

“噢，因为有朝一日，
我将睡去，湮没无闻，
毫不在意
雨水浸透或冰雪覆身！
天堂的承诺，这些狂烈的火焰
无法完全或一半兑现；
地狱的威胁，和那永恒的烈焰，
无法压抑这不灭的意愿！”

“我曾这样说过，也依然这样坚称；
面对死亡也决不改口——
我小小的躯壳中有三位神明，
日日夜夜交战不休；
他们在天堂无法共容
却在我的心中相聚；
他们将始终寓于我的心胸
直到我遗忘自己的本体！

噢，但愿终有一天，我心间
不再有他们彼此纠缠！
噢，但愿终有一日，我能安眠，
内心不再苦闷忧烦！”

“一小时前，我看见
一个幽灵就站在你这里，
三条河流淌过他脚边，
深度相同，流速相一——
一条金黄——一条红得像血一样；
另一条如宝石般莹蓝；
但在它们汇合的地方，
河流却坠入漆黑的海面。
幽灵将闪烁的目光，
投向脚下暗夜般的海洋
突然间，那美好的深处迸发光芒
把四下照得通明透亮——
它白亮胜似日光
美丽远在它分开的源头之上！”

“即使只为那幽灵、先知，
我也已穷尽一生去观察与找寻；
我在天堂、地狱、人间与空中寻觅他的影子——
无止境地探寻，却始终不得要领！
只要能看到他灿烂的双眼
点亮那蒙蔽我的阴云，
我就不会这样懦弱地呻唤
说要停止思索，放弃生命；

也不会视遗忘为福分，
或急切地向死亡伸出手臂，
祈求用这鲜活的呼吸和敏锐的灵魂
换取毫无知觉的长眠安息——
噢，就让我死去——好让那力量和意愿
停止残酷的交战；
就让失败的正义，与胜利的邪念
消弭在长眠之间！”

追忆

你冰冷地躺在地下——身上白雪堆积，
远远地、远远地离去，冷却在阴郁的墓地！
我唯一的爱人啊，难道说，我已忘记去爱你，
时间横扫一切的浪潮，我是否终究无法抵御？

如今，难道我独自一人时，思绪
已不再飞越崇山，徘徊在北部的海岸，
或收拢双翼，在石楠与蕨叶间小憩
看它们覆盖你高贵的心，直到永远？

你冰冷地躺在地下——而在棕褐的山间，
已有十五个寒冬化为春天：
但那不肯遗忘的灵魂依然痴心不变，
纵然已在变迁与挣扎中熬煎多年！

年少时甜蜜的爱人啊，当世俗的潮汐将我卷去，
请原谅，如果我把你忘记；
困扰我的是别的渴望和别的希冀，
那希望只会蒙蔽，却无法让我辜负于你！

再没有新的光芒照亮我的天际，
再没有第二个清晨为我放亮；
我毕生的幸福都由你宝贵的生命赐予，
我毕生的幸福都已与你一同埋葬。

然而，当时光带走往日金色的美梦，
就连绝望都丧失了摧毁的能力；
我才明白生命该如何去珍重，
去巩固与丰富，即使没有欢愉。

于是我告别枉然的激情，止住了泪滴——
抽离我年轻的灵魂，不再渴慕于你；
我抵御那灼人的渴望，好让灵魂不至随你而去，
钻入那早已被我视为已有的墓地。

即便如此，我仍不敢任心灵受苦，
不敢在记忆醉人的疼痛中沉溺；
一旦深陷那美丽的痛楚，
我又如何再将世间的一切舍弃？

一场死亡

“啊，白昼！他不能死在
你明媚的日光之中！
啊，太阳，你如此平静地消逝在
这光辉灿烂的天空；

“他不能离你而去，
当清新的西风缭绕，
当你的光芒带着欢愉
洒在他青春的眉梢！

“爱德华，醒来吧，醒醒——
黄昏金色的光晕
温暖明亮地投在阿登湖心——
带你走出你的梦境！

“我的挚友！我双膝跪地
在你身边
祈祷你在远渡永恒的重洋之际，
再留一小时给人间：

“我听见波涛喧嚷——
看见白浪滔天；
却还没窥见什么彼岸
能宽慰我疲惫的双眼。

“不要轻信他们的怂恿，
说远方有伊甸园般的岛屿；
回头吧，远离那狂暴的浪涌，
回到你的诞生之地。

“是疼痛，而不是死，
在你胸中挣扎——
不，振作吧，爱德华，再醒来一次；
我不愿让你倒下！”

他用长长的一瞥，将我严厉地责备：
怪我不堪忍受那份伤悲——
他眼中无声的痛苦令我心碎，
我为那些无用的祈祷而惭愧。

此刻，忽然间
翻涌的杂念骤然停止；
再没有一丝悲哀来扰乱
我的灵魂，在这可怕的一日。

美好的日光趋于苍白；
暮色中的微风也渐渐安静：
夏日的露珠轻滴下来，
湿了溪谷、草地，和沉默的树林。

随即他的目光开始黯淡，
在长眠的重压下尽显疲惫；

他的眼珠开始莫名地晦暗，
混浊昏黄，尽管噙满泪水。

但它们没有流泪，没有变换，
不再转动，也不再垂下眼帘；
它们依然彷徨，却停止了流转——
不再顾盼，却尚未安眠！

于是我明白他在死去——
我俯身，捧起他无力的头颅；
没有呼吸，也没有叹息，
于是我明白他已亡故。

歌

红雀掠过嶙峋的幽谷，
野云雀翱翔在高渺的天空，
蜜蜂在石楠丛中飞舞，
我的淑女就藏在花叶之中：

野鹿在她胸口吃草；
野鸟在她身边育雏；
它们都受过她微笑的爱抚，
如今却留她一人孤独！

我相信，当阴暗的坟墓
刚刚把她的形骸殓入；
它们也曾以为自己内心深处
不会再有光明的幸福。

它们也曾以为在未来的岁月
悲伤的潮水将长流不息；
但如今它们可还有痛苦的感觉，
它们的眼泪又在哪里？

好吧，就让它们去争夺荣誉的鼻息，
去追逐欢愉的影迹——
殊不知她居住在这死亡之地
也早已改变，毫不在意。

纵使它们的双眼凝视与哭泣，
直到耗干悲伤的源泉，
她也不会打破沉睡的静谧，
报以哪怕一声叹惋！

吹吧，西风，拂过那孤冢，
仲夏的清溪流水叮咚——
此外再无须别的响动
来抚慰我那淑女的梦。

期望

对于你，人间依旧是多么美好，
——多么充满幸福！
真正的邪恶是那么地少，
也罕有不幸虚妄的幻影！
春日还能给你那么多的荣光，
夏日还能令你那么快地遗忘
十二月阴郁的日子！
你为何紧抓不放，
青春的珍宝，那欢愉的韶光，
 当青春已逝，而你已盛年将至？

当你的同辈，
与你财富、年纪相当的同类，
泪眼看他们的晨晖，
 化作浑噩而沮丧的白昼；
倒不如死时少不更事，
尚未在流浪中迷失心智，
不幸的奴隶，被强烈的激情钳制，
 沦为虚弱而绝望的鱼肉！

“因为，他们享受时我却在希望，
而满足会将希望摧残；
我如孩童般深信不疑地盼望，
等待至福——和珍贵的安眠。

不久，一个善思的灵魂教导了我，
我们必将渴望，直至生命陨落；
 世间的每一种欢愉
 最终都将逝去，终将遭到厌弃！

“这我早已预见——也不会去追赶
 那些倏然飞逝的背弃；
但是，我双脚稳固、面色淡然，
那诱人的角逐，我决不参与，
我凝望冲刷沙滩的波浪，
 融入亘古不变的海洋——
我在此抛下欲望的船锚，
让它深深扎进未知的永恒；
但愿我的心永不疲劳，
始终期待将来的前程！

“如今，在我眼里
是希望的魔力
如青春般，美化了自然界的万般神秘，
 无论可怖还是美丽——
希望抚慰我的哀愁；
宽解我，当我为他人心忧，
她让我坚强，让我能去承受
 我命中注定的际遇。

“快乐的抚慰者啊！难道我会胆寒，
难道我会畏惧坟墓的黑暗？
难道我不会含笑倾听死亡的狂澜——

只要有你的支持，我的向导？

当下的命运愈是偏倚，

我胸中愈是胀满快意，

我会凭借你赋予的力量，坚强地去希冀

命运的回报！”

囚徒（节选）

我在地牢中悠闲地漫步，
毫不在意在此受苦的人物；
“严厉的狱卒，拉开沉重的铁条吧！开门！”
他不敢不从——铰链转动，发出刺耳的尖声。

“我们的客人身处黑暗。”我低声说道，望向那地牢，
格栅窗外的天空失却了蓝色，变得又灰又小；
（此时正值美好的春日放声大笑，尽显苏醒的骄傲）
“是啊，黑暗至极！”说话的是我阴沉的向导。

请上帝宽恕我那时年少无知，口不择言；
我开始讥诮，当潮湿的石板上响起冰冷的铁链：
“关押在三重墙内，难道你竟如此可怖，
必须被我们捆绑于此，再用脚镣束缚？”

囚徒抬起头来，她的面容是那么柔和温婉
如同大理石雕刻的圣人，或熟睡婴孩的脸；
她的神情是如此温柔和缓、甜美清丽，
没有一丝悲伤的阴影，或痛苦的痕迹！

囚徒抬手按住前额；
“我挨了打，”她说，“我在忍受折磨；
但你们坚实的门闩和铁条毫无用处，
它们纵是钢铁铸就，也无法将我久久困住。”

冷酷的狱卒嘶声大笑：“难道我该听你胡言乱语；
痴心妄想的可怜人，依你所见，你的请求我会同意？
况且，你以为你的呻吟会融化我主人的心？
哈！那你还不如等太阳融化花岗岩的坚硬。

“我的主人说话轻声细气，外表温文和善，
但他背后那个灵魂，却比燧石更坚；
我虽看似凶悍粗野，但要论凶暴乖戾，
却远远无法与我体内的鬼魂相比。”

她唇上浮现一抹轻笑，近乎鄙夷，
“我的朋友，”她柔声说，“你何曾听我哀恸哭泣；
除非与至亲重逢，或重返我往日的的生活，
我才会流泪控诉——但朋友，不到那时我的眼泪绝不掉落！

“不过还请你转告我那位暴君，我不是注定
长年在忧郁、苍凉与绝望中承受厄运；
每个夜晚，希望的信使都会来到我心头，
许我短暂的生命，与永恒的自由。

“他乘着暮色中涌动的清气，带来西风阵阵，
还有天边最明亮的黄昏与最灿烂的星辰。
风儿戚戚低语，星辰放射温柔的光芒，
眼前的景象瞬息万变，令我深陷渴望。

“我渴望的不是壮年所知的景象，
那时，当我细数未来的悲伤，惊惧让欢愉变得疯狂。

那时，纵使我灵魂的天空布满温暖的光芒，
我也不知它们来自何方，是雷暴还是太阳。

“不过，首先，一切归于宁静——安详悄然降临；
绝望的挣扎不再，骇人的焦躁骤停。
无声的音符抚慰我的心，奏响沉默的乐章，
那种和谐，我今生今世都难以想象。

“随后那无形之物出现；揭示它那看不见的真相；
我摆脱了外在的感官，只用内在的精神感知猜想：
它的羽翼近乎自由——找到了它的家园与海港，
它丈量那海峡，俯冲而下，去挑战最后的边疆。

“噢，但受阻是多么可怕——痛苦是多么巨大——
当耳朵开始倾听，眼睛开始观察；
当脉搏开始跳动，大脑重启思考，
灵魂就触到肉体，肉体就触到镣铐。

“但我依然宁愿忍受剧痛，不肯免去煎熬，
疼痛越是剧烈，幸福就越早降临；
无论它身披地狱的烈焰，抑或天堂的璀璨，
若这幻象是死亡的使者，它就神圣非凡！”

她不再说话，我们默然转身离去——
我们的力量再不能令这囚徒恐惧：
她的脸颊和闪光的双眼，似在向我们宣示，
人类擅自的判决，已被天国废止。

希望

希望只是个羞怯的朋友；
她坐在我那牢笼外头，
看我的命运向何处走，
像事不关己的人旁观袖手。

她恐惧起来尤其残酷；
阴郁的一天我透过铁条
向外望去，见她就在近处，
可她倒好，竟别过脸去不把我瞧！

像个冒牌的狱卒，装作把我看得紧紧，
还在争吵，就开始示意和平；
我在哭泣，她却唱个不停；
我若倾听，她又会骤然安静。

她是如此虚伪，如此无情；
当我最后的欢愉散落在地，
可怜的碎片零零星星，
连悲伤见了都唉声叹气；

可希望呢，原本她只需轻声关切
便能安抚我狂烈的剧痛，
但她却振翅高飞，直上天阙，
离我而去，再无影踪！

白日梦

我独自躺在夏日午后
洒满阳光的山坡上；
这正是五月大喜的时候，
她要嫁给她年轻的爱人，六月新郎。

这位新娘中的女王似乎恋恋不舍
不愿离开她母亲的胸膛，
而她父亲却把微笑的喜悦
送给自己膝下最美的姑娘。

繁茂的树枝婆娑摆动，
欢快的鸟儿高声歌唱；
但在所有的宾客当中，
唯有我一人面带惆怅！

人人都想避开我
郁郁寡欢的样子；
灰色的岩石凝望着我，
问我：“你来所为何事？”

我竟答不上来：
其实，我并不知道
自己为何带着满眼悲哀
来看这一派明媚闪耀。

于是，我躺在石楠坡上，
感知我的心灵；
与它一道带着忧伤
沉入异想的梦境。

我们想：“等冬天再度降临，
这些绚烂美景又到何处去寻？
只会消失殆尽，如虚妄的幻影，
化作空洞的笑柄！

“那些鸟儿，别看现在唱得起劲，
等穿越了干冷的沙漠，
它们将如暮春那可怜的幽灵，
忍饥挨饿，成群飞过。

“我们有什么理由欣喜？
如果树叶凋零的痕迹
早在它尚未转绿，
就已如此清晰！”

事实是否真是这样，
我从来无法确定；
但伴着一阵愤怒的悲怆，
我在沼泽上舒展身心。

千千万万簇明灭的火苗
仿佛在空气中燃烧；

千千万万把七弦琴银光闪耀
远远近近奏响仙乐飘飘。

我感到自己的呼吸仿佛
 充溢着神圣的火花，
我感到天光夺目
 织成了我石楠的床榻！

当广袤的大地应和着
 它们神异的曲调，
那些闪光的精灵也对我
 唱起，或似在吟唱歌谣。

“噢，凡人！凡人！让他们消亡；
 让时间与眼泪去摧残，
我们好在天上
 处处撒播笑语欢颜！

“让哀伤去扰乱那受苦之人的心绪，
 让黑夜将他的前路遮盖；
让它们催他早日安息，
 祝他长眠永不醒来。

“这世界于你如同坟冢，
 抑或一片荒芜的沙漠；
于我们，它却是姹紫嫣红，
 一日更比一日灼烁！

“我们若是掀起头巾，
飞快地给你一个眼神，
你就会替生者高兴，
因为他们向死而生。”

音乐戛然而止；午间的梦境，
如夜晚的神游，倏然消逝；
但幻想她不时仍会断定：
自己美好的畅想皆属真实。

致想象

当我厌倦了终日忧伤，
 当我尝尽了世间的苦难，
当我迷失方向心中绝望，
 是你亲切的声音将我呼唤：
噢，我真挚的朋友！我并不孤单，
每当听到你这样细语轻言！

外部的世界已毫无希望；
 内心的世界我加倍珍惜；
你的世界从不会滋长
 诡计、仇恨、顾虑和冰冷的怀疑；
在这里，我、自由与你，
拥有统治全境的绝对权力。

即使被危险、愧疚与黑暗环绕，
 又有什么关系？
只要我们胸怀
 一片澄明的天宇，
那里有千万道光芒撒播温暖，
无数颗太阳驱散冬的严寒。

理智确会抱怨不停
 怪真实的自然太过灰暗，
还会告诉那颗受苦的心灵，

它珍藏的梦是多么无用，注定枉然；
真理也会粗暴地践踏
那刚刚绽放的幻想之花。

但你始终守在一旁，
召回萦绕我心的幻景，
为萎靡的春日注入新的荣光，
从死亡中召唤更加鲜活的生命，
再用美妙的轻声细语，
描述那光明如你的真实天地。

你至福的幻景我并不相信，
但置身傍晚宁静的时光，
我依然怀着永远感恩的心，
欢迎你，仁慈的力量；
你抚慰人类的烦恼忧伤，
当希望枯竭，你就是更好的希望！

她闪耀得多么明亮

她闪耀得多么明亮！

我躺在她守护的光辉之下；

当天堂与人间对我轻唱：

“明天你要醒来，今夜尽情梦吧。”

好了，来吧，幻想，我美好的爱人！

请在我悸动的两鬓上轻吻；

请在我寂寞的卧榻上俯身：

赐我安眠，赐我福分。

世界渐渐远去；黑暗的世界，再见！

严酷的世界啊，请你回避，直到白天；

纵然这颗心有你无法驯服的骁悍，

但它仍需抵抗，若你执意拖延！

你的爱我不愿、不愿分享；

你的仇恨只令我笑容绽放；

你的悲伤教人心痛——你的冤屈让人神伤，

可是，噢，我决不会轻信你说的谎！

我举头凝望繁星点点

闪烁在那永无风浪的海洋，

我唯愿造物所知的一切苦难

都包含在你身上！

这就是我今夜的梦境；

梦中的天堂绚烂光明
沐浴永恒的福祉，历经无尽的光景
在光的轨道上运转不停；
我想象天外另有一重世界，
疲惫的双眼无法企及，
在那里智慧从不对爱情不屑，
恶名无法将美德遮蔽；

在那里，遍体鳞伤的弱者不必强带笑意，
当他被“命运”抽打得痛苦扭曲，
也不必强忍着包容她的恨意，
只将叛逆深埋心底。
在那里欢愉不会铸成大错，
理智不会徒然地劝说；
背叛绝无力量，真理绝不虚弱，
痛苦不是喜悦的必然结果；
在那里平静绝非了无生气的悲叹，
希望，不会是灵魂的幻影；
生命不是一场劳役，空虚而短暂；
死亡不是主宰一切的暴君！

同情

你不该绝望心碎：

当夜空中缀满繁星；

当黄昏悄然降下露水，

当阳光为清晨镀金。

你不该绝望挣扎：

尽管眼泪可能汇成河流，

难道那些最美好的年华

不是永在你心头？

它们哭泣，你也哭泣，想必应是这个道理；

你一感慨，风儿也随你叹息，

冬日将哀愁抖落在雪地，

秋日的落叶在冰雪之下堆积。

但它们终将复生，而你的命运

也与它们紧紧相依。

所以，继续前行吧，即使并不欢愉，

也永远不要心碎不已！

为我辩护

噢，你明亮的眼睛必须立即回应，
当理性用轻蔑的神情，
嘲笑我的不幸！
噢，你如簧的巧舌必须为我辩护，
说明我为何选择与你共度！

严厉的理性前来审判，
她特意穿上一身晦暗：
你，我的辩护人，会否哑口无言？
不，炫目的天使，请你申辩，
我为何将世界疏远。

为何我竟执意想要
与世间众人分道扬镳，
独自走上无人问津的小道，
权力与财富统统不要——
也没有荣誉的桂冠或快乐的花束环绕。

这些于我确曾美好非凡；
它们或许也曾听我许下誓言，
看我将供品呈上它们的祭坛；
但轻率的赠礼常被无视，
我的供品自然受到鄙视。

于是我衷心起誓，
不再寄望它们祭坛的圣石；
改用整个心灵去崇敬
你，无所不在的幻影；
我的奴隶，我的挚友，我的国君，
你是奴隶，因为你依然听我号令；
必须服从我多变的心情，
作用好坏都由我来决定：
你是挚友，因为无论黑夜天明
你总带给我无间的欢欣，——

我亲爱的痛楚，你撕裂灼烧
让我无法感知世俗的烦恼，
再从我的眼泪中榨取祝祷；
你是国君，纵然克己慎行
却将反叛教给了你的子民。

难道我不该去崇尚，
坚定的信仰，和不竭的希望，
只因我能凭自己的灵魂如愿以偿？
开口吧，幻象之神，为我辩护，
诉说我为何选择与你共度！

自问

“黄昏倏然逝去，
已近就寝的时候；
逝去的一天给了你怎样的思绪，
在你心中留下了何种感受？”

“这逝去的一天？它让我感到
仿佛余事未了；
仿佛竭尽心力，却收获甚少，——
总之徒留忧伤烦恼！”

“时间站在死亡的门前，
声色俱厉地将我数落；
良知也始终气势不减，
向我抛来黑暗的指责。

“尽管我说过良知会撒谎，
时间应当去声讨命运；
但可悲的悔恨仍使我两眼迷茫，
迫使我听从它们号令！”

“那么你是否乐意歇息？
是否乐意离开这片海洋，
再把你所有的苦闷失意，
抛入宁静的永恒之乡？”

“没人会为你的离去心痛——
也没人会哭着道声‘再见’，
这里曾让你的心千疮百孔，
你又怎会流连不前？”

“唉！无数强韧的锁链
将我们绑在各自的土壤；
爱的魂魄久久不散，
又迟迟不肯消亡！”

“长眠固然甜美，若桂冠与盛名
能为战士加冕；
但若蒙受污名，那勇敢的心，
则宁愿不懈奋战。”

“唉，你已抗争多年，
战斗贯穿了整个生命，
你已征服了恐惧，击溃了谎言；
还有什么事业未竟？”

“这倒不假，这只手曾戮力图强，
敢为他人之不敢；
我曾建立功勋，慷慨解囊，
却对忍耐毫无经验！”

“看那坟墓，你未来的长眠之地，
你一生之中最后的劲敌；

若把长眠看得如此悲凄，
你将会多么悲伤难抑。

“漫长的征战终将告负，
你静静地承受失败，
但你尚有午夜酣眠的幸福，
你仍会在灿烂的清晨醒来！”

死亡

死亡！它发起了攻击，
正当我对眼前的幸福深信不疑——
紧接着它又是一击，打得时光的枯枝
与鲜活的永恒之根分离！

绿叶曾在时光的枝条上闪亮，
鲜嫩多汁，缀满银色的露珠；
每个深夜，鸟儿在叶底乘凉；
每个白昼，蜜蜂在花间飞舞。

悲伤掠过，摘去金色的花朵；
愧疚剥夺了绿叶的骄傲；
但母树胸中依然流淌着，
生命那生生不息的浪潮。

我并不痛惜失去的欢乐，
也不悲叹巢穴空落，歌谣无人吟唱——
希望就在一旁，笑着鼓舞悲伤的我，
轻声说：“严冬不会久长！”

看啊！春天带着十倍的祝福，
在枝头遍缀美丽的花朵；
风雨和暖流前来爱抚，
为来年五月许下繁花硕果！

它高高耸立——灾难插翅也难波及；
它的光芒让罪恶不敢靠近；
伟大的爱和它强健的活力
能阻挡一切摧折——除了你造成的不幸！

残酷的死亡啊！让嫩叶低垂凋零；
傍晚的微风或许仍能将它们复活——
不！清晨的太阳耻笑我疼痛的心——
对我，时间将永远不再绽放花朵！

快把它折下，让别的枝条茁壮生长
覆盖那枯枝曾经的印痕；
这样，它朽烂的躯壳至少还能滋养
那令它诞生的——永恒。

致——

哎，你的姓名或许被人憎恨、被人轻慢，
还有人会把它忘记；
但我悲伤的心将永远悼念
你被粉碎的希望，和被玷污的声誉！
这是我一小时前的思绪，
我甚至为那可怜的不幸之人哭泣；
但某个词止住了我泉涌的泪滴，
在我眼中注入了寒冷的笑意。
然后，我说：“祝福那善意的尘土，
还肯掩埋你无人缅怀的头颅！
你曾如此虚弱，如此虚荣，
屈服于谎言、骄傲与心痛，——
我的心与你的毫不相似；
你的灵魂无法影响我的意志。”

但是这些思绪也已消亡；
因为它们愚蠢、邪恶，而且虚妄：
我岂能鄙视那胆怯的鹿，
只因它被吓得慌不择路？
我岂能嘲笑豺狼濒死的哀号，
只因他外表丑陋枯槁？
或是幸灾乐祸地聆听野兔悲泣，
只因它没有赴死的勇气？
不！愿怜悯的心怀着温柔的情谊

去将他记忆；

就说：“泥土，请轻轻覆盖那副胸膛

赐那亡灵安息吧，仁慈的天堂！”

荣誉的殉道者

这个冬夜满月当空；
 星辰寥落却明亮；
光芒映在每扇窗中；
 辉映叶露凝成的霜。

甜美的月光透进你的窗格，
 正如白昼把你的房间照亮；
伴着美梦，你在此安然度过，
 安详平静的夜晚时光！

而我，虽已竭力抑制
 疼痛仍在胸中作乱，
我独自徘徊在寂静的斗室，
 全然无法安享睡眠。

那座旧钟在阴暗的大厅
 嘀嗒回响，一刻不停；
它每一次规律的奏鸣
 都留下更加悠长的余音。

噢，那眼尖的孤星是多么迟缓，
 当它追逐天边清冷的灰白！
啊，看哪！还有那么长的时间
 明媚的清晨才会到来！

我站在你的卧房门外；
 爱人，你是否仍在酣眠？
我手按自己寒冷的胸怀，
 心脏几乎停止了震颤。

萧瑟的东风呜咽叹息，
 淹没了塔楼上的钟声，
那悲伤的讯息悄然消逝，
 像我最后的告别湮灭无闻！

明天，蔑视会将我的名字玷污，
 仇恨会对我百般凌辱，
它们会斥我为可耻的懦夫——
 做伪证的叛徒。

佞徒损友会窃窃嗤笑；
 真挚友人会祝我夭亡；
为了我，你会痛苦地哭号，
 仿佛从不曾如此心伤。

届时，别的罪人黑暗的劣迹
 将光芒四射，宛如美德；
与我的罪名两相对比，
 世人会将他们的恶行宽赦。

因为，谁会原谅那可憎的罪恶，
 那怯懦的背信弃义？

反叛，也可以捍卫自由，
在它选择的时机。

复仇能玷污正义之剑，
屠戮也可以正当；
但叛徒、叛徒，——那个字眼
却能吓退一切真挚的胸膛！

噢，我会把心脏献给死亡，
只要我的荣誉无损；
然而，我不会牺牲内心的信仰
去保全荣誉的表象！

即便为了你宝贵的爱情，
亲爱的，我也断然不敢欺瞒；
这背信需由来日验明，
到那时且只在那时，你再信不晚！

前方的道路我看得清楚；
但我毅然上路不惧艰险，
我不会去问严苛的世俗
布下了何等深重的磨难。

敌人追赶，同伴无情，
再没有人将我信任：
就让我在他人眼中背信，
在自己心底忠贞。

诗行

我不会哭泣，若你要离去，
这里本就谈不上什么美好；
黑暗的世界将加重我的悲戚，
当你的心在那里忍受煎熬。

我不会哭泣，因为绚烂的夏日
终有一天会归于颓丧；
因为无论如何，再幸福的故事——
最终都会以坟墓收场！

我已厌倦那痛苦的滋味，
它只让寒冬更加难捱；
也不愿再看那灵魂枯萎，
长年陷于死一般绝望的悲哀。

所以，当你死去，
若我碰巧落下一颗泪滴，
那只是我的灵魂在叹息，
想与你同去，长眠不起。

我的抚慰者

你的话多么漂亮，
 却没带来什么新奇的感想；
只唤起一个潜藏的思想，
让重云遮蔽的太阳
 再度拨开云雾，透出光芒。

那光芒深藏在我心底，
 向来不为人知；
但它的光辉从未熄灭——任阴影翻涌稠密，
它的柔光却不可压抑，
 洒满这阴沉的斗室。

终日在幽暗的道路上独行
 难道我就不曾难受？
在我周围，可怜之人发出谄媚的声音，
抑或为绝望的生活咆哮呻吟，
 人人都有着疯狂的舌头；——

不幸将他们连在一起，
 他们凄楚的笑容有如嗟叹；
他们的疯狂日渐令我歇斯底里，
在我眼前扭曲了幸福，
 把它变作哀痛与苦难！

于是我站这里，既沐浴天堂的日照，
又身临地狱的烈火；
我的心灵饮下那混合的曲调，
六翼天使的歌声掺杂着魔鬼的哀号；
此刻只有我的灵魂自己知道
它究竟承载了什么！

如同风暴搅动，
在海面上掀乱了和风一阵；
那暖风吹拂，悄然消融
冬日草地上的冰雪封冻；
哦不：还有什么能像你这般情浓，
我贴心的抚慰之人？

请你再多说几句，
平复我愤懑的心情；
等狂野的心变得温驯善意，
你不必再找寻别的痕迹，
只需让我用脸上的泪滴
来表明我感激的心！

年老的禁欲者

我对财富毫不崇敬；
我对爱情鄙薄耻笑；
追名逐利不过一场梦境，
黎明到来便云散烟消。

若要祈祷，那么世间仅剩
一句祷词尚能让我开口，
那便是：“让我清静，
给我自由！”

是的，当我飞逝的年华已近黄昏，
这便是我唯一所求；
愿我拥有无拘无束的灵魂，
无论生死，勇敢承受。

22.森林啊，你不必对我蹙额

森林啊，你不必对我蹙额，
诡异的树木，你们不必这样刻薄；
在阴郁的天空下摇着头如此难过，
嘲笑着我。

最美的花朵属于风铃草

最美的花朵属于风铃草，
它在夏日的微风中招摇；
那盛开的花团最能慰疗
我心灵的忧焦。

紫色的石楠有种魔力，
那忧郁太过强烈悲情。
紫罗兰的气息芬芳馥郁，
但香气却不能振奋人心。

树枝空荡，阳光清冷，
太阳是多么、多么难得一见——
天空失却了它金色的四境，
大地遗落了它青翠的衣衫。

浮冰在溪上顺流漂荡，
投下沉沉的阴影；
远处的山丘和谷地好像，
披挂着寒雾轻轻——

风铃草不再令我着迷，
石楠失去了它的绚丽，
此刻，在山下的谷地，
紫罗兰也不再芳香甜蜜。

我虽然为石楠伤感，
但好在与它相隔遥远。
我知道眼泪将是多么难掩，
若我看见它今日的笑靥。

木上的痠是如此害羞，
藏在覆满青苔的石缝里头；
它有沁人的香气和露湿的眼眸，
但那不是我呜咽的理由。

我牵挂的是那纤细却庄严的茎，
是那花朵泛着银光的靛青。
那花蕾藏在翠绿的叶鞘中心，
闪烁着蓝宝石一般的晶莹。

是这些在我心间注入，
那镇静而舒缓的咒语，
它若能让我泪流如注，
也就能抚慰我的心绪。

我为它们哭泣，沉闷的冬日，
将我们长久地分离。
我在渴望中流泪——尤其是
当我不觉走上草木枯萎的河堤。

若是寒冷，
阴沉的天空便会降下光芒，

把一抹转瞬即逝的光明，
投向那堵潮湿黑暗的墙。

我多么向往，多么渴望，
那繁花似锦的时节到来，
让我远离那消逝的光亮，
为家乡的田野致哀——

夜风

夏日醇美的午夜
一轮晴朗的明月
照进我们客厅敞开的窗
照在露湿的玫瑰树上

我静静地坐着冥想——
轻风掀动我的发梢
向我诉说天堂是多么辉煌
沉睡的大地是多么美好

这些我早已知晓
无须它来呢喃
但它仍窃窃私语
“那森林是多么黑暗！——

“浓密的枝叶听了我的低吟
婆娑起舞，胜似梦境，
它们那数不清的声音
仿佛无不充满灵性”

我说：“消停些吧，歌手，
你恳切的声音纵然动听
但别以为它美妙的节奏
有力量触动我的心灵——

“去跟芬芳的花朵嬉戏，
去抚弄小树柔嫩的枝叶——
但别来拨动我人类的情绪，
就让它自由地宣泄”

那位流浪者却不肯离去，
它的亲吻反而更加温暖——
“噢，来吧，”它的叹息如此甜蜜
“我会征服你，即使你不情愿——”

“难道你我不是童年的玩伴？
难道我不曾爱你久长？
长如你对黑夜的爱恋，
那阒寂总鼓动我歌唱。

“等你停止了心跳，
长眠在教堂的墓地，
我将有无尽的时间去哀悼，
你也将拥有无尽的孤寂——”

夜晚在我周围变暗

夜晚在我周围变暗，
寒风狂烈地嘶吼。
一个专横的诅咒却将我羁绊，
不能，我不能走。

参天大树弯下腰来，
沉重的积雪压在赤裸的枝头。
风暴正迅速地到来，
而我，还不能走。

我头上是层云翻涌，
我脚下的荒地没有尽头。
但任何苦闷都无法将我撼动，
我不能，也决不会走。

我会到来，当你心伤，
独自躺在幽暗的房间。
当白天狂浪的欢笑业已消亡，
愉快的微笑也被流放，
不敌傍晚忧郁的清寒。

我会到来，当内心（真实）的情感，

占据公正的绝对支配，
当我悄然将你感染，
而悲伤加剧、快乐凝滞不前，
我会载着你的灵魂远走高飞。

听，就是现在，你已来到
一生中最庄严的时刻。
你难道不觉得灵魂之中，
有异样的情感翻涌。
那是强大力量的先导，
我的使者。

我本想敲击天堂的琴键，
那旋律恍如你与幸福的再现。
我本想唤起那醉人的歌章，
但歌词却在舌尖无声地消亡。
于是我明白那圣洁的旋律，
再也无法诉说欢愉，
再然后，我感受到.....

尘世是否已不再给你灵感

尘世是否已不再给你灵感，
你这孤独的梦想者？
既然激情已无法将你感染，
自然可否不再俯首帖耳？

你的心灵总在
幽暗的未知地带游走；
快让它停止无谓的徘徊——
回来与我厮守——

我知道我山中的清风
仍能让你陶醉安心——
我知道你爱我的艳阳当空
尽管你恣意任性——

当黄昏渗入白昼，
占据了夏日的天空，
我看见你的灵魂，
扭曲在偶像崇拜之中。

我时刻注视着你——
我知道我有力的支配——
和强大的魔力，
能驱散你的伤悲——

世间凡人心中少有
如此强烈的渴望，
但也无人会去奢求，
胜过你那人间的天堂——

就让我用风儿将你轻抚——
就让我成为你的挚友——
既然你身旁无人祝福，
就请回来与我厮守——

我的灵魂并不怯懦

我的灵魂并不怯懦，
我也绝不颤抖，纵使身处风暴肆虐的地狱。
我看见天堂的光辉洒落，
信仰也同样闪烁，帮我战胜恐惧。

噢，我心中的上帝，
无所不能、无处不在的神明，
生命在我体内憩息，
因为我的力量，源自你不朽的生命。

那千百种信条皆为虚妄，
纵使曾打动人心，也必属无谓；
如此无用，像枯萎的芥草一样，
抑或虚浮的泡沫之于无边的海水。

它们妄图动摇的人，
如此笃信你的无限，
如此坚决地锚定，
你岿然的不朽之岩。

你的灵魂博爱广大，
为永恒的岁月注入活力。
它自上而下地弥漫、孵化，
它改变、维系、消融、创造和抚育。

就算地球与月球都已不再，
纵使恒星与宇宙消亡，
你仍会独自存在，
包罗世间万象。

那里没有“死亡”的立足之地，
没有一粒原子会在他的淫威下荒废，
因为你就是生命与呼吸，
永远没有什么能将你摧毁。

室内一片沉静宁谧

室内一片沉静宁谧，
室外——却是疾风骤雨。
但有什么在我心间低语，
穿过雨声，（穿过）风的叹息，
——永远不再。
永远不再？为何永远不再？
记忆的力量与你同样真实。

屡遭责难，却不断重返

屡遭责难，却不断重返

我与生俱来最初的情感，
放弃追求财富与知识的纷繁，
转而投身不切实际的梦幻。

今天，我不会去探索那黑暗的领域；
它无常的宽广只会徒增凄凉；
幻象升起，一批连着一批，
虚幻的世界近得难以想象。

我将前行，但不会遵循昔日英雄的小路，
也不会选择道德高地上的路线，
更不会与面目不清的人为伍，
在久已逝去的暗影中流连。

我将追随我的本心：
不需要任何别的向导：
那里蕨草丛生的山谷中有觅食的灰色羊群；
那里的山间有狂风猛烈地呼啸。

孤寂的山峦蕴含怎样的启示？
它比我想象中更加荣耀、更加悲情：
那足以唤醒一个人内心情感的世界，
堪为天堂与地狱的中心。

何必要问何时何处

何必要问何时何处，
我们的人性就寓居于此。
对权力的崇拜由来自古，
谄媚地吹捧着罪恶的胜出。
对绝望的可怜人落井下石，
打击正义，赞赏罪恶。
若是后者强大，前者羸弱。

让人流血，教人哭泣，
贪恋悲愁，自作自受。
还用愚蠢的祷告藐视上帝，
为不义者祈求慈悲庇佑。

此时正值金秋，
谷穗渐渐金黄成熟。
日复一日，在每个正午，
八月的太阳如六月那样炽热夺目。
但我们空茫的双眼，
只看见大地荡漾，天空炽燃。
无人手握收割者的镰刀，
田里成熟的谷捆也尚未捆牢。

我们的谷物数月前就已收割，
掺着血块脱粒去壳。

正当谷穗如牛奶般甜美，
马蹄与战靴将它们残暴地踩碎。
我加倍地诅咒，在异乡的草地
战斗，却不为家园抑或上帝。

版本说明

本书收录的诗歌全部选自珍妮特·吉扎里（Janet Gezari）编纂的《艾米莉·勃朗特诗歌全集》（*The Complete Poems*），企鹅出版社1992年第一版。其中《屡遭责难，却不断重返》一诗如今被普遍认为是夏洛蒂·勃朗特所作，但实属上乘，理当收录。

Emily
Brontë

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

The Night
is Darkening
Round Me

N° 18

‘ . . . ever-present,
phantom thing;
My slave, my
comrade, and
my king’

1. Faith and Despondency

'The winter wind is loud and wild,
Come close to me, my darling child;
Forsake thy books, and mateless play;
And, while the night is gathering grey,
We'll talk its pensive hours away; –

'Iernë, round our sheltered hall
November's gusts unheeded call;
Not one faint breath can enter here
Enough to wave my daughter's hair,
And I am glad to watch the blaze
Glance from her eyes, with mimic rays;
To feel her cheek so softly pressed,
In happy quiet on my breast.

'But, yet, even this tranquillity
Brings bitter, restless thoughts to me;
And, in the red fire's cheerful glow,
I think of deep glens, blocked with snow;
I dream of moor, and misty hill,
Where evening closes dark and chill;
For, lone, among the mountains cold,
Lie those that I have loved of old.
And my heart aches, in hopeless pain

Exhausted with repinings vain,
That I shall greet them ne'er again!

‘Father, in early infancy,
When you were far beyond the sea,
Such thoughts were tyrants over me!
I often sat, for hours together,
Through the long nights of angry weather,
Raised on my pillow, to descry
The dim moon struggling in the sky;
Or, with strained ear, to catch the shock,
Of rock with wave, and wave with rock;
So would I fearful vigil keep,
And, all for listening, never sleep.
But this world's life has much to dread,
Not so, my Father, with the dead.

‘Oh! not for them, should we despair,
The grave is drear, but they are not there;
Their dust is mingled with the sod,
Their happy souls are gone to God!
You told me this, and yet you sigh,
And murmur that your friends must die.
Ah! my dear father, tell me why?
For, if your former words were true,
How useless would such sorrow be;
As wise, to mourn the seed which grew
Unnoticed on its parent tree,

Because it fell in fertile earth,
And sprang up to a glorious birth –
Struck deep its root, and lifted high
Its green boughs, in the breezy sky.

‘But, I’ll not fear, I will not weep
For those whose bodies rest in sleep, –
I know there is a blessed shore,
Opening its ports for me, and mine;
And, gazing Time’s wide waters o’er,
I weary for that land divine,
Where we were born, where you and I
Shall meet our Dearest, when we die;
From suffering and corruption free,
Restored into the Deity.’

‘Well hast thou spoken, sweet, trustful child!
And wiser than thy sire;
And worldly tempests, raging wild,
Shall strengthen thy desire –
Thy fervent hope, through storm and foam,
Through wind and ocean’s roar,
To reach, at last, the eternal home,
The steadfast, changeless, shore!’

2. Stars

Ah! why, because the dazzling sun
 Restored our Earth to joy,
Have you departed, every one,
 And left a desert sky?

All through the night, your glorious eyes
 Were gazing down in mine,
And with a full heart's thankful sighs,
 I blessed that watch divine.

I was at peace, and drank your beams
 As they were life to me;
And revelled in my changeful dreams,
 Like petrel on the sea.

Thought followed thought, star followed star,
 Through boundless regions, on;
While one sweet influence, near and far,
 Thrilled through, and proved us one!

Why did the morning dawn to break
 So great, so pure, a spell;
And scorch with fire, the tranquil cheek,
 Where your cool radiance fell?

Blood- red, he rose, and, arrow- straight,
His fierce beams struck my brow;
The soul of nature, sprang, elate,
But *mine* sank sad and low!

My lids closed down, yet through their veil,
I saw him, blazing, still,
And steep in gold the misty dale,
And flash upon the hill.

I turned me to the pillow, then,
To call back night, and see
Your worlds of solemn light, again,
Throb with my heart, and me!

It would not do – the pillow glowed,
And glowed both roof and floor;
And birds sang loudly in the wood,
And fresh winds shook the door;

The curtains waved, the wakened flies
Were murmuring round my room,
Imprisoned there, till I should rise,
And give them leave to roam.

Oh, stars, and dreams, and gentle night;
Oh, night and stars return!

And hide me from the hostile light,
That does not warm, but burn;

That drains the blood of suffering men;
Drinks tears, instead of dew;
Let me sleep through his blinding reign,
And only wake with you!

3. The Philosopher

‘Enough of thought, philosopher!
Too long hast thou been dreaming
Unenlightened, in this chamber drear,
While summer’s sun is beaming!
Space- sweeping soul, what sad refrain
Concludes thy musings once again?

‘ “Oh, for the time when I shall sleep
Without identity,
And never care how rain may steep,
Or snow may cover me!
No promised heaven, these wild desires,
Could all, or half fulfil;
No threatened hell, with quenchless fires,
Subdue this quenchless will!” ’

‘So said I, and still say the same;
Still, to my death, will say –
Three gods, within this little frame,
Are warring night and day;
Heaven could not hold them all, and yet
They all are held in me;
And must be mine till I forget
My present entity!

Oh, for the time, when in my breast
 Their struggles will be o'er!
Oh, for the day, when I shall rest,
 And never suffer more!'

'I saw a spirit, standing, man,
 Where thou doth stand – an hour ago,
And round his feet three rivers ran,
 Of equal depth, and equal flow –
A golden stream – and one like blood;
 And one like sapphire seemed to be;
But, where they joined their triple flood
 It tumbled in an inky sea.

The spirit sent his dazzling gaze
 Down through that ocean's gloomy night
Then, kindling all, with sudden blaze,
 The glad deep sparkled wide and bright –
White as the sun, far, far more fair
 Than its divided sources were!'

'And even for that spirit, seer,
 I've watched and sought my life- time long;
Sought him in heaven, hell, earth, and air –
 An endless search, and always wrong!
Had I but seen his glorious eye
 Once light the clouds that wilder me,
I ne'er had raised this coward cry

To cease to think, and cease to be;
I ne'er had called oblivion blest,
Nor, stretching eager hands to death,
Implored to change for senseless rest
This sentient soul, this living breath –
Oh, let me die – that power and will
Their cruel strife may close;
And conquered good, and conquering ill
Be lost in one repose!'

4. Remembrance

Cold in the earth – and the deep snow piled above thee,
Far, far, removed, cold in the dreary grave!
Have I forgot, my only Love, to love thee,
Severed at last by Time's all- severing wave?

Now, when alone, do my thoughts no longer hover
Over the mountains, on that northern shore,
Resting their wings where heath and fern- leaves cover
Thy noble heart for ever, ever more?

Cold in the earth – and fifteen wild Decembers,
From those brown hills, have melted into spring:
Faithful, indeed, is the spirit that remembers
After such years of change and suffering!
Sweet Love of youth, forgive, if I forget thee,
While the world's tide is bearing me along;
Other desires and other hopes beset me,
Hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong!

No later light has lightened up my heaven,
No second morn has ever shone for me;
All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given,
All my life's bliss is in the grave with thee.

But, when the days of golden dreams had perished,
And even Despair was powerless to destroy;
Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,
Strengthened, and fed without the aid of joy.

Then did I check the tears of useless passion –
Weaned my young soul from yearning after thine;
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten
Down to that tomb already more than mine.

And, even yet, I dare not let it languish,
Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain;
Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,
How could I seek the empty world again?

5. A Death- Scene

'O Day! he cannot die
When thou so fair art shining!
O Sun, in such a glorious sky,
So tranquilly declining;

'He cannot leave thee now,
While fresh west winds are blowing,
And all around his youthful brow
Thy cheerful light is glowing!

'Edward, awake, awake –
The golden evening gleams
Warm and bright on Arden's lake –
Arouse thee from thy dreams!

'Beside thee, on my knee,
My dearest friend! I pray
That thou, to cross the eternal sea,
Wouldst yet one hour delay:

'I hear its billows roar –
I see them foaming high;
But no glimpse of a further shore
Has blest my straining eye.

‘Believe not what they urge
Of Eden isles beyond;
Turn back, from that tempestuous surge,
To thy own native land.

‘It is not death, but pain
That struggles in thy breast –
Nay, rally, Edward, rouse again;
I cannot let thee rest!’

One long look, that sore reproved me
For the woe I could not bear –
One mute look of suffering moved me
To repent my useless prayer:

And, with sudden check, the heaving
Of distraction passed away;
Not a sign of further grieving
Stirred my soul that awful day.

Paled, at length, the sweet sun setting;
Sunk to peace the twilight breeze:
Summer dews fell softly, wetting
Glen, and glade, and silent trees.

Then his eyes began to weary,
Weighed beneath a mortal sleep;

And their orbs grew strangely dreary,
Clouded, even as they would weep.

But they wept not, but they changed not,
Never moved, and never closed;
Troubled still, and still they ranged not –
Wandered not, nor yet reposed!

So I knew that he was dying –
Stooped, and raised his languid head;
Felt no breath, and heard no sighing,
So I knew that he was dead.

6. Song

The linnet in the rocky dells,
The moor- lark in the air,
The bee among the heather bells,
That hide my lady fair:

The wild deer browse above her breast;
The wild birds raise their brood;
And they, her smiles of love caressed,
Have left her solitude!

I ween, that when the grave's dark wall
Did first her form retain;
They thought their hearts could ne'er recall
The light of joy again.

They thought the tide of grief would flow
Unchecked through future years;
But where is all their anguish now,
And where are all their tears?

Well, let them fight for honour's breath,
Or pleasure's shade pursue –
The dweller in the land of death
Is changed and careless too.

And, if their eyes should watch and weep
Till sorrow's source were dry,
She would not, in her tranquil sleep,
Return a single sigh!

Blow, west- wind, by the lonely mound,
And murmur, summer- streams –
There is no need of other sound
To soothe my lady's dreams.

7. Anticipation

How beautiful the earth is still,
To thee – how full of happiness!
How little fraught with real ill,
Or unreal phantoms of distress!
How spring can bring thee glory, yet,
And summer win thee to forget
December's sullen time!
Why dost thou hold the treasure fast,
Of youth's delight, when youth is past,
And thou art near thy prime?

When those who were thy own compeers,
Equals in fortune and in years,
Have seen their morning melt in tears,
To clouded, smileless day;
Blest, had they died untried and young,
Before their hearts went wandering wrong,
Poor slaves, subdued by passions strong,
A weak and helpless prey!

'Because, I hoped while they enjoyed,
And, by fulfilment, hope destroyed;
As children hope, with trustful breast,
I waited bliss – and cherished rest.

A thoughtful spirit taught me, soon,
That we must long till life be done;
That every phase of earthly joy
Must always fade, and always cloy:
‘This I foresaw – and would not chase
 The fleeting treacheries;
But, with firm foot and tranquil face,
Held backward from that tempting race,
Gazed o’er the sands the waves efface,
 To the enduring seas –
There cast my anchor of desire
Deep in unknown eternity;
Nor ever let my spirit tire,
With looking for *what is to be!*

‘It is hope’s spell that glorifies,
Like youth, to my maturer eyes,
All Nature’s million mysteries,
 The fearful and the fair –
Hope soothes me in the griefs I know;
She lulls my pain for others’ woe,
And makes me strong to undergo
 What I am born to bear.

‘Glad comforter! will I not brave,
Unawed, the darkness of the grave?
Nay, smile to hear Death’s billows rave –
 Sustained, my guide, by thee?

The more unjust seems present fate,
The more my spirit swells elate,
Strong, in thy strength, to anticipate
Rewarding destiny!’

8. The Prisoner (A Fragment)

In the dungeon- crypts, idly did I stray,
Reckless of the lives wasting there away;
‘Draw the ponderous bars! open, Warder stern!’
He dared not say me nay – the hinges harshly turn.

‘Our guests are darkly lodged,’ I whisper’d, gazing through
The vault, whose grated eye showed heaven more grey than
blue;

(This was when glad spring laughed in awaking pride;)
‘Aye, darkly lodged enough!’ returned my sullen guide.

Then, God forgive my youth; forgive my careless tongue;
I scoffed, as chill chains on the damp flag- stones rung:
‘Confined in triple walls, art thou so much to fear,
That we must bind thee down and clench thy fetters here?’

The captive raised her face, it was as soft and mild
As sculptured marble saint, or slumbering unwean’d child;
It was so soft and mild, it was so sweet and fair,
Pain could not trace a line, nor grief a shadow there!

The captive raised her hand and pressed it to her brow;
‘I have been struck,’ she said, ‘and I am suffering now;
Yet these are little worth, your bolts and irons strong,
And, were they forged in steel, they could not hold me long.’

Hoarse laughed the jailer grim: 'Shall I be won to hear;
Dost think, fond, dreaming wretch, that *I* shall grant thy
prayer?

Or, better still, wilt melt my master's heart with groans?
Ah! sooner might the sun thaw down these granite stones.

'My master's voice is low, his aspect bland and kind,
But hard as hardest flint, the soul that lurks behind;
And I am rough and rude, yet not more rough to see
Than is the hidden ghost that has its home in me.'

About her lips there played a smile of almost scorn,
'My friend,' she gently said, 'you have not heard me mourn;
When you my kindred's lives, *my* lost life, can restore,
Then may I weep and sue, – but never, friend, before!

'Still, let my tyrants know, I am not doomed to wear
Year after year in gloom, and desolate despair;
A messenger of Hope, comes every night to me,
And offers for short life, eternal liberty.

'He comes with western winds, with evening's wandering airs,
With that clear dusk of heaven that brings the thickest stars.
Winds take a pensive tone, and stars a tender fire,
And visions rise, and change, that kill me with desire.

'Desire for nothing known in my maturer years,
When Joy grew mad with awe, at counting future tears.

When, if my spirit's sky was full of flashes warm,
I knew not whence they came, from sun, or thunder storm.

'But, first, a hush of peace – a soundless calm descends;
The struggle of distress, and fierce impatience ends.
Mute music soothes my breast, unuttered harmony,
That I could never dream, till Earth was lost to me.

'Then dawns the Invisible; the Unseen its truth reveals;
My outward sense is gone, my inward essence feels:
Its wings are almost free – its home, its harbour found,
Measuring the gulf, it stoops, and dares the final bound.

'Oh, dreadful is the check – intense the agony –
When the ear begins to hear, and the eye begins to see;
When the pulse begins to throb, the brain to think again,
The soul to feel the flesh, and the flesh to feel the chain.

'Yet I would lose no sting, would wish no torture less,
The more that anguish racks, the earlier it will bless;
And robed in fires of hell, or bright with heavenly shine,
If it but herald death, the vision is divine!'

She ceased to speak, and we, unanswering, turned to go –
We had no further power to work the captive woe:
Her cheek, her gleaming eye, declared that man had given
A sentence, unapproved, and overruled by Heaven.

9. Hope

Hope was but a timid friend;
 She sat without the grated den,
Watching how my fate would tend,
 Even as selfish- hearted men.

She was cruel in her fear;
 Through the bars, one dreary day,
I looked out to see her there,
 And she turned her face away!

Like a false guard, false watch keeping,
 Still in strife, she whispered peace;
She would sing while I was weeping;
 If I listened, she would cease.

False she was, and unrelenting;
 When my last joys strewed the ground,
Even Sorrow saw, repenting,
 Those sad relics scattered round;

Hope, whose whisper would have given
 Balm to all my frenzied pain,
Stretched her wings, and soared to heaven,
 Went, and ne'er returned again!

10. A Day Dream

On a sunny brae, alone I lay
 One summer afternoon;
It was the marriage- time of May
 With her young lover, June.

From her mother's heart, seemed loath to part
 That queen of bridal charms,
But her father smiled on the fairest child
 He ever held in his arms.

The trees did wave their plummy crests,
 The glad birds carolled clear;
And I, of all the wedding guests,
 Was only sullen there!

There was not one, but wished to shun
 My aspect void of cheer;
The very grey rocks, looking on,
 Asked, 'What do you here?'

And I could utter no reply;
 In sooth, I did not know
Why I had brought a clouded eye
 To greet the general glow.

So, resting on a heathy bank,
 I took my heart to me;
And we together sadly sank
 Into a reverie.

We thought, 'When winter comes again,
 Where will these bright things be?
All vanished, like a vision vain,
 An unreal mockery!

'The birds that now so blithely sing,
 Through deserts, frozen dry,
Poor spectres of the perished spring,
 In famished troops, will fly.

'And why should we be glad at all?
 The leaf is hardly green,
Before a token of its fall
 Is on the surface seen!'

Now, whether it were really so,
 I never could be sure;
But as in fit of peevish woe,
 I stretched me on the moor,

A thousand thousand gleaming fires
 Seemed kindling in the air;

A thousand thousand silvery lyres
Resounded far and near:

Methought, the very breath I breathed
Was full of sparks divine,
And all my heather-couch was wreathed
By that celestial shine!

And, while the wide earth echoing rung
To their strange minstrelsy,
The little glittering spirits sung,
Or seemed to sing, to me.

‘O mortal! mortal! let them die;
Let time and tears destroy,
That we may overflow the sky
With universal joy!

‘Let grief distract the sufferer’s breast,
And night obscure his way;
They hasten him to endless rest,
And everlasting day.

‘To thee the world is like a tomb,
A desert’s naked shore;
To us, in unimagined bloom,
It brightens more and more!

‘And could we lift the veil, and give
 One brief glimpse to thine eye,
Thou wouldst rejoice for those that live,
 Because they live to die.’

The music ceased; the noonday dream,
 Like dream of night, withdrew;
But Fancy, still, will sometimes deem
 Her fond creation true.

11. To Imagination

When weary with the long day's care,
 And earthly change from pain to pain,
And lost and ready to despair,
 Thy kind voice calls me back again:
Oh, my true friend! I am not lone,
While thou canst speak with such a tone!

So hopeless is the world without;
 The world within I doubly prize;
Thy world, where guile, and hate, and doubt,
 And cold suspicion never rise;
Where thou, and I, and Liberty,
Have undisputed sovereignty.

What matters it, that, all around,
 Danger, and guilt, and darkness lie,
If but within our bosom's bound
 We hold a bright, untroubled sky,
Warm with ten thousand mingled rays
Of suns that know no winter days?

Reason, indeed, may oft complain
 For Nature's sad reality,
And tell the suffering heart how vain

Its cherished dreams must always be;
And Truth may rudely trample down
The flowers of Fancy, newly- blown:

But, thou art ever there, to bring
The hovering vision back, and breathe
New glories o'er the blighted spring,
And call a lovelier Life from Death,
And whisper, with a voice divine,
Of real worlds, as bright as thine.

I trust not to thy phantom bliss,
Yet, still, in evening's quiet hour,
With never- failing thankfulness,
I welcome thee, Benignant Power;
Sure solacer of human cares,
And sweeter hope, when hope despairs!

12. How Clear She Shines

How clear she shines! How quietly
 I lie beneath her guardian light;
While heaven and earth are whispering me,
 ‘Tomorrow, wake, but, dream tonight.’
Yes, Fancy, come, my Fairy love!
 These throbbing temples softly kiss;
And bend my lonely couch above
 And bring me rest, and bring me bliss.

The world is going; dark world, adieu!
 Grim world, conceal thee till the day;
The heart, thou canst not all subdue,
 Must still resist, if thou delay!

Thy love I will not, will not share;
 Thy hatred only wakes a smile;
Thy griefs may wound – thy wrongs may tear,
 But, oh, thy lies shall ne’er beguile!
While gazing on the stars that glow
 Above me, in that stormless sea,
I long to hope that all the woe
 Creation knows, is held in thee!

And this shall be my dream tonight;

I'll think the heaven of glorious spheres
Is rolling on its course of light

In endless bliss, through endless years;
I'll think, there's not one world above,
Far as these straining eyes can see,
Where wisdom ever laughed at Love,
Or Virtue crouched to Infamy;

Where, writhing 'neath the strokes of Fate,
The mangled wretch was forced to smile;
To match his patience 'gainst her hate,
His heart rebellious all the while.
Where Pleasure still will lead to wrong,
And helpless Reason warn in vain;
And Truth is weak, and Treachery strong;
And Joy the surest path to Pain;
And Peace, the lethargy of Grief;
And Hope, a phantom of the soul;
And Life, a labour, void and brief;
And Death, the despot of the whole!

13. Sympathy

There should be no despair for you
 While nightly stars are burning;
While evening pours its silent dew
 And sunshine gilds the morning.
There should be no despair – though tears
 May flow down like a river:
Are not the best beloved of years
 Around your heart for ever?

They weep, you weep, it must be so;
 Winds sigh as you are sighing,
And Winter sheds his grief in snow
 Where Autumn's leaves are lying:
Yet, these revive, and from their fate
 Your fate cannot be parted:
Then, journey on, if not elate,
 Still, *never* broken- hearted!

14. Plead for Me

Oh, thy bright eyes must answer now,
When Reason, with a scornful brow,
Is mocking at my overthrow!
Oh, thy sweet tongue must plead for me
And tell, why I have chosen thee!

Stern Reason is to judgment come,
Arrayed in all her forms of gloom:
Wilt thou, my advocate, be dumb?
No, radiant angel, speak and say,
Why I did cast the world away.

Why I have persevered to shun
The common paths that others run,
And on a strange road journeyed on,
Heedless, alike, of wealth and power –
Of glory's wreath and pleasure's flower.

These, once, indeed, seemed Beings Divine;
And they, perchance, heard vows of mine,
And saw my offerings on their shrine;
But, careless gifts are seldom prized,
And *mine* were worthily despised.

So, with a ready heart I swore
To seek their altar- stone no more;
And gave my spirit to adore
Thee, ever- present, phantom thing;
My slave, my comrade, and my king,

A slave, because I rule thee still;
Incline thee to my changeful will,
And make thy influence good or ill:
A comrade, for by day and night
Thou art my intimate delight, –

My darling pain that wounds and sears
And wrings a blessing out from tears
By deadening me to earthly cares;
And yet, a king, though Prudence well
Have taught thy subject to rebel.

And am I wrong to worship, where
Faith cannot doubt, nor hope despair,
Since my own soul can grant my prayer?
Speak, God of visions, plead for me,
And tell why I have chosen thee!

15. Self- Interrogation

'The evening passes fast away,
 'Tis almost time to rest;
What thoughts has left the vanished day,
 What feelings, in thy breast?'

'The vanished day? It leaves a sense
 Of labour hardly done;
Of little, gained with vast expense, –
 A sense of grief alone!

'Time stands before the door of Death,
 Upbraiding bitterly;
And Conscience, with exhaustless breath,
 Pours black reproach on me:

'And though I've said that Conscience lies,
 And Time should Fate condemn;
Still, sad Repentance clouds my eyes,
 And makes me yield to them!'

'Then art thou glad to seek repose?
 Art glad to leave the sea,
And anchor all thy weary woes
 In calm Eternity?

‘Nothing regrets to see thee go –
Not one voice sobs “farewell”,
And where thy heart has suffered so,
Canst thou desire to dwell?’

‘Alas! The countless links are strong
That bind us to our clay;
The loving spirit lingers long,
And would not pass away!

‘And rest is sweet, when laurelled fame
Will crown the soldier’s crest;
But, a brave heart, with a tarnished name,
Would rather fight than rest.’

‘Well, thou hast fought for many a year,
Hast fought thy whole life through,
Hast humbled Falsehood, trampled Fear;
What is there left to do?’

“Tis true, this arm has hotly striven,
Has dared what few would dare;
Much have I done, and freely given,
But little learnt to bear!’

‘Look on the grave, where thou must sleep,
Thy last, and strongest foe;

It is endurance not to weep,
If that repose seem woe.

'The long war closing in defeat,
Defeat serenely borne,
Thy midnight rest may still be sweet,
And break in glorious morn!'

16. Death

Death! that struck when I was most confiding
In my certain faith of joy to be –
Strike again, Time's withered branch dividing
From the fresh root of Eternity!

Leaves, upon Time's branch, were growing brightly,
Full of sap, and full of silver dew;
Birds beneath its shelter gathered nightly;
Daily round its flowers the wild bees flew.

Sorrow passed, and plucked the golden blossom;
Guilt stripped off the foliage in its pride;
But, within its parent's kindly bosom,
Flowed for ever Life's restoring tide.

Little mourned I for the parted gladness,
For the vacant nest and silent song –
Hope was there, and laughed me out of sadness;
Whispering, 'Winter will not linger long!'

And, behold! with tenfold increase blessing,
Spring adorned the beauty-burdened spray;
Wind and rain and fervent heat, caressing,
Lavished glory on that second May!

High it rose – no winged grief could sweep it;
Sin was scared to distance with its shine;
Love, and its own life, had power to keep it
From all wrong – from every blight but thine!

Cruel Death! The young leaves droop and languish;
Evening's gentle air may still restore –
No! the morning sunshine mocks my anguish –
Time, for me, must never blossom more!

Strike it down, that other boughs may flourish
Where that perished sapling used to be;
Thus, at least, its mouldering corpse will nourish
That from which it sprung – Eternity.

17. Stanzas to —

Well, some may hate, and some may scorn,
And some may quite forget thy name;
But my sad heart must ever mourn
Thy ruined hopes, thy blighted fame!
'Twas thus I thought, an hour ago,
Even weeping o'er that wretch's woe;
One word turned back my gushing tears,
And lit my altered eye with sneers.
Then 'Bless the friendly dust,' I said,
'That hides thy unlamented head!
Vain as thou wert, and weak as vain,
The slave of Falsehood, Pride, and Pain, —
My heart has nought akin to thine;
Thy soul is powerless over mine.'

But these were thoughts that vanished too;
Unwise, unholy, and untrue:
Do I despise the timid deer,
Because his limbs are fleet with fear?
Or, would I mock the wolf's death- howl,
Because his form is gaunt and foul?
Or, hear with joy the leveret's cry,
Because it cannot bravely die?
No! Then above his memory

Let Pity's heart as tender be;
Say, 'Earth, lie lightly on that breast
And, kind Heaven, grant that spirit rest!'

18. Honour's Martyr

The moon is full this winter night;
The stars are clear, though few;
And every window glistens bright,
With leaves of frozen dew.

The sweet moon through your lattice gleams
And lights your room like day;
And there you pass, in happy dreams,
The peaceful hours away!

While I, with effort hardly quelling
The anguish in my breast,
Wander about the silent dwelling,
And cannot think of rest.

The old clock in the gloomy hall
Ticks on, from hour to hour;
And every time its measured call
Seems lingering slow and slower:

And oh, how slow that keen- eyed star
Has tracked the chilly grey!
What, watching yet! how very far
The morning lies away!

Without your chamber door I stand;
Love, are you slumbering still?
My cold heart, underneath my hand,
Has almost ceased to thrill.

Bleak, bleak the east wind sobs and sighs,
And drowns the turret bell,
Whose sad note, undistinguished, dies
Unheard, like my farewell!

Tomorrow, Scorn will blight my name,
And Hate will trample me,
Will load me with a coward's shame –
A traitor's perjury.

False friends will launch their covert sneers;
True friends will wish me dead;
And I shall cause the bitterest tears
That you have ever shed.

The dark deeds of my outlawed race
Will then like virtues shine;
And men will pardon their disgrace,
Beside the guilt of mine.

For, who forgives the accursed crime
Of dastard treachery?

Rebellion, in its chosen time,
May Freedom's champion be;

Revenge may stain a righteous sword,
It may be just to slay;
But, traitor, traitor, – from *that* word
All true breasts shrink away!

Oh, I would give my heart to death,
To keep my honour fair;
Yet, I'll not give my inward faith
My honour's *name* to spare!

Not even to keep your priceless love,
Dare I, Beloved, deceive;
This treason should the future prove,
Then, only then, believe!

I know the path I ought to go;
I follow fearlessly,
Inquiring not what deeper woe
Stern duty stores for me.

So foes pursue, and cold allies
Mistrust me, every one:
Let me be false in others' eyes,
If faithful in my own.

19. Stanzas

I'll not weep that thou art going to leave me,
 There's nothing lovely here;
And doubly will the dark world grieve me,
 While thy heart suffers there.

I'll not weep, because the summer's glory
 Must always end in gloom;
And, follow out the happiest story –
 It closes with a tomb!

And I am weary of the anguish
 Increasing winters bear;
Weary to watch the spirit languish
 Through years of dead despair.

So, if a tear, when thou art dying,
 Should haply fall from me,
It is but that my soul is sighing,
 To go and rest with thee.

20. My Comforter

Well hast thou spoken, and yet, not taught
 A feeling strange or new;
Thou hast but roused a latent thought,
A cloud- closed beam of sunshine, brought
 To gleam in open view.

Deep down, concealed within my soul,
 That light lies hid from men;
Yet, glows unquenched – though shadows roll,
Its gentle ray cannot control,
 About the sullen den.

Was I not vexed, in these gloomy ways
 To walk alone so long?
Around me, wretches uttering praise,
Or howling o'er their hopeless days,
 And each with Frenzy's tongue; –

A brotherhood of misery,
 Their smiles as sad as sighs;
Whose madness daily maddened me,
Distorting into agony
 The bliss before my eyes!

So stood I, in Heaven's glorious sun,
And in the glare of Hell;
My spirit drank a mingled tone,
Of seraph's song, and demon's moan;
What my soul bore, my soul alone
Within itself may tell!

Like a soft air, above a sea,
Tossed by the tempest's stir;
A thaw- wind, melting quietly
The snow- drift, on some wintry lea;
No: what sweet thing resembles thee,
My thoughtful Comforter?

And yet a little longer speak,
Calm this resentful mood;
And while the savage heart grows meek,
For other token do not seek,
But let the tear upon my cheek
Evince my gratitude!

21. The Old Stoic

Riches I hold in light esteem;
And Love I laugh to scorn;
And lust of fame was but a dream
That vanished with the morn:

And if I pray, the only prayer
That moves my lips for me
Is, 'Leave the heart that now I bear,
And give me liberty!'

Yes, as my swift days near their goal,
'Tis all that I implore;
In life and death, a chainless soul,
With courage to endure.

22.

Woods you need not frown on me
Spectral trees that so dolefully
Shake your heads in the dreary sky
You need not mock so bitterly

23.

The blue bell is the sweetest flower
That waves in summer air
Its blossoms have the mightiest power
To soothe my spirit's care

There is a spell in purple heath
Too wildly, sadly drear
The violet has a fragrant breath
But fragrance will not cheer

The trees are bare, the sun is cold
And seldom, seldom seen –
The heavens have lost their zone of gold
The earth its robe of green

And ice upon the glancing stream
Has cast its sombre shade
And distant hills and valleys seem
In frozen mist arrayed –

The blue bell cannot charm me now
The heath has lost its bloom
The violets in the glen below
They yield no sweet perfume

But though I mourn the heather- bell
'Tis better far, away
I know how fast my tears would swell
To see it smile today

And that wood flower that hides so shy
Beneath the mossy stone
Its balmy scent and dewy eye
'Tis not for them I moan

It is the slight and stately stem
The blossom's silvery blue
The buds hid like a sapphire gem
In sheaths of emerald hue

'Tis these that breathe upon my heart
A calm and softening spell
That if it makes the tear- drop start
Has power to soothe as well

For these I weep, so long divided
Through winter's dreary day
In longing weep – but most when guided
On withered banks to stray

If chilly then the light should fall
Adown the dreary sky

And gild the dank and darkened wall
With transient brilliancy

How do I yearn, how do I pine
For the time of flowers to come
And turn me from that fading shine
To mourn the fields of home –

24. The Night- Wind

In summer's mellow midnight
A cloudless moon shone through
Our open parlour window
And rosetrees wet with dew

I sat in silent musing –
The soft wind waved my hair
It told me Heaven was glorious
And sleeping Earth was fair –

I needed not its breathing
To bring such thoughts to me
But still it whispered lowly
'How dark the woods will be! –

'The thick leaves in my murmur
Are rustling like a dream,
And all their myriad voices
Instinct with spirit seem'

I said, 'Go gentle singer,
Thy wooing voice is kind
But do not think its music
Has power to reach my mind –

‘Play with the scented flower,
The young tree’s supple bough –
And leave my human feelings
In their own course to flow’

The Wanderer would not leave me
Its kiss grew warmer still –
‘O come,’ it sighed so sweetly
‘I’ll win thee ’gainst thy will –

‘Have we not been from childhood friends?
Have I not loved thee long?
As long as thou hast loved the night
Whose silence wakes my song?

‘And when thy heart is laid at rest
Beneath the church- yard stone
I shall have time enough to mourn
And thou to be alone’ –

25.

The night is darkening round me
The wild winds coldly blow
But a tyrant spell has bound me
And I cannot cannot go

The giant trees are bending
Their bare boughs weighed with snow
And the storm is fast descending
And yet I cannot go

Clouds beyond clouds above me
Wastes beyond wastes below
But nothing drear can move me
I will not cannot go

I'll come when thou art saddest
Laid alone in the darkened room
When the mad day's mirth has vanished
And the smile of joy is banished
From evening's chilly gloom

I'll come when the heart's [real] feeling
Has entire unbiased sway

And my influence o'er thee stealing
Grief deepening joy congealing
Shall bear thy soul away

Listen 'tis just the hour
The awful time for thee
Dost thou not feel upon thy soul
A flood of strange sensations roll
Forerunners of a sterner power
Heralds of me

I would have touched the heavenly key
That spoke alike of bliss and thee
I would have woke the entrancing song
But its words died upon my tongue
And then I knew that hallowed strain
Could never speak of joy again
And then I felt

26.

Shall Earth no more inspire thee,
Thou lonely dreamer now?
Since passion may not fire thee
Shall Nature cease to bow?

Thy mind is ever moving
In regions dark to thee;
Recall its useless roving –
Come back and dwell with me –

I know my mountain breezes
Enchant and soothe thee still –
I know my sunshine pleases
Despite thy wayward will –

When day with evening blending
Sinks from the summer sky,
I've seen thy spirit bending
In fond idolatry –

I've watched thee every hour –
I know my mighty sway –
I know my magic power
To drive thy griefs away –

Few hearts to mortals given
On earth so wildly pine
Yet none would ask a Heaven
More like this Earth than thine –

Then let my winds caress thee –
Thy comrade let me be –
Since nought beside can bless thee
Return and dwell with me –

27.

No coward soul is mine
No trembler in the world's storm- troubled sphere
I see Heaven's glories shine
And Faith shines equal arming me from Fear

O God within my breast
Almighty ever- present Deity
Life, that in me hast rest
As I Undying Life, have power in thee

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts, unutterably vain,
Worthless as withered weeds
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by thy infinity
So surely anchored on
The steadfast rock of Immortality

With wide- embracing love
Thy spirit animates eternal years
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates and rears

Though Earth and moon were gone
And suns and universes ceased to be
And thou wert left alone
Every Existence would exist in thee

There is not room for Death
Nor atom that his might could render void
Since thou art Being and Breath
And what thou art may never be destroyed

28.

All hushed and still within the house
Without – all wind and driving rain
But something whispers to my mind
Through rain and [through the] wailing wind
 – Never again
Never again? Why not again?
Memory has power as real as thine

29.

Often rebuked, yet always back returning
 To those first feelings that were born with me,
And leaving busy chase of wealth and learning
 For idle dreams of things which cannot be:

Today, I will seek not the shadowy region;
 Its unsustaining vastness waxes drear;
And visions rising, legion after legion,
 Bring the unreal world too strangely near.

I'll walk, but not in old heroic traces,
 And not in paths of high morality,
And not among the half- distinguished faces,
 The clouded forms of long- past history.

I'll walk where my own nature would be leading:
 It vexes me to choose another guide:
Where the grey flocks in ferny glens are feeding;
 Where the wild wind blows on the mountain side.

What have those lonely mountains worth revealing?
 More glory and more grief than I can tell:
The earth that wakes *one* human heart to feeling
 Can centre both the worlds of Heaven and Hell.

30.

Why ask to know what date what clime
There dwelt our own humanity
Power- worshippers from earliest time
Foot- kissers of triumphant crime
Crushers of helpless misery
Crushing down Justice honouring Wrong
If that be feeble this be strong

Shedders of blood shedders of tears
Self- cursers avid of distress
Yet Mocking heaven with senseless prayers
For mercy on the merciless

It was the autumn of the year
When grain grows yellow in the ear
Day after day from noon to noon,
That August's sun blazed bright as June

But we with unregarding eyes
Saw panting earth and glowing skies
No hand the reaper's sickle held
Nor bound the ripe sheaves in the field

Our corn was garnered months before,

Threshed out and kneaded- up with gore
Ground when the ears were milky sweet
With furious toil of hoofs and feet
I doubly cursed on foreign sod
Fought neither for my home nor God



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N° 19

一种可怕的美诞生了

中图出版集团

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企鹅经典：小黑书 第二辑

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P E N G U I N



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A terrible beauty is born

Selected from Selected Poems, edited by Timothy Webb and published in Penguin Modern Classics in 2000. This selection first published in Penguin Classics 2016.

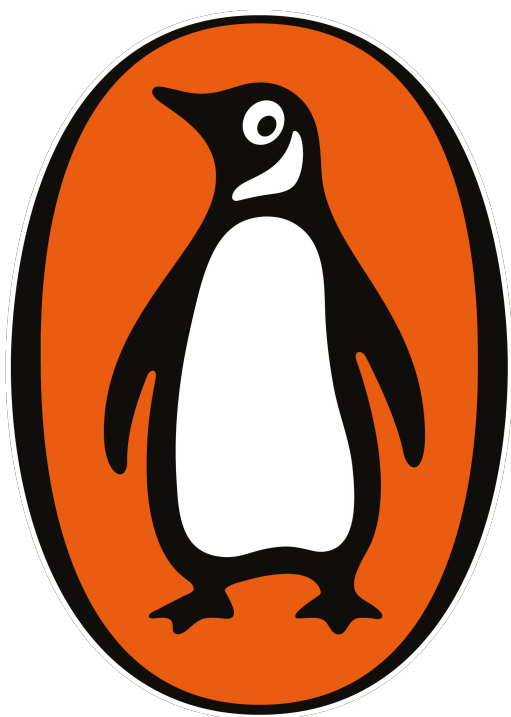
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“但我，贫穷，
只拥有我的梦；
我把我的梦
铺展在你脚下……”



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CLASSICS

在柳园 [1] 旁

在柳园旁，我与我的爱人相遇；
她雪白的小脚，走过柳园。
她要我爱得放松，像绿叶长在树上；
但我，年轻又无知，没能认同。

在河边草地，我和我的爱人站着；
她雪白的手，放在我微倾的肩上。
她要我爱得放松，像青草长在堤岸上；
但我年轻又无知，而现在满是泪水。

[1] 柳园（Salley Gardens），位于爱尔兰斯莱果郡一条小河边。“salley”源自爱尔兰语“saileach”，有“柳树”的意思。此处是年轻恋人约会的地方。（说明：本书脚注均为译者注。）

库丘林 [1] 与大海的战斗

有人从落日中缓缓而来，
走到暗影里染着衣物的爱玛前，
说：“我是那猪倌，你曾让我
看守树林和潮水间的路，
但现在我再也不需看守了。”

爱玛将织布扔在地上，
举起涂满染料的双臂，
张开嘴，突然大喊一声。

猪倌凝视她的脸说：
“没有一个活人，没有一个在死者间，
赢得他的战车带来的黄金。”

“但如果你的主人得胜回家，
为什么你会畏缩，浑身颤抖？”

随后他晃了晃身子，跌坐在
堆着织布的地面上，哭喊着说：
“和他一起的是嗓音甜美像鸟儿的人。”

“你竟敢当着我的面。”于是
她挥着染色的手揍他，踉跄地
走到她儿子放牛的地方，

用愤怒的声音哭叫：“不能
虚度时日啊，一个普通的放牧人。”

“母亲，这句话我已等了很久，
但现在是因为什么？”

“有个男人得死；
你有普天下最强健的臂膀。”

“无论是在日光还是星辰下，
我的父亲都站立在他的战车间。”

“但你必须成长为更高大的男人。”

“但在星光和太阳下的某个地方，
我父亲站立着。”

“战争已让他衰老、疲惫，
在脚下，马背上，或在战车里。”

“我只是在问通往我的旅程的路在哪儿，
因为让你受苦的会让你明智。”

“红枝 ^[2] 的一大群人驻扎
在树林边和大海奔马般的潮水间，
去那儿吧，在林边点燃营火；
但你的名字和血统只能告诉
那个用剑锋逼迫你的人，然后等着直到他们

找到被同样的誓言约束的宴客之人。”

库丘林就在那些宴客的人里，
他年轻的爱人跪着偎依在旁，
凝视他眼中悲哀的惊奇，
仿佛那是古老天空上的春色，
思虑着他荣耀的时日；
周围的琴弦诉说着对他的赞美，
库丘林，众王里的红枝之王，
用手指抚弄着黄铜琴弦。

最后库丘林说：“有人点燃了
夜间的篝火，在树荫间。
我时常听见他来回唱歌，
我时常听见他甜美的弦音。
去看看他是谁。”

有人去了又回来。
“他让我告诉所有人，他只在剑尖
说出他的名字，等到我们找到
被这同样的誓言约束的宴客之人。”

库丘林喊道：“我是那些主人里
唯一从童年起就受如此约束的人。”

在树荫间短暂战斗后，
他对年轻人说：“是因为没有少女
爱你，没有雪白的手臂缠绕你，

或是你渴求那昏暗的长眠之地，
才让你来，敢于当面与我决斗吗？”

“人的命运在上帝的隐匿之所。”

“你长得有点像我曾爱过的
一个女人。”

战斗再次加剧，
但此刻战争的怒火在庫丘林心中觉醒，
借着这怒火，新剑锋的防卫被老的攻破了，
并刺穿了他。

“在你断气前说吧。”

“庫丘林一世，强势的庫丘林的儿子。”
“我再也不能，将你从痛苦中解脱了。”

当白日载着它的重负走向黄昏，
庫丘林静止着，头垂向双膝；
康纳尔王 [3] 派那嗓音甜美的少女过来，
而她，为了让他振作，爱抚他的灰发；
她的手臂没用，她柔软雪白的胸脯没用。
康纳尔王，所有人中最敏锐的人，
让他的德鲁伊 [4] 十个人一排将他围住，
这样说：“庫丘林将在那儿沉思
三日多，在那可怕的寂静里，
然后起身，在狂乱中将我们残杀殆尽。
将魔法的幻觉吟诵进他的耳中，

这样他会与大海奔马般的潮水战斗。”

德鲁伊开始施行他们的秘术，

吟诵了三日的圣歌。

库丘林动了，

凝视大海的奔马，听见

战车和对他名字的呼喊；

与无懈可击的潮水战斗。

[1] 库丘林（Cuchulain），古爱尔兰传说中的英雄。

[2] 红枝（The Red Branch），阿尔斯特国王的侍卫队，库丘林是其重要成员之一。

[3] 康纳尔王（Conchubar），古爱尔兰传说中阿尔斯特国王。

[4] 德鲁伊（Druid），原意为熟悉橡树的人，是凯尔特人的高级祭司、法师、预言者。

当你老了

当你老了，头发灰白，满是睡意，
在炉火旁打盹，请取下这本书，
慢慢读着，怀想你的双眼
曾有过的神情柔和，以及阴影深沉；

多少人爱你绚烂优雅的时刻，
爱你的美丽，带着假意或真心，
但有一人爱你朝圣者的灵魂，
爱你容颜变换的忧伤。

垂下头，在闪光的炉栅旁，
怀着一丝悲伤，轻声诉说
爱如何消逝，如何步入头顶的群山
将他的脸庞掩藏在星辰之间。

漫游者安格斯之歌

我外出走到榛树林，
因有一团火在脑中。
我砍下榛树枝削成杆，
用线钩来一枚浆果；
当白蛾扇动翅膀，
当白蛾似的星辰闪耀而出，
我将浆果扔进溪水，
钓了条银色的小鳟鱼。

我把鱼放在地上，
又去把火吹着了，
但有某物在地上飒飒作响，
有人在以我的名字呼唤我；
它变成透着微光的女孩，
头上戴着苹果花环，
她以我的名字呼唤我，然后
跑开，消失在渐亮的空气里。

我老了，尽管漫游过
峡谷与山丘，
但我会找到她的踪迹，
亲吻她的唇，握住她的手；
沿着斑斓的草地漫步，
去采摘，直到时间终结，

那月亮的银苹果，
那太阳的金苹果。

他想要天国的衣裳

如果我有天国的绣衣，
织着金色和银色的光，
这蓝色、灰色和黑色的衣服
属于夜、白昼和黄昏，
我会将这衣裳铺展在你脚下。
但我，贫穷，只拥有我的梦；
我把我的梦铺展在你脚下；
要轻柔地踩，因为你踩在我的梦上。

听人劝慰的愚蠢

昨日有位良善的人说：

“你挚爱的人发间已有了银丝，
小小的阴影已爬上她的双眼，
时间只能让人更容易明智，
尽管现在似乎不可能，因此
你所需要的，就是耐心。”

我的心喊道：“不，
我没有得到一丝安慰，一粒也没有，
时间只会使她再次美丽，
因她那伟大的高贵，
那身上跳动的火，在她移动时
只会燃烧得更为明净。哦，她不会那样，
当整个狂野的夏日都在她的眼中。”

哦，心！哦，心！只要她一回头，
你就明白听人劝慰的愚蠢。

亚当的诅咒

有一年夏末，我们一起坐着，
有一个美丽文雅的女人，你的密友
还有你和我，在谈论诗歌。

我说：“一行诗也许要花几小时；
但它如果不似灵感迸发的神思，
我们是否打磨都没有用。

擦洗厨房地面，或像老乞丐
去采石，无论在何种天气；
要清晰地发出甜美的声音，
远要比这些困难，然而
我们却被一帮人嘈杂地称为懒人，
那些银行家、校长和教士
殉道者所说的俗世。”

随后

那美丽文雅的女人，为她
很多人因发现她的声音甜美
低沉而悲叹不已，
回答说：“生为女人要知道——
尽管他们在学校里不说——
变得美丽必须劳作。”

我说：“无疑，自亚当堕落以来，
所有美好的事物都要付出辛劳。

恋人们曾以为爱情应该
大量混杂着高度的殷勤，
他们叹息，带着学者的神色
引用美丽古书里的先例；
而现在看来正是一件闲散的事。”

说到爱，我们都变得沉静；
我们看着白日将尽时的余烬，
在天空颤动着的蓝绿色中，
月亮残损，像被时间之水
冲洗的贝壳，随着星辰
反复起落，在年岁间破碎。

我有个想法，只说给你听：
你是美丽的，而我致力于
以古老高贵的方式爱你；
那看起来很幸福，但我们
已深感倦怠，如那空洞的月亮。

没有第二个特洛伊

我为何要责备她让我的时日
充满痛苦，或者说她最近
教无知的人以最大的暴行，
或让小人物攻击伟人，
只要他们勇气与欲望相当？
有什么能使她平静，既然心智
因其高贵练就得如火一般纯粹，
她的美似绷紧的弓，既然她有
与时代并非协调的品质，诸如
高贵、孤独和坚定？
哦，她得做什么，让她成为这样？
还有第二个特洛伊为她焚毁吗？

对困难之事的迷恋

对困难之事的迷恋，
已榨干我血管里的汁液，收取
我内心自发的愉悦，和天然的
满足。我们的马驹苦恼，
它似乎没有神圣的血统，
不能在奥林匹斯山的云朵间跳跃，
必须在鞭子下战栗、挣扎、流汗、摇晃，
仿佛在拖拽铺路的石子。我诅咒
那些得以五十种方式排演的剧目，
在白日与每个无赖和笨蛋争斗，
剧场事务，人事安排。
我发誓黎明再次来临之前，
我将找到马厩，拔出门闩。

随时间而来的智慧

尽管枝叶繁多，根却只有一个；
穿过我青春所有说谎的日子，
我在日光下摇晃我的花与叶；
现在我可以凋零，进入真理。

在戈尔韦赛马会

那里就是赛马场，
欢乐使众人心意一致，
骑手在奔驰的马背上，
人群紧随其后：
我们，也曾有很好的宾客，
作品的聆听者和激励者；
是啊，将骑手当成同伴，
在商人和店员用怯弱的气息
呼吸这个世界之前。
唱吧：为某地的新月，
我们将认识到睡眠不是死亡，
听见整个大地变换了音调，
它的肌肉狂野，再次
大声呼喊，像这赛马场一样，
而我们找到了激励的人，
在这骑马的人群中间。

一九一三年九月

一旦苏醒，你们所需做的
仅仅是在油腻的钱箱里摸索，
将半便士加到一便士，
颤抖着，祈祷再祈祷，直到
你们已榨干骨头里的髓液；
因为人生来就是为了祈祷和储蓄：
浪漫的爱尔兰已死去、消失，
和奥利里 [\[1\]](#) 一起躺在坟墓里。

但他们是不同的种类，
他们的名字终止了你们幼稚的游戏，
他们像风，走遍世界，
但鲜有时间祈祷，
因刽子手的绳索已为他们转动，
上帝保佑，他们能攒什么钱？
浪漫的爱尔兰已死去、消失，
和奥利里一起躺在坟墓里。

为此，野天鹅展开
灰色的翅膀，在每次的潮汐之上？
所有的血为此而流？
爱德华·菲茨杰拉德为此而死？
还有罗伯特·艾米特和沃尔夫·托尼？
以及所有那些勇士的狂热？

浪漫的爱尔兰已死去、消失，
和奥利里一起躺在坟墓里。

但我们也可以将时间再次倒转，
将他们称为流亡者，当他们
受尽了孤独和伤痛，
你会呼喊“某个女人的黄发
让所有母亲的儿子发狂”：
他们对付出看得那么轻，
但就让他们这样吧，他们死去、消失，
和奥利里一起躺在坟墓里。

[1] 奥利里（O’Leary），即约翰·奥利里，爱尔兰民族主义者，在英格兰囚禁五年，流亡十五年后，1885年返回都柏林。

致一位朋友，其工作已没有意义

如今所有真相显现，
面对任何无耻的喉舌，
保持沉默，接受失败吧，
因你生就高贵，怎能
与那样的人相比？
即使谎言被证实，
他也不会感到羞愧，
更不在意邻人的眼光。
生来就要做比胜利
更困难的事，转身离去，
像大笑的琴弦
被疯狂的手指弹奏
在一堆石头之中。
保持沉默，狂喜吧，
因在所有已知的事中，
那是最困难的。

帕丁 [1]

在他的商店里，愤慨于笨拙的智慧，
我们老帕丁模糊的恶意，我盲目地
在石堆和荆棘丛中蹒跚而行，在晨光之下；
直到一只麻鹞呼叫，另一只麻鹞
在明亮的风中回应；我突然因此想到，
在寂寞的高处，所有一切都在上帝的眼中，
那里，我们声音中的混乱被遗忘，没有一个
单独的灵魂还缺乏甜美的水晶般的叫声。

[1] 帕丁（Paudeen），爱尔兰常见的名字Patrick的昵称，可泛指一般的市民大众。

陷落的王权

尽管她过去一露面，人群就会聚集，
连老人的双眼也变蒙眬，但只有这只手，
像某位最后的臣子，在吉卜赛营地
念叨着陷落的王权，记录消逝的一切。

这容貌，这被笑声炼制甜美的心，
这些，这些都留存着，但我记录消逝的一切。
人们还会聚集，但不会知道他们走过的街上
曾有一样事物走过，像朵燃烧的云。

冰冷的天穹

突然我看见令乌鸦愉悦的寒冷的天穹，
像是焚烧的冰，但不过是更多的冰，
因此，想象和心被牵引得
如此狂野，以至于种种随意的想法
消失了，只剩记忆，而那应当消失，
随青春的热血，以及很久以前受挫的爱；
我丧失所有的情感和理智去承担责任，
直到我呼喊，颤抖，来回摇晃，
被光线击穿得千疮百孔。啊！当鬼魂开始复活，
临终之床的混乱结束，它是否
被赤裸地派到街上，像书里说的，
遭受天空不公正的袭击，以示惩戒？

占星家们 [1]

现在正如我心中时时所见，
苍白的不满的人，穿着他们僵硬、印花的衣服，
在天空的深蓝里显现又消失。
他们古老的面容像被雨水击打的石头，
他们的银头盔在空中来回徘徊，
各各他 [2] 的骚乱并不让他们满意，
他们的双眼仍在凝望，希望再次找到
在兽性的土地上，那不可控的神秘。

[1] 占星家们（Magi），在诗中应该指的是东方三博士。

[2] 各各他（Calvary），耶稣被钉死在十字架上的地方。

外衣

我把我的歌制成外衣，
从头到脚，
缀满了来自古老
神话中的刺绣；
但蠢人拿走了它，
在世人眼前穿着，
仿佛是他们造的。
歌，就让他们拿去吧，
因为裸身走路，
需要更多的雄心。

库尔的野天鹅

树林有了秋日的美丽，
林地的小径干爽，
十月的黄昏下，水面
倒映着静止的天空；
在石子间漫溢的水上
是五十九只天鹅。

自我最初给它们点数，
已是第十九个秋天；
我看见，在我数完前，
它们突然飞起
散开，在大而碎的圆圈里盘旋，
用它们喧闹的翅膀。

我曾望着这些闪耀的造物，
而现在只让我心痛。
全都改变了，自我
踩着更轻盈的步态，
在这黄昏的堤岸，听见它们的翅膀
在头顶拍出钟鸣般的声响。

一对对情侣，仍不知疲倦，
它们在冰冷而友好的
溪水间游动，或攀飞进空中；

它们的心灵未曾老去；
激情或征服，无论它们漫游何方
仍然照料着它们。

而现在它们在平静的水面漂流，
神秘而美丽；
它们将在怎样的灯芯草丛中筑巢，
在怎样的湖边或池边
取悦人们的眼睛，当有一天
我醒来，发现它们已飞逝？

爱尔兰飞行员预见他的死亡

我知道我将遇见我的命运
在这上方的云朵之间；
我所对抗的，我并不憎恨，
我所守卫的，我并不爱；
我的故乡是基尔塔坦岔口，
我的乡亲是基尔塔坦的穷人，
任何结局都不会让他们失去什么，
或者，让他们比以往更幸福。
不是法律也不是职责令我战斗，
不是公众人物，也不是欢呼的民众，
而是孤独的愉悦的冲动
驱使我进入这云间的骚乱；
我权衡一切，思考所有，
未来的年岁似乎是浪费生命，
而身后的年岁也是浪费生命，
就在这生与死的平衡里。

一只野兔的锁骨

我将扬帆在水面上，
那儿众多的国王和众多
国王的女儿已去，
来到秀丽的树林和草地，
吹着笛，跳起舞，
明白最好的事情，
便是在跳舞时更换爱人，
仅用一吻换一吻。

我将在水边找到
一只野兔的锁骨，
它被海水研磨，变得透薄，
然后用锥子刺穿，凝视着
人们在教堂结婚的、那古老而悲惨的世界，
在平静的水面上方，嘲笑
所有在教堂结婚的人，
透过野兔白而薄的骨头。

对她的赞美

我愿在听到的那些赞美里，她排首位。
我在屋里四处走动，上下来回
像一个人出版了一本新书，
或一个年轻的姑娘穿上了新衣，
尽管我竭力转变话题
让对她的赞美成为最高的主题，
一个女人仍在讲述她读过的新书，
一个男人仍在半梦中困惑着，
仿佛别的名字跑进了他的脑海。
我愿在听到的那些赞美里，她排首位。
我将不再谈论书或漫长的战争，
只是在干枯的荆棘旁走着，
直到发现有个乞丐在避风，
她的名字出现在主导的谈话里。
即使衣衫褴褛，他仍会知道她的名字
并且愉快地记得，在旧时
尽管她受年轻人赞美，老年人责难，
但在穷人间，无论老少都对她称赞不已。

一九一六年复活节 [1]

白日结束时，我遇见他们
带着鲜活的面容，
从灰暗的十八世纪房子
那些柜台或办公桌走来。
我路过时，点点头
或者说些客套的闲话，
或者逗留一会儿，说些
客套的闲话，
尽管这之前，我已想到用
讽刺的故事或挖苦的话语
去取悦我的同伴，
在俱乐部的炉火旁，
确信他们和我一样
不过是生活在小丑之地：
一切都变了，完全变了：
一种可怕的美诞生了。

那个女人将白天消耗
在无知的良好意愿里，
她的夜晚用于争论，
直到声音变得尖锐。
还有什么声音比她的更甜美，
当，她年轻美丽
骑马猎兔？

这个男人办了所学校，
骑着我们的飞马 [2] ；
那是他的助手和朋友
正加入他的部队；
他可能最终赢得声名，
他的天性多么敏感，
他的思想多么大胆甜美。
另一个人，我曾认为
是个酒鬼，虚荣自负的蠢人。
他对我某个心爱的人
做过最痛心的错事，
但我将他列入歌中；
他，也放弃了他的角色，
在那偶然的喜剧中。
轮到他时，他也变了，
完全变了：
一种可怕的美诞生了。

众多的心怀着一个目的
历经夏日和冬季，似乎
中了魔法，变成石头
去扰乱活跃的溪流。
从路上而来的马匹，
骑手，在翻滚的云朵间
排列的鸟群，
它们每一分钟都在改变；
一只马蹄滑落到水边，
一匹马在水中泼溅；

一只长腿母鸡俯冲而下
对着公鸡呼叫。
它们每一分钟都在生活：
石头居于这一切的中心。

太漫长的牺牲
能将一颗心造就成石头，
哦，何时才能到头？
只有上天才能回答，我们
只能低声念着一个个名字，
像母亲叫唤他的孩子，
当睡意最终降临
在跑得狂野的四肢之上，
除了夜晚还能是什么？
不，不，这不是夜晚而是死；
这死终究是不必要的吗？
因为英格兰也许会信守承诺
为它做过和说过的一切。
我们知道他们的梦想，知道
他们梦想过然后死了，这就足够；
假如爱的过量
使他们迷惑至死又能怎样？
我在诗中写下——
麦克唐纳和麦克布莱德，
康诺利和皮尔斯，
现在，以及以后，
在任何身着绿装的地方，
一切都变了，完全变了：

一种可怕的美诞生了。

1916年9月25日

[1] 1916年4月24日，复活节的第二天，爱尔兰共和兄弟会在都柏林起义，宣告爱尔兰共和国成立。不久被英格兰镇压，包括诗中提及的麦克唐纳、麦克布莱德、康诺利、皮尔斯等十五位领导人遇害。

[2] 飞马 (winged horse),指的是希腊神话中的飞马珀伽索斯，相传珀伽索斯在赫利孔山上踏过时踩出了泉水，诗人饮之可获灵感，因此它也被视为文艺缪斯的标志。

十六个死者

哦，我们只是谈了很多，
在这十六人被射杀之前，
但谁又能谈论取舍，
什么该存在什么不该，
当那些死者还在徘徊，
搅动着沸腾的锅？

你说我们应保持国土平静，
直到德国人的征服；
但谁还在那儿争论，
既然皮尔斯已聋了瞎了？
而他们的逻辑能压倒
麦克唐纳精瘦的拇指？

你怎能梦想他们会听，
他们的一只耳朵只对
他们找到的新同伴敞开，
爱德华勋爵和沃尔夫·托尼，
或者那些骨与骨的交谈
会干预我们的取舍？

第二次降临

旋转旋转，在扩大的旋涡中，
猎鹰不再听从驯鹰者；
万物四散，中心无法维持；
唯有混乱弥散世间，
暗红的潮流奔涌，每一处
天真的典礼都被淹没；
最好的人缺乏信念，最坏的人
充满极度的狂热。
当然某种启示即将到来；
当然第二次降临即将到来。
第二次降临！这几个词刚说出口，
来自“世界之灵”^[1]的巨大图像
便扰乱了我的视线：沙漠中的某处，
一个狮身人头的形体，
凝视如太阳般空洞无情，
正缓慢地拖着腿，而在它四周
沙漠上愤怒的鸟群投下圈圈阴影。
黑暗再次落下；但我现在知道
坚实沉睡着的二十世纪
在摇晃的发源地旁被扰成了噩梦，
何种粗野的巨兽，它的时刻最终来临，
笨拙地朝着伯利恒去投生？

[1] 世界之灵（spiritus mundi），源自拉丁语spiritusmundi，是储存一切知识和经验的仓库，即所谓的大记忆。

驶向拜占庭

I

那不是老年人的国度。年轻人
在彼此的怀抱中。鸟在树上
这垂死的世代，唱着它们的歌。
鲑鱼的瀑布，鲭鱼群集的海，
鱼，兽，或家禽，整个夏日都在赞颂
这孕育、出生、死去的一切。
所有人沉溺于感官的音乐，忽略了
不朽的理性的纪念碑。

II

老人只是微不足道的事物，
一件拐杖上的破衣烂裳，除非
灵魂拍手歌唱，更响亮地歌唱
那尘世衣裳的每一处破烂，
没有一处音乐学校不研读
它自身辉煌的陈迹；
因此我扬帆远航，来到
这神圣的城市拜占庭。

III

哦，圣人们站在上帝的圣火中
像在墙上的金镶嵌画里，
从圣火中出来吧，在回旋中转动，
做我灵魂的歌唱导师。

耗尽我的心吧；它因欲望成疾，
被绑在垂死的动物身上，
它不知道它所是；请将我纳入
那永恒的技艺里。

IV

一旦脱离自然，我将永不
采用任何自然事物的形体，
而是要希腊金匠用锻金
和镀金制造的那种形态，
以让昏睡的君主清醒；
或者停留在金枝上，为
拜占庭的先生和女士们歌唱
过去、现在以及未来的事物。

1927年

内战时期的沉思（节选）

VI 我窗边的欧椋鸟巢

蜂群筑巢，在松动的墙壁
缝隙里，在那儿
母鸟带来了蛴螬和蝇虫。
我的墙松了，蜜蜂，
来欧椋鸟的空房筑巢吧。

我们关在里面，钥匙转动
在我们的确定之外；某处
有人被杀，或有房子被焚，
但没有清晰的事实去确认：
来欧椋鸟的空房筑巢吧。

石头或木头做的街垒；
内战时期的十四天；
昨夜他们沿路运送
一个浑身是血的年轻士兵：
来欧椋鸟的空房筑巢吧。

我们用幻想喂养心灵，
心因这食粮变得残忍；
相比我们的爱，我们的敌意里
有更多的实质；哦，蜜蜂，
来欧椋鸟的空房筑巢吧。

丽达与天鹅

猛然一击，巨大的双翼仍拍打着
在晃动的女孩上方，她的双腿
被黑色的蹼爱抚，她的颈背叼在他的喙里，
他用他的胸包裹住她无助的胸脯。

那些惊吓未定的手指如何
将多羽的荣耀推离她松开的双腿？
那躺在白色激流中的身体
怎能不感到他身下奇异的心跳？

腰部的一次战栗引发
城墙的坍塌、屋顶和塔楼的焚毁，
以及阿伽门农的死。

被如此捕捉，
被空中野蛮的血如此控制，
她是否从他的力量中吸取了他的知识，
在那冷漠的喙放开她之前？

1923年

在学童中间

I

我走过长长的教室询问；
戴白头巾的和善老修女作答；
孩子们要学习算术和唱歌，
学习阅读和历史，
学习剪裁缝补，以最现代的方式
规整所有事物——孩子们的双眼
带着瞬间的惊奇，凝视着
一个六十岁微笑的公众人物。

II

我梦见一个丽达似的身体，俯身
在沉没的火堆上，她讲一个故事，
有关刺耳的谴责或微小的事件
将稚气的一天变成悲剧——
说完，出于年轻人的同感，
我们两种天性混合为一个球体，
或者，改一下柏拉图的比喻，
成为同一个壳里的蛋黄和蛋清。

III

想起那一阵悲伤或愤怒，
我看着这个或那个小孩，
想知道她在那个年纪是否也这样站过——
因为即使是天鹅的女儿也能分享

每一个涉水者所传承的事物——
是否有那种颜色的脸颊或头发，
因此我的心变得狂野：
她站在我面前，像个鲜活的孩子。

IV

她现在的形象飘进我的心中——
是十五世纪的匠人将它塑造
成脸颊凹陷的模样，像啜饮了风
吞食了大量的阴影？
尽管我从不是丽达的种类，
但也曾有美丽的羽毛——那足够了，
最好是以微笑面对所有微笑，显示出
这是一个知足的老稻草人。

V

什么样年轻的母亲，膝上的身形
已被生殖之蜜背叛，
不得不睡觉、尖叫，挣扎着逃离，
如回忆或药物所决定的那样，
如果看见那身形，头上带着六十个
或更多的严冬，她会认为她的儿子
是一种补偿吗，对生他的剧痛，
或是对他前程的不确定性？

VI

柏拉图认为自然不过是泡沫，
在万物幽灵般的范式上游戏；
更为结实的亚里士多德执鞭
抽打万王之王的下体；

举世闻名的金大腿毕达哥拉斯
用手指拨弄琴弓或琴弦，
演奏一曲星辰之歌，被无心的缪斯听见；
老手杖上的旧衣裳吓坏了一只鸟。

VII

修女和母亲们都崇拜偶像，
但那些烛光所照亮的并不是
赋予母亲的空想以生命的东西，
不过是维护了大理石和青铜像——哦，诸神
那激情、虔诚或喜爱所知道的，
那所有天国的荣耀所象征的——
哦，人类事业自我生长的嘲弄者。

VIII

劳作是开花或舞蹈，在那儿
身体不会因取悦灵魂而挫伤，
美不会诞生于自身的绝望，
老眼昏花的智慧不会出自午夜的油灯。
哦，栗子树，根系粗壮的绽放者，
你是叶子、花朵还是树干？
哦，随音乐摇摆的身体，哦，明亮的眼神，
我们如何能分辨舞蹈和舞者？

最后的独白 一个女人的青春和老年（节选）

在所有睡过的人里
哪个鲜活的少年最能取悦我？
我回答说 我给了我的灵魂
而爱得痛苦。
但给予很多快乐的却是
那我以肉体相爱的少年。

从他的双臂间挣脱，我大笑，
想到他如此激情，
他以为我给了灵魂，
但那不过是肉体相触而已，
我在他怀里大笑，想着
野兽间也能给予这么多。

我给了其他女人能给的，
当她们脱掉了衣裳。
但当肉体脱落，灵魂
从赤裸走向赤裸，
会发现，他在里面找到了
无人知晓的东西。

他在他的权限内支配，
给出他的，也拿走他的；
尽管爱很痛苦，

如此紧紧地贴着身，
但没有一只白日的鸟
敢压制那快乐。

青金石雕

（致哈里·克里夫顿）

我听到那些歇斯底里的女人说，
她们已厌倦了总是很快乐的
诗人的调色板和琴弓，
因为每个人都知道或应该知道
如果没有激烈的事情发生，
飞机和飞艇将会出现，
像比利王 [\[1\]](#) 投掷炸弹，
直到将城镇夷为平地。

所有人都在表演他们的悲剧，
这是高傲的哈姆雷特，这是李尔王，
那是奥菲莉亚，那是科迪莉亚；
但他们到了最后一幕，
巨大的帷幕将会落下，
如果配得上剧中的重要角色，
他们不会中断台词而哭泣。
他们知道哈姆雷特和李尔王是快乐的；
快乐改变了所有那恐惧的。
所有人都有目标，寻找和失落；
终止；天国的光照进头脑：
悲剧行进到高潮。
尽管哈姆雷特在漫步，李尔王在愤怒，
所有的幕布立即垂落，

在一万个舞台上，
它不能增长一英寸或一盎司。

他们来了，步行，坐船，
或骑着骆驼、马、驴、骡，
古老的文明惨遭屠戮。
接着，他们和他们的智慧陷于毁灭。
不再有卡利马科斯 [\[2\]](#) 的手工艺品了，
他雕刻大理石像是在铸造青铜，
塑造看起来飘动的衣物，
仿佛有海风吹过角落，挺立着；
他那长长的灯罩，形状像是
细长棕榈树的枝干，但也只立了一天；
万物崩溃，而又重建，
而那些重建的人是快乐的。

两个中国人，第三个在他们身后，
被刻在青金石雕上，
他们头上，飞过一只长腿的鸟，
象征着长寿；
第三个人，无疑是仆人，
背着一件乐器。

石头上每一处褪色的斑点，
每一处偶然的裂缝或凹痕，
看起来像是一条河或一次雪崩，
或是仍在落雪的高耸的斜坡，
而确切无疑地，李子树或樱桃枝

美化了半途上的小屋。
那些中国人向上爬着，而我
乐于想象他们坐在那儿；
凝望着山和天空，
以及所有悲剧的场景。
其中一个要求听首悲伤的曲子；
娴熟的手指便开始弹奏。
他们的眼睛，四周布满皱纹，他们的眼睛，
他们古老的、闪烁的眼睛，是快乐的。

[1] 比利王（King Billy），即威廉三世，小名比利。

[2] 卡利马科斯（Callimachus），古希腊建筑家、雕塑家。

然后呢？

在校时，他挑选的同伴们认为
他必将成为一个名人；
他也这么想，生活异常规律，
他的第三个十年，布满艰辛；
“然后呢？”柏拉图的幽灵唱，“然后呢？”

他写的所有事情都被传阅，
过了多年，他有了
足够的钱，供他所需，
朋友们倒都是真朋友；
“然后呢？”柏拉图的幽灵唱，“然后呢？”

所有他快乐的梦想都变成现实——
一栋小小的老房子，妻子，女儿，儿子，
地上长着李子树和卷心菜，
诗人和智者被吸引在他四周；
“然后呢？”柏拉图的幽灵唱，“然后呢？”

“工作完成了，”年老时他想，
“依照我孩童时的计划；
让蠢人去叫嚣吧，我未背离分毫，
事情进展得很圆满。”
但那幽灵唱得更响了：“然后呢？”

布尔本山下（节选）

VI

在光秃秃的布尔本山顶下，
叶芝躺在德拉姆克利夫墓地里。
很多年前，他的祖先
曾是附近一座教堂的牧师，
路旁还有古老的十字架。
不用大理石，不用惯用的措辞；
在附近采石场的石灰岩上
按他的要求刻下这些话：

投下冷眼，
看着生和死，
骑手，路过！

1938年9月4日

受抚慰的库丘林

这人身负六处致命伤，这人
残暴、著名，在死者间阔步而行；
双眼自枝叶间凝望，而后离去。

然后某些交头接耳的尸衣
来了又去。他靠在一棵树上
仿佛在沉思伤口和血。

一件看起来很有权威的尸衣
在那些看似鸟儿的事物中走来，
扔下一捆麻布。两三个尸衣

爬上来，因为那人静止不动；
因此那个带来麻布的人说：
“你的生活会更美好，如果你

遵守我们古老的规则，制一件尸衣。
主要是因为我们所知道的仅仅是
那些武器的咯咯响声让我们害怕。

我们穿针引线，我们所做的
必须是我们所有人一起做。”他们做好后，
这人捡起最近的麻布，开始缝制。

“现在我们得吟唱，竭尽所能唱得最好，
但首先我们得向你告知我们的角色：
被亲友杀死，或被赶出家门

在恐惧中死去的，有罪的懦夫。”
他们唱着，但不是用人类的音调或语言，
尽管所做的一切都如之前那般普通；

他们却改变了他们的歌喉，有了鸟群的歌喉。

1939年1月13日

马戏团动物的逃亡

I

我寻找一个主题，徒劳地寻找，
有六个星期左右，我每天都在找。
可能到最后，我会一无所有，
但我必须满足我的心，尽管
历经冬日和夏季，直至老年开始，
我的马戏团动物都在表演，
那些踩高跷的男孩、油亮的战车，
狮子，以及女士和先生们知道的那些。

II

除了列举古老的主题，我能做什么？
首先是海骑士奥辛牵着我的鼻子
穿过三座迷人的岛，寓言般的梦境，
徒劳的快乐，徒劳的战斗，徒劳的休眠，
诸多怨恨之心的主题，或者看起来是，
用来装饰古老的歌或宫廷表演；
但我让他驰骋又有什么可忧虑的，
我，渴求他仙女般新娘的胸脯？

然后一个相反的事实填入戏剧中，
我给它起名为《凯瑟琳女伯爵》，
她，极度的怜悯，让她放弃了灵魂，
但主宰一切的上天干预，拯救了它。
我以为我亲爱的必将毁灭她的灵魂，

让执着和憎恨奴役它，
而这催生了一个梦，并且很快
这个梦本身就拥有了我所有的思想和爱。

当蠢货和盲人偷走了面包，
库丘林则与不受支配的海战斗；
这就是心的神秘之处，而当所有都已说尽，
是梦本身迷住了我：
角色被一份事业所隔绝
去独占现在，去支配记忆。
演员和多彩的舞台占据了我所有的爱，
而不是那些它们所象征的事物。

III

那些主宰一切的形象因其完整
在纯洁的心智中成长，但又从何开始？
一堆垃圾，或者街道上的残渣，
旧水壶，旧瓶子，和一个破烂的罐子，
老铁，老骨头，老旧的破衣服，那守着
钱柜的疯狂的荡妇。既然我的梯子已被撤去，
我必须躺下，在所有梯子起始的地方，
在我的心，那污秽的破烂商铺里。

政治

在我们的时代，人的命运
在政治范畴内呈现其意义。

——托马斯·曼

女孩站着那儿，我怎能
将心思集中
在罗马或俄罗斯
或西班牙的政治上？
但这儿有位阅遍世事的人，
他知道他谈论的是什么，
那儿有个政治家，
既博学又多思，
也许他们说的是真的
有关战争和战争预警，
但是啊，如果我再次年轻，
会将她拥入怀中。

W. B. Yeats

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

A terrible
beauty is born

N° 19

‘But I, being poor,
have only my
dreams; I have
spread my
dreams under
your feet . . .’

Down by the Salley Gardens

Down by the salley gardens my love and I did meet;
She passed the salley gardens with little snow- white feet.
She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree;
But I, being young and foolish, with her would not agree.

In a field by the river my love and I did stand,
And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow- white hand.
She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs;
But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears.

Cuchulain's Fight with the Sea

A man came slowly from the setting sun,
To Emer, raddling raiment in her dun,
And said, 'I am that swineherd whom you bid
Go watch the road between the wood and tide,
But now I have no need to watch it more.'

Then Emer cast the web upon the floor,
And raising arms all raddled with the dye,
Parted her lips with a loud sudden cry.

That swineherd stared upon her face and said,
'No man alive, no man among the dead,
Has won the gold his cars of battle bring.'

'But if your master comes home triumphing
Why must you blench and shake from foot to crown?'

Thereon he shook the more and cast him down
Upon the web- heaped floor, and cried his word:
'With him is one sweet- throated like a bird.'

'You dare me to my face,' and thereupon
She smote with raddled fist, and where her son
Herded the cattle came with stumbling feet,

And cried with angry voice, 'It is not meet
To idle life away, a common herd.'

'I have long waited, mother, for that word:
But wherefore now?'

 'There is a man to die;
You have the heaviest arm under the sky.'

'Whether under its daylight or its stars
My father stands amid his battle- cars.'

'But you have grown to be the taller man.'

'Yet somewhere under starlight or the sun
My father stands.'

 'Aged, worn out with wars
On foot, on horseback or in battle- cars.'

'I only ask what way my journey lies,
For He who made you bitter made you wise.'

'The Red Branch camp in a great company
Between wood's rim and the horses of the sea.
Go there, and light a camp- fire at wood's rim;
But tell your name and lineage to him
Whose blade compels, and wait till they have found
Some feasting man that the same oath has bound.'

Among those feasting men Cuchulain dwelt,
And his young sweetheart close beside him knelt,
Stared on the mournful wonder of his eyes,
Even as Spring upon the ancient skies,
And pondered on the glory of his days;
And all around the harp- string told his praise,
And Conchubar, the Red Branch king of kings,
With his own fingers touched the brazen strings.

At last Cuchulain spake, 'Some man has made
His evening fire amid the leafy shade.
I have often heard him singing to and fro,
I have often heard the sweet sound of his bow.
Seek out what man he is.'

One went and came.

'He bade me let all know he gives his name
At the sword- point, and waits till we have found
Some feasting man that the same oath has bound.'

Cuchulain cried, 'I am the only man
Of all this host so bound from childhood on.'

After short fighting in the leafy shade,
He spake to the young man, 'Is there no maid
Who loves you, no white arms to wrap you round,
Or do you long for the dim sleepy ground,

That you have come and dared me to my face?’

‘The dooms of men are in God’s hidden place.’

‘Your head a while seemed like a woman’s head
That I loved once.’

Again the fighting sped,
But now the war- rage in Cuchulain woke,
And through that new blade’s guard the old blade broke,
And pierced him.

‘Speak before your breath is done.’

‘Cuchulain I, mighty Cuchulain’s son.’
‘I put you from your pain, I can no more.’

While day its burden on to evening bore,
With head bowed on his knees Cuchulain stayed;
Then Conchubar sent that sweet- throated maid,
And she, to win him, his grey hair caressed;
In vain her arms, in vain her soft white breast.
Then Conchubar, the subtlest of all men,
Ranking his Druids round him ten by ten,
Spake thus: ‘Cuchulain will dwell there and brood
For three days more in dreadful quietude,
And then arise, and raving slay us all.
Chaunt in his ear delusions magical,
That he may fight the horses of the sea.’

The Druids took them to their mystery,
And chaunted for three days.

Cuchulain stirred,
Stared on the horses of the sea, and heard
The cars of battle and his own name cried;
And fought with the invulnerable tide.

When You are Old

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

The Song of Wandering Aengus

I went out to the hazel wood,
Because a fire was in my head,
And cut and peeled a hazel wand,
And hooked a berry to a thread;
And when white moths were on the wing,
And moth- like stars were flickering out,
I dropped the berry in a stream
And caught a little silver trout.

When I had laid it on the floor
I went to blow the fire aflame,
But something rustled on the floor,
And some one called me by my name:
It had become a glimmering girl
With apple blossom in her hair
Who called me by my name and ran
And faded through the brightening air.

Though I am old with wandering
Through hollow lands and hilly lands,
I will find out where she has gone,
And kiss her lips and take her hands;
And walk among long dappled grass,
And pluck till time and times are done

The silver apples of the moon,
The golden apples of the sun.

He wishes for the Cloths of Heaven

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half- light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

The Folly of Being Comforted

One that is ever kind said yesterday:

‘Your well- beloved’s hair has threads of grey,

And little shadows come about her eyes;

Time can but make it easier to be wise

Though now it seems impossible, and so

All that you need is patience.’

Heart cries, ‘No,

I have not a crumb of comfort, not a grain.

Time can but make her beauty over again:

Because of that great nobleness of hers

The fire that stirs about her, when she stirs,

Burns but more clearly. O she had not these ways

When all the wild summer was in her gaze.’

O heart! O heart! if she’d but turn her head,

You’d know the folly of being comforted.

Adam's Curse

We sat together at one summer's end,
That beautiful mild woman, your close friend,
And you and I, and talked of poetry.
I said, 'A line will take us hours maybe;
Yet if it does not seem a moment's thought,
Our stitching and unstitching has been naught.
Better go down upon your marrow- bones
And scrub a kitchen pavement, or break stones
Like an old pauper, in all kinds of weather;
For to articulate sweet sounds together
Is to work harder than all these, and yet
Be thought an idler by the noisy set
Of bankers, schoolmasters, and clergymen
The martyrs call the world.'

And thereupon

That beautiful mild woman for whose sake
There's many a one shall find out all heartache
On finding that her voice is sweet and low
Replied, 'To be born woman is to know –
Although they do not talk of it at school –
That we must labour to be beautiful.'

I said, 'It's certain there is no fine thing

Since Adam's fall but needs much labouring.
There have been lovers who thought love should be
So much compounded of high courtesy
That they would sigh and quote with learned looks
Precedents out of beautiful old books;
Yet now it seems an idle trade enough.'

We sat grown quiet at the name of love;
We saw the last embers of daylight die,
And in the trembling blue- green of the sky
A moon, worn as if it had been a shell
Washed by time's waters as they rose and fell
About the stars and broke in days and years.

I had a thought for no one's but your ears:
That you were beautiful, and that I strove
To love you in the old high way of love;
That it had all seemed happy, and yet we'd grown
As weary- hearted as that hollow moon.

No Second Troy

Why should I blame her that she filled my days
With misery, or that she would of late
Have taught to ignorant men most violent ways,
Or hurled the little streets upon the great,
Had they but courage equal to desire?
What could have made her peaceful with a mind
That nobleness made simple as a fire,
With beauty like a tightened bow, a kind
That is not natural in an age like this,
Being high and solitary and most stern?
Why, what could she have done, being what she is?
Was there another Troy for her to burn?

The Fascination of What's Difficult

The fascination of what's difficult
Has dried the sap out of my veins, and rent
Spontaneous joy and natural content
Out of my heart. There's something ails our colt
That must, as if it had not holy blood
Nor on Olympus leaped from cloud to cloud,
Shiver under the lash, strain, sweat and jolt
As though it dragged road metal. My curse on plays
That have to be set up in fifty ways,
On the day's war with every knave and dolt,
Theatre business, management of men.
I swear before the dawn comes round again
I'll find the stable and pull out the bolt.

The Coming of Wisdom with Time

Though leaves are many, the root is one;
Through all the lying days of my youth
I swayed my leaves and flowers in the sun;
Now I may wither into the truth.

At Galway Races

There where the course is,
Delight makes all of the one mind,
The riders upon the galloping horses,
The crowd that closes in behind:
We, too, had good attendance once,
Hearers and hearteners of the work;
Aye, horsemen for companions,
Before the merchant and the clerk
Breathed on the world with timid breath.
Sing on: somewhere at some new moon,
We'll learn that sleeping is not death,
Hearing the whole earth change its tune,
Its flesh being wild, and it again
Crying aloud as the racecourse is,
And we find hearteners among men
That ride upon horses.

September 1913

What need you, being come to sense,
But fumble in a greasy till
And add the halfpence to the pence
And prayer to shivering prayer, until
You have dried the marrow from the bone;
For men were born to pray and save:
Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,
It's with O'Leary in the grave.

Yet they were of a different kind,
The names that stilled your childish play,
They have gone about the world like wind,
But little time had they to pray
For whom the hangman's rope was spun,
And what, God help us, could they save?
Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,
It's with O'Leary in the grave.

Was it for this the wild geese spread
The grey wing upon every tide;
For this that all that blood was shed,
For this Edward Fitzgerald died,
And Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone,
All that delirium of the brave?

Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,
It's with O'Leary in the grave.

Yet could we turn the years again,
And call those exiles as they were
In all their loneliness and pain,
You'd cry, 'Some woman's yellow hair
Has maddened every mother's son':
They weighed so lightly what they gave.
But let them be, they're dead and gone,
They're with O'Leary in the grave.

To a Friend whose Work has come to Nothing

Now all the truth is out,
Be secret and take defeat
From any brazen throat,
For how can you compete,
Being honour bred, with one
Who, were it proved he lies,
Were neither shamed in his own
Nor in his neighbours' eyes?
Bred to a harder thing
Than Triumph, turn away
And like a laughing string
Whereon mad fingers play
Amid a place of stone,
Be secret and exult,
Because of all things known
That is most difficult.

Paudeen

Indignant at the fumbling wits, the obscure spite
Of our old Paudeen in his shop, I stumbled blind
Among the stones and thorn- trees, under morning light;
Until a curlew cried and in the luminous wind
A curlew answered; and suddenly thereupon I thought
That on the lonely height where all are in God's eye,
There cannot be, confusion of our sound forgot,
A single soul that lacks a sweet crystalline cry.

Fallen Majesty

Although crowds gathered once if she but showed her face,
And even old men's eyes grew dim, this hand alone,
Like some last courtier at a gypsy camping- place
Babbling of fallen majesty, records what's gone.

The lineaments, a heart that laughter has made sweet,
These, these remain, but I record what's gone. A crowd
Will gather, and not know it walks the very street
Whereon a thing once walked that seemed a burning cloud.

The Cold Heaven

Suddenly I saw the cold and rook- delighting heaven
That seemed as though ice burned and was but the more ice,
And thereupon imagination and heart were driven
So wild that every casual thought of that and this
Vanished, and left but memories, that should be out of season
With the hot blood of youth, of love crossed long ago;
And I took all the blame out of all sense and reason,
Until I cried and trembled and rocked to and fro,
Riddled with light. Ah! when the ghost begins to quicken,
Confusion of the death- bed over, is it sent
Out naked on the roads, as the books say, and stricken
By the injustice of the skies for punishment?

The Magi

Now as at all times I can see in the mind's eye,
In their stiff, painted clothes, the pale unsatisfied ones
Appear and disappear in the blue depth of the sky
With all their ancient faces like rain- beaten stones,
And all their helms of silver hovering side by side,
And all their eyes still fixed, hoping to find once more,
Being by Calvary's turbulence unsatisfied,
The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor.

A Coat

I made my song a coat
Covered with embroideries
Out of old mythologies
From heel to throat;
But the fools caught it,
Wore it in the world's eyes
As though they'd wrought it.
Song, let them take it,
For there's more enterprise
In walking naked.

The Wild Swans at Coole

The trees are in their autumn beauty,
The woodland paths are dry,
Under the October twilight the water
Mirrors a still sky;
Upon the brimming water among the stones
Are nine- and- fifty swans.

The nineteenth autumn has come upon me
Since I first made my count;
I saw, before I had well finished,
All suddenly mount
And scatter wheeling in great broken rings
Upon their clamorous wings.

I have looked upon those brilliant creatures,
And now my heart is sore.
All's changed since I, hearing at twilight,
The first time on this shore,
The bell- beat of their wings above my head,
Trode with a lighter tread.

Unwearied still, lover by lover,
They paddle in the cold
Companionable streams or climb the air;

Their hearts have not grown old;
Passion or conquest, wander where they will,
Attend upon them still.

But now they drift on the still water,
Mysterious, beautiful;
Among what rushes will they build,
By what lake's edge or pool
Delight men's eyes when I awake some day
To find they have flown away?

An Irish Airman Foresees his Death

I know that I shall meet my fate
Somewhere among the clouds above;
Those that I fight I do not hate,
Those that I guard I do not love;
My country is Kiltartan Cross,
My countrymen Kiltartan's poor,
No likely end could bring them loss
Or leave them happier than before.
Nor law, nor duty bade me fight,
Nor public men, nor cheering crowds,
A lonely impulse of delight
Drove to this tumult in the clouds;
I balanced all, brought all to mind,
The years to come seemed waste of breath,
A waste of breath the years behind
In balance with this life, this death.

The Collar- Bone of a Hare

Would I could cast a sail on the water
Where many a king has gone
And many a king's daughter,
And alight at the comely trees and the lawn,
The playing upon pipes and the dancing,
And learn that the best thing is
To change my loves while dancing
And pay but a kiss for a kiss.

I would find by the edge of that water
The collar- bone of a hare
Worn thin by the lapping of water,
And pierce it through with a gimlet, and stare
At the old bitter world where they marry in churches,
And laugh over the untroubled water
At all who marry in churches,
Through the white thin bone of a hare.

Her Praise

She is foremost of those that I would hear praised.
I have gone about the house, gone up and down
As a man does who has published a new book,
Or a young girl dressed out in her new gown,
And though I have turned the talk by hook or crook
Until her praise should be the uppermost theme,
A woman spoke of some new tale she had read,
A man confusedly in a half dream
As though some other name ran in his head.
She is foremost of those that I would hear praised.
I will talk no more of books or the long war
But walk by the dry thorn until I have found
Some beggar sheltering from the wind, and there
Manage the talk until her name come round.
If there be rags enough he will know her name
And be well pleased remembering it, for in the old days,
Though she had young men's praise and old men's blame,
Among the poor both old and young gave her praise.

Easter 1916

I have met them at close of day
Coming with vivid faces
From counter or desk among grey
Eighteenth- century houses.
I have passed with a nod of the head
Or polite meaningless words,
Or have lingered awhile and said
Polite meaningless words,
And thought before I had done
Of a mocking tale or a gibe
To please a companion
Around the fire at the club,
Being certain that they and I
But lived where motley is worn:
All changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

That woman's days were spent
In ignorant good- will,
Her nights in argument
Until her voice grew shrill.
What voice more sweet than hers
When, young and beautiful,
She rode to harriers?

This man had kept a school
And rode our wingèd horse;
This other his helper and friend

Was coming into his force;
He might have won fame in the end,
So sensitive his nature seemed,
So daring and sweet his thought.
This other man I had dreamed
A drunken, vainglorious lout.
He had done most bitter wrong
To some who are near my heart,
Yet I number him in the song;
He, too, has resigned his part
In the casual comedy;
He, too, has been changed in his turn,
Transformed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

Hearts with one purpose alone
Through summer and winter seem
Enchanted to a stone
To trouble the living stream.
The horse that comes from the road,
The rider, the birds that range
From cloud to tumbling cloud,
Minute by minute they change;
A shadow of cloud on the stream

Changes minute by minute;
A horse- hoof slides on the brim,
And a horse splashes within it;
The long- legged moor- hens dive,
And hens to moor- cocks call;
Minute by minute they live:
The stone's in the midst of all.

Too long a sacrifice
Can make a stone of the heart.
O when may it suffice?
That is Heaven's part, our part
To murmur name upon name,
As a mother names her child
When sleep at last has come
On limbs that had run wild.
What is it but nightfall?
No, no, not night but death;
Was it needless death after all?
For England may keep faith
For all that is done and said.
We know their dream; enough
To know they dreamed and are dead;
And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they died?
I write it out in a verse –
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly and Pearse

Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

September 25, 1916

Sixteen Dead Men

O but we talked at large before
The sixteen men were shot,
But who can talk of give and take,
What should be and what not
While those dead men are loitering there
To stir the boiling pot?

You say that we should still the land
Till Germany's overcome;
But who is there to argue that
Now Pearse is deaf and dumb?
And is their logic to outweigh
MacDonagh's bony thumb?

How could you dream they'd listen
That have an ear alone
For those new comrades they have found,
Lord Edward and Wolfe Tone,
Or meddle with our give and take
That converse bone to bone?

The Second Coming

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood- dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.
Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

Sailing to Byzantium

I

That is no country for old men. The young
In one another's arms, birds in the trees
– Those dying generations – at their song,
The salmon- falls, the mackerel- crowded seas,
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect.

II

An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing
For every tatter in its mortal dress,
Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence;
And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
To the holy city of Byzantium.

III

O sages standing in God's holy fire
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,
And be the singing- masters of my soul.

Consume my heart away; sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity.

IV

Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing,
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

Meditations in Time of Civil War
from *Meditations in Time of Civil War*

VI

The STare'S NeST by my WINdoW

The bees build in the crevices
Of loosening masonry, and there
The mother birds bring grubs and flies.
My wall is loosening; honey- bees,
Come build in the empty house of the stare.

We are closed in, and the key is turned
On our uncertainty; somewhere
A man is killed, or a house burned,
Yet no clear fact to be discerned:
Come build in the empty house of the stare.

A barricade of stone or of wood;
Some fourteen days of civil war;
Last night they trundled down the road
That dead young soldier in his blood:
Come build in the empty house of the stare.

We had fed the heart on fantasies,
The heart's grown brutal from the fare;
More substance in our enmities

Than in our love; O honey- bees,
Come build in the empty house of the stare.

Leda and the Swan

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still
Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.

How can those terrified vague fingers push
The feathered glory from her loosening thighs,
And how can body, laid in that white rush,
But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?

A shudder in the loins engenders there
The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
And Agamemnon dead.

Being so caught up,
So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
Did she put on his knowledge with his power
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

1923

Among School Children

I

I walk through the long schoolroom questioning;
A kind old nun in a white hood replies;
The children learn to cipher and to sing,
To study reading books and histories,
To cut and sew, be neat in everything
In the best modern way – the children's eyes
In momentary wonder stare upon
A sixty- year- old smiling public man.

II

I dream of a Ledaean body, bent
Above a sinking fire, a tale that she
Told of a harsh reproof, or trivial event
That changed some childish day to tragedy –
Told, and it seemed that our two natures blent
Into a sphere from youthful sympathy,
Or else, to alter Plato's parable,
Into the yolk and white of the one shell.

III

And thinking of that fit of grief or rage
I look upon one child or t'other there
And wonder if she stood so at that age –
For even daughters of the swan can share

Something of every paddler's heritage –
And had that colour upon cheek or hair,
And thereupon my heart is driven wild:
She stands before me as a living child.

IV

Her present image floats into the mind –
Did Quattrocento finger fashion it
Hollow of cheek as though it drank the wind
And took a mess of shadows for its meat?
And I though never of Ledaean kind
Had pretty plumage once – enough of that,
Better to smile on all that smile, and show
There is a comfortable kind of old scarecrow.

V

What youthful mother, a shape upon her lap
Honey of generation had betrayed,
And that must sleep, shriek, struggle to escape
As recollection or the drug decide,
Would think her son, did she but see that shape
With sixty or more winters on its head,
A compensation for the pang of his birth,
Or the uncertainty of his setting forth?

VI

Plato thought nature but a spume that plays
Upon a ghostly paradigm of things;
Solider Aristotle played the taws
Upon the bottom of a king of kings;

World- famous golden- thighed Pythagoras
Fingered upon a fiddle- stick or strings
What a star sang and careless Muses heard:
Old clothes upon old sticks to scare a bird.

VII

Both nuns and mothers worship images,
But those the candles light are not as those
That animate a mother's reveries,
But keep a marble or a bronze repose.
And yet they too break hearts – O Presences
That passion, piety or affection knows,
And that all heavenly glory symbolise –
O self- born mockers of man's enterprise;

VIII

Labour is blossoming or dancing where
The body is not bruised to pleasure soul,
Nor beauty born out of its own despair,
Nor blear- eyed wisdom out of midnight oil.
O chestnut- tree, great rooted blossomer,
Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?
O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance?

A Woman Young and Old

from *A Woman Young and Old*

IX

a LaST CoNfeSSIoN

What lively lad most pleased me
Of all that with me lay?
I answer that I gave my soul
And loved in misery,
But had great pleasure with a lad
That I loved bodily.

Flinging from his arms I laughed
To think his passion such
He fancied that I gave a soul
Did but our bodies touch,
And laughed upon his breast to think
Beast gave beast as much.

I gave what other women gave
That stepped out of their clothes,
But when this soul, its body off,
Naked to naked goes,
He it has found shall find therein
What none other knows,

And give his own and take his own
And rule in his own right;
And though it loved in misery
Close and cling so tight,
There's not a bird of day that dare
Extinguish that delight.

Lapis Lazuli

(for harry CLIfToN)

I have heard that hysterical women say
They are sick of the palette and fiddle- bow,
Of poets that are always gay,
For everybody knows or else should know
That if nothing drastic is done
Aeroplane and Zeppelin will come out,
Pitch like King Billy bomb- balls in
Until the town lie beaten flat.

All perform their tragic play,
There struts Hamlet, there is Lear,
That's Ophelia, that Cordelia;
Yet they, should the last scene be there,
The great stage curtain about to drop,
If worthy their prominent part in the play,
Do not break up their lines to weep.
They know that Hamlet and Lear are gay;
Gaiety transfiguring all that dread.
All men have aimed at, found and lost;
Black out; Heaven blazing into the head:
Tragedy wrought to its uttermost.
Though Hamlet rambles and Lear rages,
And all the drop- scenes drop at once

Upon a hundred thousand stages,
It cannot grow by an inch or an ounce.
On their own feet they came, or on shipboard,
Camel- back, horse- back, ass- back, mule- back,
Old civilisations put to the sword.
Then they and their wisdom went to rack:
No handiwork of Callimachus,
Who handled marble as if it were bronze,
Made draperies that seemed to rise
When sea- wind swept the corner, stands;
His long lamp- chimney shaped like the stem
Of a slender palm, stood but a day;
All things fall and are built again,
And those that build them again are gay.

Two Chinamen, behind them a third,
Are carved in lapis lazuli,
Over them flies a long- legged bird,
A symbol of longevity;
The third, doubtless a serving- man,
Carries a musical instrument.

Every discoloration of the stone,
Every accidental crack or dent,
Seems a water- course or an avalanche,
Or lofty slope where it still snows
Though doubtless plum or cherry- branch
Sweetens the little half- way house

Those Chinamen climb towards, and I
Delight to imagine them seated there;
There on the mountain and the sky,
On all the tragic scene they stare.
One asks for mournful melodies;
Accomplished fingers begin to play.
Their eyes mid many wrinkles, their eyes,
Their ancient, glittering eyes, are gay.

What Then?

His chosen comrades thought at school
He must grow a famous man;
He thought the same and lived by rule,
All his twenties crammed with toil;
‘What then?’ sang Plato’s ghost, ‘what then?’

Everything he wrote was read,
After certain years he won
Sufficient money for his need,
Friends that have been friends indeed;
‘What then?’ sang Plato’s ghost, ‘what then?’

All his happier dreams came true –
A small old house, wife, daughter, son,
Grounds where plum and cabbage grew,
Poets and Wits about him drew;
‘What then?’ sang Plato’s ghost, ‘what then?’

‘The work is done,’ grown old he thought,
‘According to my boyish plan;
Let the fools rage, I swerved in nought,
Something to perfection brought’;
But louder sang that ghost, ‘What then?’

Under Ben Bulben

from *Under Ben Bulben*

VI

Under bare Ben Bulben's head
In Drumcliff churchyard Yeats is laid.
An ancestor was rector there
Long years ago, a church stands near,
By the road an ancient cross.
No marble, no conventional phrase;
On limestone quarried near the spot
By his command these words are cut:

*Cast a cold eye
On life, on death.
Horseman, pass by!*

September 4, 1938

Cuchulain Comforted

A man that had six mortal wounds, a man
Violent and famous, strode among the dead;
Eyes stared out of the branches and were gone.

Then certain Shrouds that muttered head to head
Came and were gone. He leant upon a tree
As though to meditate on wounds and blood.

A Shroud that seemed to have authority
Among those bird- like things came and let fall
A bundle of linen. Shrouds by two and three

Came creeping up because the man was still;
And thereupon that linen- carrier said:
‘Your life can grow much sweeter if you will

‘Obey our ancient rule and make a shroud.
Mainly because of what we only know
The rattle of those arms makes us afraid.

‘We thread the needles’ eyes and all we do
All must together do.’ That done, the man
Took up the nearest and began to sew.

'Now must we sing and sing the best we can
But first you must be told our character:
Convicted cowards all by kindred slain

'Or driven from home and left to die in fear.'
They sang, but had nor human tunes nor words,
Though all was done in common as before;

They had changed their throats and had the throats of birds.

January 13, 1939

The Circus Animals' Desertion

I

I sought a theme and sought for it in vain,
I sought it daily for six weeks or so.
Maybe at last being but a broken man
I must be satisfied with my heart, although
Winter and summer till old age began
My circus animals were all on show,
Those stilted boys, that burnished chariot,
Lion and woman and the Lord knows what.

II

What can I but enumerate old themes?
First that sea- rider Oisín led by the nose
Through three enchanted islands, allegorical dreams,
Vain gaiety, vain battle, vain repose,
Themes of the embittered heart, or so it seems,
That might adorn old songs or courtly shows;
But what cared I that set him on to ride,
I, starved for the bosom of his faery bride?

And then a counter- truth filled out its play,
The Countess Cathleen was the name I gave it,
She, pity- crazed, had given her soul away
But masterful Heaven had intervened to save it.
I thought my dear must her own soul destroy

So did fanaticism and hate enslave it,
And this brought forth a dream and soon enough
This dream itself had all my thought and love.

And when the Fool and Blind Man stole the bread
Cuchulain fought the ungovernable sea;
Heart mysteries there, and yet when all is said
It was the dream itself enchanted me:
Character isolated by a deed
To engross the present and dominate memory.
Players and painted stage took all my love
And not those things that they were emblems of.

III

Those masterful images because complete
Grew in pure mind, but out of what began?
A mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street,
Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can,
Old iron, old bones, old rags, that raving slut
Who keeps the till. Now that my ladder's gone
I must lie down where all the ladders start
In the foul rag and bone shop of the heart.

Politics

'In our time the destiny of man presents its meaning in political terms.' –

T homaS MaNN

How can I, that girl standing there,

My attention fix

On Roman or on Russian

Or on Spanish politics?

Yet here's a travelled man that knows

What he talks about,

And there's a politician

That has both read and thought,

And maybe what they say is true

Of war and war's alarms,

But O that I were young again

And held her in my arms.



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N° 20

被视为艺术的谋杀案

中信出版集团

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On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts

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致《布莱克伍德》杂志编辑书

讲座内容

To The ediTor of Blackwood's Magazine

“人们开始意识到，
一桩精巧的谋杀，
在两个蠢人简单的
杀与被杀、一把匕首、
一只钱包和一条
黑灯瞎火的巷子之外，
更多的是
前期的构思……”



PENGUIN
LITTLE BLACK
CLASSICS

致《布莱克伍德》杂志编辑书

先生：

我们都听说过“道德腐化促进会”“地狱之火俱乐部”诸如此类的团体。我想，是在布莱顿，有人成立了一个“镇压美德协会”。而这个协会本身已遭镇压。但遗憾的是，伦敦还有一个这样的组织，其邪恶程度更甚。究其脾性，该团体取名为“谋杀促进会”或许更合适。不过，他们采用了雅致的Ευφημισμός（希腊语：婉词），称自己为“谋杀艺术鉴赏家协会”。他们声称，渴望了解杀人的奥秘，业余爱好各种方式的流血艺术，简而言之，就是谋杀发烧友。他们聚在一起，像评判一幅画、一尊雕像或者其他类型的艺术品那样，评价欧洲警察年鉴提供的每一桩新鲜命案。但他们是秉着何种精神展开这些活动的，我毋庸赘述，因为您将读到该协会去年面向全员宣读的“月度讲座系列”中的一个，也能从中更好地领悟这种精神。尽管他们保持警惕尽量避开公众耳目，会刊却意外落入我手。讲座内容的发表将给他们以警告，而我本意正是如此。尽管我更希望通过您引导公共舆论，从而悄然将他们镇压，而不是曝光他们的名字，然后向弓街 [1] 提出上诉；不过，如果公开他们的讲座没有取得应有的效果，我最终必将诉诸法律。因为这种事竟然发生在一个基督教国度里，这是不可原谅的。就算发生在异教徒国家，公众对于谋杀的宽容在某位基督教作家看来，仍是对社会公德最强烈的声讨。这位作家就是拉克唐修 [2]。他的话极适用于当前的情况，用他的话说：“世上有什么能比杀人更恐怖、更有冒犯性？正因此，我们的生命才受到最严厉的法律保护，也正因此，人类掀起可怕的战争。然而，人们通过风俗习惯找到了杀人的办法，不用诉诸战争，也不触犯法律。这是娱乐，却也是犯罪，理应受到惩罚。如果处在谋杀现场，我们就成了共犯，观看罪行，我们就和行凶者同罪；那么在角斗士的谋杀中，观众的手和胜利者的一样血腥；想看血流的人洗不清身上的血渍；未亲手杀人，却为谋杀者鼓掌、求奖励的人也脱不了干系 [3]。”“人的生命，”他说，“受最严厉的法律保护。然而为了谋杀，风俗习惯设计出一套逃避法律责任的办法。不过现在，欢娱（voluptas [4]）和不被约束的罪行一样，要付出同样的代价。”让业余爱好者协会的先生们想想这段话吧，他们要特别注意最后一句，关系如此重大，我必须要用英语表述一下：“现在，如果仅因身处谋杀现场，某人就成了共犯，如果只是目睹了谋杀，我们就要与行凶者同罪，那么同样，在露天竞技场的谋杀中，看台上观众的手和给对方致命一击的角斗士的手一样血腥，支持谋杀者

洗清罪证，为谋杀者鼓掌、求奖励的人也只能是共犯。”虽然我还没有听说伦敦谋杀爱好者男士俱乐部受到“*præmia postulavit*”（要求奖励谋杀者）的指控，但是他们的活动无疑是有这种倾向的。不过，这个俱乐部的名称以及我寄给您的那个讲座的字里行间均充满“*interfectori favil*”（为谋杀者鼓掌）的意味。——我是……

X.Y.Z.

（编者按：感谢这位朋友的来信，也感谢他摘引的拉克唐修的话，很好地呼应了他对这个事情的看法。但是坦白地说我们的观点是不同的。我们不能假设主讲人是认真的。他的态度不会比伊拉斯谟写《愚人颂》或者迪恩·斯威夫特提议吃小孩更认真。不过，我们双方都认为应该把这个讲座公布于世。）

[1] 弓街：伦敦的一条街道。弓街治安法庭曾数年主管伦敦的治安事务，相当于伦敦历史上首个警察局。（说明：书中脚注除特别标明的之外，均为译者注。）

[2] 拉克唐修（250—325），早期基督教作家，是第一位基督教徒罗马皇帝康斯坦丁一世的宗教政策顾问。著有《神圣原理》，书中他对异教徒宗教和哲学进行批判，又对基督教的合理性和真实性进行论述。

[3] 原文为拉丁语。

[4] 拉丁语，意为欢乐、欢娱。

讲座内容

先生们，我很荣幸，委员会将如此艰难的任务指派给我，让我朗读威廉姆斯系列“关于谋杀是一门艺术”的讲座。要是在三四个世纪之前，这个任务或许相当好办。那时人们对谋杀知之甚少，也鲜有佳作可当典范。但在当代，职业人士已创作出不少杰作，因而显然，公众必然也期待谋杀的评论方法有相应的提升。实践与理论必须Pari Passu（同步发展）。人们开始意识到，一例精巧的谋杀，在两个蠢人简单的杀与被杀、一把匕首、一只钱包和一条黑灯瞎火的巷子之外，更多的是前期的构思。先生们啊，如今，若要谋杀，构思、选址、光影、诗歌、情绪都是必要元素。威廉姆斯先生已提高了我们所有人心中的谋杀理想，因而让我的任务尤其难上加难。正如埃斯库罗斯或弥尔顿之于诗歌，米开朗基罗之于绘画，威廉姆斯先生已把他的谋杀艺术提升到了极高的境界。如华兹华斯先生所言，某种程度上，他“创造了一种人们可用于品鉴他的作品的审美力”。勾勒这一艺术之历史、批判性地审视其原则，是留给鉴赏家们的职责。他们是另一种“法官”，跟最高巡回法庭 [1] 的就颇为不同了。

在我开始之前，容我对某些自命清高的人说两句，他们说起本俱乐部就好像我们多少是有点不道德的。不道德！愿主保佑我的灵魂。先生们，那些人想表达什么啊？我是拥护道德准则的，永远拥护，拥护一切美德。我坚决认为，永远坚定地认为，（不管结果如何）谋杀是不当的行径，极为不当。但我并不认为，所有谋杀者都得有非常错误的思考方式，或者很不正确的行为准则。某位伟大的德国伦理学家 [2] 说过，把杀害对象的藏身之地告诉谋杀者，协助和支持他是每个善人应尽的本分。我非但不会这么做，相反，我愿意捐出一先令六便士将其逮捕，这比名气最大的道德学家们所捐的数额也要多出十八便士。但那又能怎样呢？世上的一切皆有两个把柄。例如谋杀，它可能要受到道德把柄的控制（就像在所有的布道中，以及老贝利那里 [3]）。这一点，我承认，是谋杀站不住脚的一面。但另外一面，它也可能成为一种审美对象，就像德国人说的，跟好品味有关。

为了证明这个观点，我将郑重地请出三位著名的权威人士，即S.T.科勒律治、亚里士多德和外科医生霍希普先生 [4]。先说科勒律治。多年前的一个夜晚，我和他正在伯尔尼街喝茶（顺便提一句，此街虽然不长，却出奇地人才济济）。在场的除我之外还有其他人。在饮茶配吐司满足口腹之欲的同时，我们都在听科勒律治文雅地谈一篇

关于普罗提诺的论文。突然传来一声：“失火了！失火了！”所有人，不管老师还是学生，柏拉图或是οἱ περὶ τὸν Πλάτωνα（希腊语：他周围的人），全都立刻冲出门外，盼着旁观大火。火情发生在牛津街上的一家钢琴制作商家。当时来看，火势很可能发展成一场可观的大火，所以很遗憾在危急关头到来之前我有事必须离开科勒律治先生的聚会。数天后，我又遇到了那位柏拉图式的聚会主人。我向他提起那场大火，求他告知那场可能的好戏是如何被终止的。“哦，先生，”他说，“那场戏后来太糟了，我们全都骂了起来。”那么有谁认为科勒律治先生（尽管他太胖了，不是一个拥有主动美德的人，但他绝对是名副其实的基督徒），可以说是好人的S.T.C.，是纵火犯吗？或者他会希望可怕的事发生在那个可怜的男人和他的钢琴身上吗（毫无疑问，很多钢琴都增加了额外的琴键 [5]）？相反，我知道他的为人，尽管他是被火灾考验过美德的人中最胖的一个，但我敢用生命打赌，必要时，他会操作消防车参与灭火。但情况到底是怎样的呢？根本就不需要美德。消防车一到，道德就全盘把责任交给了保险公司。事情就是这样，所以他就有权饱眼福。他为此离开了茶桌，难道让他一无所获吗？

我认为，在上述前提下，最高尚的人有权奢侈一回，去享受那场火灾，去发出不满的嘘声，就像对待任何先吊起了人们的胃口，后又让人扫兴的表演一样。接下来，让我们看看另一位伟大的权威人士，那位斯塔吉亚人（亚里士多德）是怎么说的。他（我想应该是在《形而上学》第五卷中）描述了κλεπτήν τέλειον，即，完美的盗贼形象。至于霍希普先生，在一篇关于消化不良的论文中用赞美的口吻谈到他看到的一种溃疡，称其为“一块美丽的溃疡”，也没见其良心不安。那么有人会说，亚里士多德不经大脑就会觉得盗贼品性完美，或者霍希普先生可能迷恋一块溃疡吗？众所周知，亚里士多德本人是个品德非常高尚的人，甚至写了八开纸一卷本的《尼各马可伦理学》也不满足，他后来又写了另外一套伦理学著作，名为*Magna Moralia*，即《大伦理学》。那么只要是撰写伦理学的人，不管是小伦理学还是大伦理学，都不可能赞美偷盗本身。至于霍希普先生，众所周知，他向所有的溃疡开战。他没有被溃疡的魅力蛊惑，相反他正努力将它们从米德尔塞克斯郡消除干净。不过，其实不管本身多么令人讨厌，跟同类相比的话，一个盗贼或者一块溃疡都可能有无数的优点。二者确实都不完美，但是它们本质上的不完美，这种不完美所蕴含的伟大恰恰构成了它们的完美。Spartam nactus es, henc exorna（“斯巴达现在归你了，尽你所有让其生辉”）。像奥托吕科斯 [6] 和巴灵顿先生 [7] 这样的贼，和性状明晰、稳步发展的可怕的崩蚀性溃疡，说他们与从长出蓓蕾直至开出“鲜艳完美的花”都堪称无懈可击的花魁洋蔷薇一样，是同类中的完美典范，也并不过分。或可比作美人中，最雍容华贵的妙龄少女。因此，不光是墨水台有可以想象的完美典范（正如

柯勒律治先生在他那封与布莱克伍德先生著名的信里说明的），尽管也没多少想象的空间，因为墨水台本身就值得赞美，是对社会有用之物。甚至可以想象，不完美本身也可能有自己的典范和完美的状态。

先生们，我真是抱歉，一下子说这么多哲理。现在让我结合实践说明。当谋杀将要发生（不久后的将来时时态），且我们听到了传闻的时候，我们务必以道德的态度视之。但是假定谋杀已完成，你可以说：Τετέλεσαι（谋杀完成了），或者（用美狄亚式的坚定的三步）说：εἴργασαι（结束了）。假定受害者断了气不再痛苦挣扎，恶棍随即逃走，无人知其行踪。假定，最后我们尽力了，在那人逃跑的时候伸腿绊倒了他，可是也于事无补啊：“abiit, evasit”（他离开了，逃走了）……那为什么我说，再多的美德又有什么用呢？我们给道德的已足够多，现在该轮到品味和艺术了。毫无疑问，人被害死是件令人难过的事，非常难过，但我们也无力回天。那么就让这件坏事物尽其用吧。既然拼尽全力也不可能再在道德方面有所作为，就让我们以审美的态度视之，看看能不能加以利用。理智的人一般都是这样想的。那么会怎样呢？我们擦干眼泪，也许会心满意足地发现，一桩在道德上骇人、站不住脚的买卖，若用审美的标准衡量，却会是一场值得赞美的表演。这样一来全世界都高兴了。老谚语还是有道理的，世上没有对人人都不利的事。谋杀爱好者本来因为太在意美德显得暴躁阴郁，现在开始变废为宝，变得欢腾起来。美德的权势日渐衰微，今后谋杀艺术爱好者和鉴赏家们可以满足自己的日常所需。先生们，基于这个原则，我计划引导你们学习从该隐到特尔泰 [8] 以来的谋杀案。就让我们心悦诚服地携手共同漫步于这条伟大的艺术长廊。我会尽力将你们的目光引向有批判价值的作品。

第一例谋杀你们都很熟悉。该隐，这位谋杀的发明人，这门艺术的先祖，必定是位一流的天才。该隐家族都是天才。土八·该隐 [9] 发明了管子，或这类东西，我想。但，不管艺术家多具原创性或多么才华横溢，在那个时代所有艺术都才萌芽，所以要评价那时的作品必须谨记这一时代背景。即使是土八的作品，今天放在设菲尔德 [10] 看，也可能不尽如人意。所以如果说该隐（我是指老该隐）的艺术水平不过尔尔，也并非贬低。然而弥尔顿应该另有想法。从他叙述的方式看，这个作品似乎应该是他心爱的谋杀案，因为在他的诗中明显能感受到他对谋杀场景进行润色想取得生动效果时的焦虑。

为此他内心狂怒，趁谈话之际，

将石块投向对方的腹部，给以致命一击：

他倾倒在地，面色苍白像死了一样，

随着鲜血不断喷涌，呻吟出最后一丝气息。

《失乐园·十一卷》

对于此段描写，擅长鉴赏效果的画家理查德森在《失乐园笔记》中如是评论道：“人们都以为该隐是用一块大石把他弟弟砸死的（按照普遍说法）。弥尔顿算认可这种说法，不过他又增加了一个巨大的伤口。”此处的添加很明智。因为杀人武器简单粗暴，除非用一种温暖的血色提亮和丰富，否则场面就会像野蛮派那样显得过于直白，就仿佛是独眼巨人行凶，他没有技巧，事先也未经构思，只用了一根羊骨。不过，我对这个提升总体上还是满意的，因为这暗示了弥尔顿是个谋杀爱好者。至于莎士比亚，他没能写得更好。《亨利六世》中格洛斯特公爵的谋害，以及邓肯和班科 [11] 的死，都足以证明这一点。

一旦这门艺术奠定了基础，眼见它久久停滞不前，实在是可惜。确切地说，我将不得不跳过接下来所有的谋杀案，不管是宗教的还是世俗的，因为它们毫无价值，一直要到基督诞生很久之后。即使在伯里克利 [12] 的时代，希腊也没能产生任何有丁点价值的谋杀。罗马的谋杀案例几乎没有任何后来艺术的原创性，罗马模式辜负了自己。事实上，拉丁语在表述谋杀思想时意味单薄，词不达意。“这个人被谋杀了。”用拉丁语说是何感觉？Interfectus est, interemptus est（他被杀了，他被消灭了），这仅仅表达出了杀人的行为。因此，中世纪基督教的拉丁语用法只好引入了一个新词，它有单薄的经典词语从未传达出的丰满。Murdratus est [13]，哥特时代更高级的方言这样讲。在这个时期，犹太学派鲜活地保留了尚未被这门艺术了解的知识，而后逐渐传入西方世界。的确，犹太学派素来让人敬佩，甚至在黑暗时期。林肯郡的休一案就说明了这点，这个案子光荣地得到了乔叟的认可，借修道院院长之口，他把案件嵌进了犹太学派的另一场表演中 [14]。

不过，现在让我们暂时回到古典时期。我不由得想到喀提林 [15]、克洛狄乌斯 [16] 以及该小团体的其他人，他们本可以成为一流的艺术家的。令人无比遗憾的是，西塞罗以其迂腐不化剥夺了他的祖国在这个领域里唯一出彩的机会。作为谋杀的对象，没人比他自己更能解释遗憾的原因。主啊！如果西塞罗听到塞西格斯 [17] 躲在他的床下，得怕得喊成什么样啊。要是能听到他的喊声，那一定很有趣。想到他宁愿选择爬着躲进柜子里的vtile（权宜之计），甚至是cloaca（阴沟里），也不敢honestum（保留颜面）地直面无畏的艺术家，先生们，我就感到很满足。

现在时间来到了黑暗时代（我们都是讲求精准的人，所以准确地说黑暗时代是指最卓越的10世纪及前后紧邻的年代），这一时期，就

像对教堂建筑、彩色玻璃等艺术一样，自然也是对谋杀艺术发展有利的时期。所以，临近黑暗时代尾声的时候，我们这门艺术相应地崛起了一位伟大的人物，我指的是“山中老人”^[18]。他就宛若一盏明亮的灯，是的。不用我说，你们都知道，“刺客”这个词正是起源于他。他是如此热爱这门艺术，甚至某次，他中意的一个刺客企图杀他的时候，施展的才华让他如此欣喜，艺术家虽然刺杀失败了，但他当场封刺客做了公爵，赐给他可养三口人的生活津贴，死后爵位可由在世的妻儿继承。刺杀是谋杀这门艺术的一个分支，需要单独注意。我会专门针对刺杀做个讲座，其中，我的分析将会只围绕它的怪异之处：为什么这门艺术的这一分支会出现间歇性的蓬勃发展。刺杀案的发生从不像下雨那样均匀散落，都是如洪水一般倾泻而来。我们当代就有一些不错的范例可以吹嘘一番。而两个世纪前发生的一系列刺杀案则非常出色。显然，我专门提到的就是那五个杰作——奥兰治亲王威廉一世^[19] 刺杀案，法国亨利四世^[20] 刺杀案，白金汉公爵^[21] 刺杀案（大英博物馆的埃利斯先生已发表的信中有精彩的案件描述），古斯塔夫·阿道夫二世^[22] 刺杀案，以及华伦斯坦^[23] 刺杀案。马上就会有很多作家质疑说瑞典国王不是遇刺身亡的，其中就包括哈德^[24]。他是死于谋杀。我认为他的案例是独一无二的杰作，因为他是中午在战场上被谋害，这一点极具原创性，据我所知是其他艺术作品都没有的。是的，所有的这些刺杀案可供高级鉴赏家们研究，是颇有价值的。它们全都是范本，可以说：

Nocturnâ versatâ manu, versate diurne;

翻起书来，日夜兼程。

nocturnâ.（夜晚）尤甚。

这些王公政客遭刺杀，没什么好惊奇的。他们只有死了才会发生重大变化。因为他们身份显赫，所以对恰好迷恋事件效果的艺术家来说，正中下怀。但从17世纪早期就流行的另一种刺杀类型着实让我感到惊讶。我是指哲学家的遇刺案。因为，先生们，实际上在过去两个世纪中，所有杰出的哲学家们要么被谋害，要么至少几近遇害。因此，如果某人自称是哲学家，但却从未被打过谋杀的主意，放心，那他肯定胸无点墨。尤其是洛克^[25]的哲学理论。我认为，否定它的不争事实（如果还需要的话）是，尽管他带着喉咙行走于世七十二年，却从未有人屈尊去切断它。鉴于这些哲学家的谋杀案不太为人所知，而从细节看，它们都很好，构思也不错，那么我就在此附带来讨论一下这方面的案例，主要是为了展现我自己的学识。

17世纪第一位伟大的哲学家（如果不算伽利略的话）是笛卡尔^[26]。如果说曾经有那么一个人差点儿，但没被谋害——就差一丁

点——那个人一定是他。巴耶 [27] 在他的《笛卡尔传》卷一第102页到103页里报告过此事。事情是这样的。1621年，笛卡尔约莫二十六岁的时候，他像往常一样四处旅行（他就像一只不安分的土狼）。他来到易北河 [28]，在格吕克施塔特或者汉堡乘船前往东弗吕斯兰。至于他有何贵干不得而知。也许只有他自己知道，因为一到埃姆登他就决定即刻驶往西弗吕斯兰。无法忍受行程的耽搁，他租了一条三桅帆船，由几个水手负责驾驶。船刚驶进海域，他就获得一个喜人的发现，那就是他把自己关进了一窝杀人犯中。贝耶先生写道，他很快就发现水手都是“恶棍”。先生们，不是我们这样的发烧友，是专业的。那时，他们的最大野心就是切断他的喉咙。因为故事实在太精彩无法删减，所以我就一字不差引述笛卡尔的法语传记：“笛卡尔先生只带了一个仆人，他们正用法语交谈。水手们以为他是外国商贩，不是骑士，断定他身上肯定带钱了。因而，他们做了一个毫不利于笛卡尔钱包的决定。海上的盗贼和森林里的是有区别的，后者因为没有风险，会放过过路人的性命。但是像笛卡尔这样的情况，海盗无法冒着被捕的风险把乘客放生到岸上去。笛卡尔先生的水手们绝不准备冒那样的风险。他们思忖着，这位来自远方的异客在本国又没熟人，万一他没出现，quand il viendrait à manquer（他应该是恰好失踪），也不会有人劳神来东问西问。”想想看，先生们，这些弗吕斯兰恶狗讨论一位哲学家的时候就像在讨论一桶朗姆酒。“他们说，他的性情非常温和且很有耐心，并且，他彬彬有礼，待他们也很客气，想必是初出茅庐的年轻人，所以他们断定解决他的性命应该是轻而易举的。他们毫不顾忌，就在他的面前讨论所有事宜，没想到除了和仆人交谈使用的语言之外，他还懂别的语言。他们的打算是：杀了他，抛尸大海，然后分赃。”

抱歉，我没忍住笑，先生们。不过一想到这个案例，我总是要笑。它看上去这么滑稽，主要是两点。一是令人不快的恐惧，或叫恐慌（伊顿公学的人都这么说）。听到歹人用这样常规的剧本勾勒他的死法、葬礼、财产继承和财产管理，笛卡尔肯定很害怕。但另一点让我觉得更滑稽。如果这些弗吕斯兰的败类够果敢的话，也许我们就不会有笛卡尔主义了。我们怎么可能没有笛卡尔主义，想想因它出版的那些卷帙浩繁的书吧，还是请尊敬的短裤制造商 [29] 发表看法。

好了，继续讲故事。尽管面对巨大的恐慌，笛卡尔还是表现出了斗志，这让“反笛卡尔（主义）”的恶棍对他心生敬畏。“发现事情不是玩笑，”贝耶先生写道，“笛卡尔顷刻间跳将起来，正颜厉色。这些懦夫万万没想到，他开口说话，用的是他们的语言，威胁要就地刺穿他们所有人，如果他们胆敢对他有丁点不敬的话。”当然了，先生们，像云雀一样穿在笛卡尔之剑上，有这等荣幸太便宜这些一文不值的恶棍了。因此，我很高兴笛卡尔先生没有打劫绞刑架擅自处死威胁者。

尤其是，如果杀了船员，他就无法驾船回港。那样一来，他就得永生在南海航行，也许会被水手们误认为是驶向家乡的鬼船船长 [30]。 “笛卡尔先生展示的精神对这帮恶棍来说有魔法一般的效果。”他的传记作者写道，“突然的惊慌让他们茫然不知所措，忘记了自己的优势，而后他们如他所愿，平静地载着他抵达目的地。”

也许，先生们，你们幻想笛卡尔会像凯撒那样对可怜的船夫说：Caesarem vehis et fortunas ejus（尔载的是凯撒和他的财物），但他只需说：你们这些恶狗，不能杀我，因为你们载的是笛卡尔和他的哲学。这样也许就能有把握地阻止他们采取极端行动。某位德国皇帝也具备这种意识，一次有人让他远离连续炮击的路径以防不测，他回道：嘘！闭嘴。你听过有哪个炮弹炸死个皇帝的？皇帝我说不好，但是稍小的事就足以摧毁一位哲学家。接下来的这位欧洲伟大的哲学家就肯定是被谋杀的。这位就是斯宾诺莎。

我很清楚一般大家都说他死在床上，也许吧，不过就算死在床上，也是被谋杀的。这一点我要用一本题为《斯宾诺莎传》的书证明。此书于1731年在布鲁塞尔出版，作者是让·克罗鲁斯先生。传记里有些附加信息是来自斯宾诺莎一位朋友写的他生平的手稿，并未出版。斯宾诺莎死于1677年2月21日，刚过四十四岁，这本身就很可疑。让先生坦言，在他的传记手稿里，有个说法证明了这个结论：“他的死也并非完全正常。”生活在荷兰这样一个阴湿乏味的国家，一个水手的国度，想来他也本应沉迷格罗格酒 [31] 的，特别是当时刚发掘出来的潘趣酒 [32]。是的，他本可能是这样，但实际上并非如此。让先生称他：“是一个饮食上非常有节制的人。”尽管坊间流传，斯宾诺莎饮曼陀罗草汁 [33]，吸鸦片 [34]，但是这两样东西都没出现在药剂师的账单上。所以，既然他活得这么清醒节制，怎么可能四十四岁就自然死亡了？听听传记作家是怎么说的：“2月21号的周日早晨，还没到做礼拜的时间，斯宾诺莎下楼和房东夫妇交谈。”所以，这个时候，可能是周日早上10点，你看斯宾诺莎还是活着的，而且身体相当好。但是似乎“他已从阿姆斯特丹叫了某位医生过来”，传记作者写道，“要不是L.M.这两个字母，我也没注意到他”。经这位L.M.指导，住在此处的人去买来一只老公鸡，然后立刻炖了，这样斯宾诺莎中午就能喝上一点鸡汤。事实上，他确实喝了，胃口不错，还吃了点老公鸡的肉。这发生在房东夫妇从教堂回来之后。

“下午，L.M.单独和斯宾诺莎待在一起，屋里其他人都回教堂去了。他们一出教堂，就得知斯宾诺莎约在下午3点去世，很是吃惊。去世时，L.M.在场。当天夜晚，L.M.就连夜乘船返回阿姆斯特丹了，对死者一点也不在乎。毫无疑问，他早想好了要免去那些道德义务，因为他把斯宾诺莎的一达克通 [35] 和少量的银币，连同一把银柄匕首全部据为己有，然后带着赃物潜逃了。”到这儿，先生们，你们就明

白，谋杀及其方式都是很清晰的。是L.M.为了钱财杀害了斯宾诺莎。可怜的斯宾诺莎，瘦弱多病。因为现场没有血迹，所以L.M.肯定是将他推倒在床，然后用枕头闷死的。可怜他已经被该死的老公鸡汤噎得半死了。但，L.M.是谁？肯定不可能是林德利·穆雷。1825年我还在约克见过他。而且，我不相信他会干出这种事，至少不会对一位语法家同仁下手。因为大家都知道，斯宾诺莎写了一本非常好的希伯来语语法书。

可为什么或者是根据什么原则，霍布斯没被谋杀？我从来也没想明白。这是17世纪职业人士的重大失误。因为除了瘦得皮包骨头，无论从哪方面看，他都是个优质的谋杀对象。因为我能证明他有钱，而且（非常好笑的是）他无权做出任何反抗。因为，根据他的理论，专制政权产生至高无上的权力，因此当一支具备充足战斗力的军队似乎要杀你的时候，你要是拒绝被杀，就是对政权最大的反叛，罪大恶极。但是，先生们，尽管他没被谋杀，我很高兴地向你们保证（据他自己的描述），他有三次差点被害了。第一次是在1640年的春天。他自称，当时他有一小本手稿在流传，代表君主对抗国会。顺便说一句，他不可能印制这本手稿。但是他说“要是陛下（5月份）还不解散国会的话”，“他的性命就会有危险。”然而，解散国会是没用的。因为同年11月，长期国会成立，霍布斯又一次害怕被谋杀，于是逃去了法国。这看上去就像约翰·丹尼斯的疯狂想法。他认为除非法国将他交于西班牙让其实施报复，不然路易十四不可能和安妮女王和解。而实际上，他就是带着这种想法逃离了海岸。在法国，十年来，霍布斯努力地照看好自己的脖子，效果相当不错。但最后的阶段，为了向克伦威尔示好，他发表了《利维坦》。现在，这个老儒夫开始第三次极度“惊慌”。他幻想着骑士们的剑不断地出现在他的喉咙上，脑海里浮现它们是怎么伺候海牙和马德里的国会大使的。那时，他用蹩脚的拉丁语说：

Tum venit in mentem mihi Dorislaus et Ascham;

Tanquam proscripto terror ubique aderat.

（那时多里斯劳斯和阿斯克姆出现在我的脑海里，

就像被判死刑的人眼里到处都是恐惧。）

因此他逃回英格兰老家去了。当然了，写《利维坦》的人确实应该被棒打一顿，而把五音步结尾写得这么拙劣的应该被打两顿或三顿——“terror ubique aderat”^[36]。可是从未有人想过对他用点棒刑之外的惩罚。而且，事实上，整个故事都是他的自我吹嘘。因为在写给

一位渊博之人（数学家瓦里斯）的一封极具诽谤意味的信中，他给了另外一种颇为不同的说法，他说，他逃回家“是因为他无法将自己的安危托付给法国教会”，言下之意，他可能因为信仰的问题被谋害。这可真是个大笑话 [37]——汤姆会因宗教问题被判刑。

不管是不是自我吹嘘，可以确定的是，霍布斯至死都在担心有人会谋害他。这点，我接下来要讲的故事可以证明。这个故事不是出自某个未出版的手稿，而是（如科勒律治所言）出自和手稿一样好的一本完全被遗忘的书，即《探究霍布斯先生的信仰，一场他与神学学生的讨论》（出版于霍布斯去世十年前）。书是匿名出版的，但是是丁尼生写的，就是那位三十年后，接替迪罗生成为坎特伯雷大主教的丁尼生。书以一则逸事开头：“某位牧师（无疑是丁尼生本人）似乎每年都会花一个月的时间去岛上四处走走。”一次远足（1670年），他来到德贝郡的匹克区，部分原因是读了霍布斯的描述。到了那一带，就不能不去邻近的巴克斯顿看看。就在他刚抵巴克斯顿之时，幸运如他，正好有一群绅士在客栈门口下马，其中一位身形瘦长，正是霍布斯本人。他可能刚从查茨沃斯骑马过来。对于一位寻觅美景的游客来说，偶遇如此伟大的名人，他能做的至少是上前叨扰。他的计划受到了命运眷顾，霍布斯先生的两个同伴突然收到差遣任务被叫走了，所以在巴克斯顿的剩余时光里，利维坦完全属于他，晚上他有幸和他一起痛饮。霍布斯一开始似乎表现得很僵硬，因为他对神学家总是有所畏惧。但这个顾虑逐渐消失，他变得友善风趣起来，之后他们决定一同入浴。丁尼生怎么敢和利维坦 [38] 在同一片水域里嬉戏？我无法解释。然而就是这样。尽管霍布斯已寿比南山，但他们在水中四处嬉戏，宛若两尾海豚。而且“在游泳停下来和再扎入水中的间歇里（也就是潜入水中），他们讨论了很多‘古人沐浴’以及‘溪水之源’的问题”。就这样，一小时过去后，他们出浴了。擦干身体更衣后，他们坐下，满怀期待地等着这种地方会提供的晚餐，计划像《哲人之宴》里写的那样恢复精气神，宁愿多想，不多饮。然而，他们纯真的愿望被一阵骚动打破了。屋里有几个粗人发生了短暂的口角。尽管离那几个人尚有一段距离，但霍布斯似乎特别关注此事。那么，先生们，他为什么关注呢？不错，你会想，从对和平与和谐抱有仁慈而无私的爱看来，那确实是值得一位老人和哲学家关注的。但是，听着：“不一会儿他就不安起来，但他说了一两遍赛克斯图斯·罗修斯晚饭后是怎么在帕拉西那的浴池附近被谋杀的，声音很低很小心，像是在自言自语。”霍布斯怕成这样，刚好可以用西塞罗的话概括。西塞罗对伊壁鸠鲁这位无神论者这样评价：所有人中就属他最害怕自己批判的事物——死亡和上帝。仅仅因为是晚饭时间，在浴池附近，霍布斯就一定会走上赛克斯图斯·罗修斯的老路。这是什么逻辑？除非他老想着被谋杀。这时的利维坦，不再害怕英国骑士的短剑或者法国教会，而是在酒馆里，被德贝郡几个老实巴交的庄稼汉的争吵“吓得失了分寸”。不

过，他自己形容枯槁，老得看起来有几百岁了，可能也会把人家吓得魂飞魄散吧。

马勒伯朗士是被谋杀的。他的故事将给你们带去欢乐。杀他的人很有名，就是伯克利主教。故事大家都熟悉，不过至今还没得到正确理解。伯克利年轻的时候，去巴黎拜访皮埃尔·马勒伯朗士。到了他修道院的房间发现他正在做饭。厨师向来是genus irritabile（脾气暴躁的物种），作家更是如此，而马勒伯朗士身兼这两种角色。他们争吵起来。老神父本来就激动，现在更激动了。厨师的火气加上哲学家的愤怒让他大动肝火：他卧床不起，然后就死了。这是大家熟知的版本，“所以说整个丹麦都被谎言欺辱了”。实际上，出于对伯克利的保护，实情被隐瞒了，因为（正如教皇所言）伯克利是天下最有德之人。否则广为人知的就是这个版本了：伯克利被法国老头的暴躁激怒了，摆开架势，接着就是一场搏斗。马勒伯朗士第一轮便被打倒在地，彻底消除了自负，他也许已经投降了。但是伯克利此时血脉偾张，他坚持要求法国老头收回偶因论学说 [39]。老头太过虚荣拒绝收回。他可笑的固执，加上爱尔兰青年的冲动，最终葬送了自己的性命。

莱布尼茨各方面都在马勒伯朗士之上，所以你可能更有理由指望他被谋杀，但，事实并非如此。我认为，他被这种忽视激怒了，安全度日令他感到耻辱。不然我无法解释他晚年的行为。他下决心，要变得非常贪婪，决定在自己家里囤一大笔金子。他死在了维也纳。他对自己喉咙的安危感到无比焦虑，至今描述他这一焦虑的信件还在。尽管无比焦虑，可他的野心——那种至少也得有人试图加害他的野心——如此之大，导致他不愿放弃危险。来自伯明翰，爱卖弄学问的已故英国教师——帕尔博士 [40]，在同样的情形下，采取了更自私的路线。他囤了数目相当可观的金银餐具，一度存放在他牧师住宅的卧室里。但是他对谋杀的担忧日渐增长，他清楚自己无法忍受这种忧虑（对此，他的确从未有过一丝夸大），就把所有的金银餐具都转移到哈顿的铁匠那里。毫无疑问，他想的是，杀死一个铁匠对于Salus reipublicae（共和政体的安全）打击要比杀老师轻。但我听说这种说法存在很大的争议。似乎现在普遍认为，一个优质马掌的价格值2.25个斯佩尔布道 [41]。

莱布尼茨纵然不是被杀身亡，但可以说他的死，部分源自对谋杀的恐惧，部分是因为没被谋杀恼怒所致。可康德在这方面又没啥野心，却差点死在谋杀者的手里，比上文提到的除笛卡尔之外的任何人都更惊险。真是造化弄人！这个案例，我想，在一本这位伟人的匿名传记中有所记载。为了健康，康德逼自己每天沿着一条大道一气走上六英里。一个因私意欲谋杀的人得知了此事。他在距哥尼斯堡三英里处，等待像邮车一样准时出现的“猎物”。要不是意外发生，康德必

死。不巧，杀手看到路上有个正在玩耍的小孩。出于“道德”的考虑，比起老先验主义者，他更想杀小孩，所以小孩被杀了，康德得以逃脱。这是德国人对此事的描述。但依我看，杀手是个谋杀发烧友，他觉得杀一个形容枯槁面若死灰的老形而上学家，对谋杀的审美事业贡献不大，而且也没有展示的空间，因为康德死了也不会比活着更像干尸。

先生们，至此，我追踪了哲学与我们这门艺术的关系。不觉我已信步走进了我们这个时代。我不用费劲解释它跟之前年代之间的区别，因为实际上这个时代的作品并无鲜明的特征。17世纪、18世纪，以及有很多作品我们还没赏析的19世纪，共同构成了谋杀的黄金时代。毫无疑问，17世纪最好的谋杀作品是埃德蒙贝里·戈弗雷爵士被害案，我完全赞同。同时，我们必须看到，本世纪的谋杀作品数量不多，至少本国艺术家的作品不多。也许是因为我们缺少开明有识的赞助人。Sint Mæcenates, non deerunt, Flacce, Marones (愿我们有很多梅塞纳斯 [42]，那么就不会缺少贺拉斯 [43]、维吉尔 [44] 这样的诗人)。参看葛兰特的《对死亡率表的观察》(第四版，牛津，1665)，我发现17世纪某二十年间死于伦敦的229250人中，只有86个是死于谋杀，即，每年约为4.3个人。先生们，要成立一个学会，这点数字是少了。当然，数量不多的时候，我们就可以期待质量一流。也许这个世纪的谋杀案质量是一流，但我仍然认为17世纪最好的艺术家是无法与18世纪最好的艺术家相提并论的。比如，不管埃德蒙贝里·戈弗雷爵士的案子多令人赞叹(没有人能比我更清楚它好在哪里)，我仍然认为它不能与布里斯托的拉斯康贝夫人谋杀案媲美，不管是构思的原创性，还是风格的大胆和涵盖的广度。这位好夫人的谋杀案发生在乔治三世早期。总的来说乔治三世的统治对艺术发展非常有利。她住在学院绿地，家中只有一个女仆。主仆二人除了从我正在记录的这位伟大艺术家的手艺所收获的，再没有什么是值得让历史注意的。某个晴朗的早晨，整个布里斯托城一片生机盎然。可疑的情况发生了，邻居们闯入拉斯康贝夫人的房屋，发现她被杀害在床，女仆被杀死在楼梯上。这可是中午，而且不到两小时前，还有人看到主仆二人还活着。我如果没记错的话，这事发生在1764年，而今六十多年的时光已消逝，可作案的艺术家仍不知姓甚名谁。后世对于嫌疑犯的猜测落在了两个冒牌货身上：一个面包师和一个扫烟囱的。但他们错了。经验不足的艺术家的不可能有这么大胆的构思，把谋杀时间设在中午，地点还选在了一座大城市的中心地段。先生们，这件作品肯定不是由默默无闻的面包师或者无名的扫烟囱的完成的，这点确信无疑。我知道是谁(这时现场的人们纷纷交头接耳低声讨论，最终大家爆发出一阵掌声，演讲人脸红了，然后一本正经继续讲)。天哪，先生

们，不要误会，不是我做的。我还没自负到以为自己可以取得这样的成就。你们是大大高估了我贫瘠的才华。拉斯康贝夫人的谋杀远超出我有限的能力。不过，我是从一位著名的外科医生那里了解到艺术家的身份的，他参与解剖了他的尸体。这位医生拥有一座私人医学博物馆，在其中一角有一具人体模型，是一个身材比例非常好的男性。

“那具骨骼，”外科医生说，“是著名的兰开夏郡公路大盗的。他有一段时期成功向邻居隐瞒了自己的职业，把羊毛长筒袜套在马腿上，因为往马厩去的巷子里铺的是石板路面，这样就能消掉马走在上面必然会发出的嗒嗒声。他因抢劫被处决的时候，我正在克鲁克山手下学习。盗贼的身材出奇地好，所以刻不容缓，必须要立刻拿到他的尸体，没有多余的金钱和精力浪费在耽搁上。在代理郡长的默许下，刽子手在法定的时间内将他砍倒在地，然后立刻装进四匹马拉的轻便马车，所以当他到达克鲁克山的解剖室的时候，还没死透。当时有个叫某某先生的年轻学生，有幸给了他最后一击，完成了法律的判决。”这段不同寻常的逸事对我震动很大。它似乎暗示了，解剖室里所有的男士们都是我们这种谋杀发烧友。一天，我跟一位兰开夏郡的女士复述此事，她当即告诉我，她就住在那个大家附近，她清楚地记得两件事，这两件事让邻居们认定他就是杀死拉斯康贝夫人的凶手。一是，在谋杀发生前后，他整整消失了两周。二是，谋杀发生之后，很快盗贼家附近到处是五先令硬币。大家都知道拉斯康贝夫人围了两千枚那种硬币。但无论艺术家是谁，这个谋杀案都是展示其天赋的不朽丰碑。这例谋杀案所展现的想象力，让人们一直感到敬畏和震撼，所以直到那时（我听说的时候是1810年），仍没人敢租拉斯康贝夫人的房子。

不过，在我赞颂拉斯康贝案的同时，也不要让别人误会，说我忽略了分布于这一世纪不同时期的其他杰作。但像布兰德小姐的创作，或是唐奈伦上尉谋杀西奥菲勒斯·鲍顿这样的作品，我确实永远也不会认同的。我鄙视这些下毒的人。他们就不能继续沿用割喉这种古老诚实的办法吗？不要从意大利引进这么糟糕的新方法。我认为，跟正统的做法比，所有的毒杀案都显得拙劣，效果堪比雕塑旁边的蜡像或者摆在精致的沃尔帕托雕刻品旁边的平版印刷品。不过，尽管这些作品不值得玩味，但还是有很多风格纯正的优秀作品的，凡公正的鉴赏家都会承认，所以有这样的风格也不必觉得丢人。注意，我说的是，公正。因为人们必须要充分考虑这些案子的难处，没有哪位艺术家能确定可以顺利完成预先精心的构思。中间会出各种状况。人们不会乖乖地任由自己被切断喉咙的。他们会逃，会踢，会咬。当肖像画家时不时总要抱怨模特太没生气的时候，对我们这行的艺术家而言，总的来说，难的地方恰恰在于模特太有生气。而且，不管艺术家本人多不顺心，谋杀过程中往往让模特兴奋的做法，对这个世界来说绝对是它的

一个优点。我们不该忽视这个优点，因为它会促进潜能的发展。杰里米·泰勒就满是赞赏地注意到，人在恐惧的作用下会跳得特别远。最近艾姆金德兄弟的作品中就有一个引人注目的例子。男仆情急之下跳过的高度，他这辈子到死也再不可能跳过去了。而且，顶尖的重拳手，他们天分的发展有时就是受到这种常伴我们艺术家的恐慌的刺激。实际上对于所有运动项目的顶尖选手来说皆是如此。否则，他们的才华就会被埋没，锋芒被遮蔽，不为人知，亦不自知。我想起一个有趣的例证，是我在德国听说的一个案例。

某天，我骑马走在慕尼黑一带，追上了我们协会一个著名发烧友，名字我就不说了。这位先生告诉我，他已厌倦了这种索然无味的发烧友娱乐方式（按照他的说法）。所以他就离开英格兰前往欧洲大陆，想稍试身手。为此他选择了德国，他以为在整个欧洲此地的警察最笨重呆滞。他的从业处女秀创作于曼海姆。因为知道我是同道中人，他也未加掩饰，就把首次历险和盘托出。他说：“我对面住着一个面包师。他为人相当吝啬，所以基本上独自生活。不知是因为他那张沾着面粉的大脸，还是其他原因，我也不清楚，但我就是‘迷’他，决定拿他的咽喉开张，而他总是敞着脖子，这点非常刺激我的欲望。我观察到，他每晚八点整准时关上所有的窗户。一天夜晚，我见他在关窗户，迅速随他进屋，锁上门，然后非常温文尔雅地对他说话，让他熟悉我此行的目的，同时也建议他不要做任何反抗，不然双方都不会愉快。说着，我掏出了工具，准备开始动手。我刚开口表明来意的时候，面包师像僵硬症发作一动不动。这时，他回过神来，狂躁不安。‘我不要被杀死！’他大声尖叫道，‘我为什么要失去宝贵的生命？’‘为什么？’我说，‘如果不为别的，就是为这个，你在面包里加了明矾。但不管有没有明矾（因为我决定先发制人不给他反驳的机会），你要知道，我是谋杀艺术的鉴赏家，我渴望在细节上提升自己，你粗大的咽喉让我迷恋，我决定一定要享受一番。’‘是吗？’他说，‘但我看你先享受下别的服务吧。’说着，他摆出了拳击的姿势。他居然有搏击的想法，这让我觉得很荒唐。不错，伦敦有个面包师在拳坛赫赫有名，人称筋斗大师，可人家年轻体健。而这人本身就像一大床丑陋的羽毛床垫，五十岁了，身体完全不行。但，尽管如此，跟我这种拳击高手打的时候，他拼死防守，有很多次我都害怕他会反败为胜，然后我这个谋杀发烧友，反可能会被一个无赖的面包师杀了。情况十分危急！心思细腻的人会感受我当时的焦虑。有多严峻呢？这么说吧，前十三回合，面包师是占上风的。第十四回合，我右眼挨了一拳，合上了。我认为，最终是这一拳救了我，因为它大大激怒了我，所以这一回合以及随后的三个回合，我都把面包师打倒在地。”

“第十八回合。面包师打上来，虚弱地哼唧了一声，明显疲惫不堪。前四回合被打趴下对他没有好处。不过，当我向他面若死灰的大

脸发送拳头的时候，他还是展现了某些阻击的技巧。我出拳的时候，脚打滑，摔倒了。

“第十九回合。我仔细打量面包师，心想自己居然被这么一大块不成形的面团扰乱这么久，真是可耻。于是我出击猛烈了起来，给了他重重的几拳。出现逆转，双方均被击倒，面包师次数更多，对发烧友比分为10：3。

“第二十回合。面包师跳了起来，惊人地敏捷。考虑到他浑身汗湿，腿部运用得的确一流，打得也精彩。但是他的光芒已不再，打比赛不过是惊恐使然。现在他明显不可能坚持多久了。本回合中，我们尝试了移动闪躲技巧，我大大占了上风，不断地击中他的鼻子。我这么打的原因是，他的鼻子长满了疖子，我想我这么随便地动他的鼻子，他应该会很恼火，结果正如所料。

“接下来三个回合，筋斗大师踉跄得就像冰上行走的奶牛。眼见胜负已分，第二十四回合时，我在他耳边小声嘀咕几句，他随即倒下。我说的不过是我对他这条命还能值多少年金的个人看法罢了。这个小小的亲密私语大大影响了他。他脸上的汗凝住了，接下来的两个回合，任我处置。而当我宣布第二十七回合时间已到的时候，他直挺挺地躺在地上像根木头。”

发烧友说完后，我对他说：“可以推断你应该完成了你的目标。”“你说的没错，”他和善地说，“我完成了，而且很满足。你要知道，对我来说，这种方式是一石二鸟。”也就是说他既拳打了面包师，又杀了他。可是，不管怎样，我是不明白的。因为，在我看来，正相反，他似乎是一鸟二石，先不得不用拳头去除他的自负，然后再用工具杀他。但也无所谓他的逻辑了。他的故事的寓意是好的，因为其证明了，只要对被谋杀的情景进行合理的想象，就可以激发出惊人的潜能。在谋杀的刺激下，曼海姆一个肥胖笨拙、身体半僵硬的面包师都能和技艺高超的英国拳击手大战二十六个回合。是谋杀者的出现和他和蔼可亲的态度，让面包师的天赋得到如此高的提升。

真的，先生们，大多数人谈到谋杀都是苛责的态度，所以听说了这样的事，也许，不再那么苛责就变成了大家的某种义务。听人们说，你会以为被人杀害是最不利、最不便的事，而对于没被害的人来说，这些都不存在。但审慎的人不这么看。“当然，”杰里米·泰勒说，“倒在粗暴的刀剑和斧头之下，比经受发烧的折磨来得痛快（他也许还加了造船工的木锤和铁撬棍）。”“比痛性尿淋漓的折磨好太多。”说得非常对。主教大人讲起话来像智者一般，也像个谋杀发烧友，他的确是。另一位伟大的哲人马可·奥勒留在这个问题上的见解也同样高于世俗的偏见。他声称，“理智最高贵的功能”之一“就是知道是否到了离开世界的时候”。没有哪种知识比此更珍贵，当然这种人必

定是非常博爱的物种，会无偿指导别人去了解这方面的知识，而自己却冒着不小的风险。不过，我抛出这些说法，是留给未来的道德家思考的。同时，我要发表我个人的看法，即很少有人杀人是基于博爱或者爱国的道义的，我要重申此前说过至少一次的话，即，多数杀人凶手都是不对的。

威廉姆斯的谋杀作品的高度和完整度都是史无前例的。我不允许自己随口聊几句他的作品就完事。要想详细讲解它们的优点，不花上一整个讲座，或者甚至一系列讲座，是不够的。但是他的案子有一处奇怪的地方，我要讲一下，因为那一点似乎暗示了，他的天才光芒太耀眼，让司法人员一时也难辨方向。你们一定都记得他创作第一个伟大作品（玛尔一家谋杀案）时使用的工具，是一把造船工的木锤和一把匕首。这把木锤属于一个瑞典老人，叫约翰·皮特森，木锤上有他名字的首字母。威廉姆斯把工具落在了玛尔家的屋里，后来落到了地方法官手中。注意，先生们，实际上首字母的细节一经公布，威廉姆斯就立刻被捕，而且，如果早公布的话，本来是可以阻止他完成第二件伟大作品（威廉姆森一家谋杀案）的，正好是十二天之后。然而地方法官把首字母的事向公众隐瞒了整整十二天，直至第二件作品完成。作品完成，他们公布名字，显然是因为觉得威廉姆斯的成就足以不朽，也已经证明他的荣誉也绝非偶然所得。

至于特尔泰先生的案件，我不知道要说什么。很显然我这个现任协会主席是非常尊重前任主席的。我承认他的讲座是很完美。但是，坦率地说，我认为作为艺术家，他最重要的表演真的被高估了。我承认一开始我自己也被大家的狂热带跑了。谋杀案公布的那个早晨，伦敦聚集了自威廉姆斯时代以来我认识的所有发烧友，有史以来最齐的一次。长期卧床的老鉴赏家们，动不动就脾气暴躁，嘲讽加抱怨说：“没事干。”现在他们都蹒跚下床来到我们俱乐部。这样的狂欢，大家这么良好地表达满足之情，我是很少目睹的。随处可见人们握着手，向彼此表示祝贺，相约晚上一聚。除了得意扬扬的疑问，听不见其他的话：“那么！这件如意吗？”“这件对了吗？”“你总算满意了吧？”但是，在这之中，我记得，当听到愤世嫉俗的老发烧友L.S.，laudator temporis acti（这位逝去时光的歌颂者），拖着他那条木腿进来的时候，大家都安静了下来。他像往常一样满脸怒色，一边走，一边嘴里不停地嘟哝，断断续续说了一路。“整个作品没有一个原创的点子，全都是剽窃，卑劣地抄袭我说的点子！而且，他的风格和阿布布莱希特·丢勒 [45] 的一样硬气，和菲斯利 [46] 的一样粗糙。”很多人以为他纯属嫉妒，就是普通的刻薄。但是我要说的是，当第一丝狂热退却，我发现大部分明智的评论家都认为特尔泰的风格中含有虚假的成分。实际上，因为他是我们俱乐部的成员，所以我们的评判自然会友好地偏袒他。再加上伦敦佬都熟悉他这个人，所以一时之间他受

到了整个伦敦的欢迎，但是这种欢迎是他的虚假无法长久维系的，因为 *opinionum commenta delet dies, naturae judicia confirmat*（时间会抹去人的意见，却会让真理的判定更清晰）。不过，特尔泰有一个未完成的计划，是要用一副哑铃 [47] 杀人。我非常钦佩他这个想法，但却只是一个他未竟的草稿。不过在我看来，再怎么样也比他的主要作品好。我记得一些发烧友对这样的草稿竟未能完成深表遗憾。这一点我是无法赞同的，因为对于原创艺术家来说，作品片段和开头大胆的构思往往都蕴含一种精妙，这种精妙通常会在处理细节时消失。

艾姆金德兄弟的作品在我看来远高于特尔泰被大肆吹嘘的表演，的确令人赞叹不已。实际上，它仿照了威廉姆斯不朽的杰作，就像《埃涅阿斯纪》仿照了《伊利亚特》。

不过，现在我要讲讲谋杀的原则，并非要规范你们的实际操作，而是要规范你们的赏析判断。老年妇女和看报纸的乌合之众，只要够血腥，对什么都满意。但这无法满足感知力敏锐的心灵。下面，让我们来讲一讲，一、哪类人适合成为谋杀对象；二、地点的选择；三、时间的选择，以及其他的小条件。

关于人的选择，我想很明显他应当是个好人。因为如果他不是好人，很可能他自己被杀的时候也正在盘算杀别人。而且，这种棋逢对手的争斗尽管足够有趣，最是激动人心，但真的不是评论家会允许自己称之为谋杀的东西。我可以举某些被杀死在漆黑巷子里的人的例子（我不说名字）。乍一看似乎没什么问题，但再细看案情，公众就注意到了，当时被害方自己是打算，轻则抢劫，重则杀掉凶手，前提是他自己够强壮。只要这种情况发生，或者人们这样想了，那这门艺术就得跟一切真诚的效果作别。因为谋杀这门艺术的最终目的与悲剧完全一致，用亚里士多德的话说，即，“通过唤起悲悯和畏惧来净化人心”。而现在，畏惧可能是有，但如果只是两恶相争死了一个，如何能有悲悯可言？

同样，选择的谋杀对象显然不应该是公众人物。比如，明智的艺术家都不会选择谋杀亚伯拉罕·纽伦。因为实际上，虽然大家都读过很多关于亚伯拉罕·纽伦的事，见过他的人却很少，以至于人们形成了一个固定的看法：他是一个抽象的概念。记得某次，我正好说到和亚伯拉罕·纽伦一起在一家咖啡馆吃饭，所有人都轻蔑地看着我，就好像我自称和祭司王约翰一起打过台球，或者和教皇决斗过。顺便提一句，教皇是非常不合适的谋杀人选，因为他作为基督教世界之父几乎无处不在，而且就像布谷鸟一样，人们如此频繁地听说，却从未真正见过，所以我怀疑大多数人也当他是抽象的概念。如果某个公众人物经常举办宴会，宴会上“满是时下的美味佳肴”，情况就会大为不同。

大家都确信他不是个抽象的概念，因此谋杀他也就没什么不合适，只不过他的谋杀就要被归类成刺杀。这方面，我尚未做讨论。

还有，所选的谋杀对象应当身体健康，因为谋杀病人是极其野蛮的行径。一般病人也不撑不了多久。因此，就不要选二十五岁以上的伦敦佬了，因为过了二十五岁，伦敦佬肯定都有胃病。如果非要去街道狭窄人口密集的伦敦寻找猎物，他应该一次起码杀掉两个人。万一选中的是个裁缝，他心里当然清楚，根据早就算好的等式，他得杀掉十八个裁缝 [48] 才算尽了本分。现在，考虑到病人需要慰藉，你们将在谋杀中看到一门艺术通常会取得的效果：感化人心。先生们，总的来说，世人是残忍的。他们想看到的谋杀不过是血浆喷涌的场面。只要花哨地展示这种场面对他们来说就足够了。但是有见识的鉴赏家可不行，他们的品味要高雅得多。和所有的人文教育一样，我们这门艺术，经过全面细致的研修后，也能增加同情心，使人更具人情味。千真万确，正如古语所说：

Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes,

Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.

真正的人文教育使人举止高雅，

让人不再野蛮无情。

有位良友，因为博爱和一贯的善举而被熟知，他建议，选择的作案对象也应是那种家中有很多小孩完全靠他生活的人，以此来强化悲剧的效果。这的确是一个明智的提醒。但我不想过于强调这个条件。一丝不苟的好品味肯定会这样要求，不过，只要选中的人道德和健康方面无可厚非，我不想再去苛求这个条件，这样可能会缩小艺术家的选择范围。

谋杀对象就讲到这里。关于谋杀时间、地点和工具，我有很多要讲，但是今天暂时没有机会了。好的艺术直觉通常会指导从业者选择夜晚和隐蔽的地方，但也不乏背离这条原则却卓有成效的案例。在作案时间上，拉斯康贝夫人案是个漂亮的例外，我已经说过了。在作案时间和地点这两个方面，爱丁堡年报（1805年）上就有一个不错的例外，爱丁堡的儿童人人都知道此案，但不知何故，它在英格兰的谋杀迷中却被遗漏，没能获得应有的名声。我说的是一个银行搬运工的谋杀案，被害的时候，搬运工正在搬一袋钱，就在光天化日之下，一出高街的拐弯处，而此街是欧洲最有名的街道之一。凶手是谁到现在也不知道。

Sed fugit interea, fugit irreparabile tempus,

Singula dum capti circumvectamur amore.

但此时，时光飞逝，去而不返，

而我们，迷恋细节，徘徊不前。

那么，先生们，最后，让我再次严肃声明，我绝不是什么职业人士。除了1801年在一只公猫身上行凶之外，我此生再未有过任何杀戮。杀猫的结果和我的打算相去甚远。我本来只是想杀死他。“什么？我毕生只能做一名听众吗？”我说，“我永远不能把话讲出来吗？”在一个漆黑的夜晚，凌晨1点，我下楼找公猫，我满心歹意，肯定一脸谋杀者凶狠的模样。可当我找到他时，他正在偷袭食品储存室，里面有面包和其他东西。这就让事情发生了新的变化。在一个物资匮乏的时期，连基督徒们都只能吃马铃薯面包、米粉面包之类的东西，一只公猫居然这样浪费优质的小麦面包，这是十足的叛国。处死他立刻变成了一种应尽的爱国义务。当我高高举起并挥动闪闪发光的刀时，我幻想自己像布鲁图斯^[49]一样站起来，在一群爱国者中间格外耀眼。当我刺向他时，我

大声呼叫图利^[50]的名字，

向他的国父致以敬意！

从此，我就会有些杂念，像杀一头老母羊，或者杀一只不能再生蛋的老母鸡。这些“小鹿”们都被锁进我胸中的秘密里。至于这门艺术更高阶的知识范畴，坦白地说是完全不适合我的。我的野心没长那么大。没有，先生们，用贺拉斯的话说——

*fungos vice cotis, ex cutum Reddere ere quæferrum
valet, exsorsipsasecandi.*

我就充当磨石的角色，它磨快铁器，自己却不能用于切割。

[1] 最高巡回法庭，位于伦敦的高等法院的法官前往英国主要县镇审理重犯，如杀人犯、抢劫犯、强奸犯等。

[2] 指康德。他在无条件诚实论的道路上走得太远，甚至要求，倘若一个人看到无辜的受害者逃脱了凶手的追杀，凶手要是问他，即

使明知凶手要杀人，他也有义务说实话，说出逃跑者的去向。生怕一旦争论激烈就想不起这个原则，在受到法国某著名作家抨击后，他又重申了这一原则，并给出自己的理由。——原文注

[3] 位于伦敦的中央刑事法庭。

[4] 英国外科医生约翰·霍希普。

[5] 第一架五个半八音阶钢琴出现在18世纪晚期，到了19世纪早期钢琴有了六个半八音阶键盘。

[6] 奥托吕科斯是莎士比亚的《冬天的故事》里的贼。

[7] 乔治·巴灵顿（1755—1804）是爱尔兰臭名昭著的扒手。

[8] 约翰·特尔泰（1794—1824）因怀疑赌伴威廉姆·维尔骗走了他300英镑，把他引到乡下杀死。

[9] 土八·该隐是该隐的后代。土八，Tubal，是tube（管子）的形容词。在《创世记》中土八·该隐发明了铜器和铁器。

[10] 设菲尔德位于英国的约克郡，19世纪时是世界高规格钢铁产品的制造中心。

[11] 邓肯和班科出自《麦克白》。

[12] 伯里克利（约公元前495—前429），雅典黄金时期（希波战争至伯罗奔尼撒战争之间）具有重要影响的领导人。

[13] 拉丁语，意为被谋杀。

[14] 在《坎特伯雷故事》中，修道院院长讲了一个犹太人杀害基督教小孩的故事，其中提到了1255年真实发生在英国林肯郡八岁小孩休身上的事。

[15] 喀提林（约公元前108—前62），罗马的阴谋叛变者，公元前63年蓄意刺杀执政官西塞罗和其他对他有敌意的元老。

[16] 克洛狄乌斯·普尔喀（约公元前93—前52），罗马共和国末年制造事端的政客，是西塞罗的护卫之一，但是参与了喀提林策动的刺杀西塞罗行动。

[17] 塞西格斯（公元前93—前63），上文提到的罗马阴谋叛变小团体成员之一，曾企图谋杀西塞罗等显赫人物未遂，被捕后被处以绞刑。

[18] “山中老人”指拉希德丁·锡南，12世纪后半叶活跃于叙利亚地区的一位伊斯兰教阿萨辛派首领。其活跃的年代正处于十字军东征期间，欧洲人称其为“山中老人”，策划刺杀了多个政要。

[19] 奥兰治亲王威廉一世（1533—1584），荷兰“国父”，曾任荷兰共和国第一任执政，1584年遭西班牙间谍刺杀身亡。

[20] 亨利四世（1553—1610），“贤明王亨利”，1610年在巴黎被刺身亡。

[21] 白金汉公爵（1592—1628），英国第一世白金汉公爵，1628年被刺身亡。

[22] 古斯塔夫·阿道夫二世（1594—1632），瑞典瓦萨王朝国王，即位后与神圣罗马帝国相争，不幸于吕岑会战中阵亡。

[23] 阿尔布雷赫特·冯·华伦斯坦（1583—1634），波西米亚（现属捷克）杰出的军事家，1634年吕岑会战后，在海布被他的军官暗杀。

[24] 沃尔特·哈德，18世纪英国作家，著有《瑞典国王，大帝，古斯塔夫·阿道夫生平史》。

[25] 约翰·洛克（1632—1704），英国哲学家，在知识论上，与乔治·布克萊和大卫·休谟共同成为英国经验主义的代表人物。

[26] 笛卡尔（1596—1650），法国哲学家、物理学家、数学家，黑格尔称其为近代“哲学之父”，二元论的代表。

[27] 安德里安·巴耶（1649—1706），笛卡尔的传记作家。

[28] 中欧主要的航运水道之一，全长1165公里，三分之一流经捷克，三分之二流经德国。

[29] 卖不出去的书都被拿去做短裤里衬。

[30] 欧洲海上的传说，鬼船是一艘幽灵船，注定永远在大海上航行，它的出现预示着灾难即将发生。

[31] 掺水烈酒。

[32] “1675年6月1日。喝了三碗潘趣酒（一种很奇怪的酒），没全喝掉。”亨利·狄昂志神父在他最近出版的日记中写道。这段文字的注释中提到福莱尔1672年出版的《东印度群岛之行》，他提到“那个叫潘趣（印度语是五的意思）的让人堕落的酒，由五种配料组成”。因此，医生们都管它叫“五度音程”。如果只有四种配料，就叫“四福音合参”。毫无疑问，正是它的福音名将自己推荐给了狄昂志神父。
——原文注

[33] 《斯宾诺莎传》一书中所提及的内容。

[34] 《斯宾诺莎传》一书中所提及的内容。

[35] 达克通：曾在欧洲的意大利等国流通的银币。

[36] 意为：“到处都是恐惧”，从音步看，在音节que和a的影响下，这个挽联的最后半句显得笨拙。

[37] 《利维坦》被广泛批评为愤世嫉俗和反对宗教。

[38] 一种巨大的水怪。

[39] 马勒伯朗士在笛卡尔的基础上更好地发展完善了偶因论：人类不可能了解内部和外部世界，除非将人类和上帝联系在一起。不管是物体位置的改变还是个人思想的改变，都不是直接由物体或者个人引起的，而是上帝。所谓的原因，不过是上帝制造效果的场合。

[40] 英国伯明翰18世纪工业革命后成为世界制造业中心。塞缪尔·帕尔（1747—1825）1783年成为英国沃里克郡哈顿地区的牧师。哈顿位于沃里克和伯明翰之间。

[41] 帕尔于1800年4月15日做了斯佩尔布道，之后又发表了布道，作者对他的布道评价很低。

[42] 盖乌斯·梅塞纳斯（公元前70—前8），罗马帝国皇帝奥古斯都的谋臣，同时还是艺术保护人，诗人维吉尔和贺拉斯都曾经得到过他的帮助。他的名字因此变成了艺术赞助人的代名词。

[43] 贺拉斯·弗拉库斯（公元前65—前8），罗马帝国奥古斯都时代的著名诗人，罗马文学“黄金时代”的代表人物。

[44] 维吉利乌斯·马罗（公元前70—前19），英语中称维吉尔，罗马帝国奥古斯都时代的著名诗人，著有《埃涅阿斯纪》。

[45] 阿尔布莱希特·丢勒（1471—1528），德国中世纪末、文艺复兴时期著名的油画家、版画家、雕塑家。

[46] 约翰·亨利希·菲斯利（1741—1825），德国—瑞士裔英国画家。

[47] 特尔泰是一名出色的业余拳击手，所以想用哑铃杀人是自然的事。

[48] 谚语，九个裁缝才算一个男人。

[49] 马尔库斯·尤里乌斯·布鲁图斯（公元前85—前42），罗马共和国晚期的一名元老院议员，组织并参与了对凯撒的刺杀。

[50] 马库斯·图利乌斯·西塞罗。

Thomas
De Quincey

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

On Murder
Considered as
One of the
Fine Arts

Nº 20

‘People begin
to see that
something
more goes to the
composition of a
fine murder than
two blockheads
to kill and be
killed – a knife –
a purse – and a
dark lane . . .’

To The ediTor of Blackwood's Magazine

Sir,

We have all heard of a Society for the Promotion of Vice, of the Hell- Fire Club, &c. At Brighton I think it was that a Society was formed for the Suppression of Virtue. That Society was itself suppressed – but I am sorry to say that another exists in London, of a character still more atrocious. In tendency, it may be denominated a Society for the Encouragement of Murder; but, according to their own delicate εὐφημισμὸς[euphemism], it is styled – The Society of Connoisseurs in Murder. They profess to be curious in homicide; amateurs and dilettanti in the various modes of bloodshed; and, in short, Murder- Fanciers. Every fresh atrocity of that class, which the police annals of Europe bring up, they meet and criticise as they would a picture, statue, or other work of art. But I need not trouble myself with any attempt to describe the spirit of their proceedings, as you will collect *that* much better from one of the Monthly Lectures read before the Society last year. This has fallen into my hands accidentally, in spite of all the vigilance exercised to keep their transactions from the public eye. The publication of it will alarm them; and my purpose is that it should. For I would much rather put them down quietly, by an appeal to public opinion through you, than by such an exposure of names as would follow an appeal to Bow- street; which last appeal, however, if this should fail, I must positively resort to. For it is scandalous that such things should go on in a Christian land. Even in a heathen land, the public toleration of murder was felt by a Christian writer to be the most crying reproach of the public morals. This writer was Lactantius; and with his words, as singularly applicable to the present occasion, I shall conclude: – ‘Quid tam horribile,’ says he, ‘tam tetrum, quam hominis trucidatio? Ideo severissimis legibus vita nostra munitur; ideo bella execrabilia sunt. Invenit tamen consuetudo quatenus homicidium sine bello ac sine legibus faciat: et hoc sibi voluptas quod scelus vindicavit. Quod si interesse homicidio sceleris conscientia est, – et eidem facinori spectator obstrictus est cui et admissor; ergo et in his gladiatorum caedibus

non minus cruore profunditur qui spectat, quam ille qui facit: nec potest esse immunis à sanguine qui voluit effundi; aut videri non interfecisse, qui interfectori et favit et proemium postulavit.' 'Human life,' says he, 'is guarded by laws of the uttermost rigour, yet custom has devised a mode of evading them in behalf of murder; and the demands of taste (*voluptas*) are now become the same as those of abandoned guilt.' Let the Society of Gentlemen Amateurs consider this; and let me call their especial attention to the last sentence, which is so weighty, that I shall attempt to convey it in English: – 'Now, if merely to be present at a murder fastens on a man the character of an accomplice, – if barely to be a spectator involves us in one common guilt with the perpetrator; it follows of necessity, that, in these murders of the amphitheatre, the hand which inflicts the fatal blow is not more deeply imbrued in blood than his who sits and looks on; neither can *he* be clear of blood who has countenanced its shedding; nor that man seem other than a participator in murder who gives his applause to the murderer, and calls for prizes in his behalf.' The '*proemia postulavit*' ['call for prizes'] I have not yet heard charged upon the Gentlemen Amateurs of London, though undoubtedly their proceedings tend to that; but the '*interfectori favit*' ['applause to the murderer'] is implied in the very title of this association, and expressed in every line of the lecture which I send you. – I am, &c.

X.Y.Z.

(*Note of the Editor* . – We thank our correspondent for his communication, and also for the quotation from Lactantius, which is very pertinent to *his* view of the case; our own, we confess, is different. We cannot suppose the lecturer to be in earnest, any more than Erasmus in his Praise of Folly, or Dean Swift in his proposal for eating children. However, either on his view or on ours, it is equally fit that the lecture should be made public.)

Lecture

Gentlemen, – I have had the honour to be appointed by your committee to the trying task of reading the Williams' Lecture on Murder, considered as one of the Fine Arts – a task which might be easy enough three or four centuries ago, when the art was little understood, and few great models had been exhibited; but in this age, when masterpieces of excellence have been executed by

professional men, it must be evident, that in the style of criticism applied to them, the public will look for something of a corresponding improvement. Practice and theory must advance *pari passu* ['with an equal step']. People begin to see that something more goes to the composition of a fine murder than two blockheads to kill and be killed – a knife – a purse – and a dark lane. Design, gentlemen, grouping, light and shade, poetry, sentiment, are now deemed indispensable to attempts of this nature. Mr Williams has exalted the ideal of murder to all of us; and to me, therefore, in particular, has deepened the arduousness of my task. Like Aeschylus or Milton in poetry, like Michael Angelo in painting, he has carried his art to a point of colossal sublimity; and, as Mr Wordsworth observes, has in a manner 'created the taste by which he is to be enjoyed.' To sketch the history of the art, and to examine its principles critically, now remains as a duty for the connoisseur, and for judges of quite another stamp from his Majesty's Judges of Assize.

Before I begin, let me say a word or two to certain prigs, who affect to speak of our society as if it were in some degree immoral in its tendency. Immoral! –God bless my soul, gentlemen, what is it that people mean? I am for morality, and always shall be, and for virtue and all that; and I do affirm, and always shall,(let what will come of it,) that murder is an improper line of conduct – highly improper; and I do not stick to assert, that any man who deals in murder, must have very incorrect ways of thinking, and truly inaccurate principles; and so far from aiding and abetting him by pointing out his victim's hiding- place, as a great moralist [\[1\]](#) of Germany declared it to be every good man's duty to do, I would subscribe one shilling and sixpence to have him apprehended, which is more by eighteen- pence than the most eminent moralists have subscribed for that purpose. But what then? Everything in this world has two handles. Murder, for instance, may be laid hold of by its moral handle, (as it generally is in the pulpit, and at the Old Bailey;) and *that* , I confess, is its weak side; or it may also be treated *aesthetically* , as the Germans call it, that is, in relation to good taste.

To illustrate this, I will urge the authority of three eminent persons, viz. S. T. Coleridge, Aristotle, and Mr Howship the surgeon. To begin with S.T.C. – One night, many years ago, I was drinking

tea with him in Berners' Street, (which, by the way, for a short street, has been uncommonly fruitful in men of genius.) Others were there besides myself; and amidst some carnal considerations of tea and toast, we were all imbibing a dissertation on Plotinus from the attic lips of S.T.C. Suddenly a cry arose of '*Fire – fire !*' –upon which all of us, master and disciples, Plato and οἱ περί τον Πλάτωνα [‘those around Plato’], rushed out, eager, for the spectacle. The fire was in Oxford Street, at a piano- forte maker's; and, as it promised to be a conflagration of merit, I was sorry that my engagements forced me away from Mr Coleridge's party before matters were come to a crisis. Some days after, meeting with my Platonic host, I reminded him of the case, and begged to know how that very promising exhibition had terminated. ‘Oh, sir,’ said he, ‘it turned out so ill, that we damned it unanimously.’ Now, does any man suppose that Mr Coleridge, –who, for all he is too fat to be a person of active virtue, is undoubtedly a worthy Christian, – that this good S.T.C., I say, was an incendiary, or capable of wishing any ill to the poor man and his piano- fortes (many of them, doubtless, with the additional keys)? On the contrary, I know him to be that sort of man that I durst stake my life upon it he would have worked an engine in a case of necessity, although rather of the fattest for such fiery trials of his virtue. But how stood the case? Virtue was in no request. On the arrival of the fire- engines, morality had devolved wholly on the insurance office. This being the case, he had a right to gratify his taste. He had left his tea. Was he to have nothing in return?

I contend that the most virtuous man, under the premises stated, was entitled to make a luxury of the fire, and to hiss it, as he would any other performance that raised expectations in the public mind, which afterwards it disappointed. Again, to cite another great authority, what says the Stagyrte? He (in the Fifth Book, I think it is, of his Metaphysics,) describes what he calls κλεπτήν τέλειον, i.e. *a perfect thief* ; and, as to Mr Howship, in a work of his on Indigestion, he makes no scruple to talk with admiration of a certain ulcer which he had seen, and which he styles ‘a beautiful ulcer.’ Now will any man pretend, that, abstractedly considered, a thief could appear to Aristotle a perfect character, or that Mr Howship could be enamoured of an ulcer? Aristotle, it is well known, was himself so very moral a character, that, not content with writing his Nichomachean Ethics, in one volume octavo, he

also wrote another system, called *Magna Moralia* , or Big Ethics. Now, it is impossible that a man who composes any ethics at all, big or little, should admire a thief *per se* , and, as to Mr Howship, it is well known that he makes war upon all ulcers; and, without suffering himself to be seduced by their charms, endeavours to banish them from the county of Middlesex. But the truth is, that, however objectionable *per se* , yet, relatively to others of their class, both a thief and an ulcer may have infinite degrees of merit. They are both imperfections, it is true; but to be imperfect being their essence, the very greatness of their imperfection becomes their perfection. *Spartam nactus es, hanc exorna* ['Sparta is yours: adorn it!']. A thief like Autolycus or Mr Barrington, and a grim phagedaenic ulcer, superbly defined, and running regularly through all its natural stages, may no less justly be regarded as ideals after *their* kind, than the most faultless moss-rose amongst flowers, in its progress from bud to 'bright consummate flower;' or, amongst human flowers, the most magnificent young female, apparelled in the pomp of womanhood. And thus not only the ideal of an inkstand may be imagined, (as Mr Coleridge demonstrated in his celebrated correspondence with Mr Blackwood,) in which, by the way, there is not so much, because an inkstand is a laudable sort of thing, and a valuable member of society; but even imperfection itself may have its ideal or perfect state.

Really, gentlemen, I beg pardon for so much philosophy at one time, and now, let me apply it. When a murder is in the paulo- post-futurum tense, and a rumour of it comes to our ears, by all means let us treat it morally. But suppose it over and done, and that you can say of it, Τετέλεισται ['it is completed'] or (in that adamantine molossus of Medea) εἰργασται ['it is done']; Suppose the poor murdered man to be out of his pain, and the rascal that did it off like a shot, nobody knows whither; suppose, lastly, that we have done our best, by putting out our legs to trip up the fellow in his flight, but all to no purpose – 'abiit, evasit' ['he has left, escaped'], &c. – why, then, I say, what's the use of any more virtue? Enough has been given to morality; now comes the turn of Taste and the Fine Arts. A sad thing it was, no doubt, very sad; but we can't mend it. Therefore let us make the best of a bad matter; and, as it is impossible to hammer anything out of it for moral purposes, let us treat it aesthetically, and see if it will turn to account in that way. Such is the logic of a sensible man, and what follows? We dry up

our tears, and have the satisfaction perhaps to discover, that a transaction, which, morally considered, was shocking, and without a leg to stand upon, when tried by principles of Taste, turns out to be a very meritorious performance. Thus all the world is pleased; the old proverb is justified, that it is an ill wind which blows nobody good; the amateur, from looking bilious and sulky, by too close an attention to virtue, begins to pick up his crumbs, and general hilarity prevails. Virtue has had her day; and henceforward, *Vertu* and Connoisseurship have leave to provide for themselves. Upon this principle, gentlemen, I propose to guide your studies, from Cain to Mr Thurtell. Through this great gallery of murder, therefore, together let us wander hand in hand, in delighted admiration, while I endeavour to point your attention to the objects of profitable criticism.

The first murder is familiar to you all. As the inventor of murder, and the father of the art, Cain must have been a man of first- rate genius. All the Cains were men of genius. Tubal Cain invented tubes, I think, or some such thing. But, whatever were the originality and genius of the artist, every art was then in its infancy; and the works must be criticised with a recollection of that fact. Even Tubal's work would probably be little approved at this day in Sheffield; and therefore of Cain (Cain senior, I mean,) it is no disparagement to say, that his performance was but so so. Milton, however, is supposed to have thought differently. By his way of relating the case, it should seem to have been rather a pet murder with him, for he retouches it with an apparent anxiety for its picturesque effect: –

Whereat he inly raged; and, as they talk'd,

Smote him into the midriff with a stone

That beat out life: he fell; and, deadly pale,

Groan'd out his soul *with gushing blood effus'd.*

Par. Lost, B. XI.

Upon this, Richardson the painter, who had an eye for effect, remarks as follows, in his Notes on Paradise Lost, p. 497: – ‘It has been thought,’ says he, ‘that Cain beat (as the common saying is,)

the breath out of his brother's body with a great stone; Milton gives in to this, with the addition, however, of a large wound.' In this place it was a judicious addition; for the rudeness of the weapon, unless raised and enriched by a warm, sanguinary colouring, has too much of the naked air of the savage school; as if the deed were perpetrated by a Polypheme without science, premeditation, or anything but a mutton bone. However, I am chiefly pleased with the improvement, as it implies that Milton was an amateur. As to Shakspeare, there never was a better; as his description of the murdered Duke of Gloucester, in Henry VI., of Duncan's, Banquo's, &c. sufficiently proves.

The foundation of the art having been once laid, it is pitiable to see how it slumbered without improvement for ages. In fact, I shall now be obliged to leap over all murders, sacred and profane, as utterly unworthy of notice, until long after the Christian era. Greece, even in the age of Pericles, produced no murder of the slightest merit; and Rome had too little originality of genius in any of the arts to succeed, where her model failed her. In fact, the Latin language sinks under the very idea of murder. 'The man was murdered;' – how will this sound in Latin? *Interfectus est, interemptus est* [he was killed, he was destroyed] –which simply expresses a homicide; and hence the Christian Latinity of the middle ages was obliged to introduce a new word, such as the feebleness of classic conceptions never ascended to. *Murdratus est*, says the sublimer dialect of Gothic ages. Meantime, the Jewish school of murder kept alive whatever was yet known in the art, and gradually transferred it to the Western World. Indeed the Jewish school was always respectable, even in the dark ages, as the case of Hugh of Lincoln shows, which was honoured with the approbation of Chaucer, on occasion of another performance from the same school, which he puts into the mouth of the Lady Abbess.

Recurring, however, for one moment to classical antiquity, I cannot but think that Catiline, Clodius, and some of that coterie, would have made first- rate artists; and it is on all accounts to be regretted, that the priggism of Cicero robbed his country of the only chance she had for distinction in this line. As the *sub-ject* of a murder, no person could have answered better than himself. Lord! how he would have howled with panic, if he had heard Cethegus under his bed. It would have been truly diverting to have listened to

him; and satisfied I am, gentlemen, that he would have preferred the *utile* [expediency] of creeping into a closet, or even into a *cloaca* [sewer], to the *honestum* [honourable thing] of facing the bold artist.

To come now to the dark ages – (by which we, that speak with precision, mean, *par excellence*, the tenth century, and the times immediately before and after) – these ages ought naturally to be favourable to the art of murder, as they were to church-architecture, to stained- glass, &c.; and, accordingly, about the latter end of this period, there arose a great character in our art, I mean the Old Man of the Mountains. He was a shining light, indeed, and I need not tell you, that the very word ‘assassin’ is deduced from him. So keen an amateur was he, that on one occasion, when his own life was attempted by a favourite assassin, he was so much pleased with the talent shown, that notwithstanding the failure of the artist, he created him a Duke upon the spot, with remainder to the female line, and settled a pension on him for three lives. Assassination is a branch of the art which demands a separate notice; and I shall devote an entire lecture to it. Meantime, I shall only observe how odd it is, that this branch of the art has flourished by fits. It never rains, but it pours. Our own age can boast of some fine specimens; and, about two centuries ago, there was a most brilliant constellation of murders in this class. I need hardly say, that I allude especially to those five splendid works, – the assassinations of William I. of Orange, of Henry IV. of France, of the Duke of Buckingham, (which you will find excellently described in the letters published by Mr Ellis, of the British Museum,) of Gustavus Adolphus, and of Wallenstein. The King of Sweden’s assassination, by the by, is doubted by many writers, Harte amongst others; but they are wrong. He was murdered; and I consider his murder unique in its excellence; for he was murdered at noon- day, and on the field of battle, – a feature of original conception, which occurs in no other work of art that I remember. Indeed, all of these assassinations may be studied with profit by the advanced connoisseur. They are all of them *exemplaria*, of which one may say, –

Nocturnâ versatâ manu, versate diurne;

[‘Let these be your models by day and by night’]

Especially *nocturnâ*.

In these assassinations of princes and statesmen, there is nothing to excite our wonder: important changes often depend on their deaths; and, from the eminence on which they stand, they are peculiarly exposed to the aim of every artist who happens to be possessed by the craving for scenical effect. But there is another class of assassinations, which has prevailed from an early period of the seventeenth century, that really *does* surprise me; I mean the assassination of philosophers. For, gentlemen, it is a fact, that every philosopher of eminence for the two last centuries has either been murdered, or, at the least, been very near it; insomuch, that if a man calls himself a philosopher, and never had his life attempted, rest assured there is nothing in him; and against Locke's philosophy in particular, I think it an unanswerable objection, (if we needed any) that, although he carried his throat about with him in this world for seventy- two years, no man ever condescended to cut it. As these cases of philosophers are not much known, and are generally good and well composed in their circumstances, I shall here read an excursus on that subject, chiefly by way of showing my own learning.

The first great philosopher of the seventeenth century (if we except Galileo,) was Des Cartes; and if ever one could say of a man that he was all but murdered – murdered within an inch, one must say it of him. The case was this, as reported by Baillet in his *Vie De M. Des Cartes* , tom. I. pp. 102– 3. In the year 1621, when Des Cartes might be about twenty- six years old, he was touring about as usual, (for he was as restless as a hyaena,) and, coming to the Elbe, either at Gluckstadt or at Hamburg, he took shipping for East Friezland: what he could want in East Friezland no man has ever discovered; and perhaps he took this into consideration himself; for, on reaching Embden, he resolved to sail instantly for *West* Friezland; and being very impatient of delay, he hired a bark, with a few mariners to navigate it. No sooner had he got out to sea than he made a pleasing discovery, viz. that he had shut himself up in a den of murderers. His crew, says M. Baillet, he soon found out to be ‘des scélérats,’ – not *amateurs* , gentlemen, as we are, but professional men – the height of whose ambition at that moment was to cut his throat. But the story is too pleasing to be abridged – I shall give it, therefore, accurately, from the French of his

biographer: 'M. Des Cartes had no company but that of his servant, with whom he was conversing in French. The sailors, who took him for a foreign merchant, rather than a cavalier, concluded that he must have money about him. Accordingly they came to a resolution by no means advantageous to his purse. There is this difference, however, between sea- robbers and the robbers in forests, that the latter may, without hazard, spare the lives of their victims; whereas the other cannot put a passenger on shore in such a case without running the risk of being apprehended. The crew of M. Des Cartes arranged their measures with a view to evade any danger of that sort. They observed that he was a stranger from a distance, without acquaintance in the country, and that nobody would take any trouble to inquire about him, in case he should never come to hand, (*quand il viendrait à man-quer .*)' Think, gentlemen, of these Friezland dogs discussing a philosopher as if he were a puncheon of rum. 'His temper, they remarked, was very mild and patient; and, judging from the gentleness of his deportment, and the courtesy with which he treated themselves, that he could be nothing more than some green young man, they concluded that they should have all the easier task in disposing of his life. They made no scruple to discuss the whole matter in his presence, as not supposing that he understood any other language than that in which he conversed with his servant; and the amount of their deliberation was – to murder him, then to throw him into the sea, and to divide his spoils.'

Excuse my laughing, gentlemen, but the fact is, I always *do* laugh when I think of this case – two things about it seem so droll. One is, the horrid panic or 'funk,' (as the men of Eton call it,) in which Des Cartes must have found himself upon hearing this regular drama sketched for his own death – funeral – succession and administration to his effects. But another thing, which seems to me still more funny about this affair is, that if these Friezland hounds had been 'game,' we should have no Cartesian philosophy; and how we could have done without *that*, considering the worlds of books it has produced, I leave to any respectable trunk- maker to declare.

However, to go on; spite of his enormous funk, Des Cartes showed fight, and by that means awed these Anti- Cartesian rascals. 'Finding,' says M. Baillet, 'that the matter was no joke, M. Des Cartes leaped upon his feet in a trice, assumed a stern countenance

that these cravens had never looked for, and addressing them in their own language, threatened to run them through on the spot if they dared to offer him any insult.' Certainly, gentlemen, this would have been an honour far above the merits of such inconsiderable rascals – to be spitted like larks upon a Cartesian sword; and therefore I am glad M. Des Cartes did not rob the gallows by executing his threat, especially as he could not possibly have brought his vessel to port, after he had murdered his crew; so that he must have continued to cruise for ever in the Zuyder Zee, and would probably have been mistaken by sailors for the *Flying Dutchman*, homeward-bound. 'The spirit which M. Des Cartes manifested,' says his biographer, 'had the effect of magic on these wretches. The suddenness of their consternation struck their minds with a confusion which blinded them to their advantage, and they conveyed him to his destination as peaceably as he could desire.'

Possibly, gentlemen, you may fancy that, on the model of Caesar's address to his poor ferryman, – '*Cae-sarem vehis et fortunas ejus*,' ['You carry Caesar and his fortunes'] – M. Des Cartes needed only to have said, – 'Dogs, you cannot cut my throat, for you carry Des Cartes and his philosophy,' and might safely have defied them to do their worst. A German emperor had the same notion, when, being cautioned to keep out of the way of a cannonading, he replied, 'Tut! man. Did you ever hear of a cannon- ball that killed an emperor?' As to an emperor I cannot say, but a less thing has sufficed to smash a philosopher; and the next great philosopher of Europe undoubtedly was murdered. This was Spinoza.

I know very well the common opinion about him is, that he died in his bed. Perhaps he did, but he was murdered for all that; and this I shall prove by a book published at Brussels, in the year 1731, entitled, *La Via de Spinoza; par M. Jean Colerus*, with many additions, from a MS. life, by one of his friends. Spinoza died on the 21st February 1677, being then little more than forty- four years old. This of itself looks suspicious; and M. Jean admits, that a certain expression in the MS. life of him would warrant the conclusion, 'que sa mort n'a pas été tout- à- fait naturelle.' Living in a damp country, and a sailor's country, like Holland, he may be thought to have indulged a good deal in grog, especially in punch, [2] which was then newly discovered. Undoubtedly he might have done so; but the fact is that he did not. M. Jean calls

him 'extrêmement sobre en son boire et en son manger.' And though some wild stories were afloat about his using the juice of mandragora (p. 140,) and opium, (p. 144,) yet neither of these articles appeared in his druggist's bill. Living, therefore, with such sobriety, how was it possible that he should die a natural death at forty- four? Hear his biographer's account: – 'Sunday morning the 21st of February, before it was church- time, Spinoza came down stairs and conversed with the master and mistress of the house.' At this time, therefore, perhaps ten o'clock on Sunday morning, you see that Spinoza was alive, and pretty well. But it seems 'he had summoned from Amsterdam a certain physician, whom,' says the biographer, 'I shall not otherwise point out to notice than by these two letters, L. M. This L. M. had directed the people of the house to purchase an ancient cock, and to have him boiled forthwith, in order that Spinoza might take some broth about noon, which in fact he did, and ate some of the *old cock* with a good appetite, after the landlord and his wife had returned from church.'

'In the afternoon, L. M. staid alone with Spinoza, the people of the house having returned to church; on coming out from which they learnt, with much surprise, that Spinoza had died about three o'clock, in the presence of L. M., who took his departure for Amsterdam the same evening, by the night- boat, without paying the least attention to the deceased. No doubt he was the readier to dispense with these duties, as he had possessed himself of a ducatoon and a small quantity of silver, together with a silver-hafted knife, and had absconded with his pillage.' Here you see, gentlemen, the murder is plain, and the manner of it. It was L. M. who murdered Spinoza for his money. Poor S. was an invalid, meagre, and weak: as no blood was observed, L. M., no doubt, threw him down and smothered him with pillows, –the poor man being already half suffocated by his infernal dinner. – But who was L. M.? It surely never could be Lindley Murray; for I saw him at York in 1825; and besides, I do not think he would do such a thing; at least, not to a brother grammarian: for you know, gentlemen, that Spinoza wrote a very respectable Hebrew grammar.

Hobbes, but why, or on what principle, I never could understand, was not murdered. This was a capital oversight of the professional men in the seventeenth century; because in every light he was a fine subject for murder, except, indeed, that he was lean

and skinny; for I can prove that he had money, and (what is very funny,) he had no right to make the least resistance; for, according to himself, irresistible power creates the very highest species of right, so that it is rebellion of the blackest die to refuse to be murdered, when a competent force appears to murder you. However, gentlemen, though he was not murdered, I am happy to assure you that (by his own account,) he was three times very near being murdered. – The first time was in the spring of 1640, when he pretends to have circulated a little MS. on the king's behalf, against the Parliament; he never could produce this MS., by the by; but he says that, 'had not his Majesty dissolved the Parliament,' (in May,) 'it had brought him into danger of his life.' Dissolving the Parliament, however, was of no use; for, in November of the same year, the Long Parliament assembled, and Hobbes, a second time, fearing he should be murdered, ran away to France. This looks like the madness of John Dennis, who thought that Louis XIV. would never make peace with Queen Anne, unless he were given up to his vengeance; and actually ran away from the sea-coast in that belief. In France, Hobbes managed to take care of his throat pretty well for ten years; but at the end of that time, by way of paying court to Cromwell, he published his *Leviathan*. The old coward now began to 'funk' horribly for the third time; he fancied the swords of the cavaliers were constantly at his throat, recollecting how they had served the Parliament ambassadors at the Hague and Madrid. 'Tum,' says he, in his dog-Latin life of himself,

Tum venit in mentem mihi Dorislaus et Ascham;

Tanquam proscripto terror ubique aderat.

['Then I began thinking about Dorislaus and Ascham

Terror was all around, as for someone condemned to death']

And accordingly he ran home to England. Now, certainly, it is very true that a man deserved a cudgelling for writing *Leviathan*; and two or three cudgellings for writing a pentameter ending so villainously as – 'terror ubique aderat!' But no man ever thought him worthy of any thing beyond cudgelling. And, in fact, the whole

story is a bounce of his own. For, in a most abusive letter which he wrote 'to a learned person,' (meaning Wallis the mathematician,) he gives quite another account of the matter, and says(p. 8.), he ran home 'because he would not trust his safety with the French clergy;' insinuating that he was likely to be murdered for his religion, which would have been a high joke indeed – Tom's being brought to the stake for religion.

Bounce or not bounce, however, certain it is, that Hobbes, to the end of his life, feared that somebody would murder him. This is proved by the story I am going to tell you: it is not from a manuscript, but, (as Mr Coleridge says), it is as good as manuscript; for it comes from a book now entirely forgotten, viz. – 'The Creed of Mr Hobbes Examined; in a Conference between him and a Student in Divinity,'(published about ten years before Hobbes's death.) The book is anonymous, but it was written by Tennison, the same who, about thirty years after, succeeded Tillotson as Archbishop of Canterbury. The introductory anecdote is as follows: – 'A certain divine, it seems, (no doubt Tennison himself,) took an annual tour of one month to different parts of the island. In one of these excursions (1670) he visited the Peak in Derbyshire, partly in consequence of Hobbes's description of it. Being in that neighbourhood, he could not but pay a visit to Buxton; and at the very moment of his arrival, he was fortunate enough to find a party of gentlemen dismounting at the inn door, amongst whom was a long thin fellow, who turned out to be no less a person than Mr Hobbes, who probably had ridden over from Chatsworth. Meeting so great a lion, – a tourist, in search of the picturesque, could do no less than present himself in the character of bore. And luckily for this scheme, two of Mr Hobbes's companions were suddenly summoned away by express; so that, for the rest of his stay at Buxton, he had Leviathan entirely to himself, and had the honour of bowsing with him in the evening. Hobbes, it seems, at first showed a good deal of stiffness, for he was shy of divines; but this wore off, and he became very sociable and funny, and they agreed to go into the bath together.' How Tennison could venture to gambol in the same water with Leviathan, I cannot explain; but so it was: they frolicked about like two dolphins, though Hobbes must have been as old as the hills; and 'in those intervals wherein they abstained from swimming and plunging themselves,' (i.e. diving) 'they discoursed of many things relating to the Baths of the Ancients, and

the Origine of Springs. When they had in this manner passed away an hour, they stepped out of the bath; and, having dried and cloathed themselves, they sate down in expectation of such a supper as the place afforded; designing to refresh themselves like the *Deipnos-ophilae*, and rather to reason than to drink profoundly. But in this innocent intention they were interrupted by the disturbance arising from a little quarrel, in which some of the ruder people in the house were for a short time engaged. At this Mr Hobbes seemed much concerned, though he was at some distance from the persons.’ – And why was he concerned, gentlemen? No doubt you fancy, from some benign and disinterested love of peace and harmony, worthy of an old man and a philosopher. But listen – ‘For a while he was not composed, but related it once or twice as to himself, with a low and careful tone, how Sextus Roscius was murdered after supper by the Balneae Palatinae. Of such general extent is that remark of Cicero, in relation to Epicurus the Atheist, of whom he observed that he of all men dreaded most those things which he contemned – Death and the Gods.’ – Merely because it was supper-time, and in the neighbourhood of a bath, Mr Hobbes must have the fate of Sextus Roscius. What logic was there in this, unless to a man who was always dreaming of murder? – Here was Leviathan, no longer afraid of the daggers of English cavaliers or French clergy, but ‘frightened from his propriety’ by a row in an ale-house between some honest clod-hoppers of Derbyshire, whom his own gaunt scare-crow of a person that belonged to quite another century, would have frightened out of their wits.

Malebranche, it will give you pleasure to hear, was murdered. The man who murdered him is well known: it was Bishop Berkeley. The story is familiar, though hitherto not put in a proper light. Berkeley, when a young man, went to Paris and called on Père Malebranche. He found him in his cell cooking. Cooks have ever been a *genus irritabile*; authors still more so: Malebranche was both: a dispute arose; the old Father, warm already, became warmer; culinary and metaphysical irritations united to derange his liver: he took to his bed, and died. Such is the common version of the story: ‘So the whole ear of Denmark is abused.’ – The fact is, that the matter was hushed up, out of consideration for Berkeley, who (as Pope remarked) had ‘every virtue under heaven:’ else it was well known that Berkeley, feeling himself nettled by the waspishness of the old Frenchman, squared at him; a *turn-up* was the consequence:

Malebranche was floored in the first round; the conceit was wholly taken out of him; and he would perhaps have given in; but Berkeley's blood was now up, and he insisted on the old Frenchman's retracting his doctrine of Occasional Causes. The vanity of the man was too great for this; and he fell a sacrifice to the impetuosity of Irish youth, combined with his own absurd obstinacy.

Leibnitz, being every way superior to Malebranche, one might, *a fortiori*, have counted on *his* being murdered; which, however, was not the case. I believe he was nettled at this neglect, and felt himself insulted by the security in which he passed his days. In no other way can I explain his conduct at the latter end of his life, when he chose to grow very avaricious, and to hoard up large sums of gold, which he kept in his own house. This was at Vienna, where he died; and letters are still in existence, describing the immeasurable anxiety which he entertained for his throat. Still his ambition, for being *attempted* at least, was so great, that he would not forego the danger. A late English pedagogue, of Birmingham manufacture, viz. Dr Parr, took a more selfish course, under the same circumstances. He had amassed a considerable quantity of gold and silver plate, which was for some time deposited in his bedroom at his parsonage house, Hatton. But growing every day more afraid of being murdered, which he knew that he could not stand, (and to which, indeed, he never had the slightest pretension,) he transferred the whole to the Hatton blacksmith; conceiving, no doubt, that the murder of a blacksmith would fall more lightly on the *salus reipublicae* [the safety of the republic], than that of a pedagogue. But I have heard this greatly disputed; and it seems now generally agreed, that one good horse-shoe is worth about 2¼ Spital sermons.

As Leibnitz, though not murdered, may be said to have died, partly of the fear that he should be murdered, and partly of vexation that he was not, – Kant, on the other hand – who had no ambition in that way – had a narrower escape from a murderer than any man we read of, except Des Cartes. So absurdly does Fortune throw about her favours! The case is told, I think, in an anonymous life of this very great man. For health's sake, Kant imposed upon himself, at one time, a walk of six miles every day along a highroad. This fact becoming known to a man who had his private reasons for

committing murder, at the third milestone from Königsberg, he waited for his 'intended,' who came up to time as duly as a mailcoach. But for an accident, Kant was a dead man. However, on considerations of 'morality,' it happened that the murderer preferred a little child, whom he saw playing in the road, to the old transcendentalist: this child he murdered; and thus it happened that Kant escaped. Such is the German account of the matter; but my opinion is – that the murderer was an amateur, who felt how little would be gained to the cause of good taste by murdering an old, arid, and adust metaphysician; there was no room for display, as the man could not possibly look more like a mummy when dead, than he had done alive.

Thus, gentlemen, I have traced the connexion between philosophy and our art, until insensibly I find that I have wandered into our own era. This I shall not take any pains to characterise apart from that which preceded it, for, in fact, they have no distinct character. The 17th and 18th centuries, together with so much of the 19th as we have yet seen, jointly compose the Augustan age of murder. The finest work of the 17th century is, unquestionably, the murder of Sir Edmondbury Godfrey, which has my entire approbation. At the same time, it must be observed, that the quantity of murder was not great in this century, at least amongst our own artists; which, perhaps, is attributable to the want of enlightened patronage. *Sint Maecenates, non deerunt, Flacce, Marones* ['Let there be a patron like Maecenus, Flaccus, and your lands will give you a poet like Virgil.'] Consulting Grant's 'Observations on the Bills of Mortality,' (4th edition, Oxford, 1665,) I find, that out of 229,250, who died in London during one period of twenty years in the 17th century, not more than eighty- six were murdered; that is, about 4 three- tenths per annum. A small number this, gentlemen, to found an academy upon; and certainly, where the quantity is so small, we have a right to expect that the quality should be first-rate. Perhaps it was; yet, still I am of opinion that the best artist in this century was not equal to the best in that which followed. For instance, however praiseworthy the case of Sir Edmondbury Godfrey may be (and nobody can be more sensible of its merits than I am,) still I cannot consent to place it on a level with that Mrs Ruscombe of Bristol, either as to originality of design, or boldness and breadth of style. This good lady's murder took place early in the reign of George III. – a reign which was notoriously favourable

to the arts generally. She lived in College Green, with a single maid-servant, neither of them having any pretension to the notice of history but what they derived from the great artist whose workmanship I am recording. One fine morning, when all Bristol was alive and in motion, some suspicion arising, the neighbours forced an entrance into the house, and found Mrs Ruscombe murdered in her bed- room, and the servant murdered on the stairs: this was at noon; and, not more than two hours before, both mistress and servant had been seen alive. To the best of my remembrance, this was in 1764; upwards of sixty years, therefore, have now elapsed, and yet the artist is still undiscovered. The suspicions of posterity have settled upon two pretenders – a baker and a chimney- sweeper. But posterity is wrong; no unpractised artist could have conceived so bold an idea as that of a noon- day murder in the heart of a great city. It was no obscure baker, gentlemen, or anonymous chimney- sweeper, be assured, that executed this work. I know who it was. (*Here there was a general buzz, which at length broke out into open applause; upon which the lecturer blushed, and went on with much earnest-ness.*) For Heaven's sake, gentlemen, do not mistake me; it was not I that did it. I have not the vanity to think myself equal to any such achievement; be assured that you greatly overrate my poor talents; Mrs Ruscombe's affair was far beyond my slender abilities. But I came to know who the artist was, from a celebrated surgeon, who assisted at his dissection. This gentleman had a private museum in the way of his profession, one corner of which was occupied by a cast from a man of remarkably fine proportions.

'That,' said the surgeon, 'is a cast from the celebrated Lancashire highwayman, who concealed his profession for some time from his neighbours, by drawing woollen stockings over his horse's legs, and in that way muffling the clatter which he must else have made in riding up a flagged alley that led to his stable. At the time of his execution for highway robbery, I was studying under Cruickshank: and the man's figure was so uncommonly fine, that no money or exertion was spared to get into possession of him with the least possible delay. By the connivance of the under- sheriff he was cut down within the legal time, and instantly put into a chaise and four; so that, when he reached Cruickshank's, he was positively not dead. Mr —, a young student at that time, had the honour of giving him the *coup de grace* – and finishing the sentence of the law.' This

remarkable anecdote, which seemed to imply that all the gentlemen in the dissecting- room were amateurs of our class, struck me a good deal; and I was repeating it one day to a Lancashire lady, who thereupon informed me, that she had herself lived in the neighbourhood of that highwayman, and well remembered two circumstances, which combined in the opinion of all his neighbours, to fix upon him the credit of Mrs Ruscombe's affair. One was, the fact of his absence for a whole fortnight at the period of that murder: the other, that, within a very little time after, the neighbourhood of this highwayman was deluged with dollars: now Mrs Ruscombe was known to have hoarded about two thousand of that coin. Be the artist, however, who he might, the affair remains a durable monument of his genius; for such was the impression of awe, and the sense of power left behind, by the strength of conception manifested in this murder, that no tenant (as I was told in 1810) had been found up to that time for Mrs Ruscombe's house.

But, whilst I thus eulogize the Ruscombian case, let me not be supposed to overlook the many other specimens of extraordinary merit spread over the face of this century. Such cases, indeed, as that of Miss Bland, or of Captain Donnellan, and Sir Theophilus Boughton, shall never have any countenance from me. Fie on these dealers in poison, say I: can they not keep to the old honest way of cutting throats, without introducing such abominable innovations from Italy? I consider all these poisoning cases, compared with the legitimate style, as no better than wax- work by the side of sculpture, or a lithographic print by the side of a fine Volpato. But, dismissing these, there remain many excellent works of art in a pure style, such as nobody need be ashamed to own, as every candid connoisseur will admit. *Candid*, observe, I say; for great allowances must be made in these cases; no artist can ever be sure of carrying through his own fine preconception. Awkward disturbances will arise; people will not submit to have their throats cut quietly; they will run, they will kick, they will bite; and, whilst the portrait painter often has to complain of too much torpor in his subject, the artist, in our line, is generally embarrassed by too much animation. At the same time, however disagreeable to the artist, this tendency in murder to excite and irritate the subject, is certainly one of its advantages to the world in general, which we ought not to overlook, since it favours the developement of latent talent. Jeremy Taylor notices with admiration, the extraordinary leaps which

people will take under the influence of fear. There was a striking instance of this in the recent case of the M'Keands; the boy cleared a height, such as he will never clear again to his dying day. Talents also of the most brilliant description for thumping, and indeed for all the gymnastic exercises, have sometimes been developed by the panic which accompanies our artists; talents else buried and hid under a bushel to the possessors, as much as to their friends. I remember an interesting illustration of this fact, in a case which I learned in Germany.

Riding one day in the neighbourhood of Munich, I overtook a distinguished amateur of our society, whose name I shall conceal. This gentleman informed me that, finding himself wearied with the frigid pleasures (so he called them) of mere amateurship, he had quitted England for the continent – meaning to practise a little professionally. For this purpose he resorted to Germany, conceiving the police in that part of Europe to be more heavy and drowsy than elsewhere. His *debut* as a practitioner took place at Mannheim; and, knowing me to be a brother amateur, he freely communicated the whole of his maiden adventure. ‘Opposite to my lodging,’ said he, ‘lived a baker: he was somewhat of a miser, and lived quite alone. Whether it were his great expanse of chalky face, or what else, I know not – but the fact was, I “fancied” him, and resolved to commence business upon his throat, which by the way he always carried bare – a fashion which is very irritating to my desires. Precisely at eight o’clock in the evening, I observed that he regularly shut up his windows. One night I watched him when thus engaged – bolted in after him – locked the door – and, addressing him with great suavity, acquainted him with the nature of my errand; at the same time advising him to make no resistance, which would be mutually unpleasant. So saying, I drew out my tools; and was proceeding to operate. But at this spectacle, the baker, who seemed to have been struck by catalepsy at my first announce, awoke into tremendous agitation. “I will *not* be murdered!” he shrieked aloud; “what for will I lose my precious throat?” – “What for?” said I; “if for no other reason, for this – that you put alum into your bread. But no matter, alum or no alum, (for I was resolved to forestall any argument on that point) know that I am a virtuoso in the art of murder – am desirous of improving myself in its details – and am enamoured of your vast surface of throat, to which I am determined to be a customer.” “Is it so?” said he, “but I’ll find you

custom in another line;" and so saying, he threw himself into a boxing attitude. The very idea of his boxing struck me as ludicrous. It is true, a London baker had distinguished himself in the ring, and became known to fame under the title of the Master of the Rolls; but he was young and unspoiled: whereas this man was a monstrous feather-bed in person, fifty years old, and totally out of condition. Spite of all this, however, and contending against me, who am a master in the art, he made so desperate a defence, that many times I feared he might turn the tables upon me; and that I, an amateur, might be murdered by a rascally baker. What a situation! Minds of sensibility will sympathize with my anxiety. How severe it was, you may understand by this, that for the first 13 rounds the baker had the advantage. Round the 14th, I received a blow on the right eye, which closed it up; in the end, I believe, this was my salvation: for the anger it roused in me was so great that, in this and every one of the three following rounds, I floored the baker.

'Round 18th. The baker came up piping, and manifestly the worse for wear. His geometrical exploits in the four last rounds had done him no good. However, he showed some skill in stopping a message which I was sending to his cadaverous mug; in delivering which, my foot slipped, and I went down.

'Round 19th. Surveying the baker, I became ashamed of having been so much bothered by a shapeless mass of dough; and I went in fiercely, and administered some severe punishment. A rally took place – both went down – Baker undermost – ten to three on Amateur.

'Round 20th. – The baker jumped up with surprising agility; indeed, he managed his pins capitally, and fought wonderfully, considering that he was drenched in perspiration; but the shine was now taken out of him, and his game was the mere effect of panic. It was now clear that he could not last much longer. In the course of this round we tried the weaving system, in which I had greatly the advantage, and hit him repeatedly on the conk. My reason for this was, that his conk was covered with carbuncles; and I thought I should vex him by taking such liberties with his conk, which in fact I did.

'The three next rounds, the master of the rolls staggered about like a cow on the ice. Seeing how matters stood, in round 24th I

whispered something into his ear, which sent him down like a shot. It was nothing more than my private opinion of the value of his throat at an annuity office. This little confidential whisper affected him greatly; the very perspiration was frozen on his face, and for the next two rounds I had it all my own way. And when I called *time* for the twenty- seventh round, he lay like a log on the floor.'

After which, said I to the amateur, 'It may be presumed that you accomplished your purpose.' – 'You are right,' said he mildly, 'I did; and a great satisfaction, you know, it was to my mind, for by this means I killed two birds with one stone;' meaning that he had both thumped the baker and murdered him. Now, for the life of me, I could not see *that* ; for, on the contrary, to my mind it appeared that he had taken two stones to kill one bird, having been obliged to take the conceit out of him first with his fists, and then with his tools. But no matter for his logic. The moral of his story was good, for it showed what an astonishing stimulus to latent talent is contained in any reasonable prospect of being murdered. A pursy, unwieldy, half cataleptic baker of Mannheim had absolutely fought six- and- twenty rounds with an accomplished English boxer merely upon this inspiration; so greatly was natural genius exalted and sublimed by the genial presence of his murderer.

Really, gentlemen, when one hears of such things as these, it becomes a duty, perhaps, a little to soften that extreme asperity with which most men speak of murder. To hear people talk, you would suppose that all the disadvantages and inconveniences were on the side of being murdered, and that there were none at all in *not* being murdered. But considerate men think otherwise. 'Certainly,' says Jer. Taylor, 'it is a less temporal evil to fall by the rudeness of a sword than the violence of a fever: and the axe' (to which he might have added the ship- carpenter's mallet and the crow- bar) 'a much less affliction than a strangury.' Very true; the Bishop talks like a wise man and an amateur, as he is; and another great philosopher, Marcus Aurelius, was equally above the vulgar prejudices on this subject. He declares it to be one of 'the noblest functions of reason to know whether it is time to walk out of the world or not.' (Book III. Collers' Translation.) No sort of knowledge being rarer than this, surely *that* man must be a most philanthropic character, who undertakes to instruct people in this branch of knowledge gratis, and at no little hazard to himself. All this,

however, I throw out only in the way of speculation to future moralists; declaring in the meantime my own private conviction, that very few men commit murder upon philanthropic or patriotic principles, and repeating what I have already said once at least – that, as to the majority of murderers, they are very incorrect characters.

With respect to Williams's murders, the sublimest and most entire in their excellence that ever were committed, I shall not allow myself to speak incidentally. Nothing less than an entire lecture, or even an entire course of lectures, would suffice to expound their merits. But one curious fact, connected with his case, I shall mention, because it seems to imply that the blaze of his genius absolutely dazzled the eye of criminal justice. You all remember, I doubt not, that the instruments with which he executed his first great work (the murder of the Marrs), were a ship-carpenter's mallet and a knife. Now the mallet belonged to an old Swede, one John Petersen, and bore his initials. This instrument Williams left behind him, in Marr's house, and it fell into the hands of the Magistrates. Now, gentlemen, it is a fact that the publication of this circumstance of the initials led immediately to the apprehension of Williams, and, if made earlier, would have prevented his second great work, (the murder of the Williamsons,) which took place precisely twelve days after. But the Magistrates kept back this fact from the public for the entire twelve days, and until that second work was accomplished. That finished, they published it, apparently feeling that Williams had now done enough for his fame, and that his glory was at length placed beyond the reach of accident.

As to Mr Thurtell's case, I know not what to say. Naturally, I have every disposition to think highly of my predecessor in the chair of this society; and I acknowledge that his lectures were unexceptionable. But, speaking ingenuously, I do really think that his principal performance, as an artist, has been much overrated. I admit that at first I was myself carried away by the general enthusiasm. On the morning when the murder was made known in London, there was the fullest meeting of amateurs that I have ever known since the days of Williams; old bed-ridden connoisseurs, who had got into a peevish way of sneering and complaining 'that there was nothing doing,' now hobbled down to our club-room:

such hilarity, such benign expression of general satisfaction, I have rarely witnessed. On every side you saw people shaking hands, congratulating each other, and forming dinner- parties for the evening; and nothing was to be heard but triumphant challenges of – ‘Well! will *this* do?’ ‘Is *this* the right thing?’ ‘Are you satisfied at last?’ But, in the midst of this, I remember we all grew silent on hearing the old cynical amateur, L. S——, that *laudator temporis acti* [a praiser of time past], stumping along with his wooden leg; he entered the room with his usual scowl, and, as he advanced, he continued to growl and stutter the whole way – ‘Not an original idea in the whole piece – mere plagiarism, – base plagiarism from hints that I threw out! Besides, his style is as hard as Albert Durer, and as coarse as Fuseli.’ Many thought that this was mere jealousy, and general waspishness; but I confess that, when the first glow of enthusiasm had subsided, I have found most judicious critics to agree that there was something *falsetto* in the style of Thurtell. The fact is, he was a member of our society, which naturally gave a friendly bias to our judgments; and his person was universally familiar to the cockneys, which gave him, with the whole London public, a temporary popularity, that his pretensions are not capable of supporting; for *opinionum commenta delet dies, naturae judicia confirmat* [‘Time erases the fictions of opinion, but it confirms the judgements of nature’]. –There was, however, an unfinished design of Thurtell’s for the murder of a man with a pair of dumb- bells, which I admired greatly; it was a mere outline, that he never completed; but to my mind it seemed every way superior to his chief work. I remember that there was great regret expressed by some amateurs that this sketch should have been left in an unfinished state: but there I cannot agree with them; for the fragments and first bold outlines of original artists have often a felicity about them which is apt to vanish in the management of the details.

The case of the M’Keands I consider far beyond the vaunted performance of Thurtell, – indeed above all praise; and bearing that relation, in fact, to the immortal works of Williams, which the Aeneid bears to the Iliad.

But it is now time that I should say a few words about the principles of murder, not with a view to regulate your practice, but your judgment: as to old women, and the mob of newspaper

readers, they are pleased with anything, provided it is bloody enough. But the mind of sensibility requires something more. First, then, let us speak of the kind of person who is adapted to the purpose of the murderer; *secondly* , of the place where; *thirdly* , of the time when, and other little circumstances.

As to the person, I suppose it is evident that he ought to be a good man; because, if he were not, he might himself, by possibility, be contemplating murder at the very time; and such ‘diamond- cut-diamond’ tussles, though pleasant enough where nothing better is stirring, are really not what a critic can allow himself to call murders. I could mention some people (I name no names) who have been murdered by other people in a dark lane; and so far all seemed correct enough; but, on looking farther into the matter, the public have become aware that the murdered party was himself, at the moment, planning to rob his murderer, at the least, and possibly to murder him, if he had been strong enough. Whenever that is the case, or may be thought to be the case, farewell to all the genuine effects of the art. For the final purpose of murder, considered as a fine art, is precisely the same as that of Tragedy, in Aristotle’s account of it, viz. ‘to cleanse the heart by means of pity and terror.’ Now, terror there may be, but how can there be any pity for one tiger destroyed by another tiger?

It is also evident that the person selected ought not to be a public character. For instance, no judicious artist would have attempted to murder Abraham Newland. For the case was this: everybody read so much about Abraham Newland, and so few people ever saw him, that there was a fixed belief that he was an abstract idea. And I remember that once, when I happened to mention that I had dined at a coffee- house in company with Abraham Newland, everybody looked scornfully at me, as though I had pretended to have played at billiards with Prester John, or to have had an affair of honour with the Pope. And, by the way, the Pope would be a very improper person to murder: for he has such a virtual ubiquity as the Father of Christendom, and, like the cuckoo, is so often heard but never seen, that I suspect most people regard *him* also as an abstract idea. Where, indeed, a public character is in the habit of giving dinners, ‘with every delicacy of the season,’ the case is very different: every person is satisfied that *he* is no abstract idea; and, therefore, there can be no impropriety in murdering him;

only that his murder will fall into the class of assassinations, which I have not yet treated.

Thirdly , The subject chosen ought to be in good health: for it is absolutely barbarous to murder a sick person, who is usually quite unable to bear it. On this principle, no Cockney ought to be chosen who is above twenty- five, for after that age he is sure to be dyspeptic. Or at least, if a man will hunt in that warren, he ought to murder a couple at one time; if the Cockneys chosen should be tailors, he will of course think it his duty, on the old established equation, to murder eighteen – And, here, in this attention to the comfort of sick people, you will observe the usual effect of a fine art to soften and refine the feelings. The world in general, gentlemen, are very bloody- minded; and all they want in a murder is a copious effusion of blood; gaudy display in this point is enough for *them* . But the enlightened connoisseur is more refined in his taste; and from our art, as from all the other liberal arts when thoroughly cultivated, the result is – to improve and to humanize the heart; so true is it, that –

– Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes,

Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.

[‘A careful study of the liberal arts refines

manners and prevents them from being savage’]

A philosophic friend, well- known for his philanthropy and general benignity, suggests that the subject chosen ought also to have a family of young children wholly dependent on his exertions, by way of deepening the pathos. And, undoubtedly, this is a judicious caution. Yet I would not insist too keenly on this condition. Severe good taste unquestionably demands it; but still, where the man was otherwise unobjectionable in point of morals and health, I would not look with too curious a jealousy to a restriction which might have the effect of narrowing the artist’s sphere.

So much for the person. As to the time, the place, and the tools, I have many things to say, which at present I have no room for. The good sense of the practitioner has usually directed him to night and

privacy. Yet there have not been wanting cases where this rule was departed from with excellent effect. In respect to time, Mrs Ruscombe's case is a beautiful exception, which I have already noticed; and in respect both to time and place, there is a fine exception in the Annals of Edinburgh, (year 1805), familiar to every child in Edinburgh, but which has unaccountably been defrauded of its due portion of fame amongst English amateurs. The case I mean is that of a porter to one of the Banks, who was murdered whilst carrying a bag of money, in broad daylight, on turning out of the High Street, one of the most public streets in Europe, and the murderer is to this hour undiscovered.

Sed fugit interea, fugit irreparabile tempus,

Singula dum capti circumvectamur amore.

['But meanwhile time is flying, flying beyond recall,
while we linger, captivated by our love of detail']

And now, gentlemen, in conclusion, let me again solemnly disclaim all pretensions on my own part to the character of a professional man. I never attempted any murder in my life, except in the year 1801, upon the body of a tom- cat; and *that* turned out differently from my intention. My purpose, I own, was downright murder. 'Semper ego auditor tantum?' said I, 'nunquamne reponam?' ['Am I always to be a listener? And never get a word in?'] And I went down stairs in search of Tom at one o'clock on a dark night, with the 'animus,' and no doubt with the fiendish looks, of a murderer. But when I found him, he was in the act of plundering the pantry of bread and other things. Now this gave a new turn to the affair; for the time being one of general scarcity, when even Christians were reduced to the use of potato- bread, rice- bread, and all sorts of things, it was downright treason in a tom- cat to be wasting good wheaten- bread in the way he was doing. It instantly became a patriotic duty to put him to death; and as I raised aloft and shook the glittering steel, I fancied myself rising like Brutus, effulgent from a crowd of patriots, and, as I stabbed him, I

called aloud on Tully's name,

And bade the father of his country hail!

Since then, what wandering thoughts I may have had of attempting the life of an ancient ewe, of a superannuated hen, and such 'small deer,' are locked up in the secrets of my own breast; but for the higher departments of the art, I confess myself to be utterly unfit. My ambition does not rise so high. No, gentlemen, in the words of Horace,

———fungar vice cotis, acutum

Reddere quae ferrum valet, exsors ipsa secandi.

[‘I’ll play the part of a whetstone, which sharpens iron, but is itself unable to cut.’]

[1] Kant – who carried his demands of unconditional veracity to so extravagant a length as to affirm, that, if a man were to see an innocent person escape from a murderer, it would be his duty, on being questioned by the murderer, to tell the truth, and to point out the retreat of the innocent person, under any certainty of causing murder. Lest this doctrine should be supposed to have escaped him in any heat of dispute, on being taxed with it by a celebrated French writer, he solemnly reaffirmed it, with his reasons.

[2] ‘June 1, 1675. – Drinke part of 3 boules of punch, (a liquor very strange to me,)’ says the Rev. Mr Henry Teonge, in his Diary lately published. In a note on this passage, a reference is made to Fryer’s *Travels to the East Indies*, 1672, who speaks of ‘that enervating liquor called *Paunch*, (which is Indostan for five,) from five ingredients.’ Made thus, it seems the medical men called it *Diapente*; if with four only, *Diatessaron*. No doubt, it was its Evangelical name that recommended it to the Rev. Mr Teonge.



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简·奥斯汀

夏星 / 译

P E N G U I N



C L A S S

漂亮的卡桑德拉

企鹅经典：小黑书 第三辑

[英]简·奥斯汀/著

夏星/译



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The Beautifull Cassandra

Selected from Love and Freindship and Other Youthful Writings, edited by Christine Alexander. This

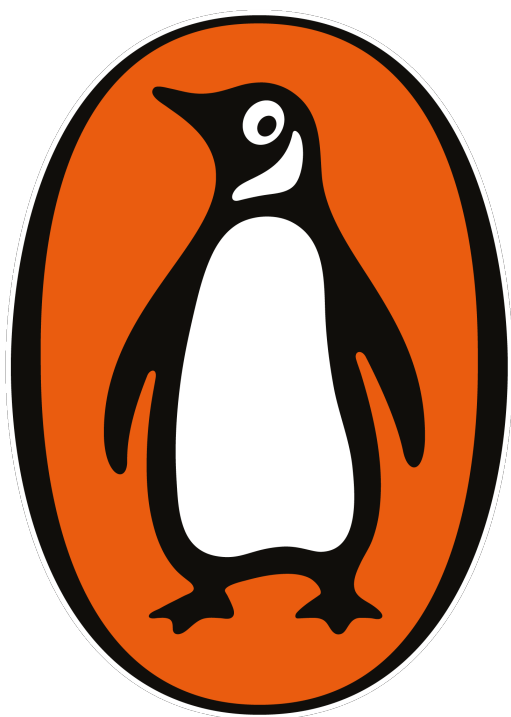
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可是却没法管住
自己不喝醉酒……”



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杰克与爱丽丝

谨将本篇小说敬献给在陛下之舰坚毅号上服役的海军候补少尉弗朗西斯·威廉·奥斯汀 [1] 先生。

他恭顺卑微的仆人

作者敬上

—

曾几何时，约翰逊先生还不到五十三岁；那之后又过了十二个来月，他就五十四岁了。这事让他欢喜得紧，于是他决定，下一回过生日时他要举行一次化装舞会，邀请孩子们和朋友们来参加，以兹庆祝。因此，在他跨进人生第五十五个年头的这天，庆生化装舞会的入场券便送到了他那些邻居的手中。在他住的这个地方，和他相熟的人并不算多，统共也只有威廉斯夫人、琼斯先生和琼斯太太、查尔斯·亚当斯以及辛普森家三位小姐。住在帕米迪德尔 [2] 的就是这么几位，来参加化装舞会的也是这么几位。

在开始讲述这天晚上发生的事情之前，我应当向读者说一说，您刚刚认识的这些人物有着怎样的尊容，化装舞会上的那些角色又是个什么模样。

琼斯先生和太太的身材都很高大，性情也有些暴躁，不过，就其他方面而言，他俩倒还称得上平易近人、彬彬有礼。查尔斯·亚当斯是个和蔼可亲的小伙子，他不仅多才多艺，长相更是迷人；他的美貌如此耀眼，只有老鹰才敢直视他的面孔。

辛普森家大小姐的模样、举止和性格都很讨喜，唯一的毛病就是野心太大。她的二妹苏姬为人善妒，阴险恶毒，又矮又胖，很难相处。小妹塞西莉亚的相貌倒是无可挑剔，可惜太会装模作样，所以没人喜欢她。

集一切美德于一身的威廉斯夫人是个寡妇，她仁慈而坦率，慷慨且真诚；她虔诚又善良，敬神又可亲；她优雅可爱，斯文风趣。风韵犹存的她继承了丈夫留下的丰厚遗产。

约翰逊这一家人感情很好，尽管有一点贪杯和嗜赌，但他们优点也是不少的。

在约翰逊宅邸那间陈设讲究的起居室里，这么一帮子人齐聚一堂。在一众戴着女性面具的人当中，最引人注目的当数一位苏丹女眷的窈窕身姿。而在男性当中，倾倒众生的则是一个戴着太阳面具的人，他两眼射出的光芒正如阳光一般灿烂，且有过之而无不及，炽烈无比，谁也不敢冒险靠近这双眼睛半英里 [3] 之内；于是乎，在这间不过半英里宽、3/4英里长的屋子里，最好的位置便被他一人所独占。这位先生最后终于发现，自己的光芒太过刺眼，给众人带来极大不便，逼得他们只能一窝蜂挤在房间一角，于是他把眼睛半闭起来，人们才看出原来这是查尔斯·亚当斯，穿着他那件素色的绿外套，什么面具都没戴。

大家的惊讶之情稍稍平息之后，注意力却又被两个兴冲冲往前赶的面具客给吸引过去；这两人的个子都很高，除此之外还有不少其他优点。“这两位，”睿智的查尔斯说道，“是琼斯先生和琼斯太太。”事实也的确如此。

谁都想不到那位苏丹女眷是谁！直到最后，她对着一位装模作样斜倚在沙发上的美丽女花神说道：“哦，塞西莉亚，我真希望自己扮谁就是谁。”听到这话，查尔斯·亚当斯认出她就是风度优雅、野心勃勃的卡罗琳·辛普森，他的聪明才智可真是战无不胜。至于她亲自开口与之打招呼的那位，则是她那漂亮又做作的妹妹塞西莉亚，这又让查尔斯给猜中了。

众人现在向赌桌走去，那儿有三位面具客（每人手里都拿着一个酒瓶），正赌得起劲儿呢；不过，有一位扮成美德的女性看到这触目惊心的场面便脚步匆匆地逃走了，而一位化装成嫉妒、略有些胖的女性却轮番坐在那三个赌棍的前头。查尔斯·亚当斯还是一如既往地机智伶俐，他很快就发现赌博的那几个是约翰逊家里的三位，嫉妒是苏姬·辛普森，美德则是威廉斯夫人。

于是所有人都摘下面具，去了另一个房间，那儿已经备好一桌精美的菜肴，大家吃吃喝喝，随后约翰逊一家三口又积极地给大伙儿倒起酒来，结果这帮子人喝得烂醉如泥，全都是给抬回家的，就连美德也不例外。

二

这次化装舞会为帕米迪德尔的居民们提供了足足三个月的谈资；不过大家说得最多最细的人物还要数查尔斯·亚当斯。他那举世无双的容貌、他那光芒四射的双眼、他那聪明睿智的头脑以及其人本身给人留下的整体印象俘获了许多年轻姑娘的芳心，参加化装舞会的六位女士当中总共只有五位不曾被他征服。爱丽丝·约翰逊正是那倒霉的第六个，她没能抵挡住他的巨大魅力，已然对他倾心钟情。读者诸君恐怕

要觉得奇怪了，既然他如此出类拔萃、如此值得爱慕，为何单单只有这一位姑娘爱上他？可你们要知道，辛普森家那三位小姐之所以没有倒在他的魅力之下，是因为大小姐有野心，二小姐爱嫉妒，三小姐太自恋。

卡罗琳心心念念想的都是嫁个有爵位的丈夫；对于苏姬而言，要是人家比她优越得太多，那非但不会激起她的爱意，反而会使她嫉恨；至于塞西莉亚，她对自己爱恋至深，旁人都没法儿叫她中意。还有威廉斯夫人和琼斯太太——前者头脑太过清醒，不会爱上一个比自己年纪小这么多的人；后者虽然个子又高、性子又急，不过她很爱自己的丈夫，自然不会去想这档子事。

然而，尽管约翰逊小姐尝尽一切努力想要看出他对自己有感情，可查尔斯·亚当斯那颗冷酷淡漠的心却似乎依然如同原先那般自由自在；他对谁都彬彬有礼、一视同仁，还是那个漂亮活泼、无动于衷的查尔斯·亚当斯。

有天晚上，爱丽丝喝了点酒（这种情形并不罕见），头脑有点发热，于是决定去找冰雪聪明的威廉斯夫人说说话，从而调剂一下她那乱糟糟的头脑，安慰安慰她那饱受相思之苦的心灵。

和平日一样，她在夫人家里见到了她，威廉斯夫人不喜欢外出。她就像那位了不起的查尔斯·格兰迪森爵士 [4]，在家时是不屑于谎称自己不在的。现在时兴把不讨人喜欢的客人拒之门外，然而在威廉斯夫人看来，这种行为跟彻头彻尾的重婚罪可是不相上下。

虽然喝了酒，但可怜的爱丽丝情绪却异常低落，她满脑子想的都是查尔斯·亚当斯，说起话来也是一句都离不开他。总而言之，她说得如此直白，威廉斯夫人很快就发现她是在单恋着他，于是对她大为怜悯、深感同情，便说出下面这一番话来。

“亲爱的约翰逊小姐，我听得再明白不过了，你没能抵挡住这个年轻人的迷人魅力，你的心已经为之倾倒，我是真心实意地替你感到可惜。这是你的初恋吗？”

“是的。”

“听你这么说，我就更难过了；我自己就是一个悲惨的例子，伴随着初恋而来的往往都是痛苦，所以我下定决心，将来一定要避免类似的不幸发生。但愿你现在这么做还为时不晚；亲爱的孩子，初恋非常危险，要是来得及的话，你还是尽力抽身而退吧。第二次恋爱就很少会引起什么严重后果了，所以我对此并不反对。你要保护自己免遭初恋的伤害，却无须担心第二次的到来。”

“夫人，您刚刚提起您曾身受此种不幸所害，所以您好心希望我

能得以幸免。不知您是否愿意跟我讲讲您的经历和故事？”

“乐意之至，亲爱的。”

三

“家父是伯克郡一名相当富有的绅士，膝下只得我和其他几个孩子。我年仅六岁时，母亲便不幸离世。当时我年纪尚幼，少不更事，所以父亲并没有送我去学校，而是请了一位能干的家庭女教师，让她在家里教我。我的兄弟们依着年龄进了相应的学校，而我的几个妹妹都比我小，所以依然由她们的保姆照看着。

“迪金斯小姐是一位优秀的家庭女教师，是她指引我走上修习德行之路。在她的教导之下，我的性格变得日益温厚，可是在我十七岁那年，这位可敬的导师却被人从我身边夺走，要不是如此，恐怕我如今已经达到了近乎完美的境界。我从来不曾忘怀她对我说的最后一句话。她说：‘我亲爱的姬蒂，晚安了。’从那以后，我就再也没有见过她。”威廉斯夫人擦了擦眼睛，继续说道：“那天夜里，她跟着管家私奔了。”

“次年冬天，家父的一位远亲邀请我去城里和她小住一阵，这位沃特金斯太太出身显赫，非常富有，还很时髦；人人都说她是美女，不过我却从不觉得她有多漂亮。在我看来，她的额头太高，眼睛太小，肤色又太重。”

“这怎么可能呢？”约翰逊小姐气得面红耳赤，打断她道，“你觉得可能会有人肤色太重吗？”

“我觉得会，亲爱的爱丽丝，我来告诉你我为什么会这么想；要是人的脸色红得过了头，那么我就会认为他们的脸看起来太红了。”

“可是，夫人，人的脸有可能会太红吗？”

“当然会，亲爱的约翰逊小姐，我告诉你怎么会这样。要是面色太红呢，这人的长相看起来就不如皮肤苍白一些的时候那么好看。”

“夫人，还是请您接着往下讲吧。”

“好的，正如我先前所说，这位夫人邀请我去城里和她小住几个星期。很多上流社会的先生都觉得她很漂亮，可是在我看来，她的额头太高，眼睛太小，肤色又太重。”

“夫人，关于这一点，我先前已经说过，您肯定是弄错了。沃特金斯太太的肤色不可能太重，因为没人会这样。”

“亲爱的，在这一点上，恕我不能同意你的观点。请容我解释清楚，对于这种情况，我的看法是这样的：要是女人脸颊上红色的

部分太大，那么她的肤色就太重了。”

“可是，夫人，我认为这是不可能的，任何人脸颊上的红色部分都不会太大。”

“亲爱的，如果有人偏偏就是肤色很重呢？”

约翰逊小姐现在已经失去了耐心，威廉斯夫人越是继续这么强硬冷静，恐怕约翰逊小姐就越是不耐烦。不过，毕竟夫人在某个方面比爱丽丝要强多了；我的意思是，她没有喝酒，要是酒精上头，再一激动，她也是要控制不住脾气的。

她俩到最后越吵越凶，爱丽丝“从动口发展到几乎要动手了”。万幸的是，约翰逊先生来了，虽然费了点力气，但总算把她从威廉斯夫人这里拉走了，没再继续让她们就沃特金斯太太以及她的红脸蛋纠缠不休。

四

读者诸君也许会以为，经过这么一番吵闹，约翰逊一家跟威廉斯夫人是再也不能亲密无间了，但是你们错了。夫人深明大义，她不会看不出，爱丽丝之所以会这样，自然是喝醉酒的缘故，所以她并不恼火；而爱丽丝是诚心诚意地敬重威廉斯夫人，又非常爱喝夫人的红酒，所以尽力做出了一切让步。

她俩和好几天之后，威廉斯夫人前来拜访约翰逊小姐，提议两人去一处香橼树林里散散步，那树林的一头是夫人家的猪圈，另一头则是查尔斯·亚当斯家的饮马池。爱丽丝觉得威廉斯夫人提议这一趟散步是出于好意，想到最后能看见查尔斯家的饮马池，她是非常满意的，于是便兴高采烈地接受了邀请。她俩走出去没有多远，爱丽丝尚且沉浸在即将降临的幸福之中，威廉斯夫人却开了口，将她从沉思当中唤醒。

“亲爱的爱丽丝，我一直克制着没有将自己的经历说下去，是因为我不愿叫你忆起往事，毕竟当时的情景还是忘记的好（那事可没给你争光，而是让你丢了脸）。 ”

爱丽丝的脸已经红了，她张口欲言，夫人却看出她的不悦，于是继续说道：“亲爱的姑娘，恐怕我刚才的话对你多有冒犯，不过我向你保证，我之所以旧事重提，并非是有意要让你难受，毕竟往事已矣，无可挽回；总的来说，我并不像许多人那样认为这事是你不好，人在喝醉的时候是没法儿对自己的所作所为负责的。”

“夫人，您说这话我就不能忍了，我坚持认为——”

“亲爱的孩子，别再为此自寻烦恼了，你放心，关于此事我已经

全不计较。其实当时我并没有生气，因为我一直都看得出，你几乎是烂醉如泥了，我知道你说出那些奇谈怪论是身不由己。我瞧着你听得太难过了，那我就换个话题吧，希望这事永远也别再提起。你要记住，我已经全都忘了——现在我就接着讲自己的故事。不过我必须要强调一下，我不会再对你描述沃特金斯太太的长相，这只会让往事重演罢了，既然你与她从未谋面，那么无论她的额头是不是太高、眼睛是不是太小，又或者肤色是不是太重，这都与你不相干了。”

“又来了！威廉斯夫人，这可真是太过分了——”

一提起旧事，可怜的爱丽丝又被激得冒了火，要不是她俩的注意力被另一桩事吸引了过去，我真不知道此事会如何收场。有个漂亮的年轻女子躺在一棵香橼树下，看起来非常痛苦，这着实耐人寻味，不由得她们不去注意。于是乎，她俩忘记了自己的争吵，同情地向她走去，和气地跟她搭话。

“这位美丽的姑娘，你似乎正身受某种不幸，我们很乐意把你解救出来，不知你是否愿意告知我们这是怎么一回事。你能给我们讲讲你的经历和故事吗？”

“当然可以，太太小姐们，劳驾您二位坐下吧。”她俩坐了下来，她便开了口。

五

“我出生在北威尔士，也在那里长大，家父是当地一名顶顶出色的裁缝。我们家孩子很多，刚好家母有个姐妹是寡妇，在我们隔壁的村里经营一家啤酒坊 [5]，家境很富裕，所以父亲很容易便被说动了心，让我把我带走并抚养长大。因此过去这八年来，我都是与她同住，在此期间，她请了几位一流的大师来给我授课，凡是我这种地位的女子所应当具备的才艺，我全都学过。在他们的教导下，我学习了舞蹈、音乐、绘画以及好几种语言，如此一来，威尔士没有哪个裁缝的女儿比我更加多才多艺了。谁都不如我这般快活，直到半年以前——不过我本应先告诉你们，在我住的那一片，最重要的一处产业属于查尔斯·亚当斯，您看，也就是那边那栋砖房的主人。”

“查尔斯·亚当斯？”爱丽丝吃惊地喊道，“你认识查尔斯·亚当斯？”

“是的，小姐，我正是为此而伤心。大约在半年前，他来收租金，就是我刚刚提到的那处产业。这是我第一次见到他；小姐，您看来也是认识他的，我就不必向您描述他有多么迷人了。我无法抵挡他的诱惑……”

“唉！谁又能抵挡得了呢？”爱丽丝说着深深地叹了一口气。

“我的姨妈跟他家厨娘关系极好，于是，在我的请求之下，她决定去找这位朋友打探一下，看看他是否可能也对我有情。为此有天晚上她去跟苏珊太太一起喝茶，苏珊太太在谈话中说起她这职位如何如何好、她那主人如何如何好。我的姨妈便借机开始套她的话，我姨妈是很会套话的，没一会儿工夫苏珊就承认说，她觉得她家主人永远都不会结婚，‘因为（她说）他常常对我说无论他的妻子是谁，都必须年轻貌美、出身良好、聪明睿智、人品高洁、钱财丰厚。我曾多次（她继续说道）想要劝他改变心意，让他明白他是不可能遇到这样一位小姐的，可是我说的道理他一点也没听，他的决心丝毫不曾动摇。’太太小姐们，你们也许能想象出我听到这番话时的痛苦心情；尽管我年轻貌美、聪明睿智、人品高洁，而且还有可能继承我姨妈的房子和生意，可我却担心他会觉得我的出身不够高贵，因而不配成为他的妻子。

“不过，我还是决定要大胆一搏，于是我言辞恳切地写了一封信给他，带着浓情蜜意对他说，我愿将自己的人和心都交给他。可他在回信中却怒气冲冲地断然拒绝了我，我想他这恐怕只是谦逊之词罢了，便再度就此事敦促于他，然而他再也没有给过我回音，而且没过多久便离开了乡下。我一听说他离去的消息，就把信写到了这儿，告诉他我期待着不久之后能有幸在帕米迪德尔与他相见，这封信他仍然没有回复，于是我当作他已经默许，就瞒着我的姨妈离开了威尔士，一番长途跋涉之后，今早才到达此地。我向人打听他家住何处，有人告诉我要穿过这片树林，也就是你们所看到的这一处。我满心欢喜地踏进树林，期待着与他见面的幸福时刻，一路走到这里，却感觉到我的腿似乎突然被人给抓住了，查看以后才发现，原来我踩中了一个捕兽夹，这种东西在绅士老爷们的地界上很是常见。”

“哎，”威廉斯夫人喊道，“我们是何其幸运，竟然遇到了你；不然的话，我们也可能是和你同样的下场。”

“千真万确，太太小姐们，你们真是走运，我只比你们早到了一小会儿。你们不难想象，当时我尖叫起来，一直喊到林子里响起回声，这无情的坏蛋才派个仆人来向我施以援手，将我从这可怕的禁锢中解放出来，然而我有一条腿已经彻底断了。”

六

听到她这伤心的故事，威廉斯夫人那对美丽的眼睛里盛满泪水，爱丽丝也忍不住大声说道：“哦！查尔斯真是狠心，这么美丽的一个人儿，竟然被他伤心又伤腿。”

威廉斯夫人打断她的话，说这位年轻女士的腿应当马上接好，一刻也不能再耽搁。她仔细察看了骨折的情况，然后立刻娴熟地开始接

骨，考虑到她以前从未做过这样的事，她的技艺就更显高超了。露西随后从地上站起身来，发现自己已经可以走动，而且毫不费力，在威廉斯夫人的特别请求之下，她便同她们一起来到夫人的宅邸。

露西身材匀称，容颜秀丽，举止优雅，待到夜宵 [6] 结束与爱丽丝作别的时候，她已经赢得了后者的好感。爱丽丝向她保证，在这世上，除了她的父亲、哥哥、叔伯、舅舅、姑妈、姨母、堂亲、表亲以及其他亲戚，还有威廉斯夫人、查尔斯·亚当斯和另外几十个特别的朋友之外，她最喜欢的就是露西了。

她如此信誓旦旦地表达了自己的喜爱之情，作为被器重的对象，露西本该觉得不胜荣幸，然而露西却清清楚楚地看到，这位性子和善的爱丽丝喝起威廉斯夫人的红酒来可是毫不客气。

夫人（她的洞察力厉害得很）从露西那一脸了然的表情看出她对此事的想法，所以约翰逊小姐刚一告辞离去，她便对露西说道：“露西，等到你和我们爱丽丝更亲近熟悉一些以后，再看到这可爱的人儿多喝了一点酒，你就不会觉得吃惊了，因为她天天都是这样的。她身上有好些招人喜爱的难得品质，可是却没法儿管住自己喝醉酒。他们一家子根本就是一帮糟糕的醉鬼。尽管很痛心，可我还是要说，我没见过比他们三个更加烂赌的人，尤其是爱丽丝。可她很讨人喜欢。诚然，我见过她大发脾气的模样，她的性情也许不是世上最温柔的，但她依然是个可爱的姑娘。我相信你一定会喜欢她的。我简直不曾见过比她更和气的人。——哦！你是没见到她有天晚上是什么样儿！为了那么一点鸡毛蒜皮的小事，她便破口大骂！她真是个讨人喜欢的孩子！我永远都爱她！”

“照夫人您这么说，她似乎是有很多优点的。”露西回应道。“哦！千好万好，”威廉斯夫人答道，“不过我对她太偏心，兴许是被这份喜爱蒙住了眼，所以对她真正的缺点都视而不见了。”

七

第二天早晨，辛普森家的三位小姐前来拜访威廉斯夫人，夫人极有礼貌地接待了她们，并将露西介绍给她们认识。辛普森家的大小姐对她非常喜欢，到临别时甚至宣称，自己唯一的心愿就是露西次日一早能陪伴她同去巴斯，因为她们姐妹三人正准备去那里小住几周。

“露西，”威廉斯夫人说道，“是完全可以自己做主的，如果她选择接受如此盛情的邀请，那么我希望她绝不要因为对我有任何顾虑而犹豫不决。真不知道我如何能够与她分别。她从未去过巴斯，我觉得她一定会非常享受这次旅行。亲爱的，”她转过头对着露西继续说道，“你愿意跟这几位小姐做个伴吗？你走了我会很难过，不过这趟远足一定会让你非常开心——我希望你能去；要是你去了，我肯定会

死的——请你千万要听我的劝。”

露西恳请婉拒这份荣幸，她就不陪她们去了，同时她也向辛普森小姐充分表达了感激之情，感谢她这么客气地邀请自己。

对于她的拒绝，辛普森小姐似乎大失所望。威廉斯夫人坚持要她去——宣称如果她不去，那她就永远不会原谅她，可要是她去了，她也绝不会独活。总之，夫人用如此具有说服力的理由让事情最终有了定论——露西会去的。次日上午十点，辛普森家的几位小姐来接走了她，不久之后，威廉斯夫人便收到她这位年轻朋友传来的好消息，心满意足地得知她们已经平安抵达巴斯。

现在该言归正传说说这篇小说的主人公了，也就是爱丽丝的哥哥。想来我一直都没什么机会提起他，这恐怕在一定程度上要归罪于他那令人遗憾的嗜好——贪杯使得他完全荒废了上天赋予他的才能，所以他从未做出什么值得一提的事情。露西离开之后没过多长时间，他便一命呜呼了，似他那般有百害而无一利的活法，这也是自然而然的结果。他一死，他妹妹便成了一大笔财产的唯一继承人，这让她重新燃起希望，觉得自己又够格做查尔斯·亚当斯的妻子了。想到这一点，她无疑是满意至极的——既然结果这么让人高兴，那起因也就不怎么叫人伤心了。

她发觉自己对查尔斯的爱慕之情一天更比一天强烈，最后终于向父亲吐露了实情，希望他能够向查尔斯建议他们两家结一门亲事。她的父亲欣然同意，于是有天早上便动身去向这位年轻人表明此事。约翰逊先生是个沉默寡言的人，很快就说完了自己该说的话，他得到的答复是这样的——

“先生，您恐怕曾以为，听到您提出的建议，我应当表现得兴高采烈、感激不尽，但我要告诉您，我认为您的提议是一种冒犯。先生，在我自己看来，我是个毫无瑕疵的美男子——您在哪儿见过有人比我的体形更加优美、容貌更加迷人？还有，先生，我认为自己的举止与言谈也是最为优雅的，这样的温文尔雅和独有的温柔可亲无法言表，我从未见过有谁能与我匹敌。撇开这些偏爱不谈，我在各种语言、各类科学、各门艺术以及一切事情上的成就都是无可否认的欧洲第一人。我性情温和，优点无数，无与伦比。先生，既然我有着这样的品格，那么您说希望我娶您的女儿为妻，究竟是什么意思呢？容我简要地描述一下您和她是何等样人。先生，我认为您大体上是个很好的人，诚然您是个老醉鬼，不过我对此倒是无所谓。至于您的女儿，先生，对我而言她既不够美丽也不够温顺，既不够聪明也不够富有。我妻子将会发现我是个完美无缺的人，我希望她也是个完美无缺的人。先生，这就是我的想法，我以此为荣。我有一个朋友，但令我骄傲的是，我只有这么一个朋友。现时她正在为我准备晚餐，如果您愿

意见见她的话，她就会来到这里，并且告诉您，我的想法一贯如此。”

约翰逊先生觉得很满意，他对亚当斯先生的赐教表示万分感激，感谢他让他知道了自己和女儿是什么样的人，随后便告辞了。

不幸的爱丽丝从父亲那里听到这桩伤心事，晓得父亲此去是无功而返，她失望得简直不能自己，于是赶紧去借酒浇愁，很快就将这事抛到了脑后。

八

帕米迪德尔的人正在处理这些事情的时候，露西却在巴斯赢得了所有人的喜欢。在那里住了两个礼拜，她几乎已将查尔斯那令人神魂颠倒的模样从记忆中抹消得一千二净——她想起自己从前因为被他迷住所吃的苦头，又记得自己的腿为他的捕兽夹所伤，因而要忘记他也并非难如登天，她便下定决心要把他给忘了；为了达到这个目标，她每天都花上五分钟将他从记忆里赶出去。

在写给威廉斯夫人的第二封信里，她传来喜报说自己已经完成这项任务，她对此十分满意；她还在信中提及某公爵向她求了婚。那位公爵年事已高，极为富有，健康却欠佳，他来巴斯主要是为了疗养身体。她继续写道：

我痛苦地发现，自己也不清楚是想答应他还是拒绝他。嫁给公爵的好处数不胜数，除了地位和财富这些次要因素，这桩婚事能给我一个家，这才是我最大的渴望，其他一切都比不上它。夫人您希望我能永远留在您身边，您这番好意既高尚又慷慨，可我如此地爱您、敬您，我无法想象自己成为您的沉重负担。我们即使要承担责任，这责任也只能来自那些为我们所不齿的人——这是我自小就被我那可敬的姨妈所灌输的观点，我在心中一直谨遵她的教诲。我姨妈是一名很出色的女性，我听说她因为我贸然离开威尔士而大发雷霆，故而不欢迎我再回去了。我无比衷心地希望能离开我所陪伴的这几位小姐。辛普森小姐（抛开她的野心来看）待人确实非常亲切，可她那位善妒又恶毒的二妹苏姬太难相处。我在此地这些大人物的圈子里广受崇拜，相信这已经引起了她的痛恨与妒忌，这并非我的凭空想象，她经常威胁说要杀了我，有几次还试图要动手割我的喉咙。所以，夫人您一定会同意我的观点，认为我想要离开巴斯、想要有个家容身并没有错，我也确有此意。迫切盼望您能就公爵一事给我建议。

对您感激不尽的露西敬上

威廉斯夫人将自己对此事的看法写信告诉了她，信上是这么说

的：

我最最亲爱的露西，对公爵的求婚，你干吗还要有片刻犹豫？我打听过他的人品，发现他既无耻又无知。我的露西可不能嫁给这么一个人！他富可敌国，而且财富与日俱增。这钱要是由你来花，那该有多么体面！在众人眼里，你会给他带来多大荣光！人们对他的尊敬会有多少是看着他妻子的面子！不过，亲爱的露西，为了给此事一个了断，你为什么不一立刻回到我身边永不离开呢？你关于责任的高尚情怀令我钦佩，可是我请求你不要因此就不再给我带来快乐。如果让你永远留在我身边，我肯定要付出一大笔开销——我承受不起这笔花费，但这跟有你陪伴带给我的幸福如何能够相提并论？我知道这会让我倾家荡产——所以，这些理由一定可以说服你回到我身边的。

你最亲爱的C.威廉斯敬上

九

如果露西收到信，夫人的建议会对她产生何种影响，我们已经无从得知了，因为就在这封信到达巴斯的几个钟头之前，露西已经咽下最后一口气，沦为嫉妒与恶毒的牺牲品。苏姬妒忌她魅力超群，于是对她下了毒，让她在十七岁的年纪便离开了倾心爱慕着她的人们。

可爱可亲的露西就这么香消玉殒了，她此生从不曾犯下罪过，除了离开姨妈这一鲁莽之举，她的人生再无瑕疵，认识她的人都诚心诚意地为她的死感到悲伤。在她的朋友当中，最为痛苦的当数威廉斯夫人、约翰逊小姐以及那位公爵；后面这两位对她的关切可是最最真心的，尤以爱丽丝为甚，毕竟她曾经跟露西相处了整整一个晚上，而且从那之后就再也没有想起过她。公爵大人的苦痛也同样不难理解，过去这十天来，他感受到露西的温柔怜爱与真切关心，如今却失去了她。对露西的死，他忠贞不渝地哀悼了两个礼拜，随后却让卡罗琳·辛普森野心得偿，抬举她当了公爵夫人。辛普森小姐最期盼的事情终于做成，自是十分地称心如意。至于她的妹妹——那位背信弃义的苏姬，在此后不久也同样被大伙儿吹捧了几天，她倒也受之无愧，而且就她的所作所为来看，这根本就是她一向的渴望。她的残忍谋杀行为被人发现，尽管亲朋好友纷纷求情，她还是很快被送上了绞刑架。还有美丽动人却装模作样的塞西莉亚，她觉得自己的魅力无人能敌，更何况如果就连卡罗琳都能勾搭上一位公爵，那么她有志要赢得某位王子的青睐也就无可厚非了，不过她知道自己祖国的那些王子基本上都已经“名花有主”，所以她离开了英格兰。据我所知，她如今是莫卧儿[7]大帝最为宠爱的妃子。

与此同时，帕米迪德尔的住户们也大大地吃了一惊，而且好奇得

紧，因为有传言说，查尔斯·亚当斯打算要成婚了。但那位小姐的芳名却仍旧无人知晓。琼斯先生和琼斯太太猜测是约翰逊小姐；不过约翰逊小姐比他们要清楚，她只担心他要娶他的厨娘。可是叫所有人意外的是，他竟公然娶了威廉斯夫人。

[1] Francis-William Austen (弗朗西斯·威廉·奥斯汀, 1774—1865), 作者的兄长, 1786年进入位于朴茨茅斯的皇家海军学院, 1788年12月随英国皇家海军坚毅号前往东印度群岛, 并在那里待了四年。据B. C.索瑟姆在《简·奥斯汀文学手稿》一书中推测,《杰克与爱丽丝》写于作者13岁至16岁之间,亦即1788年至1791年间。(说明:书中脚注除特别标明的之外,均为译者注。)

[2] Pammydiddle, 据William Baker (威廉·贝克) 所著的*Critical Companion to Jane Austen* (《简·奥斯汀的重要伴侣》) 中122页所述,该地名是作者将“Pam”与“diddle”这两个词合并在一起生造而成,前者是一种以梅花J (即Pam) 作为王牌的纸牌游戏,后者则是“欺骗”的意思。

[3] 半英里约为805米,后文的3/4英里大约是1207米,作者在此处似乎是用(极为)夸张的修辞手法。

[4] Sir Charles Grandison (查尔斯·格兰迪森爵士), 塞缪尔·理查森所著小说《查尔斯·格兰迪森爵士的历史》中的人物。

[5] alehouse (啤酒坊), 多为女性经营,出售自酿的啤酒。

[6] 据William Baker (威廉·贝克) 所著的*Critical Companion to Jane Austen* (《简·奥斯汀的重要伴侣》) 中537页所述, supper指的是一天中最后一餐,并不需要非常丰盛,尤其是已经吃过盛大晚餐 (dinner) 的情况下。故而本书中supper统一译为夜宵, dinner则一律译为晚餐。

[7] Mogul (莫卧儿帝国), 16世纪至19世纪统治印度大部分地区。

亨利与伊丽莎

谨将本篇小说献给库珀 [8] 小姐。

她恭顺又卑微的仆人

作者敬上

这天，乔治爵爷和哈考特夫人在监督晒干草的工人干活，见着勤快的便赞许地笑笑，对着偷懒的就打几棍子。恰在此时，他俩看见一垛干草堆底下躺着个漂亮的小女孩，最多不过三个月大，差点就被那茂密的草叶给挡住了。

夫妇俩自己并没有孩子，看到她那可爱秀美的面容，听到她活力十足的儿语，似在回答他俩那许许多多的疑问，不禁深受感动、大为欣喜，于是决定把她带回家，悉心照料，供她念书。

这夫妻俩本身都是好人，所以他俩认为，最首要也是最主要的就是激励她热爱美德、憎恨恶行，在这一点上，他们做得非常成功（伊丽莎的天性本就如此）。待到她长大以后，凡是认识她的人，都觉得她很讨人喜欢。

哈考特夫人宠着她，乔治爵爷疼着她，全世界都爱着她，这孩子一直过得快快乐乐，从未吃过一点苦，直到她十八岁这年。有一天，她那冷酷无情的恩主夫妇发现她偷了一张五十英镑的钞票，便将她逐出家门。对于那些没有伊丽莎这般伟大高尚思想的人而言，要是他们遭逢如此剧变，肯定就只有死路一条，不过伊丽莎知道自己是出类拔萃之人，于是开开心心地自娱自乐起来。她坐在一棵树下，现编现唱了下面这段歌词。

歌

尽管我双脚踏进不幸的阴影，

可我希望自己永远不会缺了友情，

只因我将永葆心灵的无邪，

绝不背离美德的疆界。

她唱着这支歌儿，愉快地想着心事，如此消遣了几个钟头才站起

身来，走上通往M镇的那条公路。M是一个小小的集镇，她最要好的朋友就在那里，经营着一家名叫红狮 [9] 的小酒馆。

她径直来到朋友这里，向她讲述了自己新近的不幸遭遇，同时表明心愿，说她想要去人家家里做个卑微的女伴。

要伊丽莎说，这世上最可亲的人，那就是威尔逊太太了。她刚一知晓伊丽莎的愿望，便在酒馆里坐下来，给她最为敬重的F公爵夫人修书一封，信中这样写道：

F公爵夫人 敬启

恳请贵府收留一名年轻女子，她的人品高洁无瑕，不想去做女佣，却愿意与您做伴。请快些将她从我的怀抱里带走吧。

萨拉·威尔逊敬上

这位公爵夫人和威尔逊太太友谊深厚，就算为她付出一切代价也在所不惜，现如今这么一个大好机会摆在面前，让她能够为威尔逊太太效劳，公爵夫人自是大喜过望。因此，收到信以后她即刻就启程上路，当天晚上便到了红狮酒馆。F公爵夫人年约四十五六，很容易激动，交了朋友便死心塌地，结了仇恨也绝不会回心转意。她是个寡妇，唯一的女儿眼下正在跟一个极为富有的年轻人谈婚论嫁。

公爵夫人一看到咱们的女主角，就张开双臂搂住她的脖子，宣称自己对她十分喜欢，并决定今后和她永不分离。听到她这一番友情宣言，伊丽莎很是欣喜，她洒泪挥别亲爱的威尔逊太太，次日一早陪着公爵夫人来到了她位于萨里郡的宅第。

公爵夫人将她介绍给女儿哈丽雅特小姐 [10] 认识，言辞之间尽显殷殷关切。哈丽雅特小姐非常喜欢她的相貌，于是恳求与她以姐妹相待，伊丽莎纡尊降贵地答应了。

哈丽雅特小姐的恋人塞西尔先生常常到公爵夫人家里来，因而也就经常见到伊丽莎。他和伊丽莎互生情愫，塞西尔先开口表白了自己的爱，并劝说伊丽莎跟他私订终身。他没费什么力气便得到伊丽莎的应允，而且，他俩确信，公爵夫人的牧师也深爱着伊丽莎，只要是为她效劳，他什么都愿意做。

有天晚上，公爵夫人和哈丽雅特小姐去参加一个集会，他俩便趁着她们离家的大好机会，在那位倾心于伊丽莎的牧师主持下结为夫妻。

夫人和小姐回到家才大吃一惊地发现，伊丽莎不见了，只留下一张便条，上面写道：

夫人：

我们结婚了，就此别过。

亨利·塞西尔和伊丽莎·塞西尔

这封信已经足以将整件事情解释得一清二楚，夫人读完之后勃然大怒，用尽了她盛怒之下所能想到的一切难听字眼大骂他们，舒舒服服骂了半小时。随后派出三百人带着武器去追他们，同时下令说，活要见人，死要见尸，决不允许空手而归。夫人的打算是，如果这些人真的将他俩活着带回来了，她就先把他俩关上几年，再折磨至死。

与此同时，逃跑在外的塞西尔和伊丽莎来到了欧洲大陆。他俩认为在这里比在祖国要安全一些，可以免遭公爵夫人的可怕报复——他们的担心是极有道理的。

他俩在法兰西先后生下两个男孩，只是结婚才三年伊丽莎就成了寡妇，无力养活她自己 and 两个孩子。自从结婚以来，他们几乎是挣多少花多少，没存下几个钱来。他们每年的花销是一万两千磅，可是塞西尔先生留下的遗产却连这个数字的二十分之一都不到。

伊丽莎深知这摊子事是没法儿理清爽了，丈夫一死，她便乘着一艘装有五十五门大炮的军舰回到英格兰，这军舰还是他俩当初手头比较宽裕的时候建造的。可是她一手牵着一个孩子刚刚踏上多佛尔的海岸，就被公爵夫人派来的军官抓住，送进了地牢。这里地方虽小，倒也温暖舒适，恰似夫人私家的新门 [11] 监狱，是公爵夫人专为款待她的秘密囚犯而建。

进了地牢之后，伊丽莎第一桩想到的事就是如何离开这里。

她来到门口，门是锁着的。她看看窗户，窗上有铁条。两条路都不通，她好生沮丧，觉得逃跑无望，正在万念俱灰之际，居然瞧见监房一角摆着一把小锯子和一架绳梯，这可真是鸿运当头。她立刻就拿起锯子动起了手，几个礼拜之后，她已经锯掉了所有的铁条，只留下一根用来拴绳梯。

接下来又遇到的一个难题，她想了好些时候才找到解决的法子。她的孩子们年纪还太小，没法儿自己从绳梯上爬下去，而她下去的时候又不可能抱着他俩一起。最后她决定，先把她所有的衣物都扔下去——她多的就是衣服，再严令孩子们切不可伤了自己，然后把他们也扔下去。她自己则轻轻松松地顺着绳梯往下爬，到了底下，她满意地发现两个小家伙都完好无损、睡得正香。

如今她觉得，她和孩子们要想活下去，这些衣服就非卖不可了。挥泪告别昔日辉煌仅存的遗迹之后，她用所得的钱财去买了些其他更

有用处的东西——给孩子们买了些玩具，又给她自己买了块金表。

上述这些生活必需品刚刚拿到手，她就开始觉得饥肠辘辘，并且有理由相信她的两个孩子也差不多是同样的情形，因为他们正要啃下她的两根手指头。

眼见得大难临头、躲避不过，为了做些补救，她只好下定决心，仍旧回去找她的老朋友——乔治爵爷和哈考特夫人，他二人慷慨大度，她曾多次亲身体会，只盼着如今也能再度亲历。

他们那舒适宜人的大宅距此还有四十英里，她马不停蹄地走了三十英里，发现前方是一座小镇。在从前那段幸福的时光，她常常陪着乔治爵爷和哈考特夫人来到这里，在其中一家客栈里吃顿冷餐。

往事历历涌上心头，她记起自己最后一次开心地这样吃吃喝喝，记起自己从那以后所经历的桩桩奇遇，一时间想出了神，便在一位先生家门前的台阶上坐下了。往昔忆完，她立起身，决心就在那家给她留下愉快回忆的客栈安营扎寨，指望着从进进出出的宾客那里讨些赏钱。

她刚刚在客栈院子里选定位置站好，一辆马车便驶将出来，在转过她所站的角落时停下，以便车夫能有机会欣赏一番她美丽的芳容。伊丽莎于是走到车旁，打算向他们乞求施舍，可是一看到车里的那位夫人，她便惊叫起来。

“哈考特夫人！”

听到这话，那位夫人答道：“伊丽莎！”

“是的，夫人，我正是可怜的伊丽莎。”

乔治爵爷也在马车里，吃惊得说不出话来，他正要请伊丽莎说说她眼下这是什么处境，哈考特夫人却喜不自胜地喊道：“乔治爵爷，乔治爵爷，伊丽莎不仅是咱们的养女，她还是咱们的亲生女儿。”

“咱们的亲生女儿！哈考特夫人，你这话从何说起？你也知道自己从未生过一男半女，求你说说清楚吧。”

“乔治爵爷，你一定还记得，当初你乘船去往美洲的时候，我已经怀孕了。”

“我记得，我记得，请继续说吧，亲爱的波莉。”

“你离开四个月之后，我生下了这个女孩，可我害怕你会不高兴，因为你想要的是男孩。于是我带着她来到一垛干草堆旁，将她放在那里。又过了几个礼拜，你回来了，万幸的是，你并未向我问起此事。我以为自己的孩子过得很好，觉得心满意足，很快就忘了自己曾有过孩子。所以，不久之后咱们在那垛干草底下发现她时，不仅你没

想到她是我的孩子，就连我自己都没有想到，尽管我当初正是在那里把她放下的。冒昧地说，本来没什么会让我想起此事，但是刚才偶然间听到她的声音，我忽然意识到，这跟我自己那孩子的声音正是一模一样。”

“这事的来龙去脉你解释得合情合理，令人信服，”乔治爵爷说道，“毫无疑问，她就是咱们的女儿，既是如此，对她当年犯下的盗窃罪行，我便既往不咎了。”

双方就此言归于好，伊丽莎带着她的两个孩子登上马车，回到她已阔别近四年的那个家。

伊丽莎在哈考特庄园重拾往日威势，随即便募集了一支军队，带着他们将公爵夫人那温暖舒适的监狱夷为平地，此举为她赢得了千万人的称道，她心里也觉得自己做得极好。

[8] Jane Cooper (简·库珀，1771—1798)，作者的表姐兼儿时好友，大约在1789年年初的时候拜访过奥斯汀一家。索瑟姆在《简·奥斯汀文学手稿》中推测，《亨利与伊丽莎》的写作时间是在1787年至1790年。

[9] Red Lion (红狮)，英国最受欢迎的酒馆名称。缘自1603年，伊丽莎白一世死后无嗣，苏格兰国王詹姆士六世继承英国王位，称詹姆士一世。他下令英国所有重要建筑（包括酒馆在内）均需涂上代表苏格兰的红狮纹章，以象征苏格兰和英格兰的统一。目前全英仍有七百多家酒馆名为“红狮”。

[10] Lady Harriet，公爵之女可称“Lady”。

[11] Newgate，著名监狱，位于伦敦西门。

漂亮的卡桑德拉

经奥斯汀小姐 [12] 许可，特将本小说敬献于她，共十二章。

献词

小姐：

您就如同凤凰 [13] 一般。您品位高雅、情怀高尚、美德无数。您容颜秀丽、体形优美、风姿绰约。您举止优雅、言谈理性、相貌出众。如果下面这篇小说能供您消遣一时，我也就再无所求了。

您最最恭顺卑微的仆人

作者敬上

—

卡桑德拉是邦德街 [14] 上一位著名女帽制造商的独生女儿。她的父亲出身高贵，和某某公爵夫人的管家是近亲。

二

到了十六岁这年，卡桑德拉已经出落得美丽动人，性子也很和气。她刚巧看上了一顶精致优雅的帽子——这是一位伯爵夫人订做的，她的母亲才刚刚做好。她将这顶帽子戴在自己那漂亮的脑袋上，然后走出她母亲的商店，出门闯荡去了。

三

她遇见的第一个人是一位子爵，这个大名鼎鼎的年轻人不仅德才兼备，而且风度翩翩、相貌英俊。她对他屈膝一礼，随后继续前进。

四

她走进一家糕点店，风卷残云般吞下六份冰激凌，却拒绝付钱，将糕点师打倒在地，然后扬长而去。

五

接下来，她登上了一辆出租马车，命车夫前往汉普斯特德，可是

刚到那里，她却又命令车夫掉转车头送她回来。

六

回到了出发时的同一条街、同一个地点，车夫向她索要车钱。

七

她在衣兜里搜了一遍又一遍，却一无所获，一分钱也找不到。车夫强横起来，她便将帽子往他头上一戴，拔腿跑了。

八

跑过一条又一条街道，她一直平安无事，直到经过布鲁斯伯里广场的转角，在这里她遇见了玛丽亚。

九

卡桑德拉吓了一跳，玛丽亚似乎也大吃一惊；她俩颤抖着，脸色由红转白，然后一语不发地擦肩而过。

十

有人和卡桑德拉搭讪，那人是个寡妇，跟卡桑德拉是朋友。她的脑袋小，窗户却更小，她便将脑袋从窗户里挤出来，向卡桑德拉问好。卡桑德拉屈膝一礼，然后继续前进。

十一

又走过四分之一英里，卡桑德拉回到了邦德街上的家里，此时她已经离家近七小时了。

十二

她走进家门，被母亲紧紧拥在怀里。这真是位贤妻良母。卡桑德拉微微一笑，低声自语道：“今天过得可真充实。”

[12] Cassandra-Elizabeth Austen (卡桑德拉-伊丽莎白·奥斯汀，1773—1845)，作者的姐姐。本篇作品很可能创作于1787年至1788年之间，因为作者一家曾于1788年8月到访过作品中的背景地伦敦。

[13] 作者在献词中将姐姐卡桑德拉喻为“凤凰”，这一点颇令人费解。据R. W.查普曼编纂的《简·奥斯汀作品集第六卷：次要作品》，这可能是指卡桑德拉像凤凰一样以虚构的形式重现在这篇由十二个章

节构成的小说里。

[14] Bond Street，伦敦市中心一条著名购物街，自18世纪开始，已成为伦敦的时尚购物中心。

一位处境困难的年轻女子写给友人的信 [15]

几天以前，我去参加阿什伯纳姆先生举办的一场私人舞会。因为家母从不出去交际，她便将我托付给格雷维尔夫人照顾，夫人赏光同意顺道来接我，并且允许我面向前方坐着——对于这一优待，我倒是无所谓，尤其是我深知夫人将之视为赐予我的莫大恩惠。“哎，玛丽亚小姐”（夫人看见我朝着马车车门走来，便开口说道），“今天晚上你看起来特别漂亮——我可怜的女儿们在你身旁可就被比下去了。但愿你妈妈别因为让你出门而担心。你这是穿了一件新礼服吗？”

“是的，夫人。”我尽量不动声色地答道。

“对嘛，我也觉得这件挺好（她用手摸了摸，因为我是蒙她恩准坐在她旁边的），我敢说这礼服非常时髦，不过我得直说——你知道我总是想到什么就说什么，我觉得这钱花得冤枉。你为什么不能穿你那件条纹的旧礼服呢？我这人不会因为人家穷就横加挑剔，我一向认为，穷人应该被人瞧不起，被人可怜，但不该受人责备，特别是那些身不由己的穷人。可是另一方面我也得说，在我看来，你那件条纹的旧礼服穿在你身上就已经很不错了，跟你说实话吧（我这人向来想到什么就说什么），我想舞会上恐怕有一半的人压根儿就不会知道你有没有礼服，不过我估摸着你是打算今天晚上钓个金龟婿。嗯，那就是越快越好了，祝你成功。”

“夫人，其实我并无此意——”

“谁听过哪位年轻姑娘承认自己想嫁个有钱人啊？”格雷维尔小姐大笑着说，不过我相信埃伦肯定是同情我的。

“你走之前，你母亲已经睡下了吗？”夫人问道。

“亲爱的夫人，”埃伦说，“现在才九点。”

“话是不假，埃伦，但蜡烛是要花钱买的，威廉斯夫人这么明智，她可不会铺张浪费。”

“夫人，我走的时候，她刚刚坐下来准备吃夜宵。”

“她夜宵吃什么？”“我没看到。”“我猜是面包和奶酪吧。”“我觉得这就是最好的夜宵了。”埃伦说道。“这话真没道理，”她母亲反驳道，“你哪天吃得都比这个好。”格雷维尔小姐夸张地大笑起来，她听见她妈妈说俏皮话时总是这个反应。

这便是我乘坐夫人的马车时被迫面临的屈辱境地。我却不敢失礼，母亲总是告诫我，要想立足于世，就须谦卑忍耐。她坚持认为，只要格雷维尔夫人开口相邀，我就不可拒绝。若非如此，我是断然不会踏进她家一步的，也绝不会登上她的马车，因为肯定会不愉快——她总是对我恶语相向，缘由不过是我穷罢了。我们到达阿什伯纳姆府上时已近十点，比预期晚了一个半小时；不过格雷维尔夫人是个时髦的人（或者说她自以为很时髦），自然是不会守时的。舞会尚未开始，专为等着格雷维尔小姐。进屋之后不久，伯纳德先生便来邀我跳舞，我们正要起身，他却记起自己的白手套还在仆人那里，于是立刻跑出去取。就在此时，舞会开始了，走向另一个房间的格雷维尔夫人刚好从我面前经过，她看见我，随即停下脚步，也不管近旁还有好几个人，开口说道：

“你好啊，玛丽亚小姐！找不到舞伴吗？可怜的姑娘！我看你的新礼服怕是白穿了。不过别灰心，今天晚上这舞会结束前，没准你还能跳上一支舞的。”她一边这么说，一边继续走，尽管我一再保证已经有人邀请过我，她却根本不听，让我因为她在人前如此说我而大为光火——不过伯纳德先生很快就回来了，他一进房间就来到我身边，当着那些老夫人的面带我走向跳舞的人群。这些人刚才可都是听见了她那一席话的，但愿格雷维尔夫人对我人品所泼的脏水可以就此洗清。没过多久，跳舞的乐趣就使我忘却了一切烦恼，我拥有全场的最佳舞伴，并且他还是一大笔财产的继承人。我看得出格雷维尔夫人似乎很不高兴，因为她发现伯纳德先生竟然选了我做舞伴。她打定主意要给我难堪，于是当我们在跳舞间隙坐下休息时，她便带着梅森小姐朝我走来，比平日更加盛气凌人，大声开了口，全场有一半人都能听到她的声音：“请问，玛丽亚小姐，令祖是做哪个行当的？梅森小姐和我对此有点分歧，不知道他究竟是杂货商还是订书匠。”我明白她是想羞辱我，便决心尽量不让她的奸计得逞。“夫人，都不是；他是一名红酒商人。”“是了，我就知道他的工作低贱得很——他破产了不是吗？”“夫人，我想他并不曾破产。”“难道他没有潜逃吗？”“此事我闻所未闻。”“总之他死的时候还欠着债吧？”“从没有人如此说过。”“怎么，难道令尊不是穷得叮当响吗？”“我认为不是。”“他有一回是不是被人给告了？”“我倒不曾见过他出入法庭。”她狠狠地看了我一眼，怒气冲冲地转身走了；我却是喜忧参半，喜的是我没有对她恭敬有礼，忧的是怕旁人会觉得我太过粗鲁。格雷维尔夫人被我气极了，一晚上都不再搭理我了，不过，即便她对我青眼有加，也同样会无视我的存在，因为她喜欢跟一群大人物待在一起，除非是实在找不到人说话了，否则她可不会理睬我。吃夜宵时，格雷维尔小姐跟她母亲那一帮人坐在一起，不过埃伦更愿意和我以及伯纳德一家待在一块儿。我们跳舞跳得很开心，回家的路上格雷维尔夫人一直在睡觉，所以这一路我还是挺自在的。

第二天我们吃晚餐的时候，格雷维尔夫人的马车来到门口停下了，她一般认为就该这个时候来。她叫仆人进来传话，说她“不能下车，但有话要对玛丽亚小姐讲，所以请小姐务必去到马车门口，而且要赶紧去、马上去”！“妈妈，这话可真是太无礼了！”我说。她却答道：“去吧，玛丽亚。”于是我只得出去，被迫听凭夫人摆布，顶着刺骨的狂风站在那里。

“玛丽亚小姐，我怎么觉得你没有昨晚那么漂亮了——不过我不是来查看你穿了什么衣裳的，只是想告诉你一声，后天你可以来和我们共进晚餐。不是明天。记好了，明天别来，因为我们要宴请克莱蒙特勋爵和夫人以及托马斯·斯坦利爵爷一家。我后天不会派马车来接你，所以你得委屈一下，要是下雨的话，你就把伞带上——”听到她恩准我不让自己淋湿，我差点就忍不住大笑起来。“还有，请你务必记住要准时，我可不会等着你。我讨厌食物被煮过头。不过你倒也不必提前来。你母亲还好吗？她在吃晚餐是吧？”“是的，夫人，您大驾光临的时候，我们刚好在用晚餐。”“玛丽亚，你恐怕很冷吧。”埃伦说。“是很冷，这东风 [16] 吹得真是吓人——”她母亲说道，“实话对你说，这窗子开着我都要受不了了。不过，玛丽亚小姐，你已经被风吹习惯了吧，所以你的肤色才会如此红润粗糙。你们这些不常有马车坐的年轻姑娘从来就不在意辛苦赶路时是什么天气，也无所谓风吹起裙子露出了腿。我是不会让我的女儿们在这种天气像你这样站在外头的。可是有一种人，要么就是感觉不到冷，要么就是不知道体贴别人。好了，别忘记礼拜四下午五点钟到我们家里来。你千万要叫女仆晚上来接你，那天不会有月光，你走回家这一路会很可怕。替我向你的母亲问好。恐怕你的晚餐都要凉了。赶车走吧。”她就这么走了，我却被她气得怒火中烧。她每次都是如此。

玛丽亚·威廉斯

[15] 本篇出自*A Collection of Letters*（《书信集》），是第三封信。该书信集由五封风格各异、相互独立的书信组成，均敬献给作者的表姐Jane Cooper（简·库珀）。

[16] 英国的东风系从欧洲大陆北部吹来，类似于我国的西北风，非常寒冷。

一位热恋中的年轻女子写给友人的信 [17]

我叔叔越来越小气，我婶婶越来越挑剔，而我却一天比一天爱恋更深。如此发展下去，到了年底不知会是何等光景！今天早晨，我有幸收到亲爱的默斯格罗夫写来的信，内容如下：

萨克维尔街：1月7日

自我初见美丽的亨丽埃塔那天起，迄今已有整整一月，这是个神圣的纪念日，必须以某种与之相称的方式记录下来，所以我便写信给她。我永远也不会忘记她的美貌第一次展露在我眼前的那一刻——如您所知，时间绝不可能将此刻从我记忆中抹去。我和她相遇在斯库达摩尔夫人家里。夫人何其有幸，住处竟与亨丽埃塔女神的居所相距不足一英里！当这可爱的人儿踏进房间之时，哦！我的感觉是怎样的？见到您，我惊为天人，一脸爱慕地注视着您，您的魅力似乎每一刻都有增无减。不幸的默斯格罗夫未及环顾左右便为您的妩媚所俘虏。是的，小姐，我爱上了您，这是我的幸运，亦是我的不幸，对此我却只有无尽感激。我扪心自问：“默斯格罗夫，你凭着哪一点能为亨丽埃塔牺牲呢？你这令人羡慕的凡夫俗子！你为伊人憔悴，伊人却不只为你一人所独钟，有位上校也倾心于她，还有位准男爵为了她举杯祝酒！”迷人的亨丽埃塔，您是多么美丽！我宣布，您就是女神！您并非一介凡人，您是天使，维纳斯就是您。总而言之，小姐，我此生从未见过比您更漂亮的姑娘。您允许默斯格罗夫爱您，给我以希望，您在我眼中便更加美丽动人。

啊！天使般的亨丽埃塔小姐，我是多么热切地期盼着您那可憎的叔父和缺德的婶娘早赴黄泉，此心此情，苍天可鉴。我的佳人非要等他们死了才肯答应嫁给我，因为他们的遗产可以让她过上富足的生活，而我的财产却不足以做到。尽管我的产业还是有可能增加的，可是狠心的亨丽埃塔决意如此，不肯动摇！我目前和姐姐住在一起，我自己的房子虽好，眼下却有些破败失修，在修葺完毕可以住人之前，我打算一直住在姐姐家里。再见了，我心中温柔可亲的公主，我用这颗心颤抖着签下自己的名字。

您最狂热的崇拜者以及忠实卑微的仆人

T.默斯格罗夫

玛蒂尔达，这就是一封典型的情书啊！如此富有见地，如此充满感情，思想如此纯洁，语言如此流畅，如此情真意切，全都集于这一张纸上。你从前可曾读过这样的杰作？不，这个问题我可回答不了，像默斯格罗夫这样的人是可遇不可求的。哦！我多么想和他在一起！我打算明天把下面这封信寄给他作为回复。

最最亲爱的默斯格罗夫，来信收到，吾心甚喜，无以言表；我以为自己会喜极而泣，因我爱你胜过这世上任何人。在我眼中，你是英格兰最可亲、最英俊的男人，你肯定就是如此。这是我此生读过的最甜蜜的来信，再像这样给我写一封吧，把字里行间都写满你对我的爱。我迫不及待想要见你。咱们怎么才能设法见上一面？我们是如此相爱，分离会要了我们的命。哦！亲爱的默斯格罗夫，你无法想象我是多么盼望叔父和婶娘快点死，简直都等不及了。我对你的爱恋与日俱增，如果他们不早点死的话，我想我一定会发疯的。你的姐姐何其幸福，能够享受到你在家中与她为伴的乐趣；伦敦的众人何其幸福，因为有你在那里。亲爱的默斯格罗夫，希望能很快再次收到你的信，我以前可从未读到过如此甜蜜的来信。

永远最忠于您的亨丽埃塔·霍尔顿敬上

但愿他会喜欢我的回信，我也只能写到这样了，不过跟他的信还是不能相提并论；事实上，我一贯听人说他很会写情书。你知道，我跟他第一次见面是在斯库达摩尔夫人的家里。后来我见到夫人的时候，她便问我对她的表弟默斯格罗夫印象如何。

“哎，不瞒您说，”我说道，“我觉得他是个非常英俊的年轻人。”

“你这么想，我很高兴，”她答道，“因为他已经疯狂地爱上了你。”

“天哪！斯库达摩尔夫人，”我说，“您怎么能说出如此荒唐的话来？”

“这话不仅不荒唐，而且是千真万确，”她答道，“我敢担保，他从见到你的那一刻起就爱上你了。”

“但愿如此，”我说，“一见钟情还是有些道理的，对于其他的种种爱情，我都不屑一顾。”

“好啦，恭喜你，这就把他给征服了，”斯库达摩尔夫人说道，“我相信他已经完全没有招架之力。我表弟是个很迷人的小伙子，见过许多世面，还很会写情书，我读过最好的情书都是他写的，所以你这也算是一场大胜了。”

听了这话，我非常高兴，对我的爱情俘虏更是极为满意。不过我

觉得自己还是应该摆摆架子，于是我对她说：“斯库达摩尔夫人，这当然好，不过您也知道，我们这些将要继承大笔遗产的年轻小姐可万万不能委身下嫁身无分文的男人。”

“亲爱的霍尔顿小姐，”她说，“关于这一点，我和你一样确信无疑。而且，我向你保证，不管是谁，要是他没有指望发财，我是断然不会怂恿你嫁给他的。默斯格罗夫先生远远谈不上身无分文，他继承了一笔遗产，每年大约有几百镑的收入，将来可能还会大大增加，他还有一处极好的房产，只是眼下仍需要修葺一番就是了。”

“如果是这样的话，”我答道，“那我就说不出什么来反对他了。要是如您所言，他是个见多识广的年轻人，又写得一手好情书，我相信我没有道理因为他倾慕于我而对他挑三拣四。不过，斯库达摩尔夫人，我恐怕不会因此就嫁给他。”

“你当然不是非得嫁给他不可，”夫人说道，“不过你会心甘情愿听凭爱情的摆布。要是我猜得差不离的话，此刻你已经对他情根深种，只是还不自知罢了。”

“啊呀，斯库达摩尔夫人，”我红着脸答道，“您怎么会想到那儿去呢？”

“因为你的眼神、言谈无一不在泄露你的心事，”夫人说道，“得啦，亲爱的亨丽埃塔，把我当作朋友，跟我实话实说吧，在所有认识的男子当中，你是不是最喜欢默斯格罗夫先生？”

“斯库达摩尔夫人，请不要问我此类问题，”我背过脸说道，“我是不好回答的。”

“才不是呢，我的宝贝，”她答道，“现在你已经证实了我的猜测。可是，亨丽埃塔，你既然是爱得其所，却又为何羞于承认，为何不肯向我吐露实情？”

“我并没有羞于承认，”我鼓起勇气说道，“也并非不肯向你吐露实情，厚着脸皮说一句，我确实爱着您的表弟默斯格罗夫先生，这是真心诚意的爱恋，爱上一个相貌英俊的男子并不丢脸。要是他平平无奇，我也许还有理由对这份感情感到羞耻，因为所爱之人不值得，所以这爱情本身也必定低贱。可是您的表弟有着这样的身材与面孔，还有那么漂亮的头发，如此出众的品质令我印象深刻，我为何要羞于承认呢？”

“我的好姑娘（斯库达摩尔夫人说着就热情洋溢地来拥抱我），在这些事情上头，你的看法可真是周到细致，像你这个年纪的人倒很少有这般机敏的洞察力！哦！你这高尚的情怀令我肃然起敬！”

“夫人，果真如此吗？”我说道，“您真是太热心了。不过，斯库达

摩尔夫人，请您告诉我，是您的表弟亲口对您说他爱慕我的吗？如果是这样，那我就会更喜爱他几分，要是连个红颜知己都没有，那他还算哪门子的情郎呢？”

“哦！我的宝贝，”她答道，“你们俩简直是天生的一对。你说的每一个字都让我更加深刻地确信，你们俩意气相投，你们的头脑仿佛受到一股无形的力量驱使，因为你们俩的想法和观点竟是分毫不差。不，就连你们头发的颜色都很相近。是的，亲爱的姑娘，正是可怜又绝望的默斯格罗夫本人对我透露了他的情事。我倒是没觉得吃惊，虽然不知道为什么会这样，但我有种预感，他一定会爱上你。”

“那么，他是如何对您说的？”

“那是在用完元宵之后，我们围坐在炉火旁，聊着无关紧要的话题，其实基本上都是我一个人在说，他心事重重、一言不发，可就在我说到一半的时候，他突然打断了我，用一种夸张至极的语气喊道——

‘是的，我恋爱了，现在我才明白我已拜倒在亨丽埃塔·霍尔顿的石榴裙下——’”

“哦！他这表白的方式，”我说道，“还真是甜蜜！竟然为我作了如此动听的两句诗！只可惜并不押韵！”

“看到你喜欢这两句诗，我也很欣慰，”她答道，“这里头肯定是值得好好品味一番的。‘那么你爱她吗，表弟？’我说道，‘我真替你感到惋惜，尽管你方方面面都无懈可击，有一笔可能大幅增加的可观财产，又有一栋破败失修的漂亮房子，可她是迷人的亨丽埃塔，有位上校向她求过婚，还有位准男爵曾为她举杯祝酒，谁能指望抱得美人归呢？’”

“我曾——”我喊道。

斯库达摩尔夫人却还在往下说。“啊，亲爱的表姐，”他答道，‘有这么多人爱慕着她，我也相当确信自己不大可能赢得她的芳心，不需要您再来泼冷水。不过，我想要为她赴死，成为她迷人魅力的牺牲品，相信无论是您还是美丽的亨丽埃塔本人，肯定都会成全我这美好的心愿。待我死后’他继续说道——”

“哦，斯库达摩尔夫人，”我擦着眼睛说，“这么一个漂亮的人儿竟然会说死！”

“此情此景，的确感人至深。”斯库达摩尔夫人答道，“待我死后，’他说，‘请将我抬去放在她的脚边，也许她会收起不屑，在我那可怜的尸体上洒下一滴同情的泪水。’”

“亲爱的斯库达摩尔夫人，”我打断她道，“快别说这个叫人伤心的话题了，我受不了。”

“哦！我可真喜欢你这温柔可人的性子，无论如何我都不会让你太过伤心的，那我就不说了。”

“还请您接着说吧。”我说道。她便继续说了下去。

“到了那时，’他又说道，‘啊！表姐，想象一下吧，当我感觉到那宝贵的泪水一滴滴落在我脸上，我该会是何等激动！为了一尝这般狂喜的滋味，谁会不愿赴死呢！等我下葬之后，但愿某个比我幸运的年轻人能得到亨丽埃塔女神的青睐，但愿他亦如不幸的默斯格罗夫一般对她一往情深，待我化为尘土之时，但愿他俩成为幸福夫妻的楷模！”

“你可曾听过如此感伤的话语？等他死后叫人将他抬到我的脚边，多么可爱的心愿啊！哦！能怀有这样一个心愿，他的思想必然崇高无比！”

斯库达摩尔夫人接着说道：“‘啊！亲爱的表弟，’我对他说，‘任何女人见到你这高尚的行为，无论她生来是怎样的铁石心肠，也一定会被你融化的；要是亨丽埃塔女神听到你这一番对她幸福的慷慨祝愿，似她那般心软的人，我想她定会怜惜你的情意，努力回报于你。’”哦，表姐，’他答道，‘请不要试图用这种安慰人的好听话来给我希望。不，我不敢奢望能讨得这天使般女子的欢心，除了一死，我已别无他法。’真爱总是叫人意志消沉的，’我答道，‘可是，亲爱的汤姆，我还要给你更大的希望，你是有望征服佳人芳心的。你且放心，我密切关注了她整整一天，我看得明明白白，她心中已然对你情根深种，只是她还不自知罢了。’”

“亲爱的斯库达摩尔夫人，”我喊道，“这事就连我都不知道呢！”

“我适才不是说了吗？你对此尚不自知。我继续对他说：‘我可没有一开始就把这事说出来给你鼓劲儿，意外之喜才更让人高兴。’”不，表姐，’他说道，声音无精打采的，‘你说什么我都不会相信自己能够令亨丽埃塔·霍尔顿心动，要是你在欺骗自己，就请你不要试图来欺骗我。’总而言之，亲爱的，我劝了这灰心丧气的可怜年轻人好几个小时，说你真的喜欢他；到了最后，他终于不再否认我那强有力的论据，相信了我的话，那一刻他激动不已、欣喜若狂，我简直没法形容。”

“哦！亲爱的人儿，”我大声地说，“他爱我爱得多么深情！可是，亲爱的斯库达摩尔夫人，你有没有对他说，我是完全依赖叔父和婶娘过活的？”

“当然，我什么都对他说了。”

“那他怎么说？”

“他大喊大叫，把所有的叔伯姑婶都刻毒抨击了一通；又指责英格兰的法律有问题，明明侄儿侄女缺钱，法律却容许当长辈的将财产抓住不放，还说他要是下议院的议员，就要改革立法机关，消除其一切弊病。”

“哦！这个大好人！他多么有志气啊！”我说。

“他还说，就算他的房子已经一切就绪待你入住，他也不敢自作多情，以为美丽的亨丽埃塔会为他自降身份，放弃已经习以为常的奢华与尊荣，却只换得他那有限的收入所能负担的舒适雅致。我对他说，她是不可能这么做的，如今她有权有势且行事高贵，用手中的权力对同胞中的贫穷民众广施善行，要是你认为她能够仅仅为了成全你和她自己而放弃权势，这对她可不公平。”

“那是当然，”我说，“我确实时不时地会做点善事。默斯格罗夫先生听了这话怎么说？”

“他回答说，他虽然忧伤，却不得不承认我所说的就是事实，所以如果他有这个福分，注定要和美丽的亨丽埃塔结为夫妻，那么不论他有多么迫不及待，他都得下定决心等下去，等待那幸运的日子来临，等到她脱离那些坏亲戚的辖制，等到她能够嫁与他为妻的那一天。”

他是多么高尚的人啊！哦！玛蒂尔达！我是何其幸运，竟然将要成为他的妻子！我的婶婶在喊我过去做馅饼了。再见，我亲爱的朋友。

H.霍尔顿敬上

[17] 本篇亦出自 *A Collection of Letters*（《书信集》），是第五封。

一位年轻女子的来信 [18]

(她的感情过于强烈，判断力却不足，因而犯下许多违心之过)

亲爱的埃莉诺，我曾有过许多烦恼，也曾历经浮浮沉沉，虽然吃了苦头，但唯一令我感到安慰的就是，在仔细审视自己的所作所为之后，我相信这些完全是我咎由自取。我很小的时候便谋害了自己的父亲，其后又害死了母亲，现在我打算要去谋杀自己的姐姐了。我的宗教信仰经常变来变去，如今我也不知道自己还相信什么。过去这十二年来，我在每一场公开审判中都做了伪证，还伪造了我自己的遗嘱。总而言之，几乎没有哪一种罪行是我不曾犯过的，不过现在我要改过自新了。皇家骑兵卫队的马丁上校向我求婚了，我们不日即将完婚。我俩的恋爱颇不寻常，我来给你讲一讲。马丁上校是已故约翰·马丁爵士的次子。爵爷过世的时候富可敌国，却将大部分财产——大约八百万英镑——都留给了现任的托马斯爵士，只给三位幼子留下每人十万英镑遗产。凭着他这一点点微薄的收入，上校过了近四个月还算惬意的生活，然后他突然心血来潮，决意将长兄的财产全都夺来。他伪造了一份新遗嘱在法庭上出示，可是除了他自己，再没有别人愿意宣誓，保证这才是真遗嘱，然而他发了太多誓，没人相信他。当时我刚好从法庭门口经过，法官便召我进去，他对上校说我是一位淑女，愿意为了正义的目标见证一切，所以建议他来请求我。简而言之，这桩事件很快便妥善解决。上校和我宣誓说这份遗嘱属实，托马斯爵士只得交出他非法获得的财富。满怀感激的上校隔天便来拜访我，向我求了婚。现在我要去谋杀我姐姐了。

安娜·帕克敬上

[18] 出自Scraps (《涂鸦集》)，该集子包含五篇小短文，本文是第三篇。

少女奥斯汀——《漂亮的卡桑德拉》译后记

《漂亮的卡桑德拉》这本小集子收录了简·奥斯汀少女时代的六篇作品，其中前三篇勉强可算完整的短篇小说，后三篇就只能算作练笔片段了。这些作品全都创作于1787年至1793年之间，彼时奥斯汀才不过是个尚未成年的小姑娘，大约相当于如今的中学生。记得曾经看过一部传记电影——《成为简·奥斯汀》，如果说这部电影试着还原了奥斯汀的感情生活，那么这个小小的选集则让读者可以一窥她在创作方面的成长历程。

说实话，翻译时我是吃了一惊的，尤其是前三篇的荒谬与幼稚，其中有些地方甚至不合逻辑到令人难以置信的地步。比如在《杰克与爱丽丝》一文中，作者描写约翰逊家的起居室有“半英里宽、3/4英里长”，这相当于八百多米宽、一千两百多米长，即便是用了夸张的修辞手法，恐也有过度之嫌。再比如在《亨利与伊丽莎》一文中，奥斯汀大笔一挥，让公爵夫人派了三百人带着武器去追捕私奔的亨利与伊丽莎。还有《漂亮的卡桑德拉》，虽然由十二章构成，然而每章只有短短一句话，就连正文之前的献词都比任何一个章节要长。看到这三篇小说里漏洞百出的情节，再想想这些乃是出自一个十二三岁的小女孩之手，我不由得暗笑自己太过较真。她写作一是因为自己热爱，二是为了娱乐家人，不过是些练笔之作，有多少人在这个年纪还在努力消除语法错误呢，她却已经刻画出了个性鲜明的众多人物。

后三篇的书信体片段写作时间略晚一些，笔触也稍显成熟。其中《一位处境困难的年轻女子写给友人的信》是全书我最爱的篇章，格雷维尔夫人身上可不就能看见《傲慢与偏见》中凯瑟琳·德波夫人的影子？她势利专横，自以为是，允许玛丽亚小姐在马车上面朝前方坐着便觉得这是赐予她的莫大恩惠；她认为穷人就不该穿新衣，晚上也不应该吃夜宵，而应当为了节省蜡烛早早睡下；她明知人家家里正是用餐时间，却特地赶在此时到访，可是又不肯下车，叫玛丽亚冒着刺骨寒风听她在马车里絮絮叨叨，还说出了这样的话：“我是不会让我的女儿们在这种天气像你这样站在外头的。可是有一种人，要么就是感觉不到冷，要么就是不知道体贴别人。”鲜活生动的人物形象跃然纸上，对话中的讽刺意味读来令人忍俊不禁，稍加改动便能拍出一集精彩的好剧。

“世界上这一半人的乐趣，那一半的人不会懂。”（One half of the world cannot understand the pleasures of the other.）年届四旬

的简·奥斯汀在《爱玛》一书中借由双十年华的女主角之口说出了这句至理名言。不经历少女时代的那些稚嫩可笑，何来成熟之后的睿智洞明？从译近十载，这是我译得最开心的一本书。得遇才华横溢的少女奥斯汀，并穿越时空与她同行一段，我何其幸运。

夏星

2018年8月

Jane
Austen

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

The
Beautifull
Cassandra

N° 21

‘She has
many rare
and charming
qualities, but
Sobriety is not
one of them . . .’

Jack and Alice

a novel

Is respectfully inscribed to Francis William Austen Esq^r Midshipman on board his Majesty's Ship the Perseverance

by his obedient humble

Servant The Author

CHAPTER THE FIRST

Mr Johnson was once upon a time about 53; in a twelve-month afterwards he was 54, which so much delighted him that he was determined to celebrate his next Birth day by giving a Masquerade to his Children and Freinds. Accordingly on the Day he attained his 55th year tickets were dispatched to all his Neighbours to that purpose. His acquaintance indeed in that part of the World were not very numerous as they consisted only of Lady Williams, Mr and Mrs Jones, Charles Adams and the 3 Miss Simpsons, who composed the neighbourhood of Pammydiddle and formed the Masquerade.

Before I proceed to give an account of the Evening, it will be proper to describe to my reader, the persons and Characters of the party introduced to his acquaintance.

Mr and Mrs Jones were both rather tall and very passionate, but were in other respects, good tempered, wellbehaved People. Charles Adams was an amiable, accomplished and bewitching young Man; of so dazzling a Beauty that none but Eagles could look him in the Face.

Miss Simpson was pleasing in her person, in her Manners and in her Disposition; an unbounded ambition was her only fault. Her second sister Sukey was Envious, Spitefull and Malicious. Her person was short, fat and disagreeable. Cecilia (the youngest) was perfectly handsome but too affected to be pleasing.

In Lady Williams every virtue met. She was a widow with a

handsome Jointure and the remains of a very hand-some face. Tho'Benevolent and Candid, she was Generous and sincere; Tho'Pious and Good, she was Religious and amiable, and Tho'Elegant and Agreeable, she was Pol-ished and Entertaining.

The Johnsons were a family of Love, and though a little addicted to the Bottle and the Dice, had many good Qualities.

Such was the party assembled in the elegant Drawing Room of Johnson Court, amongst which the pleasing figure of a Sultana was the most remarkable of the female Masks. Of the Males a Mask representing the Sun, was the most universally admired. The Beams that darted from his Eyes were like those of that glorious Luminary tho'infinately superior. So strong were they that no one dared venture within half a mile of them; he had therefore the best part of the Room to himself, its size not amount-ing to more than 3 quarters of a mile in length and half a one in breadth. The Gentleman at last finding the feirce-ness of his beams to be very inconvenient to the concourse by obliging them to croud together in one corner of the room, half shut his eyes by which means, the Company discovered him to be Charles Adams in his plain green Coat, without any mask at all.

When their astonishment was a little subsided their attention was attracted by 2 Dominos who advanced in a horrible Passion; they were both very tall, but seemed in other respects to have many good qualities. 'These,' said the witty Charles, 'these are M^r and M^{rs} Jones,' and so indeed they were.

No one could imagine who was the Sultana! Till at length on her addressing a beautifull Flora who was reclining in a studied attitude on a couch, with 'Oh Cecilia, I wish I was really what I pretend to be', she was discovered by the never failing genius of Charles Adams, to be the elegant but ambitious Caroline Simpson, and the person to whom she addressed herself, he rightly imagined to be her lovely but affected sister Cecilia.

The Company now advanced to a Gaming Table where sat 3 Dominos (each with a bottle in their hand) deeply engaged; but a female in the character of Virtue fled with hasty footsteps from the shocking scene, whilst a little fat woman representing Envy, sate alternately on the fore-heads of the 3 Gamesters. Charles Adams was still as bright as ever; he soon discovered the party at play to

be the 3 Johnsons, Envy to be Sukey Simpson and Virtue to be Lady Williams.

The Masks were then all removed and the Company retired to another room, to partake of an elegant and well managed Entertainment, after which the Bottle being pretty briskly pushed about by the 3 Johnsons, the whole party not excepting even Virtue were carried home, Dead Drunk.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

For three months did the Masquerade afford ample subject for conversation to the inhabitants of Pammydiddle; but no character at it was so fully expatiated on as Charles Adams. The singularity of his appearance, the beams which darted from his eyes, the brightness of his Wit, and the whole tout ensemble of his person had subdued the hearts of so many of the young Ladies, that of the six present at the Masquerade but five had returned uncap-tivated. Alice Johnson was the unhappy sixth whose heart had not been able to withstand the power of his Charms. But as it may appear strange to my Readers, that so much worth and Excellence as he possessed should have conquered only hers, it will be necessary to inform them that the Miss Simpsons were defended from his Power by Ambition, Envy, and Selfadmiration.

Every wish of Caroline was centered in a titled Husband; whilst in Sukey such superior excellence could only raise her Envy not her Love, and Cecilia was too tenderly attached to herself to be pleased with any one besides. As for Lady Williams and M^{rs} Jones, the former of them was too sensible, to fall in love with one so much her Junior and the latter, tho' very tall and very passionate was too fond of her Husband to think of such a thing.

Yet in spite of every endeavour on the part of Miss Johnson to discover any attachment to her in him; the cold and indifferent heart of Charles Adams still to all appearance, preserved its native freedom; polite to all but partial to none, he still remained the lovely, the lively, but insensible Charles Adams.

One evening, Alice finding herself somewhat heated by wine (no very uncommon case) determined to seek a relief for her disordered Head and Love-sick Heart in the Con-versation of the intelligent Lady Williams.

She found her Ladyship at home as was in general the Case, for she was not fond of going out, and like the great Sir Charles Grandison scorned to deny herself when at Home, as she looked on that fashionable method of shut-ting out disagreeable Visitors, as little less than downright Bigamy.

In spite of the wine she had been drinking, poor Alice was uncommonly out of spirits; she could think of nothing but Charles Adams, she could talk of nothing but him, and in short spoke so openly that Lady Williams soon discovered the unreturned affection she bore him, which excited her Pity and Compassion so strongly that she addressed her in the following Manner.

‘I perceive but too plainly my dear Miss Johnson, that your Heart has not been able to withstand the fascinating Charms of this Young Man and I pity you sincerely. Is it a first Love?’

‘It is.’

‘I am still more greived to hear that ; I am myself a sad example of the Miseries, in general attendant on a first Love and I am determined for the future to avoid the like Misfortune. I wish it may not be too late for you to do the same; if it is not endeavour my dear Girl to secure yourself from so great a Danger. A second attachment is seldom attended with any serious consequences; against that therefore I have nothing to say. Preserve yourself from a first Love and you need not fear a second.’

‘You mentioned Madam something of your having yourself been a sufferer by the misfortune you are so good as to wish me to avoid. Will you favour me with your Life and Adventures?’

‘Willingly my Love.’

CHAPTER THE THIRD

‘My Father was a gentleman of considerable Fortune in Berkshire; myself and a few more his only Children. I was but six years old when I had the misfortune of losing my Mother and being at that time young and Tender, my father instead of sending me to School, procured an able handed Governess to superintend my Education at Home. My Brothers were placed at Schools suitable to their Ages and my Sisters being all younger than myself, remained still under the Care of their Nurse.

‘Miss Dickins was an excellent Governess. She instructed me in the Paths of Virtue; under her tuition I daily became more amiable, and might perhaps by this time have nearly attained perfection, had not my worthy Preceptress been torn from my arms, e’er I had attained my seventeenth year. I never shall forget her last words. “My dear Kitty” she said. “Good night t’ye.” I never saw her afterwards,’ continued Lady Williams wiping her eyes, ‘She eloped with the Butler the same night.

‘I was invited the following year by a distant relation of my Father’s to spend the Winter with her in town. M^{rs} Watkins was a Lady of Fashion, Family and fortune; she was in general esteemed a pretty Woman, but I never thought her very handsome, for my part. She had too high a forehead, Her eyes were too small and she had too much colour.’

‘How can that be?’ interrupted Miss Johnson reddening with anger; ‘Do you think that any one can have too much colour?’

‘Indeed I do, and I’ll tell you why I do my dear Alice; when a person has too great a degree of red in their Complexion, it gives their face in my opinion, too red a look.’

‘But can a face my Lady have too red a look?’

‘Certainly my dear Miss Johnson and I’ll [tell] you why. When a face has too red a look it does not appear to so much advantage as it would were it paler.’

‘Pray Ma’am proceed in your story.’

‘Well, as I said before, I was invited by this Lady to spend some weeks with her in town. Many Gentlemen thought her Handsome but in my opinion, Her forehead was too high, her eyes too small and she had too much colour.’

‘In that Madam as I said before your Ladyship must have been mistaken. M^{rs} Watkins could not have too much colour since no one can have too much.’

‘Excuse me my Love if I do not agree with you in that particular. Let me explain myself clearly; my idea of the case is this. When a Woman has too great a proportion of red in her Cheeks, she must have too much colour.’

‘But Madam I deny that it is possible for any one to have too

great a proportion of red in their Cheeks.'

'What my Love not if they have too much colour?'

Miss Johnson was now out of all patience, the more so perhaps as Lady Williams still remained so inflexibly cool. It must be remembered however that her Ladyship had in one respect by far the advantage of Alice; I mean in not being drunk, for heated with wine and raised by Pas-sion, she could have little command of her Temper.

The Dispute at length grew so hot on the part of Alice that 'From Words she almost came to Blows' When M^r Johnson luckily entered and with some difficulty forced her away from Lady Williams, M^{rs} Watkins and her red cheeks.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

My Readers may perhaps imagine that after such a fracas, no intimacy could longer subsist between the Johnsons and Lady Williams, but in that they are mistaken for her Ladyship was too sensible to be angry at a conduct which she could not help perceiving to be the natural consequence of inebriety and Alice had too sincere a respect for Lady Williams and too great a relish for her Claret, not to make every concession in her power.

A few days after their reconciliation Lady Williams called on Miss Johnson to propose a walk in a Citron Grove which led from her Ladyship's pigstye to Charles Adams's Horsepond. Alice was too sensible of Lady Williams's kindness in proposing such a walk and too much pleased with the prospect of seeing at the end of it, a Horsepond of Charles's, not to accept it with visible delight. They had not proceeded far before she was roused from the reflection of the happiness she was going to enjoy, by Lady Williams's thus addressing her.

'I have as yet forborn my dear Alice to continue the narrative of my Life from an unwillingness of recalling to your Memory a scene which (since it reflects on you rather disgrace than credit) had better be forgot than remembered.'

Alice had already begun to colour up and was begin-ning to speak, when her Ladyship perceiving her displeasure, continued thus.

‘I am afraid my dear Girl that I have offended you by what I have just said; I assure you I do not mean to dis-tress you by a retrospection of what cannot now be helped; considering all things I do not think you so much to blame as many People do; for when a person is in Liquor, there is no answering for what they may do.’

‘Madam, this is not to be borne; I insist—’

‘My dear Girl don’t vex yourself about the matter; I assure you I have entirely forgiven every thing respecting it; indeed I was not angry at the time, because as I saw all along, you were nearly dead drunk. I knew you could not help saying the strange things you did. But I see I distress you; so I will change the subject and desire it may never again be mentioned; remember it is all forgot-I will now pursue my story; but I must insist upon not giving you any description of M^{rs} Watkins; it would only be reviving old stories and as you never saw her, it can be nothing to you, if her forehead was too high, her eyes were too small, or if she had too much colour.’

‘Again! Lady Williams : this is too much—’

So provoked was poor Alice at this renewal of the old story, that I know not what might have been the consequence of it, had not their attention been engaged by another object. A lovely young Woman lying apparently in great pain beneath a Citron-tree, was an object too interesting not to attract their notice. Forgetting their own dispute they both with sympathizing Tenderness advanced towards her and accosted her in these terms.

‘You seem fair Nymph to be labouring under some misfortune which we shall be happy to relieve if you will inform us what it is. Will you favour us with your Life and adventures?’

‘Willingly Ladies, if you will be so kind as to be seated.’ They took their places and she thus began.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

‘I am a native of North Wales and my Father is one of the most capital Taylors in it. Having a numerous family, he was easily prevailed on by a sister of my Mother’s who is a widow in good circumstances and keeps an alehouse in the next Village to ours, to let her take me and breed me up at her own expence. Accordingly I have lived with her for the last 8 years of my Life, during which

time she provided me with some of the first rate Masters, who taught me all the accomplishments requisite for one of my sex and rank. Under their instructions I learned Dan-cing, Music, Drawing and various Languages, by which means I became more accomplished than any other Tay-lor's Daughter in Wales. Never was there a happier Creature than I was, till within the last half year-but I should have told you before that the principal Estate in our Neighbourhood belongs to Charles Adams, the owner of the brick House, you see yonder.'

'Charles Adams!' exclaimed the astonished Alice; 'are you acquainted with Charles Adams?'

'To my sorrow madam I am. He came about half a year ago to receive the rents of the Estate I have just men-tioned. At that time I first saw him; as you seem ma'am acquainted with him, I need not describe to you how charming he is. I could not resist his attractions;—'

'Ah! who can,' said Alice with a deep sigh.

'My Aunt being in terms of the greatest intimacy with his cook, determined, at my request, to try whether she could discover, by means of her freind if there were any chance of his returning my affection. For this purpose she went one evening to drink tea with Mrs Susan, who in the course of Conversation mentioned the goodness of her Place and the Goodness of her Master; upon which my Aunt began pumping her with so much dexterity that in a short time Susan owned, that she did not think her Master would ever marry, "for (said she) he has often and often declared to me that his wife, whoever she might be, must possess, Youth, Beauty, Birth, Wit, Merit, and Money. I have many a time (she continued) endeavoured to reason him out of his resolution and to convince him of the improbability of his ever meeting with such a Lady; but my arguments have had no effect and he continues as firm in his determination as ever." You may imagine Ladies my distress on hearing this; for I was fearfull that tho'possessed of Youth, Beauty, Wit and Merit, and tho'the probable Heiress of my Aunts House and business, he might think me deficient in Rank, and in being so, unworthy of his hand.

'However I was determined to make a bold push and therefore wrote him a very kind letter, offering him with great tenderness my

hand and heart. To this I received an angry and peremptory refusal, but thinking it might be rather the effect of his modesty than any thing else, I pressed him again on the subject. But he never answered any more of my Letters and very soon afterwards left the Country. As soon as I heard of his departure I wrote to him here, informing him that I should shortly do myself the honour of waiting on him at Pammydiddle, to which I received no answer; therefore choosing to take, Silence for Consent, I left Wales, unknown to my Aunt, and arrived here after a tedious Journey this Morning. On enquiring for his House I was directed thro' this Wood, to the one you there see. With a heart elated by the expected happiness of beholding him I entered it and had proceeded thus far in my progress thro' it, when I found myself suddenly seized by the leg and on examin-ing the cause of it, found that I was caught in one of the steel traps so common in gentlemen's grounds.'

'Ah,' cried Lady Williams, 'how fortunate we are to meet with you; since we might otherwise perhaps have shared the like misfortune—'

'It is indeed happy for you Ladies, that I should have been a short time before you. I screamed as you may easily imagine till the woods resounded again and till one of the inhuman Wretch's servants came to my assistance and released me from my dreadful prison, but not before one of my legs was entirely broken.'

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

At this melancholy recital the fair eyes of Lady Williams, were suffused in tears and Alice could not help exclaiming,

'Oh! cruel Charles to wound the hearts and legs of all the fair.'

Lady Williams now interposed and observed that the young Lady's leg ought to be set without farther delay. After examining the fracture therefore, she immediately began and performed the operation with great skill which was the more wonderfull on account of her having never performed such a one before. Lucy, then arose from the ground and finding that she could walk with the greatest ease, accompanied them to Lady Williams's House at her Ladyship's particular request.

The perfect form, the beautifull face, and elegant man-ners of Lucy so won on the affections of Alice that when they parted, which

was not till after Supper, she assured her that except her Father, Brother, Uncles, Aunts, Cousins and other relations, Lady Williams, Charles Adams and a few dozen more of particular freinds, she loved her better than almost any other person in the world.

Such a flattering assurance of her regard would justly have given much pleasure to the object of it, had she not plainly perceived that the amiable Alice had partaken too freely of Lady Williams's claret.

Her Ladyship (whose discernment was great) read in the intelligent countenance of Lucy her thoughts on the subject and as soon as Miss Johnson had taken her leave, thus addressed her.

'When you are more intimately acquainted with my Alice you will not be surprised, Lucy, to see the dear Creature drink a little too much; for such things happen every day. She has many rare and charming qualities, but Sobriety is not one of them. The whole Family are indeed a sad drunken set. I am sorry to say too that I never knew three such thorough Gamesters as they are, more particu-larly Alice. But she is a charming girl. I fancy not one of the sweetest tempers in the world; to be sure I have seen her in such passions! However she is a sweet young Woman. I am sure you'll like her. I scarcely know any one so amiable. - Oh! that you could but have seen her the other Evening! How she raved! and on such a trifle too! She is indeed a most pleasing Girl! I shall always love her!'

'She appears by your ladyship's account to have many good qualities', replied Lucy. 'Oh! a thousand,' answered Lady Williams; 'tho'I am very partial to her, and perhaps am blinded by my affection, to her real defects.'

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

The next morning brought the three Miss Simpsons to wait on Lady Williams, who received them with the utmost politeness and introduced to their acquaintance Lucy, with whom the eldest was so much pleased that at parting she declared her sole ambition was to have her accompany them the next morning to Bath, whither they were going for some weeks.

'Lucy,' said Lady Williams, 'is quite at her own disposal and if she chooses to accept so kind an invitation, I hope she will not

hesitate, from any motives of delicacy on my account. I know not indeed how I shall ever be able to part with her. She never was at Bath and I should think that it would be a most agreeable Jaunt to her. Speak my Love,' continued she, turning to Lucy, 'what say you to accompanying these Ladies? I shall be miserable without you - t'will be a most pleasant tour to you - I hope you'll go; if you do I am sure t'will be the Death of me-pray be persuaded'—

Lucy begged leave to decline the honour of accompanying them, with many expressions of gratitude for the extream politeness of Miss Simpson in inviting her.

Miss Simpson appeared much disappointed by her refusal. Lady Williams insisted on her going - declared that she would never forgive her if she did not, and that she should never survive it if she did, and inshort used such persuasive arguments that it was at length resolved she was to go. The Miss Simpsons called for her at ten o'clock the next morning and Lady Williams had soon the satisfaction of receiving from her young freind, the pleasing intelligence of their safe arrival in Bath.

It may now be proper to return to the Hero of this Novel, the brother of Alice, of whom I beleive I have scarcely ever had occasion to speak; which may perhaps be partly oweing to his unfortunate propensity to Liquor, which so compleatly deprived him of the use of those faculties Nature had endowed him with, that he never did anything worth mentioning. His Death happened a short time after Lucy's departure and was the natural Consequence of this pernicious practice. By his decease, his sister became the sole inheritress of a very large fortune, which as it gave her fresh Hopes of rendering herself acceptable as a wife to Charles Adams could not fail of being most pleasing to her - and as the effect was Joyfull the Cause could scarcely be lamented.

Finding the violence of her attachment to him daily augment, she at length disclosed it to her Father and desired him to propose a union between them to Charles. Her father consented and set out one morning to open the affair to the young Man. M^r Johnson being a man of few words his part was soon performed and the answer he received was as follows—

'Sir, I may perhaps be expected to appear pleased at and gratefull for the offer you have made me : but let me tell you that I

consider it as an affront. I look upon myself to be Sir a perfect Beauty - where would you see a finer figure or a more charming face. Then, sir I imagine my Manners and Address to be of the most polished kind; there is a certain elegance a peculiar sweetness in them that I never saw equalled and cannot describe—. Partiality aside, I am certainly more accomplished in every Language, every Science, every Art and every thing than any other person in Europe. My temper is even, my virtues innumerable, my self unparalleled. Since such Sir is my character, what do you mean by wishing me to marry your Daughter? Let me give you a short sketch of yourself and of her. I look upon you Sir to be a very good sort of Man in the main; a drunken old Dog to be sure, but that's nothing to me. Your daughter sir, is neither sufficiently beautiful, sufficiently amiable, sufficiently witty, nor sufficiently rich for me—. I expect nothing more in my wife than my wife will find in me - Perfection. These sir, are my sentiments and I honour myself for having such. One friend I have and glory in having but one—. She is at present preparing my Dinner, but if you choose to see her, she shall come and she will inform you that these have ever been my sentiments.'

Mr Johnson was satisfied; and expressing himself to be much obliged to Mr Adams for the characters he had favoured him with of himself and his Daughter, took his leave.

The unfortunate Alice on receiving from her father the sad account of the ill success his visit had been attended with, could scarcely support the disappointment - She flew to her Bottle and it was soon forgot.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

While these affairs were transacting at Pammydiddle, Lucy was conquering every Heart at Bath. A fortnight's residence there had nearly effaced from her remembrance the captivating form of Charles - The recollection of what her Heart had formerly suffered by his charms and her Leg by his trap, enabled her to forget him with tolerable Ease, which was what she determined to do; and for that purpose dedicated five minutes in every day to the employment of driving him from her remembrance.

Her second Letter to Lady Williams contained the pleasing intelligence of her having accomplished her undertaking to her

entire satisfaction; she mentioned in it also an offer of marriage she had received from the Duke of——an elderly Man of noble fortune whose ill health was the chief inducement of his Journey to Bath. 'I am distressed (she continued) to know whether I mean to accept him or not. There are a thousand advantages to be derived from a marriage with the Duke, for besides those more inferior ones of Rank and Fortune it will pro-cure me a home, which of all other things is what I most desire. Your Ladyship's kind wish of my always remaining with you, is noble and generous but I cannot think of becoming so great a burden on one I so much love and esteem. That One should receive obligations only from those we despise, is a sentiment instilled into my mind by my worthy Aunt, in my early years, and cannot in my opinion be too strictly adhered to. The excellent woman of whom I now speak, is I hear too much incensed by my imprudent departure from Wales, to receive me again—. I most earnestly wish to leave the Ladies I am now with. Miss Simpson is indeed (setting aside ambition) very ami-able, but her 2d Sister the envious and malvolent Sukey is too disagreeable to live with. - I have reason to think that the admiration I have met with in the circles of the great at this Place, has raised her Hatred and Envy; for often has she threatened, and sometimes endeavoured to cut my throat. - Your Ladyship will therefore allow that I am not wrong in wishing to leave Bath, and in wishing to have a home to receive me, when I do. I shall expect with impatience your advice concerning the Duke and am your most obliged

etc etc - Lucy.'

Lady Williams sent her, her opinion on the subject in the following Manner.

'Why do you hesitate my dearest Lucy, a moment with respect to the Duke? I have enquired into his Character and find him to be an unprincipaled, illiterate Man. Never shall my Lucy be united to such a one! He has a princely fortune, which is every day encreasing. How nobly will you spend it!, what credit will you give him in the eyes of all! How much will he be respected on his Wife's account! But why my dearest Lucy, why will you not at once decide this affair by returning to me and never leav-ing me again? Altho'I admire your noble sentiments with respect to obligations, yet, let

me beg that they may not prevent your making me happy. It will to be sure be a great expence to me, to have you always with me - I shall not be able to support it - but what is that in comparison with the happiness I shall enjoy in your society?—'twill ruin me I know- you will not therefore surely, withstand these arguments, or refuse to return to yours most affectionately-etc etc.

C. Williams'

CHAPTER THE NINTH

What might have been the effect of her Ladyship's advice, had it ever been received by Lucy, is uncertain, as it reached Bath a few Hours after she had breathed her last. She fell a sacrifice to the Envy and Malice of Sukey who jealous of her superior charms took her by poison from an admiring World at the age of seventeen.

Thus fell the amiable and lovely Lucy whose Life had been marked by no crime, and stained by no blemish but her imprudent departure from her Aunts, and whose death was sincerely lamented by every one who knew her. Among the most afflicted of her freinds were Lady Wil-liams, Miss Johnson and the Duke; the 2 last of whom had a most sincere regard for her, more particularly Alice, who had spent a whole evening in her company and had never thought of her since. His Grace's affliction may likewise be easily accounted for, since he lost one for whom he had experienced during the last ten days, a tender affection and sincere regard. He mourned her loss with unshaken constancy for the next fortnight at the end of which time, he gratified the ambition of Caroline Simpson by raising her to the rank of a Dutchess. Thus was she at length rendered compleatly happy in the gratification of her favourite passion. Her sister the perfidious Sukey, was likewise shortly after exalted in a manner she truly deserved, and by her actions appeared to have always desired. Her barbarous Murder was discovered and in spite of every interceding freind she was speedily raised to the Gallows—. The beautifull but affected Cecilia was too sensible of her own superior charms, not to imagine that if Caroline could engage a Duke, she might without censure aspire to the affections of some Prince - and knowing that those of her native Country were chiefly engaged, she left England and I have since heard is at present the favourite Sultana of the great Mogul—.

In the mean time the inhabitants of Pammydiddle were in a state of the greatest astonishment and Wonder, a report being circulated of the intended marriage of Charles Adams. The Lady's name was still a secret. M^r and M^{rs} Jones imagined it to be, Miss Johnson; but she knew better; all her fears were centered in his Cook, when to the astonishment of every one, he was publicly united to Lady Williams—

Finis

Henry and Eliza

a novel

Is humbly dedicated to Miss Cooper by her obedient

Humble Servant

The Author

As Sir George and Lady Harcourt were superintending the Labours of their Haymakers, rewarding the industry of some by smiles of approbation, and punishing the idleness of others, by a cudgel, they perceived lying closely concealed beneath the thick foliage of a Haycock, a beautifull little Girl not more than 3 months old.

Touched with the enchanting Graces of her face and delighted with the infantine tho'sprightly answers she returned to their many questions, they resolved to take her home and, having no Children of their own, to edu-cate her with care and cost.

Being good People themselves, their first and principal care was to incite in her a Love of Virtue and a Hatred of Vice, in which they so well succeeded (Eliza having a natural turn that way herself) that when she grew up, she was the delight of all who knew her.

Beloved by Lady Harcourt, adored by Sir George and admired by all the World, she lived in a continued course of uninterrupted Happiness, till she had attained her eighteenth year, when happening one day to be detected in stealing a banknote of 50£, she was turned out of doors by her inhuman Benefactors. Such a transition to one who did not possess so noble and exalted a mind as Eliza, would have been Death, but she, happy in the conscious knowledge of her own Excellence, amused herself, as she sate beneath a tree with making and singing the following Lines.

SONG.

Though misfortunes my footsteps may ever attend

I hope I shall never have need of a Freind

as an innocent Heart I will ever preserve

and will never from Virtue's dear boundaries swerve.

Having amused herself some hours, with this song and her own pleasing reflections, she arose and took the road to M.a small market town of which place her most intim-ate freind kept the red Lion.

To this freind she immediately went, to whom having recounted her late misfortune, she communicated her wish of getting into some family in the capacity of Hum-ble Companion.

Mrs Wilson, who was the most amiable creature on earth, was no sooner acquainted with her Desire, than she sate down in the Bar and wrote the following Letter to the Dutchess of F., the woman whom of all others, she most Esteemed.

‘TO THE DUTCHESS OF F.’

Receive into your Family, at my request a young woman of unexceptionable Character, who is so good as to choose your Society in preference to going to Service. Hasten, and take her from the arms of your

Sarah Wilson.

The Dutchess, whose freindship for M^{rs} Wilson would have carried her any lengths, was overjoyed at such an opportunity of obliging her and accordingly sate out immediately on the receipt of her letter for the red Lion, which she reached the same Evening. The Dutchess of F. was about 45 and a half; Her passions were strong, her freindships firm and her Enmities, unconquerable. She was a widow and had only one Daughter who was on the point of marriage with a young Man of considerable fortune.

The Dutchess no sooner beheld our Heroine than throwing her arms around her neck, she declared herself so much pleased with her, that she was resolved they never more should part. Eliza was delighted with such a pro-testation of freindship, and after taking a

most affecting leave of her dear M^{rs} Wilson, accompanied her grace the next morning to her seat in Surry.

With every expression of regard did the Dutchess introduce her to Lady Harriet, who was so much pleased with her appearance that she besought her, to consider her as her Sister, which Eliza with the greatest Condescension promised to do.

Mr Cecil, the Lover of Lady Harriet, being often with the family was often with Eliza. A mutual Love took place and Cecil having declared his first, prevailed on Eliza to consent to a private union, which was easy to be effected, as the Dutchess's chaplain being very much in love with Eliza himself, would they were certain do anything to oblige her.

The Dutchess and Lady Harriet being engaged one evening to an assembly, they took the opportunity of their absence and were united by the enamoured Chaplain.

When the Ladies returned, their amazement was great at finding instead of Eliza the following Note.

‘Madam

We are married and gone.

Henry and Eliza Cecil.’

Her Grace as soon as she had read the letter, which sufficiently explained the whole affair, flew into the most violent passion and after having spent an agreeable half hour, in calling them by all the shocking Names her rage could suggest to her, sent out after them 300 armed Men, with orders not to return without their Bodies, dead or alive; intending that if they should be brought to her in the latter condition to have them put to Death in some torture-like manner, after a few years Confinement.

In the mean time Cecil and Eliza continued their flight to the Continent, which they judged to be more secure than their native Land, from the dreadful effects of the Dutchess's vengeance, which they had so much reason to apprehend.

In France they remained 3 years, during which time they became the parents of two Boys, and at the end of it Eliza became a widow without any thing to support either her or her Children.

They had lived since their Marriage at the rate of 12 , 000£ a year, of which M^r Cecil's estate being rather less than the twentieth part, they had been able to save but a trifle, having lived to the utmost extent of their Income.

Eliza, being perfectly conscious of the derangement in their affairs, immediately on her Husband's death set sail for England, in a man of War of 55 Guns, which they had built in their more prosperous Days. But no sooner had she stepped on Shore at Dover, with a Child in each hand, than she was seized by the officers of the Dutchess, and conducted by them to a snug little Newgate of their Lady's which she had erected for the reception of her own private Prisoners.

No sooner had Eliza entered her Dungeon than the first thought which occurred to her, was how to get out of it again.

She went to the Door; but it was locked. She looked at the Window; but it was barred with iron; disappointed in both her expectations, she despaired of effecting her Escape, when she fortunately perceived in a Corner of her Cell, a small saw and Ladder of ropes. With the saw she instantly went to work and in a few weeks had dis-placed every Bar but one to which she fastened the Ladder.

A difficulty then occurred which for some time, she knew not how to obviate. Her Children were too small to get down the Ladder by themselves, nor would it be possible for her to take them in her arms, when she did. At last she determined to fling down all her Cloathes, of which she had a large Quantity, and then having given them strict Charge not to hurt themselves, threw her Children after them. She herself with ease descended by the Ladder, at the bottom of which she had the pleasure of finding Her little boys in perfect Health and fast asleep.

Her wardrobe she now saw a fatal necessity of selling, both for the preservation of her Children and herself. With tears in her eyes, she parted with these last reliques of her former Glory, and with the money she got for them, bought others more usefull, some playthings for her Boys and a gold Watch for herself.

But scarcely was she provided with the above-mentioned necessities, than she began to find herself rather hungry, and had

reason to think, by their biting off two of her fin-gers, that her Children were much in the same situation.

To remedy these unavoidable misfortunes, she deter-mined to return to her old freinds, Sir George and Lady Harcourt, whose generosity she had so often experienced and hoped to experience as often again.

She had about 40 miles to travel before she could reach their hospitable Mansion, of which having walked 30 without stopping, she found herself at the Entrance of a Town, where often in happier times, she had accom-pa-nied Sir George and Lady Harcourt to regale themselves with a cold collation at one of the Inns.

The reflections that her adventures since the last time she had partaken of these happy Junketings , afforded her, occupied her mind, for some time, as she sate on the steps at the door of a Gentleman's house. As soon as these reflections were ended, she arose and determined to take her station at the very inn, she remembered with so much delight, from the Company of which, as they went in and out, she hoped to receive some Charitable Gratuity.

She had but just taken her post at the Innyard before a Carriage drove out of it, and on turning the Corner at which she was stationed, stopped to give the Postilion an opportunity of admiring the beauty of the prospect. Eliza then advanced to the carriage and was going to request their Charity, when on fixing her Eyes on the Lady, within it, she exclaimed,

‘Lady Harcourt!’

To which the lady replied,

‘Eliza!’

‘Yes Madam it is the wretched Eliza herself.’

Sir George, who was also in the Carriage, but too much amazed to speak, was proceeding to demand an explan-ation from Eliza of the Situation she was then in, when Lady Harcourt in transports of Joy, exclaimed.

‘Sir George, Sir George, she is not only Eliza our adopted Daughter, but our real Child.’

‘Our real Child! What Lady Harcourt, do you mean? You know you never even was with child. Explain your-self, I beseech you.’

‘You must remember Sir George that when you sailed for America, you left me breeding.’

‘I do, I do, go on dear Polly.’

‘Four months after you were gone, I was delivered of this Girl, but dreading your just resentment at her not proving the Boy you wished, I took her to a Haycock and laid her down. A few weeks afterwards, you returned, and fortunately for me, made no enquiries on the subject. Satisfied within myself of the wellfare of my Child, I soon forgot I had one, insomuch that when, we shortly after found her in the very Haycock, I had placed her, I had no more idea of her being my own, than you had, and nothing I will venture to say would have recalled the cir-cumstance to my remembrance, but my thus accidentally hearing her voice, which now strikes me as being the very counterpart of my own Child’s.’

‘The rational and convincing Account you have given of the whole affair,’ said Sir George, ‘leaves no doubt of her being our Daughter and as such I freely forgive the robbery she was guilty of.’

A mutual Reconciliation then took place, and Eliza, ascending the Carriage with her two Children returned to that home from which she had been absent nearly four years.

No sooner was she reinstated in her accustomed power at Harcourt Hall, than she raised an Army, with which she entirely demolished the Dutchess’s Newgate, snug as it was, and by that act, gained the Blessings of thousands, and the Applause of her own Heart.

Finis

The beautifull Cassandra

a novel in twelve Chapters dedicated by permission to Miss
Austen.

DEDICATION.

Madam

You are a Phoenix. Your taste is refined, your Sentiments are noble, and your Virtues innumerable. Your Person is lovely, your Figure, elegant, and your Form, magestic. Your Manners are polished, your Conversation is rational and your appearance singular. If therefore the following Tale will afford one moment's amusement to you, every wish will be gratified of

your most obedient

humble Servant

The Author

CHAPTER THE FIRST

Cassandra was the Daughter and the only Daughter of a celebrated Millener in Bond Street. Her father was of noble Birth, being the near relation of the Dutchess of——'s Butler.

CHAPTER THE 2^D

When Cassandra had attained her 16th year, and amiable and chancing to fall in love with an elegant Bonnet, her Mother had just compleated bespoke by the Countess of——she placed it on her gentle Head and walked from her Mother's shop to make her Fortune.

CHAPTER THE 3^D

The first person she met, was the Viscount of——a young Man, no less celebrated for his Accomplishments and Virtues, than for his

Elegance and Beauty. She curtseyed and walked on.

CHAPTER THE 4TH

She then proceeded to a Pastry-cooks where she devoured six ices, refused to pay for them, knocked down the Pastry Cook and walked away.

CHAPTER THE 5TH

She next ascended a Hackney Coach and ordered it to Hampstead, where she was no sooner arrived than she ordered the Coachman to turn round and drive her back again.

CHAPTER THE 6TH

Being returned to the same spot of the same Street she had sate out from, the Coachman demanded his Pay.

CHAPTER THE 7TH

She searched her pockets over again and again; but every search was unsuccessfull. No money could she find. The man grew peremptory. She placed her bonnet on his head and ran away.

CHAPTER THE 8TH

Thro'many a street she then proceeded and met in none the least Adventure till on turning a Corner of Blooms-bury Square, she met Maria.

CHAPTER THE 9TH

Cassandra started and Maria seemed surprised; they trem-bled, blushed, turned pale and passed each other in a mutual silence.

CHAPTER THE 10TH

Cassandra was next accosted by her freind the Widow, who squeezing out her little Head thro'her less window, asked her how she did? Cassandra curtseyed and went on.

CHAPTER THE 11TH

A quarter of a mile brought her to her paternal roof in Bond

Street from which she had now been absent nearly 7 hours.

CHAPTER THE 12TH

She entered it and was pressed to her Mother's bosom by that worthy woman. Cassandra smiled and whispered to herself 'This is a day well spent.'

Finis

Letter the third

From A young Lady in distress'd Circumstances to her
freind

A few days ago I was at a private Ball given by M^r Ashburnham. As my Mother never goes out she entrusted me to the care of Lady Greville who did me the honour of calling for me in her way and of allowing me to sit for-wards, which is a favour about which I am very indifferent especially as I know it is considered as conferring a great obligation on me. 'So Miss Maria' (said her Ladyship as she saw me advancing to the door of the Carriage) 'you seem very smart to night - My poor Girls will appear quite to disadvantage by you - I only hope your Mother may not have distressed herself to set you o^r. Have you got a new Gown on?'

'Yes Ma'am,' replied I with as much indifference as I could assume.

'Aye, and a fine one too I think—' (feeling it, as by her permission I seated myself by her) 'I dare say it is all very smart - But I must own, for you know I always speak my mind, that I think it was quite a needless peice of expence - Why could not you have worn your old striped one? It is not my way to find fault with people because they are poor, for I always think that they are more to be despised and pitied than blamed for it, especially if they cannot help it, but at the same time I must say that in my opinion your old striped Gown would have been quite fine enough for its Wearer - for to tell you the truth (I always speak my mind) I am very much afraid that one half of the people in the room will not know whether you have a Gown on or not - But I suppose you intend to make your fortune tonight— : Well, the sooner the better; and I wish you success.'

'Indeed, Ma'am, I have no such intention—'

'Who ever heard a Young Lady own that she was a Fortune-hunter?' Miss Greville laughed, but I am sure Ellen felt for me.

‘Was your Mother gone to bed before you left her?’ said her Ladyship—

‘Dear Ma’am,’ said Ellen, ‘it is but nine o’clock.’

‘True, Ellen, but Candles cost money, and M^{rs} Williams is too wise to be extravagant.’

‘She was just sitting down to supper, Ma’am—’

‘And what had she got for Supper?’ ‘I did not observe.’ ‘Bread and Cheese I suppose.’ ‘I should never wish for a better supper,’ said Ellen. ‘You have never any reason’ replied her Mother, ‘as a better is always provided for you.’ Miss Greville laughed excessively, as she constantly does at her Mother’s wit.

Such is the humiliating Situation in which I am forced to appear while riding in her Ladyship’s Coach - I dare not be impertinent, as my Mother is always admonishing me to be humble and patient if I wish to make my way in the world. She insists on my accepting every invitation of Lady Greville, or you may be certain that I would never enter either her House, or her Coach, with the disagreeable certainty I always have of being abused for my Poverty while I am in them. - When we arrived at Ash-burnham, it was nearly ten o’clock, which was an hour and a half later than we were desired to be there; but Lady Greville is too fashionable (or fancies herself to be so) to be punctual. The Dancing however was not begun as they waited for Miss Greville. I had not been long in the room before I was engaged to dance by M^r Bernard, but just as we were going to stand up, he recollected that his Servant had got his white Gloves, and immediately ran out to fetch them. In the mean time the Dancing began and Lady Greville in passing to another room went exactly before me - She saw me and instantly stopping, said to me though there were several people close to us;

‘Hey day, Miss Maria! What cannot you get a partner? Poor Young Lady! I am afraid your new Gown was put on for nothing. But do not despair; perhaps you may get a hop before the Evening is over.’ So saying, she passed on without hearing my repeated assurance of being engaged, and leaving me very provoked at being so exposed before every one - M^r Bernard however soon returned and by coming to me the moment he entered the room, and leading me to the Dancers, my Character I hope was cleared from the

imputation Lady Greville had thrown on it, in the eyes of all the old Ladies who had heard her speech. I soon forgot all my vexations in the pleasure of dancing and of having the most agreeable partner in the room. As he is moreover heir to a very large Estate I could see that Lady Greville did not look very well pleased when she found who had been his Choice - She was determined to mortify me, and accordingly when we were sitting down between the dances, she came to me with more than her usual insulting importance attended by Miss Mason and said loud enough to be heard by half the people in the room, 'Pray, Miss Maria, in what way of business was your Grandfather? for Miss Mason and I cannot agree whether he was a Grocer or a Bookbinder.' I saw that she wanted to mortify me, and was resolved if I possibly could to prevent her seeing that her scheme succeeded. 'Neither Madam; he was a Wine Merchant.' 'Aye, I knew he was in some such low way - He broke did not he?' 'I beleive not Ma'am.' 'Did not he abscond?' 'I never heard that he did.' 'At least he died insolvent?' 'I was never told so before.' 'Why, was not your Father as poor as a Rat?' 'I fancy not.' 'Was not he in the King's Bench once?' 'I never saw him there.' She gave me such a look, and turned away in a great passion; while I was half delighted with myself for my imperti-nence, and half afraid of being thought too saucy. As Lady Greville was extremely angry with me, she took no further notice of me all the Evening, and indeed had I been in favour I should have been equally neglected, as she was got into a party of great folks and she never speaks to me when she can to any one else. Miss Greville was with her Mother's party at Supper, but Ellen pre-ferred staying with the Bernards and me. We had a very pleasant Dance and as Lady G——slept all the way home, I had a very comfortable ride.

The next day while we were at dinner Lady Greville's Coach stopped at the door, for that is the time of day she generally contrives it should. She sent in a message by the Servant to say that 'she should not get out but that Miss Maria must come to the Coach-door, as she wanted to speak to her, and that she must make haste and come immediately—' 'What an impertinent Message Mama!' said I—' Go Maria—' replied She - Accordingly I went and was obliged to stand there at her Ladyship's pleasure though the Wind was extremely high and very cold.

'Why I think, Miss Maria, you are not quite so smart as you

were last night - But I did not come to examine your dress, but to tell you that you may dine with us the day after tomorrow - Not tomorrow, remember, do not come tomorrow, for we expect Lord and Lady Clermont and Sir Thomas Stanley's family - There will be no occasion for your being very fine for I shan't send the Carriage - If it rains you may take an umbrella—' I could hardly help laughing at hearing her give me leave to keep myself dry - 'And pray remember to be in time, for I shan't wait - I hate my Victuals overdone - But you need not come before the time-How does your Mother do? She is at dinner is not she?' 'Yes, Ma'am, we were in the middle of dinner when your Ladyship came.' 'I am afraid you find it very cold, Maria,' said Ellen. 'Yes, it is an horrible East wind'—said her Mother—'I assure you I can hardly bear the window down - But you are used to be blown about the wind, Miss Maria, and that is what has made your Complexion so ruddy and coarse. You young Ladies who cannot often ride in a Carriage never mind what weather you trudge in, or how the wind shews your legs. I would not have my Girls stand out of doors as you do in such a day as this. But some sort of people have no feelings either of cold or Delicacy - Well, remember that we shall expect you on Thursday at 5 o'clock - You must tell your Maid to come for you at night - There will be no Moon - and you will have an horrid walk home - My Compliments to your Mother - I am afraid your dinner will be cold - Drive on —'And away she went, leaving me in a great passion with her as she always does.

Maria Williams

From a Young Lady very much in love to her Freind

My Uncle gets more stingy, my Aunt more particular, and I more in love every day. What shall we all be at this rate by the end of the year! I had this morning the happiness of receiving the following Letter from my dear Musgrove.

Sackville St : Janry 7th

It is a month to day since I beheld my lovely Henrietta, and the sacred anniversary must and shall be kept in a manner becoming the day-by writing to her. Never shall I forget the moment when her Beauties first broke on my sight - No time as you well know can

erase it from my Memory. It was at Lady Scudamore's. Happy Lady Scudamore to live within a mile of the divine Henrietta! When the lovely Creature first entered the room, Oh! what were my sensations? The sight of you was like the sight of a wonderful fine Thing. I started-I gazed at her with Admiration - She appeared every moment more Charming, and the unfortunate Musgrove became a Cap-tive to your Charms before I had time to look about me. Yes Madam, I had the happiness of adoring you, an unhappiness for which I cannot be too grateful. 'What,' said he to himself, 'is Musgrove allowed to die for Hen-rietta? Envious Mortal! and may he pine for her who is the object of universal Admiration, who is adored by a Colonel, and toasted by a Baronet! —' Adorable Henrietta how beautiful you are! I declare you are quite divine! You are more than Mortal. You are an Angel. You are Venus herself. Inshort, Madam, you are the prettiest Girl I ever saw in my Life - and her Beauty is encreased in her Mus-grove's Eyes, by permitting him to love her and allowing me to hope. And Ah! Angelic Miss Henrietta, Heaven is my Witness how ardently I do hope for the death of your villanous Uncle and his Abandoned Wife, Since my fair one will not consent to be mine till their decease has placed her in affluence above what my fortune can procure—. Though it is an improvable Estate—. Cruel Henrietta to persist in such a resolution! I am at present with my Sister where I mean to continue till my own house which tho'an excellent one is at present somewhat out of repair, is ready to receive me. Amiable princess of my Heart farewell-Of that Heart which trembles while it signs itself your most ardent Admirer

and devoted humble Servt

T. Musgrove

There is a pattern for a Love-letter Matilda! Did you ever read such a masterpeice of Writing? Such Sense, Such Sentiment, Such purity of Thought, Such flow of Language and such unfeigned Love in one Sheet? No, never I can answer for it, since a Musgrove is not to be met with by every Girl. Oh! how I long to be with him! I intend to send him the following in answer to his Letter tomorrow.

My dearest Musgrove—. Words can not express how happy your Letter made me; I thought I should have cried for Joy, for I

love you better than any body in the World. I think you the most amiable, and the handsomest Man in England, and so to be sure you are. I never read so sweet a Letter in my Life. Do write me another just like it, and tell me you are in love with me in every other line. I quite die to see you. How shall we manage to see one another? for we are so much in love that we cannot live asunder. Oh! my dear Musgrove you cannot think how impatiently I wait for the death of my Uncle and Aunt-If they will not die soon, I beleive I shall run mad, for I get more in love with you every day of my Life. How happy your Sister is to enjoy the pleasure of your Company in her house, and how happy every body in London must be because you are there. I hope you will be so kind as to write to me again soon, for I never read such sweet Letters as yours. I am, my dearest Musgrove, most truly and faithfully yours for ever and ever

Henrietta Halton

I hope he will like my answer; it is as good a one as I can write, though nothing to his; Indeed I had always heard what a dab he was at a Love-letter. I saw him you know for the first time at Lady Scudamore's - And when I saw her Ladyship afterwards she asked me how I liked her Cousin Musgrove?

'Why upon my word'said I, 'I think he is a very hand-some young Man.'

'I am glad you think so,' replied she, 'for he is distract-edly in love with you.'

'Law! Lady Scudamore,' said I, 'how can you talk so ridiculously?'

'Nay,' tis very true,' answered She, 'I assure you, for he was in love with you from the first moment he beheld you.'

'I wish it may be true,' said I, 'for that is the only kind of love I would give a farthing for - There is some Sense in being in love at first sight.'

'Well, I give you Joy of your conquest,' replied Lady Scudamore, 'and I beleive it to have been a very complete one; I am sure it is not a contemptible one, for my Cousin is a charming young fellow, has seen a great deal of the World, and writes the best Love-letters I ever read.'

This made me very happy, and I was excessively pleased with my conquest. However I thought it was proper to give myself a few Airs - So I said to her—

‘This is all very pretty, Lady Scudamore, but you know that we young Ladies who are Heiresses must not throw ourselves away upon Men who have no fortune at all.’

‘My dear Miss Halton,’ said She, ‘I am as much con-vinced of that as you can be, and I do assure you that I should be the last person to encourage your marrying any one who had not some pretensions to expect a fortune with you. M^r Musgrove is so far from being poor that he has an estate of Several hundreds an year which is capable of great Improvement, and an excellent House, though at present it is not quite in repair.’

‘If that is the case,’ replied I, ‘I have nothing more to say against him, and if as you say he is an informed young Man and can write good Love-letters, I am sure I have no reason to find fault with him for admiring me, tho’perhaps I may not marry him for all that, Lady Scudamore.’

‘You are certainly under no obligation to marry him,’ answered her Ladyship, ‘except that which love himself will dictate to you, for if I am not greatly mistaken you are at this very moment unknown to yourself, cherishing a most tender affection for him.’

‘Law, Lady Scudamore,’ replied I blushing, ‘how can you think of such a thing?’

‘Because every look, every word betrays it,’ answered She; ‘Come, my dear Henrietta, consider me as a freind, and be sincere with me - Do not you prefer M^r Musgrove to any man of your acquaintance?’

‘Pray do not ask me such questions, Lady Scudamore,’ said I turning away my head, ‘for it is not fit for me to answer them.’

‘Nay my Love,’ replied she, ‘now you confirm my sus-picions. But why, Henrietta, should you be ashamed to own a well-placed Love, or why refuse to confide in me?’

‘I am not ashamed to own it;’ said I taking Courage. ‘I do not refuse to confide in you or blush to say that I do love your cousin M^r Musgrove, that I am sincerely attached to him, for it is no

disgrace to love a handsome Man. If he were plain indeed I might have had reason to be ashamed of a passion which must have been mean since the Object would have been unworthy. But with such a figure and face, and such beautiful hair as your Cousin has, why should I blush to own that such Superior Merit has made an impression on me.'

'My sweet Girl' (said Lady Scudamore embracing me with great affection) 'what a delicate way of thinking you have in these Matters, and what a quick discernment for one of your years! Oh! how I honour you for such Noble Sentiments!'

'Do you, Ma'am?' said I; 'You are vastly obliging. But pray, Lady Scudamore, did your Cousin himself tell you of his affection for me? I shall like him the better if he did, for what is a Lover without a Confidante?'

'Oh! my Love'replied She, 'you were born for each other. Every word you say more deeply convinces me that your Minds are actuated by the invisible power of sim-pathy, for your opinions and Sentiments so exactly coincide. Nay, the colour of your Hair is not very differ-ent. Yes, my dear Girl, the poor despairing Musgrove did reveal to me the story of his Love—. Nor was I surprised at it-I know not how it was, but I had a kind of presen - timent that he would be in love with you.'

'Well, but how did he break it to you?'

'It was not till after supper. We were sitting round the fire together talking on indifferent subjects, though to say the truth the Conversation was chiefly on my side, for he was thoughtful and silent, when on a sudden he inter-rupted me in the midst of something I was saying, by exclaiming in a most Theatrical tone—

"Yes I'm in love I feel it now

And Henrietta Halton has undone me—"

'Oh! What a sweet Way'replied I, 'of declaring his Passion! To make such a couple of charming Lines about me! What a pity it is that they are not in rhyme!'

'I am very glad you like it,' answered She; 'To be sure there was a great deal of Taste in it. "And are you in love with her, Cousin?" said I. "I am very sorry for it, for unex-ceptionable as you are in

every respect, with a pretty Estate capable of Great improvements, and an excellent House tho'somewhat out of repair, Yet who can hope to aspire with success to the adorable Henrietta who has had an offer from a Colonel and been toasted by a Baronet—" "That I have—" cried I. Lady Scudamore continued. "Ah, dear Cousin," replied he, "I am so well convinced of the little Chance I can have of winning her who is adored by thousands, that I need no assurances of yours to make me more thoroughly so. Yet surely neither you or the fair Henrietta herself will deny me the exquisite Gratification of dieing for her, of falling a victim of her Charms. And when I am dead" - continued he—'

'Oh Lady Scudamore,' said I wiping my eyes, 'that such a sweet Creature should talk of dieing!'

'It is an affecting Circumstance indeed,' replied Lady Scudamore. "When I am dead," said he, "Let me be car-ried and lain at her feet, and perhaps she may not disdain to drop a pitying tear on my poor remains."

'Dear Lady Scudamore' interrupted I, 'say no more on this affecting Subject. I cannot bear it.'

'Oh! how I admire the sweet Sensibility of your Soul, and as I would not for Worlds wound it too deeply, I will be silent.'

'Pray go on'said I. She did so.

"And then," added he, "Ah! Cousin, imagine what my transports will be when I feel the dear precious drops trickle o'er my face! Who would not die to taste such extacy! And when I am interred, may the divine Henrietta bless some happier Youth with her affection, May he be as tenderly attached to her as the hapless Musgrove and while he crumbles to dust, May they live an example of Felicity in the Conjugal state!"

'Did you ever hear any thing so pathetic? What a charming wish, to be lain at my feet when he was dead! Oh! what an exalted mind he must have to be capable of such a wish!' Lady Scudamore went on.

"Ah! my dear Cousin," replied I to him, "Such noble behaviour as this, must melt the heart of any Woman however obdurate it may naturally be; and could the divine Henrietta but hear your generous wishes for her happiness, all gentle as is her Mind, I have not a

doubt but that she would pity your affection and endeavour to return it." "Oh! Cousin," answered he, "do not endeavour to raise my hopes by such flattering Assurances. No, I cannot hope to please this angel of a Woman, and the only thing which remains for me to do, is to die." "True Love is ever desponding," replied I, "but I, my dear Tom, will give you even greater hopes of conquering this fair one's heart, than I have yet given you, by assuring you that I watched her with the strictest attention during the whole day, and could plainly discover that she cherishes in her bosom though unknown to herself, a most tender affection for you."

'Dear Lady Scudamore,' cried I, 'This is more than I ever knew!'

'Did not I say that it was unknown to yourself? "I did not," continued I to him, "encourage you by saying this at first, that Surprise might render the pleasure Still Greater."' "No, Cousin," replied he in a languid voice, "nothing will convince me that I can have touched the heart of Henrietta Halton, and if you are deceived yourself, do not attempt deceiving me." Inshort my Love it was the work of some hours for me to persuade the poor despairing Youth that you had really a preference for him; but when at last he could no longer deny the force of my arguments, or discredit what I told him, his transports, his Raptures, his Extacies are beyond my power to describe.'

'Oh! the dear Creature,' cried I, 'how passionately he loves me! But, dear Lady Scudamore, did you tell him that I was totally dependant on my Uncle and Aunt?'

'Yes, I told him every thing.'

'And what did he say?'

'He exclaimed with virulence against Uncles and Aunts; Accused the Laws of England for allowing them to possess their Estates when wanted by their Nephews or Neices, and wished he were in the House of Commons, that he might reform the Legislature, and rectify all its abuses.'

'Oh! the sweet Man! What a spirit he has!' said I.

'He could not flatter himself, he added, that the adorable Henrietta would condescend for his Sake to resign those Luxuries and that Splendor to which She had been used, and accept only in exchange the Comforts and Elegancies which his limited Income

could afford her, even supposing that his house were in Readiness to receive her. I told him that it could not be expected that she would; it would be doing her an injustice to suppose her capable of giving up the power she now possesses and so nobly uses of doing such extensive Good to the poorer part of her fellow Creatures, merely for the grat-ification of you and herself.'

'To be sure,' said I, 'I am very Charitable every now and then. And what did Mr Musgrove say to this?'

'He replied that he was under a melancholy Necessity of owning the truth of what I said, and therefore if he should be the happy Creature destined to be the Husband of the Beautiful Henrietta he must bring himself to wait, however impatiently, for the fortunate day, when she might be freed from the power of worthless Relations and able to bestow herself on him.'

What a noble Creature he is! Oh! Matilda what a for-tunate one I am, who am to be his Wife! My Aunt is calling to me to come and make the pies. So adeieu my dear freind,

and beleive me yours etc. - H. Halton

Finis

A Letter from a Young Lady, whose feelings being too Strong for her Judgement led her into the commission of Errors which her Heart disapproved

Many have been the cares and vicissitudes of my past life, my beloved Ellinor, and the only consolation I feel for their bitterness is that on a close examination of my con-duct, I am convinced that I have strictly deserved them. I murdered my father at a very early period of my Life, I have since murdered my Mother, and I am now going to murder my Sister. I have changed my religion so often that at present I have not an idea of any left. I have been a perjured witness in every public tryal for these last twelve Years, and I have forged my own Will. In short there is scarcely a crime that I have not committed - But I am now going to reform. Colonel Martin of the Horse guards has paid his Addresses to me, and we are to be married in a few days. As there is something singular in our Courtship, I will give you an account of it. Colonel Martin is the

second son of the late Sir John Martin who died immensely rich, but bequeathing only one hundred thousand pound apiece to his three younger Children, left the bulk of his fortune, about eight Million to the present Sir Thomas. Upon his small pittance the Colonel lived tolerably contented for nearly four months when he took it into his head to determine on getting the whole of his eldest Brother's Estate. A new will was forged and the Colonel produced it in Court - but nobody would swear to it's being the right Will except himself, and he had sworn so much that Nobody beleived him. At that moment I happened to be passing by the door of the Court, and was beckoned in by the Judge who told the Colonel that I was a Lady ready to witness anything for the cause of Justice, and advised him to apply to me. In short the affair was soon adjusted. The Colonel and I swore to its'being the right will, and Sir Thomas has been obliged to resign all his illgotten Wealth. The Colonel in gratitude waited on me the next day with an offer of his hand—. I am now going to murder my Sister.

Yours Ever,

Anna Parker



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陀思妥耶夫斯基

田浩 / 译

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I

温顺的女人

企鹅经典：小黑书 第三辑

[俄]陀思妥耶夫斯基/著

田浩/译



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The Meek One

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the The Gambler and Other Stories. This edition published in penguin Classics 2015. Translation

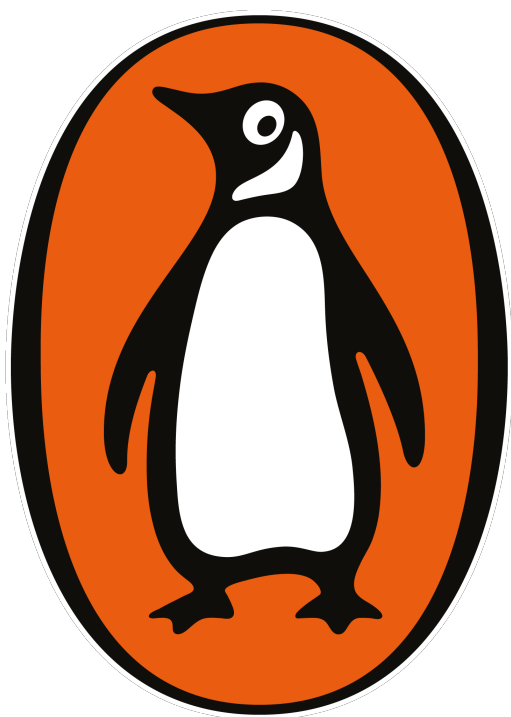
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* 此中文译本译自俄语原文

“我发现，她这时
依然很惊慌，
但我并没有因为
她的情绪而缓和语气，
相反，看到她被吓到，
我说得更直接了。”

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作者自述 [1]

我请求读者们原谅，在本期《作家日记》 [2] 中，我没有采取以往的编排形式，而是只刊登了一部中篇小说。虽然这篇小说的写作占用了我将近一个月的时间，但无论如何，我还是希望大家能够谅解我的做法。

现在我们来谈谈小说中的故事。虽然我称这篇小说是“幻想的”，但我认为故事本身是非常现实的。由于小说写作过程中确实有幻想的成分，因此我认为，在这里做一些预先说明还是有必要的。

事实上，这篇小说既不是一个完整的故事，也不是一篇手记。试想一下，有这么一位丈夫，他的妻子几小时前跳楼自杀了，现在尸体就放在他旁边的桌子上。他心烦意乱，无法集中精力思考。他在自己的房间里走来走去，试图将刚才发生的事情解释清楚，他想“把自己的注意力集中到一点上”。与此同时，他又是个严重的疑病患者，还常常自言自语。因此，大家会看到他在自己给自己描述这件事，向自己解释事情的前因后果。尽管他的话看似具有一定的连贯性，但无论在逻辑上还是感受上，都存在一些自相矛盾的地方。他为自己辩护，同时又指责妻子，而且还给出一些与此事毫无关系的解释：其中既有思想和心灵的粗鄙，又有深切的体验。他的确一步步地给自己解释清楚了事情的来龙去脉，也把自己的注意力“集中到了一点上”。他的一连串回忆最终把他引向了真理，而真理又升华了他的思想和心灵。与杂乱无章的故事开头相比，到最后，他的论调都发生了变化。至少他自己认为，对于他这个不幸的人来说，真理已经非常地清晰与明确了。

这就是故事的主题。当然，整个故事的发展持续了几个小时，中间断断续续，形式上也不连贯：他有时是自言自语，有时又好像是在讲给一位不在场的听众或一位法官听。这种情形在现实中也是存在的。如果有一位速记员能听到他的话，并把它们都记录下来，那么这篇记录读起来可能比我写的还要晦涩和不通顺，但我认为，他的心理发展脉络应该不会有太大变化。类似关于速记员记录他讲话（之后我再对记录进行加工）的假设，就是我称这篇小说具有“幻想”特点的主要原因。其实这种创作手法在文学作品中并不鲜见，例如，维克多·雨果在自己的名著《一个死囚的末日》中就使用过几乎相同的方法，虽然没有采用速记员视角，但他进行了更大胆的假设。他想象一个被判处死刑的囚犯不仅在自己最后一天，甚至在最后一小时、最后一分钟

都能（而且有时间）写手记。如果他不进行这种幻想的话，大概也就不会有这部在他创作生涯中最贴近现实的杰作了。

[1] 本章节收录于《温顺的女人》同期期刊之前，做解释说明之用，因感觉有助于读者理解作家的创作缘由，所以从俄文译出一并收录，英文部分没有此章节。——编者注

[2] 《作家日记》是陀思妥耶夫斯基自费出版发行的一份期刊，内容涉及国家政治、外交、战争、法律、宗教、家庭、青年以及文学艺术与往事回忆等。其中，《温顺的女人》刊载于1876年11月号，占了当期的全部篇幅。（说明：书中脚注除特别标明之外，均为译者注。）

1.我是谁，她又是谁

.....只要她现在在这儿，就一切都好：我可以每隔几分钟就走去去看看她，但她明天就要被人抬走了，一想到就要剩下我一个人，我就有些不知所措。现在她正躺在客厅里由两张牌桌拼起来的桌子上，可是明天，棺材就要来了，一副白色的、铺着雪白那不勒斯绸 [3] 的棺材。不过我想说的并不是这件事.....我在屋子里走来走去，想给自己一个解释，可就是无法集中注意力.....六个小时过去了，我仍然在走、走、走.....事情是这样的。我会按照先后顺序给你们讲。（按顺序！）先生们，你们可能看出来，我不是作家，不过没关系，我会把我知道的全都讲出来。不过对于我来说可怕的地方就在于，我全都明白。

如果你们想知道，或者说，如果咱们从头开始捋，她只是来我这里当东西，据说是为了付《呼声报》的广告费。她在报纸上登了一条求职广告，广告内容大致是要找一份家庭女教师之类的工作，愿意外出或家内授课等诸如此类的话。起初我没太在意她，感觉她和别的客人没有什么不同之处。但过了一会儿，我发现有些地方不太对劲。她身材瘦削，有一头淡黄色的头发，比一般人稍高点。也许是害羞，她和我说话时，总是显得有点儿迟钝（我猜她在陌生人面前就是这样，不言而喻，我和其他人没什么不同，可能她把我也当作一个陌生人，而不是当铺掌柜）。其他人来当东西时总是不停地吵闹、哀求、讨价还价，就是为了多当些钱，而她则不是，给多少就是多少，拿了钱转身就走，一句话都不说.....搞得我一头雾水.....嗯.....首先，她当的东西很奇怪：一对镀了层金的银耳环和一个破破烂烂的小铜牌，总共只值二十戈比 [4] 。她自己也很清楚，这两样东西值不了多少钱，但我从她的神情中能看出来，对她来说，它们是很珍贵的。后来我才知道，这些就是她父母留给她仅有的遗物。有一次我嘲笑她当的东西。也只有这么一次，你们看出来了吧，其实我从不允许自己这样放肆，我跟人说话时总是带着一种绅士般的口吻：话不多，有礼貌，又很严谨。“严谨、严谨、再严谨”。但这次她居然拿来了一件兔皮袄的“残片”（说是残片毫不夸张），我没忍住，突然对她说了些貌似讽刺挖苦的话。天哪，她好像发怒了。她那双淡蓝色的大眼睛总是若有所思的样子，但现在仿佛要燃烧起来似的。可她还是没有开口，带着“残片”离开了。正是这次经历让我开始对她有了“特别”的关注，而

且还想到了关于她的一些事情，就是那种特别的事情。对了，我对她还有一个印象，你们想听吗？这个印象最重要，能概括其他一切印象：就是说，她真的很年轻，看上去就像十四岁。但实际上她那时还差三个月就十六岁了。不过我想说的那个能概括一切的印象不在于此。第二天，她又来了。后来我才知道，她带着那件兔皮袄还去过多布龙拉沃夫和莫泽尔两家当铺，但人家除了金子什么都不要，也懒得和她说话。相对地，有一次，我收了她的一块玉石（也是那种不值钱的玩意），但事后想起来，也觉得奇怪：我的当铺也是除了金银什么都不收啊，而我居然让她在我这儿当了那块石头。这应该是当时能让我想到她的第二个念头了，我记得这事儿。

这一次，从莫泽尔当铺出来后，她又来到我这里想当一支琥珀烟嘴，小玩意马马虎虎，喜欢这类东西的人有可能瞧瞧，但对我们来说它毫无价值，因为我们只要金子。由于昨天她带来的那场“骚乱”，我在接待她的时候，显得有点严肃。我的严肃实质上就是冷淡。但在付给她两卢布后，我还是没忍住，说了一句可能刺激到她的话：“我只对您开这个特例，要知道，莫泽尔是绝不会收您这类东西的。”我说话时，特意在“对您”两个字上加重了语气，似乎有了某种“特殊含义”。这么做确实有些恶毒。她听到这句“对您”后，又发怒了，但依然默不作声，也没有扔掉两个卢布，她把钱收下了——这就是人穷志短啊！我还记得，她是那么生气！我知道，我的话刺痛了她。她离开后，我问自己：“花两卢布战胜她，这划算吗？”嘿、嘿、嘿！而且我记得，这个问题我问了两次：“划算吗？划算吗？”我笑着给出了肯定的答案。那一刻真是太美妙了，我并没有什么负罪感：我是故意这么做的，我想试探试探她，因为当时我脑子里掠过了一些关于她的念头。这是能让我想到她的第三个念头。

……好吧，从那时起，我们的故事就算正式开头了。不用说，我开始努力从侧面打听有关她的所有情况，然后急不可耐地期盼她的到来。你瞧，我总是能预感到，她很快就要来啦。只要她一过来，我就会极其礼貌地和她攀谈一番。要知道，我受过良好的教育，也很注意举止风度。哼哼，那时我感觉她既善良，又温顺。善良和温顺的人不会总是拒人千里之外，虽然她们不太可能完全敞开心扉，但也不会拒绝一次谈话：她们回答时会非常谨慎，但只要您愿意和她们交谈，而且不会感到厌烦的话，那么她们的话会越来越说越多。不过她当时并没有和我多说什么。关于《呼声报》和其他事情都是我后来才知道的。那个时候，为了在报纸上登求职广告，她几乎倾尽所有，起初的广告词中还带有一丝高傲的口吻：“兹有家庭女教师愿外出工作，条件随函递送”，但没过多久，就变成了“可做任何工作，授课、女伴、管家、病人护理，能缝纫”等众人所熟悉的常见写法！不消说，这些都是不同阶段分别添加进广告内容中的。直到最后，她实在走投无路，

连“不求薪酬，只需膳食”这样的字眼也都用上了。但即便如此，她依然找不到事做。那个时候，我决定对她进行最后一次试探：我突然拿出一张当日的《呼声报》，给她看上面的一条广告：“青年女子求职，本人孤儿，可做幼儿家庭教师，中老年鳏夫家庭雇用更佳，可料理家务。”

“您看，这是今天早上登出的广告，晚上大概就能找到工作。广告词就应该这样写！”

她又发怒了，眼睛似乎又要喷出火焰来，一句话没说，转身就离开了。我反倒很高兴。因为此时我已有十足的把握了，一点儿也不害怕：才不会有谁会收她的烟嘴，更何况她现在连烟嘴也已经当出去了。果不其然，三天后她又来了，面色苍白，焦虑不安。我看得出来，她家里应该是出了什么事，而且也的确是出事了。我一会儿再解释到底出了什么事，现在我只想说当时我是如何在她面前优雅地表现自己，进而提升在她心目中的地位的。这个想法也是突然从我脑子里冒出来的。事情经过是这样的，她拿来了一尊圣像（一看就是下了狠心）……唉，听听！听听！到这里故事才真正开始，我又把它讲得一团糟……我总是想回忆所有事情，每个细节。我本来是想把注意力集中在一点上的，但好像办不到，我脑子里总是千头万绪的……

那是一尊圣母像，圣母抱着圣婴，就是普通人家里供奉的那种，看上去有点儿年头了，披着镀金的衣饰——这东西值……嗯，值六卢布。看得出来，圣像对她来说很珍贵，她没有把圣像上的衣饰拿掉，完整地拿来典当了。我对她说，最好是把衣饰摘下来留在我这儿，圣像拿回去，毕竟那是尊圣像啊。

“难道典当圣像是被禁止的吗？”

“不，可以当，只是您自己可能……”

“那就把衣饰摘下来吧。”

“不，还是别那么做了，我都收下吧，我会把它放在神龛里，”我边想边说，“和其他圣像放在一起，在神灯下面（自从我开当铺起，就一直点着神灯）。”“我直接给您十卢布，就这么简单。”

“我不要十卢布，五卢布就行，我一定把圣像赎回来。”

“您不想要十卢布吗？这圣像值这么多钱。”因为看到她眼睛里一闪而过的亮光，我便补了这么一句。她没作声。我给了她五卢布。

“您可别瞧不起任何人，我也在困境中挣扎过，而且比这还要糟，您别看我现在干这行……我也是经历了种种苦难……”

“那您是在报复社会，对吗？”她突然打断我，言语中带着一丝嘲

讽，不过这种嘲讽并无恶意，反倒带着些许的天真无邪（之所以这么说，是因为她当时认为我和其他人没有区别，因而对我说这句话并无恶意）。“啊哈！”我心里想，“原来你是这样的人，性格会自己显露出来的、属于新派的那类人。”

“您看，”我马上半开玩笑又故作神秘地跟她说，“我——我是那常欲作恶，却永远为善的力量的一部分……”

她快速地看了我一眼，眼神中带着孩童般的好奇：

“等等，这是什么意思？是谁说的？我好像在哪儿听过……”

“别费脑筋了，这是梅菲斯特 [5] 向浮士德做自我介绍时说的话。《浮士德》读过吗？”

“没……没仔细读过。”

“那就是根本没读过。应该读读。不过我看您又面带讥讽地笑话我了。您别以为我没品位到会为了往自己当铺掌柜的身份上贴金，而试图在您面前把自己比作是梅菲斯特。开当铺的就是开当铺的。我们都懂，小姐。”

“您真奇怪……我从来都没那么想过……”

她其实想说的是：我没想到您是一个受过教育的人。虽然她没说出口，但我知道，她就是这么想的；我令她非常满意。

“您看，”我说，“无论干哪一行，人都可以做好事。当然，我不是说我自己，除了坏事，我好像什么都没做过，不过……”

“当然了，无论在何种地位，人都可以做好事。”她一边说，一边用锐利的目光飞快地看了我一眼。“不管处在什么地位，确实如此。”她又突然补充了一句。

啊，我记得，我记得每一个瞬间！我想多说一句，当一个年轻人，一个可爱的年轻人想要说一句睿智而又深刻的话时，她的脸上就会立刻浮现出过于真诚和天真的神情，仿佛是在告诉你：“现在，我，有一句睿智又深刻的话要说给你听。”这不是虚荣心在作祟，和我们不一样。你能看得出来，她自己极为珍视这一切，相信又尊重这一切。而且她会认为，我们和她一样，也尊重这一切。啊，真诚！年轻人就是用真诚来征服别人的，这在她身上得到了完美的体现。

我记得很清楚，什么都没忘！她离开后，我当机立断。就在那天，我进行了最后一次调查，把有关她的其余所有情况都打听得一清二楚，包括眼下的各种细节；过去的事情我早已从卢克里娅那里打听到了。卢克里娅那时还是她家里的用人，几天前我就买通了她。她的情况听上去非常可怕，我不明白，身处这样的恶劣环境中，她还

能像刚才那样笑得出来，而且还对梅菲斯特的话充满好奇。但她毕竟是个年轻人啊！我想她的时候，总能感到骄傲和兴奋，正是因为年轻人这种豁达坦荡的态度：即使处在崩溃的边缘，歌德的伟大诗句依然光芒万丈。青春就是这样的豁达坦荡，即使它极其短暂又充满曲折。你们知道，我说的是她，只有她。更重要的是，那个时候我已经认为她是我的了，而且我毫不怀疑自己的能力。要知道，当你不再有任何怀疑时，每个念头都充满了诱人的魅力。

我这是怎么了？这样下去的话，什么时候我才能集中注意力呢？快点儿，快点儿——这些根本不是重点，我的天啊！

2.求婚

我打听到的“底细”可以用一句话讲清楚：她父母三年前去世了，她和两个名声并不太好的姨妈一起生活。说她们名声不好都是客气的。其中一个为寡妇，带着六个孩子，一个比一个小，另一个是让人厌恶的老处女。两个人都不怎么样。她父亲当过公务员，但只是做文书工作，还有一个非世袭的贵族头衔。总之，一句话：我完全驾驭得了。我的社会地位似乎更高一些：毕竟我是一个退伍上尉，曾在一个有光荣历史的团里服役，我还是世袭贵族，经济独立，等等。至于我的当铺，她那两个姨妈也只有仰视的份儿了。她和姨妈们一起生活的三年过得和奴隶一样，即便如此，她还是坚持了下来，并在某个地方通过了一个考试。她试图从每日残酷无情的劳役中尽力挤出所有的时间来准备考试。这意味着，在她看来，还是有某种更美好的生活值得去追求！可我为什么要娶她呢？不过我的事不重要，一会儿再说吧……问题也不在这儿！她要教姨妈的孩子们识字，要缝补内衣，后来就不仅是内衣了，而且尽管她的肺不好，却还得擦洗地板。她们甚至还动手打她，说她是吃闲饭的。最后，打算把她卖了。呸！那些肮脏的细节我就不讲了。后来，她把自己所有的经历都详细地告诉我了。她家邻居中有个胖老板，他不是个普通的店铺老板，而是两家食品杂货店的老板。他观察了一年，把她们家的基本情况都掌握了。他的两个老婆都被他折磨死了，现在又想找第三个，于是就看上了她，说她“安静，出身清贫，可以照顾好我家里那些孤儿”。他家里确实有孤儿。他上门求婚，和姨妈们商量。但毕竟他都五十岁了，把她吓坏了。从那时起，她就不断到我这儿来当东西，急着要在《呼声报》上登广告。最后，她央求姨妈们，给她一点儿时间来考虑一下。她们答应了，但给她的时间也不是太多，等她再请求时，她们没有再给，还假惺惺地说：“就算没你这张多余的嘴，我们自己也不知道吃啥。”这些事我都知道了，就在她来当圣像的那天上午，我做了决定。当天晚上，胖老板从杂货店里拿了值半卢布的一磅糖果去了她家。她陪他坐着，我把卢克里娅从厨房里叫出来，让她进屋传话，就说我在大门口

等她，有急事要见她。我对自己的决定和行动非常满意。总的来说，那一整天我都对自己感到极其满意。

首先，把她叫出来，在大门口当着卢克里娅的面，对着已经惊呆了的她表白，我觉得这是一种幸福和荣耀……其次，我不想让她对我的举动感到诧异，我对她说：“我这个人直性子，我考虑好了。”我没撒谎，我确实是直性子。嗨，先别管这个了。我说话的时候不但彬彬有礼，显出我是一个有教养的人，而且更重要的是，我说的话都不落俗套。我这么做不对吗？我是想评判一下自己，而且我也这么做了。赞成与反对 [6] 我都想说，我也这么说了。回想起当时的情况，我觉得很满意，虽然这看上去有点儿蠢：我当时直接表白，并不觉得这有什么不妥。首先我说，我没有什么过人的才能，也不太聪明，可能也不是太善良，而且我还是个非常庸俗的利己主义者（我记得这句话是在去她家的路上想出来的，当时觉得非常得意）。这些非常、非常有可能让我在其他那里不受待见。说这些话的时候我觉得非常自豪——这种感觉你们都明白。当然咯，我还没有高尚到只坦白自己的缺点，不说优点的地步，我说：“但另一方面，我也有很多优点，如此这般，这般如此……”我发现，她这时依然很惊慌，但我并没有因为她的情绪而缓和语气；相反，看到她被吓到，我说得更直接了：我告诉她，我能让她吃喝不愁，但出席盛装舞会，去剧院听歌看戏，这些暂时还做不到，除非以后我能达到自己的目标。我缓缓，接着说，显得随意的样子，我干这一行，开这个当铺，只有一个目的，就是……我似乎有些话中有话。但我有权这么说啊，我确实有自己的目标，但也确实有隐情。稍等，先生们，要知道，我一辈子都厌恶我那个当铺，这方面谁能比得过我，虽然自言自语的时候还故弄玄虚确实有点儿可笑，但我实质上就是在“报复社会”啊，千真万确！所以，她早上嘲笑我“报复”的那句俏皮话并不是不恰当。你们看出来了吧，要是我直接对她说“对，我就是在报复社会”，估计她会哈哈大笑，就像她那天早上一样，不过这也确实可笑。但用一句神秘兮兮的话来进行间接暗示，确实能激发想象力。况且，当时我也什么都不怕了：我知道，无论在哪方面，她都更厌恶那个胖老板，而出现在大门口我，简直就如同救星一般。这一点我当然明白。唉，人更容易理解那些卑鄙的事！但哪些事是卑鄙的呢？如何去评判一个人呢？那时候我不是已经爱上她了吗？

别急，我还没说完……那个时候我当然不会说什么我有恩于她的话，半句都不会有；相反，我当时说的是：“是我，我是那个蒙恩之人，而不是您。”我本来不应该这么说，但没控制住，可能这句话听上去有点儿蠢，因为我注意到她皱了皱眉头。但总的来说，我还是如愿以偿。好吧，既然我把这些肮脏的事情都讲了，那就干脆把我那最后一丁点儿龌龊行为也告诉你们吧：我站在那里，脑子里冒出一句话

——你身材高挑又匀称，还受过教育……还有……长相也不难看。这就是当时我脑子里想的。当然咯，最后她在门口答应了我。不过……不过我还得说一句：她在门口想了好久才说“好”。她就在那儿想啊想……想得太久了，我真想问一句：“喂，你怎么想的？”当然，我最后还是没忍住，但很优雅地问了一句：“小姐，您意下如何？”

“等一下，让我想想。”

她那张小脸儿是那么严肃，严肃到我都能读懂她在想什么！我当时有种被冒犯的感觉，我想：“难道她还要在我和那个老板之间进行选择吗？”唉，那时候我还不明白！那时候我真是一点儿都不明白！直到现在我也不明白！我记得，我转身离开后，卢克里娅在后面追了上来，在街上拦住我，气喘吁吁地说：“先生，您要是能娶了我们家这位好小姐，上帝会保佑您的，只是您别和她这么说，她就是太清高了。”

哦，清高！我就喜欢清高的人。清高的人特别好，只要……嗯……只要你能镇得住她们，是吧？唉，我这低贱又愚蠢的人啊！我这是多么地小人得志啊！当初她站在大门口犹豫着是否答应求婚时，我还挺奇怪的，可你们知道吗，说不定那时她就在想：“既然怎么选择都是不幸的，那还不如干脆就选那个最差的，那个胖老板，让他喝多了赶紧把我打死算了！”你们说呢？你们是怎么想的，她有过这样的念头吗？

我现在还是不明白，我现在什么都不明白！我刚刚说她可能想选择最差的，就是说，那个老板。但是那个时候对于她来说，谁才是最坏的选择——我，还是他？是杂货店的胖老板，还是读过歌德的当铺掌柜？这也是一个问题！这是什么问题？看看吧，答案不就在桌子上躺着嘛，你还在想什么“问题”呢！其实我没那么重要！问题也完全不在于我……况且，现在对于我来说，问题是不是出自我这里又有什么意义呢？我根本就解决不了这个问题。还是躺下睡觉吧。我的头好疼……

3.最高贵的人，但我自己却不相信

我没睡着，感觉脑子里有东西一跳一跳的，就像脉搏那样。我想把这一切肮脏的事情弄明白。唉，这些事啊！唉，是我把她从那肮脏的烂泥里拉出来的啊！她应该明白的，她应该对我感激不尽啊！我喜欢我脑子里的各种想法，例如我已经四十一岁了，而她才十六岁。这种差距感让我着迷，多么幸福，多么甜蜜啊。

再比如说，我想举办一场英式 [7] 婚礼，只有我们两个人，再加上两个证婚人，其中一个应该是卢克里娅，婚礼结束我们就立刻跳上火车，可以去莫斯科（正好我在那儿有事要办），订一家旅馆，在那

儿住上两个星期。但她不同意这个想法，她也不让我这么做。她要我恭恭敬敬地去见她两个姨妈，就像见岳父母那样，然后从她们那里把她娶走。好吧，我妥协了，她那两个姨妈也拿到了应得的东西。我甚至还给了那两个娘儿们每人一百卢布，还做了些承诺。当然，这件事我没有告诉她，以免她为自己曾经的处境而难过。姨妈们拿了钱立刻变得服服帖帖。在嫁妆问题上还是有些争议的：她几乎是一无所有，但她什么都不想要。不过我还是成功地说服她，一点儿嫁妆都没有是不行的，嫁妆可以由我来准备，因为还有谁能给她置办嫁妆呢？好，先不说我了。当时我把我的很多想法都跟她讲了，至少让她心里有个数。这么做可能有点儿操之过急了。但更重要的是，从求婚成功的那一刻开始，虽然她表面上依旧矜持，但却已满怀爱意地投入我的怀抱了。每次傍晚时分我去看她时，她总是兴高采烈地接待我，少女呢喃般地和我聊天，（多么迷人的天真啊！）讲她小时候的事，讲她老家，讲她父亲和母亲。而我却给她的愉悦浇了一盆冷水。我是故意那样做的。我用沉默，一种善意的沉默来回应她的欣喜，当然……她很快就看懂了，我和她不太一样，我就是个谜。对，我就是打算要做那个谜！但我这谜面设得是多么愚蠢啊！首先，我太严肃了，严肃地把她娶回了家。虽然我心满意足，但还是定下了一套规矩。这事我做得毫不费力，这规矩是多么天经地义啊！退一步讲，考虑当时的情况，这规矩我能不定吗？这规矩理所应当，我没必要诋毁自己啊！不，听我说，如果你要评判一个人，就要把事情的来龙去脉搞清楚……别说话！

从何说起呢，这事也挺复杂的。而且，当你要开始自我辩护时，就更难了。你们知道，年轻人都鄙视金钱，但我不一样，我更重视金钱，也追逐金钱，这使她变得越来越沉默。她睁着那双大眼睛，看着、听着、沉默着。你们也知道，优秀的年轻人都道德高尚，又充满激情，但有时候不够宽容，一言不合就怒目相对。而我认为，年轻人应该更加开朗豁达，我要让她有海纳百川的心胸，对不对？举个通俗点儿的例子吧，比如说，我是怎么描述我那个当铺的呢？我当然不会直接描述个没完，那样的话，好像我是在请求别人原谅似的。我说过，我为人清高，我用沉默来讲述。我善于通过沉默的方式来表达自己，来讲述我的生活，讲述我承受的种种不幸。我是多么不幸啊！我被大家抛弃，我被人们遗忘，这一切又有谁能理解呢！然而，这个十六岁的姑娘从一些小人的那里捕风捉影，听到了一些关于我的事情，她就以为掌握了我的全部情况，但隐情只能藏在这个人的心里！我仍然保持沉默，特别是在她面前，直到昨天——我为什么要沉默呢？因为我是一个清高的人啊！我希望她能够自己去了解这个人，不要来问我，也不要听那些小人的胡言乱语，她应该自己来读懂他，真正地理解他！既然我把她娶进家门，就希望她能充分尊重我。我希望她能为我的痛苦祈祷——这是我应得的。我总是这样清高，要么拥有一切，

否则什么都不想要。这就是我无法与人分享幸福的原因，我要完全占有，这也正是为何我要强迫自己如此表现的原因：让她自己来读懂我、尊重我！你们也一定会同意我的想法，如果我自己去跟她解释，然后吞吞吐吐地暗示她要尊重我，这难道不就是在乞求施舍吗……可是……可是，我干吗要说这个呀！

愚蠢、愚蠢、愚蠢，太愚蠢了！我当时对她说的几句话简直是直截了当且残酷无情（再怎么强调也不为过）：年轻人志向高远，这很好，但它一文不值。为什么这么说呢？因为“志向高远”太容易做到了，它并非来自生活的打磨，而只是“生命的第一印象”，但让我们看看你都做了些什么事？廉价的志向似乎让一切事情看起来都很容易做到，甚至连献出生命也变得很容易了。因为那只是你热血沸腾、精力旺盛，又充满对美的渴望！不信的话，你们可以尝试去做一件高尚的、艰难的、无声无息的事情，它无人喝彩，却有人诽谤，要做出巨大牺牲，又得不到一点儿荣誉。而且当一个光明磊落的人这么做时，当你是这个世界上最真诚的人时，大家将你视为卑鄙下流之徒。您可以试试看，不，我的小姐，您会拒绝的！而我，我就是这么做的，我一辈子都在这样高尚行事。一开始，她还和我激烈争论，但后来就渐渐不作声了，一言不发，只是瞪大了眼睛在那里听着，全神贯注，眼睛越瞪越大。而且……而且我还突然发现她脸上浮现出一丝质疑、冷漠、不怀好意的微笑。这种微笑在我娶她进门的那天也见过。的确，她那时也是无处可去……

4. 计划，全是计划

当初我们俩是谁先开始的？

谁都没有。是这件事自己迈出的第一步。我说过，我娶她进门时很严肃，但其实从一开始我就有所和缓了。她还是我未婚妻的时候，我就对她说过，以后要帮我打理当铺生意，由她来收抵押物和付款，她当时什么也没说（这里提醒大家注意），而且工作起来也是满怀热情。还有，我们的房子和家具也都没有变化，和从前一样。房子有两个房间：一间是前厅，很宽敞，跟当铺柜台是隔开的；另一间是我们的房间，做起居室和卧室，也很大。我的家具很少，甚至还没有她姨妈家的多。我的神龛和神灯放在当铺里；我们的房间里有一个橱柜，里面有一些书，有一个小箱子，钥匙在我这儿；房间里还有一张床，几张桌子和几把椅子。她还是我未婚妻时，我就说过，我要在三年内攒到三万卢布，我、她和卢克里娅（我把她也带过来了），我们每天包括生活费在内的花销不能超过一卢布，否则的话是攒不到这个数的。她不反对，但后来我又把每天的花销标准提高了三十戈比。还有剧院的事。她是我未婚妻的时候我就说过，我们是不会去剧院看戏的，不过后来我还是决定，每个月去一次，而且是预订更体面的池

座。我们一起去过三次，看的好像是《追求幸福》和《会唱歌的小鸟》。（这个无所谓！）我们来去的路上都沉默不语。为什么，为什么我们一开始就是这样？要知道，我们刚开始生活时并没有吵过架，但依然是相对无言。我记得，她那时总是偷偷看我，可她越是这样，我就越加沉默。是的，保持沉默的是我，而不是她。她有那么一两次激情迸发，扑过来拥抱我；但我认为这种情绪是病态的，歇斯底里的，我想要的是稳定的幸福，要的是她的尊重，所以我冷漠地回应了她。我的判断没错，每次她激情过后，第二天就是一顿争吵。

要想不争吵，那就只有彼此保持沉默了，但她的样子却越来越放肆。“叛逆与独立”——这大概就是她想要的，只不过她不知道应该如何表现出来。是的，这张温顺的脸变得越来越放肆了。你们相信吗，我在她眼里变得越来越可恶了，这一点我当然清楚。她有时也会为此情绪爆发，这也是自然而然的事。例如，像她这种刚刚摆脱肮脏与贫贱的生活，不需要再刷地板的人，有时竟会突然抱怨起我们太穷了！您知道吗，这不是贫穷，这是节俭，我们的家饰，哪样不是又高级又整洁？因为我以前一直认为，丈夫整洁更能讨妻子欢心。不过，她抱怨的似乎不是贫穷，而是嫌弃我太吝啬了，她仿佛想说的是：“人家可是有坚定目标的。”她突然不再去剧院了，脸上也越来越多嘲讽的神情……而我则继续沉默，更加沉默。

我怎么可以为自己辩解呢？主要的问题是我那个当铺。这么说吧，先生们：我知道，作为一个女人，而且是一个十六岁的姑娘，不可能完全不屈从于男人的意志。女性缺乏独立的见解，这是最简单不过的道理，即使是现在，即使是对于现在的我来说，它都是千真万确的。她就在那儿，躺在前厅里，那又怎样呢，真理就是真理，即便是密尔 [8] 本人在这里，他也不能否认这一点！一个被爱情冲昏了头脑的女人，唉，这种女人会把她所爱的人加以神化，神化他的缺陷，甚至是他的罪恶。她为他的恶行所找的借口，他自己是想不出来的。这是女人的宽容与豁达，并不是什么独立见解。缺少独立见解只会毁掉女人。你们指给我看那个躺在桌子上的人吗？我再重复一遍，“那又怎样呢？”难道那就是有独立见解的体现吗？唉！

听我说：那时候我坚信她是爱我的。她有时候会扑到我身上，抱住我的脖子。她爱我，更准确地说——她希望爱我。不错，当时的确就是这样：她希望爱我，努力尝试着来爱我。更重要的是，我身上没有任何罪恶需要她来找理由为之辩护。当然，你们会说“你是个当铺掌柜”，你们所有人都会这么说。当铺掌柜又怎么了？这只能说明，一定有某种原因，让一个心胸最为坦荡的人成了当铺掌柜。你们瞧，先生们，有些想法……你们知道，有些想法如果用语言能够表达出来，那听上去会是非常愚蠢的。那会让你自己都感到害臊。为什么呢？不为什么。因为我们所有人都烂透了，我们不愿接受真理，如果

这都不是原因的话，那我就真知道了。我刚才说过的那句“心胸最为坦荡的人”听上去有点儿可笑，但事实就是这样的。要知道，这就是真理，千真万确的道理。那个时候我有权开这个当铺给自己的生活提供一个保障，是的，我这么做：“你们，就是你们，你们全都排斥我，用你们那轻蔑的沉默驱赶我。我对你们满腔热忱，而你们却用对我的羞辱来回应。现在我要和你们一刀两断，我有权这么做，我会攒够三万卢布，去克里米亚终老一生：在南方的海岸边，在山脚的葡萄园，在我自己购买的宅邸中。最重要的是，这能让我远离你们这些人，但我不会怨恨你们，我的灵魂中长存信念，我的心中有挚爱的伴侣，如果上帝赐福，我还会有一个家庭，还要去帮助周围的邻人。”我把这些想法说给自己听是好的，如果当初把这些都绘声绘色地给她描述一遍的话，那就太愚蠢了。这也正是我一直保持清高与沉默，又同她相对无言的原因所在。她怎么会明白我的理想呢？她只有十六岁，如此年轻，我的辩白、我的痛苦，她又理解多少呢？她鲁莽，不懂生活，拥有年轻人那种廉价的信念，反而对“美好心灵”视而不见，更重要的是——我的当铺，够了！（难道我是个开当铺的恶人吗，难道她不了解我的为人吗，我取过不义之财吗？）啊，世上的真理是多么可怕！这个女人迷人、温顺，如天使一般圣洁，但她却是个暴君，让人无法忍受的暴君，奴役并折磨着我的灵魂。我必须要这么说，否则我就是在诋毁自己！你们认为我不爱她吗？谁能说我不爱她？你们看到了吧，这就是一种嘲弄，是来自命运和造化的恶意嘲弄！我们都是被诅咒的，人类的生命被诅咒了！（特别是我！）我现在终于知道了我错在何处！这里的确存在问题。一切都已明朗，我的计划就像天空一样清晰：“刚毅、高傲，不需要任何道德上的慰藉，默默地承受苦难。”事实如此，我没有撒谎，我没有撒谎！“她以后会明白，这就是宽宏大量，但现在她还不具备读懂这一切的能力——如果未来某一天她能醒悟的话，她将会倍加珍惜我，双膝跪地，对我顶礼膜拜。”这就是我的计划。这里我好像忘了什么东西，或是漏掉了其中一项。有什么事情我没能做成，但够了，已经足够完美了。现在还需要请求别人的谅解吗？都结束了。你勇敢一点儿，不要低头！不是你的错！……

好吧，我要实话实说，我不害怕面对真相：是她的错，她的错！……

5. 温顺的女人反叛了

我们之间的争吵源于她一时兴起，竟然要自己决定付给客人多少钱，而且还高估抵押物的价值，甚至有那么两次还赏脸和我争论起这个问题。我自然是不会同意她那么做。但就在这时，来了一位上尉的遗孀。

老太太拿来了一个吊坠——是她已故丈夫留下的礼物，一看就是件纪念品。我付了她三十卢布。她一边诉着苦，一边央求我们要保管好这东西——我们当然会好好保管咯。但五天后，她又突然回来，想用一个八卢布都不值的手镯把吊坠换回去；我当然是不会同意了。不过她当时可能从我妻子的眼神中看出了什么，后来趁我不在时又来了，换走了吊坠。

我知道这事后，说了她几句，给她讲了这其中的道理，语气温和，但又不失严厉。她坐在床边，眼睛盯着地板，右脚尖敲打着地毯（她习惯的姿势），嘴角边挂着一丝坏笑。我没有提高嗓门，依然心平气和地对她讲，钱是我的，我有权从自己的角度来看待生活；我还告诉她，当初我把她娶进家门时，就没对她隐瞒什么。

她突然跳了起来，浑身颤抖——你们猜怎么着——她居然在我面前跺脚；这是头野兽，这是在发作，这是兽性的发作。我惊呆了，从没想到她会做出这样出格的举动。但我没有失态，我甚至都没有动，依然如往常一样，心平气和地对她讲，从今以后不许她再参与当铺的生意了。她冲我哈哈大笑，走出了家门。

事实上，她无权离开这间公寓。她还是我未婚妻时，我就和她定好了规矩，没有我，她哪也不许去。傍晚时分，她回来了；我一句话也没和她说。

第二天一大早，她又离开了，第三天也是这样。我关了当铺，去她姨妈那儿找她。婚礼结束后我就和她们断了联系——再也没有互相来往过。但她并不在那里。她们好奇地听着我讲的事，然后还当面嘲笑我：“您这就是活该了。”对此我并不感到意外。我私下里买通了二姨妈，就是那个老处女，答应给她一百卢布，先付二十五。两天后，她来到我家，告诉我：“我听说有一个中尉军官，叶菲莫维奇，过去和您在一个团里服役，他和你们的事有牵连。”我大吃一惊。在军队服役的时候，这个叶菲莫维奇就把我害得够惨。一个月前，他还以当东西为名，恬不知耻地来过我这儿几次，那时他就开始和我妻子有说有笑。我当时就过去警告他，不要再到我当铺来了，还提醒他我和我妻子之间的关系；但我从来没想过会发生这种事，我仅仅以为这人就是个无赖。现在她姨妈突然告诉我，他们早就见过面了，从中撮合的是一个叫尤莉娅·萨姆索诺夫娜的寡妇，曾是一位上校的夫人，是姨妈们从前的老相识。“您家那位太太现在应该就在她那儿。”她说。

长话短说。我为这事儿一共花了三百卢布，两天之内已经做好了安排，我会在隔壁房间虚掩的门后，听我妻子和叶菲莫维奇的第一次单独约会 [9]。但在这前一天的晚上，我和她发生了一次小争吵，这对我来说意义重大。

临近傍晚，她回来了，坐在床边，用略带嘲弄的眼神看着我，一只脚敲着地毯。我看着她，突然想起来一件事，在最近整整一个月里，更准确地说是最近的两个星期，她的性格发生了很大变化，甚至可以说完全变了一个人——一反常态：脾气暴躁，无理取闹，行为虽谈不上不知羞耻，但也是毫无规矩，而且还意挑衅。但她温顺的本性还是会在她想变本加厉的时候妨碍到她。她胡搅蛮缠的时候，即使行为再出格，也明显能看得出，她是在有意逼迫自己这样做，天生的纯良品性让她无法克服自己行为本身带来的羞耻感。也正因如此，这样的人有时会控制不住自己行为的尺度，她们的越轨行为可能让你无法相信自己看到的一切。反倒是那些骨子里荒淫无度的人，常常表现得温文尔雅，这种人越是做坏事，就越表现得循规蹈矩、彬彬有礼，而且在别人面前总觉得高人一筹。

“您被军队开除，是因为您不敢和别人决斗，是吗？”她突然问道，眼里还闪闪发光。

“是的，按照长官们的裁决，我必须离开军队，不过，在这之前我就已经递交了退伍申请。”

“是因为贪生怕死才被赶出来的吗？”

“他们是这么认为的。但我拒绝决斗不是因为贪生怕死，而是不愿意屈从那些专横的裁决，我当时并没有觉得自己受辱。您要明白，”说着说着，我有点儿激动，“用行动来反抗专横，并承担一切后果——这要比任何决斗都更需要勇气。”

她又不怀好意地笑了。我有点儿控制不住自己了，这句话好像是在为自己辩解，而她这么做只是想变本加厉地羞辱我。

“之后这三年您就像个流浪汉一样在彼得堡大街上游荡，讨点儿小钱，然后在台球桌下过夜，是吗？”

“实际上我甚至经常干草广场的维亚泽姆斯基大院 [10] 过夜。的确，是真的，退伍后我的生活就是那样的，饱尝羞辱，也堕落过，但不是道德上的堕落，因为那个时候连我自己都很厌恶我的所作所为。其实这只是意志和心灵的颓废，是对当时处境的绝望。但这一切都过去了……”

“哦，现在您是个大人物了——是个金融家啦！”

这是在说我的当铺。但我已经冷静下来了。我知道，她非常想让我亲口说出一些自取其辱的话，但我没有给她这个机会。这时，有人摇响了当铺的铃铛，我去了前厅招呼客人。一个小时后，她突然穿戴好准备出门，还在我面前说：

“您结婚前从来没对我说过这些，对吧？”

见我没回应，她就走了。

于是第二天，我站到了那房间的门外，揣着一把左轮手枪，听一听我的命运将如何做出安排。她打扮得漂漂亮亮，坐在桌子旁，叶菲莫维奇坐在她对面，装腔作势。虽然之前我没意识到自己有什么预感，但事情还是和我的事先判断丝毫不差（这里要夸奖一下我自己）。我不知道，我说明了没有。

事情经过就是这样。我听了整整一个小时，在这一个小时里，我仿佛见证了一位世界上最高贵的女性和一个庸俗的、堕落的、愚蠢的、灵魂卑微的无耻之徒间的决斗。我非常惊讶，我想，这个天真、温顺、沉默寡言的女人是从哪里学会这些话的？上流社会最有幽默感的喜剧作家恐怕都创作不出那种极具讽刺效果的剧本，里面充满了天真无邪的大笑与美德对丑恶的神圣鄙视。她说出的词句是多么华丽，敏捷的回应是多么机智，她的责备声中又饱含着多少真理啊！即便如此，她的话语里也完全不失少女的纯真。她嘲笑他的爱情表白，嘲笑他的腔调，嘲笑他的求婚。他没预料到她会抗拒，因此一上来就表现得十分鲁莽，这下他完全呆住了。起初我还认为，她就是在那儿卖弄风情——“这种行为虽然放荡，但能显得她俏皮可爱，这样可以提高她自己的身价。”但事实并非如此，真相就如同太阳的光芒一样，让猜忌无处容身。她的心智还没有完全成熟，决定赴这次约会只是出于对我的怨恨，突发奇想，有意为之。不过一旦事情开始，她就会立刻清醒过来。她苦思冥想，就是要找出一个能羞辱我的方法来，但真要开始做那种龌龊事时，她又忍受不了。如她这般纯洁无邪又充满理想的人，真的能被叶菲莫维奇或其他上流社会的无耻之徒引诱吗？绝不可能，他只能让她发笑。真理会从她的心灵中涌现，愤怒会激起她发自心底的嘲讽。我再说当时的情况，那个跳梁小丑最后十分尴尬，皱着眉头坐在那里，几乎一句话也说不出，以至于我有点儿担心，他会不会出于卑鄙的报复心理去直接羞辱她一番。我还要补充一下：我内心毫无波澜地听完了这场戏，我的表现还不赖。这场面我仿佛似曾相识，我去的原因似乎也正是要重温这一场景。我虽然带了一把枪，但我什么都不相信，什么说辞都不想听——这是真的！我怎么能把她想象成另外一种样子呢？我为什么爱她，我为什么欣赏她，我为什么要和她结婚？当然，那个时候我太执迷不悟了，认为她讨厌我，但我也坚信她是贞洁的。我终止了这场表演，推门走了进去。叶菲莫维奇吓了一跳，我抓住她的手，请求她和我回去。叶菲莫维奇回过神来，高声大笑。

“啊，我不能侵犯神圣的夫权，带她走吧，带她走吧！您知道，”他在我身后喊，“虽然一个正派的人不应该和您决斗，但看在您夫人的面子上，如果您自己愿意冒险尝试……我一定奉陪……”

“听见了吧！”在出门的一刹那我叫住她说道。

回家的路上我们一句话都没说。我挽着她的手，她并没有拒绝。相反地，她看上去有些惊慌，但这也只是在回家的路上。回家后，她就坐在椅子上盯着我看。她面色十分苍白，虽然略带嘲讽地抿着嘴唇，但眼神中已然带着一股郑重其事的挑战意味。似乎她真的相信，我马上会用左轮枪打死她。但我只是默默地从口袋中取出枪，放在了桌子上。她看了看我，又看了看枪。（请注意：她对这把枪并不陌生。当铺刚开张的时候，我就买了这把枪，装好了子弹。从准备开当铺时起，我就决定不养烈性犬，不雇像莫泽尔家的那种壮丁。如果家里有客人来，厨娘会去开门。但是干我们这一行的是不可能不有所防备的，所以我买了这支左轮枪，装上了子弹。她刚嫁到我家时，对这把枪非常感兴趣，缠着我问这问那，我甚至给她讲解了枪的原理和构造，而且还说服她做了一次打靶射击。请注意我说的这些。）我没理会她惊恐的神情，脱了外衣躺在床上，我感到筋疲力尽。已经将近十一点了，她还坐在那里一动不动，大约又过了一个小时，她熄了灯，没脱衣服，躺在了墙边的沙发上。这是她第一次没有和我一起睡——这也应该注意。

6. 可怕的回忆

现在来说一说这段可怕的回忆吧.....

我早上醒来时，大概不到八点，房间里早已大亮。我一下子清醒过来，猛地睁开双眼。她当时就站在桌子旁边，手里握着枪。她没注意到我已经醒了，而且还在看着她。我突然发现，她拿着枪朝我走了过来。我赶紧闭上眼，假装熟睡。

我听见她走到床边，站在那里。此时我什么都听见了，虽然房间里一片死寂，但我却能听到这寂静的声音。我突然抽搐了一下，不由自主地睁开了眼睛。她直勾勾地盯着我，看着我的眼睛，左轮枪已经指向了我的太阳穴。刹那间我们四目相对，但很快又移开了眼神。我竭尽全力把眼睛重新闭上，在那一瞬间，我下定决心，不论发生什么，我都不会动，也不会睁开眼睛。

在一般情况下，一个熟睡的人突然睁开眼睛，甚至抬起头看了一眼房间，然后又马上睡过去，这一过程应该是完全无意识的，他什么都不会记住。我和她四目相对，感觉到枪指着我的太阳穴，然后又突然闭上眼睛，一动不动，如同熟睡一样——她一定会认为，我实际上根本没醒过来，什么也没看到。而且，如果一个人看到了当时我眼前的情形，还能那样重新闭上眼睛，是完全不可思议的事。

这的确不可思议。但她可能还是弄不明白，这到底是怎么回事——其实，这就是当时我脑中瞬间闪现的念头。啊，在那一刹那，我

脑中的想法和感受如旋风般疾驰而过，如闪电般的人类思维是多么伟大！面对这种情况（我切身感受到的），如果她能认识到我当时已经清醒的话，那么我这种从容赴死的勇气一定会让她感到无比震撼，她的手可能仍旧在发抖。这种非凡的印象可能会改变一个人过去的决断。有这样一种说法，人们站在高处时，总会感觉到好像有一股力量在把他们向下拉，拉向深渊。我想，很多自杀或杀死别人的人完全就是因为他们有枪在手。无底深渊也好，四十五度的斜坡也罢，人们站在这上面不可能不向下滑落，就如同你手中拿着枪，总会有某种不可阻挡的力量促使你扣动扳机。但也许她当时已经意识到，我看见了她在做什么，也意识到我是清醒的，我是在默默等待死亡的到来——正是这种意识阻止了她继续滑向深渊。

房间里的寂静仍在蔓延，而我却突然感觉到一个冰冷的铁器碰触到了我的鬓发，你们会问：当时我真的认为自己不会死吗？上帝见证，我要告诉你们：那一刻我真的不抱任何希望，除非有奇迹发生。我为什么要接受死亡？我也要问问你们：我挚爱的人举着左轮枪对着我，即使她不开枪，我之后的人生还有什么意义？而且，我非常了解我这个人，我知道，那一瞬间，我们是在进行一场战斗，是关乎生死的一场可怕对决，其中一方正是那个被视为懦夫，被赶出军队的人。这一点我很清楚，而且，如果她能看出来我当时并没睡着的话，那么她也会明白的。

可能实际情况并非完全如此，也有可能我当时并不是那样想的，但即使我没有那样想，那一刻发生的事也确实是存在的，因为日后我还能经常回想起当时做的一切。

可你们还会问：为什么你没有把她从罪恶中拯救出来？是啊，我也不不断地问自己这个问题——每次一想起那一刻，我就脊背发凉。但那时我的灵魂已深陷绝望之中：如果连我自己都死了，我还能拯救谁？你们凭什么说，我那时还能想到拯救别人？你们怎么会知道我当时的感受？

那一刻，我思绪翻腾。时间在一秒秒地流逝，房间里依然一片死寂。我感觉她一直站在我旁边——过了一会儿，心底的一丝希望让我突然浑身一颤！我马上睁开眼睛。她已经不在房间里了。我从床上坐起来：我赢了——她永远被我征服了！

我起床去喝茶。我们家的茶炊总是放在前屋，每次都是由她来斟茶。我默默地坐到桌边，从她手里接过一杯茶。五分钟后，我看了她一眼。她面色十分苍白，甚至比昨天还要严重。她也在看着我。突然，突然间——当她发现我看她时，苍白的嘴唇间露出冷冷的一笑，怯生生的眼神里似乎充满了疑问。她好像还是拿不准刚才发生的事，并在问自己：他到底是知道还是不知道，看见还是没看见？我不动声

色地避开了她的眼神。喝完茶后，我关了当铺，去市场上买了张铁床和一扇屏风。回家后，我吩咐把床放在前厅里，用屏风把它围上。床是给她买的，但我并没和她说什么。看到这张床，不用说她也应该明白，我“都看见了，也知道了”，她也不用再猜疑了。晚上我照旧把左轮枪放在桌子上，她也一声不响地睡到了自己的新床上。婚姻关系解除了，“她被征服了，但没得到宽恕”。夜里她不断呓语，第二天早上热病发作，卧床了六个星期。

[3] 一种产自意大利那不勒斯的高级绸缎，价格昂贵，质地优良。

[4] 1卢布等于100戈比。

[5] 歌德巨著《浮士德》中引诱浮士德怠惰情满足的魔鬼。

[6] 原文为拉丁语。

[7] 此处原文为法语。

[8] 约翰·斯图亚特·密尔（旧译约翰·斯图亚特·穆勒，1806—1873），19世纪英国著名自由主义思想家。

[9] 原文为法语。

[10] 19世纪彼得堡市一个收容底层市民的场所。

1.高傲的梦

卢克里娅刚才跟我说，等太太下葬后，她不想继续在我这儿待着了，她也准备走。我已经跪着祷告五分钟了，我原本打算祷告一个小时，但我脑子里一直安静不下来，一直在想各种各样的问题，全是些病态的想法，想得我头疼——在这里祈祷有什么用呢？只不过是罪过！说来也奇怪，我竟然不想睡觉：一般说来，人在极度悲伤的情况下，特别是在经历了最初的强烈刺激后，总是想睡觉。据说，被判处死刑的人在行刑前夜会睡得非常踏实。这也可以理解，符合人的本性，否则的话那人是熬不住的……我躺在沙发上，但睡不着……

在她生病的六个星期里，我雇了一位受过专业训练的助理护士，加上我和卢克里娅，我们三人日夜照料她。我不心疼钱，甚至想在她身上多花一点儿。我请来的施罗德医生每次的出诊费是十卢布。她清醒过来后，我就很少出现在她面前了。我说这些干吗呢？基本康复后，她就常常坐在我房间里一张专门为她买的桌子旁，一言不发……是的，我们俩基本上不说话；后来才慢慢开始有了些交流，但也仅限于一些日常杂事。我当然是有意不去多说话的，但我很清楚，不用和我说过多的废话让她也很高兴。我认为，她的这些表现都是很正常的：毕竟她受到了极大的震撼，又在和我的斗争中惨败。但我认为，她需要时间去忘记这些事，而且要习惯现在的这种状态。因此，我们就这样彼此保持着沉默，但我时时刻刻都在为自己的未来做着准备。我想她应该也是如此吧，那个时候我最大的兴趣就是猜测她的想法，猜测她心里是怎么看我的。

还有……唉，你们谁也想不到，我为她的病忍受了多少折磨。但所有的一切我都只在内心默默承受，从未表露过，甚至连卢克里娅都察觉不到。我无法想象，甚至不敢去假设，她在一无所知的情况下死去会是种什么情形。在她脱离危险、逐渐康复后，我知道，我也会很快平静下来。而且，我想让现在的状态暂时维持下去，我们的未来终会降临，但我想尽量把它推后。的确，当时我的心理状态有点儿奇怪，总有种特别的感觉……这么说吧，我觉得我胜利了，对于我来说，只要一想到这件事，我就十分满足。整个冬天就这么过去了。而我，从来没有像这个冬天那样，觉得一切如此完美。

你们要知道，在我妻子的惨剧发生前，我的人生中还有过一次可

怕的经历——被迫从军队退役，这件事无时无刻不在困扰我，使我声誉受损。总之，我受到了蛮横无理的对待。是的，我的同事们不喜欢我，他们认为我性格阴郁，甚至有些可笑。事情往往就是这样的，有些东西您觉得它是高尚的，值得尊重，您把它深藏心底，但不知为什么，这竟会让有些人发笑。是啊，人们从来都不喜欢我，甚至在学校里就是这样。我总是处处不受欢迎。连卢克里娅都不喜欢我。在团里服役时，有件事可以证明我不受欢迎，虽然它是偶然发生的。有的时候厄运会像飘来的浮云一样凑到一块儿，可能发生也可能不发生的意外都会让一个人毁掉，没有什么事比这更令人反感和难以接受的了。对于一个睿智的人来说，这简直就是有辱尊严。事情的经过是这样的：

有一次我去剧院看戏，幕间休息时去了趟茶点部。这时一个叫阿×的骠骑兵突然走了进来，当着在场军官和其他观众的面，对另外两个骠骑兵大声说，我们团的别祖姆采夫上尉刚才在走廊里大吵大闹，“好像是喝多了”。他们的交谈没了下文，说的也不是真事，别祖姆采夫上尉并没有喝多，也没像他说的那样大吵大闹。几个骠骑兵又闲聊了几句，然后就走了。但第二天，这事传到了我们团里，立刻有人说，当时我们团在茶点部的只有我一人，而且骠骑兵阿×在污蔑别祖姆采夫上尉时，我也没有上去制止他。可我为什么要那样做呢？如果他对别祖姆采夫有恶意的话，那也是他们之间的私事，我干吗要踉这浑水呢？但军官们认为，这并非只是私人恩怨，而是牵涉到了我们团，因为当时团里的军官中只有我一人。我的做法就等于在向其他军官和观众们证明，我们团里可能有军官不重视自己和团队的荣誉。我不同意这样的定论。有人告诉我，虽然现在有点儿晚了，但还是有机会补救的，只要我正式向阿×解释清楚当时的情况就可以了。我不想这么做，而且觉得很气愤，所以就一口回绝了。不久之后，我就退役，离开了军队。这就是事情的整个经过。我高傲地离开，但心理却崩溃了。之后便一蹶不振。恰巧这时，我在莫斯科的姐夫挥霍掉了我们本就不多的财产，其中也包括我的那一小份，致使我身无分文，流落街头。我本可以在私人机构谋个职位，但我没那样做：脱下闪亮的军装，我不想随便到铁路上的什么地方去工作。就这样吧，羞愧、耻辱、堕落，要来就来吧，越坏越好——这就是我当时的选择。种种幽暗的记忆与维亚泽姆斯基大院，填满了我接下来三年的生活。一年半之前，我的教母，一位有钱的老妇人，在莫斯科去世了，有些意外的是，在她的遗嘱中有三千卢布是留给我的。经过一番考虑，我做出了改变自己命运的决定。我打算开一家当铺，这并不需要别人的理解：等赚够了钱，我会去找一个能安身的角落，开始新的生活，远离从前的记忆——这就是我的计划。然而，那段黑暗的往事和永远洗刷不清的羞辱却在时时刻刻折磨着我。后来我结婚了，这是不是偶然的事情——我也不知道。但娶她进家门时，我想，我是给自己找了一

位朋友，我太需要朋友了。但我也清楚，朋友间是需要磨合的，甚至是需要征服的。我能立刻向这位对我抱有成见的十六岁姑娘解释清楚所有事情吗？比如说，如果没有那次可怕的“左轮枪事件”，我能使她相信，我并非懦夫，被军队除名也是不公正的吗？但这件事来得是多么及时啊！在经受住了左轮枪的考验后，我彻底洗刷掉了那段屈辱与黑暗的历史。虽然不会有人知道这些故事，但只要她能明白就够了，这对我来说就是一切，因为她对于我来说就是一切，是我理想中未来的全部希望所在。她是我唯一想要的人，不需要别人了——她应该是都懂了，至少她清楚，投奔我的敌人对我来说是不公平的。这种想法让我无比欣慰。她现在可能还会觉得我是个怪人，但起码不会再认为我是个卑鄙下流之徒了。而且，经历了这一切之后，我更加认同：性格古怪并不是缺点；相反，有时候它更能打动女性的心。总之，我是把这件事暂时放下了，并不急于去解决。我感觉自己非常平静，对于我的理想来说，有太多的图景和素材可以利用。我是个幻想家，但这也是我的问题所在：我总是在幻想自己的未来，但对她呢，再等等吧。

整个冬天就在某种期待中过去了。我喜欢悄悄地看着她坐在桌边的样子。她会做一些针线活儿，缝缝补补，晚上有时会从我柜子里拿一本书读读。我的藏书基本上可以证明我的品位和兴趣。她几乎哪也不去。每天午饭后或黄昏前，我会带她出去散步，做些户外运动，我们也不像从前那样互不说话了。我尽量做出我们相处和睦的样子，但正如我前面说过的，我们俩都不会让自己和对方过于亲近。我是有意这样做的，而她呢，我想，还是应该再“给她些时间吧”。让我感到奇怪的是，我自己竟然从来都没仔细想过这种情况。整个冬天里，我一直喜欢悄悄地看她，但直到冬天结束，她都没看过我一眼！我只是认为，她还是太羞怯了，而且病后的虚弱无力让她看上去更加腼腆温顺。不，最好还是再等等吧——“说不定她会突然自己走过来……”

这个想法总是让我兴奋不已。再补充一句：有时我好像是故意让自己这么激动，这似乎也让我完全受制于她。就这样又过了一段时间。我对她的怨恨并没有越积越深，也没有在心底根深蒂固。我自己感觉这就像一场游戏。不错，那个时候我是解除了婚姻关系，给她买了床和屏风，但我从来没把她当成一个有罪之人来看待啊。这并不是因为我对她的过错认识肤浅，而是因为从第一天起，甚至在买床之前，我就决定要宽恕她。这听起来确实有点儿奇怪，因为无论如何，在道德要求上，我是个很严格的人。然而，在我眼中，她已经被征服了，受到了应有的惩罚，精神彻底崩溃，虽然有时候我对她充满怜悯，但有时候也对这种结果感到非常满意。我很喜欢我们之间这种不平等的感觉……

这个冬天里，我有意做了几件善事。我免去了两笔应收的债务，

还在没有任何抵押物的情况下，放了一些钱给一个贫穷的女人。我没把这些事告诉我妻子，我这么做也不是为了让她知道；但那个女人自己上门来道谢，就差没给我跪下了。这事传了出去，我想，她也应该很高兴我这么做吧。

春天马上就到了，已经是四月中旬了，双层窗户已经被拿掉，明媚的阳光照进了我们安静的房间。似乎曾有一块障眼布挡在我的眼前，蒙蔽了我的头脑。这致命又可怕的障眼布啊！但不知为什么，我眼前的遮蔽物突然落下了，瞬间一切都变得明朗起来，我恍然大悟！这一天的到来是偶然的吗，是注定的吗，是太阳的光芒让我愚钝的头脑瞬间开悟的吗？不，并不存在什么顿悟，而是那根筋脉，那根已经僵死了的筋脉突然间又跳动了起来，它摇晃着我沉寂的心灵和骇人的高傲，它们复活了，它们又放射出了光芒。我突然感觉到像是从地上跳起来一样。是的，它来得太突然，太出人意料。事情发生在那天下午五点钟，临近傍晚……

2.障眼布突然落下了

在这之前，我先交代两句。早在一个月之前，我就发现她经常莫名其妙地陷入沉思之中，注意，是沉思，不是沉默。我也是突然发现的。我看她的时候，她总是坐在那里低头缝纫，看也不看我一眼。有时她坐在那里的样子会突然让我感到惊讶，纤细、瘦弱、面色苍白，嘴唇也毫无血色，如果再加上她若有所思的神情，那可真是一幅让人震撼的画面。在这之前，我就常常在夜里听到她小声干咳。有一次，我又听到她在咳嗽，我没和她打招呼，马上起床去请施罗德医生过来。

施罗德是第二天来我家的。她惊讶地看了看医生，又看了看我。

她随即面无表情地冷笑着说：“我没生病。”

施罗德没有太仔细检查病情（这种医生总是端着架子，有时看病马马虎虎），只是把我叫到另一个房间，对我说，她这是大病初愈后的常见情况，春天时最好能去海边疗养一下，如果不行的话，去乡间休息一段时间也可以。总之，他也没说出什么来，就是告诉我，她现在身体虚弱，需要休息之类的。施罗德走后，她非常严肃地看着我，还是说：

“我真的一点儿病都没有。”

但说着说着，突然脸红了起来，很明显，她觉得很惭愧。不说我也明白：她之所以觉得惭愧，是因为她知道，我还是她的丈夫，仍然像个真正的丈夫那样在关心她。但当时我没能彻底看清的是，她脸上那一抹红晕可绝不是温顺与谦卑的象征。（那就是一块障眼布！）

就这样，一个月之后，在四月一个阳光明媚的下午，我在当铺里结账，她在房间里干着活儿。当时已经五点多，我突然听见我们的房间里传出了歌声……是她，她在那儿轻声地唱了起来。这是我第一次听到她唱歌，以至于那歌声给我留下的深刻印象，到现在我都无法完全理解。在那之后我几乎没有听到她唱过歌了，除了她刚嫁到我家的時候，我们还有说有笑，有时候我们会用左轮枪去打靶。那个时候，她的声音还很响亮、清脆，虽然有时忽高忽低，但非常悦耳，而且气力十足。但现在她的歌声是那样的微弱，虽然听上去并不忧郁（她唱的是首抒情歌曲），但她的嗓子就好像被撕裂、折断了一样，似乎不太适合用来歌唱，给人的感觉就像那首歌也生病了一样。她轻轻地唱着，唱到高音时，那虚弱的声音就会挣扎着断开，然后咳嗽一下，继续轻轻地往下唱……

有些人可能会嘲笑我太激动了，但可能永远都不会有人理解，我为什么要那么动情！不，我并不只是为她感到惋惜，除此之外，还有其他原因。起码在刚听到她的歌声时，我觉得有点儿莫名其妙，进而是惊讶不已，感到既可怕又怪异，到最后几乎是一种病态的报复心理：她在唱歌，居然在我面前唱歌！难道她忘了我的存在吗？

我浑身发抖地坐在那里，然后猛地站了起来，不假思索地拿上帽子准备出门，但我根本不知道要去哪里，要做什么。卢克里娅帮我穿好了大衣。

“她在唱歌？”我随口对卢克里娅说。但她没明白我的意思，看了看我，还是没搞懂；我这话说得的确有点儿含糊不清。

“这是她第一次唱歌吗？”

“不，您不在的时候，她偶尔会唱。”卢克里娅回答。

我明白了。我走下楼梯，上了街，开始漫无目的地游荡。我走到一处拐角，站下来想一想我要去哪儿。那里人来人往，不时会有人撞到我，但我毫无感觉。我叫下了一个马车夫，让他带我去“警察大桥”，我也不知道为什么要去那里。可不一会儿我就放弃了这个想法，并塞给他二十戈比。

“打扰了，这些钱你拿着吧。”我冲他茫然地笑了笑，但心里却突然开始一阵狂喜。

我加快脚步，转身回了家。那个颤抖、虚弱、撕裂的歌声又突然在我脑海里响起，几乎让我窒息。障眼布终于落了下来！假如她还能在我面前唱歌的话，那么说明她已经不在乎我了——这一点是很明确的，同时又很可怕。我能感受得到。但我心中的狂喜战胜了恐惧。

这真是命运对我的捉弄！要知道整个冬天我的心里全是这种喜悦

的感觉，根本容不下其他任何东西，可我自己在哪里呢？我和我的心灵是融为一体了吗？我匆匆忙忙地跑上楼梯，我不知道，我进门的时候是不是看上去怯生生的。我只记得，地板仿佛波浪一样起起伏伏，而我则像是在水面上漂浮。我走进房间，她还是坐在原来的地方，低头做着针线活，但没有唱歌。她有意无意地朝我这边看了一眼，但目光并没有落在我身上，只是做了个动作而已，平淡又冷漠，无论谁来她都是这个样子。

我直接走了过去，坐在紧挨着她的椅子上。可能是我的举动有点儿反常，她似乎是被吓了一跳，飞快地看了我一眼。我握住她的手，但忘记了和她说的是什麼，因为我当时已经完全语无伦次了。我已经控制不住我的声音了，我不知道我说了什麼，只记得当时快要窒息了。

“我们聊聊吧……你知道……随便说点儿什么都行！”我好像是说了一些蠢话，可这时候又怎么能仔细思考呢？她哆嗦了一下，立刻把手抽了回去。她吓得不敢地看着我，但眼神中却满是严肃的惊讶神情。没错，惊讶又严肃的神情，它立刻将我击得粉碎。虽然她没有开口，但眼神却在突然发问：“爱情？你也想要爱情？”我能读懂她的眼神，我能读出她眼中的一切。这一切都让我激动不已，我扑倒在了她的脚边。是的，我在她面前崩溃了。她一下子跳了起来，但我用尽全力握住了她的双手。

我完全记得我当时绝望的感觉，对，完全记得！但你们相信吗，也正是在那个时候，我的心中翻滚沸腾，感受到了难以抑制的狂喜，我想，我快要死了。我如痴如醉地亲吻着她的双脚，沉浸在无边无际的幸福之中。没错，这难以言表的幸福就出现在彻底的绝望面前。我一边哭泣，一边想要说些什么，但根本说不出话来。她刚才那惊恐的神情突然变成了一副忧虑的样子，她看我的眼神有些怪异，甚至带有一丝野性，她似乎有一个非同寻常的问题，但很快又把它想清楚了，继而微微一笑。我继续亲吻着她的双脚，她羞涩地把脚移开，我便亲吻她脚下的地板。她看着眼前发生的这一幕，突然笑了（你们也见过羞涩的笑吧）。她笑得越来越厉害，甚至近乎歇斯底里，我看见她的双手在颤抖，但这些我都毫不在意，只是在那不停地对她低语，说我爱她，说我愿意永远匍匐在她面前，“让我吻你的裙子吧……我一辈子都会这样对你顶礼膜拜……”她突然开始号啕大哭，浑身不停地抽搐，犹如陷入可怕的癫狂中一般。是我把她吓到了。

我把她抱到床上。过了一会儿，她逐渐冷静下来，但神色却十分憔悴。她坐在床边，拉着我的手，请求我一定要冷静：“够了，您不要再折磨自己，冷静一点儿吧！”——说完，她又哭了起来。那天晚上我一直陪在她身边，寸步不离。我一直在和她说话，说我要带她去

布洛涅 [11]，去洗海水浴，马上出发，再过两星期就走；说我听到她的声音还像不久前那样虚弱；说我要关了当铺，把它卖给多布龙拉沃夫；还说要开始新的生活，这是最重要的，要去布洛涅，去布洛涅！她听了讲的这些，觉得有些害怕，而且越来越害怕。但我并没有太在意她的感受，对于我来说，更重要的是，我发疯似的想要再跪倒在她的脚边，再亲吻她的双脚，亲吻她脚下的地板，膜拜她，我不停地对她说：“我再也不会向你索要什么了，不要回应我，不要在乎我，完全不要，我只请求你允许我在一个角落里默默地看着你，把我当成你的一件东西就好，把我当成一条狗……”她又哭了。

“我还以为您不会再理我了。”她脱口而出，说得那么突然，那么不经意，仿佛她自己都没有意识到她说了什么。但对于我来说，这是那天晚上最重要的一句话，无比清晰，正中要害，让我心如刀绞。这句话让我彻底醒悟了，只有她在我身边，在我眼前，我才能对未来充满渴望，我才能感到无比的幸福。啊，那天晚上我让她筋疲力尽，我能理解，但我也不断在想，我要马上做出改变。最后，她终于撑不住了，我劝她休息，她倒头便睡。夜里，我不停地起来，穿上鞋走到她床边，静静地看着她。和我想象的一样，她有时会在梦中低声呓语。我一边搓着手，一边看着她，看着这个躺在我花三卢布买来的小铁床上的病人。我跪了下来，但没有亲吻她的脚。（会弄醒她的！）我祈祷了一会儿，然后站了起来。这时，卢克里娅从厨房走了出来，看到了我。我走到她跟前，告诉她可以去睡觉了，从明天开始，就是“另一番光景”了。

我对这一点坚信不疑，甚至到了迷狂的程度。虽然我的眼前不再有任何障碍遮挡我的视线，但当时我正沉浸在那种无边无际的喜悦之中，久久不能平静下来，以至于完全不去理会灾祸降临的某种征兆。我只期待明天马上到来，对，就是明天！要知道，那个时候她还活着，她就在那里，就在我的眼前，就像我在她的眼前一样，一想到这些，我如何能平静得下来呢？“等她明天醒来，我要把这一切都告诉她，她会理解的。”这就是我当时的想法，简单而又明确，我为此狂喜不已！更重要的是去布洛涅的旅行。不知为什么，我总是想着布洛涅，似乎那就是一切，似乎在布洛涅会有某种终极存在的东西。“到布洛涅去，到布洛涅去！……”我狂躁地等待着明天。

3.我了解得太清楚了

这件事的的确确就发生在几天前，五天，总共只过去了五天，就在上星期二。不、不，如果她能再多等一会儿，用不了多长时间，我就可以驱散阴霾了！难道她的心还没有平静下来吗？第二天她听我说话时，虽然看上去有些心神不定，但脸上已经挂着微笑了……但在过去的整整五天里，她时而心神不宁，时而羞愧难当。她仍然感到害

怕，非常害怕。我不会去争辩，也不想反驳，我没有丧失理智，她感到恐惧是可以理解的，她怎么能不害怕呢？要知道，我们彼此早已是陌生人了，相互生疏，形同陌路，但却突然发生了这一切……我并没有注意到她的恐惧，我只看到了美好的新生活！……的确，千真万确，我犯了一个错误。也可能是很多错误。第二天一觉醒来（已是星期三了），一大早我就犯了个错误：我竟然把她当成了自己的一位朋友。我向她坦白了我的过去，甚至连一生中自己都不想直面的事也没有隐瞒，虽然这是有必要的，但我过于着急了——这哪里只是坦白啊！我直接对她说，在这整整一个冬天里，我始终坚信她是爱我的。我向她解释，我当时开这个当铺只是由于意志和心灵的颓废，它既是对我个人意志的鞭挞，也是一种自我夸耀。我还向她承认，当初在茶点部时，我的确是害怕了，这是我的性格所致，我的神经过于脆弱：当时的氛围让我惶恐不安，连茶点部也让我惊慌失措，我甚至在纠结，我要不要赶紧离开，我是不是表现得很愚蠢？我害怕的不是决斗本身，而是在这一过程中被人嘲笑……后来我也一直不愿承认，我是在折磨所有人，我也因此在折磨她，我娶她就是想让她为此感到痛苦。我发疯似的跟她说了这些话。她抓住我的手，哀求我不要再说了：“您这说的什么话……您不要再折磨自己了。”说完，又开始号啕大哭，差点再次歇斯底里！她不停地求我什么都别说了，不要再想这些事了。

我没太理会她的请求，继续和她说关于春天，关于布洛涅的事。那里有太阳，那里有我们的新太阳，这就是我要说的！我要关了当铺，把它转让给多布龙拉沃夫。我又突然向她提议，把我们所有的财产都分发给穷人，只留下我从教母那里继承的三千卢布，我们用这笔钱去布洛涅，等回来后再靠我们的双手开始新的生活。事情就这么定了，她没有反对，因为她什么也没说……只是笑了笑。她的笑似乎更像是出于安慰，只是为了不让我伤心。我看得出来，我让她很为难，你们别以为我又愚蠢又自私，什么都不懂。其实我什么都明白，我比谁都看得透，我已经处在彻底绝望的边缘了！

我把所有事都和她讲了，关于我的、关于她的，乃至关于卢克里娅的。我告诉她，我也哭过……唉，我当然不会多说关于我哭的事，而且有些事情我也是尽量不去提及。我记得，有那么一两次，她和我交谈时也表现得兴致勃勃，对，我记得！你们怎么可以说我什么都不在意呢？如果这件事没有发生的话，那一切都将大不一样。要知道，两天前她还笑着和我讲这个冬天她读过的书，讲吉尔·布拉斯和格林纳达大主教的片段 [12]。那是多么纯真、可爱的笑容啊，和她还是我未婚妻的时候一模一样。（时间真是过得飞快！）看到这笑容我是多么高兴啊！不过，她在讲到大主教时的那种状态倒是让我很惊讶：很显然，她在冬天里读那本文学经典的时候获得了内心的宁静和幸福，以

至于让她面露笑容。难道她那时真的已经心如死灰，完全确信我将抛弃她吗？因为她星期二的时候还说过：“我还以为您会抛弃我呢！”唉，这可真是十岁小女孩的想法！实际上，她那时的确完全相信，未来的一切事情都会是像她想的那样：我们两个人各自坐在自己的桌子旁，就这么一直坐下去，直到六十岁。但突然有一天，我走到她面前，我是她的丈夫，一个需要爱的丈夫！这是多么深的误解啊，我是多么糊涂啊！

我欣喜若狂地看着她，但这样做不太好，可能会把她吓到，我应该再克制一点。其实我已经很克制了，我控制住自己没再去亲吻她的脚。我从来没表现出过那种样子……就是……我作为一个丈夫的样子——我脑子里从来就没想过那应该是什么样子，我只想膜拜她！但我已经无法再沉默下去了，让我一言不发是完全不可能的。我突然对她说，和她交谈是一种愉悦的享受，我认为她的教养和见识都要远远超过我。她的脸涨得通红，慌忙说，我这是言过其实了。但处在狂喜中的我犯了一个愚蠢的错误，我情不自禁地和她提起了当初躲在门后，听她和那个无耻之徒论战的事，那次清白的论战。而且我还告诉她，我是多么地欣赏她的智慧、机敏和孩童般的纯真。她听了我的话，身体微微颤抖了一下，依然说我言过其实了，但这次声音更轻，而且脸色一下子阴沉了下来，随后使用双手捂着脸失声痛哭……这下我也控制不住自己了：我又跪倒在她身边，亲吻她的双脚，最后又是以一阵歇斯底里般的发作收场，那场景和星期二时一模一样。这是昨天晚上，但到了第二天早上……

第二天早上？！天啊，那不就是今天早上吗，就在不久前，就是刚才！

你们仔细想想：就在我们刚才一起喝茶的时候（就是在昨天的那阵发疯后），她还对我说，她冬天时让我惊讶的那种平静心态是真实的！而我却整夜在为昨天的事担惊受怕。但她突然走到我面前，双手紧紧握在一起，（就在刚才！）对我说，她知道，她是有罪之人，整个冬天她的罪孽都在折磨着她，而且现在也没有停止……她说她非常敬佩我高尚的情操和坦荡的胸襟……“我要做您忠诚的妻子，我会一直尊敬您……”我一下子跳了起来，发疯似的抱住了她！我亲吻着她，吻她的脸颊，吻她的嘴唇，就像一位久别归家的丈夫一样。可我才刚才为什么要出门，我就离开了两个小时……我去办理我们的出国护照……哦，我的天啊！我要是早回来五分钟，就那五分钟！……我回来时一群人围在大门口，那些人盯着我，那些目光……啊，主啊！

卢克里娅说（我现在无论如何也不能让卢克里娅走，她了解所有细节，整个冬天她都在，她会把一切都告诉我），大约在我回来前的二十分钟左右，她走进房间去问我妻子一件事，我记不起来是什么事

了。她当时看到，圣像（就是前面提到过的圣母像）已被取了出来，就放在桌子上，好像我妻子刚刚祈祷过。“您怎么了，太太？”“没什么事，卢克里娅，你去吧……等等，卢克里娅。”我妻子走到她跟前，吻了她一下。“您现在觉得开心吗，太太？”“是的，卢克里娅。”“先生早就该向您道歉，太太……感谢上帝，你们终于和好了。”“好，卢克里娅，你去吧。”她笑了笑，但看上去有些怪异，怪异到卢克里娅总觉得有什么地方不对劲，十分钟后又返回房间去看她，“她当时站在墙边，离窗户很近，一只手贴着墙，头贴在手上，好像在想着什么事情。她想得太出神了，都没注意到我在门外看她。我看见，她好像在笑，站在那儿一边笑，一边想心事。我站了一会儿，就悄悄走开了，我正在纳闷儿的时候，突然听见窗户被打开的声音。我急忙走回去说，‘外面冷，太太，您可别着凉了’，就在这时我突然看到，她站到了窗台上，窗户开着，她背对着我站在窗户中间，手里握着圣像。我的心扑通一下，赶紧喊‘太太，太太’，她听见了，我以为她会转过身来看看我，但她没有，而是把圣像按在胸前，向前跨了一步，跳了下去！”

我只记得，我刚走进大门时，她还有体温。主要是他们都在看我。一开始他们还在吵吵嚷嚷，但一看到我立刻安静了下来，给我让出了一条路，我看见……她躺在那里，抱着圣像。我记得，当时感觉周围一团漆黑，我默默地走过去，站在那儿看了好久，大家围在我身边，好像在对我说着什么。卢克里娅当时也在，但我没看见她。听别人说，她还和我说话了。我记得，有一个人一直在冲我嚷嚷：“从嘴里流出一小摊血，就一小摊，一小摊！”他还指给我看地面上的血。我的一根手指好像沾到了血，有些弄脏了，我看了看我的手指（这个我记得），而那个人就一直在旁边对我说：“一小摊，一小摊！”

“什么‘一小摊’，你是什么意思？”我用尽全力冲他喊（据说是），然后抡起拳头朝他扑了过去……

啊，荒唐，荒唐！这是个误会！这不正常！这怎么可能！

4.只晚了五分钟

难道不是这样吗？难道这会是真的吗？难道你们觉得这是有可能的吗？为了什么，究竟是什么原因让这个女人选择了死亡？

你们要相信，我是知道原因的；但她为了什么而死——仍然是个谜。她对我的爱感到恐惧，她一定是认真地问过自己：是否应该接受这种爱？既然回答不了这个问题，那就只好选择死亡。我知道，我知道，其实这没有什么值得伤脑筋的地方：她对自己做了太多的承诺，她害怕无法兑现——就是这样。但有些情况是非常可怕的。

现在我仍然弄不明白的是，她是为了什么目的而死的？这个问题

一直在我脑子里挥之不去。实际上，无论她想要过怎样的生活，我都会让她得偿所愿。但她不相信我会那样做，这就是问题所在！不、不，我在撒谎，完全不是这么回事。原因其实很简单，和我在一起就应该坦诚相待：她选择爱我，就会全心全意地爱，而不是像她爱那个杂货店老板那样敷衍行事。她是那么纯洁，那么真诚，她无法接受那位老板想要的那种爱情。她不想欺骗我，她不想用二分之一、四分之一的爱来装模作样地骗我。她就是这样的诚实，就是这样，先生们！那个时候我还想让她更加豁达一些，你们记得吗？多么奇怪的想法。

有些问题我非常想知道答案：她尊敬我吗？我不知道。她鄙视我吗？我不认为她会鄙视我。但奇怪的是，为什么我从来没想过这个问题，整个冬天我都从来没考虑过，她是不是在鄙视我。在她用那种严肃而又惊讶的目光看我之前，我一直都坚信她不会鄙视我。没错，严肃。正是那份严肃让我彻底明白，她鄙视我。但现在为时已晚，一切都无法重来了！啊，让她鄙视我吧，哪怕鄙视一辈子都没关系，只要她活着！刚才她还能走路，还能说话呢。我真想不通，她是怎么从窗户跳下去的！我哪曾想到，这事就发生在五分钟前。我叫来卢克里娅。我现在决不能让卢克里娅走，决不能！

我们还有很多事要商量呢。我们只是在这个冬天才开始彼此疏远的，难道就不能重归于好吗？为什么，为什么我们不能在一起重新开始新的生活呢？我是个坦荡又豁达的人，她也是——这不就是我们之间的契合点吗？我们只要再谈一谈，不需要多久，也许再过两天她就能彻底理解我了。

最让人无法接受的就是这样的事——简单、野蛮、愚昧，让人无法预料。这多么遗憾啊！五分钟，我就晚来了五分钟！我要是能提前回来五分钟，这事就不会发生了，她脑子里也再不会出现这样的念头了。到最后，她一定会理解我所做的一切。可现在，房间又变得空空荡荡，又只有我一个人了。钟摆还在那里嘀嗒作响，它无所牵挂，也没有遗憾。我身边一个人都没有——这就是我的不幸！

我一直在房间里走来走去。我知道，我知道，你们不用提醒我：我抱怨这件不可预料的事，我还抱怨那五分钟，你们觉得可笑吗？但你们要知道，这是很明显的。你们想想：出现这种情况时，一般人都不会留一张字条，写着“我的死和任何人无关”，但她什么都没留下。难道她没想过，有的人可能会怀疑到卢克里娅吗？人们会说：“当时只有你和她在一起，一定是你把她推下去的。”如果不是当时有四个人在院子里和厢房窗户中看到她怀抱圣像，自己跳下去的话，那卢克里娅即便无罪，至少也要受一些刁难了。但其他人不也是偶然看到她跳下去的吗？是的，这一瞬间发生的事，完全就是无意识的本能冲动。这就是一场意外，这是毫无理性的行为！但你们会问，她在这之前不

是还对着圣像祈祷来着吗？但这并不代表她做的就是死前祈祷。很有可能她就是在十分钟前才做出这种决定的——就站在墙边，头靠手上，面带微笑时。那一刻一定有某种想法钻进了她的脑子，让她神魂颠倒，最终屈服。

你们的想法都存在明显的误解。她是可以和我们一起生活的。就算她贫血又怎样呢？难道这是贫血或生命力枯竭所致吗？她从冬天开始就已经很虚弱了，就是这么回事……

我来晚了！

躺在棺材里的她是那样的纤细，连她的小鼻子都变得尖瘦了！她的睫毛像平放着的箭一样。她坠落地面后，哪里都没有摔破，哪里都没有折断！只有那“一小摊血”，一个勺子那么多。她是内脏破裂。我又冒出一个奇怪的想法：如果她不下葬会怎样？因为如果她被抬走，那么……不，她几乎不可能被抬走！我当然知道，她应该被抬走，我没疯，也没说胡话，相反，我现在比任何时候都要清醒——只不过家里又要冷冷清清了，又只剩那两个房间，又只有我一个人和那些抵押物在一起了。胡话、胡话，这就是在说胡话！我让她痛苦不堪，就是这样！

走到这一步，你们的那些法律对我来说算得了什么？你们的习俗、你们的文化、你们的生活、你们的国家、你们的信仰对我来说又算得了什么？把我送上法庭吧，让你们的法庭来公开审判我吧，我要说，我没什么好招认的。法官会冲我大喊：“肃静，军官！”我也会回应他：“你有什么权力让我服从你？为什么阴暗的守旧势力要打碎这世上最珍贵的东西？你们的法律为什么要这样对待我？我已经和那些条条框框一刀两断了。”我现在什么都不怕了！

盲目，她太盲目了！她死了，听不到我说话了！她不会知道，我把她置身在怎样的天国之中。天国就在我心里，但愿她已经身在其中！她不会再爱我了——好吧，不过那又怎样呢？万物本该如此，也终将如此。她本可以把我当成一个朋友——那样我们都会快乐，我们会看着对方开心大笑。我们本应这样去生活。如果她爱上了别人——好吧，去爱吧，去爱吧！她会和他走在一起开心地笑，而我会站在街角望着他们……啊，不管什么都可以，只要她睁开眼睛，哪怕一次也好！睁开一会儿吧，就一会儿！看看我，就像刚才一样，像她站在我面前发誓要做一个忠诚的妻子那样！只要看一眼她就会全明白了！

旧势力啊！这世界啊！人类孤零零地活在这世界中——这就是不幸！俄罗斯的勇士们在呼喊：“有人活着吗？”我不是勇士，我也这么呼喊，可是无人应答。人们说，太阳赋予万物生命。太阳升起来了，你们看看它，难道它有生命吗？一切都没有生命，到处是一片死气沉

沉。只有人是活着的，可他们周围却是一片沉寂——这就是我们的世界！“人们啊，彼此相爱吧！”——这是谁说的？这是谁的训诫？钟摆还在那里漠然地嘀嗒作响，令人厌恶。现在已经夜里两点了。她的靴子还立在床边，仿佛在等着她……不，说正经的，明天她就要被抬走了，我该怎么办？

[11] 全称为“滨海布洛涅”，法国西北部港口城市，临加莱海峡，拥有海滨浴场。

[12] 出自法国作家阿兰·勒内·勒萨日（1668—1747）的长篇小说《吉尔·布拉斯》。

Fyodor
Dostoyevsky

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

The Meek One

N^o 22

‘I could see that
she was still
terribly afraid,
but I didn’t soften
anything; instead,
seeing that she
was afraid I
deliberately
intensified it.’

Chapter 1

I. WHO I WAS AND WHO SHE WAS

... Now as long as she's here - everything is still all right : I'm constantly going over and looking at her; but tomorrow they'll take her away and - how will I ever stay behind all on my own? Now she's on the table in the sitting room, on two card tables that were put together, and the coffin will come tomorrow, a white one, with white *gros de Naples* , how-ever, that's not i ... I keep pacing and want to make sense of it for myself. Now it's six hours that I've been trying to make sense of it and I still can't collect my thoughts to a T. The fact of the matter is that I keep pacing, pacing, pacin ... Here's how it was. I'll simply tell it in order. (Order!) Gen-tlemen, I'm far from being a literary man, as you'll see, well, so be it, but I'll tell it as I myself understand it. That's the horror of it for me, that I understand everything!

If you want to know, that is, if we take it from the very beginning, then quite simply she used to come to me to pawn things in order to pay for advertising in the *Voice* , say-ing, well, that there's a governess, willing to travel and give lessons in the home and so forth and so on. That was in the very beginning and of course I didn't single her out from the others : she came like all the others and so forth. But afterwards I began to single her out. She was so thin, fair, a bit taller than average; with me she was always awkward, as if she were embarrassed (I think that she was exactly the same with all strangers, and, it goes without saying, I was no different than anyone else, that is, if taken not as a pawn-broker but as a man). As soon as she received her money she would immediately turn around and leave. And all in silence. Others argue, beg, haggle to be given more; but not this one, whatever she was give ... It seems to me that I keep getting muddle ... Yes; first of all, I was struck by her things : silver gilt earrings, a worthless little locket - things worth twenty kopecks. She herself knew that they were worth all of ten kopecks, but I could see from her face that for her they were objects of great value - and indeed, as I learned later,

this was all that she had left from her papa and mama. Only once did I permit myself to smile at her things. That is, you see, I never permit myself that, I maintain a gentlemanly tone with the public : a few words said respectfully and sternly. 'Sternly, sternly and sternly.' But she suddenly permitted herself to bring the remnants (quite literally, that is) of an old rabbit-skin jacket - and I couldn't resist and suddenly said something to her in the way of a witticism, as it were. Goodness gracious, how she flared up! Her eyes were blue, large, thoughtful, but how they blazed! But she didn't let drop a single word, she picked up her 'remnants' and left. That was the first time that I noticed her *particularly* and thought something of that sort about her, that is, precisely something of that particular sort. Yes; I recall yet another impression, that is, if you wish, the main impression, the synthesis of everything : namely, that she was terribly young, so young, as if she were fourteen years old. Whereas she was then three months shy of sixteen. However, that wasn't what I wanted to say, that wasn't the synthesis at all. She came again the next day. I later learned that she had been to Dobronravov and Mozer with that jacket, but they don't take anything except gold and didn't even bother to talk to her. I, on the other hand, had once taken a cameo from her (a worthless little thing) - and when I gave it some thought later on I was surprised : I also don't buy anything except gold and silver and yet I had taken a cameo. That was my second thought about her then, I remember that.

This time, that is, after going to Mozer, she brought an amber cigar holder - a so-so little piece, for the connoisseur, but something of no worth to us, because we deal only in gold. Since she had come after yesterday's *rebellion*, I greeted her sternly. Sternness for me means dryness. However, as I was giving her the two roubles, I couldn't resist and said with some irritation, as it were : 'I'm doing this only for you, Mozer wouldn't take a thing like this from you.' I particularly emphasized the words 'for you', and precisely with a *certain insinuation* . I was angry. Once again she flared up, upon hearing that '*for you* ', but she held her tongue, didn't throw down the money, took it - that's what poverty is! But how she flared up! I understood that I had wounded her. But when she had gone, I suddenly asked myself : So is this triumph over her really worth two roubles? Hee-hee-hee! I remember that I asked precisely that very question twice : 'Is it worth it? Is it worth it?' And, laughing, I

answered this question to myself in the affirmative. Then I really cheered up. But this wasn't a nasty feeling : I had a plan, a purpose; I wanted to test her, because suddenly I began to have some thoughts about her. That was my third *particular* thought about her.

...Well, it was from that time that it all started. It goes without saying, I immediately tried to find out all her cir-cumstances indirectly and waited for her arrival with particular impatience. You see, I had a feeling that she would come soon. When she came, I launched into an amiable conversation with unusual politeness. You see, I wasn't badly brought up and have manners. Hmm. That was when I guessed that she was kind and meek. The kind and meek don't resist for long, and although they are by no means very open, they don't at all know how to avoid a conversation : they answer grudgingly, but they answer and the longer it goes on, the more they answer; but if this is what you want, you can't let yourself get tired. It goes without saying that she didn't explain anything to me then. It was later that I learned about the *Voice* and about everything else. She was then mustering every last bit she had to advertise - at first, it goes without saying, presumptuously : 'Governess, willing to travel, send terms by post'; but later : 'Willing to do any-thing, tutor, be a companion, housekeeping, care for the sick, can sew' and so forth and so on. The usual! It goes without saying that all this was added to the advertisement at different stages, and towards the end, when despair had set in, there was even 'without salary, for board'. No, she didn't find a position! I made up my mind then to test her for the last time : I suddenly picked up today's *Voice* and showed her an advertisement : 'Young female, orphan, seeks position as governess of small children, preferably with an elderly widower. Willing to do light housework.'

'There, you see, this was published this morning and by evening she's sure to have found a job. That's the way to advertise!'

Again she flared up, again her eyes blazed; she turned around and immediately walked out. I was very pleased. However, by then I was already sure of everything and had no fears : nobody would take her cigar holders. Besides, she had already run out of cigar holders. And so it was, two days later she comes, such a pale, agitated little thing - I understood that something had happened at home, and indeed something had happened. I'll explain straight

away what happened, but now I merely wish to recall how I suddenly did something chic and rose in her eyes. A plan suddenly occurred to me. The fact of the matter is that she brought this icon (she had steeled herself to bring it) ... Oh, listen! Listen! This is where it began, but I keep getting muddle ... The fact of the matter is that I now want to recall everything, every trifle, every little detail. I still want to collect my thoughts to a T and - I can't, and now there are these little details, these little detail ...

An icon of the Mother of God. The Mother of God with Child, a family heirloom, an antique, with a silver gilt frame - worth - well, worth about six roubles. I see that the icon is dear to her, and she's pawning the whole icon, with-out removing the mounting. I tell her that it would be better if she removed the mounting and took the icon with her, because after all it's an icon.

'Surely you're not forbidden?'

'No, it's not that it's forbidden, but just that, perhaps, you yourself ... '

'Well, remove it.'

'You know what, I won't remove it, but I'll put it over there in the icon case,' I said, after giving it some thought, 'with the other icons, under the lamp.' (I've always had the lamp burning ever since I opened my shop.) 'And I'll give you ten roubles - it's as simple as that.'

'I don't need ten, give me five; I'll redeem it without fail.'

'But don't you want ten? The icon is worth it,' I added, after observing that her little eyes had flashed once again. She held her tongue. I brought her five roubles.

'Don't despise anybody - I've been in tight squeezes myself, and even a bit worse, and if you now see me in such an occupatio ... well, you see, after all that I've endure ... '

'You're taking revenge on society? Is that it?' she suddenly interrupted me with a rather sarcastic gibe, in which, how-ever, there was a good deal of innocence (that is, of a general sort, because she certainly did not single me out from the others then, so it was said almost inoffensively) . 'Aha!' I thought, 'so that's what you're like, your character is show-ing itself, you belong to the new

movement.'

'You see,' I immediately observed, half-jokingly, half-mysteriously. 'I - I am part of that part of the whole that desires to do evil, but creates goo ...'

She looked at me quickly and with great curiosity, in which, however, there was a great deal of childishness :

'Wait a moment ... What's that saying? Where's it from? I've heard it somewhere ...'

'Don't rack your brains : Mephistopheles recommends himself to Faust in those words. Have you read *Faust* ?'

'N ... not carefully.'

'That is, you haven't read it at all. You should read it. However, once again I see a sardonic grin on your lips. Please, don't suppose that I have so little taste that I wished to paint over my role as a pawnbroker by recommending myself to you as Mephistopheles. Once a pawnbroker, always a pawnbroker. We know that, miss.'

'You're such a strange person ... I didn't in the least want to say anything of the kind ...'

She wanted to say : I didn't expect that you were an educated man, but she didn't say it, though I knew that she had thought it; I had pleased her terribly much.

'You see,' I observed, 'one can do good in any walk of life. Of course, I'm not speaking of myself; let's suppose that I do nothing but bad things ...'

'Of course, one can do good in any position,' she said, looking at me with a quick and penetrating glance. 'Precisely in any position,' she added suddenly.

Oh, I remember, I remember all those moments! And I also want to add that when these young people, these dear young people, want to say something intelligent and penetrating, then their faces suddenly show you all too sincerely and naively : 'Here I am, I'm telling you something intelligent and penetrating.' And it's not at all from vanity, as is the case with the likes of us, but you see that she herself sets great store on all this terribly, and she believes, and respects and thinks that you, too, respect all this just as she

does. Oh, sincerity! That's what they win you over with! And it was so charming in her!

I remember, I have forgotten nothing! When she left, I made up my mind at once. That same day I made my final enquiries and learned absolutely everything else there was to know about her present particulars; all the particulars of her past I already knew from Lukerya, who was then their servant and whom I had bribed several days earlier. These circumstances were so horrible that I don't understand how it had been possible for her to laugh, as she had that day, and be curious about Mephistopheles' words, when she herself was faced with such horrors. But youth! That's precisely what I thought about her then with pride and joy, because, you see, there was also magnanimity about it, as if she were to say : the great works of Goethe shine even on the brink of ruin. Youth is always magnanimous, if only ever so slightly and ever so distortedly. That is, I'm speaking of her, you see, her alone. And the main thing, I then looked upon her as *mine* and did not doubt my power. You know, that's a most voluptuous thought, when you no longer have any doubt.

But what's wrong with me? If I keep going on like this, then when will I collect everything to a T? Quickly, quickly-this isn't the point at all, oh God!

II. A MARRIAGE PROPOSAL

The 'particulars' I learned about her I can set forth in a few words : her father and mother had died a long time ago, three years previously, and she had been left with her disreputable aunts. That is, it's saying too little to call them disreputable. One aunt was a widow with a large family, six children, each one smaller than the next; the other was a spinster, old and nasty. Both of them were nasty. Her father had been a government official, but only a clerk, and a non-hereditary nobleman-in a word : everything played into my hands. I appeared as if from some higher world : after all, I was a retired staffcaptain of a brilliant regiment, a nobleman by birth, independent and so on, and as far as the pawnshop went, the aunts could only look at it with respect. She had been slaving for her aunts for three years, but nevertheless she had passed an examination somewhere-she had managed to pass it, snatched a free minute to pass it, despite relentless work day in and day out -

and that meant some-thing about aspirations for the noble and the sublime on her part. After all, why did I want to get married? But who cares about me, we'll save that for late ... As if that were the point! She taught her aunt's children, she sewed their under-clothes, and towards the end she washed not only these underclothes, but she, with her bad chest, also washed the floors. To put it bluntly, they even beat her, reproaching her for every crumb. It ended with them intending to sell her. Ugh! I'll omit the dirty details. Later she told me everything in detail. A neighbour, a fat shopkeeper, had been observing all this for a whole year, and he wasn't just an ordinary shop-keeper, but the owner of two grocery stores. He had already beat two wives to death and was looking for a third, and had cast his eye on her : 'She's a quiet one,' he thought, 'she grew up in poverty and I'm marrying for the sake of my orphans.' Indeed, he did have orphans. He began to seek her hand, started negotiations with the aunts, and on top of that-he's fifty years old; she's horri fied. And that's when she started coming to me to get money for advertisements in the *Voice* . In the end, she began asking the aunts to give her just the littlest bit of time to think it over. They gave her that little bit, but only one, they didn't give her another; they badgered her : 'We don't know where we'll get our next meal, even without an extra mouth to feed.' I already knew all this, and on that same day, after her visit in the morning, I made up my mind. That evening the merchant came, he had brought from the shop a pound of candies worth fifty kopecks; she's sitting with him, and I summon Lukerya from the kitchen and tell her to go to her and whisper that I'm standing by the gate and wish to tell her something most urgently. I remained pleased with myself. And in general I was terribly pleased with myself that entire day.

Right there at the gate, already dumbfounded that I had summoned her, I explained to her, in Lukerya's presence, that I would consider myself happy and honoure ... Sec-ondly, she was not surprised by my manner or by the fact that this was taking place by the gate : 'I am a straightforward man,' I said, 'and have studied the circumstances of the mat-ter.' And I wasn't lying that I'm straightforward. Well, to hell with it. I spoke not only decently, that is, by showing myself to be a person of good breeding, but originally as well, and that's the main thing. Wat, is it a sin to acknowledge this? I want to judge myself and am doing so. I must speak both *pro and contra* , and I am doing so. I recalled it with

delight afterwards, even though it was stupid : I announced straight out then, without any embarrassment, that, in the first place, I wasn't particularly talented, not particularly intelligent, and perhaps not even particularly kind, that I was a rather cheap egoist (I remember this expression, I had composed it on my way there and remained pleased with it) and that-very, very likely - there was much that was unpleasant about me in other respects as well. All this was said with a particular kind of pride - we know how these sorts of things are said. Of course, I had sufficient good taste, after nobly declaring my deficiencies, not to launch into a declaration of my virtues : 'But to make up for this, I have this, that and the other.' I could see that she was still terribly afraid, but I didn't soften anything; instead, seeing that she was afraid I deliberately intensified it : I said straight out that she wouldn't go hungry, but as for fancy clothes, the theatre and balls-there would be none of that, though perhaps later, when I had achieved my goal. I was definitely carried away by this stern tone. I added, and as casually as possible, that if I had taken up such an occupation, that is, keeping this pawnshop, it was for one purpose only - that is, there was a certain circumstance, so to speak ... But you see I had a right to speak like that : I really did have such a purpose and such a circumstance. Wait a moment, gentlemen, all my life I have been the first to hate this pawnbroking business, but in essence, you see, even though it's ridiculous to talk to oneself in mysterious phrases, I was 'taking revenge on society', you see, I really, really, really was! Therefore, her joke about the fact that I was 'taking revenge' was unfair. That is, you see, if I had said to her straight out in so many words : 'Yes, I'm taking revenge on society', and she had burst out laughing, the way she did that morning, it would indeed have come out ridiculous. But with an indirect hint and by dropping a mysterious phrase it turned out that it was possible to engage her imagination. Moreover, I wasn't afraid of anything then : you see, I knew that in any event the fat shopkeeper was more repulsive than I and that I, standing by the gate, was her liberator. I understood that, you see. Oh, man understands baseness particularly well! But was it baseness? How is one to judge a man in a case like this? Didn't I love her already even then?

Wait a moment : it goes without saying that I didn't say a word to her about doing a good deed : on the contrary, oh, on the contrary : 'It is I,' I said, 'who am being done the favour, and not

you .' So that I even expressed this in words, I couldn't help myself, and perhaps it came out stupidly, because I noticed a fleeting grin on her face. But on the whole I had definitely won. Wait a moment, if I'm going to recall all this filth, then I'll recall this final bit of swinishness : I was standing there and this is what was going through my head : You're tall, fit, educated and - and finally, to speak without any boasting, you're not bad looking. That's what was running through my head. It goes without saying, she said 'yes'there and then by the gate. Bu ... but I should add : she thought it over for a long time, right there and then by the gate, before she said 'yes'. She was so deep in thought, so deep in thought that I was on the verge of asking, 'Well, what is it going to be?' - and I couldn't even help myself from asking with a certain sense of chic : 'Well, what is it going to be, Miss?' - adding the 'Miss'for good measure.

'Wait, I'm thinking.'

And her little face was so serious, so serious - that even then I might have read it! But instead I was offended : 'Is she really,' I thought to myself, 'choosing between me and the merchant?' Oh, I still didn't understand then! I still didn't understand anything, anything then! I didn't under-stand until today! I remember Lukerya ran after me when I was already walking away, stopped me in the street and said, catching her breath : 'God will reward you, sir, for taking our dear young lady - only don't say anything about it to her, she's proud.'

Well now, proud! I like them proud, I said to myself. The proud ones are particularly nice, whe ... well, when you no longer harbour any doubts about your power over them. Eh? Oh, base, awkward man! Oh, how pleased I was! Do you know, while she was standing there by the gate deep in thought about whether to say 'yes'to me, and I was sur-prised, do you know, that she might even have been thinking : 'If it's to be misfortune either way, isn't it better to choose the worst straight away, that is, the fat shopkeeper; let him get drunk, the sooner the better, and beat me to death!' Eh? Wat do you think, could that have been what she was thinking?

And even now I don't understand, even now I don't understand anything! I just now said that she might have been thinking that she should choose the worse of the two mis-fortunes, that is,

the merchant. But who was worse for her then - the merchant or I? The merchant or the pawnbroker who quotes Goethe? That's still a question! What question? You don't understand even that : the answer is lying on the table, and you say 'what question'! But to hell with me! I'm not the point here at al ... And at the same time, what do I care now - whether I'm the point or not? That's something I'm utterly incapable of deciding. I'd better go to bed. I have a headach ...

III. THE NOBLEST OF MEN, BUT I DON'T BELIEVE IT MYSELF

I didn't fall asleep. And how could I with that pulse hammering away in my head. I want to absorb all this, all this filth. Oh, the filth! Oh, the filth I dragged her out of then! She should have realized that, you know, she should have appreciated my deed! I was pleased, too, by various thoughts, for example, that I was forty-one years old and that she was only sixteen. That fascinated me, this sense of inequality, it was very sweet, very sweet.

I, for example, wanted to have the wedding à l'anglaise, that is, just the two of us, perhaps with two witnesses, one of whom would be Lukerya, and then at once to the train, for example, if only to Moscow (it so happened that I had business there), to a hotel for a fortnight or so. She was against it, she wouldn't have it and I was forced to visit her aunts and pay my respects to them as the relatives from whom I was taking her. I gave in, and the aunts were rendered their due. I even made a present of a hundred roubles each to those creatures and promised more, of course, without saying a word to her, so as not to distress her with the baseness of the situation. The aunts at once became as soft as silk. There was an argument about the trousseau as well : she didn't have anything, almost literally, but she didn't want anything either. However, I managed to convince her that it wasn't possible to have absolutely nothing, and so I arranged for the trousseau myself, because who else would do any-thing for her? Well, but to hell with me! Various ideas of mine, however, I nevertheless did manage to convey to her then, so that she would at least know. Perhaps I was even too hasty. The main thing is that from the very beginning, however much she tried to hold out, she would throw herself at me with her love; she would meet me when I came home in the evening with rapture, she would tell me in her prattle (the charming prattle of innocence!)

all about her child-hood, youth, about her parental home, about her father and mother. But I immediately threw cold water on all these ecstasies right then and there. That was the whole point of my idea. I answered her raptures with silence, gracious, of cours ... but she nevertheless quickly saw that we were different and that I was - a riddle. And the main thing is that I had set my sights on this riddle! You see, it was in order to pose this riddle perhaps that I committed all this foolishness! First of all, sternness - it was with sternness that I took her into my house. In a word, even though I was quite pleased with things as they were, I began to create a complete system. Oh, it took shape on its own, without any effort. And it couldn't have been otherwise, I had to create this system on account of one incontrovertible circumstance - really, what is this? I'm slandering myself! The system was genuine. No, listen, if you're going to judge a person, then you should judge him knowing the cas ... Listen.

How should I begin this, because it's very difficult. Wen you begin justifying yourself - that's when it gets difficult. You see : young people despise money, for example - I ham-mered away about money; I pressed home about money. And I hammered away so that she began to fall silent more and more. She would open her big eyes, listen, look and fall silent. You see : young people are magnanimous, that is, the good ones are magnanimous and impetuous, but they have little tolerance, as soon as something's not quite right - you get their contempt. But I wanted breadth, I wanted to instil breadth right into her heart, to instil it into her heart's vista, isn't that so? I'll take a trivial example : How could I explain, for example, my pawnshop to a person like that? It goes without saying that I didn't bring it up directly, or it would have looked like I was asking her forgiveness for the pawn-shop; instead I acted, so to speak, with pride - I spoke almost silently. And I'm a master of speaking silently - all my life I've spoken silently and I've lived through entire tragedies in silence. Oh, and I too have been unhappy! I was cast aside by everyone, cast aside and forgotten, and no one, no one knows it! And suddenly this sixteen-year-old girl got hold of details about me afterwards from vile people and thought that she knew everything, but meanwhile the secret remained only in this man's breast! I went on being silent, and I was particularly, particularly silent with her until just yesterday - why was I silent? Because I'm a proud man. I wanted her to find out

on her own, without me, but not from stories told by scoundrels, but that she should *guess herself* about this man and comprehend him! When I received her into my house, I wanted her complete respect. I wanted her to stand before me beseechingly, on account of my suffering - and I was worthy of that. Oh, I've always been proud, I've always wanted all or nothing! And that's precisely why I'm not for half-measures in happiness, but wanted everything - and that's precisely why I was forced to act as I did then, as if to say : 'Figure it out for yourself and appreciate me!' Because, you must agree, if I had begun by explaining and prompting, being evasive and asking for respect - then, you see, it would have been as if I were asking for charit ... Howeve ... However, why am I talking about this!

Stupid, stupid, stupid, stupid! I straight away and ruth-lessly (and I want to emphasize that it was ruthlessly) explained to her then, in a few words, that the magnanimity of young people was lovely, but not worth a brass button. Why not? Because it comes cheap, they get it without having lived; it's all, so to speak, the 'first impressions of existence', but let's see you do some work! Cheap magnanimity is always easy, and even to give your life-even that's easy, because that's just a matter of the blood boiling and an over-abundance of energy, one passionately longs for beauty! No, take an act of magnanimity that is difficult, quiet, muted, without splendour, where you're slandered, where there's much sacrifice and not a drop of glory - where you, a shining man, are brought forward before everyone as a scoundrel, when you are the most honest man in the world - come on, try your hand at that sort of deed, no, sir, you'll give it up! While I - all I've done my whole life is to shoulder that sort of deed. In the beginning she would argue - and how! But then she began to fall silent, completely and totally, she would just open her eyes terribly wide as she listened, such big, big eyes, and so attentive. An ... and besides that I suddenly saw a smile, a mistrustful, silent, bad smile. It was with that smile that I brought her into my house. And it's also true that she had nowhere else to g ...

IV. PLANS AND MORE PLANS

Which of us was the first to begin then?

Neither. It began on its own from the very first. I have said that

I had brought her into my house with sternness; how-ever, I softened it from the very first. When she was still my fiancée it had been explained to her that she would assist in taking in the pledges and paying out the money, and she didn't say anything then (note that) . And what's more, she even took to the business with zeal. Well, of course, the apartment, the furniture - everything remained the same as before. The apartment has two rooms : one is a large room in which the shop is partitioned off from the rest, and the other one is also a large room in which we have our sitting room and bedroom. My furniture isn't much; even her aunts had better. My icon-stand with the lamp is in the room with the shop; in the other room I have my bookcase with some books and a trunk to which I have the keys; and there's a bed, tables, chairs. When she was still my fiancée I told her that one rouble a day and no more was allotted for our board, that is, food, for me, her and Lukerya, whom I had enticed away : 'I need 30 , 000 in three years,' I told her, 'otherwise I won't be able to save up enough money.' She didn't stand in the way, but I myself added to our board by thirty kopecks. It was the same thing with the theatre. When she was still my fiancée I told her that there wouldn't be any theatre; however, I decided that we should go to the theatre once a month, and decently at that, in the orchestra. We went together, three times, and saw *In Pursuit of Happiness* and *Songbirds* , I think. (Oh, to hell with it, to hell with it!) We went in silence and returned in silence. Why, why did we from the very beginning choose to be silent? After all, there weren't any quarrels in the beginning, but there was silence then, too. As I recall, she somehow kept looking at me then on the sly; when I noticed that I increased my silence. True, I was the one who insisted upon silence, and not she. On her part there were outbursts once or twice, when she would rush to embrace me; but since these outbursts were unhealthy and hysterical, and what I required was steadfast happiness, together with her respect, I received them coldly. And I was right to do so : each time the outburst was followed the next day by a quarrel.

That is, there weren't any quarrels, but there was silence and - and on her part a more and more insolent look. 'Rebel-lion and independence' - that's what it was, only she didn't know how. Yes, that meek face was becoming more and more insolent. Can you believe it? I was becoming repulsive to her - I came to understand that. And there could be no doubt about these outbursts that came

over her. For example, after leaving behind such filth and beggary, after scrubbing floors, how could she suddenly begin to grumble about our poverty! You see, gentlemen : it wasn't poverty, it was econ-omy, and where necessary there was some luxury, when it came to linens and cleanliness, for example. I had always dreamed before that cleanliness in a husband attracts a wife. However, it wasn't poverty, but my supposed miserly econ-omy that bothered her : 'He has goals, he's showing his firm character.' She suddenly declined to go to the theatre. And there was more and more of that sardonic gri ... Wile I intensified my silence, I intensified my silence.

Surely there was no need to justify my actions? The main thing here was the pawnshop. Come now, sirs : I knew that a woman, especially one who was sixteen years old, couldn't help but submit completely to a man. Women have no ori-ginality, that's-that's an axiom, even now it's an axiom for me! Never mind what's lying there in the front room : truth is truth, and even Mill himself can't do anything about it! But a loving woman, oh, a loving woman idolizes even the vices, even the villainy of her beloved being. He would not seek such justifications for his villainy as she will find for him. That's magnanimous but not original. It is this lack of originality alone that has been the undoing of women. And what, I repeat, what are you pointing to there on the table? Is there really anything original about what's there on the table? Oh-h-h!

Listen : I was certain of her love then. You see, she would throw herself on my neck then. That meant she loved me, or rather - she wished to love me. Yes, that's what it was : she wished to love, she sought to love. But the main thing, you see, is that there weren't any villainies for which she needed to find justifications. You say a 'pawnbroker' and that's what everyone says. But what if I am a pawnbroker? That means there are reasons, if the most magnanimous of men became a pawnbroker. You see, gentlemen, there are idea ... that is, you see, when some ideas are said out loud, put into words, they come out terribly stupid. They come out so that you're ashamed of them yourself. But why? For no reason at all. Because we're all good-for-nothings and can't bear the truth, or I don't know why else. I said just now 'the most magnanimous of men'. That's ridiculous, you see, and yet that's how it was. You see, it's the truth, that is, it's the most truthful truth of all! Yes, I *had the right* then to want to pro-vide for myself and open this shop : 'You,

that is, you people, have spurned me, you have driven me away with your con-temptuous silence. You have answered my outbursts of passion with an insult that I will feel for the rest of my life. Consequently, I now am within my rights to protect myself from you with a wall, to amass those 30 , 000 roubles and end my days somewhere in the Crimea, on the southern shore, amidst mountains and vineyards, on my own estate pur-chased with that 30 , 000, and the main thing, far away from you all, but without malice towards you, with an ideal in my soul, with my beloved woman at my heart, with a family if God should send one, and - helping out the neighbouring peasants.' It goes without saying that it's good that I'm tell-ing this to myself now, but what could have been more stupid than if I had described all this out loud to her then? That was the reason behind my proud silence, and that was the reason we sat in silence. Because what would she have understood? Just sixteen years old, so very young - what could she have understood of my justifications, of my suf-fering? I was dealing with straightforwardness, ignorance of life, cheap, youthful convictions, the blindness of 'beautiful hearts', and the main thing, the pawnshop and-*basta* ! (But was I a scoundrel in the pawnshop, didn't she see how I conducted myself and did I charge more than I should?) Oh, how terrible is truth on this earth! This charming one, this meek one, this heaven - she was a tyrant, the unbearable tyrant of my soul and my tormentor! I'd be slandering myself, you see, if I didn't say that! You think I didn't love her? Wo can say that I didn't love her? You see : there was irony here, the malicious irony of fate and nature! We are accursed, the life of people in general is accursed! (And mine in particular!) I understand now, you see, that I made some mistake here! Something didn't come out the way it was supposed to. Everything was clear, my plan was as clear as the sky : 'Severe, proud, requires no moral consolation, suffers in silence.' That's how it was, I wasn't lying, I wasn't lying! 'She'll see for herself later on that there was magna-nimity here, but she just wasn't able to see it now-and when she does fathom it some day, she'll appreciate it ten times more and will fall down in the dust with her hands folded in supplication.' That was the plan. But I forgot something here or failed to take it into account. I wasn't able to do something here. But enough, enough. And of whom can I ask forgiveness now? Wat's done is done. Take courage, man, and be proud! It's not you who are to blame!...

Now then, I'll tell the truth, I won't be afraid to stand face to face with the truth : she is to blame, she is to blame!...

V. THE MEEK ONE REBELS

The quarrels began when she suddenly took it into her head to pay out money as she saw fit, to appraise things for more than they were worth, and a couple of times she even thought fit to enter into an argument with me on the subject. I didn't agree. But then this captain's widow turned up.

An old lady, the widow of a captain, came with a locket - a present from her late husband, well, you know, a keepsake. I gave thirty roubles. She started to whine plaintively, begging me to keep the thing for her; it goes without saying that we keep it. Well, in a word, suddenly she comes five days later to exchange it for a bracelet that's not worth even eight roubles; it goes without saying that I refused. She must have guessed then something from my wife's eyes, but in any case she came when I wasn't there, and my wife exchanged the locket.

When I learned about it that very same day, I began by speaking meekly, but firmly and reasonably. She was sitting on the bed, looking at the floor, tapping the rug with the toe of her right shoe (her gesture) ; an unpleasant smile played on her lips. Then without raising my voice at all I announced calmly that the money was *mine* , that I had the right to look at life with *my own* eyes and that when I invited her into my house I had not concealed anything from her.

She suddenly jumped up, suddenly began trembling all over and-what do you think-she suddenly began stamp-ing her feet at me; this was a wild animal, this was a fit, this was a wild animal having a fit. I froze in astonishment : I had never expected such an outburst. But I didn't become flus-tered, I didn't even move a muscle, and once again in the same calm voice I declared plainly that from that time for-ward I refused to let her take part in my affairs. She laughed in my face and walked out of the apartment.

The fact of the matter is that she had no right to leave the apartment. Nowhere without me, that was the agreement we made when she was still my fiancée. She returned towards evening; I didn't say a word.

The next day, too, she went out in the morning, and it was the same thing the following day. I locked up the shop and set off to see her aunts. I had broken off relations with them from the day of the wedding - I hadn't invited them to visit me, we didn't visit them. Now it turned out that she wasn't with them. They heard me out with curiosity and laughed in my face. 'Serves you right,' they said. But I had expected their laughter. I then and there bribed the younger aunt, the spinster, with a hundred roubles, and gave her twenty-five in advance. Two days later she comes to me : 'An officer,' she says, 'a Lieutenant Yefimovich, a former comrade of yours from the regiment, is mixed up in this.' I was quite astonished. This Yefimovich had done me more harm than anyone else in the regiment, and a month ago he stopped by my shop a couple of times, and being the shameless fellow that he is, under the pretence of pawning something, I remember, he began laughing with my wife. I went up to him then and told him that, considering our relations, he should not pre-sume to visit me; but no idea of anything like that crossed my mind, I simply thought that he was an insolent fellow. But now suddenly her auntie informs me that she had made an appointment to see him and that this whole affair is being handled by a certain former acquaintance of the aunts, Yuliya Samsonovna, a widow, and a colonel's widow at that- 'It's her that your spouse goes to visit now,' she says.

I'll cut this story short. This business cost me almost 300 roubles, but in two days it was arranged that I would stand in the adjoining room, behind closed doors, and listen to my wife's first *rendezvous* alone with Yefimovich. Mean-while, the previous evening a brief but for me very significant scene between myself and my wife took place.

She returned towards evening, sat down on the bed, looked at me mockingly and thumped the rug with her foot. Suddenly, as I was looking at her, the idea flew into my head then that all this past month, or, rather, for the past two weeks, she had not been herself at all - one could even say that she had been exactly the opposite : a wild, aggressive being had made its appearance; I can't say shameless, but disorderly and looking for trouble. Asking for trouble. Meekness, however, held her back. When a girl like that starts creating an uproar, even if she does cross the line, it's nevertheless plain to see that she's only hurting herself, that she's

egging herself on and that she will be the first who is unable to cope with her feelings of modesty and shame. That's why girls like that sometimes go too far, so that you don't believe your own eyes when you witness it. A soul accustomed to debauchery, on the contrary, always softens it, making it more vile, but in a guise of decorum and decency that claims to be superior to you.

'And is it true that you were driven out of your regiment, because you were too cowardly to fight a duel?' she asked suddenly, out of the blue, and her eyes flashed.

'It's true; the officers rendered the verdict that I was to be asked to leave the regiment, although I had in any case already tendered my resignation.'

'You were driven out as a coward?'

'Yes, they judged me a coward. But I refused to duel not because I was a coward, but because I didn't wish to submit to their tyrannical verdict and issue a challenge to a duel when I did not consider myself to be insulted. You should know,' I couldn't restrain myself here, 'that flying in the face of such tyranny through my actions and accepting all the consequences took far more courage than any duel would have done.'

I couldn't contain myself, with this phrase I launched into self-justifications, as it were, and that was all she needed, a fresh instance of my humiliation. She burst out in malicious laughter.

'And is it true that for the next three years you wandered the streets of Petersburg like a tramp, and begged for kopecks, and slept under billiard tables?'

'I even spent some nights in the Vyazemsky House on Haymarket Square. Yes, it's true; in my life after leaving the regiment there was much shame and degradation, but not moral degradation, because I was the first to loathe my actions even then. It was merely the degradation of my will and mind, and it was brought about only by the desperation of my situation. But this passe ...'

'Oh, now you're an important person - a financier!'

That is, a hint at my pawnshop. But I had already managed to hold myself in check. I saw that she thirsted for explanations that

would be humiliating for me and - I didn't give them. Fortunately, a client rang the bell just then and I went to see him in the front room. Afterwards, an hour later, when she had suddenly dressed to go out, she stopped in front of me and said :

'You didn't tell me anything about this before the wedding, however.'

I didn't answer, and she left.

And so, the next day I stood in this room behind the door and listened to my fate being decided, and in my pocket there was a revolver. She was dressed up, sitting at the table, and Yefimovich was putting on airs. And what do you know : it turned out (I say this to my credit), it turned out exactly as I had foreseen and supposed, though without realizing that I had foreseen and supposed this. I don't know whether I'm expressing myself clearly.

This is what happened. I listened for a whole hour and for that hour I witnessed a duel between the most noble and lofty woman and a worldly, depraved, dim-witted creature with a grovelling soul. And how, I thought to myself in amazement, how does this naive, this meek, this reserved girl know all this? The cleverest author of a high-society comedy could not have created this scene of ridicule, the most naive laughter and the holy contempt of virtue for vice. And such brilliance in her words and little turns of speech; what wit in her quick replies, what truth in her censure! And at the same time what almost girlish ingenuousness. She laughed in his face at his declarations of love, at his gestures, at his proposals. Coming straight to the matter with a crude assault and not foreseeing any opposition, all of a sudden he had the wind taken out of his sails. at first I might have thought that it was simply coquetry on her part - the 'coquetry of a clever though depraved creature in order to show herself more lavishly'. But no, the truth shone through like the sun and it was impossible to have any doubts. It was only out of hatred for me, affected and impetuous though it was, that she, inexperienced as she was, could have decided to undertake this meeting, but as soon as it had become reality - her eyes were opened at once. Here was a creature who was simply flailing about so as to insult me no matter what, but once she had decided on such filth she couldn't bear the disorder. And could she, blameless and pure, with ideals, have been attracted

to Yefimovich or any of those other high-society brutes? On the contrary, he aroused only laughter. The whole truth rose up from her soul, and indignation called forth sarcasm from her heart. I repeat, towards the end this fool was utterly dazed and sat scowling, barely responding, so that I even began to fear that he would venture to insult her out of mean-spirited revenge. And I repeat once again : to my credit I heard this scene out almost without astonishment. It was as though I had encountered something familiar. It was as though I had gone in order to encounter it. I had gone, believing nothing, no accusation, although I did put a revolver in my pocket-that's the truth! And could I have really imagined her otherwise? Wasn't that why I loved her, wasn't that why I cherished her, wasn't that why I had married her? Oh, of course, I was all too convinced that she hated me then, but I was also convinced of her purity. I brought the scene swiftly to a close by opening the door. Yefimovich jumped to his feet, I took her by the hand and invited her to leave with me. Yefimovich found his bearings and suddenly burst out in resounding peals of laughter.

'Oh, I have no objections to sacred conjugal rights, take her away, take her away! And you know,' he shouted after me, 'even though a respectable person can't fight you, yet out of respect for your lady, I am at your service ... If you, however, want to risk it ... '

'Do you hear that!' I stopped her for a second on the threshold.

Then not a word all the way home. I led her by the hand, and she didn't resist. On the contrary, she was utterly dumb-founded, but only until we got home. On our arrival, she sat down on a chair and fastened her gaze on me. She was extraordinarily pale; though her lips had at once formed a mocking smile, she was already regarding me with a solemn and severe challenge, and, I believe, she was seriously convinced those first few moments that I was going to kill her with the revolver. But I took the revolver out of my pocket in silence and laid it on the table. She looked at me and at the revolver. (Note : she was already familiar with this revolver. I had acquired it and kept it loaded ever since opening the shop. When I was getting ready to open the shop I had decided not to keep hulking dogs or a burly lackey like Mozer did, for example. The cook opens the door for my visitors. But people who engage in my trade cannot deprive themselves of self-defence, just in case, and I kept a loaded revolver. During those first days when she had come

to live in my house she showed a lot of interest in this revolver, she asked a lot of questions, and I even explained the mechanism and how it worked; moreover, I persuaded her once to shoot at a target. Note all that.) Paying no notice of her frightened look, I lay down on the bed half-undressed. I was very tired; it was already almost eleven o'clock. She went on sitting in the same place, without moving, for almost another hour, then she put out the candle and lay down, also dressed, on the sofa by the wall. It was the first time that she didn't come to bed with me - note that as well ...

VI. A TERRIBLE MEMORY

Now, this terrible memory ...

I woke up in the morning, between seven and eight, I think, and it was already almost completely light in the room. I woke up all at once fully conscious and suddenly opened my eyes. She was standing by the table, holding the revolver. She didn't see that I was awake and watching. And suddenly I saw that she had started to move towards me, holding the revolver. I quickly shut my eyes and pretended to be fast asleep.

She came up to the bed and stood over me. I heard everything; although a dead silence had fallen, I heard even that silence. Then there came a convulsive movement - and I suddenly, uncontrollably, opened my eyes against my will. She was looking me right in the eyes, and the revolver was already by my temple. Our eyes met. But we looked at each other for no more than a moment. I forced myself to shut my eyes again and at the same moment I resolved with every fibre of my being that I would not stir or open my eyes, no matter what awaited me.

In fact, it does happen sometimes that a person who is sound asleep suddenly opens his eyes, even raises his head for a second and looks about the room, then, a moment later, he lays his head on the pillow again and falls asleep without remembering a thing. Well, after meeting her gaze and feeling the revolver at my temple, I suddenly shut my eyes again and didn't stir, like someone sound asleep, she certainly could have supposed that I indeed was asleep and that I hadn't seen anything, particularly since it was altogether incredible that having seen what I saw I would shut my eyes again at *such* a moment.

Yes, incredible. But she still might have guessed the truth - that was what suddenly flashed through my mind, at that very same moment. Oh, what a whirlwind of thoughts, sensations raced through my mind in less than a moment; long live the electricity of human thought! In that case (I felt) , if she had guessed the truth and knew that I wasn't sleeping, then I had already crushed her with my readiness to accept death and her hand might now falter. Her former resolve might be shattered by this new extraordinary impression. They say that people standing on a height are drawn downwards, as it were, of their own accord, to the abyss. I think that a lot of suicides and murders have been committed merely because the revolver was already in hand. There's an abyss here as well, there's a forty-five-degree slope down which you can't help but slide and something relentlessly challenges you to pull the trigger. But the awareness that I had seen everything, that I knew everything and that I was awaiting my death from her in silence-might hold her back from that slope.

The silence continued, and suddenly I felt on my temple, at my hairline, the cold touch of iron. You will ask : did I firmly hope that I would be saved? I will answer you as if I were before God himself : I had no hope whatsoever, except perhaps one chance in a hundred. Wy, then, did I accept death? But I will ask : Wat need would I have of life after the revolver was raised against me by the being whom I adored? Moreover, I knew with all the force of my being that a struggle was going on between us at that very moment, a terrible duel for life and death, a duel of that same coward of yesterday, driven out by his comrades. I knew it, and she knew it, if only she had guessed the truth that I wasn't sleeping.

Perhaps it wasn't like that, perhaps I didn't think that then, but still it must have been like that, even without thought, because all I've done since is think about it every hour of my life.

But you'll ask me the question again : why didn't I save her then from this treachery? Oh, I have asked myself that question a thousand times since-each time when, with a shiver down my spine, I recalled that second. But my soul then was plunged in dark despair : I was lost, I myself was lost, so whom could I have saved? And how do you know whether I still wanted to save somebody then? How can you know what I might have been feeling then?

My consciousness, however, was seething; the seconds passed, there was dead silence; she was still standing over me - and then suddenly I shuddered with hope! I quickly opened my eyes. She was no longer in the room. I got up from the bed : I had defeated her - and she was forever defeated!

I went out to the samovar. We always had the samovar brought to the outer room and she was always the one to pour the tea. I sat down at the table in silence and took a glass of tea from her. About five minutes later I glanced at her. She was terribly pale, even paler than yesterday, and she was looking at me. And suddenly - and suddenly, seeing that I was looking at her, she gave a pale smile with her pale lips, a timid question in her eyes. 'That means that she still has doubts and is asking herself : does he know or not, did he see or didn't he?' I indifferently turned my eyes away. After tea I locked up the shop, went to the market and bought an iron bed and a screen. When I returned home, I had the bed installed in the front room with the screen around it. This bed was for her, but I didn't say a word to her. Even without words she understood from this bed alone that I 'had seen everything and knew everything' and that there was no longer any doubt about this. I left the revolver on the table for the night as always. At night she silently got into her new bed : the marriage was dissolved, 'she had been defeated but not forgiven'. During the night she became delirious, and by morning she had a fever. She was confined to bed for six weeks.

Chapter 2

I. A DREAM OF PRIDE

Lukerya just announced that she won't stay with me and that she'll leave as soon as the mistress is buried. I prayed on my knees for five minutes, and I had wanted to pray for an hour, but I keep thinking, and thinking, and they're all such aching thoughts and my head aches - what's the use of praying - it's nothing but a sin! It's also strange that I don't want to sleep : in great, in such great sorrow, after the first violent outbursts, one always wants to sleep. They say that people who are condemned to death sleep extremely soundly on their last night. As they should, it's only natural, otherwise they wouldn't have the strength to endure i ... I lay down on the sofa, but I didn't fall aslee ...

...For the six weeks of her illness we took care of her day and night-Lukerya and I and a trained nurse from the hos-pital, whom I had hired. I didn't begrudge the money, and even wanted to spend money on her. I called in Dr Schroeder and paid him ten roubles a visit. Wen she regained con-sciousness, I started to show myself less often. But why am I describing this? Wen she was completely on her feet again, she sat quietly and silently in my room at a special table, which I had also bought for her at the tim ... Yes, it's true, we were perfectly silent; that is, we began to talk later on, but only about the usual things. Of course, I delib-erately refrained from becoming expansive, but I could see very well that she also was happy not to say a word more than was necessary. This seemed perfectly natural on her part : 'She is too shaken and too defeated,' I thought, 'and of course she needs time to forget and get used to things.'And so it was that we were silent, but every minute I was secretly preparing myself for the future. I thought that she was doing the same as well, and it was terribly entertaining for me to guess : Exactly what is she thinking about now?

I'll say one more thing : Oh, of course, nobody knows what I endured as I grieved over her during her illness. But I kept my grief to myself and kept the grieving in my heart even from Lukerya. I

couldn't imagine, I couldn't even suppose that she would die without learning everything. When she was out of danger and her health started to return, I remember this, I quickly calmed down and very much so. What's more, I decided *to postpone our future* for as long as possible, and for the present to leave everything as it was now. Yes, then something happened to me that was strange and peculiar, I don't know what else to call it : I had triumphed and this thought alone proved to be quite sufficient for me. And that's how the whole winter passed. Oh, I was pleased as I had never been before, and that for the whole winter.

You see : in my life there had been one terrible external circumstance, which until then, that is, until the catastrophe with my wife, weighed heavily on me every day and every hour, namely, the loss of my reputation and leaving the regiment. To put it in a nutshell : this had been a tyrannical injustice against me. True, my comrades disliked me on account of my difficult and, perhaps, ridiculous character, although it often happens that what you find sublime, what you hold dear and esteem, for some reason at the same time makes a group of your comrades laugh. Oh, I was never liked, even in school. I've never been liked anywhere. Even Lukerya cannot like me. The incident in the regiment, though a consequence of this dislike for me, without a doubt bore an accidental character. I mention this because there's nothing more exasperating and intolerable than to be ruined by an incident that might or might not have happened, by an unfortunate chain of circumstances that might have passed over, like a cloud. It's humiliating for an educated man. The incident was as follows.

During the intermission at the theatre I went to the bar. Hussar A—v came in suddenly and began talking loudly with two of his fellow hussars in the presence of all the officers and public gathered there about how Bezumtsev, the captain of our regiment, had just caused a scandal in the corridor 'and he seems to be drunk'. The conversation moved on to other things; besides, there had been a mistake, because Captain Bezumtsev wasn't drunk, and there hadn't really been a scandal. The hussars began talking about something else, and that was the end of it, but the next day the story made its way to our regiment, and at once they began saying how I was the only person at the bar from our regiment and that when Hussar A—v spoke insolently of Captain Bezumtsev I had not

gone over to A—v and put a stop to it by reprimanding him. But why on earth should I have done that? If he had it in for Bezumtsev, then it was their personal affair, and why should I get involved? Meanwhile, the officers began to take the position that the affair was not personal but concerned the regiment, and that since I was the only officer of our regiment present, I had proved by my conduct to all the officers at the bar as well as the public that there might be officers in our regiment who were not overly scrupulous concerning their honour and the regiment's. I could not agree with this verdict. I was given to understand that I might still set everything right even now, belatedly, if I should wish to demand a formal explanation from A—v. I did not wish to do so and since I was annoyed, I refused with pride. I then at once resigned my commission - and that's the whole story. I left proud, but with my spirit crushed. My mind and will both foundered. It was just then that my sister's husband squandered our little fortune and my portion of it, a tiny portion, so I was left on the street without a kopeck. I could have found employment in a private business, but I didn't : after wearing my splendid regimental uniform I couldn't go work on some railroad. And so - if it's shame, let it be shame, if it's disgrace, let it be disgrace, if it's degradation, let it be degradation, and the worse, the better - that's what I chose. There followed three years of gloomy memories, even of the Vyazemsky House. A year and a half ago a rich old lady, my godmother, died in Moscow and among other bequests unexpectedly left me 3 , 000 in her will. I gave it some thought and then decided my fate. I settled on the pawnshop, with no apologies to anyone : money, then a corner and - a new life far away from my former memories - that was the plan. Nevertheless, my gloomy past and the reputation of my honour, forever ruined, tormented me every hour, every minute. But then I married. By chance or not - I don't know. But when I brought her into my house, I thought that I was bringing a friend, I greatly needed a friend. But I saw clearly that my friend had to be prepared, given the finishing touches, and even defeated. And could I have explained anything straight off like that to this sixteen-year-old girl with her prejudices? For example, how could I, without the accidental assistance of the terrible catastrophe with the revolver, have convinced her that I wasn't a coward and that I had been unjustly accused by the regiment of being a coward? But the catastrophe arrived just at the right moment. Having stood up to

the revolver, I had avenged all of my gloomy past. And even though nobody knew about it, *she* knew about it, and that was everything for me, because she was everything to me, all my hopes for the future in my dreams! She was the only person whom I was preparing for myself, and I didn't need another-and now she knew everything; at least she knew that she had unjustly hurried to join my enemies. This thought delighted me. In her eyes I could no longer be a scoundrel, but merely a peculiar person, and even this thought, after everything that had happened, did not at all displease me : peculiarity is not a vice; on the contrary, it sometimes attracts the fem-inine character. In a word, I deliberately postponed the finale : what had taken place was more than sufficient, for the time being, for my peace of mind and contained more than enough pictures and material for my dreams. That's the nasty thing about this-I'm a dreamer : I had enough material; as for her, I thought that *she would wait* .

And so the whole winter passed in some sort of expectation of something. I liked to steal looks at her, when she happened to be sitting at her little table. She would be busy with her needlework, with the linen, and in the evenings she would sometimes read books which she would take from my book-case. The choice of books in the bookcase should also have spoken in my favour. She hardly ever went out. Every day after dinner, before dusk, I would take her for a walk and we would go for our constitutional, but not completely in silence, as before. I precisely tried to make it look as though we weren't being silent and were speaking harmoniously, but as I've already said we both avoided getting carried away talking. I was doing this on purpose, while she, I thought, needed to be 'given time'. Of course, it's strange that it did not once occur to me until almost the very end of the winter that though I liked to look at her on the sly, I never once caught her looking at me that whole winter! I thought that it was timidity on her part. Moreover, she had an air about her of such timid meek-ness, such weakness after her illness. No, better to bide one's time and-'and she will suddenly come to you on her ow ... '

That thought delighted me irresistibly. I will add one thing : sometimes it was as if I had deliberately inflamed myself and really brought my heart and mind to the point that I would feel that I had been wronged by her. And so it continued for some time. But my

hatred could never ripen and take root in my soul. And I even felt that it was only some sort of game. And even then, although I had dissolved our marriage by buying the bed and screen, never, never could I see her as a criminal. And not because I judged her crime lightly, but because it made sense to forgive her completely, from the very first day, even before I bought the bed. In a word, this was a strange move on my part, for I am morally stern. On the contrary, in my eyes she was so defeated, so humiliated, so crushed that I sometimes felt tormenting pity for her, even though at the same time I sometimes definitely found the idea of her humiliation pleasing. The idea of our inequality pleased m ...

That winter it so happened that I deliberately performed several good deeds. I forgave two debts, I gave money to one poor woman without any pledge. And I didn't tell my wife about this, and I hadn't done this so that she would find out; but the woman came to thank me herself, she was practically on her knees. And that was how it became known; it seemed to me that she was truly pleased to find out about the woman.

But spring was approaching, it was already the middle of April, the storm windows had been taken down, and the sun began to light up our silent rooms with its bright pencils of light. But scales hung before my eyes and blinded my reason. Fateful, terrible scales! How did it come about that they suddenly fell from my eyes and that I suddenly could see clearly and understand everything! Was it chance, was it that the appointed day had come, was it a ray of sunshine that had kindled the thought and conjecture in my benumbed mind? No, it wasn't a matter of a thought but rather a nerve began to play up, a nerve that had grown numb began to quiver and came to life and illuminated my entire benumbed soul and my demonic pride. It was as if I had suddenly jumped up from my seat then. And it happened suddenly and unexpectedly. It happened towards evening, at about five o'clock, after dinner ...

II. THE SCALES SUDDENLY FALL

A couple of words first. A month earlier I had noticed a strange pensiveness in her, not just silence, but pensiveness. I had also noticed this suddenly. She was sitting at her work at the time, her head bent over her sewing, and she didn't see that I was looking at her. And suddenly I was struck by how delicate and thin she had

become, that her face was pale, her lips were drained of colour - all this as a whole, taken together with her pensiveness, shocked me all at once in the extreme. I had already heard earlier a little dry cough, particularly at night. I got up at once and set off to ask Schroeder to pay us a visit, without saying anything to her.

Schroeder came the following day. She was very surprised and looked first at Schroeder and then at me.

‘But I’m fine,’ she said with an uncertain smile.

Schroeder didn’t examine her very thoroughly (these medical men sometimes are condescendingly off hand) , and merely told me in the other room that it was the remnants of her illness and that come spring it wouldn’t be a bad idea to take a trip somewhere to the sea or if that were not possible, then simply to find a place in the country. In a word, he didn’t say anything other than that there was some weakness or something of the sort. When Schroeder had gone, she suddenly said to me again, looking at me terribly seriously :

‘I’m really, really fine.’

But after saying this, she then and there suddenly flushed, apparently from shame. Apparently, it was shame. Oh, now I understand : She was ashamed that I was still *her husband* , that I was taking care of her as if I were still her real husband. But I didn’t understand then and ascribed her blush to humility. (The scales!)

And then, a month later, between five and six o’clock, in April, on a bright sunny day I was sitting in the shop and doing the accounts. Suddenly I heard her in our room, at her table, over her work, singing ever so softly ... This new development made a tremendous impression on me, and to this day I don’t understand it. Until then I had almost never heard her sing, except perhaps in the very first days when I brought her into my house and we could still have some fun, target shooting with the revolver. Then her voice was still rather strong, ringing, though a bit off -key, but terribly pleasant and healthy. But now her little song sounded so feeble - oh, not that it was doleful (it was some romance) , but it was as if there was something cracked, broken, in her voice, as if the little voice couldn’t cope, as if the song itself were ailing. She was singing

under her breath, and suddenly, after rising, the voice broke - such a poor little voice, it broke so pitifully; she cleared her throat and started singing again, ever so softly, you could barely hear he ...

My agitation may be laughable, but no one will ever understand why I had become so agitated! No, I didn't feel sorry for her yet; it was still something altogether different. At the beginning, for the first moments at least, I suddenly felt bewilderment and terrible surprise, terrible and strange, painful and almost vindictive : 'She is singing and in my presence!*Has she forgotten about me, is that it?*'

Completely shaken, I stayed where I was, then I suddenly rose, took my hat and left, without thinking it through, as it were. At least I didn't know why or where I was going. Lukerya started helping me on with my coat.

'She sings?' I said to Lukerya unintentionally. She didn't understand and looked at me, still not understanding; but I really had been incomprehensible.

'Is this the first time that she's been singing?'

'No, she sometimes sings when you're not here,' Lukerya replied.

I remember everything. I walked down the stairs, went out into the street and set off for nowhere in particular. I walked as far as the corner and began to stare off into the distance. People passed by me, jostled me, but I didn't feel it. I hailed a cab and told him to take me to the Police Bridge, I don't know why. But then I suddenly changed my mind and gave him a twenty-kopeck piece.

'That's for your trouble,' I said, laughing senselessly, but some sort of rapture had suddenly begun to fill my heart.

I turned around and went home, quickening my step. The cracked, poor, broken little note suddenly rang out in my heart again. It took my breath away. The scales were falling, falling from my eyes! If she'd started singing in my presence, then she had forgotten about me - that's what was clear and terrible. My heart sensed this. But rapture shone in my soul and overcame my fear.

Oh, the irony of fate! You see, there had been nothing else and there could not have been anything else in my soul all winter

except this very rapture, but where had I myself been all winter long? Had I been there with my soul? I ran up the stairs in a great hurry, I don't know whether I walked in timidly or not. I remember only that the entire floor seemed to be rippling and it was as if I were floating down a river. I walked into the room, she was sitting in the same place, sewing, with her head bent, but no longer singing. She threw me a fleeting and incurious glance, but it wasn't even a glance, merely the usual, indifferent gesture one makes when somebody enters a room.

I walked straight up to her and sat down on a chair right beside her, like a madman. She gave me a quick look, as though she were frightened : I took her by the hand and I don't remember what I said to her, that is, what I wanted to say, because I couldn't even speak properly. My voice kept breaking and wouldn't obey me. And I didn't know what to say, I just kept gasping for breath.

'Let's tal ... you kno ... say something!' I suddenly babbled something stupid-oh, but was I capable of making sense? She flinched again and recoiled, badly frightened, looking at my face, but suddenly - *stern surprise* appeared in her eyes. Yes, surprise, and *stern* . She was looking at me wide-eyed. This sternness, this stern surprise came crashing down on me all at once : 'So you still want love? Love?'that surprise seemed to ask suddenly, although she was silent as well. But I could read it all, all of it. My whole being was shaken and I simply fell to the ground at her feet. Yes, I collapsed at her feet. She quickly jumped up, but I restrained her by taking hold of both her hands with extraordinary force.

And I fully understood my despair, oh, I understood! But would you believe it, rapture was seething in my heart so irrepressibly that I thought I would die. I kissed her feet in ecstasy and happiness. Yes, in happiness, immeasurable and infinite, yet understanding nonetheless all my hopeless despair! I wept, said something, but couldn't speak. Her fright and surprise suddenly gave way to some anxious thought, some extreme question, and she looked at me strangely, wildly even-she wanted to understand something quickly, and she smiled. She was terribly ashamed that I was kissing her feet, and she kept moving back, but I would at once kiss the spot on the floor where she had been standing. She saw this and suddenly began to laugh from shame (you know how people laugh from shame) . Hysterics weren't far off, I saw that, her hands quivered - I

didn't give it a thought and kept muttering that I loved her, that I wouldn't get up, '...let me kiss your dress ... I'll worship you like this for as long as you live...' I don't know, I don't remember - and suddenly she burst out into sobs and started trembling; a terrible fit of hysteria had set in. I had frightened her.

I carried her over to the bed. When the fit had passed, she sat up on the bed and with a terribly distraught look, seized me by the hands and pleaded with me to calm myself : 'Enough, don't torment yourself, calm yourself!' and she began to weep again. I didn't leave her side all that evening. I kept telling her that I'd take her to Boulogne to bathe in the sea, now, right away, in two weeks, that she had such a cracked little voice, I had heard it earlier that day, that I would close the pawnshop, sell it to Dobronravov, that everything would begin afresh, and the main thing, to Boulogne, to Boulogne! She listened and was still afraid. She was more and more afraid. But that wasn't the main thing for me, but rather that I more and more irrepressibly wanted to lie down again at her feet, and once again, to kiss, to kiss the ground on which her feet stood, and to idolize her and - 'I'll ask nothing more of you, nothing,' I kept repeating every minute. 'Don't answer me anything, don't take any notice of me at all, and only let me look at you from the corner, turn me into your thing, into your little do ... ' She wept.

'But I thought that you were going to leave me like that,' suddenly burst forth from her involuntarily, so involuntarily that perhaps she didn't notice at all how she had said it, and yet - oh, it was the most important, her most fateful word and the most comprehensible for me that evening, and it was as if it had slashed my heart like a knife. It explained everything to me, everything, but as long as she was there beside me, before my eyes, I went on hoping irrepressibly and was terribly happy. Oh, I wore her out terribly that evening and I understood that, but I kept thinking that I would change everything at once. Finally, towards nightfall, she broke down completely; I persuaded her to go to sleep, and she immediately fell sound asleep. I expected delirium, and there was delirium, but it was very mild. I got up during the night every few minutes, and would quietly go in my slippers to look at her. I wrung my hands over her, as I looked at this sick being lying on that pathetic little cot, the iron bedstead that I had bought for her then for three roubles. I got down on my knees but I didn't dare kiss her feet while

she was sleeping (against her wishes!) . I would start praying to God, and then jump up again. Lukerya watched me closely and kept coming out of the kitchen. I went to her and told her to go to bed and that tomorrow 'something quite different' would begin.

And I believed that blindly, madly, terribly. Oh, I was surging with rapture, rapture. I couldn't wait for tomorrow. The main thing, I didn't believe in any misfortune, despite the symptoms. My powers of understanding had not yet fully returned, even though the scales had fallen, and for a long, long time would not return - oh, not until today, not until this very day! And how, how could my understanding have returned then : you see, she was still alive then, you see, she was right there before me, and I before her. 'She'll wake up tomorrow, and I'll tell her all this, and she'll see it all.' That was my reasoning then, clear and simple, hence the rapture! The main thing was this trip to Boulogne. For some reason I thought that Boulogne was everything, that there was something final about Boulogne. 'To Boulogne, to Boulogne!...' I waited for morning in a state of madness.

III. I UNDERSTAND ALL TOO WELL

But this was only a few days ago, you see, five days, only five days ago, just last Tuesday! No, no, if only there had been a little more time, if only she had waited just a little bit longer and - and I would have dispelled the darkness! And hadn't she calmed down? The very next day she listened to me with a smile even, despite her confusion. The main thing was that during all this time, all five days, she was either confused or ashamed ... She was also afraid, very afraid. I don't dispute it, I won't deny it, like some madman : there was fear, but then how could she not be afraid? You see, we'd been strangers to each other for so long, we had grown so far apart from one another, and suddenly all thi ... But I didn't pay attention to her fear - something new was shin-ing!... Yes, it's undoubtedly true that I'd made a mistake. And perhaps even many mistakes. And as soon as we woke up the next day, when it was still morning (this was on Wed-nesday), I suddenly made a mistake right away : I suddenly made her my friend. I was in a hurry, much too much of a hurry, but a confession was necessary, essential - and much more than a confession! I didn't even conceal that which I had concealed from myself all my life. I told her straight out that I

had done nothing all winter long but be certain of her love. I explained to her that the pawnshop had been merely the degradation of my will and mind, my personal idea of self-flagellation and self-exaltation. I explained to her that I had indeed turned coward that time at the bar, and that it was owing to my character, my touchiness : I was struck by the surroundings, I was struck by the bar; I was struck by how I would end up looking in all this and wouldn't it end up looking stupid? I didn't turn coward on account of the duel, but because it would end up looking stupi ... And then later I didn't want to admit it, and tormented everyone, and tormented her for it as well, and then I married her so that I could torment her on account of it. In general, for the most part I spoke as though I were in a fever. She herself took me by the hands and begged me to stop : 'You're exag-geratin ... you're tormenting yourself', and the tears would begin again, and again there'd almost be a fit of hysteria. She kept pleading with me not to say or remember any of this.

I paid little or no attention to her pleas : spring, Boulogne! There was the sun, there was our new sun, that was all I talked about! I locked up the shop, handed over the busi-ness to Dobronravov. I suddenly suggested to her that we give away everything to the poor, except for the initial 3 , 000 I had received from my godmother, which we would use to travel to Boulogne, and then we'd come back and begin our new working life. And so it was decided, because she didn't say anythin ... she merely smiled. And I believe she smiled more out of a sense of delicacy, so as not to upset me. Of course, I saw that I was a burden to her, don't think that I was so stupid or such an egoist that I didn't see that. I saw everything, everything, right down to the last detail, I saw and knew better than anyone else; my despair was there for all to see!

I told her everything about myself and about her. And about Lukerya. I told her that I had wep ... Oh, I'd change the subject, you see, I was also trying not to remind her of certain things at all. And, you see, she even livened up once or twice, you see, I remember, I remember! Wy do you say that I looked and saw nothing? And if only *this* had not hap-pened, everything would have been resurrected. You see, it was she who told me the day before yesterday, when the conversation turned to reading and what she had read that winter - you see, it was she who told me and laughed,

when she recalled that scene between Gil Blas and the Archbishop of Granada. And what a childish laugh, sweet, just like when she was still my fiancée (an instant! an instant!) ; I was so happy! I was terribly struck, however, by the archbishop : you see, that meant she had found enough peace of mind and happiness to laugh at that masterpiece while she sat there that winter. That means that she had already begun to find herself wholly at peace, that she had already begun to be wholly persuaded that I would leave her *like that* . ‘ I thought that you were going to leave me *like that* ’ - that’s what she had said then on Tuesday! Oh, the thought of a ten-year-old girl! And you see, she believed, believed that everything would in fact remain *like that* : she at her table, I at mine, and that’s how it would be for both of us until we were sixty. And suddenly - here I come forward, her husband, and her husband needs love! Oh, the incompre-hensibility, oh, my blindness!

It was also a mistake to look at her with rapture; I should have exercised restraint, because the rapture frightened her. But you see, I did exercise restraint, I didn’t kiss her feet anymore. Not once did I make a show of the fac ... well, that I was her husband - oh, and it didn’t even cross my mind, I only worshipped her! But you see, I couldn’t be completely silent, I couldn’t say nothing at all, you see! I suddenly told her that I enjoyed her conversation and that I considered her incomparably, incomparably more educated and developed than I. Embarrassed, she blushed bright red and said that I was exaggerating. At this point, unable to contain myself, I foolishly told her what rapture I’d felt when I stood behind the door and listened to her duel, a duel of innocence with that beast, and how I had taken pleasure in her intelligence, her sparkling wit, combined with such childlike simple-heartedness. She seemed to shudder all over, murmured again that I was exaggerating, but suddenly her whole face darkened, she covered it with her hands and burst into sob ... Here I was unable to hold myself back : I again fell down before her, I again started to kiss her feet and again it ended in a fit, just as it had on Tuesday. That was yesterday evening, but the next mornin ...

Next morning?! Madman, but that morning was today, just now, only just now!

Listen and consider carefully : you see, when we met just now (this was after yesterday’s attack) , she even struck me with her

calmness, that's how it was! While all night long I had been trembling with fear over what had happened yesterday. But suddenly she comes up to me, stands before me and with her arms folded (just now, just now!), began by telling me that she's a criminal, that she knows this, that the crime has tormented her all winter long, and is tormenting her now ... that she values my magnanimity all too much ... 'I'll be your true wife, I'll respect you ...' Here I jumped up and embraced her like a madman! I kissed her, I kissed her face, her lips, like a husband, for the first time after a long separation. But why did I go out just now, for only two hours ... our foreign passport ... Oh, God! If only I had returned five minutes earlier, just five minutes!...And now there's this crowd at our gate, these eyes fixed on me ... Oh, Lord!

Lukerya says (oh, I won't let Lukerya go now for anything, she knows everything, she was here all winter, she'll tell me everything), she says that after I left the house and only some twenty minutes before my return-she suddenly went into our room to see the mistress to ask her something, I don't remember what, and she saw that her icon (the same icon of the Mother of God) had been taken down and was on the table before her, and that her mistress seemed to have been praying before it. 'What's wrong, mistress?' 'Nothing, Luk-erya, you may go ... Wait, Lukerya,' she walked up to her and kissed her. 'Are you happy, mistress?' I ask. 'Yes, Luk-erya.' 'The master should have come to ask your forgiveness long ago ... Thank God, you've made up.' 'All right, Luk-erya,' she says, 'leave me, Lukerya.' And she smiled, but so strangely. So strangely that ten minutes later Lukerya suddenly went back to look in on her: 'She was standing by the wall, right by the window, she had placed her hand on the wall, and laid her head on her hand, she was standing like that and thinking. And she was so lost in thought standing there that she didn't hear me standing there and watching her from the other room. I saw that she was smiling, as it were, standing, thinking and smiling. I looked at her, turned around ever so quietly and walked out, thinking to myself, only suddenly I hear the window being opened. I at once went to say that "it's fresh, mistress, you'll catch cold" - and suddenly I see that she's climbed up on to the window and is already standing there upright, in the open window, with her back towards me and holding the icon. My heart just sank then and I cried out: "Mistress, mistress!" She heard, made a move as if to

turn around towards me, but didn't, instead she took a step, clutched the icon to her breast-and threw herself out the window!

I only remember that when I entered the gates she was still warm. The main thing is that they're all looking at me. at first they were shouting, but then they suddenly fell silent and they all make way for me an ... and she's lying there with the icon. I remember, though darkly, that I walked over in silence and looked for a long time, and they all gathered round and are saying something to me. Lukerya was there, but I didn't see her. She says that she spoke with me. I remember only that tradesman : he kept shouting at me 'only a handful of blood came out of her mouth, a handful, a handful!' and pointing to the blood on a stone. I think I touched the blood with my finger, smeared some on my finger, looked at my finger (I remember that) , and he kept saying to me : 'A handful, a handful!'

'And what do you mean "a handful"?' I wailed, they say, with all my might, I raised my arms and threw myself at hi ...

Oh, it's absurd, absurd! Incomprehensibility! Improbabil-ity! Impossibility!

IV. ONLY FIVE MINUTES TOO LATE

But is it really? Is it really probable? Can one really say that it was possible? Wy, for what reason did this woman die?

Oh, believe me, I understand; but why she died is still a question. She was frightened of my love, she asked herself seriously whether she should accept it or not, and she couldn't bear the question and it was better to die. I know, I know, there's no use in racking my brains over it : she had made too many promises, got frightened that she couldn't keep them-that's clear. There are a number of circum-stances here that are quite terrible.

Because why did she die? The question persists, all the same. The question hammers, hammers away in my brain. I would even have left her *like that* if she had wished to be left *like that* . She didn't believe it, that's what! No, no, I'm lying, that's not it at all. It was simply because with me it had to be honest : to love meant to love completely, and not like she would have loved the merchant. And since she was too chaste, too pure to agree to a love like a merchant needs, she didn't want to deceive me. She didn't want to deceive me with half a love or a quarter of a love under the guise of

love. She was much too honest, that's what it is, gentlemen! I wanted to cultivate breadth of heart then, do you remember? A strange thought.

I'm terribly curious : did she respect me? I don't know. Did she despise me or not? I don't think she did. It's terribly strange : why didn't it occur to me all winter long that she despised me? I was utterly convinced of the contrary right until the moment when she looked at me then with *stern surprise* . Precisely, *stern* . It was then that I understood at once that she despised me. I understood irrevocably and forever! Ah, let her, let her despise me, for her whole life even, but let her live, live! Just now she was still walking, talking. I don't at all understand how she could throw herself out the window! And how could I have supposed that even five minutes earlier? I summoned Lukerya. I won't let Lukerya go now for anything, not for anything!

Oh, we could still have come to an understanding. It's just that we had grown so terribly unused to each other during the winter, but couldn't we have become accustomed to one another again? Wy, why couldn't we have come together and begun a new life again? I'm magnanimous, and so is she-that's the point of connection! Just a few words more, two days, no more, and she would have understood everything.

The main thing, it's a pity that it all comes down to chance - simple, barbaric inertia, chance. That's the pity of it! All of five minutes, I was only five minutes late! If I had arrived five minutes earlier - the moment would have passed by, like a cloud, and it would never have occurred to her again. And it would have ended by her understanding every-thing. But now the rooms stand empty again and I'm alone once again. There's the pendulum ticking, it doesn't care, it doesn't feel sorry for anyone. There's no one - that's the awful thing!

I pace, I keep pacing. I know, I know, don't try to put words in my mouth : you think it's ridiculous that I complain about chance and the five minutes? But it's obvious, you see. Consider one thing : she didn't even leave a note saying, 'Don't blame anyone for my death', like everyone does. Could she really not have considered that even Lukerya might get into trouble? They might say, 'You were alone with her, so you must have pushed her.'In any event,

she would have been dragged away, innocent though she was, if four people in the courtyard hadn't seen from the windows of the wing and the courtyard how she stood there holding the icon and hurled herself down. But, you see, that's chance as well that people were standing and saw it. No, this was all a moment, just one inexplicable moment. Suddenness and fan-tasy! So what if she was praying before the icon? That doesn't mean that this was before death. The entire moment lasted, perhaps, all of some ten minutes, the entire decision-precisely when she was standing by the wall, with her head resting on her arm, and smiling. The thought flew into her head, her head started spinning and-and she couldn't withstand it.

It was a clear misunderstanding, say what you will. She could still have lived with me. But what if it was anaemia? Simply on account of anaemia, the exhaustion of vital energy? She had grown tired during the winter, that's what it wa ...

I was late!

How very thin she is in the coffin, how sharp her little nose has become! Her eyelashes lie like arrows. And she fell, you see - without smashing or breaking anything! Just this one 'handful of blood'. A dessertspoon, that is. Internal concus-sion. A strange thought : Wat if it were possible not to bury her? Because if they take her away, the ... Oh, no, it's almost impossible that she'll be taken away! Oh, of course, I know that she must be taken away, I'm not a madman and I'm not the least bit delirious; on the contrary, my mind has never been so lucid - but how can it be that again there'll be no one in the house, again the two rooms, and again I'm alone with the pledges. Delirium, delirium, that's where the delirium lies! I tormented her - that's what it was!

Wat are your laws to me now? Wat do I need with your customs, your ways, your life, your government, your faith? Let your judges judge me, let them take me to court, to your public court, and I will say that I acknowledge nothing. The judge will shout : 'Silence, officer!' And I will cry out to him : 'Wat power do you now possess that I should obey you? Wy has dark inertia shattered that which was dearest of all? Wat need have I now of your laws? I part company with you.' Oh, it's all the same to me!

Blind, she's blind! Dead, she doesn't hear! You don't know with

what paradise I would have surrounded you. The para-dise was in my soul; I would have planted it all round you! Well, you wouldn't have loved me - so be it, what of it? Everything would have been *like that* , everything would have stayed *like that* . You would have talked to me only as a friend - and we would have rejoiced and laughed with joy, as we looked into each other's eyes. That's how we would have lived. And if you had fallen in love with somebody else - well, so be it, so be it! You would have walked with him and laughed, while I looked on from the other side of the stree ... Oh, let it be anything, anything, if only she would open her eyes just once! For one moment, just one! If she would look at me as she did just now, when she stood before me and swore to be my faithful wife! Oh, she would have understood it all in one glance!

Inertia! Oh, nature! People are alone on this earth-that's the problem! 'Is there a man alive on the field?' the Russian *bogatyr* cries out. And I cry out as well, though I am not a *bogatyr* , and no one answers. They say that the sun gives life to the universe. The sun will rise and - look at it, isn't it dead? Everything is dead, the dead are everywhere. There are only people, and all around them is silence - that's the earth. 'People, love one another' - who said that? Wose commandment is that? The pendulum ticks insensibly, disgustingly. It's two o'clock in the morning. Her little shoes are by the bed, as if they were waiting for he ... No, ser-iously, when they take her away tomorrow, what will become of me?



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别祈求别人帮你。
否则，今后你的祈祷
都是徒劳的。”



PENGUIN
LITTLE BLACK
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鹰和寒鸦

一只鹰从高耸的岩石上飞下来，猛扑向一只绵羊，用爪子牢牢地抓住了它。一只寒鸦看到了整个过程，十分嫉妒，决定效仿鹰的力道和飞行方式。

寒鸦高高地飞到空中，飞快地俯冲下来，翅膀扇动得呼呼作响，落在一只大公羊的背上。他想要抓起公羊，可是爪子却缠在了羊毛里。尽管他不停地拍打翅膀，也无济于事。

牧羊人目睹了这一切，他跑过来，捉住了寒鸦，剪掉了他的翅膀，晚上带回家给孩子们。孩子们问：“爸爸，这是什么鸟呀？”他回答道：“据我所知，他是只寒鸦，但他想要人们以为他是只鹰呀。”

猫和公鸡

一只猫捉住了一只公鸡，想着找个好借口美餐一顿。他控诉公鸡晚上打鸣，不让人们睡觉。但公鸡却为自己辩护说，他打鸣也是为人们好，让他们能够及时起床劳作。猫回答道：“尽管你在粉饰你的过错，但我也不能饿肚子呀。”于是，猫杀了公鸡，把他给吃了。

山羊和驴

有个男人曾经养了一只山羊和一头驴。

山羊很嫉妒驴丰盛的饮食，于是他对驴说：“你这样被使唤真是可怜呀：有时你要去磨坊里拉磨，有时你又要驮很多重物。”紧接着，他建议驴假装患了癫痫，掉进一个沟里，这样就能够休息一会儿了。驴听从了山羊的建议，掉到了一个沟里，摔得遍体鳞伤。

驴的主人派人去请兽医，寻求他的意见。兽医吩咐他把山羊的肺敷在驴的伤口上。他们立即杀了山羊，然后医好了驴。

斗鸡和鹰

两只斗鸡正激烈地为农场的统治权而战。一只最终战胜了另一只。

被打败的那只逃走了，躲进了一个安静的角落；而胜利的那只飞上了高墙，扑腾着翅膀，用尽他浑身力气得意地鸣叫。一只鹰在高空飞翔，突然袭击了他，用爪子把他抓走了。

被打败的那只公鸡立即从角落里走了出来，无可争辩地成为农场的统治者。

骄兵必败。

渔夫和渔网

一个贪婪的渔夫，抛出了成功的一网，捕到了一大网鱼。他熟练的拉网技巧使得所有的大鱼都留在了渔网里，他将它们成功拖上了岸。但是他无法阻止小鱼从网眼里滑落，逃回大海。

狐狸和樵夫

一只狐狸在狂奔，后面跟着一群猎犬。他突然遇见了一个正在砍橡树的樵夫，就请求樵夫给他找个安全的藏身之所。樵夫建议狐狸藏在他的小木屋里。于是狐狸钻进去，悄悄地爬到一个角落，藏了起来。

不久之后，猎人赶上了他的猎犬，他向樵夫询问狐狸的踪迹。樵夫声称自己没有见到狐狸，但是在他说话时，他的手一直指着狐狸藏身的木屋。猎人没有留意他的暗示，但是相信了他说的话，于是赶紧向前追去。

等他们一离开，狐狸连声招呼都没打，就走了。樵夫高声地责备狐狸：“你这个不知感恩的家伙，你欠我一条命，而你现在呢，一句谢谢都不说就走了。”狐狸回答道：“如果你言行一致，如果你的手没有出卖你的言辞，那我的确会好好地感谢你。”

狐狸和山羊

一天，一只狐狸掉进了一口深井里，无论如何也逃不出来了。一只口渴难耐的山羊也路过了这口井，看见了井里的狐狸，便问他井里的水好不好。

狐狸用欢快的幌子掩饰了他悲惨的处境。他对井里的水不吝任何赞美之词，说它好得不能再好了，并请山羊自己下来尝一尝。山羊只想着赶紧解渴，其他想都没想，立刻跳进了井里。当他喝足了之后，狐狸和他说了他们所处的困境，并给出了解决之法。“如果，”狐狸说，“你前腿伸到墙上，头弯下来，我就能跳到你的背上，先逃出去，那之后我再来帮你。”

山羊欣然同意了，狐狸跳上了他的背，踩着山羊的角，安全地到达了井口，随即便以最快的速度跑走了。当山羊责骂他背弃诺言时，他转过身，呼喊道：“你这个愚蠢的老家伙！如果你脑子和你的胡须一样发达的话，你是不会在没想好出路前就跳进这口井的，更不会将自己置于如此险境，无从逃脱。”

三思而后行。

熊和狐狸

一只熊在吹嘘自己博爱。他说，在所有动物中，他对人类最温柔，因为他对人类如此尊重，以至于都不愿去触碰死尸。一只狐狸听见他的话，面露微笑地对熊说道：“哦！所以你宁可吃死尸也不吃活人呗。”

青蛙求王

青蛙们因没有一位稳定的国王统治而感到十分不满。于是，他们派了一个使者去见朱庇特，请求他赐给他们一个国王。

鉴于他们的无知，朱庇特 [1] 向湖里投了一根巨大的木头。青蛙被溅起的水花吓到了，他们飞快地游到了池塘最深处。可是渐渐地，他们发现木头一动不动。于是，他们再次浮出水面。消除恐惧之后便爬了上去，轻蔑地蹲坐在木头上。

过了一段时间，他们认为，被赐予这样一个国王，简直是对他们的侮辱。他们又派了一个使者去见朱庇特，请求他再赐给他们一个统治者。朱庇特让一条鳗鱼去统治他们。当他们发现鳗鱼天性温驯后，第三次派使者去见朱庇特，恳求他再选一个新国王。

朱庇特被这样纠缠得很生气，便派了一只鹭去统治他们。鹭每日以捕食青蛙为生，渐渐地，湖面上便再也听不到青蛙呱呱的叫声了。

[1] 此中文译本译自英文版，因此文中提及众神均属罗马神话体系，朱庇特对应希腊神话中，便是众神之王宙斯。

大力神与车夫

一个车夫驾驶着牛车在乡村小路上行驶。突然，车轮深深地陷进了车辙里。这位乡下的车夫一下子呆住了，站在那儿看着牛车，什么都不做，只是大声呼喊大力神来帮他。

大力神出现了，对他说：“这位老兄，用你的肩膀把车轮扛起来，并吆喝你的牛。在你尽力自助之前，别祈求别人帮你。否则，今后你的祈祷都是徒劳的。”

天助自助者。

维纳斯与猫

一只猫爱上了一位英俊的小伙子，它恳求维纳斯 [2] 把它变成女人。维纳斯答应了，立马将它变成了一位美丽的少女。小伙子对少女一见钟情，将她娶回了家。

一天，他们俩在房里依偎着，维纳斯想知道那只猫改变了外形后，是否也改变了本性。于是，她在屋子里放了只老鼠。那只猫忘乎所以，从沙发上站起来，捉住老鼠想要吃掉它。维纳斯十分失望，将她再次变回了原来的样子。

江山易改，本性难移。

[2] 身为罗马十二主神之一的维纳斯是代表爱与美的天神，对应希腊神话中的阿佛罗狄忒。

农夫与蛇

一年冬天，一位农夫发现了一条冻僵的蛇。出于同情，他捡起了蛇，把它放进怀里。蛇很快暖和了过来，便露出本来面目，冲着恩人的胸口就咬上致命的一口。“哦，”农夫用最后一口气哭喊道，“怜悯一个恶棍，我真是活该。”

最好的善意不会改变忘恩负义之人。

女人和母鸡

女人有一只母鸡，它每天都会为她下一颗蛋。她经常思索，如果一天想得到两个蛋该怎么做。最后，为了达成她的目的，她决定喂母鸡双份的大麦。从那天起，母鸡就长得又胖又圆，从此一个蛋也下不了了。

海豚、鲸鱼和小海鱼

海豚和鲸鱼在激烈地交战。当战斗进入高潮时，一只小海鱼从海浪中伸出头来说，如果他们愿意接受他做裁判，他可以来劝和。一只海豚回答道：“我们宁愿战斗至死，也不愿让你干涉我们的纠纷！”

水池里的牡鹿

一只热得受不了的牡鹿到水池边喝水。当他俯下身子，看到自己在水里的倒影时，他对自己犄角的尺寸和多样的形状十分满意。但同时，他又嫌自己的腿太瘦弱、太纤细了。

当他在自我欣赏的时候，一只狮子出现在水池边，盯上了他，并发动攻击。牡鹿立刻跑了起来，并加速到最快。在开阔的空地上，他始终保持着领先优势。但当他来到一片森林时，他的角被树枝挂住了。狮子飞快地赶上并捉住了他。

眼见为时已晚，牡鹿自责道：“我好悲哀啊！我是如何骗自己的！我鄙视我的腿，但它们可以挽救我的生命；我赞叹我的角，它们却见证了我的毁灭。”

最有价值的东西往往被低估。

两个死对头

两个互为死敌的男人乘坐同一艘船航行。为了能够离对方足够远，他们一个坐在船尾，一个坐在船头。

一场猛烈的暴风雨来临，船有沉没的危险。在船尾的那个人问领航员，船的哪头会先沉没。领航员回答说船头可能先沉下去。这个人说：“我不会觉得死亡是件悲伤的事情，只要我能看到我的敌人比我先死。”

青蛙怨日

很久很久以前，太阳宣布了自己想要娶个妻子的意图。青蛙们提着嗓门大声朝着天空呱呱叫。朱庇特被噪声弄烦了，便问他们呱呱叫个不停是什么原因。他们回答道：“当太阳还单身的时候，就已经要烤干我们的沼泽了，迫使我们悲惨地死在干旱的家中。如果他再生下其他太阳，我们未来该怎么办呀？”

骡子

一天早晨，一只骡子玉米棒吃多了，因为无事可做，便开始肆意地奔过来跑过去，还自言自语：“我的父亲一定是一匹精力充沛的赛马，我的速度和精气神完全随了他。”

第二天，因为经历了一段长途跋涉，骡子感到十分疲惫，于是用沮丧的腔调说道：“我一定搞错了，我的父亲可能终究只是个毛驴罢了。”

战马和磨坊主

一匹战马年老体衰，不再征战四方，而是被送到一家磨坊工作。

不过，当他被迫拉磨而不是在战争中服役时，便哀叹起命运的变化，并联想起自己之前的境遇，他说道：“啊！磨坊主，我之前的确四处征战，但我从背到尾巴都披着华服，有专人喂我。我现在想不通是什么促使我放弃服役，选择来磨坊的。”

“忍忍吧，”磨坊主对他说，“你一味地对过去喋喋不休，但命运总是起起伏伏的呀。”

骆驼

当一个人第一次看到骆驼时，他被骆驼庞大的体型吓得跑开了。

过了一段时间，这个人察觉到骆驼的温驯，便鼓起勇气走近他。

不久之后，这个人观察到骆驼完全没脾气时，便大胆地用缰绳套住了他的嘴，让一个小孩去驱赶他。

加以使用可以克服恐惧。

核桃树

一棵长在路边的核桃树结出了许多核桃。为了得到核桃，路过的人们用木棍或石头击打它的枝干。核桃树哀怨道：“哦！可怜的我！我用果实取悦那些人，他们却用疼痛来回报我！”

小虫子和公牛

一只小虫子飞落在公牛的一只角上，在那儿待了很长时间。当他准备飞走的时候，弄出了嗡嗡的响动，想以此来问询公牛是否介意他离开。公牛回应道：“你来的时候，我都没注意到；你走的时候，我自然也不会留恋你。”

有些人总是把自己看得比在旁人眼中重要得多。

捉蝗虫的男孩

一个男孩在捉蝗虫。他捉了好多。这时男孩看到一只蝎子，误以为他是蝗虫，伸手想要捉他。蝎子露出了他的刺，说道：“如果你摸了我的话，我的朋友，你不仅会失去我，你也会失去你所有的蝗虫。”

粗心大意，后果严重。

跳蚤和男人

一个男人被一只跳蚤惹烦了，最终捉到了他。男人说道：“你怎么如此大胆，不但敢咬我，还让我费了这么大劲才捉住你？”

跳蚤回答道：“哦，我亲爱的先生，求求你放我走吧，别杀我，我不可能对你造成很大伤害的。”

这个男人笑着回答道：“我现在就要亲手杀了你。因为邪恶是不应被容忍的，无论这邪恶是大是小。”

被狗咬的男人

一个男人被狗咬了之后，想要寻找一个可以医治他的人。一位朋友见了，他，弄清楚他的需求后说：“如果你想要伤口愈合，请拿一小片面包，用它蘸你伤口流出的血液，然后把它给咬你的那条狗。”

被狗咬的男人边嘲笑他的建议边说道：“为什么？如果我这样做的话，那我就好像在求全镇的狗都来咬我似的。”

对行恶者施与恩惠只会使他们加倍地伤害你。

恶狗

有一条狗总是悄无声息地走到每个遇到的人脚边，趁其不备张嘴就咬。于是，他的主人便在他的脖子上系了一个铃铛，以便在他出现的时候，给大家提个醒。狗将这个铃铛视为自己与众不同的标记，对此感到特别骄傲，十分得意地在市场里招摇。

一天，一条老猎狗对他说：“你为什么要如此炫耀自己？相信我，你戴着的那个铃铛不是勋章，恰恰相反，它是耻辱的象征呀。它提醒所有人你是一条恶狗，要避开你。”

恶名常被误认为是美誉。

狼和小羊

一只狼遇见了一只从羊群中走失的小羊，他决定不急着下毒手，而是想找个证明他有权利吃小羊的借口。他对小羊说：“先生，去年你狠狠地侮辱了我。”

“事实上，”小羊用悲哀的语调咩咩叫道，“我那时还没出生。”

狼又说道：“那你在我的牧场上吃过草。”

“不，好先生，”小羊回答道，“我还从未吃过草呢。”

狼再次说道：“你喝了我的井水。”

“不，”小羊呼喊道，“我从未喝过水，因为我妈妈的奶对我来说，既是饭也是水。”

狼捉住了他，把他给吃了，说道：“好吧！我是不会饿着肚子的，即使你推翻了我的每一种推论。”

暴君总会为他的暴政找借口。

小羊和狼

一只狼在追赶着一只小羊。小羊在一座庙里避难。狼要求小羊从里面出来，并说道：“如果你不出来的话，牧师就会捉住你，把你供奉在祭坛上。”小羊如是说：“谢谢，我想我就待在这儿了，我宁愿被拿去祭祀，也不要被你吃掉。”

因此，一些在学校里似乎有点才能的演说家，一旦进入政治舞台便暴露出了他们的无能。

城里鼠和乡下鼠

一天，乡下鼠邀请他的密友城里鼠来乡下做客并享用乡村野味。

当他们坐在裸露的耕地上，享用小麦和从篱笆上拔出的根茎拼凑出的晚餐时，城里鼠对他的朋友说：“你过着蝼蚁一般的生活呀，而在我的屋子里，食物应有尽有。我的四周都是美食，如果你跟我来的话，我也希望你能跟我来，我一定会让你美餐一顿的。”乡下鼠很轻易地就被说服了，和他的朋友一起去了城里。

他刚到，城里鼠就为他拿出了面包、大麦、豆子、无花果干、蜂蜜、葡萄干，最后还从篮子里拿了一块美味的奶酪。看到这么丰盛的食物，乡下鼠热忱地表达了他的谢意，还哀叹了自己悲惨的命运。

当他们正准备开始吃时，有人打开了门，他们飞快地吱吱叫着跑进了一个小洞里，那个洞小得只够他们两个在里面挤成一团。当他们心惊胆战地准备再次用餐时，另一个人走进来从碗橱里拿了东西。这两只老鼠比之前更加惊慌失措，赶紧躲起来了。

最后，乡下鼠饥饿难耐，他对他的朋友说：“尽管你为我准备了这么丰盛的一餐，你还是自己享用吧。取悦我要面临太多危险了。我更喜欢裸露的耕地和篱笆上的根茎，在那儿我可以安全地、不用担惊受怕地活着。”

墨丘利 [3] 和工人

一位工人在河边砍树，他的斧头不小心掉进了一个很深的水塘里。他因为没了谋生的手段，坐在河边，哀叹起了自己悲惨的命运。

墨丘利出现了，询问工人哭泣的缘由。在他听了工人不幸的经历后，跳入水中，捞出了一把金斧头，并问工人这是不是他丢的斧头。工人否认了，墨丘利再次潜入水中，捞出了一把银斧头，再次询问他。工人否认了，墨丘利又一次潜入河底，捞出了他丢的那把斧头。工人对斧头失而复得感到十分高兴。墨丘利很高兴他这么诚实，就把金斧头和银斧头也送给了他。

工人回到家后，把他的经历告诉了同伴。其中一个人决定自己也去碰碰运气。他跑到河边，故意在同一个地方把斧头扔进河里，并坐在河边抽泣。

墨丘利如他所料地出现了。当墨丘利弄清楚他悲伤的原因后，跳进水中，捞起了一把金斧头，问他是不是他丢的那把。工人贪婪地夺过斧头，并声称这正是他丢的那把。墨丘利对他的无赖行径十分反感，不仅拿走了这把金斧头，还拒绝为他寻回原来丢掉的那把斧头。

[3] 墨丘利为罗马神话中众神的使者，负责众神间的交流与沟通，罗马十二主神之一，对应希腊神话中的赫尔墨斯。

驴和宠物狗

曾经有个人养了一头驴和一只十分美丽的马耳他狗。

驴住在马厩里，有充足的燕麦和干草享用，过着跟别的驴一样的日子。小狗会耍许多花招，很讨主人喜欢。主人经常爱抚他，每次赴宴归来都会给他带点儿好吃的。相反，驴有许多工作要做，比如磨谷物啦，从森林里运木头啦，或是驮农场上的重物。

他经常哀叹命运的悲惨，并将自己的命运和小狗轻松懒散的生活相对比。直到有一天，他挣脱了缰绳，飞快地跑进了主人的屋子，无拘无束地尥着蹄子，尽他所能地蹦跳着献殷勤。当他看到小狗跳到主人的膝上时，他也想这么做，结果打翻了桌子，摔碎了碗碟。接着，他想要舔主人并跳到他的背上。仆人听到这异常的喧哗，察觉到主人身处险境，飞快地跑去救他，并连踢带打地将驴赶回了马厩。

驴回到马厩时已经被打得半死不活了，他悔恨道：“这都是我自找的！我为什么不能满足于和同伴一起劳作，而非要想着像那只无用的小狗一样整天无所事事呢？”

披着狮皮的驴

一头驴穿上了狮皮，在森林里巡游，以吓唬那些愚蠢的动物为乐。后来，驴遇见了狐狸，也想要吓吓他。但是狐狸一听到他的声音就大声说道：“如果我没听见你的驴叫，或许会真的害怕呢！”

母鸡和燕子

一只母鸡发现了一窝蛇蛋，小心翼翼地为它们保温，精心地将它们孵化了出来。一只燕子发现了她的所作所为，对她说：“你这个蠢东西！你为什么要孵这些蛇呀？当他们长大之后，会危害所有生物，就从你开始！”

鹧鸪和捕鸟人

一位捕鸟人捉住了一只鹧鸪，正要杀了它。鹧鸪恳切地求捕鸟人放了它，并说道：“祈求上帝，大人，放我一条生路吧，我会骗更多的鹧鸪飞到您的网里，作为对您的报答。”

捕鸟人回答道：“杀你这事儿，我现在更是没什么可犹豫的了。你居然想靠出卖朋友和亲人来换自己的命！”

猴子和骆驼

猴子站起身，跳起了舞，逗得森林里的动物们哈哈大笑。博得大家的欢心后，他在经久不息的掌声中坐了下来。

骆驼对猴子获得的赞赏感到十分嫉妒，也想要以同样的方式得到来宾们的喜爱。轮到他时，他决定也站起身，跳舞为大家助兴。他走动的方式非常滑稽，以至于所有动物一怒之下棍棒交加地把他赶出了集会。

模仿比我们更胜一筹的人总是荒谬可笑的。

鼯鼠和妈妈

鼯鼠是一种生下来就没有视力的动物。有一次，他对妈妈说：“我确信我能看见，妈妈！”

为了证明他是错的，他的妈妈在他面前摆放了一些乳香，并问他：“这是什么？”

小鼯鼠说道：“这是卵石。”

他的妈妈惊呼道：“我的儿子，恐怕你不仅看不见，鼻子也不灵了吧。”

墨丘利和被蚂蚁咬的人

一个人曾经目睹了一艘船和它上面全体船员沉没的场景。他严厉地斥责着众神的不公。

“他们根本不关心一个人的品性，”他说道，“只会让好人和坏人一起赴死。”

他站立的地方附近有一个蚁丘，在他说话时，一只蚂蚁咬了他的脚。他把脾气发在了蚁丘上且一脚踩上了蚁丘，数百只无辜的蚂蚁命丧黄泉。

突然，墨丘利出现了，他用他的手杖痛打这个人，并说道：“你这个恶棍，现在你那伟大的正义感哪去了呢？”

骗子/

一个人生病了，病入膏肓。他发誓，如果众神能够让他重获健康，他一定会为他们献上一百头牛。众神想知道他会如何履行诺言，就立即让他痊愈了。

现在，他一头牛都没有，于是他用牛油做了一百头小牛，并把它们供奉在祭坛上。他说道：“众神啊，我请你们见证，我信守了我的诺言。”

众神决定报复他一下，于是他们给他托了个梦。在梦中，他被吩咐去海边，去拿回他在那儿发现的一百克朗。醒来之后，他兴奋地跑到海边，却落入了一群强盗手中。他们捉住了他并把他卖为奴隶：卖得的钱刚好是他想要找的一百克朗。

别许下那些自己做不到的承诺。

男人和狮子

一个人和一只狮子结伴旅行。在谈话的过程中，他们开始吹嘘自己勇猛无敌，并声称自己无论在力量还是勇气方面都胜过对方。他们正在热烈地争论时，刚巧途经一个十字路口，这里摆放着一个人勒着狮子的雕塑。

“那儿！”人耀武扬威地说道，“看那个！这不正证明了我比你强吗？”

“别这么快地下结论，我的朋友，”狮子说，“这只是你看这个问题的角度。如果我们狮子也能够制作雕塑的话，你应该会看到大多数雕塑都是人在下面。”

每个问题都有两个角度。

蛇与朱庇特

一条蛇时不时地就会被人和野兽踩到，遭了不少的罪。一方面由于他身体太长，另一方面由于他不能够离开地面站立起来。于是，他向朱庇特抱怨他所要面临的风险。但是朱庇特一点儿都不同情他。“我敢说，”朱庇特说，“如果你第一次被踩时，就咬他的话，其他人就会费点劲儿，看看该把脚放在哪儿了。”

屋顶上的小孩

一个小孩被长在茅草屋顶上的小草和其他东西所吸引，爬上了外屋的屋顶。当他站在那儿四处眺望时，他发现一只狼从下面经过。小孩嘲笑那只狼捉不到自己。狼只是抬头看了看他，然后说道：“我听到你了，我年轻的朋友；但是嘲笑我的并不是你，而是你脚下的屋顶呀。”

蝙蝠、荆棘和海鸥

蝙蝠、荆棘和海鸥决定结伴一起出海贸易。蝙蝠为他的冒险活动借了一大笔钱；荆棘储存了各种各样的服饰；海鸥带了一些铅。就这样，他们出发上路了。

没过多久，一阵猛烈的暴风雨突然来袭。他们的船和所有货物都沉入海底。但这三个旅行者都设法回到了陆地上。从那时起，海鸥就在海面上来来回回地飞，不时地把头扎进海里，找寻他丢失的铅。而蝙蝠害怕见到他的债主，于是就在白天躲藏起来，晚上才出来觅食。荆棘则钩住每个过路人的衣服，梦想着有一天能够找回他丢失的服装。

所有人都更关心找回他们丢失的东西，而不是得到他们缺少的东西。

驴和货物

一个小贩有头驴。有一天他买了一些盐，并且尽可能多地装在了驴背上。在回家的路上，驴在渡过一条小溪时，蹄子滑了一下，跌入了水中。

盐全都湿透了，许多都溶解流走了。因此，当驴站起来时，他发现身上的负担轻了许多。他的主人赶着他回了集市，买了更多的盐放进了他的驮篮里。他们再一次出发了。

当他们刚到小溪时，驴立马跌坐在水里，然后像之前一样站起来，身上的负担又轻了许多。他的主人识破了他的诡计，又一次地回到集市，买了许多海绵，把它们堆在了驴背上。

当他们来到小溪时，驴故技重施，但是这一次，海绵吸了大量的水。当他站起来时，发现身上的负担变得前所未有的重。

好牌不能频繁地打。

驴、公鸡和狮子

驴和公鸡一起待在牛栏里。这时，一只几天没吃饭的狮子出现了，正准备攻击驴并吃掉他时，公鸡跳了起来，用力地扑棱着翅膀，发出惊人的鸣叫。

这种情境下，要是有什么还能吓到一只狮子的话，那也就是公鸡的鸣叫了：狮子刚一听见公鸡的叫声，就飞快地逃走了。

驴看到这个场景十分高兴，他想着，如果狮子连公鸡都怕的话，那么他肯定也不可能打得过驴。于是驴跑出去追赶狮子。但是当他们到达公鸡看不到也听不到的地方时，狮子径直扑向驴，把他给吃了。

盲目自信通常导致灾难。

狗和狼

一条狗躺在农场门前的阳光下。这时，一只狼突袭了他，正要吃掉他。但他乞求狼饶他一命，并说道：“你看我多瘦呀，现在的我只能给你塞塞牙缝。但是你再等几天的话，我的主人将要摆宴席。那时，所有丰盛的残羹剩饭都会落入我的腹中，我将变得又胖又美味，那才是你该吃我的时候。”

狼觉得这个主意不错，便走开了。不久之后，他又来到了农场，发现狗躺在马厩的屋顶上。“你下来，”他喊道，“该我吃你了，你记得我们的约定吗？”

但是狗冷酷地说：“我的朋友，如果你再看见我躺在门口的话，可别再等什么盛宴了。”

一回上当两回乖。

年迈的狮子

一只狮子，随着年龄的增长变得衰弱无力。他不再能够凭借武力获得食物，便决定用诡计给自己弄点食物。他走到山洞里，躺在那儿，假装病了。每当有动物进去询问他的身体状况时，他就一跃而起，把他们吞入腹中。

许多动物都以这种方式丧了命。直到有一天，一只狐狸来到这个山洞。因为怀疑狮子是不是真的病了，所以他并没有走进去，而是站在山洞外，问狮子感觉怎么样。狮子回答说，他感觉很不好。“但是，”他说，“你为什么站在外面呢？请进来吧。”

“我本该这么做，”狐狸回答说，“如果我没注意到这些脚印只有进没有出的话。”

预言家

一位预言家坐在集市里，给那些想要一探究竟的人算命。

突然来了一个人告诉他，他家里遭贼了。他们把所有能找到的东西都抢走了。预言家立即跳起来，冲了出去，扯着自己的头发，诅咒那些恶棍。

路人们都被逗笑了，其中一个人说道：“我们的朋友自称能够预测他人的命运，但他似乎还没聪明到能预测自己的未来呀。”

妻子和醉酒的丈夫

一个女人一直忍受着她酗酒的丈夫带来的屈辱。有一次，当她丈夫喝得烂醉时，她把他送进了存尸房。当她估摸着丈夫应该是时候恢复知觉时，她走开了，然后又回来敲门。

“谁在那儿？”酒徒说。

“一个给死人送肉的人。”女人说。

“朋友，”他说，“还是给我来点酒吧。我想任何认识我的人给我别的东西时，也不会忘了给我酒。”

“好吧，”她说，“这种我所察觉到的情绪已经完全控制了他，成了他的恶习，他已经没救了。”

养成的恶习会成为我们的天性，就好像我们被撕成碎片，然后重新被拼接在一起，仿若被修补过一样。

音乐家

一位嗓音嘶哑的人，有着一间很棒的音乐室。他在那个房间里练声，回音使他觉得自己的声音很美。他十分骄傲，并想着要在剧院展示一番。但他唱得实在太糟糕了，人们将他轰下了舞台，还朝他扔石头。

一个人可能会很喜欢自己镜中的样子，但公共场合中的世人却无法爱上他。事实上，我们对自己情况的了解很片面，除了从别人的眼中解读自己之外，我们没有其他方式。

Aesop

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

The Cat and Venus

Nº 23

' . . . Until you
have done your
best to help
yourself, or
depend upon it
you will
henceforth pray
in vain.'

The Eagle and the Jackdaw

An Eagle, flying down from his perch on a lofty rock, seized upon a lamb and carried him aloft in his talons. A Jackdaw, who witnessed the capture of the lamb, was stirred with envy and determined to emulate the strength and flight of the Eagle.

He flew around with a great whirl of his wings and settled upon a large ram, with the intention of carrying him off, but his claws became entangled in the ram's fleece and he was not able to release himself, although he fluttered with his feathers as much as he could.

The shepherd, seeing what had happened, ran up and caught him. He at once clipped the Jackdaw's wings, and taking him home at night, gave him to his children. On their saying, 'Father, what kind of bird is it?' he replied, 'To my certain knowledge he is a Daw; but he would like you to think an Eagle.'

The Cat and the Cock

A Cat caught a Cock, and pondered how he might find a reasonable excuse for eating him. He accused him of being nuisance to men by crowing in the night time and not per-mitting them to sleep. The Cock defended himself by saying that he did this for the benefit of men that they might rise in time for their labours. The Cat replied, 'Although you abound in specious apologies, I shall not remain supperless'; and he made a meal of him.

The Goat and the Ass

A man once kept a Goat and an Ass.

‘The Goat, envying the Ass on account of his greater abundance of food, said, ‘How shamefully you are treated : at one time grinding in the mill, and at another carrying heavy burdens’; and he further advised him to pretend to be epi-leptic and fall into a ditch and so obtain rest. The Ass listened to his words, and falling into a ditch, was very much bruised.’

His master, sending for a leech, asked his advice. He bade him pour upon the wounds the lungs of a Goat. They at once killed the Goat, and so healed the Ass.

The Fighting Cocks and the Eagle

Two game Cocks were fiercely fighting for the mastery of the farmyard. One at last put the other to flight.

The vanquished Cock skulked away and hid himself in a quiet corner, while the conqueror, flying up to a high wall, flapped his wings and crowed exultingly with all his might. An Eagle sailing through the air pounced upon him and carried him off in his talons

The vanquished Cock immediately came out of his corner, and ruled henceforth with undisputed mastery.

Pride goes before destruction.

The Fisherman and His Nets

A Fisherman, engaged in his calling, made a very successful cast and captured a great haul of fish. He managed by a skilful handling of his net to retain all the large fish and to draw them to the shore; but he could not prevent the smaller fish from falling back through the meshes of the net into the sea.

The Fox and the Woodcutter

A Fox, running before the hounds, came across a Woodcutter felling an oak and begged him to show him a safe hiding-place. The Woodcutter advised him to take shelter in his own hut, so the Fox crept in and hid himself in a corner.

The huntsman soon came up with his hounds and inquired of the Woodcutter if he had seen the Fox. He declared that he had not seen him, and yet pointed, all the time he was speaking, to the hut where the Fox lay hidden. The hunts-man took no notice of the signs, but believing his word, hastened forward in the chase.

As soon as they were well away, the Fox departed without taking any notice of the Woodcutter : whereon he called to him and reproached him, saying, 'You ungrateful fellow, you owe your life to me, and yet you leave me without a word of thanks.' The Fox replied, 'Indeed, I should have thanked you fervently if your deeds had been as good as your words, and if your hands had not been traitors to your speech.'

The Fox and the Goat

A Fox one day fell into a deep well and could find no means of escape. A Goat, overcome with thirst, came to the same well, and seeing the Fox, inquired if the water was good.

Concealing his sad plight under a merry guise, the Fox indulged in a lavish praise of the water, saying it was excellent beyond measure, and encouraging him to descend. The Goat, mindful only of his thirst, thoughtlessly jumped down, but just as he drank, the Fox informed him of the difficulty they were both in and suggested a scheme for their common escape. 'If,' said he, 'you will place your forefeet upon the wall and bend your head, I will run up your back and escape, and will help you out afterwards.'

The Goat readily assented and the Fox leapt upon his back. Steadying himself with the Goat's horns, he safely reached the mouth of the well and made off as fast as he could. When the Goat upbraided him for breaking his promise, he turned around and cried out, 'You foolish old fellow! If you had as many brains in your head as you have hairs in your beard, you would never have gone down before you had inspected the way up, nor have exposed yourself to dangers from which you had no means of escape.'

Look before you leap.

The Bear and the Fox

A Bear boasted very much of his philanthropy, saying that of all animals he was the most tender in his regard for man, for he had such respect for him that he would not even touch his dead body. A Fox hearing these words said with a smile to the Bear, 'Oh! That you would eat the dead and not the living.'

The Frogs Asking for a King

The Frogs, grieved at having no established Ruler, sent ambassadors to Jupiter entreating for a King.

Perceiving their simplicity, he cast down a huge log into the lake. The Frogs were terrified at the splash occasioned by its fall and hid themselves in the depths of the pool. But as soon as they realised that the huge log was motionless, they swam again to the top of the water, dismissed their fears, climbed up, and began squatting on it in contempt.

After some time they began to think themselves ill-treated in the appointment of so inert a Ruler, and sent a second deputation to Jupiter to pray that he would set over them another sovereign. He then gave them an Eel to govern them. When the Frogs discovered his easy good nature, they sent yet a third time to Jupiter to beg him to choose for them still another King.

Jupiter, displeased with all their complaints, sent a Heron, who preyed upon the Frogs day by day till there were none left to croak upon the lake.

Hercules and the Wagoner

A Carter was driving a wagon along a country lane, when the wheels sank down deep into a rut. The rustic driver, stupefied and aghast, stood looking at the wagon, and did nothing but utter loud cries to Hercules to come and help him.

Hercules, it is said, appeared and thus addressed him : ‘Put your shoulders to the wheels, my man. Goad on your bull-ocks, and never more pray to me for help, until you have done your best to help yourself, or depend upon it you will henceforth pray in vain.’

Self-help is the best help.

The Cat and Venus

A Cat fell in love with a handsome young man, and entreated Venus to change her into the form of a woman. Venus consented to her request and transformed her into a beautiful damsel, so that the youth saw her and loved her, and took her home as his bride.

While the two were reclining in their chamber, Venus wishing to discover if the Cat in her change of shape had also altered her habits of life, let down a mouse in the middle of the room. The Cat, quite forgetting her present condition, started up from the couch and pursued the mouse, wishing to eat it. Venus was much disappointed and again caused her to return to her former shape.

Nature exceeds nurture.

The Farmer and the Snake

One winter a Farmer found a Snake stiff and frozen with cold. He had compassion on it, and taking it up, placed it in his bosom. The Snake was quickly revived by the warmth, and resuming its natural instincts, bit its benefactor, inflict-ing on him a mortal wound. 'Oh,' cried the Farmer with his last breath, 'I am rightly served for pitying a scoundrel.'

The greatest kindness will not bind the ungrateful.

The Woman and Her Hen

A Woman possessed a Hen that gave her an egg every day. She often pondered how she might obtain two eggs daily instead of one, and at last, to gain her purpose, determined to give the Hen a double allowance of barley. From that day the Hen became fat and sleek, and never once laid another egg.

The Dolphins, the Whales, and the Sprat

The Dolphins and Whales waged a fierce war with each other. When the battle was at its height, a Sprat lifted its head out of the waves and said that he would reconcile their differences if they would accept him as an umpire. One of the Dolphins replied, 'We would far rather be destroyed in our battle with each other than admit any interference from you in our affairs.'

The Stag at the Pool

A Stag overpowered by heat came to a spring to drink. Seeing his own shadow reflected in the water, he greatly admired the size and variety of his horns, but felt angry with himself for having such slender and weak feet.

While he was thus contemplating himself, a Lion appeared at the pool and crouched to spring upon him. The Stag immediately took to flight, and exerting his utmost speed, as long as the plain was smooth and open kept himself easily at a safe distance from the Lion. But entering a wood he became entangled by his horns, and the Lion quickly came up to him and caught him.

When too late, he thus reproached himself : ‘Woe is me! How I have deceived myself! These feet which would have saved me I despised, and I gloried in these antlers which have proved my destruction.’

What is most truly valuable is often underrated.

The Two Men Who Were Enemies

Two Men, deadly enemies to each other, were sailing in the same vessel. Determined to keep as far apart as possible, the one seated himself in the stem, and the other in the prow of the ship.

A violent storm arose, and with the vessel in great danger of sinking, the one in the stern inquired of the pilot which of the two ends of the ship would go down first. On his replying that he supposed it would be the prow, the Man said, 'Death would not be grievous to me, if I could only see my Enemy die before me.'

The Frogs' Complaint Against the Sun

Once upon a time, when the Sun announced his intention to take a wife, the Frogs lifted up their voices in clamor to the sky. Jupiter, disturbed by the noise of their croaking, inquired the cause of their complaint. One of them said, 'The Sun, now while he is single, parches up the marsh, and compels us to die miserably in our arid homes. What will be our future condition if he should beget other suns?'

The Mule

A Mule, frolicsome from lack of work and from too much corn, galloped about in a very extravagant manner, and said to himself : 'My father surely was a high-mettled racer, and I am his own child in speed and spirit.'

On the next day, being driven a long journey, and feeling very wearied, he exclaimed in a disconsolate tone : 'I must have made a mistake; my father, after all, could have been only an ass.'

The Charger and the Miller

A Charger, feeling the infirmities of age, was sent to work in a mill instead of going out to battle.

But when he was compelled to grind instead of serving in the wars, he bewailed his change of fortune and called to mind his former state, saying, 'Ah! Miller, I had indeed to go campaigning before, but I was barbed from counter to tail, and a man went along to groom me; and now I cannot understand what ailed me to prefer the mill before the battle.'

'Forbear,' said the Miller to him, 'harping on what was of yore, for it is the common fate of mortals to question the ups and downs of fortune.'

The Camel

When man first saw the Camel, he was so frightened at his vast size that he ran away.

After a time, perceiving the meekness and gentleness of the beast's temper, he summoned courage enough to approach him.

Soon afterwards, observing that he was an animal alto-gether deficient in spirit, he assumed such boldness as to put a bridle in his mouth, and to let a child drive him.

The Walnut Tree

A Walnut Tree standing by the roadside bore an abundant crop of fruit. For the sake of the nuts, the passers-by broke its branches with stones and sticks. The Walnut-Tree pite-ously exclaimed, 'O wretched me! That those whom I cheer with my fruit should repay me with these painful requitals!'

The Gnat and the Bull

A Gnat settled on the horn of a Bull, and sat there a long time. Just as he was about to fly off, he made a buzzing noise, and inquired of the Bull if he would like him to go. The Bull replied, 'I did not know you had come, and I shall not miss you when you go away.'

Some men are of more consequence in their own eyes than in the eyes of their neighbours.

The Boy Hunting Locusts

A Boy was hunting for locusts. He had caught a goodly number, when he saw a Scorpion, and mistaking him for a locust, reached out his hand to take him. The Scorpion, showing his sting, said : 'If you had but touched me, my friend, you would have lost me, and all your locusts too!'

Carelessness has consequences.

The Flea and the Man

A Man, very much annoyed with a Flea, caught him at last, and said, 'Who are you who dare to feed on my limbs, and to cost me so much trouble in catching you?'

The Flea replied, 'O my dear sir, pray spare my life, and destroy me not, for I cannot possibly do you much harm.'

The Man, laughing, replied, 'Now you shall certainly die by mine own hands, for no evil, whether it be small or large, ought to be tolerated.'

The Man Bitten by a Dog

A Man who had been bitten by a Dog went about in quest of someone who might heal him. A friend, meeting him and learning what he wanted, said, 'If you would be cured, take a piece of bread, and dip it in the blood from your wound, and go and give it to the Dog that bit you.'

The Man who had been bitten laughed at this advice and said, 'Why? If I should do so, it would be as if I should beg every Dog in the town to bite me.'

Benefits bestowed upon the evil-disposed increase their means of injuring you.

The Mischievous Dog

A Dog used to run up quietly to the heels of everyone he met, and to bite them without notice. His master suspended a bell about his neck so that the Dog might give notice of his presence wherever he went. Thinking it a mark of distinction, the Dog grew proud of his bell and went tinkling it all over the marketplace.

One day an old hound said to him : ‘Why do you make such an exhibition of yourself? That bell that you carry is not, believe me, any order of merit, but on the contrary a mark of disgrace, a public notice to all men to avoid you as an ill-mannered dog.’

Notoriety is often mistaken for fame.

The Wolf and the Lamb

Wolf, meeting with a Lamb astray from the fold, resolved not to lay violent hands on him, but to find some plea to justify to the Lamb the Wolf's right to eat him. He thus addressed him : 'Sir, last year you grossly insulted me.'

'Indeed,' bleated the Lamb in a mournful tone of voice, 'I was not then born.'

Then said the Wolf, 'You feed in my pasture.'

'No, good sir,' replied the Lamb, 'I have not yet tasted grass.'

Again said the Wolf, 'You drink of my well.'

'No,' exclaimed the Lamb, 'I never yet drank water, for as yet my mother's milk is both food and drink to me.'

Upon which the Wolf seized him and ate him up, saying, 'Well! I won't remain supperless, even though you refute every one of my imputations.'

The tyrant will always find a pretext for his tyranny.

The Lamb and the Wolf

A Wolf pursued a Lamb, which fled for refuge to a certain Temple. The Wolf called out to him and said, 'The Priest will slay you in sacrifice, if he should catch you.' On which the Lamb replied, 'It would be better for me to be sacrificed in the Temple than to be eaten by you.'

Thus, certain orators who, at school, seem to have some talent, reveal their incompetence as soon as they enter the political arena.

The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse

A Country Mouse invited a Town Mouse, an intimate friend, to pay him a visit and partake of his country fare.

As they were on the bare plowlands, eating their wheat-stocks and roots pulled up from the hedgerow, the Town Mouse said to his friend, 'You live here the life of the ants, while in my house is the horn of plenty. I am surrounded by every luxury, and if you will come with me, as I wish you would, you shall have an ample share of my dainties.' The Country Mouse was easily persuaded, and returned to town with his friend.

On his arrival, the Town Mouse placed before him bread, barley, beans, dried figs, honey, raisins, and, last of all, brought a dainty piece of cheese from a basket. The Country Mouse, being much delighted at the sight of such good cheer, expressed his satisfaction in warm terms and lamented his own hard fate.

Just as they were beginning to eat, someone opened the door, and they both ran off squeaking, as fast as they could, to a hole so narrow that two could only find room in it by squeezing. They had scarcely begun their repast again when someone else entered to take something out of a cupboard, whereupon the two Mice, more frightened than before, ran away and hid themselves.

At last the Country Mouse, almost famished, said to his friend : 'Although you have prepared for me so dainty a feast, I must leave you to enjoy it by yourself. It is surrounded by too many dangers to please me. I prefer my bare plowlands and roots from the hedgerow, where I can live in safety, and without fear.'

Mercury and the Workmen

A Workman, felling wood by the side of a river, let his axe drop-by accident into a deep pool. Being thus deprived of the means of his livelihood, he sat down on the bank and lamented his hard fate.

Mercury appeared and demanded the cause of his tears. After he told him his misfortune, Mercury plunged into the stream, and, bringing up a golden axe, inquired if that were the one he had lost. On his saying that it was not his, Mercury disappeared beneath the water a second time, returned with a silver axe in his hand, and again asked the Workman if it were his. When the Workman said it was not, he dived into the pool for the third time and brought up the axe that had been lost. The Workman claimed it and expressed his joy at its recovery. Mercury, pleased with his honesty, gave him the gold and silver axes in addition to his own.

The Workman, on his return to his house, related to his companions all that had happened. One of them at once resolved to try and secure the same good fortune for himself. He ran to the river and threw his axe on purpose into the pool at the same place, and sat down on the bank to weep.

Mercury appeared to him just as he hoped he would; and having learned the cause of his grief, plunged into the stream and brought up a golden axe, inquiring if he had lost it. The Workman seized it greedily, and declared that truly it was the very same axe that he had lost. Mercury, displeased at his knavery, not only took away the golden axe, but refused to recover for him the axe he had thrown into the pool.

The Ass and the Lapdog

A man had an Ass, and a Maltese Lapdog, a very great beauty.

The Ass was left in a stable and had plenty of oats and hay to eat, just as any other Ass would. The Lapdog knew many tricks and was a great favourite with his master, who often fondled him and seldom went out to dine without bringing him home some tidbit to eat. The Ass, on the contrary, had much work to do in grinding the corn-mill and in carrying wood from the forest or burdens from the farm.

He often lamented his own hard fate and contrasted it with the luxury and idleness of the Lapdog, till at last one day he broke his cords and halter, and galloped into his master's house, kicking up his heels without measure, and frisking and fawning as well as he could. He next tried to jump about his master as he had seen the Lapdog do, but he broke the table and smashed all the dishes upon it to atoms. He then attempted to lick his master, and jumped upon his back. The servants, hearing the strange hubbub and perceiving the danger of their master, quickly relieved him, and drove out the Ass to his stable with kicks and clubs and cuffs.

The Ass, as he returned to his stall beaten nearly to death, thus lamented : 'I have brought it all on myself! Why could I not have been contented to labour with my companions, and not wish to be idle all the day like that useless little Lapdog!'

The Ass in the Lion's Skin

An Ass, having put on the Lion's skin, roamed about in the forest and amused himself by frightening all the foolish animals he met in his wanderings. At last coming upon a Fox, he tried to frighten him also, but the Fox no sooner heard the sound of his voice than he exclaimed, 'I might possibly have been frightened myself, if I had not heard your bray.'

The Hen and the Swallow

A Hen finding the eggs of a viper and carefully keeping them warm, nourished them into life. A Swallow, observing what she had done, said, 'You silly creature! why have you hatched these vipers which, when they shall have grown, will inflict injury on all, beginning with yourself!'

The Partridge and the Fowler

A Fowler caught a Partridge and was about to kill it. The Partridge earnestly begged him to spare his life, saying, 'Pray, master, permit me to live and I will entice many Par-tridges to you in recompense for your mercy to me.'

The Fowler replied, 'I shall now with less scruple take your life, because you are willing to save it at the cost of betraying your friends and relations.'

The Monkey and the Camel

The beasts of the forest gave a splendid entertainment at which the Monkey stood up and danced. Having vastly delighted the assembly, he sat down amidst universal applause.

The Camel, envious of the praises bestowed on the Mon-key and desiring to divert to himself the favour of the guests, proposed to stand up in his turn and dance for their amuse-ment. He moved about in so utterly ridiculous a manner that the Beasts, in a fit of indignation, set upon him with clubs and drove him out of the assembly.

It is absurd to ape our betters.

The Mole and His Mother

A Mole, a creature blind from birth, once said to his Mother : ‘I am sure than I can see, Mother!’

In the desire to prove to him his mistake, his Mother placed before him a few grains of frankincense, and asked, ‘What is it?’

The young Mole said, ‘It is a pebble.’

His Mother exclaimed : ‘My son, I am afraid that you are not only blind, but that you have lost your sense of smell.’

(Translated by George Fyler Townsend)

Mercury and the Man Bitten by an Ant

A Man once saw a ship go down with all its crew, and commented severely on the injustice of the gods.

‘They care nothing for a man’s character,’ said he, ‘but let the good and the bad go to their deaths together.’

There was an ant-heap close by where he was standing, and, just as he spoke, he was bitten in the foot by an Ant. Turning in a temper to the ant-heap he stamped upon it and crushed hundreds of unoffending ants.

Suddenly Mercury appeared, and belaboured him with his staff, saying as he did so, ‘You villain, where’s your nice sense of justice now?’

The Imposter

A certain man fell ill, and, being in a very bad way, he made a vow that he would sacrifice a hundred oxen to the gods if they would grant him a return to health. Wishing to see how he would keep his vow, they caused him to recover in a short time.

Now, he hadn't an ox in the world, so he made a hundred little oxen out of tallow and offered them up on an altar, at the same time saying, 'Ye gods, I call you to witness that I have discharged my vow.'

The gods determined to be even with him, so they sent him a dream, in which he was bidden to go to the sea-shore and fetch a hundred crowns which he was to find there. Hastening in great excitement to the shore, he fell in with a band of robbers, who seized him and carried him off to sell as a slave : and when they sold him a hundred crowns was the sum he fetched.

Do not promise more than you can perform.

The Man and the Lion

A Man and a Lion were companions on a journey, and in the course of conversation they began to boast about their prowess, and each claimed to be superior to the other in strength and courage. They were still arguing with some heat when they came to a cross-road where there was a statue of a Man strangling a Lion.

‘There!’ said the Man triumphantly, ‘look at that! Doesn’t that prove to you that we are stronger than you?’

‘Not so fast, my friend,’ said the Lion, ‘that is only your view of the case. If we Lions could make statues, you may be sure that in most of them you would see the Man underneath.’

There are two sides to every question.

The Snake and Jupiter

A Snake suffered a good deal from being constantly trodden upon by man and beast, owing partly to the length of his body and partly to his being unable to raise himself above the surface of the ground : so he went and complained to Jupiter about the risks to which he was exposed. But Jupiter had little sympathy for him. ‘I dare say,’ said he, ‘that if you had bitten the first that trod on you, the others would have taken more trouble to look where they put their feet.’

The Kid on the Housetop

A Kid climbed up on to the roof of an outhouse, attracted by the grass and other things that grew in the thatch; and as he stood there browsing away, he caught sight of a Wolf passing below, and jeered at him because he couldn't reach him. The Wolf only looked up and said, 'I hear you, my young friend; but it is not you who mock me, but the roof on which you are standing.'

Bat, the Bramble, and the Seagull

A Bat, a Bramble, and a Seagull went into partnership and determined to go on a trading voyage together. The Bat borrowed a sum of money for his venture; the Bramble laid in a stock of clothes of various kinds; and the Seagull took a quantity of lead : and so they set out.

By and by a great storm came on, and their boat with all the cargo went to the bottom, but the three travellers managed to reach land. Ever since then the Seagull flies to and fro over the sea, and every now and then dives below the surface, looking for the lead he's lost; while the Bat is so afraid of meeting his creditors that he hides away by day and only comes out at night to feed; and the Bramble catches hold of the clothes of everyone who passes by, hoping some-day to recognise and recover the lost garments.

All men are more concerned to recover what they lose than to acquire what they lack.

The Ass and his Burdens

A Pedlar who owned an Ass one day bought a quantity of salt, and loaded up his beast with as much as he could bear. On the way home the Ass stumbled as he was crossing a stream and fell into the water.

The salt got thoroughly wetted and much of it melted and drained away, so that, when he got on his legs again, the Ass found his load had become much less heavy. His master, however, drove him back to town and bought more salt, which he added to what remained in the panniers, and started out again.

No sooner had they reached a stream than the Ass lay down in it, and rose, as before, with a much lighter load. But his master detected the trick, and turning back once more, bought a large number of sponges, and piled them on the back of the Ass.

When they came to the stream the Ass again lay down : but this time, as the sponges soaked up large quantities of water, he found, when he got up on his legs, that he had a bigger burden to carry than ever.

You may play a good card once too often.

The Ass, the Cock, and the Lion

An Ass and a Cock were in a cattle-pen together. Presently a Lion, who had been starving for days, came along and was just about to fall upon the Ass and make a meal of him when the Cock, rising to his full height and flapping his wings vigorously, uttered a tremendous crow.

Now, if there is one thing that frightens a Lion, it is the crowing of a Cock : and this one had no sooner heard the noise than he fled.

The Ass was mightily elated at this, and thought that, if the Lion couldn't face a Cock, he would be still less likely to stand up to an Ass : so he ran out and pursued him. But when the two had got well out of sight and hearing of the Cock, the Lion suddenly turned upon the Ass and ate him up.

False confidence often leads to disaster.

The Dog and the Wolf

A Dog was lying in the sun before a farmyard gate when a Wolf pounced upon him and was just going to eat him up; but he begged for his life and said, 'You see how thin I am and what a wretched meal I should make you now : but if you will only wait a few days my master is going to give a feast. All the rich scraps and pickings will fall to me and I shall get nice and fat : then will be the time for you to eat me.'

The Wolf thought this was a very good plan and went away. Some time afterwards he came to the farmyard again, and found the Dog lying out of reach on the stable roof. 'Come down,' he called, 'and be eaten : you remember our agreement?'

But the Dog said coolly, 'My friend, if ever you catch me lying down by the gate there again, don't you wait for any feast.'

Once bitten, twice shy.

The Old Lion

A Lion, enfeebled by age and no longer able to procure food for himself by force, determined to do so by cunning. Betaking himself to a cave, he lay down inside and feigned to be sick : and whenever any of the other animals entered to inquire after his health, he sprang upon them and devoured them.

Many lost their lives in this way, till one day a Fox called at the cave, and, having a suspicion of the truth, addressed the Lion from outside instead of going in, and asked him how he did. He replied that he was in a very bad way : ‘But,’ said he, ‘why do you stand outside? Pray come in.’

‘I should have done so,’ answered the Fox, ‘if I hadn’t noticed that all the footprints point towards the cave and none the other way.’

The Prophet

A Prophet sat in the market-place and told the fortunes of all who cared to engage his services.

Suddenly there came running up one who told him that his house had been broken into by thieves, and that they had made off with everything they could lay hands on. He was up in a moment, and rushed off, tearing his hair and calling down curses on the miscreants.

The bystanders were much amused, and one of them said, 'Our friend professes to know what is going to happen to others, but it seems he's not clever enough to perceive what's in store for himself.'

(Translated by Vernon Jones)

A Wife and a Drunken Husband

A Woman that lay under the mortification of a fudling Husband, took him once when he was dead drunk; and had his body laid in a charnel-house. By the time she thought he might be come to himself again, away goes she, and knocks at the door.

Who's there? (says the Toper)

One, says the Woman, that brings meat for the dead.

Friend, says he, bring me drink rather. I wonder any body that knows me, should bring me one without t'other.

Nay then, says she, the humour I perceive has taken pos-session of him; he has gotten a habit, and his case is desperate.

Inveterate illhabits become another nature to us, and we may almost as well be taken to pieces, and new put together again, as mended.

Musician

A Man that had a very coarsevoice, but an excellent musick-room, would be still practising in that chamber, for the advantage of the eccho. He took such a conceit upon't, that he must needs be shewing his parts upon a public theatre, where he perform'd so very ill, that the auditory hiss'd him off the stage, and threw stones at him.

A man may like himself very well in his own glass, and yet the world not fall in love with him in publick. But the truth on't is, we are partial in our own case, and there's no reading of our selves but with other men'seyes.

(Translated by Sir Roger L'Estrange)



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No. 24

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企鹅经典：小黑书 第三辑

[英]查尔斯·狄更斯/著

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To Be Read at Dusk

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Signalman' were first published in All the Year Round, in 1865 and 1866 respectively. This selection

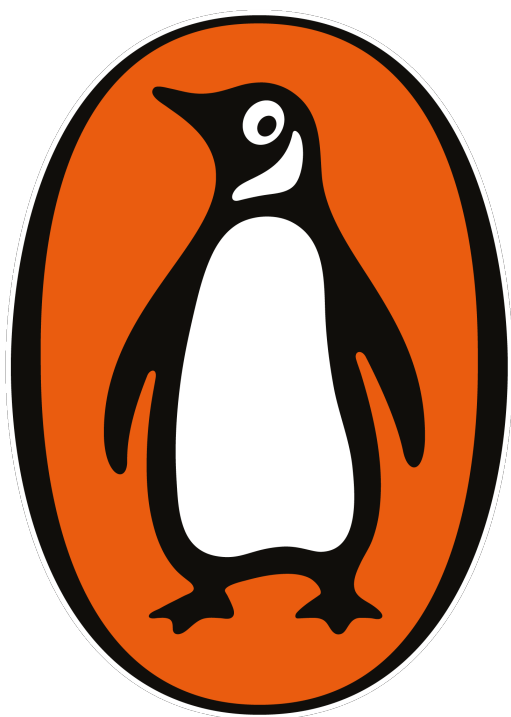
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“我打量着他
一直盯着我的眼睛
和有点阴郁的脸，
脑海中产生了一个
可怕的念头，
这是一个灵魂，
不是人类。”



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黄昏之读

一，二，三，四，五。五个人。

在瑞士大圣伯纳德山口之巅，五个向导坐在修道院门外的长凳上。他们朝远处高山望去，那边巍峨的山峰浸染着落日的颜色，仿佛是谁失手泼洒了大量的红葡萄酒，色彩在山顶表面恣意流淌，好像还没来得及渗入下层白雪似的。

这可不是我的比喻，是那个最壮实的德国向导说的。不过其他向导对这番优美言辞倒没有多在意，就像他们也不在意我一样。此刻，我就坐在修道院门口另一边的长凳上，和他们一样抽着雪茄——也和他们一样——望着远处余晖染红的积雪。我们旁边是一间孤零零的小棚屋，里面放着不少旅行者的尸体，他们因大雪封山被困，从积雪下被挖出来，如今只能躺在地上慢慢干枯萎缩，毕竟这么冷，倒是不会腐烂。

我们就这样看着山顶的红酒一点点渗进雪中，山又恢复了洁白，天空泛着深蓝，风的呼啸声渐大，周遭空气寒冷刺骨。那五个向导扣紧了身上粗毛的大外套。在这里，向导做什么，你就跟着做什么，这样才最安全，于是我也赶忙扣紧了大衣。

先前夕阳映照下的山景打断了五个人的谈话，因为那实在雄伟壮丽，值得静静欣赏。现在太阳落山，他们又继续着之前的谈话。我之前没有听他们说，因为当时还在和一位美国绅士闲聊。他坐在修道院专门接待旅行者的客厅里，面朝壁炉，说要给我讲一个大骗子怎么靠着次次招摇撞骗，混成我们国家首富的故事。

“我的天！”瑞士向导冒出了一句法语。我不敢（像其他作者那样）说这个词可以完全表达出他的本意，但力求用英语写出来不像脏话吧。“如果谈起鬼魂——”

“但我说的不是鬼魂。”德国人说。

“那你要说什么？”瑞士人问。

“我要是知道，”德国人说，“那我懂的可就不止这些了。”

好答案，我心想，一下子就勾起了我的好奇心。因此，我挪到离他们较近的长凳的另一端，背靠着修道院墙，不用参与谈话，也能够听得十分清楚。

“电闪雷鸣！”德国人兴冲冲地说，“当一个人突然想要来看你，而他自己却毫无意识地把这个想法植入你的脑海，整日盘旋，仿佛是遣了某个看不见的信差，你怎么称呼这种现象？当你走在熙熙攘攘的街道——在法兰克福、米兰、伦敦、巴黎——想着身边走过的某个陌生人酷似你的朋友海因里希，另一个擦肩而过的路人也像海因里希，由此产生了一种奇怪的预感——不一会儿你就要见到他了——你还真就见到他了，虽然你一直以为他远在的里雅斯特 [1]。你又把这个叫什么？”

“这都不是什么稀罕事啊。”瑞士人和其他三个人小声说。

“这很不平常！”德国人说，“平常是什么？平常是黑森林里的樱桃，那不勒斯的通心面。说起那不勒斯倒提醒了我！老侯爵夫人苏珊尼姆在基艾亚 [2] 的纸牌宴会上尖叫来着——我就在现场，因为当时我服侍的巴伐利亚一家也去了——哎呀，那侯爵夫人往牌桌前一坐，嘴唇煞白，惊喊道：‘我那在西班牙的妹妹死了！我刚刚感觉到她冰凉的手在摸我的背。’而她的妹妹恰恰就是在那一刻走的，这个你怎么看？”

“还有神职人员祷告后圣热内罗的血液就会溶解 [3] ——整个世界都知道，每年发生一次，就在我的家乡，”那不勒斯向导停顿了一会儿，带着戏谑的表情说，“您又怎么称呼这个呢？”

“那个！”德国人大声说，“对！我想有个名称可以。”

“神迹？”那不勒斯人依然神色狡黠。

德国人只是抽了口烟，放声大笑，其他人也一起抽烟大笑。

“呸！”过了片刻，德国人啐了一口，“我说的这些都是实在发生的。我要是想看招魂，怎么不找个专业的，钱就值回来了。有些怪事根本和鬼魂无关。说到鬼魂！乔万尼·巴普蒂斯塔，讲讲你那个英国新娘的事吧，里面没有鬼，可就是很诡异。谁来说？”

一时间大家陷入沉默。我朝旁边瞥了瞥，猜那个重新点了支雪茄的人就是巴普蒂斯塔。果然片刻后他接过了话茬，听口音是热那亚人。

“英国新娘？”他说，“够了！这点小破事谈不上什么故事。不过，也算是吧，是真的。竖起耳朵听好了，各位，绝无半句虚言。发光的不一定都是金子，可我接下来要说的一定是真的。”

接着，他又强调了一遍。

十年前，我带着自己的履历去找一位英国绅士。他住在伦敦邦德街的长龙酒店，正打算旅行一两年。他对我的履历很满意，对我印象

也不错。问了价格后，对价钱也相当满意。于是他决定雇我六个月，给我的薪酬待遇也不错。

这位绅士年轻英俊，乐观潇洒，倾心一位貌美的英国富家小姐。他们就要结婚了，接下来的旅行算是度蜜月。为了在炎热的三个月中（当时已是初夏）能够充分休憩，他在里维埃拉 [4] 租了一栋老宅。从我所在的城市热那亚过去，非常方便，前往尼斯也需路过此地。我知不知道那栋宅子？当然。我告诉他，自己很了解那里。老宅带着大花园，有点昏暗阴森，周围树木环绕。不过宅子面积倒是不小，它伫立在海岸边，古老而庄严。他表示自己先前也听人这样讲过，很高兴我能有所了解。虽然里面家具是少了点，但别的地方也都这样。虽然房子阴森了点，但主要是看中了大花园，打算和女主人在树荫下避暑度日。

“所以没问题吧，巴普蒂斯塔？”他问。

“完全没有，先生。非常好。”

我们乘的是崭新的特制双轮马车，无论从哪方面来说都很完美。可以说是万事俱备，别无他求了。之后他们举办了婚礼，非常幸福。我也很高兴，因为生活是如此明快，一切都恰到好处，我又回到了自己长大的城市，还可以胡乱教女仆拉贝拉·卡罗琳娜说一些家乡话。她是一个活泼开朗的年轻女孩，时常被我逗得放声大笑。

时间就这样一天天过去，但我发现——听着，高潮来了！（说到这里向导压低了嗓音）——我发现女主人有的时候会陷入沉思，而且是以非常奇怪、可怕甚至悲伤的方式，脸上愁容惨淡，还有些飘忽不定的惊恐。开始注意到这个，是因为我正走着上坡，跟在马车边，主人早到前面去了。不管怎么说，到法国南部时，那天晚上发生的一些事让我更加确定了。当时女主人唤我把主人叫过来，于是主人又回头，陪着她走了很长的路，一直温柔地安慰她，鼓励她。他把手搭在打开的马车窗边，而女主人坐在车里，把手放在窗内沿。主人时不时地开怀大笑，仿佛是为了驱散她心中的忧虑。不久之后，她也放声大笑，一切就又好起来了。

这件事有点古怪，我向漂亮的小女仆拉贝拉·卡罗琳娜打听。女主人有哪里不舒服吗？没有。精神不振？没有。担心路况或者强盗土匪？没有。更神秘的是，卡罗琳娜回答问题时不愿意看着我，只是望向远处的风景。

不过，有一天她把秘密告诉了我。

“如果，你真想知道的话，”卡罗琳娜说，“我发现，根据我听到的情况来看，女主人是被鬼缠上了。”

“怎么缠上的？”

“因为一个梦。”

“什么梦？”

“一个有着一张脸的梦。结婚前有三个晚上，她都梦到了一张脸——同一个面孔，只有一个。”

“那张脸恐怖吗？”

“不，是一个相貌非凡、面色黝黑的男人的脸。他一身黑衣，黑头发，还有灰色的小胡子——相当帅气，不过又冷淡又神秘。女主人压根就没见过这张脸，连长得像的都没有。梦里，他只是从黑暗深处静静地凝视着她，什么也不做。”

“后来女主人又做过同样的梦吗？”

“再也没有。但只要想起这个梦境，她心中就充满了不安。”

“为什么会困扰她呢？”

卡罗琳娜摇了摇头。

“这也是主人的疑惑，”卡罗琳娜说，“她不知道，自己也弄不明白。我只听到昨天晚上，她跟主人说如果在意大利的房子里发现那张脸的画像（她担心她会），那就真要崩溃了。”

说实话，这之后我就开始担心（热那亚向导说），等我们到了那座豪华的旧宫殿，真会看到某幅类似的倒霉画像，毕竟那里这种画像还真不少。随着离目的地越来越近，我心中恨不得把整个宅子的画廊都扔到维苏威火山口去。然而好像事情还不够糟一样，偏巧我们到里维埃拉的那晚风狂雨骤，天色阴沉，还打着雷。由于热那亚周围高山环绕，雷声在其间回荡时，显得震耳欲聋。蜥蜴仿佛受了雷鸣的惊吓，在花园颓圯的石墙缝隙间蹿来蹿去。青蛙一直扯着嗓子呱呱大叫。海风咆哮着卷进来，湿透的树木滴着雨水，还有闪电——把圣劳伦斯教堂都照得通亮！

我们都知道一栋热那亚风格的老式宫殿会是什么样——时间和海风会怎样将它沾染，外墙的纹案图饰会怎样像石膏一样片片斑驳脱落，低层的窗框会怎样慢慢生锈发黑，院子里会怎样杂草丛生、日渐荒芜，外围的建筑会怎样颓圯失修，整栋建筑会怎样无人问津、逐渐破败。我们租下的这栋宫殿就是活生生的例子。它大门紧闭已经几个月了。几个月？——不对，应该是好多年！房子里有一种土味，像墓室一样；同时外面露台上的橘子树味，墙边烂熟柠檬的果味，以及破裂的喷泉周围疯长的灌木丛的草味，不知怎的都跑进来，闷在这里面发酵。每个房间都隐约弥漫着一种陈年的腐朽气息，充斥着橱柜和抽

屈。到了两个大房间之间用作流通的小间里，这种味道就变得更加令人窒息。如果你想挪动一幅画——说回到画来——是根本就动不了的，因为它们像蝙蝠一样牢牢粘在墙上。

房子里所有的格状百叶窗都紧闭着，只有两个头发灰白的老女仆在照看。其中一人拿着纺锤，站在门口缠卷着，咕哝着，估摸着她随时就能像放进空气一样把坏人放进来。主人、女主人、拉贝拉·卡罗琳娜和我一道穿过宫殿。虽然名字排在最后，但其实我走在最前面，打开了窗玻璃和网格百叶窗，结果自己淋到了几点雨，身上落了些石灰皮，还时不时有打盹的蚊子或热那亚当地带有斑点的大蜘蛛掉下来。

月光照进房间，主人们和拉贝拉·卡罗琳娜才进来。接着，大家查看了四周的画像，我则走进了另一间房。女主人打心底里恐惧，生怕见到和那张脸类似的任何东西——其实我们都怕，不过这没有发生。圣母圣婴、圣弗朗西斯科、圣塞巴斯蒂安、维纳斯、圣卡塔林纳、天使、强盗、修士、落日映照的神殿、战争、白马、森林、使徒和共和国 [5] 总督，画上尽是平凡无奇的常规题材——确实如此。那个身着黑衣、黑头发灰胡子、带着冷淡神秘气质、从黑暗中凝视女主人的帅气男子则毫无踪影。

最后我们走遍了所有房间，看过了所有画像，来到了花园。这里租给一个园丁后，维护得相当不错，面积很大，树木成荫。其中有一处简陋的露天小剧场，绿草覆盖的斜坡是主舞台：侧面一边三个入口，布景则是缀满叶子、散发着草木清香的绿幕。女主人明亮的大眼睛飞快转动着，即便在这儿，她仍然害怕那张脸会突然冒出来：还好一切正常。

“好了，克拉拉，”主人轻声说，“你看到了，什么都没有，开心点。”

女主人很受鼓舞，之后不久就适应了这个阴沉的宫殿，整天唱歌、弹竖琴，临摹古画，或者和男主人在绿树下或葡萄藤下散步。她光彩照人，他也心情畅快。男主人经常大笑着吩咐我备马，他要在中午热起来前骑马溜达一圈：

“一切都顺利，巴普蒂斯塔！”

“是的先生，谢天谢地，非常好！”

他不需要我陪伴，于是我就带着拉贝拉去看看大教堂、托雷安农齐亚塔 [6]、咖啡馆、歌剧院、村庄庆典活动、公园、日间剧场、牵线木偶表演。所有这些都能让漂亮的小拉贝拉着迷。她还学会了意大利语——天哪！奇迹啊！我有时会问她，女主人是不是快忘记那个梦了？差不多吧，卡罗琳娜说——基本上是，她在慢慢淡忘。

一天，主人收到了一封信，把我叫过去。

“巴普蒂斯塔！”

“先生。”

“一位别人介绍我认识的绅士说今天要来这里共进晚餐。他叫德尔欧布拉。准备一下，别让我丢脸。”

真是奇怪的名字，我没听说过，不过当时也有很多贵族绅士因为在奥地利受到政治猜忌，然后改名的。可能是其中一位吧。管他呢！德尔欧布拉这个名字对我来说和任何名字一样，没什么不好。

晚餐时间，德尔欧布拉先生来了（说到这里，热那亚向导再一次压低了声音），我把他带到会客室，也就是老宫殿的大厅。主人热情真诚地接待了他，并转身向女主人介绍。而女主人站起身，脸色唰地一变，尖叫一声就晕过去了，直接栽倒在大理石地面上。

接着，我立马看向德尔欧布拉先生，只见他一身黑衣，表情冷淡而神秘，面色黝黑，相貌非凡，还蓄着黑头发和灰色小胡子。

主人把女主人抱回到她的房间，我赶紧让拉贝拉跟过去服侍。后来她告诉我，女主人吓得大半条命没了，整晚脑子里都是之前那个梦。

主人既恼怒又焦躁不安——几近愤怒，心中又很担心。这位德尔欧布拉先生是一位谦和儒雅的绅士，对女主人的病况表示了关心和同情。他说，来自非洲的风已经吹了好些时日（这是他听马耳他十字架酒店的人说的，他住在那里），妖风经常伤人。他还祝愿美丽的夫人能够早日康复。接着便要请辞离开，说自己可以等女主人康复后再行登门。不过主人没有同意，认真挽留他坐下来进餐，最后他们俩一起吃了饭。

德尔欧布拉先生当晚早早走了，第二天又来敲门，骑在马上，问女主人是否安好。一周内他来了那么两三次。

根据我的观察，加上拉贝拉·卡罗琳娜的消息，显然主人正在努力安慰女主人，让她克服胡思乱想的恐惧。他非常温柔体贴，但也理智坚定，慢慢分析给她听，告诉她任何空想都不过是庸人自扰，如果能安定心神，就什么事都没有了。如果她能克服自己奇怪的弱点，成功像英国淑女招待客人那样接纳德尔欧布拉先生，那就永远不会再出事了。最终，德尔欧布拉先生再次到访，女主人招待了他，没有表露出什么明显的痛苦（尽管仍有些局促和忧虑），当晚平静地度过了。主人对这种变化感到十分欣喜，为了急于确认她已好转，于是德尔欧布拉先生成了我们的常客。他的画艺和乐理都十分精湛，还博览群书，这种社交伙伴，在任何沉闷的意大利宫殿，都是相当受欢迎的。

我时常能注意到，女主人并没有真正恢复。在德尔欧布拉先生面前，她会垂下眼睑，低着头，要不就是以害怕又着迷的眼神飞快地瞥他一眼，好像他在这儿就会对她造成什么不好的影响或施加什么邪恶力量。我又看看德尔欧布拉先生，之前在荫蔽的花园或半明半暗的宽敞起居室里，我常常能看到他“从黑暗中凝视着她”，老实说，我并没有忘记拉贝拉·卡罗琳娜对梦中那张脸的描述。

德尔欧布拉先生第二次来访结束后，我听到主人说：

“亲爱的克拉拉，你看，都结束了！德尔欧布拉来了又走，你的忧虑已经完全没有啦。”

“他还——还会再来吗？”女主人问。

“再来？为什么不！当然，他会来很多次的！怎么了，你是不是冷？”（女主人打了个哆嗦。）

“不，亲爱的——但是——我真的害怕他：你确定真的还要他来吗？”

“克拉拉，这是毫无疑问的！”主人愉快地答道。

不过，他对女主人的完全康复倒抱有极大希望，并且这种期冀与日俱增。女主人优雅美丽，他也心情畅快。

“一切都顺利吧，巴普蒂斯塔？”他又对我说一遍。

“是的先生，感谢老天。非常好。”

有一天（热那亚向导微微抬高了嗓门儿），我们都在罗马参加狂欢节。我有个西西里岛的朋友，他也是向导，当时陪同一个英国家庭。我和他出去玩了一整天，晚上回酒店的时候，碰到小卡罗琳娜。她从来不单独离开家，那天却沿着大道狂奔，显得心烦意乱。

“卡罗琳娜！怎么了？”

“哦，巴普蒂斯塔！哦，老天啊！女主人到底去哪儿了？”

“女主人？”

“人家说她不见了。今天早上，因为她前一晚没休息好（太痛苦的缘故），主人出门就没有叫她。本来她应该在床上躺到天黑，再精神抖擞地起来活动。结果现在她不见了，不见了！主人回来了，撞开了门，发现她不见了！美丽大方又善良的女主人！”

娇小漂亮的卡罗琳娜在我面前大喊着，咆哮着，甚至拉扯自己的头发，要不是她最后像中枪一样晕倒在我怀里，我几乎就快控制不住她了。这时主人出现了——我从来没见过他这副模样，仪态、脸色，甚至嗓音都变了。他叫上我（我把小卡罗琳娜抱回她的床上，让内侍

女仆陪着她)，驾着马车气冲冲地闯进夜色里，横穿荒无人烟的原野。天亮时我们赶到一家破败驿站，可惜所有马匹在十二个小时前已全被租用，分别去往不同的方向。听着！都是德尔欧布拉先生订的，驿站的人说他曾驾车来过这里，还带着一位害怕得蜷缩在角落的英国女士。

打那以后（热那亚向导说着长长地舒了一口气）我再也没有听过她的消息。我所知道的就是，女主人和梦中见过的那张可怖的脸一起消失了，从此湮没在离奇骇人的故事里。

“你怎么解释这种事呢？”德国向导得意扬扬地说，“鬼！那里根本就没有鬼！接下来我要告诉你的事，看看又如何理解呢？鬼嘛！这个故事里也没有鬼！”

我曾经（德国向导继续说道）跟着一位英国绅士干活，他上了年纪，又是单身，当时要去我的祖国德国旅行。这位绅士是做德国进出口贸易的商人，所以懂德语，他在小时候去过德国，但长大成人以后没再去过——据我判断，那大概是六十年前的事了。

他叫詹姆斯，有个双胞胎哥哥叫约翰，也是单身汉。兄弟俩感情深厚，一起在古德曼广场打拼生意，但是并不同住。詹姆斯先生住波兰街，伦敦牛津街的外面，而约翰先生住在埃平森林旁边。

詹姆斯先生和我准备在一周内启程去德国，具体日子看生意安排。约翰先生来到波兰街（当时我就在房子里），准备和詹姆斯先生共度那一周。但是第二天，他却说：“詹姆斯，我有点不舒服。应该问题不大，是痛风的毛病。我想回家，因为老管家很了解我，能好好照顾我。如果好一点了，我就回来，在你走之前看看你。如果我撑不住了回不来，你启程前能不能去看看我呢？”当然，詹姆斯先生答应了。他们握了手——双手交叉互握，一贯如此——然后约翰先生命令双轮马车出发，坐在车里摇摇晃晃地回去了。

第二天晚上——也就是那周的第四天——穿着法兰绒睡袍的詹姆斯先生举着一盏蜡烛走进我的房间，我从熟睡中醒过来。他坐在我床沿，看着我，说：

“威廉，我有理由相信自己得了某种怪病。”

我立即察觉到他的神情非同寻常。

“威廉，”他说，“有些事我不怕告诉你，也不觉得羞耻，但我不愿意告诉其他人。因为你来自一个理智的国度，在那里，这么多年来，疑神疑鬼的事总会有人关心，人们却不会轻易地下结论，也不会不分青红皂白地表示鄙夷。我刚刚看到了哥哥的幽灵。”

我承认（德国向导说）听到这里，我浑身打了个激灵。

“就在刚刚看到的，”詹姆斯先生直视着我重复了一遍，好让我看出他很镇定也很清醒，“哥哥约翰的幽灵。我正坐在床上，毫无困意，突然他就进来了，穿着白袍，严肃地和我打了招呼。然后飘到房间的另一端，扫了眼写字台上的纸，又转过来像刚才一样认真凝望着我，随后出门离去。听着，我根本没有疯，也不想用任何自己以外的客观存在来解释那个幽灵，只是觉得这说明我生病了，现在最好放点血清醒一下。”

我赶紧下床（德国向导说），一边穿衣，一边让他不要慌，我会去请医生过来。正要出门，这时大门外传来巨大的敲门声，有人还按了门铃。我的房间是后院的阁楼，詹姆斯先生的卧室在前院二层，于是我们去到他的房间，打开窗子，看看外面什么情况。

“是詹姆斯先生家吗？”底下一个男人，退回到路对面抬头问。

“是，”詹姆斯先生说，“我认得你，我哥哥的男仆罗伯特。”

“是的先生。很遗憾地告诉您，约翰先生病了，非常严重，可以说是在鬼门关了。他想见您，所以我驾了马车来接您，请不要耽搁了，快跟我走吧。”

詹姆斯先生和我对视了一眼。“威廉，”他说，“太奇怪了。你跟我一起去吧！”我立即服侍他更衣，其实一半衣服都是在车上穿的。马儿跑得飞快，从波兰街到森林这一路不知踩死了多少小草。

这时，听好了！（德国向导说）我和詹姆斯先生一起来到了他哥哥的房间，以下都是我亲眼所见，亲耳所闻。

他哥哥躺在那间狭长卧室里头的床上，老管家站在旁边，还有几个人也在；估计这三四个人从下午就来陪他了。约翰先生一身白色，像幽灵一样，因为他正穿着睡袍。不过他脸色也像幽灵，一看到自己弟弟进来，眼神就直勾勾地盯着他。

不过，当弟弟来到床边时，哥哥支着身子坐起来，眼睛睁得老大，望着他说：“詹姆斯，你见过我的，今晚——你知道的！”

然后就咽气了！

德国向导讲完这个诡异的故事后，我静静等着，还想听他谈谈自己的看法。空气却陷入了沉默。我环顾四周，骇然发现五个向导都不见了：周围如此静谧，仿佛幽幽大山已将他们吞噬，埋入亘古的积雪。此时，寒冷的空气再度侵袭，我一点儿都不想独自待在这可怕的环境中——或者老实说，是压根儿不想一个人。因此，我起身走向修道院的大厅，发现那位美国绅士还很愿意讲那个了不起的骗子的故事，于是我又听了一通。

[1] 的里雅斯特，意大利东北部港口城市。（说明：书中脚注均为编者注。）

[2] 基艾亚是那不勒斯的一个区。

[3] 那不勒斯每年有圣热内罗节，举行弥撒仪式，祈祷装在两个小玻璃瓶中的圣热内罗的血溶解。圣热内罗是公元四世纪的殉道者，他的血液至今存放在那不勒斯教堂的一个玻璃瓶中。

[4] 意属里维埃拉即利古里亚海岸地区，该海岸以热那亚为中心分界点。

[5] 这里指（前）威尼斯和热那亚共和国。

[6] 意大利南部坎帕尼亚大区那不勒斯省的一个城市，坐落于维苏威火山下。

信号员

“喂！下面的！”

听到有人叫他时，他正站在岗亭前，手里拿着一面卷起的小旗。鉴于我们的相对位置，你可能会觉得他绝不会弄错声音的方向。但是，他不仅没有抬头看上方陡峭岩峰处站着的我，反而转身向铁路远处望去。这一举动里有一些耐人寻味的东西，虽然我可能一辈子也搞不明白到底是什么。但我知道，我已经被吸引了，即使对于站在高处的我来说，他的身影在沟槽底部，显得又矮又暗。而我浑身浸染在晃眼的落日余晖里，只有用手挡住刺眼的光晕才能看清他。

“喂！下面的！”

他把目光从铁路上收回，转过身来抬了抬眼，看到了高处的我。

“这附近有路吗？我可以下去和你说说话。”

他看着我，没有答话，我也低头看了看他，没有再问，不想强迫他回答我无聊的问题。就在这时，地面和四周开始轻微地震颤，并很快演变成了剧烈的震动，一股迎面而来的急流迫使我开始后退，力量之大好像可以把我拖拽下去。从飞驰的火车中涌出的蒸汽升至和我一样的高度，飘过我身旁，渐渐散开。我再次向下望去，看到他正在卷火车经过时挥舞起来的小旗。

我又问了他一遍。他沉默了一阵，似乎是在定睛观察，然后用卷起的小旗指了指和我在同一高度的一个点，距我两三百码 [7] 远。我冲着下面喊了一句“好的”，随后开始朝着那个点走去。到达后我仔细地环顾了一下四周，发现岩壁上有一条曲曲折折的小道——我就是顺着这条道下去的。

岩壁上的这条路凿得很深，异常的陡峭，开在一块黏湿的巨石上，而且越往下走，石体就愈加湿软。因此，我走得十分缓慢，中途还想起了他最初给我指路时表现出的那种奇怪的不情愿，好像被谁胁迫了一样。

当我顺着这条曲折的下坡路走到能看到他的地方时，他正站在火车刚才经过的轨道中间，一副好像正等着我的样子。他的左手扶着下巴，右手则横在胸前托着左肘。他这种期待又警惕的态度让我停下来想了一会儿。

我继续往下走着，来到铁路旁，朝着他的方向走去。眼前的他是一个面色蜡黄的男人，胡须黑森森，眉毛浓密。他工作的地方是我见过的最孤立最凄凉的地方。两旁渗水的粗糙石墙遮蔽了所有的光线，只留下一道缝隙得以窥见天空。往一边望去，这个地牢般的空间弯弯曲曲不见尽头。而在另一侧，很快就能看到不远处昏暗的红色信号灯和更为昏暗的入口，后者通往一条漆黑的隧道，而这个庞然大物里还弥漫着粗野、压抑和令人生畏的气息。由于能照到这里的阳光少得可怜，四周氤氲着一股令人难以忍受的泥土气息。而且穿堂的冷风一阵接着一阵，吹得我直打颤，我觉得自己已经被冻死了。

在他还纹丝未动时，我就走到了能碰到他的位置。可还没把眼神从我身上移开，他就后退了一步，抬起了手。

这是一个孤独的岗位（我说过），我当时从那边的高处往下看时就完全被它吸引了。我想，来这里的人应该算是稀客了，希望我这个稀客不会让人讨厌。在他眼里，我只是一个终其一生都局限于狭窄的范围内毫无突破的人，一个终获自由后对这些伟大的工作萌发兴趣的人。带着这样的想法，我对他开了口。但是我对自己的用词根本毫无把握，因为除了我本人不喜欢引出话题外，这个人身上有一种令我生畏的东西。

他用一种非常好奇的目光望向隧道口附近的红灯，并仔细地打量了一番，好像那里少了什么东西，然后他才看向我。

那个灯也归他管吗？还是不归？

他低声答道：“你难道不知道它吗？”

我打量着他一直盯着我的眼睛和有点阴郁的脸，脑海中产生了一个可怕的念头，这是一个灵魂，不是人类。此后我就一直怀疑他脑子是不是坏了。

这次轮到我了，我往后退了几步。但在退的时候，我察觉到他眼中有一丝潜在的对我的恐惧。这让那个可怕的念头一扫而空。

“你看我的时候，”我说，强挤出一个笑脸，“感觉你在怕我。”

“我在想，”他答道，“我之前是不是见过你。”

“在哪儿？”

他指了指之前一直看的红灯。

“在那儿吗？”我反问道。

他立刻对我警觉起来，（无声地）说了一声“是”。

“老兄，我去那儿干吗啊？但就算有可能，我也根本没去过，你

可以肯定。”

“或许可以，”他接着说道，“是的，我可以。”

他的举止开始放松起来，像我一样。不仅回答爽快利落，用词还很恰当。他的工作很多吗？是的。也就是说，他要承担很多责任。但是他的岗位要求他保持精准和机警，几乎没有什么体力活。变换信号、修理灯具和把这个铁把手拉来推去 [8] 就是他所有的职责。那些我似乎过于看重的漫长寂寞时光，对他来说，只是被生活中的例行常规填充成现在的模样，他也慢慢习惯了这样的生活。在下边的这段日子他还自学了一门语言——如果看得懂、对发音有一些粗略理解可以算是学会一门语言的话。他还学了分数和小数，以及一点代数。但他还是像小时候一样，算数非常糟糕。当班的时候他就必须一直待在充斥着潮湿空气的隧道中吗？他永远都不能从那两堵高石墙中走出来感受阳光吗？哎呀，这还要看时机和情境。某些情况下在铁路上的时间确实显得比其他情形下的时间长，在一天之中也有某些时段情况如此。天气晴朗的时候，他确实也会走出阴影，往高处去。但是，由于随时都要注意聆听电铃，而且这种情况下更要加倍小心，他大概并没有我想的那么轻松。

他带我进了岗亭，屋里生着火，桌子上放着一本工作手册——他必须在上边做一些记录，一个带有拨号盘和指针的电报设备，还有他之前提到的小铃铛。他曾说自己受过良好教育——大概是要高于火车站工作人员受教育的水平（希望这么说没有冒犯之意）。我本以为他会对这样的说法感到难为情，但他说大多数人都会撒这样的小谎，并不稀奇。在救济院、警署，甚至是最让人绝望的地方——军队里，他都听过这样的吹嘘。而且他知道不管是干什么的铁路工，或多或少都会这样标榜一下。他年轻的时候曾经（如果说坐在那个小屋里的我还能相信，他自己都不信了）研究过自然哲学 [9]，还受过正规的教育。但当时年少轻狂，不肯好好把握机会，堕落至此，再也没有回头的一天了。他对此倒并无半句怨言，铺好了床，然后躺了上去，看样子也不打算另铺一张了。

所有我现在简洁复述的内容，从他口中说出时都相当平静。那时的他，显得严肃忧郁，一会儿看看我，一会儿又凝视火苗。他时不时会冒出一句“先生”，尤其是在讲述自己年少时光的时候：仿佛是在让我明白，我看到的他就是全部的他。中途有几次谈话被小电铃打断了，他不得不停下来，去读取信息并立即回复。有一次甚至不得不站到门外去，在火车经过的时候挥舞小旗，和司机说几句话。我发现他在履行职责时精准又机敏，一个词都没说完就开始了工作，而且在完成之前会一直保持沉默。

总之，我应该会把这个人列为该岗位上最可靠的人之一，但是他

在对我说话时，会突然停下，沉着脸去看并没有发出任何声响的小电铃，而且还会打开小屋的门（之前因为要隔绝有害气体一直关闭着），伸出头去看隧道口附近的红灯。这种情况发生了两次，每次他回到火炉旁，脸上都挂着令人费解的神情，我们当时坐得很远，我说不太清。

起身准备走时，我说了一句：“我差点就以为你活得很惬意。”

（恐怕我必须要承认，我说这话的意思是想让他接的。）

“我觉得我之前是，”他用一开始的低沉嗓音答道，“但是我有麻烦了，先生，我被麻烦缠身了。”

只要愿意，他完全可以收回所说的话。但他还是说了，于是我很快接了上去。

“什么麻烦？你的麻烦是什么？”

“这个很难说清楚，先生。真的很难很难开口。如果你还来的话，我会试着告诉你的。”

“但是我是明确打算再来拜访你的。那么，什么时候呢？”

“我凌晨下班，先生，明天晚上十点再上班。”

“那我十一点过来。”

他谢过我，把我送到了门外。“先生，我会一直亮着白灯的，”他用自己独特的低音说道，“一直到你找到上去的路为止。找到之后，别叫！到了山顶，也别叫！”

他这么说，不禁让我觉得寒意更甚，但我只回了一句：“好的。”

“你明晚下来的时候，不要叫！让我问你最后一个问题。是什么让你今晚喊出那句‘喂！下面的’？”

“谁知道呢，”我说，“我就是喊出那个意思的——”

“别那个意思，先生。它们是具有特殊意义的词。我非常了解它们。”

“我承认它们有特殊意义。我的确那么叫了，因为看到了你就在下面啊。”

“没有其他的原因？”

“还能有什么原因！”

“你没觉得它们是通过某种非自然的方式传递给你的吗？”

“没有。”

他说了声“晚安”后，举起了灯。我沿着下行铁路的边缘走着（有一种火车就要从身后开过来的不适感），最后找到了路。上去要比下来容易些，我非常顺利地回到了自己的旅社。

第二天晚上，我准时赴约，在远方传来十一点钟声的时候，踏上了曲折小路的第一块石板。他在底下等着我，手里的白灯亮着。“我没有喊叫，”靠近后我说了这么一句，“我现在可以说话了吗？”“当然可以，先生。”“那么晚上好。”他伸出了手。“晚上好先生。”我也伸出了我的。随后我们并肩向他的岗亭走去，进来后关上门，在炉火边坐了下来。

“我决定了，先生，”刚一坐下他就探着身子说道，声音只比耳语大一点，“你不用再问我麻烦是什么了。昨晚我把你认作了别人。那就是我的麻烦。”

“认错人吗？”

“不。是那个‘别人’。”

“谁？”

“我不认识。”

“像我吗？”

“不知道。我从来没见过正脸。他的左臂挡在脸前，右臂在挥舞，挥舞得很厉害。就像这样。”

我注视着他的行为，那是一种非常激动与愤怒的姿势——“老天啊，把路让开！”

“那是一个月光皎洁的夜晚，”他说，“我当时正坐在这里，突然听到一声‘喂！下面的！’于是我起身站在门口向外看，那个‘别人’就站在隧道附近的红灯旁，像我刚才那样挥着胳膊。他的声音似乎已经因为喊叫沙哑了，他叫道，‘小心啊！小心！’然后又叫，‘喂！下边的！小心！’我拿起灯，把它调成了红光后向着那个人影边跑边叫，‘怎么了？发生什么事了？在哪里？’他就站在隧道的阴影外。我走到近处时，发现他一直用袖子遮住自己的眼睛，感到非常奇怪。所以我径直走过去，伸出手试图拉掉他的袖子，就在那个时候他消失了。”

“进隧道了。”我说道。

“不。我跑进了隧道，足足跑了五百码。我停下来把灯举过头顶，看到了测距的标记数字，当时潮湿的污渍从壁上缓缓流淌下来，还有些直接从拱顶滴落。我又跑出去，速度比之前还要快（因为我极度厌恶眼前这地方），路上我还用手中的红灯照了照隧道的红信号灯，查看周边情况，并且爬上铁梯去了顶部的走廊，之后又爬下来，

跑回了这里。我给两边都拍了电报：‘收到警报，一切可好？’两边的回电都是‘一切正常’。”

我感到一根冰凉的手指正慢慢划过后脊背，我努力克制住自己，告诉他这个人影一定是出现的幻觉，是视觉神经过于脆弱才出了问题，很多病人都曾这样，其中一些已经意识到了这种痛苦的本质，甚至通过医学实验证明了这种认识。“至于那个想象中的喊叫声，”我说，“我们小声说话的时候，你可以听一听这个怪异山谷的风声，听听它们吹过电报线时的诡异尖叫！”

“你说的也有道理。”在我们坐着听了一会儿后，他如是说道。他对大风和电线应该是熟悉的，毕竟他在那里度过了那么多冬夜，经常一个人默默看着这一切。但他跟我说，事情并没有完。

我对打断他的话表示了歉意，于是他慢慢把手搭在我胳膊上，一字一句地说了下面这段话：

“在这个‘现象’出现的六小时后，这条铁路线上最重大的事故发生了，十小时后，伤亡者被抬出隧道，恰好就经过了那个人影曾经站过的地方。”

我竭力克制住浑身的战栗，回答说，这巧合确实是太过出人意料了，仿佛是人为精心设计出来，好叫他永远难忘的。然而，毫无疑问的是，惊人的巧合确实一直都有，谈起类似的话题也必须考虑到这一点。尽管必须承认，我补充道（因为我认为我看出他准备对这番话提出异议），但凡有点常识的人都不会让事故成为日常轨迹的一部分。

他又一次请求继续说下去。

我再次为自己不知不觉打断他的话道了歉。

“这件事，”他说着，再次把手放在我胳膊上，空洞的眼神向后瞟去，“就发生在一年前。六七个月后，我已经从当时的震惊错愕中恢复了过来，有一天破晓时分，我就站在那个门前，朝着红灯的方向看，又看到了那个幽灵。”他停下来，直直地盯着我。

“它叫出声了吗？”

“没有。它很安静。”

“它挥手示警了吗？”

“没有。它倚着灯柱，双手都放在脸前。就像这样。”

我再次看向他。那是哀悼的姿势。我曾在坟墓上的石像上见过这种姿势。

“你过去了吗？”

“我进屋坐了下来，一方面是想理一下思绪，另一方面是因为它让我感到有点晕眩。等我再出门时，太阳已经升得很高了，那个鬼魂也不见了。”

“没有后续了？这之后没有发生什么？”

他一边用食指轻轻戳了我的胳膊两下，一边极为勉强地点点头：

“就在那一天，当一列火车驶出隧道时，我注意到在我这边的一个车厢窗户边有一些头和手，很混乱，有什么东西在挥舞。我又看到了它，立即给司机示意，停车！司机迅速关火踩刹车，但是火车还是往前走了一百五十码，甚至更多。我在后边追着跑，路上就听到了可怕的尖叫声和哭喊声。一个隔间里的漂亮小姐当场死亡，她被抬进了这里，就放在我们俩中间这片地板上。”

我看着他指的那片地方，不由自主地把自己的椅子向后推了推。

“真的，先生。千真万确。事实就是这样，和我告诉您的一样。”

我不知道该说些什么，也不知道怎么说，我的嘴巴非常干燥。风声和电线共同发出一声长长的哀叹，将故事接了下去。

他继续说道：“现在，先生，记住这个，帮我判断一下我脑子到底怎么了。那个灵魂一周前又回来了。从那之后，它就会时不时地出现在那里，断断续续地。”

“在灯光下？”

“在危险信号灯下。”

“它看上去想要干什么？”

他把之前“老天啊，把路让开”的动作又重复了一遍，似乎是带着更多的激情与愤怒。

然后，他继续说道：“我为了这事日夜不得安宁。它用一种痛苦的语调对我喊道‘下面的！小心！小心啊！’，持续的时间加起来有好几分钟，它就站在那里冲我挥手，敲我的小电铃……”

我突然想到了什么。“昨天晚上我在这里的时候是因为它敲你的铃，你才出门看的吗？”

“两次。”

“哎，你看吧，”我说，“你的想象欺骗了你。我的眼睛是盯着铃铛的，我的耳朵也是听着铃声的，所以如果我是一个活人，我就敢说它在那些时刻并没有响。不，在其他时候也没有响，除非是在火车开过，司机和你交流的时候它响了。”

他摇了摇头：“迄今为止我在那方面从没弄错过，先生。我从来没有把铃声和人声弄混过。鬼魂的铃声是电铃的一种奇怪震动，毫无来由，而且我还没有说，那个电铃就在我的眼前晃动。您没有听到它我并不奇怪。但是我确实听到了。”

“那你往外看时，那个灵魂还在吗？”

“在。”

“两次都是？”

他坚定地重复了一遍：“两次都是。”

“现在你能和我一起到门前去看看它吗？”

他咬了咬自己的下嘴唇，似乎不太情愿，但最终还是站了起来。我打开门，站在台阶上，他则站在门口。向远处望去，那边有危险信号灯，有阴森的隧道口，有凿壁湿漉漉的高墙，有头顶的一片星空。

“你看到它了吗？”我边问边特意看了看他的脸。他的双眼突出，满是紧张的神色，但是当我认真地看向同样的地点时，我的双眼可能更突出，神色更紧张。

“不，”他答道，“它不在那里。”

“同意。”我说道。

我们再次进去，关上了门，坐回原先的位置上。我开始考虑如何才能更好地发挥这个优势——如果他这样肯定的回答能够被称为一种优势的话，他是如此肯定事实的不可争辩，以至于我处在了一个最无力的位置上。

“这次你就彻底明白了吧，先生，”他说，“让我这么抓狂的，是一个问题，那个灵魂到底是什么意思？”

我告诉他，我也不确定，但我充分理解他。

“它让我们警惕什么？”他注视着火苗，沉思着，时不时往我这里看一眼。“危险是什么？危险又在哪里？有危险马上就要来临，就在铁路线上的某处。可怕的灾难就要发生。经历了前两次事故后，这一次不能再犹豫了。但是这对我来说确实太残酷，阴魂不散的。我能做什么呢！”

他扯出自己的手帕，擦了擦热得冒汗的额头。

“如果我发出危险两字，不管是发往其中一边，还是两边都发，我都没办法解释。”他一边继续说着，一边擦拭着手掌心，“我会陷入麻烦，于事无补。他们会觉得我疯了。情况就会是这样——信息：‘危险！当心！’回复：‘什么危险？地点？’信息：‘不知。但务必当心！’他

们会辞退我的。要不然还能怎么办呢？”

他的痛苦不禁让人心生怜悯。那是一个意识清醒的人在遭受精神上的折磨，他一直默默背负着某种关乎生命的难以理解的责任，压力已经到了极限。“当它第一次站在危险信号灯下的时候，”他一边继续说着，一边把额前的黑发拢到了脑后，伸手揉着两边的太阳穴，看上去极度悲痛，“为什么不告诉我事故发生的地点——如果它注定要发生？为什么不告诉我规避的方法——如果可以规避？它第二次来的时候遮住了自己的脸，为什么不直接告诉我‘那个女士就要死了，让他们把她留在家里吧’？如果它来的前两次，只是为了告诉我它的警报是正确的，从而让我为第三次做好准备，为什么现在不明白地警告我呢？而且我，老天帮帮我吧！我就是这个冷清车站里一个可怜的信号员而已！为什么不去找一个大家都相信的人呢，或者有能力做出改变的人！”

看到他这样，我意识到为了这个可怜人，也为了公共安全，必须立即平复他的情绪。因此，暂时撇开我们之间所有有关现实和非现实的争论，我告诉他任何一个被赋予职责的人都应该认真履行，虽然他不明白这些莫名其妙的现象到底是什么意思，但至少他明白自己的职责所在，这也是能够让他感到欣慰的地方了。相比于让他放弃自己想法的劝说，我的安慰要成功得多。他镇静了下来，随着夜色越来越深，他的工作对注意力的要求也越来越高。我是在凌晨两点离开的。我提出要过夜，可是他连听都不想听。

我在沿着小路往上走时不止一次地回头看那盏红灯，我并不喜欢那个灯，如果我的床在它下面，我应该已经睡着了，只不过会很不舒服。我没有理由隐瞒这些想法。而且我不喜欢那两场事故和死去的女孩。我也知道没有理由去隐瞒这些。

但是，我想得最多的还是应该怎么做。毕竟我已经知道了这个秘密。我已经证实了这个人聪明、机警、隐忍和严谨。然而他能维持这种状态多久呢？虽然他的职位不高，但做这份工作需要被充分信任，我（举个例子）愿意拿自己的生命做赌注去相信他会一如既往地精准吗？

如果我把他跟我说的这些话告诉公司领导，那就出卖了他。但我实在不愿意背叛他，也不想一开始真诚相待，随后又提出折中方案，于是最终决定陪他（要不然就暂时保守他的秘密）去看这一带最好的医生，照医生说的办。明天晚上就是换班时间，他告诉我，日出后的一两个小时下班，等日落后就赶回来上班。我也相应地做了往返安排。

第二天傍晚天色很好，我早早地就出了门。穿过岩顶凿壁附近的

田野小道时太阳还没有下山。我心里盘算再漫步一小时就差不多了，半小时去，半小时回，然后就该去岗亭找信号员了。

继续散步前，我往崖边走了走，机械性地往下看了看，就站在我第一次看见他的地方。这时，我看见一个人影站在隧道口的不远处，左袖遮住了眼睛，正在拼命地挥舞右臂。一种无法形容的恐惧袭上心头。

不过只一瞬间，这种无名恐惧就消失了。我发现那个人影的确确是一个人，而且不远处还站着另外一小撮人，他似乎正对着这群人排练这个姿势。危险信号灯还没有亮起来。灯柱旁出现了一个我完全没见过的矮小棚屋，由一些木质的支架和防水帆布搭建而成，看上去还没有一张床大。

一种不好的感觉袭上心头——自责带来的恐惧一闪而过，我把那个人留在那里，没让人去注意或纠正他的行为，导致了这一出致命的恶作剧——我以最快的速度从小路冲了下去。

“怎么了？”我问其中一个男人。

“信号员今天早上死了，先生。”

“不是那个岗亭里的人吧？”

“就是他，先生。”

“不是我认识的那个人吧？”

“你会认出他的，先生，如果你认识的话，”那个人说着郑重地脱下帽子，掀起了防水帆布的一角，“因为他的脸非常完好。”

“啊！怎么会这样呢，怎么会这样呢？”随着帆布再次盖上，我挨个问了好几个人。

“他是被火车头撞倒的，先生。在英格兰没有人比他更熟悉这份工作，但是不知道怎么回事，他没从外轨中出去。当时天已大亮，他打开了信号灯，手里还拿着他的提灯。火车头出隧道的时候，他正背朝着火车，就被撞倒了。那就是开火车的人，正在演示当时的过程。给这位绅士讲一下，汤姆。”

那个穿着粗布深色裙子的男人往后退了几步，站到了之前所在的隧道口：

“当时正在隧道的弯道附近，先生，”他解释道，“我看见了尽头处的他，好像是用望远镜看到的。当时没有时间去检查车速，而且我也知道他会的。由于他好像并没有注意到汽笛声，火车冲过去时我就把它关了，靠近的时候拼了命地大声喊他。”

“你喊了什么？”

“我喊的是：‘下面的！小心！小心啊！老天啊，把路让开！’”

我吃了一惊。

“啊！简直是噩梦，先生。我从来都用不着喊他的。这次我只能把胳膊挡在自己眼前，不去看，然后一直挥舞着胳膊，但是都没用。”

我不再继续赘述这几个相较于其他故事来说格外奇特的事件了。在文章结尾，我想说明，火车驾驶员发出警告的巧合，不仅仅是不幸的信号员反复说给我听的那些阴魂不散的话语，而且还有我自己——不是他——看到他模仿的姿势时，只在心里想过的话。

[7] 英制长度单位。1码约等于91.44厘米。

[8] 旧铁路线上需要推拉把手以变换铁路路线。

[9] 从前用以指自然科学，特别是物理学。

谋杀案审判

我发现，即便是智慧超群、学识卓越的人，如果要让他们吐露一下自己奇奇怪怪的心理活动，大家都会变得胆小谨慎。几乎所有人都会担心自己的一番讲述无法引起听众内心世界的共鸣，可能受到质疑或嘲笑。对于一个敢于说实话的旅行者来说，即便是见过（传说中）海蛇怪一般的神奇生物，他也会毫不害怕地说出自己的经历。但是，如果他已有某种奇特的不祥预感、内心冲动、奇思妙想、（所谓的）憧憬展望、梦境，抑或其他特别的心理印象，就会在最终承认前反复犹豫纠结，难以开口。在我看来，大部分以上那些不可言明的因素导致了这种缄默。习惯上，我们不会像谈论客观事物一样去沟通主观的感受。带来的后果就是，这方面的经历常常显得非同寻常，就其不幸与缺憾而言，的确如此。

接下来我要说的，既不是为了讲什么道理，也不是要反驳或声援什么理论。我了解柏林书商 [10] 的过去，也经戴维·布鲁斯特爵士介绍研究过一位已逝皇家天文学家妻子的案件。此外，我还深入研究过密友们身上发生的鬼魅幻影案。关于最后一点我有必要声明一下，受害人（一位女士）本人和我关系疏远，甚至可以说是毫无瓜葛。那件事的错误假设为我自己的案件提供了部分解释——不过只是部分——因为整件事是完全没有根据的，不能说明我天生就具有某种超能力，况且之前和之后也从没有经历过类似事情。

同时这也没有影射那桩英格兰谋杀案的意思，不记得是很多年还是好几年前了，总之当时那件案子可谓举世关注。这些年我们相继听过不少臭名昭著的谋杀犯，但如果可以，我想彻底埋葬关于那个暴徒的记忆，就像他的身躯被埋进新门监狱 [11] 地下一样。接下来的讲述中，我会尽量避免透露有关罪犯身份的直接线索。

谋杀案刚发现的时候，还没有人怀疑他——我不能说得太详细，应该说——这名后来入狱的犯人身上还没有任何公开的嫌疑。当时，由于各大报纸并没有对其进行报道，很显然，人们不可能从报纸上读到任何有关他的描述。记住这一点很关键。

我一边吃着早餐，一边翻看晨报，上面对这个谋杀案进行了首次曝光。我饶有兴致地细细读了两三遍。尸体是在卧室发现的，读到这里我放下报纸，突然眼前闪过——划过——流过——不知道应该叫什么，暂时还没找到恰当的词，总之就是我似乎看到那个卧室正穿过自

己的房子，就像是画在流水上的一幅画。虽然是一闪而过，但是清晰可见，甚至在我清楚地看到床上没有尸体后，心里还有一丝庆幸。

这种奇妙感觉不是在什么温柔乡产生的，而是在皮卡迪利大街的套间里，紧邻着圣詹姆斯街道的拐角。对此时窝在安乐椅里的我来说，这个案子相当新奇，除了奇妙外还伴有一丝古怪的战栗，让椅子都晃起来。（不过有必要说明椅子下面本来就很滑。）我走到一扇窗旁（房间在二层，有两扇窗），俯视皮卡迪利大街上的车水马龙，放松眼睛。明亮的秋日上午，大街在阳光照耀下熠熠生光，一切都显得愉悦惬意。秋风正劲，从邻近公园裹挟来大量落叶，一阵疾吹之下，只见叶子打着旋儿翻飞上升，形成小圆柱。恍然间，柱子又轰然倒塌，叶片四散。这时我看见马路对面有两个人，一前一后自西向东走去。前面的人时不时扭头往后看，后面的人跟他隔了约三十步，气势汹汹地举着右手。首先，在人来人往的大道上，这持续的怪异举动本身就吸引了我。接着我发现，如此不同寻常的情况，竟然没有任何人注意到。他们在行人间穿梭自如，丝毫不像走在人行道上。目之所及，没有一个人给他们让路、碰到他们或者多看他们一眼。从我窗前走过时，他们还都抬头凝视着我。我也认清了这两张脸，估计到哪儿都不会忘了，他们脸上倒没什么突出特征值得注意，只不过前面那个人一脸苦相，后面那位则面色蜡黄，一脸阴沉。

我是个单身汉，身边只有一名贴身男仆和他妻子跟着。我目前在一所银行分行工作，作为部门主管，我本希望这个职位和人们想的一样轻松。那个秋天，上面安排我待在城里，以防有任何变动。我没有生病，但也不算健康。本篇中，读者将会最大程度地感受到我的厌倦情绪，体会到我对单调乏味生活的失望，甚至还“有点消化不良 [12]”。给我看病的那位名医说，我的身体没什么大毛病，在我的要求之下，他写了一份纸质说明给我，我在这里只是引用他的原话。

随着谋杀案的调查逐渐展开，案情日益披露，公众也越来越关心。不过我尽量不去管这些事，不让自己陷入普遍的兴奋情绪。但据我所知，目前已经断定这是一场蓄意谋杀，并且嫌疑犯也已被押送至新门监狱，等候审判。我还知道，由于惯常的偏见和准备辩护所需的时间不够，定于伦敦中央刑事法院的审判被推迟了数个会期。我基本已经猜出，案件会具体推到什么时候开庭，但又觉得自己不知道。

我的客厅、卧室和更衣室都在同一层，更衣室只能从卧室过去。以前更衣室里确实有扇小门通向楼梯，不过多年前浴室重修，就把那里堵上了。当时装修工还顺手把门钉牢，盖上了帆布。

有天深夜，我正站在卧室里，趁仆人睡前吩咐他一些事情。我的脸正对着通向更衣室唯一的那扇门，当时门紧闭着，仆人背对着听我说话。就在此时，我看见门突然开了，一个男人探头朝这边看，还向

我招手，表情严肃而神秘。这个人正是在皮卡迪利大街上后面走着的那位，面色蜡黄，一脸阴沉。

打完招呼后他就退回去，关上了门。我略微怔住，赶紧穿过卧室，打开更衣室房门朝里看。我手上举着点燃的蜡烛，心里倒也不指望真能在更衣室看见那个身形。果然，最后什么也没看到。

想起来仆人还震惊在原地，我转身说：“德里克，你相信吗，我刚才十分清醒地看到了一个——”我刚把手放到他胸膛上，他突然猛烈颤抖起来，说：“噢，天哪，是的，先生！一个死人在招手！”

此时我意识到，眼前这个忠心耿耿跟了我二十多年的约翰·德里克，在我触碰到他之前，其实什么都没有看见，也什么都不知道。他身上的变化实在太过剧烈，我们接触时，我明显感觉到他通过某种神秘的方式，在一瞬间吸取了我的意识，从而得出现在的结论。

我让德里克去取白兰地酒来，给他和自己都倒了点，对于之前发生的事却只字未提。后来我细细回想了一番，可以肯定的是，除了在皮卡迪利大街，自己与这个人从未谋面。对比他在门边招手和在街上抬头凝视时的神情，我明白了：第一次他是要在我脑中留下印象，第二次他是想确认我能够迅速地记住他。

那晚，尽管有一种难以解释的确切预感——知道他不会再回来，我仍然睡得不安稳，天亮时才陷入沉沉睡梦。后来我是被约翰·德里克叫醒的，他来到床边，手里攥着一张纸。

依稀中正是因为这张纸，来者和仆人在门口好一顿争吵。这是一张传票，传唤我去老贝利街参加中央刑事法院的近期开庭。约翰·德里克很清楚我以前从未参加过陪审团，也认为——我不清楚是现在推理得出的还是什么其他方式——陪审团成员的身份通常要比我低，所以一开始婉拒了。传票人却态度倨傲，公事公办，说我去还是不去对他都没有影响，传票就在这里，怎么处理后果自负，与他无关。

一两天过去了，我还没想好到底是回复传票，还是直接无视。我自问心中不存丝毫的奇怪偏见，也没受到什么影响或诱惑，不会偏向于哪一方。说出这样的话，我问心无愧，和自己在这一里说的每一句话一样肯定。不过最终我还是决定前去，就当是乏味生活里的一点调剂好了。

约定的那天到来的时候已是十一月，上午出门，天气阴冷。皮卡迪利大街雾气浓重，雾色由棕转黑，在圣殿关 [\[13\]](#) 附近显得格外压抑。而在法院大楼内，煤气灯照得过道和楼梯灯火通明，整个法院也显得亮堂堂的。我觉得，在我跟着引导官员进入法院见到满堂听众前，我根本不知道那个谋杀犯是今天受审。我觉得，要不是他们费了老大劲才带我挤进这里，估计我也不会知道拿着这张传票到底应该进

哪个门。但是我说这话也不十分肯定，因为当时我对大脑所做的这个判断并不是很满意。

我在陪审团的预备席落座，尽力环顾四周，让视线穿过雾气和人们呼出气体的浓密混合物质。我看到巨大窗玻璃外的黑雾像是积满灰尘的窗帘，听到车轮压过稻草发出闷响，又或是鞣料洒落街道的窸窣，同时伴有人群逐渐聚拢的嗡嗡声，刺耳的哨音或响亮的歌声、喊声偶尔也会突兀地划过耳畔。不久，两位大法官进来坐下，法庭内原先的嗡嗡耳语迅速消寂，众人目光都集中在被带上来的谋杀犯身上。他出现在被告席栅栏后的一刹那，我就认出来了：他是走在皮卡迪利大街上的前者。

如果当时就点名，我可能会惊愕到说不出话。不过好在陪审团里我坐在大概第六、第八的位置，等轮到我时已经缓过来了。“到！”现在，注意了。囚犯之前一直密切却冷漠地注视着每一位陪审员，而就在我踏进陪审席时，他突然变得非常激动，还朝自己的律师打手势，针对我的意思再明显不过了。他强烈反对我就任陪审，闹得不得不暂时休庭。休庭时，辩护律师一只手搭在被告席上与他小声交谈，还不断摇头。后来我向这位绅士打听，他说客户的第一句话就吓到他了。“不惜任何代价，反对那个人！”不过，由于囚犯本人不愿意做任何解释，也承认在我被叫到之前，他从来没有听说过我，所以最终他还是没有如愿以偿。

我不希望唤起任何关于谋杀犯的不快记忆，这一点已经说过，再加上详细说明他的漫长审判过程之于整体叙述而言又并非不可或缺，因此，我准备根据极不寻常的个人经历，谈谈陪审团成员共同度过的十天十夜。这些事估计要比谋杀犯更吸引读者，希望大家关注它们，而不只是《新门记事》^[14]上那一纸故事。

我被选为陪审团团长。审判的第二天，取证就花了两小时（我亲耳听见教堂的钟敲了两次）。不经意间，我瞥了瞥陪审团的同人们，发现很难数清他们的人数。我来回回点了好几遍，始终有一种说不清道不明的困难，简而言之，总觉得多了一个人。

我拍拍邻座的同事，悄声说：“帮我点点人数。”听到这个请求他有些惊讶，但是很快扭头开始清点。“为什么，”他突然说，“一共十三——，但是不，不可能。不会，我们一共十二人啊。”

根据我当天的清点，具体到每个人都没有问题，但是总的来看时又显得多了一个。那时还什么都没有发生——没有任何人物出现——来解答我内心的困惑，但是我有预感，有东西一定会来。

陪审团都住在伦敦酒馆的一间大客房里，有各自的床位，始终受人看护，并且被监视着，尽管那个官员发誓他只是来保障我们安全

的。他聪明机警，很有礼貌，乐于助人，同时（我很高兴听说）他在伦敦城也是颇受尊敬的人物，不仅相貌堂堂，眼睛炯炯有神，还有着令人艳羡的黑络腮胡，甚至连嗓音也洪亮悦耳。我觉得这里倒没有必要隐去他的姓名，他叫哈克。

晚上，当我们各自回到床上时，哈克先生的床就会被拉过来横在门口。第二天夜里，我尚无困意，看到哈克先生坐在他的床边，就过去也坐下来，递了一口鼻烟。就在从我手里接过鼻烟盒开始吸烟时，他突然诡异地哆嗦了一下，说：“那是谁！”

我顺着他的目光望去，视线越过房间，看见意料之中的那个人——皮卡迪利大街上的后者。我嗖地站起来，向前跑了好几步，接着停下来，回头看向哈克先生。只见他一脸漫不经心，哈哈大笑，愉快地说：“有一瞬间我还以为出现第十三位没有床的陪审员了，定睛一看只是月光而已呀。”

我没有和哈克先生解释，只是邀请他一起走到房间那头，并且始终注视着眼前的那个身影。他在其他十一位成员床边枕头的位置分别伫立了一会儿，每次都是到床的右边，走到下一张床的床尾时总会闪一下。从他头的位置来看，好像他只是忧郁地看着每个躺下休息的陪审员，根本没注意到我和我的床，尽管我的床离哈克先生最近。接着，他从月光照进来的位置飘然出去，穿过高大的窗玻璃，仿佛踏上了空中步梯一般离开。

次日早餐时，我才知道，昨夜大家好像都不约而同地梦到了被谋杀的死者，除了我和哈克先生。

到此时我已经确信，走在皮卡迪利大街上的第二个人（应该）就是死者，他身体力行的证词已经深深扎根在我的脑海。不过在此之后，还是发生了让我不知所措的一些事。

审判的第五天，当检方陈述接近尾声，一个死者的袖珍画像作为证据被呈上来。这个画像本应在死者的床头，但是在案发现场却不见了踪影，之后它又出现在另一个据目击者称是谋杀犯埋尸的隐秘地点。目击者检查确认后，这项证物上呈给法官，继而交由陪审团。当一位穿着黑袍的官员拿着袖珍像朝我走来时，皮卡迪利大街上第二个人的身影突然自人群中冲出，他从官员手里夺走袖珍像，亲自交到我手上。因为画像在小盒子里，我还没看到画像，就听见他低沉空洞的声音飘来——“我当时还很年轻，脸上也没这么煞白。”这声音在我传给下一个陪审员的时候又出现了，等他传给他身边的另一位时再次响起，就这样每传到下一个人，这话就响起一遍，直到最后，画像又回到了我手里。而其他所有人好像对此都毫无察觉。

陪审团用餐通常都在一处，由哈克先生监管。打第一天开始，我

们就会很自然地在饭桌上讨论起当日案情进展。到第五天时，原告方的案情陈述已经结束，陪审团已经从这一角度了解到事件全貌，讨论自然更加热烈，也更为严肃 [15]。陪审团中有一位教区代表——我所见过的最愚蠢的白痴——他以非常荒谬的理由否决了最简单确凿的证据，还有两个优柔寡断的教区跟屁虫也支持他。他们三人都是从一个区被选进来的，那个区的治安简直一团糟，我敢说光他们那里的谋杀案审判估计就不下五百起。就在这些笨蛋家伙愈吵愈凶时，我又看到了那个死者，当时已临近午夜，我们中一些人已准备休息了。他阴森森地站在他们身后，朝我挥手。我一走到陪审员中间加入讨论，他就消失了。打那以后，他便时常出现，在我们被关着的这个大房间里来回飘荡。每当同事们把脑袋凑到一起商议时，我就看见他的脑袋也从中间冒出来。每当他们比较分析的内容于他不利时，他就会情不自禁地向我招手，表情一脸严肃。

不过你们要记住，直到审判的第五天，那个袖珍画像出现之前，他可从未在法庭显形。随着案件进入到辩护阶段，有三点变化出现了。我先说其中两点吧。首先，死者的身影如今频频出现在法庭上，再也不对着我，而总是向着正在发言的人。比如，死者的喉咙曾被人切断，辩方一开始就指出他很有可能是自己割喉而亡。这时，死者飘到说话人肘边，打开他恐怖的断喉部位（之前藏起来了），任凭支气管在空中交叉晃动，左右手还交替比画，奋力向律师展示，不论哪只手都不可能造成这种伤口。还有一次，有位女性作为品德证人出庭，宣誓说嫌犯是这世上最亲切友善的人。死者立即抵在她的面前，凑上去死命瞪她，还伸出手臂，用手指着犯人阴邪的面孔。

接下来要说的第三点变化给我印象最深刻，也最为震惊。我不想解释分析，只打算准确地描述事实，交由你们来判断。尽管被靠近的对象毫无察觉，但死者的靠近还是会让他们感到些许惊恐与不安。在我看来，好像有一种未知的力量在限制他完全暴露自己，但同时也使得他能够无形无声地侵入别人的大脑。当首席辩护律师提及自杀的假设时，那身形就会闪现在这位博学的绅士旁，扯开自己被割断的喉咙，露出令人毛骨悚然的伤口。不可否认的是，辩护律师在之后的演讲中竟变得结结巴巴，甚至卡顿了几秒钟，忘记了精心准备的说辞，还脸色煞白，不断用手帕擦拭前额。当品德证人面对死者的显形时，我几乎可以肯定她确实按照死者手指的方向看去了，十分犹豫和苦恼地盯着嫌犯。这两个补充例子已经足够说明问题。在审判的第八天，每日午后的照例小憩和茶歇结束，我和陪审员们一起回到法庭，法官还没回来。我站在位子上四处张望，没看见死者，还以为他不在，结果不经意间抬头扫了一眼廊台，发现他身子前倾，正靠在一位优雅的女士身上，似乎是在确定法官们有没有归位。那位女士立即尖叫一声晕了过去，然后被人抬走了。主持审判的大法官是位经验丰富、睿智

又耐心的人，他也跟了出去，等到料理好一切，才回来坐好，稳住自己，开始宣读总结陈词。这时死者从法官走进来的门飘入，直接到他桌旁，站在他身后急切地看笔录。法官大人正要翻页，突然脸色陡变，手也僵住，只见熟悉的一阵战栗传遍全身。他结结巴巴地说：“抱歉各位请稍等，不知怎的我被这污浊的空气弄魔怔了。”他端起杯子喝下一整杯水，才缓过来。

没有尽头的十天期限已经挨过了单调枯燥的六天——同样的法官坐在席位上，同一个谋杀犯坐在被告席，同样的律师坐在桌边，同样语气的问答声飘散在法庭上空，同样的沙沙作响声自法官笔下传出，同一批接待员进进出出引导，没有自然光时，同样的灯会在同样的时间亮起，雾天里蒙在巨幅玻璃外窗帘一般的同样的浓雾，雨天里吧嗒吧嗒打下的同样的雨滴，狱吏和囚犯日复一日在同样的地面上留下的同样的脚印，开关重重大门时转动的同样的钥匙——所有这些乏味的反复都让我有一种错觉，好像把这个陪审团团长当到天荒地老了，外面皮卡迪利大街还是当初和巴比伦都城一同繁华起来的。不过那个死者的一举一动我都不曾错过，他太过特别，实在难以忽略。实际上，就我所见，显灵的死者从来没有看向过谋杀犯。我一遍又一遍地想，为什么呢？真的一次都没有。

自打袖珍画像出现直到结案，死者再也没有看我一眼。陪审团在深夜十点还差七分钟的时候，退庭回去商议。由于教区代表和他的两个跟班太过蠢笨，又添了不少麻烦，以至于我们两次回法庭请求重读法官的部分笔录。我们九个人认为这些笔录一点儿问题都没有，随便从法庭上拽一个人估计他都会这么觉得。可那白痴三人组什么都不懂，就知道添乱，一直怀疑反对。我们争论了好久，才说服他们，于是陪审团在十二点十分重返法庭。

此时，死者站在陪审团坐席的正对面，法庭的另一边。待我入座，他十分刻意地盯着我看，然后似乎还比较满意，悠悠地拿起搭在手臂上的灰色大面纱——此前他从来没有戴过——盖住自己的头和整个身子。我宣读裁定时，讲到“判定有罪”，那纱巾一下掉在了地上，里面什么都没有了，他原先所在之处此时空空如也。

依照惯例，法官询问谋杀犯在宣布死刑之前他还有没有话要说，犯人含糊地嘟囔了一番。第二天，各大主要报纸都对此进行了报道，并形容这番话为“有点冗长混乱、不合逻辑、含糊不清的话，显然是为了抱怨自己受到不公，因为觉得陪审团团长早就对他心存偏见”。实际上，他那番不同寻常的说辞如下：“大人，我一看到陪审团团长就座，就知道自己完蛋了。法官阁下，他一定不会放过我的，因为我还没被抓的时候，有一天晚上，他就不知道怎的来到床边，把我叫醒，还要拿绳子勒死我。”

[10] 柏林书商，指阿道弗斯·亚瑟（1800——1853），当时他的书店是伦敦文人名流聚会之所。

[11] 新门监狱，位于伦敦西门的著名监狱。

[12] 英文中，单词dyspeptic一语双关，既指“消化不良”，也指“（因消化不良而变得）阴郁悲观或暴躁牢骚”。

[13] 圣殿关，地处商业中心伦敦和政治中心西敏之间的关卡。在狄更斯时代，即1878年之前，这里矗立着克里斯托夫·雷恩设计的石制门坊，即圣殿门。

[14] 《新门记事》，18世纪至19世纪英国家喻户晓的通俗月刊，讲述新门监狱里执行死刑的故事。

[15] 英美司法体系中，对于刑事案件，陪审团会分别听取原告被告双方陈述和证据陈列后，再进行封闭式讨论，得出有罪或无罪的判定。

Charles
Dickens

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

To Be Read
at Dusk

N^o 24

‘The monstrous
thought came
into my mind as
I perused the fixed
eyes and the
saturnine face,
that this was a
spirit, not a man.’

To Be Read at Dusk

One, two, three, four, five. There were five of them.

Five couriers, sitting on a bench outside the convent on the summit of the Great St Bernard in Switzerland, looking at the remote heights, stained by the setting sun, as if a mighty quantity of red wine had been broached upon the mountain top, and had not yet had time to sink into the snow.

This is not my simile. It was made for the occasion by the stoutest courier, who was a German. None of the others took any more notice of it than they took of me, sitting on another bench on the other side of the convent door, smoking my cigar, like them, and - also like them - looking at the reddened snow, and at the lonely shed hard by, where the bodies of belated travellers, dug out of it, slowly wither away, knowing no corruption in that cold region.

The wine upon the mountain top soaked in as we looked; the mountain became white; the sky, a very dark blue; the wind rose; and the air turned piercing cold. The five couriers buttoned their rough coats. There being no safer man to imitate in all such proceedings than a courier, I buttoned mine.

The mountain in the sunset had stopped the five couriers in a conversation. It is a sublime sight, likely to stop conversation. The mountain being now out of the sunset, they resumed. Not that I had heard any part of their previous discourse; for, indeed, I had not then broken away from the American gentleman, in the travellers' parlour of the convent, who, sitting with his face to the fire, had undertaken to realize to me the whole progress of events which had led to the accumulation by the Honourable Ananias Dodger of one of the largest acquisitions of dollars ever made in our country.

'My God!' said the Swiss courier, speaking in French, which I do not hold (as some authors appear to do) to be such an all-sufficient excuse for a naughty word, that I have only to write it in

that language to make it innocent; 'if you talk of ghosts - '

'But I *don't* talk of ghosts,' said the German.

'Of what then?' asked the Swiss.

'If I knew of what then,' said the German, 'I should probably know a great deal more.'

It was a good answer, I thought, and it made me curious. So, I moved my position to that corner of my bench which was nearest to them, and leaning my back against the convent-wall, heard perfectly, without appearing to attend.

'Thunder and lightning!' said the German, warming, 'when a certain man is coming to see you, unexpectedly; and, without his own knowledge, sends some invisible messenger, to put the idea of him in your head all day, what do you call that? When you walk along a crowded street - at Frankfort, Milan, London, Paris - and think that a passing stranger is like your friend Heinrich, and then that another passing stranger is like your friend Heinrich, and so begin to have a strange foreknowledge that presently you'll meet your friend Heinrich - which you do, though you believed him at Trieste - what do you call *that* ?'

'It's not uncommon either,' murmured the Swiss and the other three.

'Uncommon!' said the German. 'It's as common as cherries in the Black Forest. It's as common as macaroni at Naples. And Naples reminds me! When the old Marchesa Senzanima shrieks at a card party on the Chiaja - as I heard and saw her, for it happened in a Bavarian family of mine, and I was overlooking the service that evening - I say, when the old Marchesa starts up at the card-table, white through her rouge, and cries, "My sister in Spain is dead! I felt her cold touch on my back!" - and when that sister is dead at the moment - what do you call that?'

'Or when the blood of San Gennaro liquefies at the request of the clergy - as all the world knows that it does regularly once a-year, in my native city,' said the Neapolitan courier after a pause, with a comical look, 'what do you call that?'

'*That!* ' cried the German. 'Well! I think I know a name for that.'

‘Miracle?’ said the Neapolitan, with the same sly face.

The German merely smoked and laughed; and they all smoked and laughed.

‘Bah!’ said the German, presently. ‘I speak of things that really do happen. When I want to see the conjurer, I pay to see a professed one, and have my money’s worth. Very strange things do happen without ghosts. Ghosts! Gio-vanni Baptista, tell your story of the English bride. There’s no ghost in that, but something full as strange. Will any man tell me what?’

As there was a silence among them, I glanced around. He whom I took to be Baptista was lighting a fresh cigar. He presently went on to speak. He was a Genoese, as I judged.

‘The story of the English bride?’ said he. ‘Basta! one ought not to call so slight a thing a story. Well, it’s all one. But it’s true. Observe me well, gentlemen, it’s true. That which glitters is not always gold; but what I am going to tell, is true.’

He repeated this more than once.

Ten years ago, I took my credentials to an English gentleman at Long’s Hotel, in Bond Street, London, who was about to travel - it might be for one year, it might be for two. He approved of them; likewise of me. He was pleased to make inquiry. The testimony that he received was favourable. He engaged me by the six months, and my entertainment was generous.

He was young, handsome, very happy. He was enamoured of a fair young English lady, with a sufficient fortune, and they were going to be married. It was the wedding trip, in short, that we were going to take. For three months’ rest in the hot weather (it was early summer then) he had hired an old palace on the Riviera, at an easy distance from my city, Genoa, on the road to Nice. Did I know that palace? Yes; I told him I knew it well. It was an old palace, with great gardens. It was a little bare, and it was a little dark and gloomy, being close surrounded by trees; but it was spacious, ancient, grand, and on the sea shore. He said it had been so described to him exactly, and he was well pleased that I knew it. For its being a little bare of furniture, all such places were. For its being a little gloomy, he had hired it principally for the gardens, and he and my mistress would pass the summer weather in their

shade.

‘So all goes well, Baptista?’ said he.

‘Indubitably, signor; very well.’

We had a travelling chariot for our journey, newly built for us, and in all respects complete. All we had was complete; we wanted for nothing. The marriage took place. They were happy. *I* was happy, seeing all so bright, being so well situated, going to my own city, teaching my language in the rumble to the maid, la bella Carolina, whose heart was gay with laughter : who was young and rosy.

The time flew. But I observed-listen to this, I pray! (and here the courier dropped his voice) - I observed my mistress sometimes brooding in a manner very strange; in a frightened manner; in an unhappy manner; with a cloudy, uncertain alarm upon her. I think that I began to notice this when I was walking up hills by the carriage side, and master had gone on in front. At any rate, I remember that it impressed itself upon my mind one evening in the South of France, when she called to me to call master back; and when he came back, and walked for a long way, talking encouragingly and affectionately to her, with his hand upon the open window, and hers in it. Now and then, he laughed in a merry way, as if he were bantering her out of something. By and by, she laughed, and then all went well again.

It was curious. I asked la bella Carolina, the pretty little one, Was mistress unwell? - No. Out of spirits? - No. Fearful of bad roads, or brigands? - No. And what made it more mysterious was, the pretty little one would not look at me in giving answer, but would look at the view.

But, one day she told me the secret.

‘If you must know,’ said Carolina, ‘I find, from what I have overheard, that mistress is haunted.’

‘How haunted?’

‘By a dream.’

‘What dream?’

‘By a dream of a face. For three nights before her marriage,

she saw a face in a dream - always the same face, and only One.'

'A terrible face?'

'No. The face of a dark, remarkable-looking man, in black, with black hair and a grey moustache - a hand - some man, except for a reserved and secret air. Not a face she ever saw, or at all like a face she ever saw. Doing nothing in the dream but looking at her fixedly, out of darkness.'

'Does the dream come back?'

'Never. The recollection of it, is all her trouble.'

'And why does it trouble her?'

Carolina shook her head.

'That's master's question,' said la bella. 'She don't know. She wonders why, herself. But I heard her tell him, only last night, that if she was to find a picture of that face in our Italian house (which she is afraid she will) , she did not know how she could ever bear it.'

Upon my word I was fearful after this (said the Geno-ese courier) of our coming to the old palazzo, lest some such ill-starred picture should happen to be there. I knew there were many there; and, as we got nearer and nearer to the place, I wished the whole gallery in the crater of Vesuvius. To mend the matter, it was a stormy dismal evening when we, at last, approached that part of the Riviera. It thundered; and the thunder of my city and its environs, rolling among the high hills, is very loud. The lizards ran in and out of the chinks in the broken stone wall of the garden, as if they were frightened; the frogs bubbled and croaked their loudest; the sea-wind moaned, and the wet trees dripped; and the lightning - body of San Lorenzo, how it lightened!

We all know what an old palazzo in or near Genoa is - how time and the sea air have blotted it - how the drapery painted on the outer walls has peeled off in great flakes of plaster-how the lower windows are darkened with rusty bars of iron - how the courtyard is overgrown with grass-how the outer buildings are dilapidated - how the whole pile seems devoted to ruin. Our palazzo was one of the true kind. It had been shut up close for months. Months? - years! It had an earthy smell, like a tomb. The scent of

the orange-trees on the broad back terrace, and of the lemons ripening on the wall, and of some shrubs that grew around a broken fountain, had got into the house somehow, and had never been able to get out again. There it was, in every room, an aged smell, grown faint with confinement. It pined in all the cup-boards and drawers. In the little rooms of communication between great rooms, it was stifling. If you turned a picture - to come back to the pictures - there it still was, clinging to the wall behind the frame, like a sort of bat.

The lattice-blinds were close shut, all over the house. There were two ugly grey old women in the house, to take care of it; one of them with a spindle, who stood winding and mumbling in the doorway, and who would as soon have let in the devil as the air. Master, mistress, la bella Carolina, and I, went all through the palazzo. I went first, though I have named myself last, opening the windows and the lattice-blinds, and shaking down on myself splashes of rain, and scraps of mortar, and now and then a dozing mosquito, or a monstrous, fat, blotchy, Genoese spider.

When I had let the evening light into a room, master, mistress, and la bella Carolina, entered. Then, we looked round at all the pictures, and I went forward again into another room. Mistress secretly had great fear of meeting with the likeness of that face - we all had; but there was no such thing. The Madonna and Bambino, San Fran-cisco, San Sebastiano, Venus, Santa Caterina, Angels, Brigands, Friars, Temples at Sunset, Battles, White Horses, Forests, Apostles, Doges, all my old acquaint-ance many times repeated? - yes. Dark handsome man in black, reserved and secret, with black hair and grey moustache, looking fixedly at mistress out of darkness? - no.

At last we got through all the rooms and all the pictures, and came out into the gardens. They were pretty well kept, being rented by a gardener, and were large and shady. In one place, there was a rustic theatre, open to the sky, the stage a green slope : the coulisses, three entrances upon a side, sweet-smelling leafy screens. Mistress moved her bright eyes, even there, as if she looked to see the face come in upon the scene : but all was well.

‘Now Clara,’ master said, in a low voice, ‘you see that it is nothing? You are happy.’

Mistress was much encouraged. She soon accustomed herself to

that grim palazzo, and would sing, and play the harp, and copy the old pictures, and stroll with mas-ter under the green trees and vines, all day. She was beautiful. He was happy. He would laugh and say to me, mounting his horse for his morning ride before the heat :

‘All goes well, Baptista!’

‘Yes, signore, thank God; very well!’

We kept no company. I took la bella to the Duomo and Annunciata, to the Café, to the Opera, to the village Festa, to the Public Garden, to the Day Theatre, to the Marionetti. The pretty little one was charmed with all she saw. She learnt Italian - heavens! miraculously! Was mistress quite forgetful of that dream? I asked Carolina sometimes. Nearly, said la bella - almost. It was wear-ing out.

One day master received a letter, and called me.

‘Baptista!’

‘Signore.’

‘A gentleman who is presented to me will dine here today. He is called the Signor Dellombra. Let me dine like a prince.’

It was an odd name. I did not know that name. But, there had been many noblemen and gentlemen pursued by Austria on political suspicions, lately, and some names had changed. Perhaps this was one. Altro! Dellombra was as good a name to me as another.

When the Signor Dellombra came to dinner (said the Genoese courier in the low voice, into which he had subsided once before) , I showed him into the reception-room, the great sala of the old palazzo. Master received him with cordiality, and presented him to mis-tress. As she rose, her face changed, she gave a cry, and fell upon the marble floor.

Then, I turned my head to the Signor Dellombra, and saw that he was dressed in black, and had a reserved and secret air, and was a dark remarkable-looking man, with black hair and a grey moustache.

Master raised mistress in his arms, and carried her to her own room, where I sent la bella Carolina straight. La bella told me

afterwards that mistress was nearly terrified to death, and that she wandered in her mind about her dream, all night.

Master was vexed and anxious-almost angry, and yet full of solicitude. The Signor Dellombra was a courtly gentleman, and spoke with great respect and sympathy of mistress's being so ill. The African wind had been blowing for some days (they had told him at his Hôtel of the Maltese Cross), and he knew that it was often hurtful. He hoped the beautiful lady would recover soon. He begged permission to retire, and to renew his visit when he should have the happiness of hearing that she was better. Master would not allow of this, and they dined alone.

He withdrew early. Next day he called at the gate, on horseback, to inquire for mistress. He did so two or three times in that week.

What I observed myself, and what la bella Carolina told me, united to explain to me that master had now set his mind on curing mistress of her fanciful terror. He was all kindness, but he was sensible and firm. He reasoned with her, that to encourage such fancies was to invite melancholy, if not madness. That it rested with herself to be herself. That if she once resisted her strange weakness, so successfully as to receive the Signor Dellombra as an English lady would receive any other guest, it was for ever conquered. To make an end, the Signor came again, and mistress received him without marked distress (though with constraint and apprehension still), and the evening passed serenely. Master was so delighted with this change, and so anxious to confirm it, that the Signor Dellombra became a constant guest. He was accomplished in pictures, books, and music; and his society, in any grim palazzo, would have been welcome.

I used to notice, many times, that mistress was not quite recovered. She would cast down her eyes and droop her head, before the Signor Dellombra, or would look at him with a terrified and fascinated glance, as if his presence had some evil influence or power upon her. Turning from her to him, I used to see him in the shaded gardens, or the large half-lighted sala, looking, as I might say, 'fixedly upon her out of darkness'. But, truly, I had not forgotten la bella Carolina's words describing the face in the dream.

After his second visit I heard master say :

‘Now see, my dear Clara, it’s over! Dellombra has come and gone, and your apprehension is broken like glass.’

‘Will he - will he ever come again?’asked mistress.

‘Again? Why, surely, over and over again! Are you cold?’ (She shivered.)

‘No, dear - but - he terrifies me : are you sure that he need come again?’

‘The surer for the question, Clara!’replied master, cheerfully.

But, he was very hopeful of her complete recovery now, and grew more and more so every day. She was beautiful. He was happy.

‘All goes well, Baptista?’he would say to me again.

‘Yes, signore, thank God; very well.’

We were all (said the Genoese courier, constraining himself to speak a little louder) , we were all at Rome for the Carnival. I had been out, all day, with a Sicilian, a friend of mine and a courier, who was there with an Eng-lish family. As I returned at night to our hôtel, I met the little Carolina, who never stirred from home alone, run-ning distractedly along the Corso.

‘Carolina! What’s the matter?’

‘O Baptista! Oh, for the Lord’s sake! where is my mistress?’

‘Mistress, Carolina?’

‘Gone since morning - told me, when master went out on his day’s journey, not to call her, for she was tired with not resting in the night (having been in pain) , and would lie in bed until the evening; then get up refreshed. She is gone! - she is gone! Master has come back, broken down the door, and she is gone! My beautiful, my good, my innocent mistress!’

The pretty little one so cried, and raved, and tore herself, that I could not have held her, but for her swooning on my arm as if she had been shot. Master came up - in manner, face, or voice, no more the master that I knew, than I was he. He took me (I laid the little one upon her bed in the hôtel, and left her with the chamber-women) , in a carriage, furiously through the darkness, across the desolate Cam-pagna. When it was day, and we stopped at a

miserable posthouse, all the horses had been hired twelve hours ago, and sent away in different directions. Mark me! - by the Signor Dellombra, who had passed there in a carriage, with a frightened English lady crouching in one corner.

I never heard (said the Genoese courier, drawing a long breath) that she was ever traced beyond that spot. All I know is, that she vanished into infamous oblivion, with the dreaded face beside her that she had seen in her dream.

‘What do you call *that* ?’ said the German courier, triumphantly : ‘Ghosts! There are no ghosts *there* ! What do you call this, that I am going to tell you? Ghosts! There are no ghosts *here* !’

I took an engagement once (pursued the German courier) with an English gentleman, elderly and a bachelor, to travel through my country, my Fatherland. He was a merchant who traded with my country and knew the language, but who had never been there since he was a boy - as I judge, some sixty years before.

His name was James, and he had a twin-brother John, also a bachelor. Between these brothers there was a great affection. They were in business together, at Goodman’s Fields, but they did not live together. Mr James dwelt in Poland Street, turning out of Oxford Street, London. Mr John resided by Epping Forest.

Mr James and I were to start for Germany in about a week. The exact day depended on business. Mr John came to Poland Street (where I was staying in the house) , to pass that week with Mr James. But, he said to his brother on the second day, ‘I don’t feel very well, James. There’s not much the matter with me; but I think I am a little gouty. I’ll go home and put myself under the care of my old housekeeper, who understands my ways. If I get quite better, I’ll come back and see you before you go. If I don’t feel well enough to resume my visit where I leave it off, why *you* will come and see *me* before you go.’Mr James, of course, said he would, and they shook hands - both hands, as they always did-and Mr John ordered out his old-fashioned chariot and rumbled home.

It was on the second night after that - that is to say, the fourth in the week - when I was awoke out of my sound sleep by Mr James coming into my bedroom in his flannel-gown, with a lighted candle. He sat upon the side of my bed, and looking at me, said :

‘Wilhelm, I have reason to think I have got some strange illness upon me.’

I then perceived that there was a very unusual expression in his face.

‘Wilhelm,’ said he, ‘I am not afraid or ashamed to tell you, what I might be afraid or ashamed to tell another man. You come from a sensible country, where mysterious things are inquired into, and are not settled to have been weighed and measured - or to have been unweighable and unmeasurable - or in either case to have been completely disposed of, for all time - ever so many years ago. I have just now seen the phantom of my brother.’

I confess (said the German courier) that it gave me a little tingling of the blood of hear it.

‘I have just now seen,’ Mr James repeated, looking full at me, that I might see how collected he was, ‘the phantom of my brother John. I was sitting up in bed, unable to sleep, when it came into my room, in a white dress, and, regarding me earnestly, passed up to the end of the room, glanced at some papers on my writing-desk, turned, and, still looking earnestly at me as it passed the bed, went out at the door. Now, I am not in the least mad, and am not in the least disposed to invest that phantom with any external existence out of myself. I think it is a warning to me that I am ill; and I think I had better be bled.’

I got out of bed directly (said the German courier) and began to get on my clothes, begging him not to be alarmed, and telling him that I would go myself to the doctor. I was just ready, when we heard a loud knocking and ringing at the street door. My room being an attic at the back, and Mr James’s being the second-floor room in the front, we went down to his room, and put up the window, to see what was the matter.

‘Is that Mr James?’ said a man below, falling back to the opposite side of the way to look up.

‘It is,’ said Mr James; ‘and you are my brother’s man, Robert.’

‘Yes, sir. I am sorry to say, sir, that Mr John is ill. He is very bad, sir. It is even feared that he may be lying at the point of death. He wants to see you, sir. I have a chaise here. Pray come to him. Pray lose no time.’

Mr James and I looked at one another. 'Wilhelm,' said he, 'this is strange. I wish you to come with me!' I helped him to dress, partly there and partly in the chaise; and no grass grew under the horses' iron shoes between Poland Street and the Forest.

Now, mind! (said the German courier). I went with Mr James into his brother's room, and I saw and heard myself what follows.

His brother lay upon his bed, at the upper end of a long bedchamber. His old housekeeper was there, and others were there : I think three others were there, if not four, and they had been with him since early in the after-noon. He was in white, like the figure - necessarily so, because he had his night-dress on. He looked like the figure - necessarily so, because he looked earnestly at his brother when he saw him come into the room.

But, when his brother reached the bedside, he slowly raised himself in bed, and looking full upon him, said these words :

'JAMES, YOU HAVE SEEN ME BEFORE, TO-NIGHT - AND YOU KNOW IT!'

And so died!

I waited, when the German courier ceased, to hear some-thing said of this strange story. The silence was unbroken. I looked round and the five couriers were gone : so noise-lessly that the ghostly mountain might have absorbed them into its eternal snows. By this time, I was by no means in a mood to sit alone in that awful scene, with the chill air coming solemnly upon me - or, if I may tell the truth, to sit alone anywhere. So I went back into the convent-parlour, and, finding the American gentleman still disposed to relate the biography of the Honourable Ananias Dodger, heard it all out.

Te Signalman

‘Halloa! Below there!’

When he heard a voice thus calling to him, he was stand-ing at the door of his box, with a flag in his hand, furred round its short pole. One would have thought, considering the nature of the ground, that he could not have doubted from what quarter the voice came; but, instead of looking up to where I stood on the top of the steep cutting nearly over his head, he turned himself about and looked down the Line. Tere was something remarkable in his manner of doing so, though I could not have said for my life, what. But, I know it was remarkable enough to attract my notice, even though his fgure was foreshortened and shadowed, down in the deep trench, and mine was high above him, so steeped in the glow of an angry sunset that I had shaded my eyes with my hand before I saw him at all.

‘Halloa! Below!’

From looking down the Line, he turned himself about again, and, raising his eyes, saw my fgure high above him.

‘Is there any path by which I can come down and speak to you?’

He looked up at me without replying, and I looked down at him without pressing him too soon with a repeti-tion of my idle question. Just then, there came a vague vibration in the earth and air, quickly changing into a violent pulsation, and an oncoming rush that caused me to start back, as though it had force to draw me down. Wen such vapour as rose to my height from this rapid train, had passed me and was skimming away over the landscape, I looked down again, and saw him re-furling the fag he had shown while the train went by.

I repeated my inquiry. After a pause, during which he seemed to regard me with fixed attention, he motioned with his rolled-up flag towards a point on my level, some two or three hundred yards distant. I called down to him, ‘All right!’ and made for that point.

There, by dint of looking closely about me, I found a rough zig-zag descend-ing path notched out : which I followed.

The cutting was extremely deep, and unusually pre-cipitate. It was made through a clammy stone that became oozier and wetter as I went down. For these reasons, I found the way long enough to give me time to recall a singular air of reluctance or compulsion with which he had pointed out the path.

When I came down low enough upon the zig-zag descent, to see him again, I saw that he was standing between the rails on the way by which the train had lately passed, in an attitude as if he were waiting for me to appear. He had his left hand at his chin, and that left elbow rested on his right hand crossed over his breast. His attitude was one of such expectation and watchfulness, that I stopped a moment, wondering at it.

I resumed my downward way, and, stepping out upon the level of the railroad and drawing nearer to him, saw that he was a dark sallow man, with a dark beard and rather heavy eyebrows. His post was in as solitary and dismal a place as ever I saw. On either side, a dripping-wet wall of jagged stone, excluding all view but a strip of sky; the per-spective one way, only a crooked prolongation of this great dungeon; the shorter perspective in the other direction, terminating in a gloomy red light, and the gloomier entrance to a black tunnel, in whose massive architecture there was a barbarous, depressing, and forbidding air. So little sun-light ever found its way to this spot, that it had an earthy deadly smell; and so much cold wind rushed through it, that it struck chill to me, as if I had left the natural world.

Before he stirred, I was near enough to him to have touched him. Not even then removing his eyes from mine, he stepped back one step, and lifted his hand.

Tis was a lonesome post to occupy (I said) , and it had riveted my attention when I looked down from up yonder. A visitor was a rarity, I should suppose; not an unwel-come rarity, I hoped? In me, he merely saw a man who had been shut up within narrow limits all his life, and who, being at last set free, had a newly awakened interest in these great works. To such purpose I spoke to him; but I am far from sure of the terms I used, for, besides that I am not happy in opening any conversation, there was something in

the man that daunted me.

He directed a most curious look towards the red light near the tunnel's mouth, and looked all about it, as if something were missing from it, and then looked at me.

Tat light was part of his charge? Was it not?

He answered in a low voice : 'Don't you know it is?'

Te monstrous thought came into my mind as I perused the fixed eyes and the saturnine face, that this was a spirit, not a man. I have speculated since, whether there may have been infection in his mind.

In my turn, I stepped back. But in making the action, I detected in his eyes some latent fear of me. This put the monstrous thought to flight.

'You look at me,' I said, forcing a smile, 'as if you had a dread of me.'

'I was doubtful,' he returned, 'whether I had seen you before.'

'Where?'

He pointed to the red light he had looked at.

'There?' I said.

Intently watchful of me, he replied (but without sound) , Yes.

'My good fellow, what should I do there? However, be that as it may, I never was there, you may swear.'

'I think I may,' he rejoined. 'Yes. I am sure I may.'

His manner cleared, like my own. He replied to my remarks with readiness, and in well-chosen words. Had he much to do there? Yes; that was to say, he had enough responsibility to bear; but exactness and watchfulness were what was required of him, and of actual work - manual labour - he had next to none. To change that signal, to trim those lights, and to turn this iron handle now and then, was all he had to do under that head. Regarding those many long and lonely hours of which I seemed to make so much, he could only say that the routine of his life had shaped itself into that form, and he had grown used to it. He had taught himself a language down here - if only to know it by sight, and to have

formed his own crude ideas of its pronunciation, could be called learning it. He had also worked at fractions and decimals, and tried a little algebra; but he was, and had been as a boy, a poor hand at figures. Was it necessary for him when on duty, always to remain in that channel of damp air, and could he never rise into the sunshine from between those high stone walls? Why, that depended upon times and circumstances. Under some conditions there would be less upon the Line than under others, and the same held good as to certain hours of the day and night. In bright weather, he did choose occasions for getting a little above these lower shadows; but, being at all times liable to be called by his electric bell, and at such times listening for it with redoubled anxiety, the relief was less than I would suppose.

He took me into his box, where there was a fire, a desk for an official book in which he had to make certain entries, a telegraphic instrument with its dial face and needles, and the little bell of which he had spoken. On my trusting that he would excuse the remark that he had been well educated, and (I hoped I might say without offence), perhaps educated above that station, he observed that instances of slight incongruity in such-wise would rarely be found wanting among large bodies of men; that he had heard it was so in workhouses, in the police force, even in that last desperate resource, the army; and that he knew it was so, more or less, in any great railway staff. He had been, when young (if I could believe it, sitting in that hut; he scarcely could), a student of natural philosophy, and had attended lectures; but he had run wild, misused his opportunities, gone down, and never risen again. He had no complaint to offer about that. He had made his bed, and he lay upon it. It was far too late to make another.

All that I have here condensed, he said in a quiet manner, with his grave dark regards divided between me and the fire. He threw in the word 'Sir', from time to time, and especially when he referred to his youth : as though to request me to understand that he claimed to be nothing but what I found him. He was several times interrupted by the little bell, and had to read off messages, and send replies. Once, he had to stand without the door, and display a flag as a train passed, and make some verbal communication to the driver. In the discharge of his duties I observed him to be remarkably exact and vigilant, breaking off his discourse at a

syllable, and remaining silent until what he had to do was done.

In a word, I should have set this man down as one of the safest of men to be employed in that capacity, but for the circumstance that while he was speaking to me he twice broke off with a fallen colour, turned his face towards the little bell when it did NOT ring, opened the door of the hut (which was kept shut to exclude the unhealthy damp) , and looked out towards the red light near the mouth of the tunnel. On both of those occasions, he came back to the fire with the inexplicable air upon him which I had remarked, without being able to define, when we were so far asunder.

Said I when I rose to leave him : ‘You almost make me think that I have met with a contented man.’

(I am afraid I must acknowledge that I said it to lead him on.)

‘I believe I used to be so,’ he rejoined, in the low voice in which he had first spoken; ‘but I am troubled, sir, I am troubled.’

He would have recalled the words if he could. He had said them, however, and I took them up quickly.

‘With what? What is your trouble?’

‘It is very difficult to impart, sir. It is very, very difficult to speak of. If ever you make me another visit, I will try to tell you.’

‘But I expressly intend to make you another visit. Say, when shall it be?’

‘I go off early in the morning, and I shall be on again at ten to-morrow night, sir.’

‘I will come at eleven.’

He thanked me, and went out at the door with me. ‘I’ll show my white light, sir,’ he said, in his peculiar low voice, ‘till you have found the way up. When you have found it, don’t call out! And when you are at the top, don’t call out!’

His manner seemed to make the place strike colder to me, but I said no more than ‘Very well.’

‘And when you come down to-morrow night, don’t call out! Let me ask you a parting question. What made you cry “Halloa! Below there!” to-night?’

‘Heaven knows,’ said I. ‘I cried something to that effect - ’

‘Not to that effect, sir. Those were the very words. I know them well.’

‘Admit those were the very words. I said them, no doubt, because I saw you below.’

‘For no other reason?’

‘What other reason could I possibly have!’

‘You have no feeling that they were conveyed to you in any supernatural way?’

‘No.’

He wished me good night, and held up his light. I walked by the side of the down Line of rails (with a very disagreeable sensation of a train coming behind me) , until I found the path. It was easier to mount than to descend, and I got back to my inn without any adventure.

Punctual to my appointment, I placed my foot on the first notch of the zig-zag next night, as the distant clocks were striking eleven. He was waiting for me at the bot-tom, with his white light on. ‘I have not called out,’ I said, when we came close together; ‘may I speak now?’ ‘By all means, sir.’ ‘Good night then, and here’s my hand.’ ‘Good night, sir, and here’s mine.’ With that, we walked side by side to his box, entered it, closed the door, and sat down by the fire.

‘I have made up my mind, sir,’ he began, bending for-ward as soon as we were seated, and speaking in a tone but a little above a whisper, ‘that you shall not have to ask me twice what troubles me. I took you for some one else yesterday evening. That troubles me.’

‘That mistake?’

‘No. That some one else.’

‘Who is it?’

‘I don’t know.’

‘Like me?’

‘I don’t know. I never saw the face. The left arm is across the face, and the right arm is waved. Violently waved. This way.’

I followed his action with my eyes, and it was the action of an arm gesticulating with the utmost passion and vehemence : ‘For God’s sake clear the way!’

‘One moonlight night,’ said the man, ‘I was sitting here, when I heard a voice cry “Halloa! Below there!” I started up, looked from that door, and saw this Some one else standing by the red light near the tunnel, waving as I just now showed you. The voice seemed hoarse with shouting, and it cried, “Look out! Look out!” And then again “Halloa! Below there! Look out!” I caught up my lamp, turned it on red, and ran towards the figure, calling, “What’s wrong? What has happened? Where?” It stood just outside the blackness of the tunnel. I advanced so close upon it that I wondered at its keeping the sleeve across its eyes. I ran right up at it, and had my hand stretched out to pull the sleeve away, when it was gone.’

‘Into the tunnel,’ said I.

‘No. I ran on into the tunnel, five hundred yards. I stopped and held my lamp above my head, and saw the figures of the measured distance, and saw the wet stains stealing down the walls and trickling through the arch. I ran out again, faster than I had run in (for I had a mortal abhorrence of the place upon me), and I looked all round the red light with my own red light, and I went up the iron ladder to the gallery atop of it, and I came down again, and ran back here. I telegraphed both ways : “An alarm has been given. Is anything wrong?” The answer came back, both ways : “All well.”’

Resisting the slow touch of a frozen finger tracing out my spine, I showed him how that this figure must be a deception of his sense of sight, and how that figures, originating in disease of the delicate nerves that minister to the functions of the eye, were known to have often troubled patients, some of whom had become conscious of the nature of their affliction, and had even proved it by experiments upon themselves. ‘As to an imaginary cry,’ said I, ‘do but listen for a moment to the wind in this unnatural valley while we speak so low, and to the wild harp it makes of the telegraph wires!’

That was all very well, he returned, after we had sat listening for a while, and he ought to know something of the wind and the wires, he who so often passed long winter nights there, alone and watching. But he would beg to remark that he had not finished.

I asked his pardon, and he slowly added these words, touching my arm :

‘Within six hours after the Appearance, the memorable accident on this Line happened, and within ten hours the dead and wounded were brought along through the tunnel over the spot where the figure had stood.’

A disagreeable shudder crept over me, but I did my best against it. It was not to be denied, I rejoined, that this was a remarkable coincidence, calculated deeply to impress his mind. But, it was unquestionable that remarkable coincidences did continually occur, and they must be taken into account in dealing with such a subject. Tough to be sure I must admit, I added (for I thought I saw that he was going to bring the objection to bear upon me), men of common sense did not allow much for coincidences in making the ordinary calculations of life.

He again begged to remark that he had not finished.

I again begged his pardon for being betrayed into interruptions.

‘Tis,’ he said, again laying his hand upon my arm, and glancing over his shoulder with hollow eyes, ‘was just a year ago. Six or seven months passed, and I had recovered from the surprise and shock, when one morn-ing, as the day was breaking, I, standing at that door, looked towards the red light, and saw the spectre again.’He stopped, with a fixed look at me.

‘Did it cry out?’

‘No. It was silent.’

‘Did it wave its arm?’

‘No. It leaned against the shaft of the light, with both hands before the face. Like this.’

Once more, I followed his action with my eyes. It was an action of mourning. I have seen such an attitude in stone figures on tombs.

‘Did you go up to it?’

‘I came in and sat down, partly to collect my thoughts, partly because it had turned me faint. Wen I went to the door again, daylight was above me, and the ghost was gone.’

‘But nothing followed? Nothing came of this?’

He touched me on the arm with his forefinger twice or thrice, giving a ghastly nod each time :

‘Tat very day, as a train came out of the tunnel, I noticed, at a carriage window on my side, what looked like a confusion of hands and heads, and something waved. I saw it, just in time to signal the driver, Stop! He shut of, and put his brake on, but the train drifted past here a hundred and ffty yards or more. I ran after it, and, as I went along, heard terrible screams and cries. A beau-tiful young lady had died instantaneously in one of the compartments, and was brought in here, and laid down on this foor between us.’

Involuntarily, I pushed my chair back, as I looked from the boards at which he pointed, to himself.

‘True, sir. True. Precisely as it happened, so I tell it you.’

I could think of nothing to say, to any purpose, and my mouth was very dry. The wind and the wires took up the story with a long lamenting wail.

He resumed. ‘Now, sir, mark this, and judge how my mind is troubled. The spectre came back, a week ago. Ever since, it has been there, now and again, by fits and starts.’

‘At the light?’

‘At the Danger-light.’

‘What does it seem to do?’

He repeated, if possible with increased passion and vehemence, that former gesticulation of ‘For God’s sake clear the way!’

Then, he went on. ‘I have no peace or rest for it. It calls to me, for many minutes together, in an agonized man-ner, “Below there! Look out! Look out!” It stands waving to me. It rings my little bell - ,

I caught at that. ‘Did it ring your bell yesterday evening when I was here, and you went to the door?’

‘Twice.’

‘Why, see,’ said I, ‘how your imagination misleads you. My eyes were on the bell, and my ears were open to the bell, and if I am a living man, it did NOT ring at those times. No, nor at any other time, except when it was rung in the natural course of physical

things by the station communicating with you.'

He shook his head. 'I have never made a mistake as to that, yet, sir. I have never confused the spectre's ring with the man's. The ghost's ring is a strange vibration in the bell that it derives from nothing else, and I have not asserted that the bell stirs to the eye. I don't wonder that you failed to hear it. But I heard it.'

'And did the spectre seem to be there, when you looked out?'

'It WAS there.'

'Both times?'

He repeated firmly : 'Both times.'

'Will you come to the door with me, and look for it now?'

He bit his under-lip as though he were somewhat unwilling, but arose. I opened the door, and stood on the step, while he stood in the doorway. There, was the Danger-light. There, was the dismal mouth of the tunnel. There, were the high wet stone walls of the cutting. There, were the stars above them.

'Do you see it?' I asked him, taking particular note of his face. His eyes were prominent and strained; but not very much more so, perhaps, than my own had been when I had directed them earnestly towards the same spot.

'No,' he answered. 'It is not there.'

'Agreed,' said I.

We went in again, shut the door, and resumed our seats. I was thinking how best to improve this advantage, if it might be called one, when he took up the conversation in such a matter of course way, so assuming that there could be no serious question of fact between us, that I felt myself in the weakest of positions.

'By this time you will fully understand, sir,' he said, 'that what troubles me so dreadfully, is the question, What does the spectre mean?'

I was not sure, I told him, that I did fully understand.

'What is its warning against?' he said, ruminating, with his eyes on the fire, and only by times turning them on me. 'What is the danger? Where is the danger? There is danger overhanging,

somewhere on the Line. Some dreadful calamity will happen. It is not to be doubted this third time, after what has gone before. But surely this is a cruel haunting of *me*. What can I do!’

He pulled out his handkerchief, and wiped the drops from his heated forehead.

‘If I telegraph Danger, on either side of me, or on both, I can give no reason for it,’ he went on, wiping the palms of his hands. ‘I should get into trouble, and do no good. They would think I was mad. This is the way it would work : Message : “Danger! Take care!” Answer : “What Danger? Where?” Message : “Don’t know. But for God’s sake take care!” They would displace me. What else could they do?’

His pain of mind was most pitiable to see. It was the mental torture of a conscientious man, oppressed beyond endurance by an unintelligible responsibility involving life.

‘When it first stood under the Danger-light,’ he went on, putting his dark hair back from his head, and drawing his hands outward across and across his temples in an extremity of feverish distress, ‘why not tell me where that accident was to happen - if it must happen? Why not tell me how it could be averted - if it could have been averted? When on its second coming it hid its face, why not tell me instead : “She is going to die. Let them keep her at home”? If it came, on those two occasions, only to show me that its warnings were true, and so to prepare me for the third, why not warn me plainly now? And I, Lord help me! A mere poor signalman on this solitary station! Why not go to somebody with credit to be believed, and power to act!’

When I saw him in this state, I saw that for the poor man’s sake, as well as for the public safety, what I had to do for the time was, to compose his mind. Therefore, setting aside all question of reality or unreality between us, I represented to him that whoever thoroughly discharged his duty, must do well, and that at least it was his comfort that he understood his duty, though he did not understand these confounding Appearances. In this effort I succeeded far better than in the attempt to reason him out of his conviction. He became calm; the occupations incidental to his post as the night advanced, began to make larger demands on his attention; and I left him at two in the morning. I had offered to stay through the night, but he

would not hear of it.

Tat I more than once looked back at the red light as I ascended the pathway, that I did not like the red light, and that I should have slept but poorly if my bed had been under it, I see no reason to conceal. Nor, did I like the two sequences of the accident and the dead girl. I see no reason to conceal that, either.

But, what ran most in my thoughts was the consideration how ought I to act, having become the recipient of this disclosure? I had proved the man to be intelligent, vigilant, painstaking, and exact; but how long might he remain so, in his state of mind? Tough in a subordinate position, still he held a most important trust, and would I (for instance) like to stake my own life on the chances of his continuing to execute it with precision?

Unable to overcome a feeling that there would be some-thing treacherous in my communicating what he had told me, to his superiors in the Company, without frst being plain with himself and proposing a middle course to him, I ultimately resolved to ofer to accompany him (otherwise keeping his secret for the present) to the wisest medical practitioner we could hear of in those parts, and to take his opinion. A change in his time of duty would come round next night, he had apprised me, and he would be of an hour or two after sunrise, and on again soon after sunset. I had appointed to return accordingly.

Next evening was a lovely evening, and I walked out early to enjoy it. Te sun was not yet quite down when I traversed the feld-path near the top of the deep cutting. I would extend my walk for an hour, I said to myself, half an hour on and half an hour back, and it would then be time to go to my signalman's box.

Before pursuing my stroll, I stepped to the brink, and mechanically looked down, from the point from which I had frst seen him. I cannot describe the thrill that seized upon me, when, close at the mouth of the tunnel, I saw the appearance of a man, with his left sleeve across his eyes, passionately waving his right arm.

The nameless horror that oppressed me, passed in a moment, for in a moment I saw that this appearance of a man was a man indeed, and that there was a little group of other men standing at a

short distance, to whom he seemed to be rehearsing the gesture he made. The Danger-light was not yet lighted. Against its shaft, a little low hut, entirely new to me, had been made of some wooden supports and tarpaulin. It looked no bigger than a bed.

With an irresistible sense that something was wrong-with a flashing self-reproachful fear that fatal mischief had come of my leaving the man there, and causing no one to be sent to overlook or correct what he did - I descended the notched path with all the speed I could make.

‘What is the matter?’ I asked the men.

‘Signalman killed this morning, sir.’

‘Not the man belonging to that box?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Not the man I know?’

‘You will recognize him, sir, if you knew him,’ said the man who spoke for the others, solemnly uncovering his own head and raising an end of the tarpaulin, ‘for his face is quite composed.’

‘O! how did this happen, how did this happen?’ I asked, turning from one to another as the hut closed in again.

‘He was cut down by an engine, sir. No man in England knew his work better. But somehow he was not clear of the outer rail. It was just at broad day. He had struck the light, and had the lamp in his hand. As the engine came out of the tunnel, his back was towards her, and she cut him down. That man drove her, and was showing how it happened. Show the gentleman, Tom.’

The man, who wore a rough dark dress, stepped back to his former place at the mouth of the tunnel :

‘Coming round the curve in the tunnel, sir,’ he said, ‘I saw him at the end, like as if I saw him down a perspective-glass. There was no time to check speed, and I knew him to be very careful. As he didn’t seem to take heed of the whistle, I shut it off when we were running down upon him, and called to him as loud as I could call.’

‘What did you say?’

‘I said, Below there! Look out! Look out! For God’s sake clear the way!’

I started.

‘Ah! it was a dreadful time, sir. I never left off calling to him. I put this arm before my eyes, not to see, and I waved this arm to the last; but it was no use.’

Without prolonging the narrative to dwell on any one of its curious circumstances more than on any other, I may, in closing it, point out the coincidence that the warning of the Engine-Driver included, not only the words which the unfortunate Signaller had repeated to me as haunting him, but also the words which I myself - not he - had attached, and that only in my own mind, to the gesticulation he had imitated.

Te Trial for Murder

I have always noticed a prevalent want of courage, even among persons of superior intelligence and culture, as to imparting their own psychological experiences when those have been of a strange sort. Almost all men are afraid that what they could relate in such wise would find no parallel or response in a listener's internal life, and might be suspected or laughed at. A truthful traveller, who should have seen some extraordinary creature in the likeness of a sea-serpent, would have no fear of mentioning it; but the same traveller, having had some singular presentiment, impulse, vagary of thought, vision (so called) , dream, or other remarkable mental impression, would hesitate considerably before he would own to it. To this reticence I attribute much of the obscurity in which such subjects are involved. We do not habitually communicate our experiences of these subjective things as we do our experiences of objective creation. The consequence is, that the general stock of experience in this regard appears exceptional, and really is so, in respect of being miserably imperfect.

In what I am going to relate, I have no intention of setting up, opposing, or supporting any theory whatever. I know the history of the Bookseller of Berlin, I have studied the case of the wife of a late Astronomer Royal as related by Sir David Brewster, and I have followed the minutest details of a much more remarkable case of Spectral Illusion occurring within my private circle of friends. It may be necessary to state as to this last, that the sufferer (a lady) was in no degree, however distant, related to me. A mistaken assumption on that head might suggest an explanation of a part of my own case, - but only a part, - which would be wholly without foundation. It cannot be referred to my inheritance of any developed peculiarity, nor had I ever before any at all similar experience, nor have I ever had any at all similar experience since.

It does not signify how many years ago, or how few, a certain murder was committed in England, which attracted great attention. We hear more than enough of murderers as they rise in succession

to their atrocious eminence, and I would bury the memory of this particular brute, if I could, as his body was buried, in Newgate Jail. I purposely abstain from giving any direct clew to the criminal's individuality.

When the murder was first discovered, no suspicion fell - or I ought rather to say, for I cannot be too precise in my facts, it was nowhere publicly hinted that any suspicion fell - on the man who was afterwards brought to trial. As no reference was at that time made to him in the newspapers, it is obviously impossible that any description of him can at that time have been given in the newspapers. It is essential that this fact be remembered.

Unfolding at breakfast my morning paper, containing the account of that first discovery, I found it to be deeply interesting, and I read it with close attention. I read it twice, if not three times. The discovery had been made in a bedroom, and, when I laid down the paper, I was aware of a flash - rush - flow - I do not know what to call it, - no word I can find is satisfactorily descriptive, - in which I seemed to see that bedroom passing through my room, like a picture impossibly painted on a running river. Though almost instantaneous in its passing, it was perfectly clear; so clear that I distinctly, and with a sense of relief, observed the absence of the dead body from the bed.

It was in no romantic place that I had this curious sensation, but in chambers in Piccadilly, very near to the corner of Saint James's Street. It was entirely new to me. I was in my easy-chair at the moment, and the sensation was accompanied with a peculiar shiver which started the chair from its position. (But it is to be noted that the chair ran easily on castors.) I went to one of the windows (there are two in the room, and the room is on the second floor) to refresh my eyes with the moving objects down in Piccadilly. It was a bright autumn morning, and the street was sparkling and cheerful. The wind was high. As I looked out, it brought down from the Park a quantity of fallen leaves, which a gust took, and whirled into a spiral pillar. As the pillar fell and the leaves dispersed, I saw two men on the opposite side of the way, going from West to East. They were one behind the other. The foremost man often looked back over his shoulder. The second man followed him, at a distance of some thirty paces, with his right hand menacingly raised. First, the singularity and steadiness of this

threatening gesture in so public a thoroughfare attracted my attention; and next, the more remarkable circumstance that nobody heeded it. Both men threaded their way among the other passengers with a smoothness hardly consistent even with the action of walking on a pavement; and no single creature, that I could see, gave them place, touched them, or looked after them. In passing before my windows, they both stared up at me. I saw their two faces very distinctly, and I knew that I could recognize them anywhere. Not that I had consciously noticed anything very remarkable in either face, except that the man who went first had an unusually lowering appearance, and that the face of the man who followed him was of the colour of impure wax.

I am a bachelor, and my valet and his wife constitute my whole establishment. My occupation is in a certain Branch Bank, and I wish that my duties as head of a Department were as light as they are popularly supposed to be. They kept me in town that autumn, when I stood in need of change. I was not ill, but I was not well. My reader is to make the most that can be reasonably made of my feeling jaded, having a depressing sense upon me of a monotonous life, and being 'slightly dyspeptic.' I am assured by my renowned doctor that my real state of health at that time justifies no stronger description, and I quote his own from his written answer to my request for it.

As the circumstances of the murder, gradually unraveling, took stronger and stronger possession of the public mind, I kept them away from mine, by knowing as little about them as was possible in the midst of the universal excitement. But I knew that a verdict of Wilful Murder had been found against the suspected murderer, and that he had been committed to Newgate for trial. I also knew that his trial had been postponed over one Sessions of the Central Criminal Court, on the ground of general prejudice and want of time for the preparation of the defence. I may further have known, but I believe I did not, when, or about when, the Sessions to which his trial stood postponed would come on.

My sitting-room, bedroom, and dressing-room are all on one floor. With the last there is no communication but through the bedroom. True, there is a door in it, once communicating with the staircase; but a part of the fitting of my bath has been - and had then been for some years - fixed across it. At the same period, and as

a part of the same arrangement, the door had been nailed up and canvassed over.

I was standing in my bedroom late one night, giving some directions to my servant before he went to bed. My face was towards the only available door of communication with the dressing-room, and it was closed. My servant's back was towards that door. While I was speaking to him, I saw it open, and a man look in, who very earnestly and mysteriously beckoned to me. That man was the man who had gone second of the two along Piccadilly, and whose face was of the colour of impure wax.

The figure, having beckoned, drew back, and closed the door. With no longer pause than was made by my crossing the bedroom, I opened the dressing-room door, and looked in. I had a lighted candle already in my hand. I felt no inward expectation of seeing the figure in the dressing-room, and I did not see it there.

Conscious that my servant stood amazed, I turned round to him, and said : 'Derrick, could you believe that in my cool senses I fancied I saw a - 'As I there laid my hand upon his breast, with a sudden start he trembled violently, and said, 'O Lord, yes, sir! A dead man beckoning!'

Now I do not believe that this John Derrick, my trusty and attached servant for more than twenty years, had any impression whatever of having seen any such figure, until I touched him. The change in him was so startling, when I touched him, that I fully believe he derived his impression in some occult manner from me at that instant.

I bade John Derrick bring some brandy, and I gave him a dram, and was glad to take one myself. Of what had preceded that night's phenomenon, I told him not a single word. Reflecting on it, I was absolutely certain that I had never seen that face before, except on the one occasion in Piccadilly. Comparing its expression when beckoning at the door with its expression when it had stared up at me as I stood at my window, I came to the conclusion that on the first occasion it had sought to fasten itself upon my memory, and that on the second occasion it had made sure of being immediately remembered.

I was not very comfortable that night, though I felt a certainty,

difficult to explain, that the figure would not return. At daylight I fell into a heavy sleep, from which I was awakened by John Derrick's coming to my bedside with a paper in his hand.

This paper, it appeared, had been the subject of an altercation at the door between its bearer and my servant. It was a summons to me to serve upon a Jury at the forthcoming Sessions of the Central Criminal Court at the Old Bailey. I had never before been summoned on such a Jury, as John Derrick well knew. He believed - I am not certain at this hour whether with reason or otherwise - that that class of Jurors were customarily chosen on a lower qualification than mine, and he had at first refused to accept the summons. The man who served it had taken the matter very coolly. He had said that my attendance or non-attendance was nothing to him; there the summons was; and I should deal with it at my own peril, and not at his.

For a day or two I was undecided whether to respond to this call, or take no notice of it. I was not conscious of the slightest mysterious bias, influence, or attraction, one way or other. Of that I am as strictly sure as of every other statement that I make here. Ultimately I decided, as a break in the monotony of my life, that I would go.

The appointed morning was a raw morning in the month of November. There was a dense brown fog in Piccadilly, and it became positively black and in the last degree oppressive East of Temple Bar. I found the passages and staircases of the Court-House flaringly lighted with gas, and the Court itself similarly illuminated. I *think* that, until I was conducted by officers into the Old Court and saw its crowded state, I did not know that the Murderer was to be tried that day. I *think* that, until I was so helped into the Old Court with considerable difficulty, I did not know into which of the two Courts sitting my summons would take me. But this must not be received as a positive assertion, for I am not completely satisfied in my mind on either point.

I took my seat in the place appropriated to Jurors in waiting, and I looked about the Court as well as I could through the cloud of fog and breath that was heavy in it. I noticed the black vapor hanging like a murky curtain outside the great windows, and I noticed the stifled sound of wheels on the straw or tan that was

littered in the street; also, the hum of the people gathered there, which a shrill whistle, or a louder song or hail than the rest, occasionally pierced. Soon afterwards the Judges, two in number, entered, and took their seats. The buzz in the Court was awfully hushed. The direction was given to put the Murderer to the bar. He appeared there. And in that same instant I recognized in him the first of the two men who had gone down Piccadilly.

If my name had been called then, I doubt if I could have answered to it audibly. But it was called about sixth or eighth in the panel, and I was by that time able to say, 'Here!' Now, observe. As I stepped into the box, the prisoner, who had been looking on attentively, but with no sign of concern, became violently agitated, and beckoned to his attorney. The prisoner's wish to challenge me was so manifest, that it occasioned a pause, during which the attorney, with his hand upon the dock, whispered with his client, and shook his head. I afterwards had it from that gentleman, that the prisoner's first afrighted words to him were. '*At all hazards, challenge that man!*' But that, as he would give no reason for it, and admitted that he had not even known my name until he heard it called and I appeared, it was not done.

Both on the ground already explained, that I wish to avoid reviving the unwholesome memory of that Murderer, and also because a detailed account of his long trial is by no means indispensable to my narrative, I shall confine myself closely to such incidents in the ten days and nights during which we, the Jury, were kept together, as directly bear on my own curious personal experience. It is in that, and not in the Murderer, that I seek to interest my reader. It is to that, and not to a page of the Newgate Calendar, that I beg attention.

I was chosen Foreman of the Jury. On the second morning of the trial, after evidence had been taken for two hours (I heard the church clocks strike) , happening to cast my eyes over my brother jurymen, I found an inexplicable difficulty in counting them. I counted them several times, yet always with the same difficulty. In short, I made them one too many.

I touched the brother jurymen whose place was next me, and I whispered to him, 'Oblige me by counting us.' He looked surprised by the request, but turned his head and counted. 'Why,' says he,

suddenly, 'we are Thirt -; but no, it's not possible. No. We are twelve.'

According to my counting that day, we were always right in detail, but in the gross we were always one too many. There was no appearance - no figure - to account for it; but I had now an inward foreshadowing of the figure that was surely coming.

The Jury were housed at the London Tavern. We all slept in one large room on separate tables, and we were constantly in the charge and under the eye of the officer sworn to hold us in safe-keeping. I see no reason for sup-pressing the real name of that officer. He was intelligent, highly polite, and obliging, and (I was glad to hear) much respected in the City. He had an agreeable presence, good eyes, enviable black whiskers, and a fine sonorous voice. His name was Mr Harker.

When we turned into our twelve beds at night, Mr Harker's bed was drawn across the door. On the night of the second day, not being disposed to lie down, and seeing Mr Harker sitting on his bed, I went and sat beside him, and offered him a pinch of snuff. As Mr Hark-er's hand touched mine in taking it from my box, a peculiar shiver crossed him, and he said : 'Who is this!'

Following Mr Harker's eyes, and looking along the room, I saw again the figure I expected, - the second of the two men who had gone down Piccadilly. I rose, and advanced a few steps; then stopped, and looked round at Mr Harker. He was quite unconcerned, laughed, and said in a pleasant way, 'I thought for a moment we had a thirteenth juryman, without a bed. But I see it is the moonlight.'

Making no revelation to Mr Harker, but inviting him to take a walk with me to the end of the room, I watched what the figure did. It stood for a few moments by the bedside of each of my eleven brother jurymen, close to the pillow. It always went to the right-hand side of the bed, and always passed out crossing the foot of the next bed. It seemed, from the action of the head, merely to look down pensively at each recumbent figure. It took no notice of me, or of my bed, which was that nearest to Mr Harker's. It seemed to go out where the moonlight came in, through a high window, as by an aerial flight of stairs.

Next morning at breakfast, it appeared that everybody present had dreamed of the murdered man last night, except myself and Mr Harker.

I now felt as convinced that the second man who had gone down Piccadilly was the murdered man (so to speak) , as if it had been borne into my comprehension by his immediate testimony. But even this took place, and in a manner for which I was not at all prepared.

On the fifth day of the trial, when the case for the prosecution was drawing to a close, a miniature of the murdered man, missing from his bedroom upon the discovery of the deed, and afterwards found in a hiding-place where the Murderer had been seen digging, was put in evidence. Having been identified by the witness under examination, it was handed up to the Bench, and thence handed down to be inspected by the Jury. As an officer in a black gown was making his way with it across to me, the figure of the second man who had gone down Piccadilly impetuously started from the crowd, caught the miniature from the officer, and gave it to me with its own hands, at the same time saying, in a low and hollow tone, - before I saw the miniature, which was in a locket, - *'I was younger then, and my face was not then drained of blood .'* It also came between me and the brother jurymen to whom I would have given the miniature, and between him and the brother jurymen to whom he would have given it, and so passed it on through the whole of our number, and back into my possession. Not one of them, however, detected this.

At table, and generally when we were shut up together in Mr Harker's custody, we had from the first naturally discussed the day's proceedings a good deal. On that fifth day, the case for the prosecution being closed, and we having that side of the question in a completed shape before us, our discussion was more animated and serious. Among our number was a vestryman, - the densest idiot I have ever seen at large, - who met the plainest evidence with the most preposterous objections, and who was sided with by two flabby parochial parasites; all the three impanelled from a district so delivered over to Fever that they ought to have been upon their own trial for five hundred Murders. When these mischievous blockheads were at their loudest, which was towards midnight, while some of us were already preparing for bed, I again saw the

murdered man. He stood grimly behind them, beckoning to me. On my going towards them, and striking into the conversation, he immediately retired. This was the begin-ning of a separate series of appearances, confined to that long room in which we were confined. Whenever a knot of my brother jurymen laid their heads together, I saw the head of the murdered man among theirs. Whenever their comparison of notes was going against him, he would solemnly and irresistibly beckon to me.

It will be borne in mind that down to the production of the miniature, on the fifth day of the trial, I had never seen the Appearance in Court. Three changes occurred now that we entered on the case for the defence. Two of them I will mention together, first. The figure was now in Court continually, and it never there addressed itself to me, but always to the person who was speaking at the time. For instance. The throat of the murdered man had been cut straight across. In the opening speech for the defence, it was suggested that the deceased might have cut his own throat. At that very moment, the figure, with its throat in the dreadful condition referred to (this it had concealed before) , stood at the speaker's elbow, motioning across and across its windpipe, now with the right hand, now with the left, vigorously suggesting to the speaker himself the impossibility of such a wound having been self-inflicted by either hand. For another instance. A witness to character, a woman, deposed to the prisoner's being the most amiable of mankind. The figure at that instant stood on the floor before her, looking her full in the face, and pointing out the prisoner's evil countenance with an extended arm and an outstretched finger.

The third change now to be added impressed me strongly as the most marked and striking of all. I do not theorize upon it; I accurately state it, and there leave it. Although the Appearance was not itself perceived by those whom it addressed, its coming close to such persons was invariably attended by some trepidation or disturbance on their part. It seemed to me as if it were prevented, by laws to which I was not amenable, from fully revealing itself to others, and yet as if it could invisibly, dumbly, and darkly overshadow their minds. When the leading counsel for the defence suggested that hypothesis of sui-cide, and the figure stood at the learned gentleman's elbow, frightfully sawing at its severed throat, it is undeniable that the counsel faltered in his speech, lost for a few

seconds the thread of his ingenious discourse, wiped his forehead with his handkerchief, and turned extremely pale. When the witness to character was confronted by the Appearance, her eyes most certainly did follow the direction of its pointed finger, and rest in great hesitation and trouble upon the prisoner's face. Two additional illustrations will suffice. On the eighth day of the trial, after the pause which was every day made early in the after-noon for a few minutes' rest and refreshment, I came back into Court with the rest of the Jury, some little time before the return of the Judges. Standing up in the box and looking about me, I thought the figure was not there, until, chancing to raise my eyes to the gallery, I saw it bending forward, and leaning over a very decent woman, as if to assure itself whether the Judges had resumed their seats or not. Immediately afterwards that woman screamed, fainted, and was carried out. So with the venerable, sagacious, and patient Judge who conducted the trial. When the case was over, and he settled himself and his papers to sum up, the murdered man, entering by the Judges' door, advanced to his Lordship's desk, and looked eagerly over his shoulder at the pages of his notes which he was turning. A change came over his Lordship's face; his hand stopped; the peculiar shiver, that I knew so well, passed over him; he faltered, 'Excuse me, gentlemen, for a few moments. I am somewhat oppressed by the vitiated air'; and did not recover until he had drunk a glass of water.

Through all the monotony of six of those interminable ten days, - the same Judges and others on the Bench, the same Murderer in the dock, the same lawyers at the table, the same tones of question and answer rising to the roof of the Court, the same scratching of the Judge's pen, the same ushers going in and out, the same lights kindled at the same hour when there had been any natural light of day, the same foggy curtain outside the great windows when it was foggy, the same rain pattering and dripping when it was rainy, the same footmarks of turnkeys and prisoner day after day on the same sawdust, the same keys locking and unlocking the same heavy doors, - through all the wearisome monotony which made me feel as if I had been Foreman of the Jury for a vast period of time, and Piccadilly had flourished coevally with Babylon, the murdered man never lost one trace of his distinctness in my eyes, nor was he at any moment less distinct than any-body else. I must not omit, as a matter of fact, that I never once saw the Appearance which I call by

the name of the murdered man look at the Murderer. Again and again I wondered, 'Why does he not?' But he never did.

Nor did he look at me, after the production of the miniature, until the last closing minutes of the trial arrived. We retired to consider, at seven minutes before ten at night. The idiotic vestryman and his two parochial parasites gave us so much trouble that we twice returned into Court to beg to have certain extracts from the Judge's notes re-read. Nine of us had not the smallest doubt about those passages, neither, I believe, had any one in Court; the dunder-headed triumvirate, however, having no idea but obstruction, disputed them for that very reason. At length we prevailed, and finally the Jury returned into Court at ten minutes past twelve.

The murdered man at that time stood directly opposite the Jury-box, on the other side of the Court. As I took my place, his eyes rested on me with great attention; he seemed satisfied, and slowly shook a great gray veil, which he carried on his arm for the first time, over his head and whole form. As I gave in our verdict, 'Guilty', the veil collapsed, all was gone, and his place was empty.

The Murderer, being asked by the Judge, according to usage, whether he had anything to say before sentence of Death should be passed upon him, indistinctly muttered something which was described in the leading newspapers of the following day as 'a few rambling, incoherent, and half-audible words, in which he was understood to complain that he had not had a fair trial, because the Foreman of the Jury was prepossessed against him'. The remarkable declaration that he really made was this : *'My Lord, I knew I was a doomed man, when the Foreman of my Jury came into the box. My Lord, I knew he would never let me off, because, before I was taken, he some-how got to my bedside in the night, woke me, and put a rope round my neck.'*



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P E N G U I N



C L A S S

Nº 25

一个可怕的故事是如何被一条普通的 屠夫的狗公之于众的

企鹅经典：小黑书 第三辑

[德]约翰·彼得·黑贝尔/著

杜旻/译



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How a Ghastly Story Was Brought to Light by a Common or Garden Butcher's Dog

The stories in this selection were mostly first published in Johann Peter Hebel's Schatzkästlein des

rheinischen Hausfreundes in 1811 and are taken from The Treasure Chest, chosen and translated by

John Hibberd in 1994. Original translation of The Treasure Chest first published in Great Britain by

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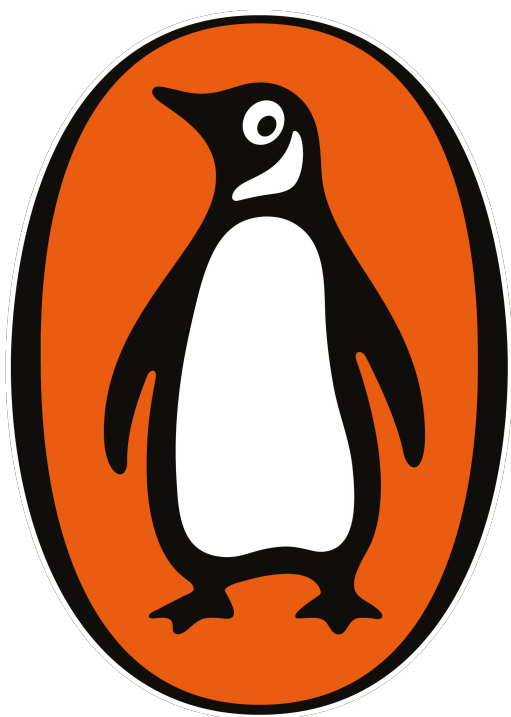
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这个女人的胳膊：
‘看上去这个屠夫
好像在他的围裙下面
藏着一大笔钱！’”



PENGUIN
LITTLE BLACK
CLASSICS

* 此中文译本译自德语原文

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银勺

在维也纳有一位军官，他盘算着：“我怎么着也得去红牛 [1] 吃顿午饭。”

如同其他地方一样，酒店里充斥着各色人等：既有熟客，也有生人；既有社会名流，也有无名鼠辈；既有坦荡君子，也有江湖骗子。人们在这里吃吃喝喝，有人吃得多，有人吃得少。人们在这里聊天闲扯，从摩拉维亚 [2] 最近为什么会天降陨石雨，一直聊到法国有个叫玛钦的家伙打败了大恶狼。总有某人向自己的听众们吹嘘：自己比其他人提前一年从相好的那里洞悉了不可告人的天机。

在午餐快要结束的时候，总有一两个家伙举着还剩下半升匈牙利葡萄酒的杯子开怀畅饮，另一个家伙就像药剂师生产药丸那样把软面包搓成一个个的球，第三个家伙则耍起了刀子、叉子或者银勺子。军官注意到：一个穿着绿色上衣的家伙正玩着银勺子，忽然勺子滑进了他的衣袖里，再也没有出现。

如果换作别人，可能会想：“这关我什么事？”然后就视而不见，或者干脆跟着一块儿胡闹。军官却想：“我不知道那个偷勺子的绿衣服家伙是谁，这可能会引起误会。所以在老板过来结账之前，我得保持沉默。”

当老板过来结账的时候，军官拿起一把银勺子，插进了自己上衣的两个扣眼之间——一个扣眼进，另一个扣眼出，就像士兵们在战场上携带勺子那样，只是没有汤。在军官买单的时候，老板盯着他的外套，心中暗想：“这位先生佩戴的勋章真是别具一格啊，莫非他是曾经与一碗龙虾汤英勇战斗，因此才获得了一把银勺子？或者这把勺子就是属于我的？”

在买完单之后，军官故意板着脸说：“这把勺子是送的，对不对？账单已经够贵的了。”老板回答：“我们这儿可没这规矩！如果您家里没有勺子使，我可以送您一把钢的，但我这把还请您留下！”

这时候军官站了起来，拍着老板的肩膀笑了。“我和那边那位穿绿色外套的先生，我们俩这是跟您开玩笑呢，”他说，“那位绿衣服先生，如果您能把您的勺子从袖子里拿出来，我也把我的勺子交出来。”偷勺子的贼人意识到：他双手不诚实的举动已经落入了一双诚实的眼睛里。他想：最好还是假装开玩笑，把勺子还给店主吧。

就这样，老板的财产终于物归原主，偷勺子的贼也笑了——然而他并没能得意多久。目睹了事件经过的其他顾客们齐心协力追打辱骂着行径暴露的贼人，将他轰出了酒店。老板也让佣人在贼人身后撒上了满满一把没有燃尽的炉灰 [3] 。这位好样儿的军官因为他正直的行为获得了一瓶匈牙利葡萄酒作为奖赏。

注意：不应该偷银勺子！

注意：正义从来不会缺席！

（1810年）

[1] 红牛酒店（Gasthaus Roter Ochsen）是维也纳一家历史悠久的豪华酒店。（说明：书中脚注均为译者注。）

[2] 今捷克共和国东南部地区的旧称，当时属于奥地利帝国领土。

[3] 基督教风俗，有让罪人悔改之意。

廉价午餐

有一句古老的谚语：自己挖坑埋自己。在某个小镇有家狮子客栈，这里发生的故事，恰好就说明了这句话的含义。

有一位衣冠楚楚的客人，他声称要点一份上等的肉汤、一块牛排和一份蔬菜。

客栈老板小心翼翼地问他：“您是否还想来一杯葡萄酒？”

“当然了，”客人回答，“只要对得起我兜里这钱。”

在把这些食物都一扫而光之后，客人掏出一枚磨损的五芬尼 [4] 硬币放到桌上，对客栈老板说：“老板先生，这是我的钱。”

客栈老板大怒：“这叫什么玩意儿？难道这顿饭不值一塔勒 [5] 吗？”

客人回答道：“我可没有说要点一顿价值一塔勒的饭菜，我说的是要点一顿对得起我兜里这钱的饭菜。我的钱就搁在这儿了，再多也没有了。是您饭菜给多了，这是您的错儿。”

很显然，客栈老板因为自己的傲慢和大意被顾客耍弄了，事情本应该到此为止的。然而，故事到这里并没有结束。

“您是个狡猾的流氓，”客栈老板说，“我本该好好收拾您一顿，然而这顿午饭算我白请，我再送给您二十四枚十字币 [6]，请您再去到隔壁的大熊客栈，对他们重复一遍刚才的把戏。”

客栈老板之所以这么说，是因为他和隔壁大熊客栈的同行一直是竞争关系，双方彼此仇视，经常赌咒发誓，Thnbsp；不共戴天。然而狡猾的客人一把攥紧了客栈老板给的钱币，小心地看了一眼门外，对客栈老板道了一声晚安，最后笑着说：“我之前已经去过隔壁的大熊客栈了，是他们家老板让我上您这儿来的。”

鹬蚌相争，渔翁得利。然而如果这两位客栈老板能够有所领悟，并且彼此和解的话，他们还是应该好好感谢这位狡猾的客人。所谓和则两利，斗则两伤。

（1804年）

[4] 芬尼（Pfennig）是德国历史上最小的货币单位之一。

[5] 塔勒（Taler）是德国及中欧地区古代通行的大银币，每枚价值相当于360芬尼。

[6] 十字币（Kreuzerstück）是德国南部及奥地利古代通行的银质辅币，因钱币上有十字架图案而得名，每枚价值相当于4芬尼。

户外午餐

人们常常抱怨：与某些人打交道是多么不容易。这么说当然没问题。然而在这些难打交道的人当中，很多人并不是坏人，只是脾气古怪而已。一旦别人正确理解了他们的思想和行为，并且用适当的方法对待他们，既不固持己见，也不一味附和，就会发现和他们相处其实是非常轻松愉快的。

从前有一位仆人对他的主人就是这么做的。这位仆人时常做错事，有时候也因为不是自己犯下的错误而受到责难。有一天，主人怒气冲冲地回到家里，坐下开始吃午餐。可能是因为汤太烫了，太凉了，或者不冷不热了，总而言之，主人怒了。他抄起盛汤的碗，从敞开的窗户将碗连同里面的汤汤水水一起扔到了外面的庭院里。

这时候仆人是这么做的呢？他毫不犹豫地拿起本来要上到餐桌上的肉，将它像汤那样扔到了庭院里，随后他又把面包、葡萄酒以及包括桌布在内桌上的所有东西一股脑儿都扔了出去。

“你这冒失鬼想要干吗？”主人从沙发上暴跳起来，怒气冲冲地问道。仆人不慌不忙地回答：“如果我错误理解了您的意思的话，还请您原谅我。我没想别的，只是以为您今天想去庭院里吃饭。空气是多么新鲜，天空是多么湛蓝，开花的苹果树是多么可爱，蜜蜂都在花间愉快地享用它们的午餐。”

——这一次汤被扔出了窗外，但以后再也不会了。主人认识到了自己的错误，他欣赏着窗外美妙的春光，为仆人机智的反应会心一笑，并且在心中暗自感谢仆人给他上的这一课。

（1805年）

机智的法官

我们曾经听说过：并不是所有在东方国家发生的事情都是不公平的。下面这件事情就发生在那里。

有一位财主因为疏忽大意遗失了被他缝在布袋里的一大笔钱。当他发现把钱弄丢了以后，他顺理成章地悬赏一百塔勒来奖励那个找到钱的诚实的发现者。

不久就来了一个诚实的好人。“您的钱我找到了。分文不少！如数奉还！”当好人说这番话的时候，他坦荡的目光中透着诚实和善良，真是好样儿的。可是财主只在财产失而复得的瞬间露出了笑容。他不诚实的品性很快就会展现在我们面前。财主一边数着钱，一边暗中盘算：按照我之前的承诺，我将要付给这位发现者一大笔赏金。

“好伙计，”财主说，“布袋里原来一共有八百塔勒，但是现在只剩七百了，我猜您一定从缝隙里拿走了一百塔勒作为赏金，谢谢您。”

这真是太坏了。然而我们的故事并没有结束。诚实永垂不朽，而制造不公平的人却总是搬起石头砸自己的脚。这位诚实的发现者努力捍卫自己的清白正直，他保证自己将捡到的布袋原封不动还给了失主。

最后他们一起来到了法官面前。这两人各执一词，一位声称布袋里原本就有八百塔勒，另一位则坚持自己并没有从布袋里拿走一分一毫。两人唇枪舌剑好一番。

然而这位机智的法官早已看出了这两人一个胸怀磊落，一个心怀鬼胎，于是他眉头一皱，计上心来。他表示相信当事双方的陈述都是真实可靠的，并且做出了如下的判决：“照这么说，你们两人一个遗失了有八百塔勒的布袋，另一个捡到了有七百塔勒的布袋，所以你捡到的这个布袋很显然不是他遗失的那个。你，诚实的发现者，把你捡到的这笔钱先拿回去，直到遗失了七百塔勒的那人过来找你。至于你嘛，我没有什么好说的，你应该耐心等着那个捡到八百塔勒的人来找你。”这就是法官的判决，并且是终审判决。

(1805年)

狡猾的轻骑兵

有一位参加最后一战 [7] 的轻骑兵，在街道上遇到向他迎面走来的一位庄稼汉。他得知这位庄稼汉刚刚由于出售干草而获得了一百古尔登 [8]，正打算带着这笔钱回家。因此他打算向庄稼汉要点儿钱去买烟打酒。谁知道他会不会因为讨到几个子儿而满足呢？

然而那位庄稼汉却指天咒地说：他的最后一枚十字币已经在隔壁的村庄花光了，现在他已经是一文不名。

“这地方离我们驻地不远，”轻骑兵说，“所以我们应该都能找到一些援助；但因为你啥都没有，我也啥都没有，所以我们得先走到圣阿方索 [9] 面前，如果他今天给咱俩恩赐的话，咱俩就像兄弟一样平分。”

所谓的圣阿方索，其实不过是立在乡村小路旁一座古老而人迹罕至的小教堂里的石头雕像。

起初，庄稼汉对徒步朝圣并没有什么兴趣，然而轻骑兵却不由分说，生拉硬拽着他一块儿上了路，还向他强调：圣阿方索从没有让他陷入过困境。这让农夫心中也燃起了一丝希望。

或许在小教堂里有一位轻骑兵的战友或者伙伴在等着他们？才没有呢！那儿只有一座圣阿方索的雕像，他俩在雕像前跪了下来，轻骑兵开始假装虔诚地祈祷。

“现在，”轻骑兵对他的伙伴耳语，“圣人在召唤我了。”他站起身，将自己的耳朵贴在石像的嘴唇上，然后面露喜色地回到他的同伴那里。

“圣人送给我一枚古尔登，就在我的衣兜里。”轻骑兵当着庄稼汉的面从衣兜里掏出一枚他事先藏好的古尔登，然后他俩就如同事先所约定的那样，像兄弟般平分了这笔钱。

庄稼汉觉得这很合理，他催促轻骑兵如法炮制再试一次。轻骑兵依样画葫芦又表演了一通，然后又欣喜若狂地从圣人那里回来了。“这一次好心的圣阿方索给了咱们一百古尔登，就在你的衣兜里。”

当庄稼汉听到这番话的时候，他的面色变得惨白起来，他再三保证，自己连一枚十字币都没剩下。然而轻骑兵告诉庄稼汉：他应该相

信圣人，圣阿方索是不会骗他的。无论结果如何，他都应该把衣兜翻出来清空。

当一百枚古尔登出现在两人面前的时候，庄稼汉也只有打落门牙肚里吞，像轻骑兵之前和他平分自己的一枚古尔登那样，和轻骑兵平分了他这一百枚古尔登。

这件事儿办得机智而巧妙，然而这么做是不对的，尤其是在教堂里。

(1807年)

[7] 指19世纪初由欧洲各国封建君主组成的“反法同盟”围攻拿破仑指挥下的法国军队的战争。

[8] 原文中的Florin在当代西方语言中通常指代英国自1849年开始通行的面值2先令银币，但作者成书距此尚有近半个世纪之久。经译者考据，Florin另有一个含义是17世纪至19世纪德意志神圣罗马帝国内通行的古尔登（Gulden）银币，其价值约为1/2塔勒，即180芬尼，此译法也与下面原文中将要提到的古尔登相吻合。

[9] 圣阿方索（St. Alphonsus，1696—1787），出生于意大利那不勒斯，著名天主教神父，著有多部神学著作，死后由教皇庇护九世册封为圣人。

牙医

有两个懒汉，在一起东游西荡已经有些日子了。他俩懒得去赚那点儿打工的小钱，又身无长技，找不到快速致富的门道，最后变得穷困潦倒，走投无路。

于是他俩想到一个主意：挨家挨户去乞讨，不是为了填饱肚子，而是为了坑蒙拐骗。他俩把讨来的面包又揉又捏，做成小药片和药丸的形状，再混上被虫蛀过的烂木头的碎屑，看起来和药剂师那里的黄色药丸一模一样。

随后他俩从书籍装订商那里花几个巴岑 [10] 买来了一些红色的纸张（漂亮的颜色对每一种骗局都有所帮助）。他们把纸裁开，每张包上六到八颗“药丸”。

现在其中一人来到了镇上的年集，走进了一家红狮酒馆，希望能多招徕一些客人。他要了一杯葡萄酒，然而并不喝，而是坐在角落里，双手托腮露出一副痛苦的表情，不断发出低声的呻吟。

酒馆里纯朴的农民和镇上的人，都认定这个可怜人应该是患上了严重的牙疼。然而怎么办呢？人们同情他，安慰他说这一切很快就会过去，喝完了杯中的葡萄酒，又回到各自的工作中去了。

这时候另一个懒汉出现了。这两个混蛋看起来就好像这辈子从来不认识对方一样。他们并没有彼此注视对方，直到第二个家伙好像被坐在角落里的第一个家伙的呻吟声所吸引。“好伙计，”他说，“您看上去好像犯了牙疼？”然后他缓缓迈着大步走到了对方跟前。

“我是特拉法尔加 [11] 的施瑙齐乌斯拉朋齐乌斯医生。”他接着说。这样一个奇特而响亮的名字就如同醒目的颜色一样，有助于实施诈骗。“如果您服下我的牙疼药丸的话，”他接着说，“即使是如此严重的症状，只需要一颗，最多两颗就可以药到病除。”

“看在上帝的分儿上。”另一个骗子回答。于是这位冒牌的拉朋齐乌斯医生从口袋里掏出红色的纸包，从里面取出一颗药丸，命令病人把药丸放在那颗坏牙上，完全嚼碎。顾客们一个接一个从桌边探过头来，围观这奇迹般的治愈。

接下来发生的事情您可想而知。病人不想从第一颗药丸开始就吹嘘它神奇的功效，于是他发出了一声尖利的号叫。这让医生感到非常满意。“您的疼痛，”他说，“已经开始被打破了。”说着他迅速拿出了

第二颗药丸，用同样的方式让病人服下。

所有的疼痛立刻消失了。病人欢快地一跃而起，擦去额头上由于紧张而冒出的汗珠，尽管他手中其实空空如也，他还是假装对救命恩人千恩万谢，并掏出一笔貌似可观的报酬放到对方手中表示感谢。

这种伎俩看起来非常高明，而且的确行之有效。每一个在场的人现在都想要拥有这种神奇的药丸。“医生”对每包药丸开价二十四个十字币，在几分钟之内药丸就被一抢而空。

这两个骗子一前一后分别离开了，当他俩再次相聚的时候，他们为人们的单纯以及他们因此骗来的钱财而放声大笑。

这些“面包”可真是价值不菲啊。损失二十四枚十字币这笔小钱并不能让人陷入贫困，然而这对受骗的人们来说还不是最糟糕的。软面包球随着时间的流逝会变得像石子儿一样坚硬。在一年半载之后，当一位可怜的受骗者牙疼发作，他自信满满地一颗接一颗用他的坏牙咬碎坚硬的药丸，然而并没有被治愈，而是感到撕心裂肺的疼痛。而这种疼痛就是用他当初从自己兜里掏出去的那二十四枚十字币换来的！

由此我们可以看到，人们是多么容易被四处游荡的流浪汉的伪装所欺骗，这些骗子他们今生前所未见，今后也不会再见。有些读者看到这里可能会想：“我是如此的单纯，曾经也上过类似的当。”

记住：那些知道如何从其他地方骗钱的家伙，当他们来到村庄或者年集上的时候，可不会穿着有破洞的袜子，或者在右脚和左脚的鞋上分别安上白色和黄色的鞋扣。

（1807年）

[10] 巴岑（Batzen），瑞士古代通行的银质辅币，价值相当于1/15古尔登。

[11] 西班牙西南部的海角地区。

小站

一位驿站站长对一位驾着两匹马正向他的驿站驶来的犹太人说：“从这儿开始您必须得有三匹马！因为前面是上坡路，而且路面柔软，这样的话，您得花三小时才能赶到那儿。”

犹太人问：“如果我驾着四匹马，多长时间能赶到那儿？”

——“两小时。”

“驾着六匹马呢？”

——“一小时。”

“您知道的，”犹太人最后说，“给我套上八匹马吧，这样我不用赶路就直接到了！”

（1813年）

一份特殊的酒馆账单

一个恶作剧的念头有时候会成功，有时候却需要付出外套甚至是皮肤作为代价。这一次仅仅是外套。

从前有三个浪荡的大学生，他们在旅途中一路风流快活，衣兜里连一个赫勒 [12] 都没剩下。像往常那样，他们又走进了一家小酒馆，盘算着白吃白喝一顿然后悄悄从后门溜走。

天遂人愿，当时酒馆里只有年轻柔弱的老板娘一个人。他们仨一边胡吃海喝，一边高深莫测地对话，诸如：这个世界已经存在了几千年之久，将来还会存在这么久，Thnbsp；直到某一天的某一个时辰，每一年、每一天、每一小时都会像六千年前那样从头开始。

“是的。”他们中的一位终于发声了，他对坐在窗户旁，手里一边做着针线活儿，一边认真倾听的老板娘说道，“这是我们从学过的书籍里知道的。”

另一位则厚颜无耻地声称：他依稀记得他们在六千年前曾经来过这个地方，他还能清楚地认出老板娘那张美丽而友善的脸庞。

这样的对话持续了好长一段时间，老板娘看起来越是相信他们说的一切，这几个年轻的浪荡子弟越是卖力地享用着葡萄酒、烤肉和纽结面包。最后他们账单上的数字一路攀升到了五古尔登外加十六枚十字币。当他们吃饱喝足之后，哥仨打算按照之前计划的那样逃之夭夭。

“老板娘女士，”其中一位说，“这回哥几个手头有点儿紧。这条街上有很多酒馆，我们有幸找到了您这位聪明的女士，我们希望这次您作为老朋友能让我们赊账。如果您不介意的话，当六千年后哥几个再回来的时候，咱们新账旧账一块儿算。”

聪明的老板娘并没有面露愠色，而是显得十分愉快。她表示：几位先生如此满意，这让她也十分高兴。随后她不声不响地站在了酒馆的门口，要求这几位先生立刻把六千年前欠下的五古尔登外加十六枚十字币的账付了。因为按照他们所说，今天所发生的一切，从前已经原封不动地发生过一遍了。

不幸的是，这时村里的警长正领着几个精壮的汉子，走进酒馆想要为他们的荣誉喝上一杯。这对这几位瓮中之鳖来说可不是什么好事儿。很快警长就做出了判决：“欠账六千年可不是件光荣的事情，这

几位先生要么立刻把债还清，要么就把身上崭新的上衣脱下来抵债。”

哥仨不得不选择了第二个选项，而老板娘也保证：如果六千年后他们几个带着钱回来的话，她会衣服一件一件全部还给他们。

这个故事就发生在1805年4月17日泽灵根 [13] 的酒馆里。

(1808年)

[12] 赫勒 (Heller) 是德国古代通行的铜质辅币，1赫勒价值相当于1/2芬尼。

[13] 泽灵根 (Segringen) ，今德国南部巴符州一小镇。

意外的重逢

五十多年前，在瑞典的法伦有一位年轻的矿工，他亲吻着美丽的未婚妻，对她说：“在圣露西亚节 [14] 我们的爱情将会在牧师手中得到祝福，我们将成为夫妻，共同建筑爱巢。”

“那里面将充满了宁静和爱，”美丽的未婚妻带着甜蜜的微笑说，“你是我的唯一和全部，离开你，我除了坟墓哪里也不想去。”

然而，他俩还没来得及站在圣露西亚面前，牧师还没有机会说：“如果有谁反对这两位新人结成婚姻的，请站出来陈述理由。”——死亡就站出来了。

有一天早上，小伙子穿着他乌黑的矿工制服从姑娘的房前经过——矿工总是穿着他自己的寿衣——他又一次敲响了她的窗户，对她说早安，然而他却没能对她说晚安。他再也没能从矿井里回来。

那天早上，姑娘因为无聊系上了她为婚礼准备的带着红边的黑色围巾。当得知未婚夫的噩耗之后，她把围巾扯了下来，为他哭泣，念念不忘。

与此同时，葡萄牙的里斯本城被地震摧毁 [15]，七年战争 [16] 结束了，弗兰茨一世皇帝 [17] 去世了，耶稣会 [18] 被解散，波兰被瓜分 [19] 95年波兰被俄、普、奥三国最终瓜分。 [20] 去世，施特林泽 [21] 被处决，美国宣告独立，法国和西班牙联军没能攻破直布罗陀 [22]。土耳其人将斯坦因将军关进了匈牙利的“老兵山洞” [23]，约瑟夫皇帝 [24] 也去世了。瑞典的古斯塔夫国王7从俄罗斯手里夺取了芬兰，法国大革命引发了长期的战争，利奥波德二世皇帝 [25] 也进了坟墓。拿破仑征服了普鲁士 [26]，英国人炮轰哥本哈根 [27]。农民们播种又收割，磨坊主磨面，铁匠们敲打，矿工们在地下工场中挖掘金属矿脉。然而，在1809年圣约翰节◆◆圣约翰节（Johannistag），基督教节日，为纪念施洗者约翰——为耶稣洗礼的基督教先知而设立，时间通常在每年6月24日。◆◆前后，法伦的矿工们想要在两条竖井之间打开一条通道，在距离地面三百多腕尺 [28] 的碎石和酸水中，他们挖出了一具年轻男子的尸体。他在绿矾水的保护下，毫发未损，栩栩如生。人们可以清晰地辨认出他的容貌和年龄，仿佛他在一小时之前刚刚死去，或者正在工作间隙打盹儿。

当人们把尸体抬出矿井的那天，他的父母双亲、好友故知都早已离世，没有人能够认出这个长眠的小伙子，或者述说他不幸的遭遇。

直到矿工的未婚妻认出了那张某一天从她面前消逝、一去不返的面庞。

她苍白的脸上已布满皱纹，拄着一根拐棍来到广场上辨认她的未婚夫。她跪倒在爱人的尸体前，心中的喜悦胜过了忧伤。她内心波澜起伏，久久才平静下来。“他是我的未婚夫，”她终于说道，“五十年来我一直牵挂着他，如今在上帝的安排之下，我终于在离世之前再次见到了他。在我们婚礼之前八天他下了矿井，从此一去不返。”

那位昔日的未婚妻，无情的时光已经在她脸上刻满了皱纹，而她的未婚夫，面容却依然像年轻时候那样英俊。好像在五十年后，她胸中年轻时爱的火焰又被重新点燃了，然而他却再也不能发出笑声，眼睛再也不能睁开了。围观的人们都被这悲伤的情景感动得热泪盈眶。

最后她让矿工们把他的尸体抬进了她的小屋，就仿佛他是他所拥有的唯一东西，而他也拥有这样的权利，直到在教堂墓地他的墓穴被挖好。

第二天，墓穴已经挖好了，矿工们抬着尸体走向教堂墓地。她从一个箱子里拿出那条带着红边的黑色围巾系上，穿上她最好的衣服，陪伴着他走上她每周日去教堂的必经之路，就仿佛这是他俩的婚礼，而不是他的葬礼。

当人们把他的尸体放进教堂墓地的墓穴，她说：“安息吧，在冰冷的婚床上再待上几天，不要感到时光漫长。我还有一点儿事情要处理，重逢的日子不远了。——大地已经将你还给了我，它不会再次将你夺走的。”她一步三回头地离开了。

(1811年)

[14] 圣露西亚节 (Sankt Luciä) 是北欧国家通行的基督教节日，为纪念罗马帝国时期的女圣人圣露西亚 (Sankt Luciä, 283—304) 而设立，时间通常在每年的12月13日。

[15] 1755年11月1日，里斯本发生了迄今为止欧洲发生过的最大地震，地震引发了30米高的海啸，整个城市被摧毁，6~10万人遇难，占当时里斯本人口的1/4至1/5。

[16] 1756年至1763年欧洲各国之间围绕着王位继承权和殖民地利益而爆发的一系列战争，最后以英国、普鲁士等一方胜利，法国、奥地利、俄罗斯等一方失败告终。

[17] 欧洲历史上有多位名叫弗兰茨一世 (Franz der Erste) 的君主，此处应为哈布斯堡王朝的弗兰茨·史蒂芬 (Franz I. Stephan,

1708—1765)。

[18] 1534年成立于法国的天主教修会，1773年被教皇敕令解散。

[19] 1★ ★ ★ 此处应为古斯塔夫三世 (Gustav III, 1746—1792)。

[20] ，玛丽亚·特利莎女皇★ ★ ★ 玛丽亚·特利莎 (Maria Theresia)，奥地利女君主 (1717—1780)。

[21] 约翰·弗里德里希·施特林泽 (Johann Friedrich Struensee, 1737—1772)，德国人，丹麦和挪威国王克里斯蒂安七世 (Christian VII, 1749—1808) 的御医，因篡夺权位以及与王后私通被斩首分尸。

[22] 直布罗陀 (Gibraltar)，西班牙伊比利亚半岛最南端的海岬，1704年在西班牙王位继承战争中被英军占领，此后西班牙多次设法收复，至今未果。

[23] 此事应发生在1787年至1792年第六次俄土战争期间，当时奥地利帝国参与了俄罗斯一方。

[24] 约瑟夫二世 (Joseph II, 1741—1790)，奥地利帝国皇帝，特利莎女皇之子。

[25] 利奥波德二世 [Leopold II. (HRR), 1747—1792]，神圣罗马帝国皇帝波西米亚、克罗地亚及匈牙利国王。

[26] 1806年普鲁士军队在第四次反法同盟中被法军彻底击败，被迫于次年签订了割地赔款的季利济特条约。

[27] 1807年，由于害怕中立国丹麦-挪威王国与拿破仑领导下的法国结盟，英国军队在不宣而战的情况下对该国首都哥本哈根进行了为期三天的炮击，造成了大量人员财产伤亡损失。

[28] 腕尺 (Ellen)，德国古代长度单位，1腕尺相当于现代公制的45 ~ 56厘米。

狡猾的朝圣者

几年前，有一个四处游荡的流浪汉，他把自己打扮成虔诚的朝圣者的样子，声称自己来自帕德伯恩 [29]，正走在朝拜耶路撒冷神圣墓地 [30] 的路上。

在米尔海姆 [31] 的驿站，他曾经向人打听：“这儿离耶路撒冷还有多远？”

别人告诉他：“需要七百个小时，但如果你从毛兴 [32] 的小路走的话，就可以省下一刻钟的时间 [33]。”

这听上去还不赖，所谓不积跬步，无以至千里嘛。毕竟节省或者赚到一个巴岑的机会，要比获得一个古尔登的机会多得多。

然而十五个巴岑毕竟就相当于一个古尔登。所以在七百个小时的旅程中，每五小时里就能省下一刻钟的话，谁知道一共能够省下多少时间呢。

但是这位冒牌的朝圣者可不是这么想的，他就是一门心思东游西荡，蹭吃蹭喝。

一个乞丐永远不应该忘记一句古老的谚语：不要去一个贫穷的村庄乞讨，因为讨来的东西还抵不上一路上鞋底的磨损，尤其是光着脚的时候更不要去。朝圣者也是这么想的，所以他很快就回到了大路上，这里有富人们的房屋和丰盛的食物。

这个无赖并不满足于作为一个普通朝圣者从一双双充满同情而虔诚的手中获取的寻常食物，他除了“营养丰富”的卵石汤 [34] 以外，什么都不想喝。

只要在路旁看到上好的酒馆，比如说克罗琴根 [35] 的驿站，或者施林根 [36] 的巴塞尔酒吧，他就装出一副极其谦卑和饥饿的样子，向别人乞讨一碗由清水和卵石煮成的汤，看在上帝的份儿上，钱自然是不付的。

当好心的老板娘对他说“虔诚的朝圣者，鹅卵石太硬了，在胃里没法儿消化！”的时候，他回答道：“所以我才要吃它！去耶路撒冷的路这么远，这玩意儿吃下去比面包顶饿！当然如果您能送我一杯葡萄酒的话，肯定会有助于我的消化。”

这时候老板娘会说：“然而，虔诚的朝圣者，这样的一碗汤没法

儿给您提供足够的能量啊。”

朝圣者这样回答：“如果您能把清水换成肉汁的话，肯定会更有营养的。”

现在老板娘给他端来了这样一碗汤，并且说：“底料还没煮得那么软。”朝圣者回答道：“是啊，而且肉汁看上去也太稀了。您能不能往汤里再添上满满几勺蔬菜或者一块肉，或者二者都添上？”

当好心的老板娘把蔬菜和肉加进汤碗里之后，朝圣者说道：“上帝保佑您！现在请把面包给我，我要喝汤了。”

于是朝圣者扔下他的手杖，挽起衣袖，坐下了。他满心欢喜地端起他的杰作，将最后一粒面包屑，最后一根肉丝，最后一滴葡萄酒和肉汁都吃喝得干干净净。然后用餐巾或者袖口擦了擦嘴，或者根本不擦嘴，说道：“老板娘女士，您的汤把我撑得太饱了，所以我无法勉为其难吃下这些美丽的鹅卵石了。太可惜了！但还是请您把它们收好。当我回来的时候，我会送给您一枚来自亚实基伦 [37] 的神圣贝壳或者一朵来自杰里科 [38] 的玫瑰。”

(1808年)

[29] 帕德博恩 (Paderborn)，德国中西部城市。

[30] 此处指位于耶路撒冷的耶稣墓地。

[31] 米尔海姆 (Müllheim)，德国西南部城市。

[32] 毛兴 (Mauchen)，米尔海姆附近一小镇。

[33] 考虑到作者成书的年代距今已有两个世纪，德语原文中的“七百小时”其实是路人的信口开河，只是大概虚数；而“一巴岑”与“一刻钟”则分别是流浪汉作为缺乏教育的社会底层人物所能理解的最小货币和时间单位，因此用二者来做类比，虽然与“一古尔登”和“五小时”在比例上并不准确，但非常符合其思维逻辑。

[34] 卵石汤 (Kieselstein suppen) 源自一个古老的欧洲民间传说：一群饥饿的旅人谎称用清水煮石头可以做出人间美味，以此骗村民们将自己的食物投入锅中与其分享，也被称为“斧头汤”或者“扭扣汤”，其含义与中文的“空手套白狼”有相似之处。

[35] 克罗琴根 (Krotzingen)，德国西南部小城。

[36] 施林根 (Schliengen)，德国西南部小城。

[37] 亚实基伦 (Ashkelon)，以色列南部古城，临近地中海东岸。

[38] 杰里科（Jericho），以色列中部古城，位于死海北岸河谷中，因盛产玫瑰而著称。

司令官和轻装步兵在赫斯菲尔德

在上一次与普鲁士-俄罗斯联军的战役中 [39]，法国军队和大部分联盟 [40] 军队都驻扎在波兰和普鲁士境内，其中有一支来自巴登 [41] 的轻装步兵队伍在黑森 [42] 的赫斯菲尔德 [43] 担任警戒任务。此地战端初起之时，就已经被皇帝 [44] 派兵占领，据为己有了。

相比旧的统治者而言，经常为非作歹的占领军显然不受当地居民的待见，因此他们在赫斯菲尔德也遇到了许多反抗，其中一起是一位法国军官被杀害了。

法国皇帝正在前线与不计其数的敌军鏖战，他可不允许敌人在他身后捣乱，造成这样的事情发生，因为即使是一点星星之火，也可能卷起燎原的烈焰。

赫斯菲尔德可怜的居民们，很快就被要求为自己鲁莽的行为承担后果。按照法国皇帝的命令，赫斯菲尔德市必须遭到劫掠，然后四处纵火，被烧成灰烬。

赫斯菲尔德是一个居民富足，有着许多工厂和美丽建筑的地方。当这样一个坏消息传来的时候，这些可怜的老乡亲们是一种什么样的心情，大家可想而知。穷人们仅有的身家将被人一把夺走，而富人们的财产则将被人用一辆辆马车运走。广场旁的豪宅和角落里的寒舍将化成同样的灰烬，就如同教堂墓地也是富人和穷人共同的归宿。

然而，最坏的情况并没有发生。在法国驻卡塞尔 [45] 和赫斯菲尔德司令官的求情下，惩罚明显减轻了：只有四座房屋被烧毁，损失有限；然而劫掠还将照旧执行，这依然是非常严厉的惩罚。

当不幸的居民们听到最终判决的时候，他们恐惧万分，魂飞魄散。他们对在仁慈的司令官面前进行徒劳无益的抱怨和请求已经不抱任何希望，只想争分夺秒在劫掠开始前将自己最重要的财物抢救出来。

恐怖的时刻终于来临了，鼓声在不幸的人们的号啕大哭声中响起。士兵们匆匆忙忙穿过恐惧、奔逃、绝望的人群，来到了他们的集合点。

于是这位正直的司令官站在他的轻装步兵队列前面，他首先声情并茂地向他们描述了居民们的悲惨遭遇，随后说道：“士兵们！劫掠的许可从现在开始生效。谁有兴趣参加的，请出列。”

没有人站出来，一个都没有！司令官又重复了一遍命令，依然没有人迈步。司令官表示：如果没有人想要参与劫掠，那他就只好自己去了。然而依然没有人愿意服从。于是显而易见，这次任务就被放弃了。

当居民们知道这件事情的时候，他们的心情就仿佛刚刚从一场噩梦中醒来一样。他们的快乐简直无法形容。他们立刻派出一位代表去见司令官，向他的宽宏大量表示感谢，并且送给他一份丰厚的礼物作为报答。谁知道如果没有他将会发生什么！

然而司令官却拒绝了礼物，他说，自己做好事不是为了钱财。

这个故事于1807年发生在赫斯菲尔德，这座小城至今依然屹立。

(1808年)

[39] 此处应指1806年至1807年的第四次反法同盟。

[40] 此处指1806年至1813年由法国扶植德意志地区众邦国组建的“莱茵联盟”(Rheinbund)。

[41] 巴登(Baden)，当时为“莱茵联盟”境内公国，领土包括今日德国西南部巴符州南部地区。

[42] 黑森(Hessen)，当时亦为“莱茵联盟”境内公国，领土包括今日德国中部黑森州大部分地区。

[43] 赫斯菲尔德(Hersfeld)，黑森公国境内城市。

[44] 此处指拿破仑一世。

[45] 卡塞尔(Kassel)，德国中部城市，当时为黑森公国首都。

坏的奖赏

在上一次与普鲁士的战争中，法国人攻入了普鲁士国王 [46] 所在的城市柏林 [47]，许多属于王室的财产被夺走，它们被人占有，或者被变卖。因为战争从不会带来任何东西，它只会掠夺东西。

人们发现了许多精心藏匿的财宝，作为战利品的一部分，但王室财产并没有全都被找到。有大量属于王室的木质建材尚未被发现，保存完好。

在国王的侍从中有一个无赖，他想着借此好好赚上一笔。他跑到法国司令官那里，挤眉弄眼地告诉他：在某某地方有一批质量上乘的橡木和杉木，价值数千古尔登。

然而这位正直的司令官婉言谢绝了这种背叛行为，他说：“就让那些上乘的木料待在它们原来的地方吧，不应该对敌人赶尽杀绝。”

当国王回国之后，他命令用这些木材给这位“忠诚”的侍从建起了一座崭新的绞刑架，以此作为对他“忠诚”的报答。

在莱茵兰 [48] 的朋友如果欣赏这个故事的话，可以试着在自家的森林里挖一挖，或许能找到一些当时被遗忘的木材呢。

（1809年）

[46] 此处指腓特烈·威廉三世（Frederick William III，1770—1840）。

[47] 1806年10月，法军在与第四次反法同盟的战争中大败普军，占领了包括柏林在内的普鲁士大部分地区，腓特烈·威廉三世被迫逃亡到位于东部的柯尼希堡（Königsberg）。

[48] 莱茵兰（Rhineland），今属德国西部的莱法州，当时为普鲁士王国领土。

奇怪的鬼故事

去年秋天，有一位陌生的绅士来到了施林根这个美好的地方。在登山的时候，他放弃骑马，选择了步行。在途中，他向一位克罗伊茨纳赫 [49] 人讲述了一个他亲身经历的故事。

半年前，这位绅士在丹麦旅行，一天深夜他来到了一座村庄，村庄不远处的山丘上有一座整洁的小城堡，他决定就在村里过夜了。

客栈老板告诉他，当天晚上已经没有足够的床位了，而明天早上将有一场行刑，他将和三个刽子手一起过夜。于是这位绅士回答说：“我要去那座小城堡，那里的领主或者主人会让我进去，并且给我提供一张空床铺。”

老板说：“那里有许多挂着丝绸床幔的美丽的床，就在居高临下的房间里，而我负责保管城堡的钥匙。然而我不建议您去那里。三个月之前，城堡仁慈的主人和他的妻子儿女一起出了远门，打那以后，这座小城堡就被鬼魂占据了。城堡的看守和仆人们都待不下去了，其他去过小城堡的人就没有再去第二次的。”

这位陌生的绅士笑了。他是一个勇敢的人，对鬼魂毫不惧怕。他说：“我想去试试。”

尽管客栈老板对此表示反对，他还是从老板手里拿到了钥匙。随后他准备好了拜访鬼魂所需要的物品，与一直跟随他的仆人一起走进了城堡。

在城堡里，他衣不解带，睡意全无，一心等待着将要发生的事情。他把两盏点亮的灯放在桌上，旁边摆上两把上好膛的手枪，看着用细细的红丝带悬挂在镜框下面的金色纸片，欣赏着美丽的图画，回想着与莱茵兰发小儿共度的往日时光。很长时间过去了，可什么都没有发生。

然而到了午夜时分，教堂的屋顶开始闪烁，大钟敲响了十二点，一片乌云飘过来遮住了城堡，巨大的雨滴敲打着窗户，发出比敲打大门大三倍的响声。一个有着漆黑而空洞的眼睛、半肘长的鼻子、突出的牙齿和山羊胡子、全身长满了乱蓬蓬的毛发的身影开始在房间里游荡，并且发出可怕的鼻音：“我是梅菲斯特 [50]，欢迎来到我的宫殿。你们要和你们的老婆孩子永别了！”

陌生的绅士感到一股冷气从大脚趾上兴起，顺着后背一直蹿到了

睡帽上。至于他可怜的仆人，就更不用想了。

然而有着恐怖鬼脸的梅菲斯特正向他走来，膝盖抬得高高的，就好像在火焰上漫步一样。可怜的绅士想：以上帝的名义，在此一举了。他勇敢地站起身，用枪指着那个鬼魂，喊道：“不许动！不然我就开枪了！”

在这种情况下，没有任何鬼怪会感到害怕，因为尽管人们想开枪，但要么枪打不响，要么子弹对鬼怪毫发无损，反而飞回来击中开枪自卫的那个人。

然而梅菲斯特却高高地举起他的大脚趾，慢慢转过身，像他来的时候那样迈着缓慢的步伐离开了。

当陌生人看到魔鬼在火药面前心生畏惧的时候，他想：现在没有危险了。他用另一只手拿起灯，蹑手蹑脚地慢慢跟在鬼魂的身后。而这位仆人，他用最快的速度蹿出城堡，回到了客栈，他宁可跟刽子手在一起过夜，也不要和鬼魂待在一起。

然而，在过道里，鬼魂忽然从大胆的跟踪者的眼前消失了，看起来就仿佛沉入了地底一样。

当绅士想要再往前走几步一探究竟的时候，他脚下的地板忽然消失了，他掉进了一个地洞里。他看到迎面而来的火光，相信自己马上就要一命归西了。然而当他的十个脚趾终于安全落地的时候，他才发现自己身在一个有着穹顶的地窖里，毫发无损地躺在一堆干草上。有六个外形奇特的家伙围着火堆站着，梅菲斯特也在其中。在他们周围摆放着各种各样稀奇古怪的装备，在两张桌子上堆满了闪闪发光的伪造塔勒，一张比一张更迷人。

这时候陌生人终于恍然大悟：原来他们是一个伪造钱币的秘密团伙，所有人都是有血有肉的活人。他们利用城堡主人不在的时机，将造币设备秘密运进了城堡，有一些熟悉城堡情况的内部人员或许也参与其中。为了保证他们的秘密行动不被打扰和发现，他们开始装神弄鬼，每个来到城堡里的人都惊恐万状，以至于下次再也不来了。

然而现在旅行者开始为他没有听从村里客栈老板的劝告而感到后悔了。因为他被塞进一个狭窄的洞穴里一处阴森的小屋，并且听到他们的“战争法庭”在讨论对自己的处治方案。

“最好还是把他宰了，然后把尸体埋起来。”有人说。

然而另一个人却说：“我们应该先审问一下他，他是谁，他叫什么名字，他从哪儿来。”

当他们听到他是一位贵族绅士，并且要去哥本哈根觐见国王的时

候，他们面面相觑，瞪大了眼睛。在把他扔回阴森的储藏室之后，他们说：“这下大事不好了，一旦他失踪了，人们就会从客栈老板那里知道他进了城堡再也没有出来的事情。轻骑兵一夜之间就会来到这里，把我们揪出来。我们长期的苦心经营，就要毁于一旦了。”

他们表示愿意放过这位俘虏，前提是他发誓不把他们的秘密泄露出去。此外他们还威胁说，他们会在哥本哈根派人监视他。他们还要求他在誓词里把自己的住处说出来。

他说：“在野人左手附近有着绿色百叶窗的大房子。”

然后他们送给他一杯勃艮第葡萄酒作为起床饮料。在天亮之前他整晚看着他们如何铸造假塔勒。

当阳光穿过缝隙照进了地窖的时候，街上传来了啪啪的鞭子声和哞哞的牛叫声。陌生人告别了阴暗的地窖，向主人人们的“友好招待”表示了感谢，带着欢快的神情回到了客栈，全然不顾他的怀表、烟斗和手枪还留在城堡里。

老板说：“谢天谢地，终于再见到您了，我整个晚上都没睡着。您那边怎么样？”

然而旅人却想：“一诺千金。虽然是为了保命而许下的誓言，然而也不应该将它泄露出来，否则就是对上帝的亵渎。”

所以他一言不发。这时钟声又敲响了，那些可怜的罪犯已经把现场清理干净，一切就这样过去了。

在哥本哈根，他也对这件事情守口如瓶，几乎都快想不起来了。

然而，在几个星期后，邮局给他送来了一个小箱子，里边装着一对儿崭新的带着银饰价值不菲的手枪，一块崭新的镶嵌着昂贵宝石的金质怀表，一个带着金链子和金线刺绣烟袋的土耳其烟斗，还有一封短信。

短信上写着：“我们给您送上这份礼物，以此表达对给您带来惊吓的补偿，以及对您站在我们一边、保持沉默的感谢。现在一切都过去了，如果您愿意的话，可以把这个故事讲出来了。”

这就是那位绅士之所以把这个故事讲给克罗伊茨纳赫人听的原因。当他在登山途中听到赫廷根正午时分的钟声，掏出来对时的，就是他所说的那块金表。后来在巴塞尔的仙鹤旅馆 [51]，有一位法国将军出价七十五枚崭新的杜布伦 [52]。然而他没有答应。

(1809年)

[49] 克罗伊茨纳赫（Krenzach），德国西部莱法州城市。

[50] 梅菲斯特（Mephistopheles）是当时德国文学中常见的魔鬼形象，在同时代歌德的《浮士德》中亦有出现。

[51] 仙鹤旅馆（Gasthof zum Storchen）是巴塞尔一家历史悠久的豪华酒店。

[52] 杜布伦（Dublone），古代欧洲通行的金币，西班牙、法国、瑞士等均有铸造，1杜布伦价值约相当于3古尔登。

废话连篇

有一位富裕的施瓦本 [53] 绅士将他的儿子送到巴黎去学习法语和礼仪。过了一年多，这位父亲的仆人也来到了巴黎。

当年轻的绅士看到仆人的时候，他充满惊喜和友善地叫出了声：“嗨，汉斯！哪阵风把你吹来的？家里怎么样？有什么消息吗？”

“没啥消息，威廉先生，只是一年前牧场工人送给您的那只美丽的乌鸦在十天前死了。”

“可怜的动物，”这位威廉先生回答，“它怎么死的？”

“唉，您知道，当咱家美丽的马一匹接一匹地死去之后，它可能吞吃了太多的尸体。我就知道会这样。”

“什么？我父亲那四匹美丽的摩尔马 [54] 都死了？”威廉先生问道，“这是怎么回事？”

“当咱家的房子和农场着火的时候，它们因为运水而劳累过度，我们对此也无能为力。”

“天哪！”威廉先生惊叫，“咱家的房子烧了？这是什么时候的事儿？”

“那天晚上我们正在火化您父亲的尸体，有人一不留神，一颗小火星就把房子点着了。”

“多么不幸的消息！”威廉先生哀号着，“那我的妹妹还好吧？”

“您还没出嫁的妹妹生了个没有父亲的孩子，是个男孩。这就是令尊大人被活活气死的原因。除此以外就没有什么消息了。”他补充道。

(1809年)

[53] 施瓦本 (Schwabenland)，今德国巴伐利亚州西南部地区，当时为公国。

[54] 摩尔马 (Mohren schimmel) 指肤色类似摩尔人的棕黑色马种。

赔本买卖

在大都市伦敦及其周围地区，有许多极其愚蠢的傻瓜，他们对别人的金钱、怀表或者昂贵的戒指有着孩子般的喜好，不弄到一模一样的，誓不罢休。

他们常常通过诡计或者欺骗来达到自己的目的，更多时候则是通过明火执仗的抢劫，这样的抢劫有时就发生在光天化日之下开阔的公路上。其中有的成功了，有的则失败了。伦敦的狱卒或者刽子手可以讲述很多这样的故事。

有一天，一个奇特的故事就发生在一位高贵而富有的先生身上。

一个美丽的夏日，国王和许多贵族仕女聚集在一座巨大的王家花园中，那里有一条幽长曲折的道路，一直通往森林的深处。

有许多其他人等也聚集在那里，他们并没有兴趣花几个小时去小路上一探究竟，只要看到他们热爱的国王和王室成员就感到非常愉快和幸运了。

人们又吃又喝，歌舞嬉戏，成双成对或者独自一人在美丽的小路上或者茂密的玫瑰花丛中漫步。

一个衣冠楚楚的人，打扮得就好像众人中的一员，在外套下面掖着一把手枪，藏身在花园与森林交界处的一棵树后，等着有人路过。

说曹操，曹操就到。有一位绅士戴着闪闪发光的戒指、叮当作响的表链、钻石镶嵌的带扣、宽阔的绶带和金星，心无杂念地走进了凉爽的树荫里。

正在他心无杂念的时候，那个家伙从他面前的树林里走出来，给了这位好先生一个“谦卑的欢迎”。他从外套下面的马甲里掏出手枪，将枪口指着绅士的胸口，并且礼貌地要求他不要作声，因为他不想让别人听到他们之间的谈话。

当人站在枪口前面的时候，难免会感到恐惧，因为你也不知道枪里装着什么。

这位绅士理智地思考了一下：身体比钱财更有价值，而失去戒指总比失去手指要强。于是他同意保持沉默。

“尊贵的老爷，”这家伙开口了，“您能不能把您的两块金表出一个好价钱卖了呢？我们的校长每天都要找别人对表，而日晷上的刻度又

非常模糊，我们总是不清楚准确的时间。”

不管这位富有的绅士是否情愿，他不得不以几个斯蒂博 [55] 的价格将怀表卖给了这个无赖，这点儿钱甚至都不够去喝上一杯四分之一升的酒。

就这样，这个无赖右手举着枪，左手拿着几个小钱，一件一件地从绅士那里买来了戒指、带扣和金星。

到最后绅士想：“终于完事儿了，谢天谢地！”可这时无赖却耍起了新的花招：“尊贵的老爷，鉴于咱俩之间相处得还是挺融洽的，您想不想从我这儿买点儿东西呢？”

绅士思考了一下这句话，觉得面对这桩糟糕买卖，还是应该有个好的表情，于是说道：“让我瞧瞧吧！”

于是无赖就从口袋里掏出了各种各样的小玩意儿，Thnbsp；这些都是他从“件件两巴岑”的杂货店里买来的，现在可算是找到一位不还价的买主了。那位好绅士不得不把所有的东西以高昂的价格一件一件从他手里买过来。

到最后，除了手枪无赖把所有东西都卖光了，而绅士的绿色丝绸钱包里还剩下一些迷人的杜布伦。无赖还在说着：“尊贵的老爷，您难道不想用手里剩下的钱，买下我这把手枪吗？它是由伦敦最好的工匠打造的，看在咱哥俩的情面上，两个杜布伦卖给你。”

绅士惊讶地想：“你这个蠢贼！”然后买下了手枪。

当他把手枪买下之后，他立刻掉转枪口喊道：“不许动，坏家伙，立刻给我往前走，我叫你去哪儿你就去哪儿，否则我就一枪毙了你。”

无赖一下蹿进了树林，嘴里喊着：“尽管开枪吧，尊贵的老爷，枪没上膛！”

绅士扣动了扳机，枪果然没有响。他把通条插进了枪管，里面一粒火药都没有。

这时那个贼人已经逃进了树林深处，这位高贵的英国人只好面红耳赤地回去了。今天这段可怕的经历，够他好好回味一阵子的。

（1809年）

[55] 斯蒂博（Stüber）是古代荷兰发行的辅币，每枚价值相当于4芬尼。

秘密斩首

我不知道，在某一年6月17日的早晨，兰道 [56] 的刽子手是否曾经再三向我们在天上的父虔诚地祈祷。

但在他的祈祷中，他肯定没有祈求一封来自南锡 [57] 的短信在那一天到来。

在这封信上写着：“兰道的邻居！您必须带上砍头用的大剑，立刻到南锡来。在这儿您将被告知要执行的任务，并且得到丰厚的报酬。”——一辆旅行马车已经停在了他家门前。

刽子手想：“这是我的工作。”于是就坐进了马车。

在离南锡还有一小时车程的时候，太阳已经和血红色的晚霞一起落下，夜幕降临了。车夫悄悄把车停下，说了声：“明天又是个好天气。”

这时候路边来了三个全副武装的壮汉，上车坐在刽子手的身旁，他们向他保证不会伤害他，但他必须让他们把他的眼睛蒙住。当把刽子手的眼睛蒙好以后，他们说道：“车夫，走吧。”

车夫驾车继续向前。刽子手感觉足足过去了十二个小时，但却不知道自己身处何方。一路上他听到了午夜猫头鹰的叫声，听到了公鸡的打鸣声，听到了早晨的钟声。

马车终于再次停了下来，有人把刽子手带进了一所房子，给了他一杯饮料和一根上好的香肠。

当食物和饮料让他恢复了体力之后，有人领着他在房子里继续前行，进进出出穿过一道道门，上上下下走过一级级台阶，当他的蒙眼布被解开的时候，他发现自己身处一座巨大的大厅之中。大厅的四周被黑布遮蔽，桌上点着蜡烛。

在大厅中央的椅子上坐着一个人，她的脖子裸露着，脸上戴着面具，她的嘴好像被什么东西堵住了，因此不能说话，只能发出呜咽声。

在四周的墙边站着许多穿着黑色外衣，脸部蒙着黑色面纱的绅士，这样下次当他再遇见他们的时候，就完全认不出他们来了。其中的一个人命令刽子手举起剑，把坐在椅子上的那个人的头颅砍下来。

可怜的刽子手感觉心脏里好像被冰凉的水灌满了，他表示：他的

剑是为了执行法律而铸造的，他不能用谋杀去亵渎它。

这时候其中一位绅士掏出一把手枪，从远处指着刽子手说：“您选吧！如果您不执行命令的话，那您再也见不到兰道的教堂钟楼了。”

刽子手想起了家中的老婆孩子。“既然别无选择的话，”他说，“愿我剑下这无辜之人的鲜血，流到你们的脖子上。”他一刀砍下去，那个可怜的人顿时身首异处。

行刑结束之后，这些绅士给了刽子手一个钱袋，里面装着二百杜布伦。有人把他的眼睛又蒙上了，领着他坐上了同一辆马车，还是同样那几个人陪着他一起返程。

当马车最后又停下来的时候，他被允许离开马车。解开蒙眼布，他发现自己又回到了那天晚上他遇见三个男人时距离南锡一小时车程的地方。然而这一次，马车匆匆掉头回去了。

这就是兰道的刽子手所经历的故事。这位好朋友非常遗憾自己无法说出是怎样一个可怜的灵魂通过这条血腥的道路去了天堂。

是啊，没有人知道她是谁，她犯了什么罪，也没有人知道她的坟墓在哪里。

（1810年）

[56] 在德国和奥地利有多处以兰道（Landau）为名的城镇，根据上下文推断，此处应为今日德国西部莱法州境内的兰道（Landau in der Pfalz）。

[57] 南锡（Nanzig），今法国东部洛林省首府，历史上曾数次在法德之间易主。

假宝石

在斯特拉斯堡 [58] 的梅齐格门A [59] 前有一座美丽的花园，任何人只要有钱就可以进去参加一些有趣而公平的娱乐活动。这其中就有一个衣冠楚楚的男人，像别人一样，端着个小啤酒杯坐在那里。他的手指上还戴着一枚戒指，戒指上镶嵌着一枚价值昂贵的宝石，闪闪发光。

这时候来了一个犹太人。他说道：“我没有恶意，先生。您戒指上的宝石真漂亮。它闪闪发光的样子，难道不像祭司亚伦 [60] 胸牌上的乌灵与土明 [61] 吗？”

这个衣冠楚楚的陌生人简短而生硬地说：“这块宝石是假的。如果它是真的，可能就已经戴在别人的手指，而不是我的手指上了。”

犹太人请求陌生人把戒指给他看看。他把戒指拿在手里，翻来覆去，左看右看。“这块宝石难道不是真的吗？”他想着。随后他向陌生人出价两枚崭新的杜布伦购买这枚戒指。

那个陌生人不情愿地说：“我骗您干吗？您已经听到了，这块宝石是假的。”

犹太人请求把宝石给一位行家鉴定一下。这时候旁边坐着的一位开口了：“我可以为这个以色列人担保，这块宝石或许真像他所说的那样值点儿钱。”

陌生人说：“我不需要什么担保，这块宝石不是真的。”

在这座花园的另一张桌子上，有一位此间的常客正和他的狐朋狗友们一起进行着有趣而公平的金钱游戏。

其中一个人是精于此道的金匠。他曾经为一位在奥斯特利茨之战 [62] 失去了鼻子的士兵用银子打造了一个假鼻子，涂上肌肤的颜色，这个鼻子除了不能用来呼吸以外，看上去和真的毫无二致。

犹太人向那位金匠走过去。“先生，”他说，“这块宝石究竟是不是真的呢？所罗门王 [63] 的王冠上能不能有一块比它更漂亮的呢？”

那位金匠，也算是半个宝石专家，说道：“它就像天空中的毕宿五 [64] 一样闪亮，我愿意出九十杜布伦向您收购这枚戒指。如果您能够花言巧语把它买过来的话，那您就赚到了。”

犹太人转身回到陌生人跟前说：“不管真的假的，我给您六个杜

布伦。”说着，他数出几枚崭新的钱币放在桌上。

陌生人把戒指又戴回了手指上，并且说：“这玩意儿我不卖。这块假宝石的做工太逼真了，如果您把它当成真的买了，我心里会过意不去的。”说着，他把手插进了口袋里，这样贪心的以色列人就看不见那块宝石了。

“八杜布伦。”

“不行。”

“十杜布伦。”

“不行。”

“十二——十四——十五杜布伦。”

“这样的话，”陌生人终于说道，“如果您不肯让我安静一下，坚持要买的话，当着在场所有先生的面，我得跟您说好了：这块宝石是假的，我从来没有说过它是真的。我不想引起任何误会。这枚戒指现在是您的了。”

犹太人欢天喜地地把这枚戒指拿到金匠面前，说：“明天我来找您拿钱吧。”

然而这位从未被人蒙骗过的金匠，却吃惊地瞪大了双眼说道：“好伙计，这不是您两分钟以前拿给我看的那枚戒指。看在咱们们儿的情面上，这块宝石最多就值二十枚十字币。它是圣布拉辛 [65] 的玻璃工厂制造的。”

原来这个陌生人早就把一枚和在他手指上闪闪发光的真戒指看上去一模一样的假戒指藏在了口袋里，当犹太人和他交易的时候，他把手插进口袋里，用拇指把真戒指从手指上撸下来，再戴上假戒指，拿出来交给了犹太人。

受骗者怒气冲天地回到了陌生人那里，喊着：“天哪，天哪！我上当了！我真倒霉！这块宝石是假的！”

然而这个陌生人却十分沉着冷静地回答道：“我卖给您的就是假的，在场的先生们都能见证。”

(1810年)

[58] 斯特拉斯堡 (Straßburg)，今法国东部阿尔萨斯省首府，历史上曾多次在法德之间易主。

[59] 梅齐格门 (Metzgertor)，斯特拉斯堡地标性建筑之一，位

于市中心的奥斯特里茨广场。

[60] 亚伦（Aaron），《圣经》中犹太人领袖摩西（Moses）的兄长。

[61] 乌灵与土明（Urim und Thummim），古代犹太教祭司置于胸牌中，用于占卜神意的两件法器，通常被认为是黑白两色的两枚宝石。

[62] 在1805年12月，法国军队与奥地利-俄罗斯联军在当时奥地利帝国境内的奥斯特利茨（Austerlitz，今属捷克）进行决战，史称奥斯特利茨之战（Schlacht von Austerlitz）或“三皇会战”（Dritter Koalitionskrieg），此役以法军完胜告终，第三次反法同盟也随之瓦解。

[63] 所罗门王（König Salomon，公元前971——前931），以色列国王，以其财富和智慧而著称。

[64] 毕宿五（Aldebaran）是位于金牛座中的双星，是天空中最闪亮的星星之一。

[65] 圣布拉辛（Sankt Blasien）是德国西南部莱法州小城。

一个可怕的故事是如何被一条普通的屠夫的狗公之于众的

两个屠夫一同来到郊外的一个村庄，他们在天鹅客栈门前分手，一个向左走，一个向右走，说：“我们在天鹅客栈里再见。”然而他俩再也没能重逢。

他们中的一人随着一位农夫走进了畜栏，农夫的妻子尽管正在厨房洗碗，也跟着一同走了进去，农夫的孩子也在后面跟着。

这时候魔鬼推了一下这个女人的胳膊：“看上去这个屠夫好像在他的围裙下面藏着一大笔钱！”

女人对她的男人使了个眼色，男人也给她回了个眼色。他俩一起砸死了那个可怜的屠夫，然后迅速把他的尸体用稻草掩盖了起来。

魔鬼又推了一下女人的胳膊：“瞧，谁正在看着。”

女人环顾四周，看到了自己的孩子。

于是他们一行人惊魂未定地回到了家中，紧锁房门，如临大敌。

这个心如蛇蝎的女人说道：“孩子，看看你把自己弄成什么样了，到厨房来，我给你洗洗。”

在厨房里，她把孩子的脑袋按进滚烫的肥皂水里，活活烫死了。

现在她感觉一切终于清静了，然而她却没有想到被谋杀的屠夫的那只狗。

被谋杀的屠夫的狗，和它的同伴们在一起旅行已经有些日子了。在孩子被烫死，并被迅速扔进火炉的时候，它就已经嗅到了味道。它顺着畜栏门外主人熟悉的味道一路嗅了过来，它扒着农舍的门，意识到这里发生了一些非同寻常的事情。它猛然蹿回村庄，寻找它的同伴。很快，它拉扯着另一个屠夫的上衣，呜咽哀号着，那个屠夫也意识到了什么。所以他和狗一同回到了农舍，他立刻判断出这里曾经发生过一些可怕的事情，于是挥手招来了两个从远处路过的男人。

当那两个杀人凶手听到了狗的哀鸣声和屠夫的呼喊声，他们的眼前仿佛出现了刑场的情景，心脏也仿佛掉进了地狱。

那个男人想要从后窗跳出去逃跑，女人却拉住他的外套说：“留下来吧！”

男人说：“跟我走吧！”

女人回答：“我走不动，我的双脚好像灌了铅一样。你没看见窗前那个可怕的身影吗？它有着闪亮的眼神和炽热的呼吸。”

这时候房门被撞开了，人们很快找到了被谋杀者的尸体。这两名罪犯被双手反绑送到了法官面前。

六个星期之后，他俩被执行了车轮刑 [66]。他们丑陋的尸体支离破碎地挂在车轮上，这时候乌鸦们说道：“这堆肉的味道不错！”

(1810年)

[66] 车轮刑（Rädern或Radebrechen）是古代欧洲通行的一种酷刑，因使用车轮作为行刑工具而得名。具体执行方式为将犯人绑在车轮侧面用铁棒打断四肢然后任其自然死亡，或直接将犯人用车轮砸死或者碾压致死。

狡猾的施泰尔马克人

在“最后一战”期间，在施泰尔马克 [67] 有一位富有的农夫，他思考着：在这样艰难的世道里，我怎么能保住我的皇冠塔勒 [68] 和杜卡特 [69] 呢？

“我经历过玛丽亚·特利莎女王的时代，愿上帝保佑她；约瑟夫皇帝的时代，愿上帝保佑他；以及弗兰茨皇帝的时代，愿上帝保佑他健康长寿，到现在依然安然无恙。

“如果有人认为在这些仁慈的君主统治下，还是比较容易将自己的钱财藏匿或者转移的话，那么现在敌人 [70] 的鼻子已经伸进了村庄，很有可能把他抓进洛林 [71] 或者香槟 [72] 的监狱里去。这样的话，这位可怜的臣民的心就要为爱国主义而流血了。”

“我明白了，”他说，“说干就干。”于是在一个伸手不见五指的黑夜里，他把钱埋进了菜园里。“天上的七星不会出卖我的。”他说。

在菜园里，他把钱埋在了甘蓝菜与甜豌豆之间的地方。然后他在旁边与糖萝卜之间的小径上又挖了一个坑，并且把挖出来的泥土全部堆在了埋钱的地方，再在四周插满美丽的花茎和菜梗，看上去就像为了制作混合泡菜而种植的那样。

星期一已经开始有轻骑兵在整个地区四处巡逻，星期二有一支新来的队伍开进了村里的磨坊，他们用白色的胳膊肘 [73] 推搡着农民们。“把钱交出来，老乡，”一个松德高 [74] 人挥舞着明晃晃的马刀喊道，“否则就准备向天父做临终祈祷吧。”

农夫表示：看在上帝的分儿上，他们可以把能找到的东西都拿走，他所有的钱在昨天和前天已经全部被抢走了。“在你们面前没有人能把东西藏起来，”他说，“你们就是法律。”

果然，他们除了几枚铜质的十字币，一枚带着玛丽亚·特利莎女皇头像的镀金五芬尼硬币，以及一枚小戒指以外，一无所获。

“老乡，”那个松德高人说道，“你肯定是把钱藏起来了，把你藏钱的地方指出来吧，否则你可以不用做临终祈祷，直接去见天父了。”

“我没法儿向您指出那个地方，”农夫说，“那帮匪徒是如此的凶恶，所以我不得不把他们带到菜园里。我可以向您指出我曾经藏钱的那个地方，并且告诉您曾经发生的事情。那帮坏人在昨天和前天已经

来过这里，并且把找到的全部钱财都带走了。”

轻骑兵们立刻把目光转向了菜园，在那里他们看到的景象与农夫所描述的毫无二致。他们中没有人想到钱就藏在土堆下面，而是看着空空如也的地洞想：“我要是早点儿来就好了。”

“要是他们没有伤害这些美丽的甘蓝菜和香罗兰就好了！”农夫说道。这就是他成功骗过了眼下这位以及之前包括弗兰茨皇帝、约瑟夫皇帝、玛丽亚·特利莎女皇以及至高无上的利奥波德一世大公在内所有接踵而至的王公贵族，成功保住埋藏在地下的钱财的方法。

(1811年)

[67] 施泰尔马克 (Steiermark)，今奥地利东南部格拉茨州首府。

[68] 皇冠塔勒 (Kronentaler)，18世纪中期奥地利属尼德兰地区发行的大银币，因上有皇冠图案而得名，其质量较通常塔勒更重，每枚价值约合 $2\frac{2}{3}$ 古尔登。

[69] 杜卡特 (Ducat)，古代欧洲各国通行的金币，每枚价值约合4古尔登。

[70] 指当时与奥地利交战的法国。

[71] 洛林 (Lothringen)，法国东部省份，历史上曾多次在德法之间易主。

[72] 香槟 (Champagne)，法国东北部省份，因作为香槟酒的产地而闻名。

[73] 当时的法军制服上衣为白色红边。

[74] 松德高 (Sundgau)，今法国东部阿尔萨斯省境内与德国接壤地区。

土耳其故事

在土耳其有正义。

有一位商人的仆人，他在夜间赶路时感到十分疲惫，于是就把他驮着昂贵货物的马系在距护林人小屋不远的树上，自己在树荫下睡着了。

当他在晨风中被鹌鹑的拍打声惊醒的时候，发现当自己熟睡时，马儿已经不见了。

他立刻跑到这个行省的总督，也就是正驻扎在附近的卡洛斯曼·奥格鲁王子那里，在他的审判席前诉说了自己的困境。

王子倾听了一会儿，说道：“你离护林人的小屋如此之近，为什么不再向前走五十步，以确保自己的安全呢？这是由你的大意造成的过失。”

于是商人的仆人说道：“尊贵的王子，在您统治的土地下，难道我应该为在露天睡觉而感到恐惧吗？”

这番话让卡洛斯曼王子感到非常高兴，同时也感觉受了刺激。“今晚喝下这杯土耳其烈酒，”王子说，“然后回到树下再睡上一觉。”

仆人照办了。

第二天早晨，当他又好好睡了一觉，在晨风中被鹌鹑的拍打声惊醒的时候，他发现自己的马儿驮着所有珍贵的货物又被系在了他身旁，而树上吊着一个死人。那个贼，他再也见不到日出了。

在许多地方还有很多树，或大或小。

(1811年)

最轻的死刑判决

有人可能认为这是断头台，然而并不是！ [75]

有个男人，尽管他为祖国做出了许多贡献，并且受到了亲王的明文表彰，但还是因为一次由激情驱使的犯罪行为，被判处了死刑。

常言道：“如果乞求得不到的，祈祷也得不到。”然而由于他曾经受过亲王的明文表彰，他还是被获准选择自己最喜欢的死法，这意味着他可以选择用任意一种方式死去。

于是高等书记官来塔楼 [76] 拜访他，说道：“公爵想要向您展现他的仁慈。如果您想要被执行车轮刑，那么您将被执行车轮刑。如果您想要被执行绞刑，那么您将被执行绞刑。绞刑架上已经挂着两个人了，然而众所周知还有第三个位置。如果您想要吞耗子药的话，药剂师那儿有的是。公爵说了，无论您选择哪一种死法，都悉听尊便。然而您必须死，这您应该明白。”

于是这位罪犯说道：“如果我必须去死的话，车轮刑是一种非常憋屈的死法。而绞刑呢，尤其是在有风的时候，晃来晃去太难受了。然而您可能没有正确理解这个判决。依我来说，我一直相信，由于衰老而导致的死亡是最温和的。既然公爵让我选择死法，这就是我的选择，没人能够改变。”于是他就活了下来，没有被处决。

因此，这个男人得以重获自由，并且继续活着直到老死。公爵说：“一言既出，驷马难追。”

这个小故事来自我的岳母，如果她能够救别人的生命，她绝不会袖手旁观。

(1811年)

[75] 在古代欧洲有许多类似于前文中车轮刑的酷刑，斩首和绞刑被认为是死刑中最轻的刑罚。

[76] 古代欧洲统治者常常将塔楼用作囚禁贵族囚犯的监狱，例如著名的伦敦塔。

被欺骗的杂货商

在俄罗斯，一卢布就是一枚银质硬币，价值相当于二十七巴岑；而一帝国币 [77] 则是一枚价值十卢布的金币。

人们当然可以用一帝国币换来一卢布，比方说在牌桌上输了九卢布的时候，然而却不可能用一卢布换来一帝国币。

然而在莫斯科有一个狡猾的士兵却说：“明天我要去集市上，用一卢布做诱饵，赚上两帝国币。”

第二天，年集上的货摊已经排成了一条长龙，在每个摊位前都站着人，人们或夸耀或贬损着商品，讨价还价。人群忽而聚集忽而散开，小伙子们向姑娘们打着招呼。这时候士兵手拿一卢布来到了这里。

“这枚印着皇帝头像的卢布是谁的？是您的吗？”他向每一个摊位前站着的每一位摊主询问。

其中有位摊主其实并没有丢钱，他观察了一阵，最后想：要是你觉得这钱在你手里烧得慌，还不如拿过来给我呢。他喊道：“这边来，步兵！这个卢布是我的。”

步兵说：“如果您不喊我的话，我在人群中还真不容易找到您呢。”说着就把卢布给了摊主。

这位商人拿着这枚卢布左看右看，想从声音上确定它是否是真的。直到确定是真的之后，才把它放进了口袋。

“要是没问题的话，现在请把我的帝国币还给我。”那位步兵说道。

商人回答：“我没有拿过您的帝国币，所以我也不欠您的钱。如果您只是想开个玩笑的话，您可以把您的那一枚卢布拿回去。”

然而步兵却说：“我的一枚两帝国币已经给您了，我不是在跟您开玩笑，我要去找市场保安和警察了。”

于是他俩你一言我一语地争吵了起来，从宽容说到固执，从固执说到卑鄙，在摊位前聚集的人越来越多，就好像蜂箱上聚集的一群蜜蜂一样。

突然，有个身影像鼯鼠一样穿过了人群。

“这儿发生什么事情了？”这位警官带着手下穿过人群，一边问道。

“发生什么了？问我吗？”这位杂货商不善言辞，偏偏步兵却是个能言善辩的家伙。

步兵声称，在一刻钟之前，他在杂货商那里买了价值一卢布的商品，然而当他付钱的时候，翻遍了所有的口袋，只找到爷爷临终之前留给他的一枚价值两帝国币的金币。所以他只好把帝国币作为押金留下，去取卢布。当他拿着一卢布回来的时候，却找不到刚才那个货摊了，他只好在所有的摊位前询问：“我欠谁一卢布？”眼前这位商人承认自己就是刚才卖货给他的那一位，并且收下了那一卢布，然而他却拒绝承认关于帝国币的事情。

警官询问摊位周围的人，他们说道：“这位步兵确实曾经向每个货摊询问过这枚卢布是属于谁的，当这位杂货商听到步兵的声音，他承认这枚卢布是属于他的。他收下了卢布，并且通过听声音辨别了真伪。”

当警长听到这里，他立刻做出了裁决：“既然您已经收下了那枚卢布，那么就把士兵的帝国币还给他，否则我就让人用长钉子把您的摊位封起来，您将在属于自己的木板之间过上与世隔绝的生活，于是您将长时间忍饥挨饿，这样您就可以健康长寿了。”

这就是警察局长所说的。于是商人就这样以一帝国币的代价从步兵手里换来了一卢布。 [78]

注意：就像新雪会使旧雪融化一样。贪恋陌生人的财物，难免殃及自身。

(1811年)

[77] 帝国币 (Imperial)，18世纪至19世纪俄罗斯发行的金质硬币。

[78] 此处与上文中提到“两帝国币”似有冲突，疑为泛指，同时与本文开头呼应。

好耐性

一个法国人骑马路过一座桥梁，这座位于河流之上的桥非常狭窄，以至于两名骑马的人都无法同时通过。

一个英国人也从另一端骑上了桥，他俩在桥的中间狭路相逢了，双方谁都不愿意给对方让路。

“一个英格兰人是不会给一个法国人让路的。”那个英格兰人说道。

“上帝啊” [79]，法国人回答，“我的马也是英格兰马 [80]，所以您如果想要我掉头，给您看看它的秃尾巴的话，门儿都没有。要不还是让您骑着的这匹英格兰马给我骑着的这匹英格兰马让路吧。您这匹看起来比我这匹要年轻一些，我这匹可是在路易十四 [81] 时代的公元1702年就参加过卡法奥泽战役 [82] 的。”

英格兰人自然对这种冒犯感到些许不快，然而他说道：“我可以等。我现在有了一个绝好的机会来读读今天的报纸。我可以一直等到您愿意给我让路为止。”说着，他就像英格兰人通常那样，非常冷漠地从口袋里掏出一张报纸，像叠手绢那样把它折了起来，骑着马在桥上看了整整一小时。

然而太阳却并不愿意长时间地注视这两个笨蛋，它飞快地朝着山头落了下去。

一小时之后，英格兰人终于看完了报纸，他把报纸重新收好，盯着法国人，说道：“好了吧？” [83]

然而法国人却不肯点头，他回答道：“英格兰人，把您的报纸给我看一会儿吧，我可以看看它，直到您愿意让路为止。”

当英格兰人终于见识到了对手的耐性的时候，他说道：“你猜怎么着，法国人？过来吧，我给你让路。”

于是英格兰人给法国人让了路。

(1812年)

[79] 此处原文为法语Par Dieu。

[80] 原文中的“英格兰人”和“英格兰马”都是德语“Engländer”，

此处法国人显然有羞辱英格兰人之意。

[81] 路易十四（Louis X IV，1638—1715），法国国王，自称“太阳王”（le Roi Solei），在位七十二年间曾发动多次对外战争，法国的版图及国际影响力均有所扩大。

[82] 在1702年期间英法两国的确为西班牙王位继承战争的交战双方，但历史文献中从未有“卡法奥泽”（Käferolse）这一地名出现，更遑论相关战役。此处显然系法国人信口开河。

[83] 此处原文为法语“Eh bien”。

伟大的游泳者

在漫长的战争爆发之前 [84]，人们还可以不受阻碍地从法国前往英国旅行，在多佛尔 [85] 喝上一小杯酒，或者买块儿衣料缝制马甲。每周有两班大型邮轮从加莱 [86] 穿过海峡开往多佛尔，然后返回。因为两国之间的海洋只有几英里宽而已 [87]。

当然，人们如果想搭船的话，必须在开船之前到达船所在地点。有一位来自加斯科涅 [88] 的法国人似乎不明白这个道理，他迟到了一刻钟，这时从加莱出发的邮轮船舱已经关闭，天空中只有云彩在飘荡。

“难道我就束手无策地在这儿坐上几天，直到下一班船过来吗？不行，”他想，“要不然，我就花十二苏 [89] 找个船夫，让他驾船跟在邮轮的后面。小船速度比大邮轮快，这样就能赶上邮轮了。”

然而当他坐进一艘敞篷的船只里的时候，船夫对他说道：“要是我想到会这样，我就带上一块遮雨布了！现在已经开始下雨了，不是吗？一会儿高高的夜空中就将降下倾盆大雨，就像天上有一座海洋将要倾泻到地上的海洋中那样。”

然而那个加斯科涅人却想：“这真有趣。”

“上帝保佑，”船夫终于说道，“我看见邮轮了。”

他们终于赶上了邮轮。当加斯科涅人于午夜时分在海中央登船，穿过客舱的小门走进船里的时候，每个人都十分好奇他从哪里来，为什么这么晚，一个人，而且浑身湿透。

这样的一次海上航行，就像坐在地窖里一样。除了船舱内的谈话、海员们的呼喊、船发出的噪声、海鸥的鸣叫以及海浪声以外，他们听不到外界的其他声音，也没有人意识到外面正在下雨。

“您看起来，”其中一个人说道，“就好像刚刚被龙骨拖曳 [90] 过，我的意思是说，被绑在船底下拖来拖去。”

“是吗？”加斯科涅人说，“您觉得有人能在游泳的时候身体保持干燥吗？如果您能找到一个这样的人，我也很想见识一下。我是来自奥莱龙 [91] 的信使，每个星期一我都要带着信件和公文游泳去大陆，因为这样速度比较快。”

“我现在要去英格兰办一些事情。如果你们允许的话，”他继续说

道，“我现在想和你们一起搭个船，遇到你们真是太幸运了。从星星判断，离多佛尔已经不远了。”

“同胞，”其中一人说道，他嘴里的烟斗冒出一团烟雾（其实他不是同胞，而是一个英格兰人），“既然您从加莱远跨重洋游到了这里，那您肯定比伦敦的那位黑人游泳者还要厉害。”

“那当然没错儿。”加斯科涅人说。

“如果您想要跟他比试比试的话，”英格兰人回答，“我下注一百金路易 [92] 赌您赢。”

加斯科涅人说：“我来！”

英格兰的富人们有在体育竞技项目上一掷千金进行赌博的传统，因此船上那位英格兰人按照他开出的价格将加斯科涅人带到了伦敦，好吃好喝地招待着，为的是让他保持良好的体力。

“阁下，”他对伦敦的一位好朋友说，“我从海上花一百基尼 [93] 找来了一个游泳者，让他跟你的摩尔人比一比怎么样？”

那位好朋友说：“行啊！”

于是第二天这两位都带着自己的游泳者来到了泰晤士河边约定的地方，这时候已经有数百人聚集在了那里，他们之间也相互下注。这个人赌摩尔人赢，那个人赌加斯科涅人赢，一先令 [94]、六先令、一基尼、二基尼、五基尼、十基尼、二十基尼。摩尔人看上去跟加斯科涅人旗鼓相当。

当两人都脱去衣服之后，加斯科涅人用一根皮带将一个小盒子绑在了腰间，他并没有说明缘由，仿佛这就是理所当然的那样。

摩尔人说：“您这是搞什么名堂？莫非您是想要向伟大的潜水员学习，在脚上绑个铅球，以免自己在逮兔子的时候跳得比兔子还高？”

加斯科涅人打开那个小盒子，说道：“这里面只有一小瓶葡萄酒、几根干香肠以及一小块面包。我正想问问您，把食物放在哪儿了。我现在要沿着泰晤士河一直游到北海，再穿过海峡进入大西洋，最后抵达加的斯 [95]。按照我的估计，直到16号我从奥莱龙岛返回之前，我们在路上不会再见面了。然而我早上会在加的斯的小马酒店订上一桌上好的午饭，等我吃完饭的时候，您应该就随后赶到了。”

聪明的读者们或许很难相信这种夸夸其谈，然而那位摩尔人却被吓得头晕目眩。

“在这只公鸭子面前，”他对他的主人说，“我肯定游不过他。您看着办吧。”说着他又重新穿上了衣服。

于是这场赌局就此宣告结束。加斯科涅人从他为英格兰人赢得的赌注当中分得了一大笔奖赏，而摩尔人则受到了每个人的耻笑。

无论大家是否发觉法国人的所作所为不过是一场骗局，每个人在从这个滑稽的故事及其出人意料的结局中得到乐趣之余，都应该认识到：此人打那以后在所有的客栈和啤酒馆里已经畅通无阻地赌了四个星期之久，而他其实一生中从来没有下过水。

(1813年)

[84] 开始于1793年的法国与反法同盟各国之间的战争，至作者写作此文时已经持续了20年，给欧洲人民带来了巨大的痛苦。

[85] 多佛尔 (Dover)，英格兰东南部海港城市，英伦三岛最靠近欧洲大陆的地点。

[86] 加莱 (Calais)，法国北部海港城市，欧洲大陆最靠近英国的地点。

[87] 多佛尔与加莱之间距离34公里，合21英里。

[88] 加斯科涅 (Gascogne)，法国西南部地区，与西班牙接壤。

[89] 苏 (Sou)，法国古代小额铜币，价值5生丁，约相当于德国的6芬尼。

[90] 龙骨拖曳 (Kielholen) 是古代欧洲船只上经常采取的一种体罚方式，将受刑人捆绑后，将其从船的侧舷投入水中，利用船的动力进行拖曳，因此时受刑人的身体常常位于船龙骨下方，故得名。

[91] 奥莱龙岛 (Oleron)，位于法国西部比斯开湾中的岛屿。

[92] 金路易 (Louisdor)，法国古代金币，每枚价值60苏，约相当于德国的 $1\frac{1}{2}$ 古尔登。

[93] 基尼 (Guinee)，英国古代金币，每枚价值21先令又6便士，约合德国的9古尔登，此处显然是英格兰人在夸海口。

[94] 先令 (Schilling)，英国及多个英联邦国家发行的辅币，当时1先令相当于1/2英镑或12便士，约合德国的1/3古尔登。

[95] 加的斯 (Cadix)，西班牙西南部海港城市。

天气操纵者

就如同一位筛子工匠或者一位补锅工匠那样，作为手艺人，当他居住在一个小地方的时候，他的同乡们不能给他提供全年的工作以及给养，所以他就需要在周边地区四处奔走，打工赚钱。

这位五金工匠像其他手艺人那样勤奋地在周边地区奔走，只不过他兜售的不是五金小玩意儿，而是欺骗和谎言。他就靠着蛊惑人心在客栈里骗吃骗喝。

有一天他来到了上埃欣根 [96]，径直去了镇长那儿。

“镇长先生，”他说道，“您难道不想换个天气吗？刚才我从您的田地上经过，土地深处已经吸收了太多雨水，这对庄稼的生长可不好。”

镇长表示，说起来倒是轻巧，要做起来可就需要本事了。

“嗯，”这位“五金工匠”回答，“在这一趟旅行中我就做到了。在意大利波隆纳改变天气的人不就是我吗？那里种着酸橙和柠檬，所有的天气都按照安排好的那样出现了。这方面你们德国人已经落后了。”

这位镇长是个正直的好人，他属于那种想快速致富，而不是缓慢积累的人。所以他接受了这位“五金工匠”的提议，然而还是希望保持一些谨慎。

“明天早上就给我来个晴天试试吧，”他说，“天空中还要有一些淡淡的白云，这样一整天一缕缕闪亮的阳光就可以从其间温和地投射下来。在中午时分您可以放飞第一只黄色的蝴蝶，在傍晚时分天气又重新变得凉爽。”

“五金工匠”回答：“我可不接只有一天的活儿，镇长先生。这对我来说不合算。我从来都只接为期一年的活儿，到那时候您就要为找不到足够的地方存放您的粮食和新酿的葡萄酒而发愁了。”

关于镇长先生提出的关于操纵一年天气所需要的费用问题，他表示：一切准备就绪至少需要三天时间，在此期间他除了每天一枚古尔登以及免费的酒水以外，别无所求。

“打那以后，您在每一桶 [97] 葡萄酒上都能收获更多，”他说道，“比最好的年份还要多四分之一。每一马尔脱 [98] 粮食都能多收一赛斯特 [99]。”

“这好像不多啊。”镇长说。

在当地，人们说“多”的时候，通常是用“veil”，而不是“viel”。为了表示对“五金工匠”的尊敬，镇长特地用了标准德语。

正当他从柜子里取出纸笔，想要让“五金工匠”把未来的天气按月份写下来的时候，“五金工匠”提出了新的意见：“这可不行，镇长先生！如果这样的话，您就得听听公民们的意见。毕竟天气是一件公共事务，您不能指望所有人都赞同您对天气的安排。”

镇长说道：“您说得对！您真是个明白事理的人。”

聪明的读者可能已经识破了“五金工匠”的伎俩，正如同他之前估计的那样，公民们不可能就这个问题达成一致。第一次镇民大会没有任何结果，第七次也没有。在第八次大会上，在经过一系列严肃的演讲之后，有位聪明的律师提出的意见终于获得了镇民们的一致认可：最好把钱付给这位天气操纵者，把他送走。

于是镇长告诉天气操纵者：“这是您的九古尔登，麻烦制造者，请您务必要离开，把谋杀和凶杀从镇上带走。”

“五金工匠”并不需要第二遍催促。他拿上这笔钱，留下了大约二十大壶 [100] 葡萄酒的酒馆账单，天气也一如既往没有任何改变。

总之，这位“五金工匠”真是一位有教育意义的人物啊。

注意：迄今为止，那位至高的统治者已经按照他自己的意志将天气安排妥当。即使我们的日历制定者、日月星辰和各界贤达 [101]，也不会轻易去问及这方面的问题，更遑论改变岁月静好的日子了。所以如果有人提起这事儿，还是洗洗睡吧。

(1819年)

[96] 上埃欣根（Obernehringen），今德国西南部巴符州境内小镇。

[97] 原文的量词“Saum”是奥地利南部及瑞士德语区方言，意思是容量为130~180公升的大酒桶。

[98] 马尔脱（Malter），德国古代计量单位，1马尔脱约相当于110公升。

[99] 赛斯特（Sester），德国古代谷物计量单位，1赛斯特相当于15~17公升。

[100] 原文的量词“Maß”在奥地利南部及瑞士德语区方言中意为

装酒的大壶。

[101] 此处德语原文“Landstände”意为中世纪时期由社会各界贤达人士组成的地方议会代表。

最安全的路 [102]

有些时候即使是一个醉汉也会思考，或者突然冒出一个好主意，比如不走平时熟悉的道路从城里回家，而是从水里抄个近道。

他遇到了一位充满爱心、非常乐意向落难之人或者醉汉伸出援手的绅士。

“好伙计，”绅士说，“您没有注意到您正在水里走着吗？道路在这边哪！”

醉汉回答：尽管他觉得在干燥的道路上走着也很舒服，但这一次他还是想往另一边走走。

“话虽如此，”绅士说道，“还是让我帮您从溪水里出来吧。”

“话虽如此，”醉汉回答，“还是让我待在水里吧。要是我在小溪里摔倒了，那么我还在路上。可如果我在路上摔倒了，我就得掉进小溪里了。”

他一边这么说着，一边用食指敲打着额头，仿佛那里面除了醉意之外，还有别人意想不到的其他什么东西。

（遗作）

[102] 本书作者黑贝尔去世于1826年，本篇是他生前未能完成的作品，具体写作年代不详。

Johann
Peter Hebel

P E N G U I N C L A S S I C S



How a Ghastly Story
Was Brought to Light by
a Common or Garden
Butcher's Dog

Nº 25

‘The devil gave
the woman a
nudge: “Look at
that belt full of
money peeping
out from under
the butcher’s
shirt!”’

The Silver Spoon

An officer in Vienna was thinking, 'Just for once I'll dine at the Red Ox,' and into the Red Ox he went. There were regulars there and strangers, important and unimportant people, honest men and rascals such as you'll find any-where. They were eating and drinking, some a great deal, others little. They talked and argued about this and that, about how it had rained rocks at Stannern in Moravia, for instance, or about Machin who fought the great wolf in France. When the meal was almost over one or two were drinking a small jug of Tokay to round things off, one man was making little balls from bread crumbs as if he were an apothecary making pills, another was fiddling with his knife or his fork or his silver spoon. It was then the officer happened to notice how a fellow in a green huntsman's coat was playing with a silver spoon when it suddenly disappeared up his sleeve and stayed there.

Someone else might have thought, 'It's no business of mine,' and said nothing, or have made a great fuss. The officer thought, 'I don't know who this green spoon-hunter is and what I might let myself in for,' and he kept as quiet as a mouse, until the landlord came to collect his money. But when the landlord came to collect his money the officer, too, picked up a silver spoon, and tucked it through two button holes in his coat, in one and out the other as soldiers sometimes do in war when they take their spoons with them, but no soup. As the officer was paying his bill the landlord was looking at his coat and thinking, 'That's a funny medal this gentleman's wearing! He must have distinguished himself battling with a bowl of cray-fish soup to have got a silver spoon as a medal! Or could it just be one of mine?' But when the officer had paid the landlord he said, without a sign of a smile on his face, 'The spoon's included, I take it? The bill seems enough to cover it.' The landlord said, 'Nobody's tried that one on me before If you don't have a spoon at home I'll give you a tin one, but you can't have one of my silver spoons!' Then the officer stood up, slapped the landlord on the shoulder and laughed. 'It was only a joke we were hav-ing,' he said, 'that gentleman over there in the green jacket and me! - My

green friend, if you give back that spoon you have up your sleeve I'll give mine back too.' When the spoon-hunter saw that he had been caught in the act and that an honest eye had observed his dishonest hand, he thought, 'Better pretend it was a joke,' and gave back his spoon. So the landlord got his property back, and the spoon thief smiled too - but not for long. For when the other customers saw what had happened they set about him with curses and hounded him out of the Holy of Holies and the landlord sent the boots after him with a big stick. But he stood the worthy officer a bottle of Tokay to toast the health of all honest men.

Remember : You must not steal silver spoons!

Remember : Someone will always stand up for what is right.

The Cheap Meal

There is an old saying : The biter is sometimes bit. But the landlord at the Lion in a certain little town was bitten first. He received a well-dressed customer who curtly demanded a good bowl of broth, the best his money would buy. Then he ordered beef and vegetables too for his money. The landlord asked him, all politeness, if he wouldn't like a glass of wine with it. 'Indeed I would,' his guest replied, 'if I can have a good one for my money.' When he had finished, and he enjoyed it all, he took a worn six-kreuzer piece from his pocket and said, 'Here you are, landlord, there's my money!' The landlord said, 'What's this? You owe me a thaler!' The customer answered, 'I didn't ask for a meal for a thaler, but for my money. Here it is. It's all I have. If you gave me too much for it then that's your fault!' It wasn't really such a clever trick. It called only for cheek and a devil-may-care view of the consequences. But the best is yet to come.

'You're an utter villain,' said the landlord, 'and don't deserve this. But you can have the meal for nothing and take this twenty-four kreuzer bit as well. Just keep quiet about it and go over to my neighbour who keeps the Bear and try the same trick on him!' He said this because he had had a quarrel with his neighbour and resented his success and each was keen to do the other down.

But the artful customer smiled as he took the money he was offered in his one hand and reached carefully for the door with the other, wished the innkeeper good after-noon, and said, 'I went to the Bear first, it was the landlord there who sent me over here!'

So really both of the innkeepers had been tricked; the cunning customer took advantage of their quarrel. Yet he might have also earned a further reward, grateful thanks from both of them, if they had learnt the right lesson from it and had made things up between them. For peace pays, whereas quarrels have to be paid for.

Dinner Outside

We often complain how difficult or impossible it is to get on with certain people. That may of course be true. But many such people are not bad but only strange, and if you got to know them well with all their ins and outs and learnt to deal with them properly, neither too wilfully nor too indulgently, then many of them might easily be brought to their senses. After all, one servant did manage to do that with his master. Sometimes he could do noth-ing right by him and, as often happens in such situations, was blamed for many things that were not his fault. Thus one day his master came home in a very bad mood and sat down to dinner. The soup was too hot or too cold for him, or neither; no matter, he was in a bad mood! So he picked up the dish and threw it and its contents out of the open window into the yard below. So what do you think the servant did? He didn't hesitate, he threw the meat he was bringing to table down into the yard after the soup, then the bread, the wine, and finally the table-cloth and everything on it, all down into the yard too. 'What the devil do you think you're doing?' said his mas-ter angrily and rose threateningly to his feet. But the servant replied quietly and calmly, 'Pardon me if I mis-understood your wishes. I thought you wanted to eat outside today. The air's warm, the sky's blue, and look how lovely the apple blossom is and how happy the bees are sipping at the flowers!' Never again would the soup go out through the window! His master saw he was wrong, cheered up at the sight of the beautiful spring day, smiled to himself at his man's quick thinking, and in his heart he was grateful to him for teaching him a lesson.

The Clever Judge

Not everything that happens in the East is so wrong. We are told the following event took place there. A rich man had been careless and lost a large sum of money sewn up in a cloth. He made his loss known, and in the usual way offered a reward for its return, in this case a hundred thalers. Soon a good honest man came to see him. 'I have found your money,' he said. 'This must be yours.' He had the open look of an upright fellow with a clear conscience, and that was good. The rich man looked happy too, but only at seeing his precious money again. As for his honesty, that we shall see! He counted the money and worked out quickly how he could cheat this man of the promised reward. 'My friend,' he said, 'there were in fact eight hundred thalers sewn up in this cloth. But I can find only seven hundred. So I take it you must have cut open a corner and taken your one hundred thalers' reward. You acted quite properly. I thank you!' That was not good. But we haven't got to the end yet. Honesty is the best policy, and wrongdoing never proves right. The honest man who had found the money and who was less concerned for his reward than for his blameless name protested that he had found the packet just as he handed it over, and had handed over exactly what he had found. In the end they appeared in court. Both of them stuck to their stories, one that eight hundred thalers were sewn up in the cloth, the other that he had left the packet just as he found it and had taken nothing from it. It was hard to know what to do. But the clever judge, who seemed from the outset to recognize the honesty of the one and the bad faith of the other, approached the problem as follows. He had both swear their statements on solemn oath, and then passed the following judgement : 'Since one of you lost eight hundred thalers and the other found a packet containing only seven hundred, the package found by that second party cannot be the one to which the first party has just claim. You, my honest friend, take back the money you found and put it into safe keeping until the person who lost only seven hundred thalers makes himself known. And you I can only advise to be patient until someone says he has found your eight hundred thalers.' That was

his judgement, and that was final.

The Artful Hussar

A hussar in the last war knew that the farmer he met on the road had just sold his hay for a hundred guilders and was on his way home with the money. So he asked him for something to buy tobacco and brandy. Who knows, he might have been happy with a few coppers. But the farmer swore black and blue he had spent his last kreuzer in the nearby village and had nothing left. 'If we weren't so far from my quarters,' said the hussar, 'we could both be helped out of this difficulty; but you have nothing, and neither have I; so we'll just have to go to Saint Alphonsus! We'll share what he gives us like brothers.' This Saint Alphonsus stood carved from stone in an old, little frequented chapel in the fields. At first the farmer was not too keen to make the pilgrimage. But the hussar allowed no objection, and on the way he was so vigorous in his assurances that Saint Alphonsus had never let him down when in need that the farmer began to cherish hopes himself. So you think the hussar's comrade and accomplice was hiding in the deserted chapel, do you? Not a bit of it! No one was there, only the stone figure of Alphonsus, and they knelt before him, and the hussar appeared to be praying fervently. 'This is it!' he whispered to the farmer, 'the saint has just beckoned to me.' He got to his feet and went to put his ear to the lips of stone and came back delighted. 'He's given me a guilder, he says it's in my purse!' And indeed to the other's amazement the hussar took out a guilder, but one that he had had there all the time, and shared it like a brother as promised. That made sense to the farmer and he agreed that the hussar should try again. All went just as before. This time the hussar was even happier when he came back to the farmer. 'Now Saint Alphonsus has given us a hundred guilders all in one go! They're in your purse.' The farmer turned deadly white when he heard this and repeated his protests that he had no money at all. But the hussar persuaded him he must trust Saint Alphonsus and just take a look; Alphonsus had never deceived him! So whether he liked it or not he had to turn his pockets inside out and empty them. Then the hundred guilders appeared all right, and since he

had taken half of the hussar's guilder it was no use pleading and imploring, he had to share his hundred.

That was all very artful and cunning, but that doesn't make it right, especially in a chapel.

The Dentist

Two loafers who had been roaming around the country together for some time because they were too lazy to work or had learnt no trade finally got into a tight corner because they had no money left, and they saw no quick way of getting any. Then they had this idea : they went begging at doors for bread which they intended to use, not to fill their stomachs, but to stage a trick. For they kneaded and rolled it into little balls and coated them with the dust from old, rotten worm-eaten wood so that they looked just like yellow pills from the chemist. Then for a couple of pence they bought some sheets of red paper at the bookbinder's (for a pretty colour often helps take people in) . Next they cut up the paper and wrapped the pills in it, six or eight to a little packet. Then one of them went on ahead to a village where there was a fair and into the Red Lion where he hoped to find a good crowd. He ordered a glass of wine, but he didn't drink it but sat sadly in a corner holding his face in his hand, moaning under his breath and fidgeting and turning this way and that. The good farmers and townsfolk in the inn thought the poor fellow must have terrible toothache. Yet what could they do? They pitied him, they consoled him, saying it would soon go away, then went back to their drinks and their market-day affairs. Meanwhile the other idler came in. The two scoundrels pretended they had never seen each other in their lives before. They didn't look at each other until the one seemed to react to the other's moans in the corner. 'My friend,' he said, 'have you got toothache?' and he strode slowly over to him. 'I am Dr Schnauzius Rapunzius from Trafalgar,' he continued. Such resounding foreign names help take people in too, you know, like pretty colours. 'If you take my tooth pills,' he went on, 'I can easily get rid of the pain, one of them will do the trick, at most two.' 'Please God you're right!' said the other rogue. So now the fine doctor Rapunzius took one of the red packets from his pocket and prescribed one pill, to be placed on the tongue and bitten on firmly. The customers at the other tables now craned their necks and one by one they came over to observe the miracle cure. You can imagine what happened! But no, the first

bite seemed to do the patient no good at all, he gave a terrible scream. The doctor was pleased! They had, he said, got the better of the pain, and quickly he gave him the second pill to be taken likewise. Now suddenly the pain had all gone. The patient jumped for joy, wiped the sweat from his brow, though there was none there, and pretended to show his thanks by pressing more than a trifling sum into his saviour's hand. The trick was artfully done and had its desired effect. For all those present now wanted some of these excellent pills too. The doctor offered them at twenty-four kreuzers a packet, and they were all sold in a few minutes. Of course the two scoundrels now left separately one after the other, met up to laugh at the people's stupidity, and had a good time on their money.

The fools had paid dear for a few crumbs of bread ! Even in times of famine you never got so little for twenty-four kreuzers. But the waste of money was not the worst part of it. For in time the pellets of breadcrumbs naturally became as hard as stone. So when a year later a poor dupe had toothache and confidently bit on a pill with the offending tooth, once and then again, just imagine the awful pain that he had got himself for twenty-four kreuzers instead of a cure!

From this we can learn how easy it is to be tricked if you believe what is told you by any vagrant whom you meet for the first time in your life, have never seen before and will never see again. Some of you who read this will perhaps be thinking : 'I was once silly like that too and brought suffering on myself!'

Remember : Those who can, earn their money elsewhere and don't go around villages and fairs with holes in their stockings, or a white buckle on one shoe and a yellow one on the other.

A Short Stage

The postmaster told a Jew who drove up to his relay station with two horses, 'From here on you'll have to take three! It's a hard pull uphill and the surface is still soft. But that way you'll be there in three hours.' The Jew asked, 'When will I get there if I take four?' 'In two hours.' 'And if I take six?' 'In one hour.' 'I'll tell you what,' said the Jew after a while, 'Harness up eight. That way I shan't have to set off at all!'

Strange Reckoning at the Inn

Sometimes a cheeky trick comes off, sometimes it costs you your coat, often your skin as well. But in this case it was only coats. One day, you see, three merry students on their travels didn't have a brass farthing left between them, they had spent everything on a good time, but nevertheless they went into another inn intending to leave without sneaking out by the back door, and it suited them fine that they found only the landlord's nice young wife inside. They ate and drank merrily and talked very learnedly about the world being many thousands of years old and how it would last as long again, and how each year, to the day and the hour, everything that happened came to pass as it had done on that day and at that hour six thousand years before. Eventually one of them turned to the landlady, who was sitting on one side by the window knitting and listening attentively, and said, 'That's how it is, ma'am, we've had to learn that from our learned tomes.' And one had the impudence to assert that he just about remembered their being there six thousand years ago, and he remembered the landlady's pretty friendly face very well indeed. They carried on talking for some time, and the more the landlady seemed to believe everything they said the more the young gadabouts tucked into the wine and the meat and a fistful of pretzels, and in the end their bill stood chalked up at five guilders and sixteen kreuzers. They had eaten and drunk their fill, and now they came out with the trick they had planned.

'Ma'am,' said one, 'this time we are short of money, for there are so many inns on the road. But since we know you're a clever woman we hope that as old friends we can have credit here, and if you agree, in six thousand years'time when we come again we'll pay our old bill together with the new one.' The sensible landlady was not upset by that, it was fine by her, she was delighted that the young gentlemen were well served. But before they had noticed her move she was standing in front of the door and was asking the gentlemen kindly just to settle now the bill of five guilders and sixteen kreuzers that they owed from six thousand years ago, since,

as they said, everything that happened now was an exact repetition of what had taken place before. Unfortunately just at that moment the village mayor came in with a couple of sturdy men to enjoy a glass of wine together. That didn't suit our gay young dogs at all! For now the official verdict was pronounced and carried out : you had to give it to some-one who had allowed credit for six thousand years! The gentlemen were therefore to pay their old debt immediately or leave their newish overcoats as a pledge. They were obliged to take the second option, and the landlady promised to return their coats in six thousand years'time when they came again with a bit more money.

This took place in 1805 on the 17th of April in the inn at Segringen.

Unexpected Reunion

At Falun in Sweden, a good fifty years ago, a young miner kissed his pretty young bride-to-be and said, 'On the feast of Saint Lucia the parson will bless our love and we shall be man and wife and start a home of our own.' 'And may peace and love dwell there with us,' said his lovely bride, and smiled sweetly, 'for you are everything to me, and without you I'd sooner be in the grave than anywhere else.' When however, before the feast of Saint Lucia, the parson had called out their names in church for the second time : 'If any of you know cause, or just hindrance, why these two persons should not be joined together in holy Matrimony' - Death paid a call. For the next day when the young man passed her house in his black miner's suit (a miner is always dressed ready for his own funeral) , he tapped at the window as usual and wished her good morning all right, but he did not wish her good evening. He did not return from the mine, and in vain that same morning she sewed a red border on a black neckerchief for him to wear on their wedding day, and when he did not come back she put it away, and she wept for him, and never forgot him.

In the meantime the city of Lisbon in Portugal was destroyed by an earthquake, the Seven Years War came and went, the Emperor Francis I died, the Jesuits were dissolved, Poland was partitioned, the Empress MariaTheresa died, and Struensee was executed, and America became independent, and the combined French and Spanish force failed to take Gibraltar. The Turks cooped up General Stein in the Veterane Cave in Hungary, and the Emperor Joseph died too. King Gustavus of Sweden conquered Russian Finland, the French Revolution came and the long war began, and the Emperor Leopold II too was buried. Napoleon defeated Prussia, the English bom-barded Copenhagen, and the farmers sowed and reaped. The millers ground the corn, the blacksmiths wielded their hammers, and the miners dug for seams of metal in their workplace under the ground.

But in 1809, within a day or two of the feast of Saint John,

when the miners at Falun were trying to open up a passage between two shafts, they dug out from the rubble and the vitriol water, a good three hundred yards below ground, the body of a young man soaked in ferrous vitriol but otherwise untouched by decay and unchanged, so that all his features and his age were still clearly recognizable, as if he had died only an hour before or had just nodded off at work. Yet when they brought him to the surface his father and mother and friends and acquaintances were all long since dead, and no one claimed to know the sleeping youth or to remember his misadventure, until the woman came who had once been promised to the miner who one day had gone below and had not returned. Grey and bent, she hobbled up on a crutch to where he lay and recognized her bridegroom; and, more in joyous rapture than in grief, she sank down over the beloved corpse, and it was some time before she had recovered from her fervent emotion. 'It is my betrothed,' she said at last, 'whom I have mourned these past fifty years, and now God grants that I see him once more before I die. A week before our wedding he went under ground and never came up again.' The hearts of all those there were moved to sadness and tears when they saw the former bride-to-be as an old woman whose beauty and strength had left her, and the groom still in the flower of his youth; and how the flame of young love was rekindled in her breast after fifty years, yet he did not open his mouth to smile, nor his eyes to recognize her; and how finally she, as the sole relative and the only person who had claim to him, had the miners carry him into her house until his grave was made ready for him in the churchyard.

The next day when the grave lay ready in the church-yard and the miners came to fetch him she opened a casket and put the black silk neckerchief with the red stripes on him, and then she went with him in her best Sunday dress, as if it were her wedding day, not the day of his burial. You see, as they lowered him into his grave in the churchyard she said, 'Sleep well for another day or a week or so longer in your cold wedding bed, and don't let time weigh heavy on you! I have only a few things left to do, and I shall join you soon, and soon the day will dawn.'

'What the earth has given back once it will not withhold again at the final call', she said as she went away and looked back over her shoulder once more.

The Sly Pilgrim

A few years ago an idler roamed around the countryside pretending to be a pious pilgrim, saying he came from Paderborn and was making for the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, and already at the Coach and Horses in Mülheim he was asking, 'How far is it to Jerusalem now?' They told him, 'Seven hundred hours. But you'll save a quarter of an hour if you take the path to Mauchen.' So he went by way of Mauchen to save himself a quarter of an hour on his long journey. That wasn't such a bad idea. You must not scorn a small gain or a bigger one won't come your way. You more often get a chance to save or make threepence than a florin. But eight threepennies make a florin, and if on a journey of seven hundred hours you can save a quarter of an hour every five hours, over the whole journey you will save - now, who can work that out? How many hours? But that wasn't how our supposed pilgrim saw it! Since he was only after an easy life and a good meal he didn't care which way he went. As the old saying goes, a beggar can never take the wrong turning, it's a poor village indeed where he can't collect more than the cost of the shoe leather he has worn out on the road, especially if he goes barefoot. Yet our pilgrim intended to get back as soon as he could to the main road where he'd find rich people's houses and good cooking. For this rascal wasn't content, as a true pilgrim should be, with common food given in compassion by a pious hand, he wanted nothing but nourishing pebble soup! You see, whenever he saw a nice inn by the road, for instance the Post House at Krozingen or the Basel Arms at Schliengen, he would go in and very humbly and hungrily ask for a nice soup made of pebbles and water, in God's name, he had no money. And when the innkeeper's wife took pity on him and said, 'Pious pilgrim, pebbles are not easy to digest!', he said, 'That's just it! Pebbles last longer than bread and it's a long way to Jerusalem. But if you were to give me a little glass of wine too, in God's name, it would help me digest them.' Now if she said, 'But good pilgrim, a soup like that won't give you any strength at all!' then he replied, 'Well, if you use broth instead of water then of course it would be more nourishing.' And

when she brought him his broth and said, 'The bits at the bottom are still a bit hard, I'm afraid,' then he'd say, 'You're right, and the broth looks a little thin. Would you have a couple of spoonfuls of vegetables to add to it, or a scrap of meat, or maybe both?' If now the innkeeper's wife still felt sorry for him and put some meat and vegetables in the bowl, he said, 'God bless you! Now just hand me a piece of bread and I'll tuck into your soup!' Then he would push back the sleeves of his pilgrim's habit, sit down and set to work with relish, and when he had eaten the last crumb of bread, drained the wine, and finished the last morsel of meat and vegetables and the last drop of broth, he would wipe his mouth on the tablecloth or his sleeve, or perhaps he wouldn't bother, and he'd say, 'Missus, your soup has strengthened me as a good soup should, what a shame I can't find room for the nice pebbles now! But put them by, and when I come back I'll bring you a holy conch from the seashore at Ascalon or a Jericho rose.'

The Commandant and the Light Infantry in Hersfeld

In the last campaign in Prussia and Russia when the French Army and a large part of the allied troops were in Poland and Prussia, a contingent of the Baden Light Infantry was in Hessen and stationed at Hersfeld. For the Emperor had taken that state at the beginning of the campaign and stationed troops there. The inhabitants who preferred the way things had been before defied the new order and there were several acts of lawlessness, particularly in the town of Hersfeld. In one incident a French officer was killed. The French Emperor was engaged face to face with great numbers of the enemy and couldn't allow hostilities behind his back or let a spark spread into a great fire. The unfortunate people of Hersfeld thus had cause to regret their rashness. For the Emperor ordered the town to be looted, set alight at each corner and burnt to the ground.

This town of Hersfeld has many factories and thus many rich inhabitants and fine buildings; and all of us with a heart can understand how its unfortunate people, those fathers and mothers with families, felt when they heard the dreadful news. The poor whose possessions could be carried off in one pair of arms were just as much affected as the rich whose goods couldn't all be loaded on a train of wagons. Great houses on the town square and small dwellings in the alleyways are all the same when burnt to the ground, just like rich and poor in the graveyard.

But the worst didn't happen. The French Commandant in Kassel and Hersfeld interceded and the punishment was reduced. Only four houses were to be burnt down, and that was lenient. But the plundering was to take place as ordered, and that was hard enough. The wretched townsfolk, hearing this latest decision, were so cowed and robbed of all presence of mind that the benevolent Commandant himself had to urge them, instead of weeping and pleading in vain, to remove their most precious possessions in the short time that was left. The dreadful hour arrived, the drums sounded over

the wails of anguish. The soldiers hurried to their place of assembly through the crowds fleeing in despair. Then the stalwart Commandant of Hersfeld stood before the ranks of the infantry, and first he painted a vivid picture of the sad fate of the townspeople, then he said, 'Men, you now have permission to loot! Those who wish to take part, fall out!' Not one man moved. Not a single one! The order was repeated. Not one pair of boots stirred, and if the Commandant had intended the town to be plundered he would have had to do it himself. But no one was more pleased than he was that things turned out as they did, that is easy to tell. When the townsfolk learnt this, it was as if they woke from a bad dream. No one can describe their joy. They sent a delegation to the Commandant to thank him for his kindness and magnanimity, and offered him a handsome gift to mark their gratitude. Who knows what they might not have done! But the Commandant refused and said he wouldn't be paid for a good deed.

This happened in Hersfeld in the year 1807, and the town is still standing.

A Poor Reward

When in the last Prussian war the French came to Berlin where the King of Prussia resides, a great deal of the royal property as well as other people's was taken and carried off or sold. For war brings nothing, it only takes. Much was claimed as booty, however well it was hidden they found it, but not everything. A large store of royal building timber remained undiscovered and untouched for some time. But eventually a rascal among the king's own subjects thought, there's a fair penny to be made here, and with a smirk and a wink he went to tell the French com-mandant what a lovely stack of oak and pine logs was still at such and such a place, and it was worth a few thousand guilders. But the French commandant paid him badly for this betrayal and said, 'Just you leave those fine logs where they are! There's no call to deprive the enemy of his most basic needs. For when your king returns he will need timber for new gallows for trusty subjects like you!'

Your Family Friend can only applaud that, and he would make a present of a few logs from his own coppice if they were needed.

A Curious Ghost Story

Last autumn a gentleman was travelling through Schlien-gen, a nice little place. And as he was walking up the hill to spare the horses he told a man from Grenzach the following story of what had happened to him.

Six months earlier this gentleman was on his way to Denmark, and late one evening he arrived in a village with a fine mansion on a hill outside, and he wanted to stay the night. But the innkeeper said he had no room, there was a hanging the next day and three hangmen were staying with him. So the gentleman replied, 'Then I'll ask up there in the big house. The owner, the governor or whoever he is, will take me in and find a spare bed for me.' The innkeeper said, 'There are plenty of fine beds with silk hangings up there all ready made up, and I'm in charge of the keys. But I wouldn't advise you to go there! Three months ago the lord and the lady and the young master went away on a long journey, and since then the mansion house has been haunted by ghosts. The steward and the servants had to leave, and all the others who have been to the house never went back a second time.' Our stranger smiled. For he was a plucky man who wasn't afraid of ghosts, and he said, 'I'll risk it!' Despite all the innkeeper's objections he had to hand over the key, and after the traveller had put together what was needed to pay a visit on ghosts he went to the mansion with his servant who was travelling with him.

Once inside he didn't undress or get ready for bed, but waited to see what happened. He put two lights to burn on the table and a pair of loaded pistols next to them, and to pass away the time he picked up the Rhinelanders' Family Friend, bound in gold paper, which was hanging by a red silk ribbon under the mirror in its frame on the wall, and looked at the nice pictures. For a long time nothing happened. But when midnight stirred in the church tower and the clock struck twelve, and a rainstorm was passing over the house and large drops were beating against the window, there were three loud knocks on the door and a ghastly apparition with black

squinting eyes, a nose half a yard long, gnashing teeth, a beard like a goat and hair all over its body came into the room and said in a horrible growl : ‘I am the lord Mephistopheles. Welcome to my palace! Have you said your goodbyes to your wife and children?’The visitor felt a cold shiver run up from his big toes over his back and up under his night-cap, and his poor servant was in a worse state still. But when this Mephistopheles came towards him, scowling dreadfully and stepping high as if he was crossing a floor of flames, the unfortunate gentleman thought : in God’s name, this is the test! And he stood up boldly and pointed his pistol at the monster and said, ‘Halt, or I’ll shoot!’ Not every ghost can be stopped like that, for even if you pull the trigger it doesn’t go off, or the bullet flies back and hits you instead of the target. But Mephistopheles raised his first finger in warning, turned slowly on his heels and strode away just as he had come. Now when our traveller saw that this devil had respect for gunpowder, he thought, ‘There’s no danger now!’, picked up a light in his free hand and followed the ghost cautiously along the passage; and his servant who was standing behind him ran for all he was worth out of this blessed place and down to the village, thinking he’d sooner spend the night with the hangmen than with spooks.

But suddenly in the passage the ghost disappeared from under the eyes of its plucky pursuer just as if it had gone through the floor. And when the gentleman went on another few paces to see where it had gone, all at once there was no floor under his feet and he fell down through a hole towards a flaming fire, and he himself thought he was on the way to hell. But after dropping about ten feet he found himself lying unharmed on a heap of hay in a cellar. And six weird fellows were standing around the fire, that Mephistopheles with them. All sorts of strange implements were piled up around them, and two tables stood heaped with shining thalers, each one more lovely than the other.

Now the stranger knew what was going on. For this was a secret band of forgers, all with blood running in their veins. They had taken advantage of the owner’s absence and set up their mint in his mansion, and some of them were probably servants of the house who knew their way about; and to make sure they were not disturbed and discovered they wailed like ghosts, and anyone who came to the house was so frightened he never came back to take a

second look. Yet the plucky traveller now had cause to regret his lack of prudence in not listening to the innkeeper's warnings. For he was pushed through a narrow opening into a small dark room and could hear them deciding his fate : 'The best thing is to kill him!' said one. But another said, 'First we must question him, find out who he is and where he's from.' When they then learnt he was a man of consequence and on his way to Copenhagen to see the king they looked at each other wide-eyed. And when he was back in the dark storeroom they said, 'This is a bad business. For if he's missed and they find out from the innkeeper that he came here and didn't leave, the hussars will come overnight and fetch us out, and there's plenty of hemp in the fields this year, so hang-men's nooses come cheap.' So they told their prisoner they would let him go if he swore an oath not to betray them, threatening they would have him watched in Copenhagen. And he had to tell them on oath where he lived. He told them, 'Next to the Green Man, on the left in the big house with green shutters.' Then they poured him some Burgundy wine and he watched them coining their thalers until it was light.

When the morning light shone down through the gratings, and they heard the sound of whips on the road and the cowherd blowing his horn, the traveller took leave of his night-time companions, thanked them for having him and went gaily back to the inn, quite forgetting that he had left his watch and pipe and the pistols behind in the mansion. The innkeeper said, 'Thank God you're back, I didn't get a wink of sleep! How did you get on?' But the traveller thought, an oath is an oath, and you mustn't take God's name in vain to save your life. So he said nothing, and as the bell was ringing and the wretched malefactor was being led out everyone ran off to watch. He said nothing in Copenhagen either, and almost forgot the incident himself.

A few weeks later, however, he received a parcel by the post, and in it were a pair of expensive new pistols inlaid with silver, a new gold watch set with diamonds, a Turkish pipe with a gold chain and a silk tobacco-pouch embroidered with gold, and in the pouch was a note. It said, 'We are sending you this to make up for the fright we gave you and to thank you for keeping quiet. It's all over now, and you can tell anyone you like.' So the traveller told the man from Grenzach, and it was that same gold watch that he took out at the top of the hill to check that the clock at Hertingen was

striking noon on time, and later on in the Stork in Basel a French general offered him seventy-five new doubloons for it. But he wouldn't part with it.

One Word Leads to Another

A rich man in Swabia sent his son to Paris to learn French and a few manners. After a year or more his father's farm-hand came to see him. The son was greatly surprised and cried out joyfully, 'Hans, whatever are you doing here? How are things at home, what's the news?'

'Nothing much, Mr William, though your fine raven copped it two weeks ago, the one the gamekeeper gave you.'

'Oh, the poor bird,' replied Mr William. 'What hap-pened to it?'

'Well, you see, he ate too much carrion when our fine horses died one after the other. I said he would.'

'What! My father's four fine greys are dead?' Mr William asked. 'How did that happen?'

'Well, you see, they were worked too hard hauling water when the house and the barns burned down, and it did no good.'

'Oh no!' exclaimed Mr William, horrified. 'Our house burnt down? When was that?'

'Well, you see, nobody thought of a fire when your father lay in his coffin. He was buried at night with torches. A small spark soon spreads.'

'That's terrible news!' exclaimed Mr William in his dis-tress. 'My father dead? And how is my sister?'

'Well, you see, your late father died of grief when the young Miss had a child and no father for it. It's a boy.'

'There's nothing much else to tell,' he added.

A Bad Bargain

In the great city of London and round about it there are an extraordinary number of silly fools who take a childish delight in other people's money or fob watches or pre-cious rings and don't rest until they have them for themselves. Sometimes they get them by cunning and trickery, but more often by fearless assault, sometimes in broad daylight on the open road. Some of them do well, others don't. The London jailors and executioners can tell a few tales about that! One day, however, a strange thing happened to a certain rich and distinguished man. The King and many other great lords and their ladies were gathered on a lovely summer's day in a royal park where the winding paths led to a wood in the distance. Crowds of other people were there too, they didn't think their journey or their time wasted if they could see that their beloved King and his family were happy and well. There was food and drink, music and dancing. There were walks to be taken in pairs or alone along the inviting paths and between scented rose bushes. A man, well-dressed so that he appeared to be one of the company, took up his stand with a pistol under his coat by a tree at a secluded spot where the park bordered on the wood, waiting for some-one to come his way. And someone did come, a gentleman with a ring sparkling on his finger, a tinkling watch chain, diamonds in his buckles, and a ribbon and a star on his breast. He was strolling in the cool shade and thinking of nothing in particular. And while he was thinking of nothing in particular the fellow behind the tree stepped out, bowed low, pulled his pistol from under his coat, pointed it at the gentleman's breast and asked him politely to keep quiet, no one need know about their conversation! You can't help feeling uneasy when a pistol is aimed at you, you can never be sure what's in it! The gentleman very sensibly thought : better your money than your life, better lose a ring than a finger! and he promised to keep quiet.

'Now, Your Honour,' said this fellow, 'would you part with your two gold watches for a good price? Our school-master adjusts the clock every day, so we can never be sure of the right time, and

you can't see the figures on the sundial.' The gentleman had no choice, he was obliged to sell his watches to the scoundrel for a few pence, hardly the price of a glass of wine. In this way the rascal bought his ring and his buckles and the decorations off his breast, one after another and each for a paltry sum, with the pis-tol in his left hand all the time. When at last the gentleman thought, now he'll let me go, thank God!, the rogue began again.

'Your Honour, since we do business so easily, why don't you buy some of my things from me?' The gentleman thought, I must grin and bear it, that's the expression, and said, 'Show me what you have!' The fellow took a collection of trinkets from his pocket, things he had bought at a tuppenny stall or filched from somewhere, and the gentleman had to buy them all from him, one after the other, none of them cheap. Eventually the rogue had nothing left but the pistol, but seeing that the gentleman still had a couple of lovely doubloons in his green silk purse he said, 'Sir, won't you buy this pistol of mine with what's left in your purse? It's made by the best gun-maker in London and it's worth two doubloons of anyone's money!' The gentleman was surprised. 'This robber's an idiot!' he thought, and bought the pistol. When he had bought it from the robber he turned the tables on him and said : 'Hands up, my fine friend, and do as I tell you, keep walking in front of me or I'll blow your brains out!' But the rogue darted off into the wood. 'Go ahead and shoot, Your Excellency,' he said, 'it's not loaded!' The gentleman pulled the trigger, and in fact it didn't go off. He pushed the ramrod into the barrel, there was no trace of powder. By now the thief was well away into the wood; and the distinguished Englishman walked back, red in the face at being frightened by an empty threat, and he had something to think about now.

A Secret Beheading

Whether or not on that morning of 17 June that year the executioner at Landau said the Lord's Prayer with proper devotion and its 'Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil' - that I don't know. But a delivery came, a note posted from Nancy, and if he hadn't said his prayers, then it arrived on just the right day. The note said : 'Executioner at Landau, come to Nancy straight away and bring your big sword. You will be told what to do and paid well.' A coach was waiting outside. 'It's my job', thought the executioner and got into the coach. When he was still one hour this side of Nancy, it was evening already and the sun was setting among blood-red clouds, the driver drew up, saying, 'It will be fine again tomorrow', when suddenly three strong armed men were standing by the road, climbed in beside the executioner and promised that he wouldn't come to any harm, 'But you must let us blindfold you!' And when they had put the blindfold over his eyes they said, 'Driver, drive on!' The coachman drove on, and it seemed to the executioner that he was taken a good twelve hours further, and he had no way of telling where he was. He heard the mid-night owls; he heard the cocks crow; he heard the morning bells. Then without warning the coach stopped again. They took him into a house and gave him something to drink and a nice roll and sausage too. When he was strengthened by food and drink they led him on inside the same building, through several doors and up stairs and down, and then they removed his blindfold and he saw he was in a large room. It was hung all around with black drapes, and wax candles burnt on the tables. In the middle sat a woman on a chair with her neck bared and a mask over her face, and she must have been gagged, for she couldn't speak, only sob. Round the walls stood a number of gentlemen dressed in black and with black crape over their faces so that the executioner could not have recognized them if he had met them again an hour later. And one of them handed him his sword and ordered him to cut off the head of the woman sitting on the chair. The poor executioner's blood ran cold and he said they must excuse him : his sword was dedicated to the

service of justice and he could not defile it with murder. But one of the gentlemen by the wall pointed a pistol at him and said, 'Get on with it! Do as we tell you or you'll never set eyes on the church tower at Landau again!' The executioner thought of his wife and children at home. 'If I've no choice,' he said, 'and I must shed innocent blood, then on your head be it!' and with one blow he severed the poor woman's head from her body.

When it was done one of the men gave him a purse with two hundred doubloons. They put the blindfold over his eyes again and took him back to the coach he had come in. The men who had brought him there escorted him again. And when at last the coach drew up and they let him get out and remove the blindfold he was left standing where the three men had joined the coach, one hour this side of Nancy on the Landau road, and it was night. The coach sped off back.

That is what happened to the executioner at Landau, and Your Family Friend is not sorry that he can't say who that poor soul was who had to take such a bloody way to life everlasting. No, nobody found out who she was, what sin she had committed, and nobody knows where she is buried.

The Fake Gem

Outside the Butcher's Gate at Strassburg there is a pleasant garden where anyone can go and spend his money on decent pleasure, and there sat a well-dressed man drinking his wine like everyone else, and he had a ring with a precious stone on his finger and held it so it sparkled. So a Jew came up and said, 'Sir, you have a lovely gem in that ring on your finger, I wouldn't mind that myself! Doesn't it glitter like the Urim and Thummim in the breastplate of Aaron the priest?' The well-dressed stranger answered very curtly, 'The gem is a fake. If it weren't, it would be on someone else's finger, not mine!' The Jew asked to take a closer look at it. He turned it this way and that in his hand and bent his head to look at it from every angle. 'He says this stone is a fake?' he thought, and offered the stranger two new doubloons for the ring. But the stranger said quite angrily, 'Why do you think I'm lying? I told you, it's a fake!' The Jew asked permission to show it to an expert, and someone sitting close by said, 'I'll vouch for the Israelite, he'll know what the jewel is worth!' The stranger said, 'I don't need to consult anyone, the stone's a fake.'

While this was happening Your Family Friend was sitting at another table in the same garden with good friends of his, happily spending money on decent pleasure, and one of the company was a goldsmith who knows all about gems. He fitted a soldier who lost his nose at the battle of Austerlitz with a silver one and painted it skin colour, and it was a good nose. The only thing he couldn't do was breathe the breath of life into it. The Jew came over to this goldsmith. 'Sir,' he said, 'would you say this is a fake stone? Can King Solomon have worn anything more splendid in his crown?' The goldsmith, who was also something of a stargazer, said, 'It shines like Aldebaran in the sky all right. I'll get you ninety doubloons for this ring. If you come by it cheaper the profit is yours.'

The Jew went back to the stranger. 'Fake or not, I'll give you six doubloons!' and he counted them out on the table, sparkling

new from the mint. The stranger put the ring back on his finger and said, 'I have no intention of parting with it. If it's such a good fake that you think it's real that doesn't make it worth any less to me,' and he put his hand in his pocket so that the eager Israelite could no longer see the stone. 'Eight doubloons.' 'No.' 'Ten doubloons.' 'No.' 'Twelve - fourteen - fifteen doubloons.' 'Very well,' said the stranger at last, 'if you won't leave me in peace and insist on being deceived at all costs! But I tell you, in front of all these gentlemen here, the stone is a fake, and I'll not say it isn't. For I don't want any trouble. You can have the ring, it's yours.'

Now the Jew took the ring joyfully over to the gold-smith. 'I'll come for the money tomorrow.' But the goldsmith, who had never been taken in by anyone, opened his eyes wide in amazement. 'My friend, this isn't the ring you showed me two minutes ago! This stone is worth twenty kreuzers at most. This is the sort they make in the glass works at Sankt Blasien!' For actually the stranger had in his pocket a fake ring which looked as good as the one that had first sparkled on his finger, and while the Jew was bargaining with him and his hand was in his pocket, he pushed the genuine ring off his finger with his thumb and slipped his finger into the fake, and that was the one he had given the Jew. At once the dupe shot back to the stranger as if fired on a rocket : 'Oh, woe, woe unto me! I have been tricked, the stone is a fake!' But the stranger said coldly and calmly, 'I sold it to you for a fake. These gentlemen here are witnesses. It's yours now. Did I talk you into buying it or did you talk me into selling it?' All those present had to admit, 'Yes, he told you the stone was a fake when he said you could have it!' So the Jew had to keep the ring and no further fuss was made of the matter.

How a Ghastly Story was Brought to Light by a Common or Garden Butcher's Dog

Two butchers out in their district buying in animals came to a village and split up, one went left past the Swan, the other right, and they said, 'We'll meet up again in the Swan.' But they never did meet up again. For one of them went with a farmer into his cowshed. The farmer's wife went as well, though she was doing the washing in the kitchen, and their child decided to follow too. The devil gave the woman a nudge : 'Look at that belt full of money peeping out from under the butcher's shirt!' The woman gave her husband a wink, he gave her a nod, and they killed the poor butcher in the cowshed and hurriedly hid his body under some straw. The devil nudged the woman again : 'Look who's watching!' She looked round and saw the child. So, driven out of their minds by fear, they went back together into the house and locked the doors as if the enemy were near. Then the woman, whose heart was not just as black as sin but blacker and hotter than hell, said, 'Child, just look at you again! Come into the kit-chen,' she said, 'I'll clean you up.' In the kitchen she pushed her child's head into the hot suds and scalded him to death. Now, she thought, there's no one to tell on us - but she didn't think of the murdered butcher's dog.

The murdered butcher's dog had run along a bit with the other butcher, and then, while the child was being boiled and then popped into the bread oven, the dog doubled back and picked up his master's scent, sniffed at the cowshed door, scratched at the door to the house, and knew that something was wrong. Off he ran at once, back into the village, looking for the other butcher. Soon he was whinging and whining and pulling at this butcher's coat, and the butcher, too, knew something was wrong. So he went with the dog back to the house, in no doubt that something dreadful had happened there. He beckoned over two men who were passing nearby. When the murderers heard the dog whining and the butcher shouting, they had nothing but the gallows before their eyes and the fear of hellfire in their hearts. The man tried to escape

through the back window but his wife grabbed him by his coat and said, 'Stay here with me!' The man said, 'Come with me!' She answered, 'I can't, my legs won't move! Can't you see that ghastly figure outside the window, with its flaming eyes and fiery breath?' Meanwhile the door had been broken open. They soon found the two corpses. The criminals were taken and brought to court. Six weeks later they were put to death, their villainous corpses bound to the wheel, and even now the crows are still say-ing, 'That's tasty meat, that is!'

The Cunning Styrian

It was in Styria during the last war and some way off the main road, and a rich farmer was thinking : ‘How can I keep my thalers and my dear little ducats safe in these evil times? I’m ever so fond of the Empress MariaTheresa, God bless her, and the Emperor Joseph, God bless him, and the Emperor Francis, God give him long life and health! And just when you think you have these dear sovereigns ever so safe and out of harm’s way the enemy gets a whiff of them as soon as he sticks his nose into the village and takes them off prisoner to Lorraine or Cham-pagne! It’s enough to make a poor patriotic Austrian’s heart bleed!’ ‘I’ve got it!’ he said, ‘I know what I’ll do,’ and in the dark moonless night he took his money out into the kitchen garden. ‘The Seven Sisters will not betray me,’ he said. Out in the garden he put the money straight down between the wallflowers and the sweet peas. Next to it he dug a hole in the path between the beds, threw all the soil on top of the coins and trampled on the beau-tiful flowers and the chard all around like someone treading down sauerkraut. The next Monday the Chasseurs were scouting all round the district, and on the Tuesday a patrol entered the village and went straight to the mill, and then with white elbows from the mill to our farmer. And an Alsatian brandished his sword and bawled at him, ‘Out with your money, farmer, or say your last Our Father!’ The farmer said they were welcome in God’s name to take whatever they could find. He had nothing left, it had all gone yesterday and the day before that. ‘You’ll not find anything,’ he said, ‘you fine fellows!’ When they found nothing except for a couple of coppers and a gilded threepenny piece with the image of the Emp-ress MariaTheresa on it and a ring to hang it up by, the Alsatian said, ‘Farmer, you’ve buried your money! Show us here and now where you buried your money or you’ll leave for the hereafter without saying your last Our Father!’ ‘I can’t show you it here and now,’ said the farmer, ‘I’m sorry, but you’ll have to come with me out into the kitchen garden. I’ll show you where it was hidden there and what happened. Our lords and masters, the enemy, were here before you, yesterday and

the day before, and they found it and took the lot."The Chasseurs saw how things looked in the garden, found everything just as the man said, and not one of them thought the money might be lying under the pile of earth, but each of them gazed into the empty hole and thought : 'If only I'd been here earlier!' 'And if only they hadn't ruined the wallflowers, and the chard as well!' said the farmer, and so he fooled them and all those who came after them, and so it was that he saved the whole family of archdukes, the Emperor Francis, the Emperor Joseph, the Empress MariaTheresa, and Leopold the First, the Most Blessed of All, and kept them safe in their own country.

A Report from Turkey

There is justice in Turkey. A merchant's man was over-taken on his journey by night and fatigue, tied his horse laden with precious goods to a tree not far from a guard-house, lay down under the shelter of the tree and went to sleep. Early next day he was woken by the morning air and the quails calling. He had slept well, but his horse had gone.

So he rushed off to the governor of the province, Prince Carosman Oglu he was called and he was staying nearby, and complained that he had been robbed. The prince cut the hearing short : 'So close to the guardhouse! Why didn't you ride on another fifty yards, then you would have been safe! It's your own stupid fault!' But then the merchant's man said, 'O just prince, should I have feared to sleep in the open in a land where you rule?' That pleased the Prince Carosman, and it annoyed him too. 'Drink a little glass of Turkish brandy tonight,' he said to the merchant's man, 'and sleep under the same tree again.' The man did just as he was told. The next morning when he was woken by the morning air and the quails calling he had slept well again, for the horse was standing there tethered at his side together with all the precious goods, and in the tree hung a dead man, the thief, who never saw the sun rise again.

They do say there are trees enough in most parts, big ones and little ones.

The Lightest Death Sentence

People have said it's the guillotine. But it isn't, you know! A man who had done much for his country and was highly thought of by its ruler was sentenced to death for a crime he'd committed in a fit of passion. Petitions or prayers were no use. But since he was otherwise highly regarded by the ruler, he, the prince, let him choose how he would like to die : he was to die in whatever way he chose. So the chief secretary came to him in prison : 'The prince has determined to show you mercy. If you wish to be put to death on the wheel you shall be put on the wheel; if you wish to be hanged he will have you hanged-there are already two up on the gallows but everybody knows there's room for three at a time. If, however, you would rather take rat poison there is some at the chemist's. For whatever kind of death you choose the prince says it shall be yours. But, as you know, die you must!' The criminal replied, 'If I really must die, then death on the wheel can be bent to suit one's taste, and hanging can be turned to suit one's inclination if the wind lends a hand. But you haven't got the point! For my part I have always thought that death from old age is the easiest way, and since the prince leaves the choice to me I'll choose it and no other!' And that was his final decision, he wouldn't be talked out of it. So they had to let him go free and live on until he died of old age. For the prince said, 'I gave my word and I'll not break it.'

This little story comes from our mother-in-law who doesn't like to let anyone die if she can possibly help it.

A Stallholder is Duped

A rouble is a silver coin in Russia, worth a bit less than two guilders, whereas an imperial is a gold coin and worth ten roubles. So you can get a rouble for an imperial, for instance if you lose nine roubles at cards, but you can't get an imperial for a rouble. Yet a cunning soldier in Moscow said, 'Want to bet? Tomorrow at the fair I'll get me an imperial for a rouble.' The next day long rows of stalls were set out at the fair, the people were already standing at all the booths, admiring or finding fault, mak-ing bids and haggling, the crowd was walking up and down and the boys were saying hello to the girls, when up came the soldier with a rouble in his hand. 'Whose is this rouble? Is it yours?' he asked all the stallkeepers in turn. One of them who wasn't doing much business looked on for some time and then thought : if that mon-ey's too hot for you to hold I can warm to it! 'Over here, musketeer, it's my rouble!' The soldier said, 'If you hadn't shouted I would never have found you in the crowd,' and he handed him the rouble. The trader turned it one way and the other and tested its ring; it was a good one all right, and he put it in his purse. 'Now give me back my imperial, please!' said the musketeer. The trader said, 'I don't have any imperial of yours, I owe you nothing. You can have this stupid rouble back if you're playing a trick on me!' But the musketeer said, 'Hand over my imperial, this is no joke, I'm serious and can easily fetch a constable!' One thing led to another, a polite word to a defiant one, defiance to insults, and a crowd gathered around the stall like bees round a honey pot. Then some-thing was burrowing its way through the throng. 'What's going on here?' said the police sergeant who had pushed through the crowd with his men. 'I said, what's all this?' The stallkeeper couldn't say much, but the musketeer had a good story to tell.

Less than a quarter of an hour before, he said, he had bought this and that from this man for one rouble. But when it came to paying he could find only a double imper-ial, nothing smaller, one his godfather had given him when he was enlisted. So he gave him the imperial until he came back with a rouble. When he came back

with the rouble he couldn't find the right stall, so he asked at all the booths, 'Who do I owe a rouble?' And this man said it was him, and it was too, and he took the rouble but pretended he didn't have his imperial. 'Now will you agree to give it back?' The police sergeant questioned those around and they said : Yes, the musketeer asked at all the stalls whose rouble it was and this man said it was his, and took it too, and tested it to see if it was genuine. When the police sergeant heard that, he settled the matter : 'You've got your rouble, so give this soldier his imperial or we'll close down your stall and nail it up with you inside and leave you to starve to death!' Thus the police officer, and the trader it was who had to give the musketeer an imperial for a rouble.

Remember : Other people's property can eat into your own just as fresh snow swallows up the old.

Patience Rewarded

One day a Frenchman rode up on to a bridge over a stream, and it was so narrow there was scarcely room for two horses at once. An Englishman was riding up from the other side, and when they met in the middle neither of them would give way. 'An Englishman does not make way for a Frenchman!' said the Englishman. 'Pardieu,' said the Frenchman, 'My horse has an English pedigree too! It's a pity I can't turn him round and let you have a good look at his backside in retreat! But you could at least let that English fellow you're riding step aside for this English mount of mine. In any case yours seems to be the junior; mine served under Louis XIV in the battle of Kieferholz, 1702!'

But the Englishman was not greatly impressed. 'I have all the time in the world!' he said. 'This gives me a chance to read today's paper until you are pleased to make way.' So with the coolness the English are famed for he took a newspaper from his pocket and opened it up and sat on his horse on the bridge and read for an hour, and the sun didn't look as if it would shine on this pair of fools for ever, it was going down quickly towards the mountains. An hour later when he had finished reading and was about to fold up the newspaper again he looked at the Frenchman and said, 'Eh bien?' But the Frenchman had kept his head too and replied, 'Englishman, kindly lend me your paper a while, so that I can read it too until you are pleased to make way.' Now, when the Englishman saw that his adversary was a patient man, he said, 'Do you know what, Frenchman? Come on, I'll make way for you!' So the Englishman made way for the Frenchman.

The Champion Swimmer

Before the war and all its afflictions when you could still cross freely from France to England and drink a glass or two in Dover or buy material for a waistcoat, a large mail boat sailed from Calais across the straits to Dover and back again twice a week. For the sea between those two countries is only a few miles wide at that point, you see. But you had to get there before the boat left if you wanted to sail on it. A Frenchman from Gascony seemed not to know that, for he came to Calais a quarter of an hour too late, just as they were shutting up the hens, and the sky was clouding over. 'Must I sit around here for a couple of days twiddling my thumbs? No,' he thought, 'I'd do better to pay a boatman a twelve-sous piece to go after the mail boat.' For a small craft can sail faster than the heavy mail boat, you understand, and will catch up with it. But when he was sitting in the open boat the boatman said, 'If I'd thought I'd have brought a tarpaulin!' For it began to rain, and how! Very soon it poured down from the night sky as if a sea up above was emptying itself into the sea below. But the Gascon thought, 'This is going to be fun!' 'Praise be,' said the boatman at last, 'I can see the mail boat.' And he pulled up alongside and the Gascon climbed aboard, and when he suddenly appeared through the narrow hatchway in the middle of the night and in the middle of the sea and joined the passengers on the ship they all wondered where he had sprung from, all on his own, so late and so wet. For on a ship like that it is like being in a cellar, you can't hear what is going on outside over the talk of the passengers, the sailors' shouts, the noise of the wind, the flapping sails and the crashing waves, and nobody had any idea it was raining. 'You look as if you've been keelhauled,' said one, 'pulled right under the ship from one side to the other, I mean.' 'Is that what you're thinking?' said the Gascon. 'Do you imagine you can go swimming and stay dry? If you can tell me how to do that I'll be glad to hear it, you see I'm the postman from Oléron and every Monday I swim over to the mainland with letters and messages, it's quicker that way. But now I have a message to take to England. With your permission I'll join you, since I was

fortunate enough to meet up with you. Judging from the stars it can't be far to Dover now.' 'You're welcome, fellow country-man,' said one (though he wasn't a fellow Frenchman but an Englishman) and blew a cloud of tobacco smoke from his mouth. 'If you have swum this far across the sea from Calais you must be a class above the black swimmer in London!' 'I'm not afraid of competition,' said the Gascon. 'Will you take him on,' replied the Englishman, 'if I place a hundred louis d'or on you?' The Gascon said, 'You can bet I will!' It's the custom of rich Englishmen to bet with each other for large sums placed on men who excel at some physical activity. And so it was that this Englishman on the ship took the Gascon to London with him at his expense and had him eat and drink well so that he stayed fit and strong. 'My lord,' he said to a good friend of his in London, 'I have brought with me a swimmer I found at sea. I bet you a hundred guineas he can beat your Moor!' His friend said, 'You're on!'

The next day they both appeared with their swimmers at an agreed spot on the river Thames, and hundreds of curious people had gathered there and they laid their bets too, some on the Moor, some on the Gascon, one shilling, or six shillings, one, two, five, twenty guineas, and the Moor didn't give the Gascon much of a chance. But when they had both undressed the Gascon tied a little box to his body with a leather strap without saying why, as if that were quite normal. The Moor said, 'What are you up to? Have you learnt that from the champion jumper who had to tie lead weights to his feet when he was set to catch a hare and was afraid he would jump right over it?' The Gascon opened his box and said, 'I've only got a bottle of wine in here, a couple of saveloys and a small loaf of bread! I was going to ask you where you have your eats. For I shall swim straight down the river Thames into the North Sea and down the Channel into the Atlantic and on to Cadiz, and I suggest we don't call in anywhere on the way, for I have to be back in Oléron by Monday, that's the 16th. But tomorrow morning in Cadiz at the White Horse I'll order a good dinner for you so it will be ready by the time you arrive.' You, good reader, will hardly be imagining that he could escape that way! But the Moor was scared stiff. 'I can't compete against that amphibian!' he told his master. 'You can please yourself what you do!' And he got dressed again.

So the bet was over, the Gascon was given a handsome reward

by the Englishman who had brought him there and everyone scoffed at the Moor. For although they must have seen that the Frenchman was only shamming, they were all amused by his bravado and the unexpected out-come, and for a month after that he was treated in the inns and beerhouses by all those who had bet on him, and he admitted he had never been in the water in all his life.

The Weather Man

Just as a sieve-maker or a basket-weaver who lives in a small place cannot earn enough in his village or town to keep himself all year, but has to look for work and practise his craft in the countryside around, so our compasses-maker too does business away from home, and his trade is not in compasses but in knavish tricks that pay for a few drinks at the inn. Thus one day he appeared in Ober-ehingen and went straight to the mayor. 'Mr Mayor,' he said, 'could you do with different weather? I've seen how things are hereabouts. There's been too much rain on the bottom fields and the crops on the hill are behindhand.' The mayor thought that was easy to say but difficult to put right. 'Just so,' replied the compasses-maker, 'but that's my line of business! Didn't you know I'm the weather man from Bologna?' In Italy, he said, where the oranges and lemons grow, all the weather was made to order. 'You Germans are a bit behind in these matters.' The mayor was a good and trusting fellow and one of those who would like to get rich sooner rather than later. So he was attracted by the offer. But he also thought caution was called for! 'As a test run,' he said, 'make it a clear sky tomorrow with just a few fluffy white clouds, sunshine all day with some streaks of vapour glistening in the air. Let the first yellow butterflies come out round midday, and it can be a nice cool evening!' The compasses-maker replied, 'I can't commit myself just for one day, Mr Mayor! It wouldn't cover my costs. I can only take on the job by the year. But then you'll have problems finding room to store your crops and the new wine!' When the mayor wanted to know how much he would charge for the year he was careful and didn't ask for payment in advance, only a guilder a day and free drinks until the matter was properly in hand, that could take at least three days-'But after that a pint from each gallon of wine over what you press in your best years, and a peck from every bushel of fruit.' 'That's risnible,' said the mayor. He stood in awe of the compasses-maker and was using refined language, and people in his part of the country think it's refined to say 'risnible' for reasonable. But when he took pen and paper from

the cupboard and was drawing up a schedule for the weather month by month the compasses-maker came up with a further complication : ‘You can’t do that, Mr Mayor! You will have to consult the people. The weather is a community matter. You can’t expect every-one to accept your choice of weather.’ ‘You’re right!’ said the mayor. ‘You’re a sensible man.’

You, good reader, will have taken the measure of our compasses-maker and will have foreseen that the people could not agree on the matter. At their first meeting no decision was reached, nor even at the seventh, at the eighth hard words were spoken, and in the end a level-headed lawyer concluded that the best thing to do, to preserve peace and avoid strife in the community, was to pay the weather man off and send him packing. So the mayor summoned the compasses-maker. ‘Here are your nine guilders, you mischief-maker, now make sure you leave before there’s blood shed in the village!’ The compasses-maker didn’t have to be told twice. He took the money, left owing for about twelve pints of wine at the inn, and the weather stayed as it was.

Now then, as always the compasses-maker has much to teach us! In this case how good it is that up till now the supreme ruler of the world has always governed the weather according to his will alone. Even we calendar-makers, luminaries and the other estates of the realm are scarcely consulted and need lose no sleep on that score.

The Safest Path

Now and then even someone drunk has the occasional notion or good idea, as a fellow did one day who didn't take his usual path home from town but walked straight into the stream running alongside it instead. There he met a good man ready to offer a hand to a fellow, even a drunk one, in trouble. 'My good friend,' said the man, 'haven't you noticed you're in the water? The footpath's over here.' He too, replied the drinker, generally found it best to use the path, but explained that this time he had had one too many. 'And that's just why I want to help you out of the stream,' said the good man. 'And that's just why I want to stay in it,' replied the drinker. 'Because if I walk in the stream and fall, I fall on to the path, but if I fell when walking on the path, I'd fall into the stream.' And that's what he said, tapping his forehead with his index finger, as if to show that he still knew a thing or two that might not have occurred to anyone else, despite being a bit the worse for wear.



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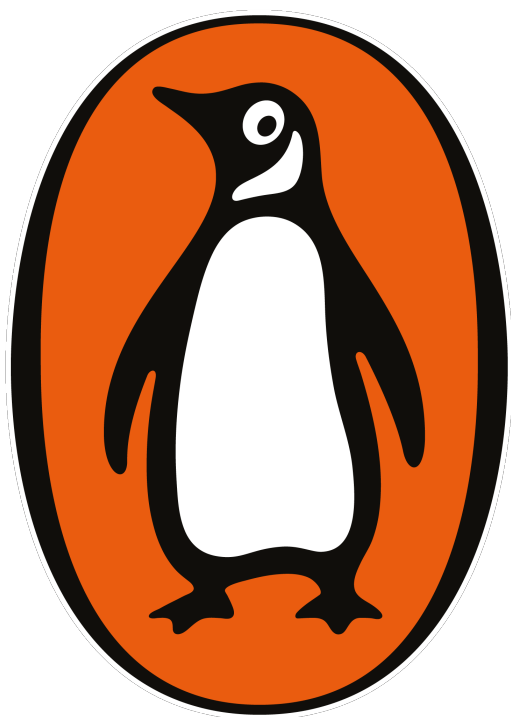
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亚瑟·萨维尔勋爵的罪行

Lord Arthur Savile's Crime

亚瑟·萨维尔勋爵的罪行

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这是温德米尔夫人在复活节前的最后一场招待会，本廷克山庄比平日里更加热闹。六位内阁大臣直接从议长会议的现场赶来，身上还披挂着星章缎带；所有漂亮女人都穿上了她们最时髦的裙子。在画室尽头站着的，是卡尔斯鲁厄的索菲亚公主。她一副鞑靼人的面相，长着一对黑溜溜的小眼睛，佩戴着华美的翡翠首饰，尖声操着一口蹩脚的法语，无论谁对她说些什么，都报以夸张的大笑作回应。现场云集了各方各派的宾客：漂亮的贵族夫人们与狂热的激进派亲切地交谈，颇有声望的传教士与大名鼎鼎的无神论者擦肩而过，一群虔诚的主教追随着一位丰腴的歌剧首席女主唱穿堂过室，楼梯上站着几个皇家学院院士，假充成艺术家的样子。据说一时间，晚餐室里高朋满座，佳客云集。事实上，那真是温德米尔夫人最美好的一个夜晚，公主待到了快十一点半才离去。

公主刚一离开，温德米尔夫人就回到了画室，开始和佩斯利公爵夫人攀谈起来。画室里，一位著名的政治经济学家正表情严肃地向一位愤愤不平的匈牙利艺术大师解释音乐的科学原理。温德米尔夫人看上去去明艳动人，她那秀丽的脖颈白皙如象牙，大大的眼睛仿佛幽蓝的勿忘我花，一头浓密的卷发闪烁着金色光华——绝不是当今篡夺纯金声名的那种浅淡的麦秸色，而是交织在璀璨阳光里或隐藏在珍稀琥珀中的那种金色。它们为她的脸庞镀上了一圈圣光，全然掩去了她罪人的魅惑。她是一个奇妙的心理学研究课题。年轻的时候，她就发现了一条重要的真理：越是放浪形骸，越是清纯可人。于是经由一系列鲁莽的出格行为——其中多半无伤大雅，她赢得了一位名流所享有的优遇。她换了不少一任丈夫。据《德布雷特英国贵族年鉴》记载，她曾有过三段婚姻。不过她从来没换过情人，于是坊间早就不再传播她的流言蜚语了。如今她四十年华，无儿女承欢膝下，只对寻欢作乐有着极度的热情，这也是她永葆青春的秘密。

她突然急切地环顾了一下房间，用她清晰而低沉的嗓音问：“我的手相师呢？”

“你的什么，格拉迪斯？”公爵夫人不由自主地高声问道。

“我的手相师，公爵夫人。我现在没他活不下去。”

“亲爱的格拉迪斯，你总是这么别出心裁！”公爵夫人边低声说

着，边暗自琢磨手相师到底是什么，心想总不会和手足科医生差不多吧。

“他每周都会来给我看两次手相，”温德米尔夫人继续说道，“有趣极了。”

“我的老天！”公爵夫人自言自语道，“还真是一个手足科医生。太可怕了！我希望他无论如何至少是个外国人，那样的话还不算太糟糕。”

“我一定要把他介绍给您。”

“介绍给我？！”公爵夫人大喊一声，“你的意思是他就在这儿？”她开始四处张望，寻找她的玳瑁小扇子和一件破旧不堪的蕾丝披肩，以便做好准备，即刻离开。

“他当然在这儿。我怎么可能不邀请他来参加我的派对？他说我有一只通灵的手，要是我的拇指再短哪怕一丁点儿，我必定会是一个悲观主义者，会入修道院。”

“哦，我明白了！”公爵夫人如释重负，“他是个占吉卜卦的算命先生？”

“也卜算厄运。”温德米尔夫人答道，“吉凶祸福，前世今生。比如，明年我命里有灾，在陆地或海上都危险，所以我打算住在高空气球上，每天晚上用篮子把吃食拎上来。这些都写在我小手指上，也许是我的掌纹，我记不清是哪个了。”

“但你这必定是在违背天意，格拉迪斯。”

“我亲爱的公爵夫人，我坚信天意是禁得住这一回考验的。我认为每个人每月都应该看一次手相，好知道什么不该做。当然，有的人还是会去做，不过能被提前预警还是好的。现在，如果没有人赶紧去把波杰斯先生找来，我只好自己去了。”

“由我为您效劳吧，温德米尔夫人。”一个高大帅气的年轻男子说道。他一直微笑着站在旁边，饶有兴趣地聆听着她们的对话。

“太感谢了，亚瑟勋爵！可是我怕你不认识他。”

“如果他如您所说的那般出众，温德米尔夫人，我是不会认不出他的。跟我说说他什么样子，我会立刻把他带来。”

“嗯，他一点儿也不像是一个手相师。我的意思是，他并不是一副神秘莫测、深藏不露或不着边际的样子。他是一个矮壮的男人，滑稽的秃头，戴一副大大的金丝眼镜，形貌介于家庭医生和乡村律师之间。实在抱歉，可这并不是我的错——人们太讨厌了，我的钢琴师们都看起来和诗人一模一样，而我的诗人们又仿佛是一群钢琴家。我还记

得上一季我邀请了一个曾经炸死过许多人的、极度可怕的阴谋家来吃晚饭，他以前总是穿一件锁子甲，袖子上别着一把匕首。可你知道吗，他来的时候看起来就像是一位和善的老牧师，整晚都在讲笑话。当然了，他非常有趣，可是我失望至极。当我问起他的锁子甲，他只是大笑着说：‘英格兰实在太冷了，没法穿。’啊，波杰斯先生来了！波杰斯先生，我想让你给佩斯利公爵夫人看看手相。公爵夫人，您得把手套脱了。不，不是左手，另一只。”

“亲爱的格拉迪斯，我认为这实在是不妥。”公爵夫人说着，轻轻地脱下了一只脏污的小山羊皮手套。

“但凡有趣的事情都不妥，”温德米尔夫人说，“世事如此。不过，我一定要介绍你们认识。公爵夫人，这是波杰斯先生，我钟爱的手相师。波杰斯先生，这是佩斯利公爵夫人，如果你敢说她手掌上的月亮山 [1] 比我的大，我就再也不会相信你了。”

“我确信，格拉迪斯，我手上没有那东西。”公爵夫人严肃地说。

“夫人说得没错，”波杰斯先生瞥了一眼那只手指短粗的小胖手，说道，“月亮山没有成形。不过，生命线极好。请您弯一下手腕。谢谢！手腕上三条醒目的主线！您会长命百岁的，公爵夫人，而且非常幸福。志向线——不好不坏。才智线不算突出，情感线——”

“您就直言不讳吧，波杰斯先生！”温德米尔夫人大声说道。

“倘若看出了公爵夫人经历过什么，我自然乐意直言，”波杰斯先生说着，鞠了一躬，“可是很遗憾，我只看到了伟大的情感，伴随着强烈的责任感。”

“请您继续，波杰斯先生。”公爵夫人说道，看上去颇为受用。

“理财是夫人您重要的美德。”波杰斯先生继续说。温德米尔夫人大笑着离开了。

“理财是件极好的事。”公爵夫人自鸣得意地说，“我嫁给佩斯利的时候，他有十一座城堡，可没有一所房子能住人。”

“如今，他有了十二所房子，可一座城堡也没有了。”温德米尔夫人大声说道。

“哦，亲爱的，”公爵夫人说，“我喜欢……”

“舒适，”波杰斯先生说道，“现代化设施，而且每一间卧室里都有热水。夫人您完全正确，舒适是我们的文明带给我们的唯一的東西。”

“你已经准确地讲出了公爵夫人的性格，波杰斯先生，现在你一定要给弗劳拉夫人看看手相。”女主人微笑着点头示意，一位淡褐色

头发、削肩膀的高个儿女孩便从沙发后面笨手笨脚地走出来，伸出了一只瘦骨嶙峋的细长的手掌，手指像竹片儿一样。

“哈，一位钢琴师！”波杰斯先生说道，“我看是一位杰出的钢琴师，不过或许还称不上是音乐家。非常矜持，非常坦诚，而且非常爱动物。”

“太对了！”公爵夫人大声说着，转向温德米尔夫人，“完全正确！弗劳拉在麦克洛斯基养了二十四只柯利牧羊犬。如果她父亲允许的话，她会把我们城里的房子变成动物园。”

“哎呀，正巧每个星期四的晚上我也这么对待我的房子。”温德米尔夫人大笑着高声说道，“只不过比起柯利牧羊犬，我更喜欢狮子。”

“这是您的一桩错事，温德米尔夫人。”波杰斯先生说着，浮夸地鞠了一躬。

“如果一个女人不能令她所犯的错事楚楚动人，那她充其量也仅是一位女性罢了。”这是女主人的回答。“不过你一定要给我们多看几个手相。来，托马斯爵士，让波杰斯先生给您看看。”一位身穿白色西装马甲的亲切和蔼的老绅士走上前来，伸出一只厚实粗糙的手，中指尤其长。

“生性爱冒险。以往有过四次长途旅行，即将开启一段新旅程。遭遇过三次船难。不，两次，不过下次旅行会有遭遇海难的风险。一个坚定的保守派，非常守时，酷爱收藏奇珍异宝。在十六岁到十八岁之间生过一场重病，快三十岁的时候继承了一笔财富。对猫和激进派深恶痛绝。”

“太神奇了！”托马斯爵士惊呼道，“您一定得给我夫人也看看手相！”

“您的第二任夫人，”波杰斯先生依然握着托马斯爵士的手，轻声说道，“您第二任夫人的手。我荣幸之至！”可是马维尔夫人，一个棕色头发、连睫毛都伤感的忧郁女人，完全拒绝将她的过去或未来暴露出来。而温德米尔夫人费尽口舌也没能让俄国大使克洛夫先生脱下他的手套。事实上，似乎许多人都很害怕面对这个满脸一成不变的微笑、戴着金丝眼镜、眼睛贼亮的古怪的小个子男人。而且，当他当着所有人的面，对可怜的弗莫尔夫人说，她其实一点儿都不喜欢音乐，只是非常喜欢音乐家的时候，人们都觉察到，手相学真是一门最危险的科学，不应该受到鼓励，除非是两人私下交流。

然而，亚瑟·萨维尔勋爵全然不知弗莫尔夫人的不幸遭遇，他已经饶有兴致地看了波杰斯先生许久，迫不及待地希望他给自己看看手相，可是又不太好意思主动前去要求。于是他穿过房间走到了温德米

尔夫人落座的地方，满脸绯红地询问，是否能请波杰斯先生给他瞧瞧。

“当然了，他会愿意的。”温德米尔夫人说，“那正是他来这儿的目。亚瑟勋爵，我所有的狮子都是马戏团演员，无论何时，我一声令下，它们就得跳火圈。不过我得事先警告你，我会把一切都告诉西比尔的。她明天来和我共进午餐，聊聊帽子的事。如果波杰斯先生发现你脾气很坏，或者有痛风的征兆，或是在贝斯沃特金屋藏娇，我必定将一切如实奉告给西比尔。”

亚瑟勋爵微笑着摇了摇头。“我不担心，”他答道，“西比尔对我了如指掌，我对她也一样。”

“啊！你这么说过令我感到一丝遗憾。婚姻是建立在彼此误解的基石之上的。我可一点儿都不愤世嫉俗，只是有些经验罢了，然而事实正是如此。波杰斯先生，亚瑟·萨维尔勋爵巴不得你快给他看看手相。你可别说出什么‘他和伦敦最漂亮的女孩儿订婚了’之类的话，这消息早在一个月以前就登过《晨报》了。”

“亲爱的温德米尔夫人，”杰德堡侯爵夫人大声说道，“千万让波杰斯先生多留会儿。他刚刚才告诉我，我应该登台表演，我对此颇有兴趣。”

“如果他真是这么说的，杰德堡夫人，我必定得把他带走了。快过来，波杰斯先生，给亚瑟勋爵看看手相。”

“好吧，”杰德堡夫人噘着嘴从沙发上站起身，“就算我当不成演员，至少能当个听众吧。”

“当然，我们大家都来做听众。”温德米尔夫人说，“现在，波杰斯先生，千万告诉我们点儿好话，亚瑟勋爵可是我特别钟爱的客人之一。”

可是，当波杰斯先生看到亚瑟勋爵的手掌，他竟一言不发，面色变得莫名地苍白。他似乎打了个寒战，粗重的眉毛以一种奇怪又恼人的方式扭曲着，正如每次他困惑不解时的样子。接着他的黄脑门上渗出豆大的汗珠，仿佛有毒的露水，他的粗手指也变得冰冷黏湿。

亚瑟勋爵自然注意到了这些令人不安的奇怪迹象，有生以来第一次，他感觉到了恐惧。他想冲出房间，可是他克制住了自己的冲动。最好能知道最坏的情况，不管是什么，也好过在骇人的未知中惶惶度日。

“愿闻其详，波杰斯先生。”他说道。

“我们都等着呢！”不耐烦的温德米尔夫人急切地大喊道。可是那

位手相师偏偏缄口不言。

“我相信亚瑟勋爵也是要登台表演的。”杰德堡夫人说，“只不过刚才被你斥责一番，波杰斯先生就不敢再这样告诉他了。”

突然间，波杰斯先生松开了亚瑟勋爵的右手，抓起他的左手，低低地俯下身去，仔细查看，眼镜的金边都要蹭到手掌心了。霎时间，他的脸变得惨白，如同一副恐怖的面具，但他很快恢复了镇静。他抬起头看着温德米尔夫人，挤出一个微笑说：“这是一个迷人的年轻人的手。”

“当然了！”温德米尔夫人答道，“不过他会是一个可爱的丈夫吗？这才是我想知道的。”

“所有迷人的年轻人都会是可爱的丈夫。”波杰斯先生说道。

“我认为做丈夫的不应该太过迷人，”杰德堡夫人一脸忧思地低声说道，“那太危险了。”

“我亲爱的宝贝，他们永远都不会太过迷人的。”温德米尔夫人大声说，“不过我想知道细节，只有细节才是最有趣的。亚瑟勋爵会发生什么事？”

“哦，未来几个月之内，亚瑟勋爵将外出旅行……”

“没错，当然了，他要去度蜜月。”

“还会失去一位亲戚。”

“但愿可别是他妹妹？”杰德堡夫人用满是怜悯的语气问道。

“当然不是他妹妹，”波杰斯先生做了一个不以为然的手势，“只是个远房亲戚。”

“哦，我真是失望透顶，”温德米尔夫人说，“我明天没有一星半点儿的东西可以透露给西比尔。现如今可没人不在乎什么远房亲戚，多少年前就过时了。不过，我想她最好备一块黑丝巾在身边，去教堂总会用得到。好了，我们去吃晚餐吧。他们肯定把什么都吃光了，我们没准儿还能找些热汤喝。弗朗索瓦以前会烹制极美味的鲜汤，可是他现在对政治狂热，我都有些搞不懂他了。我倒是希望布朗热将军能保持安静。公爵夫人，您肯定累了吧？”

“一点儿也不，亲爱的格拉迪斯，”公爵夫人边回答，边蹒跚着走向门口，“我过得非常愉快，那个手足科医生，我是说那个手相师，真是太有意思了。弗劳拉，我的玳瑁扇子在哪儿？哦，谢谢你，托马斯爵士，非常感谢！我的蕾丝披肩呢，弗劳拉？哦，谢谢你，托马斯爵士，你真是个好人！”然后，这位高贵的人物终于走下了楼，途中只把香水瓶弄掉了两次。

这期间，亚瑟·萨维尔勋爵一直站在壁炉旁，挥之不去的恐惧与对厄运将临的胆战心惊笼罩着他。妹妹挽着普利姆代尔勋爵的胳膊从他身边经过，身着粉色织锦，戴着粉色珍珠配饰，楚楚动人，而他只对着妹妹苦笑一番。他几乎没听到温德米尔夫人在招呼他跟上。他想着西比尔·默顿，想着他们之间可能会产生嫌隙，不禁泪湿了眼眶。

看着他，人们会说，复仇女神涅墨西斯已经偷走了帕拉斯 [2] 的盾牌，让他看到了蛇发女妖戈耳工的头。他似乎石化了，忧郁阴沉的脸像是大理石一般。他从出生以来就过着富家公子锦衣玉食的生活，无俗事挂心，度过了无忧无虑的美妙的少年时光。此刻，有生以来第一次，他意识到了世事无常、命运捉弄，感受到了在劫难逃的可怕。

这真是疯狂且荒谬至极！这些骇人的秘密罪孽、血红的犯罪征兆，都以一种他自己无法识读的字符，写在他的手掌上，而另一个人却可以破译？没有逃离厄运的可能吗？无论是荣耀还是耻辱，我们难道都如棋子一般，被一股无形的力量左右，如陶工手下的器皿一般任由人搓扁揉圆？他的理智对抗着它，同时他又感到灾难正纠缠着自己，他突然被要求去承担一个难以负荷的重任。演员们太幸运了，他们可以选择演绎悲剧或喜剧，品尝苦涩或欢愉，大笑或哭泣。可现实生活并非如此。大部分男人和女人都被迫扮演一些他们并不能胜任的角色。我们的吉尔登斯吞 [3] 为我们扮演着哈姆雷特，而我们的哈姆雷特不得不像哈尔王子 [4] 一样开着玩笑。世界是一个舞台，可是剧里的演员都配错了角色。

波杰斯先生突然走进房间。看到亚瑟勋爵时，他惊了一下，粗鄙肥胖的脸青黄不定。两人目光交错，一时间沉默无言。

“公爵夫人把一只手套落在这里了，亚瑟勋爵，让我给她拿过去。”波杰斯先生终于开口，“啊，在沙发上！晚安！”

“波杰斯先生，我要请教您一个问题，请您务必直言不讳。”

“下次吧，亚瑟勋爵，公爵夫人等着急了，我得赶紧走。”

“先别走，公爵夫人没什么急事。”

“不该让夫人久等，亚瑟勋爵。”波杰斯先生说着，无力地笑了笑，“女士们很容易不耐烦的。”

亚瑟勋爵任性又轻蔑地撇了撇他轮廓鲜明的嘴唇。此刻，那位可怜的公爵夫人对他而言一点儿都不重要。他穿过房间，来到波杰斯先生身旁，伸出他的手。

“告诉我您看到了什么，”他说，“实话实说。我必须知道真相。我不是个小孩儿。”

金丝眼镜后面，波杰斯先生的眼睛眨了眨。他不安地交错着步子，手指紧张地把弄着一条闪闪发光的表链。

“您为什么会认为除了我告诉您的那些，我还在您手上看到了更多的东西呢，亚瑟勋爵？”

“我就是知道。你不说明白，我是不会罢休的。我可以付钱给你。我会给你一张一百英镑的支票。”

那对绿眼睛闪亮了片刻，紧接着又恢复了暗淡。

“基尼金币 [5] ？”最终，波杰斯先生低声说道。

“当然。我明天就把支票给您送去。您在哪个俱乐部？”

“我没有俱乐部。也就是说，目前还没有。我的地址是……还是请允许我奉上名片吧。”说着，波杰斯先生从马甲背心口袋里掏出一张镶金边的卡片，递给亚瑟勋爵，并向他深深鞠了一躬。卡片上写着：

塞普蒂默斯·R.波杰斯先生

—职业手相师—

西月街103a号

“我的工作时间是上午十点到下午四点。”波杰斯先生例行公事地小声说道，“全家一起来有折扣。”

“快点儿吧！”亚瑟勋爵的面色极度苍白，边高声催促，边伸出了他的手。

波杰斯先生紧张地环顾四周，拉上了厚重的门帘。

“要花点儿时间，亚瑟勋爵，您最好先坐下。”

“长话短说，先生！”亚瑟勋爵再次大声催促，在光可鉴人的地板上愤怒地跺着脚。

波杰斯先生笑了笑，从他胸前的口袋里掏出一面小放大镜，用手帕小心地擦拭着。

“我准备好了。”他说。

二

十分钟以后，大惊失色、悲痛欲绝的亚瑟勋爵从大条纹雨篷周遭站着的一群穿毛皮大衣的男仆们中间挤过去，冲出了本廷克山庄，似乎对一切视而不见、充耳不闻。那天晚上天寒地冻，广场四周的煤气

灯闪烁在凛冽的寒风中。可是他的双手却热得发烫，他的额头如火烧火燎一般。他迈着醉汉似的步伐，走了又走。他经过一个警察的身边，警察好奇地打量他；一个乞丐懒散地从拱廊中走出来，乞求施舍，看眼前人的痛苦更甚于自己，反倒害怕起来。他一度在路灯下驻足，看看自己的双手。他仿佛能觉察到上面已沾满血污，颤抖的双唇间迸出一声微弱的呜咽。

谋杀！那手相师看出来的竟是一场谋杀！此刻的夜晚似乎也洞悉了一切，荒凉的风在他耳畔呼啸，漆黑的街角也满是这秘密，这秘密在房顶上对他咧着嘴笑。

他先是来到公园，那里阴暗的树林似乎对他有强烈的吸引力。精疲力竭的他倚靠在栏杆上，额头抵着湿冷的金属降温。他倾听着林木间令人战栗的寂静。“谋杀！谋杀！”他不断地重复着，仿佛反复的诉说可以减弱这个词的恐怖。他自己的声音令他胆战心惊，然而他又希望回声女神或许能听到他，把这座酣睡的城市从梦境中唤醒。他感到一种强烈的欲望，想要拦住随便哪个过往的行人，将一切说与他听。

而后，他游荡过牛津街，来到逼仄腌臢的小巷子。他经过的时候，两个浓妆艳抹的女人逗弄他。一个漆黑的院子里传来打骂声，紧接着是尖叫声，然后他看到了弯腰驼背挤成一团的穷人和老者，都蜷缩在门前潮湿的台阶上。一种莫名的怜悯之情涌上心头。罪恶与苦难注定是这些人的结局吗？就像他也有命定的归宿一样？难道他们也和他一样，仅仅是一场大秀中的提线木偶吗？

然而击溃他的不是个中谜题，而是受难的喜剧性。它的全然无用，它荒谬至极得毫无意义。一切看起来是多么不合逻辑！毫无和谐可言！他惊诧于白日浅薄的乐观主义与真实存在的事实之间的不协调。他还非常年轻。

片刻之后，他发现自己来到了马里波恩教堂前。安静的车道看起来像是一条长长的亮闪闪的银缎带，斑驳错落的光影仿佛深色的蔓藤花纹。远处弯弯曲曲一排明灭不定的煤气灯，一座带围墙的小房子外面孤零零地停放着一辆双轮马车，车夫正在里面睡觉。他急匆匆地向着波特兰广场的方向走去，还不时地四处张望，似乎在担心被人跟踪。在里奇街的街角站着两个男人，他们正读着公告牌上的一张小布告。一股莫名的好奇心驱使他凑上前去。他刚一走近，那两个黑字——“谋杀”就映入他的眼帘。他吓了一跳，两颊变得通红。那是一张悬赏公告，为了抓捕一个中等身材、年龄在三十岁到四十岁之间、头戴圆顶毡帽、身穿黑色大衣和格子裤子、右脸上有道疤的男人。他读了一遍又一遍，想着那个可怜的男人会不会被抓住，猜想他脸上的疤是怎么来的。或许，某一天，他自己的名字也会出现在伦敦街墙的布告栏上。或许，某一天，人们也会给他的人头开个悬赏捉拿价。

这想法令他毛骨悚然。他猛然转身，快步没入夜色之中。

他不清楚自己身在何处。他模模糊糊地记得自己游荡过一片迷宫一样的脏房子，在一大片纵横交错的幽暗的街道中迷了路。最后他发现自己走到了皮卡迪利广场，此时已是曙光初照，黎明破晓。他溜达着回家，向贝尔格雷夫广场走去，路上遇见了驶向科芬园的四轮运货大马车。马车夫们身穿白色罩衫，留着粗糙的卷发，晒伤的脸上满是欢愉。他们稳坐在马车上，马鞭子挥得噼啪作响，彼此间时不时地高喊几声。这支嘈杂的队伍中为首的是一匹大灰马，马背上坐着一个胖嘟嘟的男孩，他破旧的帽子里有一束报春花。他一路笑着，小手紧紧地抓着马鬃毛。堆得高高的蔬菜看上去就像是许多块翡翠直冲云霄，又像是美艳玫瑰的粉红色花瓣上镶嵌的碧玉。亚瑟勋爵被莫名地感动，说不清是因为什么。黎明时分的柔和美妙中有些东西似乎于他而言是无以言表的可悲，他想起所有那些初时晴好、晚时暴风雨侵袭的日子。还有这些庄稼人，他们粗粝又欢快的声音，他们满不在乎的举止，他们眼中的伦敦是多么不寻常啊！没有夜晚的罪行，没有白天的烟雾，伦敦，一个毫无生气的鬼魅般的城市，一座荒冢之城！他好奇他们如何看待它，他们是否了解它的壮丽与耻辱，它热烈的色彩斑斓的欢乐，它恐怖的饥荒，它从早到晚的创造与破坏。也许对他们而言，它只不过是一个可以卖水果的集市，是他们至多逗留几个小时的地方——他们离开时街道依然安静，房屋依然沉睡未醒。观察这些过往的行人成为他的一件乐事。粗野的人们穿着笨重的大头鞋，迈着笨拙的步子，散发着几分超然世外的感觉。他觉得这些人与大自然共生，而自然教会了他们平和。他羡慕他们对许多事都不知晓。

他走到贝尔格雷夫广场的时候，天空泛着微蓝，花园中的鸟儿开始叽叽喳喳。

三

亚瑟勋爵醒来的时候是十二点，正午的阳光透过象牙色丝绸窗帘照进他的房间。他起身望向窗外。这座伟大的城市被笼罩在热气蒸腾的朦胧的雾中，一所所房子的屋顶是暗银色。下面广场上一闪一闪的绿色中，一些孩子正像白色的蝴蝶一般飞舞着，人行道上满是去往公园的人。在他眼中，生命从未如此美妙，邪祟从未离他如此遥远。

他的贴身男仆用托盘给他送来一杯巧克力。他喝完巧克力，拨开厚重的桃红色长丝绒门帘，走进浴室。柔和的光从上方倾泻下来，穿过透明的缟玛瑙薄板，大理石水池里的水像块月长石一样闪闪发光。他急切地跳了进去，直到清凉的水波触到了脖子、头发，然后他把头沉下去，仿佛这样可以洗刷掉一些可耻的斑驳记忆。他迈步出来的时候，感到几乎平静了。此刻他敏锐的身体状况支配了他，正如许多本

质精纯的事物一样，心智就像是烈火，既可用于提纯，亦可用于毁灭。

早餐之后，他瘫坐在沙发床上，点了根烟。壁炉架上，精致的旧织锦相框中，立着一幅西比尔·默顿的大照片。照片中的人一如他在诺埃尔夫人的舞会上初见时的模样。形状精致的小脑袋微微垂向一侧，就好像那个细长如芦苇似的脖子没法承担如此的美貌一般；双唇微启，仿佛专为甜美的音乐而生；一双满是好奇的梦幻的眼睛透出少女的清纯。她穿着柔软贴身的中国绉纱的裙子，手持大大的叶形团扇，看上去就像是一尊人们在塔纳格拉 [6] 附近的橄榄树丛中找到的那种精美的小陶俑。而她的仪态风度中确有些希腊风范。尽管她个子并不娇小，但她比例匀称完美——在那个大多数女人要么太魁梧，要么太微不足道的年纪，这可是件难得的事。

此刻亚瑟勋爵看着她，心中由爱而生出万般怜悯。他感到自己头上悬着谋杀的宿命，娶她为妻是一种堪比犹大的背叛，是连波吉亚家族 [7] 做梦也想不出的更恶劣的罪行。他可能在任何时刻受到感召，去实践那个写在他手上的罪大恶极的预言。如此，他们两个还有什么幸福可言呢？当命运依然掌握着这个可怕的天平，他们的生活会如何呢？无论如何，婚礼必须要推迟，对此他毅然决然。尽管他深爱着那个女孩，当他们坐在一起时，哪怕是手指轻触，也会令他全身上下每一个神经因无比的欢愉而震颤，然而他清楚地意识到自己的责任所在，也完全明白那个事实——在他完成这桩谋杀之前，他没有权利结婚。完成之后， he 可以和西比尔·默顿站在圣坛前，把自己的一生交付于她的手上，不再惧怕有恶事发生；完成之后，他可以拥她入怀，知道她再也不用因为他而脸红，再也不用羞愧得抬不起头。可是，完成这桩谋杀必须是第一要务，对他们两个人而言，越快越好。

许多男人如果处于他的境遇，会优先选择寻欢作乐的鲜花小径，而非承担责任的悬崖峭壁。可亚瑟勋爵太过认真尽责，以至于无法将快乐建立在原则之上。他的爱可不是一时意乱情迷，西比尔对他来说就是一切美好高贵的象征。有那么一瞬间，他对于自己要去做的事情本能地产生强烈的厌恶，不过那感觉转瞬即逝。他的内心告诉他这不是罪行，而是牺牲；他的理智提醒他，没有其他出路。他必须在为自己而活还是为他人而活之间做出选择。尽管毫无疑问，加之于他身上的责任非常糟糕，可他知道不能让自私战胜爱。早晚我们都会面临同样的抉择，我们所有人都会被问同样的问题。亚瑟勋爵的问题来得早一些，他的本性还没有被中年斤斤计较的愤世嫉俗而腐坏，他的心还没有被我们这个时代流行的浅薄的自负而侵蚀，他毫不犹豫地选择承担自己的责任。对他而言同样幸运的是，他既不是空想家，也不是懒散的不学无术之徒。他如果是那样的人，就会犹豫踌躇，会像哈姆雷特一样，让优柔寡断毁了他的目标。可他本质上是一个务实主义者。

对他来说，生命意味着行动，而非思考。他拥有最难能可贵的东西——直觉决断力。

前一晚狂乱混沌的感觉此刻已经完全褪去，回想自己走街串巷地疯狂游荡，回想起自己情感上经历的剧烈的苦痛挣扎，他甚至觉得有些羞愧。他那些锥心刻骨的痛苦现在似乎变得很不真实。他很纳闷，自己怎么会傻到对无可避免之事埋天怨地。唯一令他苦恼的问题是，他要杀死谁？他并没有无视那个事实——谋杀就像是异教世界的宗教信仰，除了要有一位祭司，还需要一名牺牲者。他不是天才，没有敌人，而且他确实感觉到，这次不是意气用事或满足个人好恶的时机，他卷入的任务是一件最重大、最严肃的事件。于是，他在一页纸上列出了他的亲友名单，经过一番深思熟虑，他最终选择了自己的远房表亲克莱门蒂娜·比彻姆夫人，一位住在可胜街的可爱的老妇人。他一直非常喜欢克莱姆 [8] 夫人——每个人都这么称呼她，而且他法定年龄一到就继承了拉格比勋爵的所有财产，自己非常富有，并不会从她的离世中获得什么钱物的好处。事实上，他越琢磨就越觉得她是最合适的人选，任何拖延都是对西比尔的不公，他决意即刻安排行事。

首先要搞定的当然是手相师。于是他在窗边的谢拉顿 [9] 小书桌前坐下来，开了一张一百零五英镑的支票，收款人为塞普蒂默斯·波杰斯先生。接着，他将支票装进信封，令他的贴身男仆送去西月街。而后他打电话给马厩，叫了一辆马车，自己穿戴好就出了门。离开房间之前，他回头看了看西比尔·默顿的照片，发誓无论如何，他绝不会让她知道自己为她做了什么，他要将自己牺牲的秘密永远深埋在心中。

在去往白金汉宫俱乐部的路上，他去了一趟花店，为西比尔递送了一篮水仙，俏丽的白色花瓣，鲜艳夺目的花蕊副冠，漂亮极了。他一到俱乐部，就径直走向图书馆，摇响服务铃，向侍者要一杯柠檬苏打水和一本毒物学的书。他心意已决，毒药是解决这件麻烦事的最佳方式。人与人之间任何形式的暴力行为都令他反感，况且，他非常担心杀死克莱姆夫人可能会引起大众关注。他很讨厌成为人们在温德米尔夫人家嘲讽戏弄的谈资，更不愿看到自己的名字出现在恶俗的社会新闻报道中。他还要考虑西比尔的父母，他们是非常传统守旧的人，倘若牵涉任何丑闻，他们很可能会反对这桩婚姻。尽管他也确信无疑，如果他将这件事情的来龙去脉告诉他们，他们会是最理解他行动动机的人。因此，无论怎么看，毒药都是最佳选择。安全、安静、万无一失，能避免出现任何痛苦的场面——像大多数英国人一样，他从骨子里拒绝一切痛苦的场面。

然而，他对毒物学一无所知，而且除了《拉夫入门指南》和《贝利杂志》，侍者在图书馆中也实在找不出什么东西。他亲自查看了书架，终于发现一册装帧精美的《药典》，还有一本由皇家医师学院院

长马修·里德爵士编纂的厄斯金的《毒物学》。马修·里德爵士是白金汉宫最古老的成员之一，曾因为其他人被误选，那次令人窘困的意外事件大大激怒了委员会，以至于当真人出现的时候，他们全体一致投票反对他。亚瑟勋爵读不懂两本书中的专业术语，已经开始后悔当初在牛津大学没认真上古典文学课程了。不过他在《毒物学》第二卷中发现一个非常有趣的关于乌头碱性能的详细记录，是用简单易读的英文记述的，看起来正是他想要的毒药。毒发快——几乎是即刻生效，完全无痛，而且据马修爵士的建议，如果以胶囊的形态服用，丝毫不会难以下咽。他在衬衫袖口上记足以致命的药剂量，将书放回原位，然后漫步到圣詹姆斯街的帕索·亨贝大药房。帕索先生常与贵族阶层打交道，对于亚瑟勋爵的需求，他感到十分惊讶，极其毕恭毕敬地低声说道，买这些药品必须要有诊断书的。亚瑟勋爵解释说是为了解决一只挪威巨獒，因为它出现了早期的狂犬病症状，已经咬了马车夫小腿肚子两次。帕索先生对这个理由非常满意，还恭维了亚瑟勋爵丰富的毒物学知识，并立刻配好了药。

亚瑟勋爵在邦德街一家商店的橱窗里发现一个漂亮的银质小糖果盒。他将胶囊装进糖果盒中，丢掉帕索·亨贝大药房的丑陋的药盒，然后立刻动身前往克莱姆夫人家。

“好啊，坏小子，”他一进屋，老夫人就大声说道，“怎么这么长时间没来看我？”

“我亲爱的克莱姆夫人，我实在无暇抽身。”亚瑟勋爵笑着说。

“我猜你的意思是你整日间都陪在西比尔·默顿小姐身边，买衣服、聊废话？我真是不理解人们为何对结婚这样小题大做。在我那个年代，我们从没想过在公共场合喁喁私语、卿卿我我，甚至私下也不曾。”

“向您保证，克莱姆夫人，我已经二十个小时没见过西比尔了。依我看，她是完全属于她的女帽商的。”

“当然了，要不是这样，你也不会来看望我这个丑老太婆。我很纳闷，你们男人怎么不引以为戒？我年轻的时候也有人为我痴狂，现如今变成一个风湿病缠身的可怜的老东西，一副假牙外加一副臭脾气。要不是亲爱的詹森夫人四处搜罗些蹩脚的法国小说给我送来，我估计都熬不过这一天。医生真是百无一用，就会向我收钱。他们连我烧心的毛病都治不好。”

“我给您带来了治疗烧心的药，克莱姆夫人，”亚瑟勋爵一脸严肃地说，“美国人研制的，药效奇佳。”

“我可不喜欢美国人的发明创造，亚瑟。我一点儿也不喜欢。我最近读了几部美国小说，全都不知所云。”

“哦，我这个可不是不知所云的东西，克莱姆夫人！我向您保证，药到病除。您一定要答应我试试看。”说着，亚瑟勋爵从口袋里拿出那个小盒子，递给她。

“嗯，这个盒子还挺精致的，亚瑟。真是给我的礼物吗？你真是太贴心了。这是那个灵丹妙药吗？看上去像一颗糖果。我现在就吃。”

“我的天啊！克莱门蒂娜夫人，”亚瑟勋爵大喊一声，抓住她的手，“现在可不行，它是顺势疗法 [10] 的药，如果在不烧心的时候吃，可能会后患无穷呢。等您难受的时候再吃，您会被药效吓一跳的。”

“那我现在就该吃。”克莱姆夫人说着，将小小的透明胶囊举到灯前，里面流动着液态乌头碱的泡沫。“我相信它一定很好吃。事实上，我虽然讨厌医生，却很喜欢药。不过，我还是等下次犯病时再吃吧。”

“那会是什么时候呢？”亚瑟勋爵急切地问道，“会很快吗？”

“但愿一个星期内不要再犯了。我昨天早上烧心，难受极了。不过，谁知道呢？”

“那么，克莱姆夫人，您肯定在这个月底之前还会再犯病？”

“怕是如此。不过，亚瑟，你今天真是有心啊！真的，西比尔让你变得更好了。你现在得离开了，我一会儿要和几个非常无聊的人吃晚饭，他们从来不聊八卦丑闻，我如果现在不睡一会儿，晚饭的时候是没法保持清醒的。再见，亚瑟！代我问候西比尔，还有谢谢你带来的美国药。”

“您可别忘了吃啊，克莱姆夫人。”亚瑟勋爵从座位上起身说道。

“我当然不会忘啊，傻孩子。你这样为我着想，真是太贴心了！我如果需要更多，会写信告诉你的。”

亚瑟勋爵兴高采烈地离开了，感到如释重负。

那天晚上他和西比尔·默顿碰了面。他告诉她，他突然被置于一个极其困难的境地，无论出于尊严还是责任，他都无法退缩；他告诉她婚礼必须推迟，因为直到他摆脱那个可怕的纠缠物，他才能恢复自由之身；他恳求她相信自己，请她对未来不要有任何怀疑，一切都会走上正轨，但必须要忍耐。

这场景发生在帕克巷默顿先生家的花房里，亚瑟勋爵平日里常来这儿吃晚饭。今夜的西比尔处于莫大的幸福之中，有那么一刻，亚瑟勋爵险些向心中懦弱的部分屈服，打算写信向克莱门蒂娜夫人要回药

丸，让婚礼照常进行，假装这世上根本没有波杰斯先生这个人。然而，他良善的本性很快占了上风，甚至当西比尔埋在他怀中痛哭流涕时，他也没有犹疑。令他心旌荡漾的美丽也触动了他的良心。他觉得为了几个月的快乐而毁掉如此美好的一生，是大错特错的。

直到临近午夜，他一直陪着西比尔，两人彼此慰藉。第二天一早，他给默顿先生写了一封充满男子气概的意志坚决的信，言明婚礼不得不推迟，然后就动身前往威尼斯了。

四

在威尼斯，他见到了他的弟弟瑟比顿勋爵。瑟比顿正巧乘着他的游艇从科孚岛来，两个年轻人一起度过了愉快的两周。早上，他们在利多岛上骑马，或是乘着狭长的黑色贡多拉在绿色的水道中滑行；下午，他们通常在游艇上招待访客；晚上，他们在佛罗莱恩餐厅吃饭，在皮亚扎广场上没完没了地抽烟。但不知怎的，亚瑟勋爵并不开心。他每天都要读《泰晤士报》的讣告栏，希望能看到克莱门蒂娜夫人去世的消息，可每天都是失望。他开始担心是不是发生了什​​么意外。他经常后悔，当初她迫切地希望尝试药效的时候，自己阻止了她服下那枚乌头碱。尽管西比尔的信满是爱与信任以及温柔，却也总是语带哀伤。他常常在某些时候觉得自己与她永别了。

两周之后，瑟比顿勋爵厌倦了威尼斯，决定沿海岸南下，到拉文那去，因为他听说那里的松树园里有一些重要的射猎活动。一开始，亚瑟勋爵坚决拒绝同往，不过，他钟爱的瑟比顿最终说服了他，说他如果自己待在达涅利酒店，会闷死的。15号的早上，他们借着一阵强劲的东北风，在惊涛骇浪中出发了。那项运动十分精彩，而自由的户外生活也让亚瑟勋爵的脸上又焕发了生机。可是到了22号，他又开始担忧起克莱门蒂娜夫人的事，于是不顾瑟比顿的反对，乘坐火车回到了威尼斯。

他刚刚从贡多拉中迈步出来，踏上酒店的台阶，酒店老板就拿着一沓电报迎了上来。亚瑟勋爵从他手中一把夺过电报，把它们撕开。大功告成！克莱门蒂娜夫人于17号夜里突然离世！

他首先想到的是西比尔，于是发了一封电报告诉她自己即刻赶回伦敦。接着他让贴身男仆收拾行李，连夜赶车。他支付了贡多拉船夫五倍的船费，终于怀着轻松的心情、迈着轻快的步伐回到了家，直奔起居室。起居室里有三封给他的信。一封来自西比尔，满是同情与哀悼。另外两封分别来自他的母亲和克莱门蒂娜夫人的律师。似乎那天晚上老夫人先和公爵夫人吃了饭，席间相谈甚欢，可是因为烧心难受，提早离开了。第二天早上，她被发现死在了床上，很显然走得安详，没遭罪受苦。马修·里德爵士立刻被请来，当然也是于事无补，回

天乏术。她将于22号被安葬在比彻姆-查克特。她去世前几天刚刚立了遗嘱，除了将袖珍画收藏品都留给了自己的姐妹玛格丽特·拉福德夫人，紫水晶项链留给了西比尔·默顿之外，她将自己可胜街的小房子、所有的家具、个人财物、藏画等等悉数留给了亚瑟勋爵。遗产倒是不值什么，可律师曼斯菲尔德先生急切地要亚瑟勋爵尽早赶回来，因为有许多账单要支付，克莱门蒂娜夫人生前从没有理财记账的习惯。

克莱门蒂娜夫人对亚瑟勋爵的善念让他动容，他觉得波杰斯先生要为此事负很大的责任。然而他对西比尔的爱支配了其他所有情感，他认为自己履行了应尽的职责，这让他平静安宁。当他抵达查令十字街时，他感到全然的幸福。

默顿一家亲切地招待了他，西比尔让他发誓再也不会会有什么东西挡在两人之间。婚礼定在6月7日。他的生活又变得光明美好起来，往日的欢乐再次回到他身边。

这天，他在克莱门蒂娜夫人的律师和西比尔的陪同下，来到可胜街的那间房子。他们烧掉了一包包褪色的信件，收拾出一抽屉一抽屉的垃圾。突然，那个年轻的女孩兴奋地叫出了声。

“你发现了什么，西比尔？”亚瑟勋爵停下手中的活儿，抬起头微笑着问道。

“这个可爱的银质小糖果盒，亚瑟。你不觉得它古雅别致、有几分荷兰风格吗？把它给我吧！我知道八十岁以前我都用不上那条紫水晶项链的。”

是那个装了乌头碱的盒子。

亚瑟勋爵吓了一跳，两颊泛红。他几乎全然忘记了自己的所作所为。对他来说，这真是奇怪的巧合：西比尔，这个让他经历那一切烦恼的人，也最先让他想起了它。

“你当然可以拥有它，西比尔。本就是送给可怜的克莱姆夫人的。”

“哦！谢谢你，亚瑟。这颗糖也给我吗？我都不知道克莱门蒂娜夫人喜欢吃糖。我原以为她是理性行事的人。”

亚瑟勋爵面色惨白如纸，一个可怕的念头闪过他的脑海。

“糖？西比尔，你什么意思？”他用沙哑的声音缓慢地说。

“里面有一颗糖果，只有一颗，看上去很旧，沾满了灰尘，我可一点儿也不想吃它。怎么了，亚瑟？你脸色怎么这么差？”

亚瑟勋爵快步穿过房间，抓过那个盒子。里面正是带有毒性泡沫的琥珀色胶囊。原来克莱门蒂娜夫人是寿终正寝！

这个发现令他震惊不已！他将胶囊扔进火里，一屁股坐在沙发上，发出绝望的悲声。

五

第二次推迟婚礼让默顿先生忧心忡忡，而茱莉亚夫人已经订好了参加婚礼的礼服，因此她竭力劝说西比尔断了这段姻缘。西比尔虽深爱着自己的母亲，也同样将终身托付给了亚瑟勋爵，无论茱莉亚夫人说什么动摇不了她的信念。亚瑟勋爵自己则用了好多天才平复了巨大的沮丧，有一段时间，他处于神经衰弱的状态。然而，他绝佳的直觉决断力很快占了上风，他强健务实的大脑并没有让他陷于长久的迟疑之中。毒药计划彻底失败了，炸药或爆炸物显然值得一试。

他再次检视了一遍亲友名单，经过一番慎重考虑，他决定炸死他的舅舅，奇切斯特教长。这位学识渊博的教长酷爱钟表，收藏了一批从十五世纪到当代的精美钟表。在亚瑟勋爵看来，这位好教长的这个嗜好恰恰为他实施计划提供了绝佳的机会。当然，去哪儿搞来一套爆炸装置，那得再做打算了。《伦敦通讯簿》在这方面没有提供任何信息，而且他觉得就算去苏格兰场 [11] 也打听不到什么，因为在爆炸之前，他们似乎从来也搞不清楚炸药的来龙去脉，甚至炸过之后，依然一无所知。

他突然想起了他的朋友鲁沃洛夫，一个极具革命主义倾向的年轻俄国人，冬天的时候，他们曾经在温德米尔夫人家碰过面。据说鲁沃洛夫伯爵正在撰写彼得大帝的传记，来到英国是为了调研这位沙皇在此当造船工人时期的相关资料。不过人们普遍怀疑他是一名虚无主义特工。毫无疑问，俄国大使馆十分不愿意看到他出现在伦敦。亚瑟勋爵觉得他正是那个能助自己一臂之力的人。于是，亚瑟在一天早上驱车前往鲁沃洛夫位于布鲁姆斯伯里的寓所，去寻求意见和协助。

“所以您当真要投身政治？”当亚瑟勋爵道出此行目的时，鲁沃洛夫伯爵如此问道。可亚瑟勋爵讨厌任何形式的招摇，觉得有必要承认自己对社会问题没有一星半点儿兴趣，仅仅是需要一个爆炸装置来处理一件纯粹的家务事，而这件事只牵涉他自己，无关任何其他人。

鲁沃洛夫伯爵惊诧地看了他一会儿，发觉他十分认真，于是在纸上写下一个地址，签了名，递给桌子对面的他。

“苏格兰场可是不惜代价想得到这个地址，我亲爱的朋友。”

“他们不会知道的。”亚瑟勋爵大笑着高声说道。和这个年轻的俄国人热情地握手之后，他跑下楼，看了一眼纸条，让马车夫带他去苏荷广场。

到了那儿，他让马车夫先回去，自己则步行到希腊街，最终来到

一个叫贝尔庭院的地方。他穿过拱廊，走进一个奇怪的死胡同。这里显然是一家法国洗衣店，晾衣绳在房屋之间纵横交错成一张完美的大网，亚麻布在清晨的空气中飘动着。他径直走到头儿，敲了敲一所绿色小房子的门。在等人应门的空当，院子里的每一扇窗户都映出一张张模糊的窥探的脸。开门的是一个长相极其粗鄙的外国人，用一口蹩脚的英语问他有什么事。亚瑟勋爵递上鲁沃洛夫伯爵写给他的纸条。那个男人看到纸条后，鞠了一躬，将亚瑟勋爵请进了房屋底层一间破败不堪的前厅。没多久，温克尔科夫先生——在英格兰人们都这样称呼他——急匆匆地走进房间，脖子上围着沾了红酒渍的餐巾，左手还拿着一把餐叉。

“鲁沃洛夫伯爵介绍我来找您。”亚瑟勋爵鞠躬说道，“我急需和您简单聊聊，谈笔买卖。我叫史密斯，罗伯特·史密斯先生，我希望您卖给我一只爆炸的钟表。”

“很高兴见到您，亚瑟勋爵！”和蔼可亲的小个子德国人大笑着说道，“别紧张，我的职责就是认识每一个人，我记得某个夜晚在温德米尔夫人家见过您。我希望夫人她万安！您介意坐下来陪我吃完早餐吗？有一盘上乘的美味佳肴，我那些好心的朋友们都说我的莱茵葡萄酒比他们在德国大使馆喝到的还要好。”亚瑟勋爵还没从被认出的惊讶中缓过来，发现自己已经在里屋落座了。手持铭刻着皇家纹饰的浅黄色大酒杯，小口品着最美味的莱茵白葡萄酒，亚瑟勋爵十分友好地和这位著名的阴谋家交谈起来。

“爆炸钟表，”温克尔科夫先生说道，“可不是什么海外出口的好东西，就算成功通过了海关，可火车运输太不规律，经常还没运到目的地就爆炸了。不过，如果您是想家用，我倒是可以给您提供一件绝佳的物件，效果包您满意。我能问您是要给谁用吗？如果是针对警察，或者任何与苏格兰场有关的人，我恐怕没法帮您。英国警探们真是我们的好朋友，我发现仰仗他们的愚蠢，我们可以为所欲为。我可不想让他们任何一个遭殃。”

“我向您保证，”亚瑟勋爵说，“这件事和警察绝无半点牵连。其实，这钟表是给奇切斯特教长的。”

“哎呀！亚瑟勋爵，我都不知道您对宗教有如此强烈的态度。如今已经鲜少有年轻人如此了。”

“恐怕您抬举我了，温克尔科夫先生。”亚瑟勋爵红着脸说，“事实上，我对神学一无所知。”

“那么就是一件纯粹的私人恩怨了？”

“纯粹私事。”

温克尔科夫先生耸了耸肩，离开了房间。几分钟后回来的时候，他手里多了一小块一分钱硬币大小的圆形炸药，一只精美的法式钟表，顶端是一尊镀金的自由神像，脚踏象征独裁专政的九头蛇。

亚瑟勋爵一见到它不禁面露喜色。“正是我想要的。”他喊道，“快告诉我怎么让它爆炸。”

“啊！那是我的秘密。”温克尔科夫先生回答道，他注视着自己的发明创造，满脸是无可厚非的自豪。“告诉我您希望它什么时间爆炸，我会把这个装置设定到那个时间。”

“那么，今天是星期二，如果您能马上把它送去……”

“那可不行。我现在要为莫斯科那边的朋友处理一些重要的事情。不过，我明天倒是可以送出去。”

“哦，那时间足够了！”亚瑟勋爵礼貌地说，“如果明晚或周四一早抵达。爆炸时间，定在周五正午时分如何？那时候，教长通常会在家里。”

“星期五，正午时分。”温克尔科夫先生重复着，在壁炉旁衣柜上放着的大账本上做了大致记录。

“那么现在，”亚瑟勋爵从座位上起身说道，“请告诉我该支付您多少钱。”

“小事一桩，亚瑟勋爵，我可没打算从中牟利。那个炸药七先令六便士，钟表三镑十先令，马车费大约五先令。能为鲁沃洛夫伯爵的朋友服务，我感到万分荣幸。”

“可是劳您费了工夫，温克尔科夫先生。”

“哦，那没什么！我很乐意效劳。我工作可不是为了钱，我完全是为了我的艺术而活。”

亚瑟勋爵在桌上放了四英镑二先令六便士，向友善的小个子德国人道了谢，拒绝了下周六在某个茶会上见一些无政府主义者的邀请，然后离开了那所房子，前往帕克巷。

接下来的两天，他都处于极度兴奋的状态中。周五中午十二点，他驱车前往白金汉宫等待消息。整个下午，呆头呆脑的门厅侍者贴出来自全国各地的电报，公布赛马结果、离婚案的陪审团裁决、天气报告，诸如此类；电报机上打出下议院整晚会议的乏味细节，以及证券交易所的一小场恐慌。四点钟，各类晚报来了。亚瑟勋爵拿着《帕摩尔街报》《圣詹姆斯报》《环球报》《回声报》一头扎进了图书馆。古德柴尔德上校对此义愤填膺，他想要阅读关于他上午在伦敦市长官邸发表的一篇演讲的报道，演讲主题是南非传教以及在全省设立黑人

主教的建议。而出于种种原因，他对《晚间新闻报》抱有强烈的偏见。然而，所有报纸上都没有奇切斯特的任何消息，亚瑟勋爵猜想这次尝试肯定又失败了。这对他是一次沉重的打击，他一度感到万念俱灰。第二天他去见了温克尔科夫先生。温克尔科夫先生万分诚恳地道歉，主动提出为他免费提供另一块钟表，或者以成本价卖给他一套硝化甘油炸药装置。不过亚瑟勋爵已经对爆炸彻底死心，温克尔科夫先生自己也承认，现如今什么事都掺假，连炸药都不纯。这个小个子德国人承认那个装置一定是出了什么问题，可是那个钟表还是可能会爆炸的。他举例子说，他曾经给敖德萨的军政长官送去一个气压计装置，预设十天之后爆炸，可是三个月过去了都没动静。后来它果真爆炸了，仅仅把女仆炸得粉碎，军政长官早在六个星期以前就出城了。不过这至少证明了，虽然时间总是不准，可一旦奏效，炸药的杀伤力还是威力无穷的。亚瑟勋爵听了这些才感到一丝丝欣慰，可是这点儿希望也最终破灭了，因为两天之后，他正准备上楼时，公爵夫人把他叫到自己的房间，给他看了一封她刚刚收到的从教区发来的信。

“简的信向来写得生动。”公爵夫人说道，“你一定要读一读最近这一封，完全像穆迪送来的那些小说一样好看。”

亚瑟勋爵从她手中接过信件。内容如下：

教区，奇切斯特

5月27日

我最亲爱的姑妈：

十分感谢您为多加会 [12] 送来法兰绒和方格布。我非常赞同您的观点，她们想要穿漂亮衣服，这真是太荒唐了。可现如今，每一个人都如此激进，如此反宗教，很难让她们明白她们不该穿得像上流社会。我不确定我们的未来将如何。正如爸爸经常在布道时所说的，我们生活在一个没有信仰的年代。

我们这儿最近发生了一件趣事。上周四，某个匿名仰慕者给爸爸送来一只钟表。它被装在一个木头盒子里，邮资已付，寄件地址是伦敦。爸爸认为一定是某个人读了他杰出的布道文《放纵即为自由吗？》，然后送来了这东西，因为在钟表的上面是一尊女像，爸爸说她头上的帽子代表自由。我觉得它并不好看，可是爸爸说它有年头了，所以我猜想它应该还不错。帕克拆开了盒子，爸爸把钟表放在了图书室的壁炉架上。星期五早上我们都坐在那里，当钟表指针指向十二点的时候，我们听到嗡嗡的一声，人像底座冒出一小股烟，自由女神掉了下来，撞上壁炉挡板，撞坏了鼻子！玛丽亚吓了一跳，可是

当时太可笑了，詹姆斯和我不禁大笑起来，甚至连爸爸都被逗乐了。我们上前检查，才发现它其实是一只闹钟，如果你把它设定在某一时刻，然后在一个小锤子下面放些火药和一个小火帽，它可以在你预设的时刻爆炸。爸爸说它会产生噪声，不能放在图书室，因此雷吉把它带去了讲堂。它一点儿用处都没有，就是成天到晚地小规模爆炸。你觉得亚瑟会想要一个作为结婚礼物吗？我觉得它们在伦敦算是时鲜的玩意儿。爸爸说它们其实寓意深远，表明自由不能长久，最终会坠落。爸爸还说自由是在法国大革命时期被发明出来的。真是糟透了！

我现在得去多加会了，去给她们朗读您启迪心灵的书信。亲爱的姑妈，您说得太对了，她们这个阶层就应该穿一些简朴的衣服。我必须说，她们愁穿戴这件事真是太荒唐了，毕竟在这个世界上，在未来的日子里，还有那么多更加重要的事情。我很高兴您那件印花底绸效果很好，蕾丝花边都没坏。我打算在星期三的主教学校穿您送给我的那件黄缎子，我想看上去一定很不错。您会佩戴蝴蝶结吗？詹宁斯说如今每个人都佩戴蝴蝶结，而且衬裙要有荷叶边。雷吉那边又爆炸了，爸爸命令他把钟表送去马厩。我觉得爸爸不像刚开始那么喜欢它了，尽管有人送来这么一件漂亮精巧的玩具还是令他颇为受用的，至少说明人们读了他的布道文，并从中受益。

爸爸让我问候您，还有詹姆斯、雷吉和玛丽亚都问您好。希望塞西尔姑父痛风的毛病好些了。相信我，亲爱的姑妈，永远爱您的侄女。

简·佩尔西

又及，记得回答我蝴蝶结的问题，詹宁斯非说这是现在的时尚。

公爵夫人因为这封信大笑不已，亚瑟勋爵对着它却面色凝重，十分不快。

“我亲爱的亚瑟，”她大声说道，“我再也不会给你看年轻女士的信了！可是对于那只钟表我真是无话可说。我想它是一件伟大的发明，我自己也应该拥有一只。”

“我可没什么兴趣。”亚瑟勋爵苦笑着说道。他亲吻了母亲，然后离开了房间。

上楼以后，他瘫坐在沙发上，满眼噙泪。他殚精竭虑地去完成这桩谋杀，可两次都失败了，而且错都不在他。他已经努力去履行自己的责任了，可命运女神似乎背叛了他。他因为良愿无法达成而烦恼，因为徒劳无功而烦恼。或许，彻底取消这场婚姻更好一些。西比尔会痛苦，没错，可是这痛苦并不会真的毁掉她高洁的本质。至于他自

己，有什么关系呢？人终有一死，既然生无可恋，死亦无惧。就让命运主宰厄运吧，他也不费力去帮命运女神了。

七点半，他穿好衣服去俱乐部。瑟比顿正在那儿和年轻的人们开派对。他被迫留下来和他们共进晚餐。他们琐碎的闲谈和无聊的笑话实在提不起他的兴趣，上咖啡的时候，他谎称自己还有约会，先行离开了。他刚一走出俱乐部，侍者就递给他一封信。信来自温克尔科夫先生，邀请他第二天晚上屈尊前去看一个只要一打开就会爆炸的雨伞。这是最新的发明，刚刚从日内瓦运来。他把信撕得粉碎。他已经下定决心不再做任何尝试。然后他游逛到泰晤士河堤岸，在河边坐了几个小时。月亮从鬃毛一般的黄褐色的云团间透出头，仿佛是一只狮子的眼睛；空洞无边的苍穹中数不清的星光闪烁，仿佛在紫色的穹顶上撒满了金粉；偶尔，一只驳船摇晃着进入混浊的水流，随着起落的潮水漂远；铁路信号灯由绿变红，火车呼啸着驶过大桥。过了一会儿，威斯敏斯特高塔上发出十二点的低沉的钟声，每一声洪亮的钟声都仿佛让黑夜震颤。接着，火车信号灯熄灭了，一盏孤零零的路灯发出柔弱的光，就像是一根巨大的船桅杆上镶嵌着一颗硕大的红宝石。喧嚣的城市渐渐沉寂。

凌晨两点，他站起身，漫步去黑衣修士桥。一切看起来多么不真实！多像是一场奇怪的梦！河对岸的房子似乎建在黑暗中。人们会说银光黑影重新装点了这个世界。圣保罗教堂的大屋顶若隐若现，就像是朦胧天空中的一个气泡。

他走到克利奥帕特拉方尖碑 [13] 的附近，见一个男人正靠在矮墙上。等他再走近一些，那个男人抬起了头，煤气灯光照亮了他的整张脸。

是波杰斯先生，那个手相师！谁都不会认错那张松弛的胖脸，那副金丝眼镜，那个苍白无力的微笑，那张魅惑的巧嘴。

亚瑟勋爵停下脚步。一个机智的念头闪过他的脑海，他悄无声息地来到他的身后。说时迟，那时快，他一把抓住波杰斯先生的双腿，把他丢进了泰晤士河。一声粗俗的咒骂和一片重重的水花飞溅之后，一切归于平静。亚瑟勋爵紧张地观望，看不到那个手相师的踪迹，只有一顶高帽在月光照耀下的河水中随漩涡旋转着。过了一会儿，高帽也沉了，再寻不到波杰斯先生的任何踪迹。他一度以为大桥楼梯上一个身形高大的怪异的人看到了他，一股挫败的恐怖感笼罩了他。不过后来他发现那只是一个倒影，当月亮从云后面出来，它就消失不见了。终于，他似乎完成了命运的裁决。他长长地舒了一口气，如释重负，嘴边呢喃着西比尔的名字。

“您丢了什么东西吗，先生？”一个声音突然出现在他身后。

他转过身，看到一个手持牛眼灯的警察。

“没什么重要的，警察先生。”他微笑着回答。他招呼了一辆路过的马车，跳上去，让车夫驶往贝尔格雷夫广场。

接下来的几天，他在希望与恐惧之间煎熬。有时候，他期待波杰斯先生走进房间；有时候，他又觉得命运不该对他如此不公。他去了两次西月街手相师的住处，可是没勇气敲响门铃。他希望得到确信，又害怕它。

它终于来了。他正坐在俱乐部的吸烟室喝茶，心不在焉地听着瑟比顿描述狂欢会上最后一首滑稽歌曲，侍者拿着晚报走进来。他拿起《圣詹姆斯报》，百无聊赖地翻看，一个奇怪的标题引起了他的注意：

一名手相师的自杀

他赶紧读起来，脸色因为兴奋而变得苍白。文章是这样写的：

昨天早上七点钟，著名手相师塞普蒂默斯·R·波杰斯先生的尸体被冲刷上了船坞酒店前的格林威治河岸。这位不幸的先生已经失踪数日，手相圈已经开始担心他的安危。据推测，他由于劳累过度，引发暂时性精神错乱，进而选择了自杀，今天下午验尸陪审团也证实了这一推断。波杰斯先生刚刚完成了一篇主题为“人类手相”的优秀论文，将于不久后发表，届时必将引发广泛关注。逝者六十五岁，似乎没有任何亲眷在世。

亚瑟勋爵拿着报纸冲出俱乐部，门厅侍者惊诧万分，企图拦住他，却是徒劳。他立刻乘车赶往帕克巷。西比尔透过窗户看到了他，感觉到他似乎带来了什么好消息。她跑下楼去迎接他，当她看到他的脸，她知道云开雾散了。

“我亲爱的西比尔，”亚瑟勋爵大喊道，“我们明天就结婚吧！”

“你这个傻瓜！急什么？蛋糕都没订呢！”西比尔说着，眼眶含泪，笑逐颜开。

六

大约三个星期之后，他们举行了婚礼，圣彼得教堂挤满了身着锦衣华服的人。奇切斯特教长极其郑重庄严地主持了婚礼仪式，所有人都承认他们从没见过比这对新人更漂亮的夫妻。然而，不只是漂亮，他们还非常幸福。亚瑟勋爵从未曾有一时半刻后悔他为西比尔所承受的一切苦楚，而她也给予了他一个女人可以给予男人的最好的东西——崇拜、温柔，还有爱。对于他们而言，现实没有扼杀情爱。他们一直

感到年轻。

几年之后，他们有了两个漂亮的孩子。温德米尔夫人来到奥尔顿修道院探望他们。奥尔顿修道院是个可爱的老房子，是公爵送给儿子的结婚礼物。一天下午，她正和亚瑟夫人坐在花园里的酸橙树下，看着小男孩和小女孩像是跃动的阳光一般在玫瑰小径上蹦蹦跳跳。她突然握住女主人的手，问道：“你幸福吗，西比尔？”

“亲爱的温德米尔夫人，我当然幸福。您呢？”

“我没时间幸福，西比尔。我总会喜欢新结识的人。我一旦和谁变得熟识，就会对他们厌烦。”

“您的狮子们也无法取悦您吗，温德米尔夫人？”

“哦，当然不能！狮子的趣味超不过一季。一旦它们的狮鬃被剪掉，它们就变成了世界上最无聊的东西。而且，如果你对它们非常好，它们就得寸进尺起来。你记得那个讨人厌的波杰斯先生吗？他是个大骗子。当然，我全然不在意，甚至当他想向我借钱的时候，我都原谅了他，但我无法忍受他向我求爱。他让我打心底里厌恶手相学。我现在相信传心术。那可好玩儿多了！”

“您可别在这儿说任何手相学的不好，温德米尔夫人。这是唯一一个亚瑟不喜欢别人打趣的话题。我向您保证，他是很认真的。”

“你不会告诉我他信手相学吧，西比尔？”

“您自己问他，温德米尔夫人，他来了。”亚瑟勋爵手捧着一大束黄玫瑰出现在花园中，他的两个孩子绕着他嬉闹。

“亚瑟勋爵？”

“什么事，温德米尔夫人？”

“别告诉我你相信手相学？”

“我当然相信啊。”那个年轻的男子微笑着说。

“可是，为什么呢？”

“因为我毕生的幸福都多亏了手相学。”他低声说着，坐到柳条椅上。

“我亲爱的亚瑟勋爵，它给了你什么？”

“西比尔。”他边回答，边将那束玫瑰献给妻子，并深深凝望着她紫色的眼睛。

“胡说八道！”温德米尔夫人大声说道，“我这辈子都没听过这种胡话！”

[1] 西方手相学术语，掌纹名称，被认为与人的想象、创造、本能等相关。（说明：文中脚注均为译者注。）

[2] 帕拉斯即为雅典娜，古希腊神话中的战争与智慧女神。

[3] 莎士比亚剧作《哈姆雷特》中的角色。

[4] 莎士比亚剧作《亨利四世》中的角色。

[5] 英国于1663年到1814年间铸造并发行的货币名称。

[6] 古希腊维奥蒂亚城邦中雅典以北的一个城镇和自治区，距离底比斯不远，在古代因为以此地名命名的女像小陶俑而闻名。

[7] 15世纪和16世纪欧洲极具影响力的西班牙裔意大利贵族，因为犯罪、通奸、贿赂、乱伦、谋杀等一系列丑闻而臭名昭著。

[8] 克莱门蒂娜的简称。

[9] 托马斯·谢拉顿（Thomas Sheraton，1751—1806）是18世纪英国最著名的家具设计师与家具生产商之一，此处指谢拉顿风格的家具。

[10] 顺势疗法是德国医生塞缪尔·哈内曼（Samuel Hahnemann，1755—1843）于1796年创立的替代治疗方法，声称如果某些物质能够引发健康人身体的某种症状，那么这些物质就可以治疗产生同样症状的病人的疾病，类似我们俗称的“以毒攻毒”。

[11] 伦敦地区警察机关的名称，多用于代指伦敦警察厅。

[12] 由基督教教会发起的慈善团体，目的是向穷人提供衣物援助。

[13] 位于伦敦地区威斯敏斯特市的方尖大石碑。1819年，埃及统治者为了纪念尼罗河战役和亚历山大大战役的胜利，将其赠予英国。

Oscar Wilde

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

Lord
Arthur Savile's
Crime

N° 26

‘He was not blind
to the fact that
murder, like the
religions of the
Pagan world,
requires a victim
as well as
a priest.’

Lord Arthur Savile's Crime

i

It was Lady Windermere's last reception before Easter, and Bentinck House was even more crowded than usual. Six Cabinet Ministers had come on from the Speaker's Levée in their stars and ribands, all the pretty women wore their smartest dresses, and at the end of the picture-gallery stood the Princess Sophia of Carlsruhe, a heavy Tartar-looking lady, with tiny black eyes and wonderful emeralds, talking bad French at the top of her voice, and laughing immoderately at everything that was said to her. It was certainly a wonderful medley of people. Gorgeous peeresses chatted affably to violent Radicals, popular preachers brushed coat-tails with eminent sceptics, a perfect bevy of bishops kept following a stout prima-donna from room to room, on the staircase stood several Royal Academicians, disguised as artists, and it was said that at one time the supper-room was absolutely crammed with geniuses. In fact, it was one of Lady Windermere's best nights, and the Princess stayed till nearly half-past eleven.

As soon as she had gone, Lady Windermere returned to the picture-gallery, where a celebrated political economist was solemnly explaining the scientific theory of music to an indignant virtuoso from Hungary, and began to talk to the Duchess of Paisley. She looked wonderfully beautiful with her grand ivory throat, her large blue forget-me-not eyes, and her heavy coils of golden hair. *Or pur* they were — not that pale straw colour that nowadays usurps the gracious name of gold, but such gold as is woven into sunbeams or hidden in strange amber; and they gave to her face something of the frame of a saint, with not a little of the fascination of a sinner. She was a curious psychological study. Early in life she had discovered the important truth that nothing looks so like innocence as an indiscretion; and by a series of reckless escapades, half of them quite harmless, she had acquired all the privileges of a personality. She had more than once changed her husband; indeed, Debrecht credits her with three marriages; but as she had never changed her

lover, the world had long ago ceased to talk scandal about her. She was now forty years of age, childless, and with that inordinate passion for pleasure which is the secret of remaining young.

Suddenly she looked eagerly round the room, and said, in her clear contralto voice, 'Where is my cheiromantist?' 'Your what, Gladys?', exclaimed the Duchess, giving an involuntary start.

'My cheiromantist, Duchess; I can't live without him at present.'

'Dear Gladys! you are always so original,' murmured the Duchess, trying to remember what a cheiroman-tist really was, and hoping it was not the same as a cheiropodist.

'He comes to see my hand twice a week regularly,' continued Lady Windermere, 'and is most interesting about it.'

'Good heavens!' said the Duchess to herself, 'he is a sort of cheiropodist after all. How very dreadful. I hope he is a foreigner at any rate. It wouldn't be quite so bad then.'

'I must certainly introduce him to you.'

'Introduce him!' cried the Duchess; 'you don't mean to say he is here?' and she began looking about for a small tortoise-shell fan and a very tattered lace shawl, so as to be ready to go at a moment's notice.

'Of course he is here, I would not dream of giving a party without him. He tells me I have a pure psychic hand, and that if my thumb had been the least little bit shorter, I should have been a confirmed pessimist, and gone into a convent.'

'Oh, I see!' said the Duchess, feeling very much relieved; 'he tells fortunes, I suppose?'

'And misfortunes, too,' answered Lady Windermere, 'any amount of them. Next year, for instance, I am in great danger, both by land and sea, so I am going to live in a balloon, and draw up my dinner in a basket every evening. It is all written down on my little finger, or on the palm of my hand, I forget which.'

'But surely that is tempting Providence, Gladys.'

'My dear Duchess, surely Providence can resist temptation by this time. I think every one should have their hands told once a

month, so as to know what not to do. Of course, one does it all the same, but it is so pleasant to be warned. Now, if some one doesn't go and fetch Mr Podgers at once, I shall have to go myself.'

'Let me go, Lady Windermere,' said a tall handsome young man, who was standing by, listening to the conversation with an amused smile.

'Thanks so much, Lord Arthur; but I am afraid you wouldn't recognise him.'

'If he is as wonderful as you say, Lady Windermere, I couldn't well miss him. Tell me what he is like, and I'll bring him to you at once.'

'Well, he is not a bit like a cheiromantist. I mean he is not mysterious, or esoteric, or romantic-looking. He is a little, stout man, with a funny, bald head, and great gold-rimmed spectacles; something between a family doctor and a country attorney. I'm really very sorry, but it is not my fault. People are so annoying. All my pianists look exactly like poets, and all my poets look exactly like pianists; and I remember last season asking a most dreadful conspirator to dinner, a man who had blown up ever so many people, and always wore a coat of mail, and carried a dagger up his shirt-sleeve; and do you know that when he came he looked just like a nice old clergy-man, and cracked jokes all the evening? Of course, he was very amusing, and all that, but I was awfully disappointed; and when I asked him about the coat of mail, he only laughed, and said it was far too cold to wear in England. Ah, here is Mr Podgers! Now, Mr Podgers, I want you to tell the Duchess of Paisley's hand. Duchess, you must take your glove off. No, not the left hand, the other.'

'Dear Gladys, I really don't think it is quite right,' said the Duchess, feebly unbuttoning a rather soiled kid glove.

'Nothing interesting ever is,' said Lady Windermere : '*on a fait le monde ainsi* . But I must introduce you. Duch-ess, this is Mr Podgers, my pet cheiromantist. Mr Podgers, this is the Duchess of Paisley, and if you say that she has a larger mountain of the moon than I have, I will never believe in you again.'

'I am sure, Gladys, there is nothing of the kind in my hand,' said the Duchess gravely.

‘Your Grace is quite right,’ said Mr Podgers, glancing at the little fat hand with its short square fingers, ‘the mountain of the moon is not developed. The line of life, however, is excellent. Kindly bend the wrist. Thank you. Three distinct lines on the *rascette* ! You will live to a great age, Duchess, and be extremely happy. Ambition — very moderate, line of intellect not exaggerated, line of heart-’

‘Now, do be indiscreet, Mr Podgers,’ cried Lady Windermere.

‘Nothing would give me greater pleasure,’ said Mr Podgers, bowing, ‘if the Duchess ever had been, but I am sorry to say that I see great permanence of affection, combined with a strong sense of duty.’

‘Pray go on, Mr Podgers,’ said the Duchess, looking quite pleased.

‘Economy is not the least of your Grace’s virtues,’ continued Mr Podgers, and Lady Windermere went off into fits of laughter.

‘Economy is a very good thing,’ remarked the Duchess complacently; ‘when I married Paisley he had eleven castles, and not a single house fit to live in.’

‘And now he has twelve houses, and not a single castle,’ cried Lady Windermere.

‘Well, my dear,’ said the Duchess, ‘I like —’

‘Comfort,’ said Mr Podgers, ‘and modern improvements, and hot water laid on in every bedroom. Your Grace is quite right. Comfort is the only thing our civilisation can give us.’

‘You have told the Duchess’s character admirably, Mr Podgers, and now you must tell Lady Flora’s;’ and in answer to a nod from the smiling hostess, a tall girl, with sandy Scotch hair, and high shoulder-blades, stepped awkwardly from behind the sofa, and held out a long, bony hand with spatulate fingers.

‘Ah, a pianist! I see,’ said Mr Podgers, ‘an excellent pianist, but perhaps hardly a musician. Very reserved, very honest, and with a great love of animals.’

‘Quite true!’ exclaimed the Duchess, turning to Lady Windermere, ‘absolutely true! Flora keeps two dozen collie dogs at

Macloskie, and would turn our town house into a menagerie if her father would let her.'

'Well, that is just what I do with my house every Thurs-day evening,' cried Lady Windermere, laughing, 'only I like lions better than collie dogs.'

'Your one mistake, Lady Windermere,' said Mr Podgers, with a pompous bow.

'If a woman can't make her mistakes charming, she is only a female,' was the answer. 'But you must read some more hands for us. Come, Sir Thomas, show Mr Podgers yours;' and a genial-looking old gentleman, in a white waistcoat, came forward, and held out a thick rugged hand, with a very long third finger.

'An adventurous nature; four long voyages in the past, and one to come. Been shipwrecked three times. No, only twice, but in danger of a shipwreck your next journey. A strong Conservative, very punctual, and with a passion for collecting curiosities. Had a severe illness between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. Was left a fortune when about thirty. Great aversion to cats and Radicals.'

'Extraordinary!' exclaimed Sir Thomas; 'you must really tell my wife's hand, too.'

'Your second wife's,' said Mr Podgers quietly, still keeping Sir Thomas's hand in his. 'Your second wife's. I shall be charmed;' but Lady Marvel, a melancholy-looking woman, with brown hair and sentimental eyelashes, entirely declined to have her past or her future exposed; and nothing that Lady Windermere could do would induce Monsieur de Koloff, the Russian Ambassador, even to take his gloves off. In fact, many people seemed afraid to face the odd little man with his stereotyped smile, his gold spectacles, and his bright, beady eyes; and when he told poor Lady Fermor, right out before every one, that she did not care a bit for music, but was extremely fond of musicians, it was generally felt that cheiromancy was a most dangerous science, and one that ought not to be encouraged, except in a *tête-à-tête*.

Lord Arthur Savile, however, who did not know anything about Lady Fermor's unfortunate story, and who had been watching Mr Podgers with a great deal of interest, was filled with an immense curiosity to have his own hand read, and feeling

somewhat shy about putting him-self forward, crossed over the room to where Lady Windermere was sitting, and, with a charming blush, asked her if she thought Mr Podgers would mind.

‘Of course, he won’t mind,’ said Lady Windermere, ‘that is what he is here for. All my lions, Lord Arthur, are performing lions, and jump through hoops whenever I ask them. But I must warn you beforehand that I shall tell Sybil everything. She is coming to lunch with me to-morrow, to talk about bonnets, and if Mr Podgers finds out that you have a bad temper, or a tendency to gout, or a wife living in Bayswater, I shall certainly let her know all about it.’

Lord Arthur smiled, and shook his head. ‘I am not afraid,’ he answered. ‘Sybil knows me as well as I know her.’

‘Ah! I am a little sorry to hear you say that. The proper basis for marriage is a mutual misunderstanding. No, I am not at all cynical, I have merely got experience, which, however, is very much the same thing. Mr Podgers, Lord Arthur Savile is dying to have his hand read. Don’t tell him that he is engaged to one of the most beautiful girls in London, because that appeared in the *Morning Post* a month ago.

‘Dear Lady Windermere,’ cried the Marchioness of Jed-burgh, ‘do let Mr Podgers stay here a little longer. He has just told me I should go on the stage, and I am so interested.’

‘If he has told you that, Lady Jedburgh, I shall certainly take him away. Come over at once, Mr Podgers, and read Lord Arthur’s hand.’

‘Well,’ said Lady Jedburgh, making a little *moue* as she rose from the sofa, ‘if I am not to be allowed to go on the stage, I must be allowed to be part of the audience at any rate.’

‘Of course; we are all going to be part of the audience,’ said Lady Windermere; ‘and now, Mr Podgers, be sure and tell us something nice. Lord Arthur is one of my spe-cial favourites.’

But when Mr Podgers saw Lord Arthur’s hand he grew curiously pale, and said nothing. A shudder seemed to pass through him, and his great bushy eyebrows twitched convulsively, in an odd, irritating way they had when he was puzzled. Then some huge beads of perspiration broke out on his yellow forehead, like a poisonous dew, and his fat fingers grew cold and clammy.

Lord Arthur did not fail to notice these strange signs of agitation, and, for the first time in his life, he himself felt fear. His impulse was to rush from the room, but he restrained himself. It was better to know the worst, what-ever it was, than to be left in this hideous uncertainty.

‘I am waiting, Mr Podgers,’ he said.

‘We are all waiting,’ cried Lady Windermere, in her quick, impatient manner, but the cheiromantist made no reply.

‘I believe Arthur is going on the stage,’ said Lady Jedburgh, ‘and that, after your scolding, Mr Podgers is afraid to tell him so.’

Suddenly Mr Podgers dropped Lord Arthur’s right hand, and seized hold of his left, bending down so low to examine it that the gold rims of his spectacles seemed almost to touch the palm. For a moment his face became a white mask of horror, but he soon recovered his *sang-froid*, and looking up at Lady Windermere, said with a forced smile, ‘It is the hand of a charming young man.’

‘Of course it is!’ answered Lady Windermere, ‘but will he be a charming husband? That is what I want to know.’

‘All charming young men are,’ said Mr Podgers.

‘I don’t think a husband should be too fascinating,’ mur-mured Lady Jedburgh pensively, ‘it is so dangerous.’

‘My dear child, they never are too fascinating,’ cried Lady Windermere. ‘But what I want are details. Details are the only things that interest. What is going to happen to Lord Arthur?’

‘Well, within the next few months Lord Arthur will go on a voyage —’

‘Oh yes, his honeymoon, of course!’

‘And lose a relative.’

‘Not his sister, I hope?’ said Lady Jedburgh, in a pit-eous tone of voice.

‘Certainly not his sister.’ answered Mr Podgers, with a deprecating wave of the hand, ‘a distant relative merely.’

‘Well, I am dreadfully disappointed,’ said Lady Winder-mere. ‘I have absolutely nothing to tell Sybil to-morrow. No one cares about

distant relatives nowadays. They went out of fashion years ago. However, I suppose she had better have a black silk by her; it always does for church, you know. And now let us go to supper. They are sure to have eaten everything up, but we may find some hot soup. François used to make excellent soup once, but he is so agitated about politics at present, that I never feel quite certain about him. I do wish General Boulanger would keep quiet. Duchess, I am sure you are tired?’

‘Not at all, dear Gladys,’ answered the Duchess, waddling towards the door. ‘I have enjoyed myself immensely, and the cheiropodist, I mean the cheiromantist, is most interesting. Flora, where can my tortoise-shell fan be? Oh, thank you, Sir Thomas, so much. And my lace shawl, Flora? Oh, thank you, Sir Thomas, very kind, I’m sure;’ and the worthy creature finally managed to get downstairs without dropping her scent-bottle more than twice.

All this time Lord Arthur Savile had remained standing by the fireplace, with the same feeling of dread over him, the same sickening sense of coming evil. He smiled sadly at his sister, as she swept past him on Lord Plymdale’s arm, looking lovely in her pink brocade and pearls, and he hardly heard Lady Windermere when she called to him to follow her. He thought of Sybil Merton, and the idea that anything could come between them made his eyes dim with tears.

Looking at him, one would have said that Nemesis had stolen the shield of Pallas, and shown him the Gorgon’s head. He seemed turned to stone, and his face was like marble in its melancholy. He had lived the delicate and luxurious life of a young man of birth and fortune, a life exquisite in its freedom from sordid care, its beautiful boyish insouciance; and now for the first time he became conscious of the terrible mystery of Destiny, of the awful meaning of Doom.

How mad and monstrous it all seemed! Could it be that written on his hand, in characters that he could not read himself, but that another could decipher, was some fearful secret of sin, some blood-red sign of crime? Was there no escape possible? Were we no better than chess-men, moved by an unseen power, vessels the potter fashions at his fancy, for honour or for shame? His reason revolted against it, and yet he felt that some tragedy was hanging over him,

and that he had been suddenly called upon to bear an intolerable burden. Actors are so fortunate. They can choose whether they will appear in tragedy or in comedy, whether they will suffer or make merry, laugh or shed tears. But in real life it is different. Most men and women are forced to perform parts for which they have no qualifications. Our Guildensterns play Ham-let for us, and our Hamlets have to jest like Prince Hal. The world is a stage, but the play is badly cast.

Suddenly Mr Podgers entered the room. When he saw Lord Arthur he started, and his coarse, fat face became a sort of greenish-yellow colour. The two men's eyes met, and for a moment there was silence.

'The Duchess has left one of her gloves here, Lord Arthur, and has asked me to bring it to her,' said Mr Podgers finally. 'Ah, I see it on the sofa! Good evening.'

'Mr Podgers, I must insist on your giving me a straight-forward answer to a question I am going to put to you.' 'Another time, Lord Arthur, but the Duchess is anxious. I am afraid I must go.'

'You shall not go. The Duchess is in no hurry.'

'Ladies should not be kept waiting, Lord Arthur,' said Mr Podgers, with his sickly smile.

'The fair sex is apt to be impatient.'

Lord Arthur's finely-chiselled lips curled in petulant disdain. The poor Duchess seemed to him of very little importance at that moment. He walked across the room to where Mr Podgers was standing, and held his hand out.

'Tell me what you saw there,' he said. 'Tell me the truth. I must know it. I am not a child.'

Mr Podgers's eyes blinked behind his gold-rimmed spectacles, and he moved uneasily from one foot to the other, while his fingers played nervously with a flash watch-chain.

'What makes you think that I saw anything in your hand, Lord Arthur, more than I told you?'

'I know you did, and I insist on your telling me what it was. I will pay you. I will give you a cheque for a hundred pounds.'

The green eyes flashed for a moment, and then became dull again.

‘Guineas?’ said Mr Podgers at last, in a low voice.

‘Certainly. I will send you a cheque to-morrow. What is your club?’

‘I have no club. That is to say, not just at present. My address is-, but allow me to give you my card;’ and producing a bit of gilt-edged pasteboard from his waistcoat pocket, Mr Podgers handed it, with a low bow, to Lord Arthur, who read on it,

MR SEPTIMUS R. PODGERS

Professional Cheiromantist

103a West Moon Street

‘My hours are from ten to four,’ murmured Mr Podgers mechanically, ‘and I make a reduction for families.’

‘Be quick,’ cried Lord Arthur, looking very pale, and holding his hand out.

Mr Podgers glanced nervously round, and drew the heavy *portière* across the door.

‘It will take a little time, Lord Arthur, you had better sit down.’

‘Be quick, sir,’ cried Lord Arthur again, stamping his foot angrily on the polished floor.

Mr Podgers smiled, drew from his breast-pocket a small magnifying glass, and wiped it carefully with his handkerchief.

‘I am quite ready,’ he said.

ii

Ten minutes later, with face blanched by terror, and eyes wild with grief, Lord Arthur Savile rushed from Bentinck House, crushing his way through the crowd of fur-coated footmen that stood round the large striped awning, and seeming not to see or hear anything. The night was bitter cold, and the gas-lamps round the square flared and flick-ered in the keen wind; but his hands were hot with fever, and his forehead burned like fire. On and on he went, almost

with the gait of a drunken man. A policeman looked curiously at him as he passed, and a beggar, who slouched from an archway to ask for alms, grew fright-ened, seeing misery greater than his own. Once he stopped under a lamp, and looked at his hands. He thought he could detect the stain of blood already upon them, and a faint cry broke from his trembling lips.

Murder! that is what the cheiromantist had seen there. Murder! The very night seemed to know it, and the deso-late wind to howl it in his ear. The dark corners of the streets were full of it. It grinned at him from the roofs of the houses.

First he came to the Park, whose sombre woodland seemed to fascinate him. He leaned wearily up against the railings, cooling his brow against the wet metal, and listening to the tremulous silence of the trees. 'Murder! murder!' he kept repeating, as though iteration could dim the horror of the word. The sound of his own voice made him shudder, yet he almost hoped that Echo might hear him, and wake the slumbering city from its dreams. He felt a mad desire to stop the casual passer-by, and tell him everything.

Then he wandered across Oxford Street into narrow, shameful alleys. Two women with painted faces mocked at him as he went by. From a dark courtyard came a sound of oaths and blows, followed by shrill screams, and, hud-dled upon a damp doorstep, he saw the crook-backed forms of poverty and eld. A strange pity came over him. Were these children of sin and misery predestined to their end, as he to his? Were they, like him, merely the puppets of a monstrous show?

And yet it was not the mystery, but the comedy of suf-fering that struck him; its absolute uselessness, its grotesque want of meaning. How incoherent everything seemed! How lacking in all harmony! He was amazed at the discord between the shallow optimism of the day, and the real facts of existence. He was still very young.

After a time he found himself in front of Marylebone Church. The silent roadway looked like a long riband of polished silver, flecked here and there by the dark ara-besques of waving shadows. Far into the distance curved the line of flickering gas-lamps, and outside a little walled-in house stood a solitary hansom, the driver asleep inside. He walked hastily in the direction of Portland Place,

now and then looking round, as though he feared that he was being followed. At the corner of Rich Street stood two men, reading a small bill upon a hoarding. An odd feeling of curiosity stirred him, and he crossed over. As he came near, the word 'Murder,' printed in black letters, met his eye. He started, and a deep flush came into his cheek. It was an advertisement offering a reward for any information leading to the arrest of a man of medium height, between thirty and forty years of age, wearing a billy-cock hat, a black coat, and check trousers, and with a scar upon his right cheek. He read it over and over again, and wondered if the wretched man would be caught, and how he had been scarred. Perhaps, some day, his own name might be placarded on the walls of London. Some day, perhaps, a price would be set on his head also.

The thought made him sick with horror. He turned on his heel, and hurried on into the night.

Where he went he hardly knew. He had a dim memory of wandering through a labyrinth of sordid houses, of being lost in a giant web of sombre streets, and it was bright dawn when he found himself at last in Piccadilly Circus. As he strolled home towards Belgrave Square, he met the great waggons on their way to Covent Garden. The white-smocked carters, with their pleasant sunburnt faces and coarse curly hair, strode sturdily on, cracking their whips, and calling out now and then to each other; on the back of a huge grey horse, the leader of a jangling team, sat a chubby boy, with a bunch of primroses in his battered hat, keeping tight hold of the mane with his little hands, and laughing; and the great piles of vegetables looked like masses of jade against the morning sky, like masses of green jade against the pink petals of some marvellous rose. Lord Arthur felt curiously affected, he could not tell why. There was something in the dawn's delicate loveliness that seemed to him inexpressibly pathetic, and he thought of all the days that break in beauty, and that set in storm. These rustics, too, with their rough, good-humoured voices, and their nonchalant ways, what a strange London they saw! A London free from the sin of night and the smoke of day, a pallid, ghost-like city, a desolate town of tombs! He wondered what they thought of it, and whether they knew anything of its splendour and its shame, of its fierce, fiery-coloured joys, and its horrible hunger, of all it makes and mars from morn to

eve. Probably it was to them merely a mart where they brought their fruits to sell, and where they tarried for a few hours at most, leaving the streets still silent, the houses still asleep. It gave him pleasure to watch them as they went by. Rude as they were, with their heavy, hob-nailed shoes, and their awkward gait, they brought a little of Arcady with them. He felt that they had lived with Nature, and that she had taught them peace. He envied them all that they did not know.

By the time he had reached Belgrave Square the sky was a faint blue, and the birds were beginning to twitter in the gardens.

iii

When Lord Arthur woke it was twelve o'clock, and the mid-day sun was streaming through the ivory-silk curtains of his room. He got up and looked out of the window. A dim haze of heat was hanging over the great city, and the roofs of the houses were like dull silver. In the flickering green of the square below some children were flitting about like white butterflies, and the pavement was crowded with people on their way to the Park. Never had life seemed lovelier to him, never had the things of evil seemed more remote.

Then his valet brought him a cup of chocolate on a tray. After he had drunk it, he drew aside a heavy portière of peach-coloured plush, and passed into the bathroom. The light stole softly from above, through thin slabs of transparent onyx, and the water in the marble tank glimmered like a moonstone. He plunged hastily in, till the cool ripples touched throat and hair, and then dipped his head right under, as though he would have wiped away the stain of some shameful memory. When he stepped out he felt almost at peace. The exquisite physical conditions of the moment had dominated him, as indeed often happens in the case of very finely-wrought natures, for the senses, like fire, can purify as well as destroy.

After breakfast, he flung himself down on a divan, and lit a cigarette. On the mantel-shelf, framed in dainty old brocade, stood a large photograph of Sybil Merton, as he had seen her first at Lady Noel's ball. The small, exquisitely-shaped head drooped slightly to one side, as though the thin, reed-like throat could hardly bear the burden of so much beauty; the lips were slightly parted, and seemed

made for sweet music; and all the tender purity of girlhood looked out in wonder from the dream-ing eyes. With her soft, clinging dress of *crêpe-de-chine* , and her large leaf-shaped fan, she looked like one of those delicate little figures men find in the olive-woods near Tanagra; and there was a touch of Greek grace in her pose and attitude. Yet she was not *petite* . Yet she was simply perfectly proportioned — a rare thing in an age when so many women are either over life-size or insignificant.

Now as Lord Arthur looked at her, he was filled with the terrible pity that is born of love. He felt that to marry her, with the doom of murder hanging over his head, would be a betrayal like that of Judas, a sin worse than any the Borgia had ever dreamed of. What happiness could there be for them, when at any moment he might be called upon to carry out the awful prophecy written in his hand? What manner of life would be theirs while Fate still held this fearful fortune in the scales? The marriage must be postponed, at all costs. Of this he was quite resolved. Ardently though he loved the girl, and the mere touch of her fingers, when they sat together, made each nerve of his body thrill with exquisite joy, he recognised none the less clearly where his duty lay, and was fully conscious of the fact that he had no right to marry until he had committed the murder. This done, he could stand before the altar with Sybil Merton, and give his life into her hands without terror of wrongdoing. This done, he could take her to his arms, knowing that she would never have to blush for him, never have to hang her head in shame. But done it must be first; and the sooner the better for both.

Many men in his position would have preferred the primrose path of dalliance to the steep heights of duty; but Lord Arthur was too conscientious to set pleasure above principle. There was more than mere passion in his love; and Sybil was to him a symbol of all that is good and noble. For a moment he had a natural repugnance against what he was asked to do, but it soon passed away. His heart told him that it was not a sin, but a sacrifice; his reason reminded him that there was no other course open. He had to choose between living for himself and living for others, and terrible though the task laid upon him undoubtedly was, yet he knew that he must not suffer selfishness to triumph over love. Sooner or later we are all called upon to decide on the same issue — of us all, the same

question is asked. To Lord Arthur it came early in life-before his nature had been spoiled by the calculating cynicism of middle-age, or his heart corroded by the shallow, fashionable egotism of our day, and he felt no hesitation about doing his duty. Fortunately also, for him, he was no mere dreamer, or idle dilettante. Had he been so, he would have hesitated, like Hamlet, and let irresolution mar his purpose. But he was essentially practical. Life to him meant action, rather than thought. He had that rarest of all things, common sense.

The wild, turbid feelings of the previous night had by this time completely passed away, and it was almost with a sense of shame that he looked back upon his mad wanderings from street to street, his fierce emotional agony. The very sincerity of his sufferings made them seem unreal to him now. He wondered how he could have been so foolish as to rant and rave about the inevitable. The only question that seemed to trouble him was, whom to make away with; for he was not blind to the fact that murder, like the religions of the Pagan world, requires a victim as well as a priest. Not being a genius, he had no enemies, and indeed he felt that this was not the time for the gratification of any personal pique or dislike, the mission in which he was engaged being one of great and grave solemnity. He accordingly made out a list of his friends and relatives on a sheet of notepaper, and after careful consideration, decided in favour of Lady Clementina Beauchamp, a dear old lady who lived in Curzon Street, and was his own second cousin by his mother's side. He had always been very fond of Lady Clem, as every one called her, and as he was very wealthy himself, having come into all Lord Rugby's property when he came of age, there was no possibility of his deriving any vulgar monetary advantage by her death. In fact, the more he thought over the matter, the more she seemed to him to be just the right person, and, feeling that any delay would be unfair to Sybil, he determined to make his arrangements at once.

The first thing to be done was, of course, to settle with the cheiromantist; so he sat down at a small Sheraton writing-table that stood near the window, drew a cheque for £105, payable to the order of Mr Septimus Podgers, and, enclosing it in an envelope, told his valet to take it to West Moon Street. He then telephoned to the stables for his hansom, and dressed to go out. As he was leaving the

room, he looked back at Sybil Merton's photograph, and swore that, come what may, he would never let her know what he was doing for her sake, but would keep the secret of his self-sacrifice hidden always in his heart.

On his way to the Buckingham, he stopped at a florist's, and sent Sybil a beautiful basket of narcissi, with lovely white petals and staring pheasants' eyes, and on arriving at the club, went straight to the library, rang the bell, and ordered the waiter to bring him a lemon-and-soda, and a book on Toxicology. He had fully decided that poison was the best means to adopt in this troublesome business. Anything like personal violence was extremely distasteful to him, and besides, he was very anxious not to murder Lady Clementina in any way that might attract public attention, as he hated the idea of being lionised at Lady Windermere's, or seeing his name figuring in the paragraphs of vulgar society-newspapers. He had also to think of Sybil's father and mother, who were rather old-fashioned people, and might possibly object to the marriage if there was anything like a scandal, though he felt certain that if he told them the whole facts of the case they would be the very first to appreciate the motives that had actuated him. He had every reason, then, to decide in favour of poison. It was safe, sure, and quiet, and did away with any necessity for painful scenes, to which, like most Englishmen, he had a rooted objection.

Of the science of poisons, however, he knew absolutely nothing, and as the waiter seemed quite unable to find anything in the library but Ruff's *Guide* and Bailey's *Magazine*, he examined the book-shelves himself, and finally came across a handsomely-bound edition of the *Pharmacopoeia*, and a copy of Erskine's *Toxicology*, edited by Sir Mathew Reid, the President of the Royal College of Physicians, and one of the oldest members of the Buckingham, having been elected in mistake for somebody else; a *contretemps* that so enraged the Committee, that when the real man came up they black-balled him unanimously. Lord Arthur was a good deal puzzled at the technical terms used in both books, and had begun to regret that he had not paid more attention to his classics at Oxford, when in the second volume of Erskine, he found a very interesting and complete account of the properties of aconitine, written in fairly clear English. It seemed to him to be exactly the poison he

wanted. It was swift — indeed, almost immediate, in its effect — perfectly painless, and when taken in the form of a gelatine capsule, the mode recommended by Sir Mathew, not by any means unpalatable. He accordingly made a note, upon his shirt-cuff, of the amount necessary for a fatal dose, put the books back in their places, and strolled up St James's Street, to Pestle and Humbey's, the great chemists. Mr Pestle, who always attended personally on the aris-tocracy, was a good deal surprised at the order, and in a very deferential manner murmured something about a medical certificate being necessary. However, as soon as Lord Arthur explained to him that it was for a large Nor-wegian mastiff that he was obliged to get rid of, as it showed signs of incipient rabies, and had already bitten the coachman twice in the calf of the leg, he expressed himself as being perfectly satisfied, complimented Lord Arthur on his wonderful knowledge of Toxicology, and had the prescription made up immediately.

Lord Arthur put the capsule into a pretty little silver *bonbonnière* that he saw in a shop-window in Bond Street, threw away Pestle and Humbey's ugly pill-box, and drove off at once to Lady Clementina's.

'Well, *monsieur le mauvais sujet* ,' cried the old lady, as he entered the room, 'why haven't you been to see me all this time?'

'My dear Lady Clem, I never have a moment to myself,' said Lord Arthur, smiling.

'I suppose you mean that you go about all day long with Miss Sybil Merton, buying *chiffons* and talking nonsense? I cannot understand why people make such a fuss about being married. In my day we never dreamed of billing and cooing in public, or in private for that matter.'

'I assure you I have not seen Sybil for twenty-four hours, Lady Clem. As far as I can make out, she belongs entirely to her milliners.'

'Of course; that is the only reason you come to see an ugly old woman like myself. I wonder you men don't take warning. *On a fait des folies pour moi* , and here I am, a poor, rheumatic creature, with a false front and a bad temper. Why, if it were not for dear Lady Jansen, who sends me all the worst French novels she can find, I

don't think I could get through the day. Doctors are no use at all, except to get fees out of one. They can't even cure my heartburn.'

'I have brought you a cure for that, Lady Clem,' said Lord Arthur gravely. 'It is a wonderful thing, invented by an American.'

'I don't think I like American inventions, Arthur. I am quite sure I don't. I read some American novels lately, and they were quite nonsensical.'

'Oh, but there is no nonsense at all about this, Lady Clem! I assure you it is a perfect cure. You must promise to try it;' and Lord Arthur brought the little box out of his pocket, and handed it to her.

'Well, the box is charming, Arthur. Is it really a present? That is very sweet of you. And is this the wonderful medi-cine? It looks like *abonbon*. I'll take it at once.'

'Good heavens! Lady Clem,' cried Lord Arthur, catch-ing hold of her hand, 'you mustn't do anything of the kind. It is a homoeopathic medicine, and if you take it without having heartburn, it might do you no end of harm. Wait till you have an attack, and take it then. You will be astonished at the result.'

'I should like to take it now,' said Lady Clementina, holding up to the light the little transparent capsule, with its floating bubble of liquid aconitine. 'I am sure it is delicious. The fact is that, though I hate doctors, I love medicines. However, I'll keep it till my next attack.'

'And when will that be?' asked Lord Arthur eagerly. 'Will it be soon?'

'I hope not for a week. I had a very bad time yesterday morning with it. But one never knows.'

'You are sure to have one before the end of the month then, Lady Clem?'

'I am afraid so. But how sympathetic you are to-day, Arthur! Really, Sybil has done you a great deal of good. And now you must run away, for I am dining with some very dull people, who won't talk scandal, and I know that if I don't get my sleep now I shall never be able to keep awake during dinner. Good-bye, Arthur, give my love to Sybil, and thank you so much for the American medicine.'

'You won't forget to take it, Lady Clem, will you?' said Lord Arthur, rising from his seat.

'Of course I won't, you silly boy. I think it is most kind of you to think of me, and I shall write and tell you if I want any more.'

Lord Arthur left the house in high spirits, and with a feeling of immense relief.

That night he had an interview with Sybil Merton. He told her how he had been suddenly placed in a position of terrible difficulty, from which neither honour nor duty would allow him to recede. He told her that the marriage must be put off for the present, as until he had got rid of his fearful entanglements, he was not a free man. He implored her to trust him, and not to have any doubts about the future. Everything would come right, but patience was necessary.

The scene took place in the conservatory of Mr Mer-ton's house, in Park Lane, where Lord Arthur had dined as usual. Sybil had never seemed more happy, and for a moment Lord Arthur had been tempted to play the cow-ard's part, to write to Lady Clementina for the pill, and to let the marriage go on as if there was no such person as Mr Podgers in the world. His better nature, however, soon asserted itself, and even when Sybil flung herself weeping into his arms, he did not falter. The beauty that stirred his senses had touched his conscience also. He felt that to wreck so fair a life for the sake of a few months'pleasure would be a wrong thing to do.

He stayed with Sybil till nearly midnight, comforting her and being comforted in turn, and early the next morn-ing he left for Venice, after writing a manly, firm letter to Mr Merton about the necessary postponement of the marriage.

iv

In Venice he met his brother, Lord Surbiton, who hap-pened to have come over from Corfu in his yacht. The two young men spent a delightful fortnight together. In the morning they rode on the Lido, or glided up and down the green canals in their long black gondola; in the afternoon they usually entertained visitors on the yacht; and in the evening they dined at Florian's, and smoked innumerable cigarettes on the Piazza. Yet somehow Lord Arthur was not happy. Every day he studied the obituary column in the

Times , expecting to see a notice of Lady Clementina's death, but every day he was disappointed. He began to be afraid that some accident had happened to her, and often regretted that he had prevented her tak-ing the aconitine when she had been so anxious to try its effect. Sybil's letters, too, though full of love, and trust, and tenderness, were often very sad in their tone, and sometimes he used to think that he was parted from her for ever.

After a fortnight Lord Surbiton got bored with Venice, and determined to run down the coast to Ravenna, as he heard that there was some capital cock-shooting in the Pinetum. Lord Arthur, at first, refused absolutely to come, but Surbiton, of whom he was extremely fond, finally persuaded him that if he stayed at Danielli's by himself he would be moped to death, and on the morning of the 15th they started, with a strong nor'-east wind blowing, and a rather sloppy sea. The sport was excellent, and the free, open-air life brought the colour back to Lord Arthur's cheeks, but about the 22nd he became anxious about Lady Clementina, and, in spite of Surbiton's remonstrances, came back to Venice by train.

As he stepped out of his gondola on to the hotel steps, the proprietor came forward to meet him with a sheaf of telegrams. Lord Arthur snatched them out of his hand, and tore them open. Everything had been successful. Lady Clementina had died quite suddenly on the night of the 17th!

His first thought was for Sybil, and he sent her off a telegram announcing his immediate return to London. He then ordered his valet to pack his things for the night mail, sent his gondoliers about five times their proper fare, and ran up to his sitting-room with a light step and a buoyant heart. There he found three letters waiting for him. One was from Sybil herself, full of sympathy and condolence. The others were from his mother, and from Lady Clementina's solicitor. It seemed that the old lady had dined with the Duchess that very night, had delighted every one by her wit and *esprit* , but had gone home some-what early, complaining of heartburn. In the morning she was found dead in her bed, having apparently suffered no pain. Sir Mathew Reid had been sent for at once, but, of course, there was nothing to be done, and she was to be buried on the 22nd at Beauchamp Chalcote. A few days before she died she had made her will, and left Lord Arthur her little house in Curzon Street, and all her furniture, personal effects, and

pictures, with the exception of her collection of miniatures, which was to go to her sister, Lady Margaret Rufford, and her amethyst necklace, which Sybil Merton was to have. The property was not of much value; but Mr Mansfield the solicitor was extremely anxious for Lord Arthur to return at once, if possible, as there were a great many bills to be paid, and Lady Clementina had never kept any regular accounts.

Lord Arthur was very much touched by Lady Clementina's kind remembrance of him, and felt that Mr Podgers had a great deal to answer for. His love of Sybil, however, dominated every other emotion, and the consciousness that he had done his duty gave him peace and comfort. When he arrived at Charing Cross, he felt perfectly happy.

The Mertons received him very kindly, Sybil made him promise that he would never again allow anything to come between them, and the marriage was fixed for the 7th June. Life seemed to him once more bright and beautiful, and all his old gladness came back to him again.

One day, however, as he was going over the house in Curzon Street, in company with Lady Clementina's solicitor and Sybil herself, burning packages of faded letters, and turning out drawers of odd rubbish, the young girl suddenly gave a little cry of delight.

'What have you found, Sybil?' said Lord Arthur, looking up from his work, and smiling.

'This lovely little silver *bonbonnière*, Arthur. Isn't it quaint and Dutch? Do give it to me! I know amethysts won't become me till I am over eighty.'

It was the box that had held the aconitine.

Lord Arthur started, and a faint blush came into his cheek. He had almost entirely forgotten what he had done, and it seemed to him a curious coincidence that Sybil, for whose sake he had gone through all that terrible anxiety, should have been the first to remind him of it.

'Of course you can have it, Sybil. I gave it to poor Lady Clem myself.'

'Oh! thank you, Arthur; and may I have the *bonbon* too? I had

no notion that Lady Clementina liked sweets. I thought she was far too intellectual.'

Lord Arthur grew deadly pale, and a horrible idea crossed his mind.

'*Bonbon* , Sybil? What do you mean?'he said, in a slow, hoarse voice.

'There is one in it, that is all. It looks quite old and dusty, and I have not the slightest intention of eating it. What is the matter, Arthur? How white you look!'

Lord Arthur rushed across the room, and seized the box. Inside it was the amber-coloured capsule, with its poison-bubble. Lady Clementina had died a natural death after all!

The shock of the discovery was almost too much for him. He flung the capsule into the fire, and sank on the sofa with a cry of despair.

V

Mr Merton was a good deal distressed at the second postponement of the marriage, and Lady Julia, who had already ordered her dress for the wedding, did all in her power to make Sybil break off the match. Dearly, how-ever, as Sybil loved her mother, she had given her whole life into Lord Arthur's hands, and nothing that Lady Julia could say could make her waver in her faith. As for Lord Arthur himself, it took him days to get over his terrible disappointment, and for a time his nerves were completely unstrung. His excellent common sense, however, soon asserted itself, and his sound, practical mind did not leave him long in doubt about what to do. Poison having proved a complete failure, dynamite, or some other form of explosive, was obviously the proper thing to try.

He accordingly looked again over the list of his friends and relatives, and, after careful consideration, determined to blow up his uncle, the Dean of Chichester. The Dean, who was a man of great culture and learning, was extremely fond of clocks, and had a wonderful collection of timepieces, ranging from the fifteenth century to the present day, and it seemed to Lord Arthur that this hobby of the good Dean's offered him an excellent opportunity for

carrying out his scheme. Where to procure an explosive machine was, of course, quite another matter. The London Directory gave him no information on the point, and he felt that there was very little use in going to Scotland Yard about it, as they never seemed to know anything about the movements of the dynamite faction till after an explosion had taken place, and not much even then.

Suddenly he thought of his friend Rouvaloff, a young Russian of very revolutionary tendencies, whom he had met at Lady Windermere's in the winter. Count Rouvaloff was supposed to be writing a life of Peter the Great, and to have come over to England for the purpose of studying the documents relating to that Tsar's residence in this country as a ship carpenter; but it was generally suspected that he was a Nihilist agent, and there was no doubt that the Russian Embassy did not look with any favour upon his presence in London. Lord Arthur felt that he was just the man for his purpose, and drove down one morning to his lodgings in Bloomsbury, to ask his advice and assistance.

'So you are taking up politics seriously?' said Count Rouvaloff, when Lord Arthur had told him the object of his mission; but Lord Arthur, who hated swagger of any kind, felt bound to admit to him that he had not the slightest interest in social questions, and simply wanted the explosive machine for a purely family matter, in which no one was concerned but himself.

Count Rouvaloff looked at him for some moments in amazement, and then seeing that he was quite serious, wrote an address on a piece of paper, initialled it, and handed it to him across the table.

'Scotland Yard would give a good deal to know this address, my dear fellow.'

'They shan't have it,' cried Lord Arthur, laughing; and after shaking the young Russian warmly by the hand he ran downstairs, examined the paper, and told the coach-man to drive to Soho Square.

There he dismissed him, and strolled down Greek Street, till he came to a place called Bayle's Court. He passed under the archway, and found himself in a curious cul-de-sac, that was apparently occupied by a French Laundry, as a perfect network of clothes-lines

was stretched across from house to house, and there was a flutter of white linen in the morning air. He walked right to the end, and knocked at a little green house. After some delay, during which every window in the court became a blurred mass of peering faces, the door was opened by a rather rough-looking foreigner, who asked him in very bad English what his business was. Lord Arthur handed him the paper Count Rouvaloff had given him. When the man saw it he bowed, and invited Lord Arthur into a very shabby front parlour on the ground-floor, and in a few moments Herr Winckelkopf, as he was called in England, bustled into the room, with a very wine-stained napkin round his neck, and a fork in his left hand.

‘Count Rouvaloff has given me an introduction to you,’ said Lord Arthur, bowing, ‘and I am anxious to have a short interview with you on a matter of business. My name is Smith, Mr Robert Smith, and I want you to supply me with an explosive clock.’

‘Charmed to meet you, Lord Arthur,’ said the genial little German, laughing. ‘Don’t look so alarmed, it is my duty to know everybody, and I remember seeing you one evening at Lady Windermere’s. I hope her ladyship is quite well. Do you mind sitting with me while I finish my breakfast? There is an excellent *pâté*, and my friends are kind enough to say that my Rhine wine is better than any they get at the German Embassy,’ and before Lord Arthur had got over his surprise at being recognised, he found himself seated in the back-room, sipping the most delicious Marcobrunner out of a pale yellow hock-glass marked with the Imperial monogram, and chatting in the friendliest manner possible to the famous conspirator.

‘Explosive clocks,’ said Herr Winckelkopf, ‘are not very good things for foreign exportation, as, even if they succeed in passing the Custom House, the train service is so irregular, that they usually go off before they have reached their proper destination. If, however, you want one for home use, I can supply you with an excellent article, and guarantee that you will be satisfied with the result. May I ask for whom it is intended? If it is for the police, or for any one connected with Scotland Yard, I’m afraid I cannot do anything for you. The English detectives are really our best friends, and I have always found that by relying on their stupidity, we can do exactly what we like. I could not spare one of them.’

‘I assure you,’ said Lord Arthur, ‘that it has nothing to do with the police at all. In fact, the clock is intended for the Dean of Chichester.’

‘Dear me! I had no idea that you felt so strongly about religion, Lord Arthur. Few young men do nowadays.’

‘I am afraid you overrate me, Herr Winckelkopf,’ said Lord Arthur, blushing. ‘The fact is, I really know nothing about theology.’

‘It is a purely private matter then?’

‘Purely private.’

Herr Winckelkopf shrugged his shoulders, and left the room, returning in a few minutes with a round cake of dynamite about the size of a penny, and a pretty little French clock, surmounted by an ormolu figure of Liberty trampling on the hydra of Despotism.

Lord Arthur’s face brightened up when he saw it. ‘That is just what I want,’ he cried, ‘and now tell me how it goes off.’

‘Ah! there is my secret,’ answered Herr Winckelkopf, contemplating his invention with a justifiable look of pride; ‘let me know when you wish it to explode, and I will set the machine to the moment.’

‘Well, to-day is Tuesday, and if you could send it off at once-’

‘That is impossible; I have a great deal of important work on hand for some friends of mine in Moscow. Still, I might send it off to-morrow.’

‘Oh, it will be quite time enough!’ said Lord Arthur politely, ‘if it is delivered to-morrow night or Thursday morning. For the moment of the explosion, say Friday at noon exactly. The Dean is always at home at that hour.’

‘Friday, at noon,’ repeated Herr Winckelkopf, and he made a note to that effect in a large ledger that was lying on a bureau near the fireplace.

‘And now,’ said Lord Arthur, rising from his seat, ‘pray let me know how much I am in your debt.’

‘It is such a small matter, Lord Arthur, that I do not care to make any charge. The dynamite comes to seven and sixpence, the clock will be three pounds ten, and the carriage about five shillings.

I am only too pleased to oblige any friend of Count Rouvaloff's.'

'But your trouble, Herr Winckelkopf?'

'Oh, that is nothing! It is a pleasure to me. I do not work for money; I live entirely for my art.'

Lord Arthur laid down £4 : 2 : 6 on the table, thanked the little German for his kindness, and, having succeeded in declining an invitation to meet some Anarchists at a meat-tea on the following Saturday, left the house and went off to the Park.

For the next two days he was in a state of the greatest excitement, and on Friday at twelve o'clock he drove down to the Buckingham to wait for news. All the after-noon the stolid hall-porter kept posting up telegrams from various parts of the country giving the results of horse-races, the verdicts in divorce suits, the state of the weather, and the like, while the tape ticked out wearisome details about an all-night sitting in the House of Commons, and a small panic on the Stock Exchange. At four o'clock the evening papers came in, and Lord Arthur disappeared into the library with the *Pall Mall*, the *St James's*, the *Globe*, and the *Echo*, to the immense indignation of Colonel Goodchild, who wanted to read the reports of a speech he had delivered that morning at the Mansion House, on the subject of South African Missions, and the advisability of having black Bishops in every province, and for some reason or other had a strong prejudice against the *Evening News*. None of the papers, however, contained even the slightest allusion to Chich-ester, and Lord Arthur felt that the attempt must have failed. It was a terrible blow to him, and for a time he was quite unnerved. Herr Winckelkopf, whom he went to see the next day, was full of elaborate apologies, and offered to supply him with another clock free of charge, or with a case of nitro-glycerine bombs at cost price. But he had lost all faith in explosives, and Herr Winckelkopf himself acknowledged that everything is so adulterated now-adays, that even dynamite can hardly be got in a pure condition. The little German, however, while admitting that something must have gone wrong with the machinery, was not without hope that the clock might still go off, and instanced the case of a barometer that he had once sent to the military Governor at Odessa, which, though timed to explode in ten days, had not done so for something like three months. It was quite true that

when it did go off, it merely succeeded in blowing a housemaid to atoms, the Governor having gone out of town six weeks before, but at least it showed that dynamite, as a destructive force, was, when under the control of machinery, a powerful, though a somewhat unpunctual agent. Lord Arthur was a little consoled by this reflection, but even here he was destined to disappointment, for two days afterwards, as he was going upstairs, the Duchess called him into her boudoir, and showed him a letter she had just received from the Deanery.

‘Jane writes charming letters,’ said the Duchess; ‘you must really read her last. It is quite as good as the novels Mudie sends us.’

Lord Arthur seized the letter from her hand. It ran as follows :

‘The Deanery, Chichester,

‘27th May.

‘My Dearest Aunt,

‘Thank you so much for the flannel for the Dorcas Society, and also for the gingham. I quite agree with you that it is nonsense their wanting to wear pretty things, but

everybody is so Radical and irreligious nowadays, that it is difficult to make them see that they should not try and dress like the upper classes. I am sure I don’t know what we are coming to. As papa has often said in his sermons, we live in an age of unbelief.

‘We have had great fun over a clock that an unknown admirer sent papa last Thursday. It arrived in a wooden box from London, carriage paid; and papa feels it must have been sent by some one who had read his remarkable sermon, “Is Licence Liberty?” for on the top of the clock was a figure of a woman, with what papa said was the cap of Liberty on her head. I didn’t think it very becoming myself, but papa said it was historical, so I suppose it is all right. Parker unpacked it, and papa put it on the mantel-piece in the library, and we were all sitting there on Friday morning, when just as the clock struck twelve, we heard a whirring noise, a little puff of smoke came from the pedestal of the figure, and the goddess of

Liberty fell off, and broke her nose on the fender! Maria was quite alarmed, but it looked so ridiculous, that James and I went off into fits of laughter, and even papa was amused. When we examined it, we found it was a sort of alarum clock, and that, if you set it to a particular hour, and put some gunpowder and a cap under a little hammer, it went off whenever you wanted. Papa said it must not remain in the library, as it made a noise, so Reggie carried it away to the schoolroom, and does nothing but have small explosions all day long. Do you think Arthur would like one for a wedding present? I suppose they are quite fashionable in London. Papa says they should do a great deal of good, as they show that Liberty can't last, but must fall down. Papa says Liberty was invented at the time of the French Revolution. How awful it seems!

'I have now to go to the Dorcas, where I will read them your most instructive letter. How true, dear aunt, your idea is, that in their rank of life they should wear what is unbecoming. I must say it is absurd, their anxiety about dress, when there are so many more important things in this world, and in the next. I am so glad your flowered poplin turned out so well, and that your lace was not torn. I am wearing my yellow satin, that you so kindly gave me, at the Bishop's on Wednesday, and think it will look all right. Would you have bows or not? Jennings says that every one wears bows now, and that the underskirt should be frilled. Reggie has just had another explosion, and papa has ordered the clock to be sent to the stables. I don't think papa likes it so much as he did at first, though he is very flattered at being sent such a pretty and ingenious toy. It shows that people read his sermons, and profit by them.' Papa sends his love, in which James, and Reggie, and Maria all unite, and, hoping that Uncle Cecil's gout is better, believe me, dear aunt, ever your affectionate niece,

'Jane Percy

'P. S. — Do tell me about the bows. Jennings insists they are the fashion.'

Lord Arthur looked so serious and unhappy over the letter, that the Duchess went into fits of laughter.

'My dear Arthur,' she cried, 'I shall never show you a young lady's letter again! But what shall I say about the clock? I think it is

a capital invention, and I should like to have one myself.'

'I don't think much of them,' said Lord Arthur, with a sad smile, and, after kissing his mother, he left the room.

When he got upstairs, he flung himself on a sofa, and his eyes filled with tears. He had done his best to commit this murder, but on both occasions he had failed, and through no fault of his own. He had tried to do his duty, but it seemed as if Destiny herself had turned traitor. He was oppressed with the sense of the barrenness of good intentions, of the futility of trying to be fine. Perhaps, it would be better to break off the marriage altogether. Sybil would suffer, it is true, but suffering could not really mar a nature so noble as hers. As for himself, what did it mat-ter? There is always some war in which a man can die, some cause to which a man can give his life, and as life had no pleasure for him, so death had no terror. Let Destiny work out his doom. He would not stir to help her.

At half-past seven he dressed, and went down to the club. Surbiton was there with a party of young men, and he was obliged to dine with them. Their trivial conversation and idle jests did not interest him, and as soon as coffee was brought he left them, inventing some engagement in order to get away. As he was going out of the club, the hall porter handed him a letter. It was from Herr Winckelkopf, asking him to call down the next evening, and look at an explosive umbrella, that went off as soon as it was opened. It was the very latest invention, and had just arrived from Geneva. He tore the letter up into fragments. He had made up his mind not to try any more experiments. Then he wandered down to the Thames Embankment, and sat for hours by the river. The moon peered through a mane of tawny clouds, as if it were a lion's eye, and innumerable stars spangled the hollow vault, like gold dust powdered on a purple dome. Now and then a barge swung out into the turbid stream, and floated away with the tide, and the railway signals changed from green to scarlet as the trains ran shrieking across the bridge. After some time, twelve o'clock boomed from the tall tower at Westminster, and at each stroke of the sonorous bell the night seemed to tremble. Then the railway lights went out, one solitary lamp left gleaming like a large ruby on a giant mast, and the roar of the city became fainter.

At two o'clock he got up, and strolled towards Black-friars.

How unreal everything looked! How like a strange dream! The houses on the other side of the river seemed built out of darkness. One would have said that silver and shadow had fashioned the world anew. The huge dome of St Paul's loomed like a bubble through the dusky air.

As he approached Cleopatra's Needle he saw a man leaning over the parapet, and as he came nearer the man looked up, the gas-light falling full upon his face.

It was Mr Podgers, the cheiromantist! No one could mistake the fat, flabby face, the gold-rimmed spectacles, the sickly feeble smile, the sensual mouth.

Lord Arthur stopped. A brilliant idea flashed across him, and he stole softly up behind. In a moment he had seized Mr Podgers by the legs, and flung him into the Thames. There was a coarse oath, a heavy splash, and all was still. Lord Arthur looked anxiously over, but could see nothing of the cheiromantist but a tall hat, pirouetting in an eddy of moonlit water. After a time it also sank, and no trace of Mr Podgers was visible. Once he thought that he caught sight of the bulky misshapen figure striking out for the staircase by the bridge, and a horrible feeling of failure came over him, but it turned out to be merely a reflection, and when the moon shone out from behind a cloud it passed away. At last he seemed to have realised the decree of destiny. He heaved a deep sigh of relief, and Sybil's name came to his lips.

'Have you dropped anything, sir?' said a voice behind him suddenly.

He turned round, and saw a policeman with a bull's-eye lantern.

'Nothing of importance, sergeant,' he answered, smiling, and hailing a passing hansom, he jumped in, and told the man to drive to Belgrave Square.

For the next few days he alternated between hope and fear. There were moments when he almost expected Mr Podgers to walk into the room, and yet at other times he felt that Fate could not be so unjust to him. Twice he went to the cheiromantist's address in West Moon Street, but he could not bring himself to ring the bell. He longed for certainty, and was afraid of it.

Finally it came. He was sitting in the smoking-room of the club having tea, and listening rather wearily to Sur-biton's account of the last comic song at the Gaiety, when the waiter came in with the evening papers. He took up the *St James's*, and was listlessly turning over its pages, when this strange heading caught his eye :

SUICIDE OF A CHEIROMANTIST.

He turned pale with excitement, and began to read. The paragraph ran as follows : —

Yesterday morning, at seven o'clock, the body of Mr Sep-timus R. Podgers, the eminent cheiromantist, was washed on shore at Greenwich, just in front of the Ship Hotel. The unfortunate gentleman had been missing for some days, and considerable anxiety for his safety had been felt in cheiromantic circles. It is supposed that he committed sui-cide under the influence of a temporary mental derangement, caused by overwork, and a verdict to that effect was returned this afternoon by the coroner's jury. Mr Podgers had just completed an elaborate treatise on the subject of the Human Hand, that will shortly be published, when it will no doubt attract much attention. The deceased was sixty-five years of age, and does not seem to have left any relations.

Lord Arthur rushed out of the club with the paper still in his hand, to the immense amazement of the hall-porter, who tried in vain to stop him, and drove at once to Park Lane. Sybil saw him from the window, and something told her that he was the bearer of good news. She ran down to meet him, and, when she saw his face, she knew that all was well.

'My dear Sybil,' cried Lord Arthur, 'let us be married tomorrow!'

'You foolish boy! Why the cake is not even ordered!' said Sybil, laughing through her tears.

Vi

When the wedding took place, some three weeks later, St Peter's was crowded with a perfect mob of smart people. The service was read in a most impressive manner by the Dean of Chichester, and everybody agreed that they had never seen a handsomer couple than the bride and bride-groom. They were more

than handsome, however — they were happy. Never for a single moment did Lord Arthur regret all that he had suffered for Sybil's sake, while she, on her side, gave him the best things a woman can give to any man — worship, tenderness, and love. For them romance was not killed by reality. They always felt young.

Some years afterwards, when two beautiful children had been born to them, Lady Windermere came down on a visit to Alton Priory, a lovely old place, that had been the Duke's wedding present to his son; and one afternoon as she was sitting with Lady Arthur under a lime-tree in the garden, watching the little boy and girl as they played up and down the rose-walk, like fitful sunbeams, she suddenly took her hostess's hand in hers, and said, 'Are you happy, Sybil?'

'Dear Lady Windermere, of course I am happy. Aren't you?'

'I have no time to be happy, Sybil. I always like the last person who is introduced to me; but, as a rule, as soon as I know people I get tired of them.'

'Don't your lions satisfy you, Lady Windermere?'

'Oh dear, no! lions are only good for one season. As soon as their manes are cut, they are the dullerest creatures going. Besides, they behave very badly, if you are really nice to them. Do you remember that horrid Mr Podgers? He was a dreadful impostor. Of course, I didn't mind that at all, and even when he wanted to borrow money I forgave him, but I could not stand his making love to me. He has really made me hate cheiromancy. I go in for telepathy now. It is much more amusing.'

'You mustn't say anything against cheiromancy here, Lady Windermere; it is the only subject that Arthur does not like people to chaff about. I assure you he is quite serious over it.'

'You don't mean to say that he believes in it, Sybil?'

'Ask him, Lady Windermere, here he is;' and Lord Arthur came up the garden with a large bunch of yellow roses in his hand, and his two children dancing round him.

'Lord Arthur?'

'Yes, Lady Windermere.'

‘You don’t mean to say that you believe in cheiro-mancy?’

‘Of course I do,’ said the young man, smiling.

‘But why?’

‘Because I owe to it all the happiness of my life,’ he murmured, throwing himself into a wicker chair.

‘My dear Lord Arthur, what do you owe to it?’

‘Sybil,’ he answered, handing his wife the roses, and looking into her violet eyes.

‘What nonsense!’ cried Lady Windermere. ‘I never heard such nonsense in all my life.’



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列夫·托尔斯泰

草婴 / 译

P E N G U I N



C L A S S

Nº 27

伊凡·伊里奇之死

企鹅经典：小黑书 第三辑

[俄]列夫·托尔斯泰/著

草婴/译



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正文目录

伊凡·伊里奇之死

三死

The Death of Ivan Ilyich

Three Deaths

伊凡·伊里奇之死

—

在法院大厦里，当梅尔文斯基案审讯暂停时，法官和检察官都聚集在伊凡·叶果罗维奇·谢贝克的办公室里，谈论着闹得满城风雨的克拉索夫案件。费多尔·瓦西里耶维奇情绪激动，认为此案不属本院审理范围；伊凡·叶果罗维奇坚持相反意见；彼得·伊凡内奇一开始就没加入争论，始终不过问此事，而是翻阅着刚送来的《公报》。

“诸位！”他说，“伊凡·伊里奇死了。”

“真的吗？”

“喏，您看吧！”他对费多尔·瓦西里耶维奇说，同时把那份散发出油墨味的刚出版的《公报》递给他。

公报上印着一则带黑框的讣告：“普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜·高洛文娜沉痛哀告亲友，先夫伊凡·伊里奇·高洛文法官于1882年2月4日逝世。兹定于礼拜五下午一时出殡。”

伊凡·伊里奇是在座几位先生的同事，大家都喜欢他。他病了几个礼拜，据说患的是不治之症。他生病以来职位还给他保留着，但大家早就推测过，他死后将由阿历克谢耶夫接替，而阿历克谢耶夫的位置则将由文尼科夫或施塔别尔接替。因此，一听到伊凡·伊里奇的死讯，办公室里在座的人首先想到的就是，他一死对他们本人和亲友在职位调动和升迁上会有什么影响。

“这下子我很可能弄到施塔别尔或文尼科夫的位置，”费多尔·瓦西里耶维奇想，“这个位置早就说好给我了，而这样一提升，我就可以在车马费之外每年净增加八百卢布收入。”

“这下子我可以申请把内弟从卡卢加调来。”彼得·伊凡内奇想，“妻子一定会很高兴的。如今她可不能再说不关心她家的人了。”

“我早就想到，他这一病恐怕起不来了，”彼得·伊凡内奇说，“真可怜！”

“他究竟害的是什么病啊？”

“几个医生都不准。或者说，各有各的说法。我最后一次看见

他，还以为他会好起来呢。”

“自从过节以来我就没有去看过他，去是一直想去的。”

“那么，他有财产吗？”

“他妻子手里大概有一点，但很有限。”

“是啊，应该去看看她。他们住得太远。”

“从您那儿去是很远。您到什么地方去都很远。”

“嘿，我住在河对岸，他总是有意见。”彼得·伊凡内奇笑眯眯地瞧着谢贝克说道。大家又说了一通城市太大、市内各区距离太远之类的话，然后回到法庭上。

伊凡·伊里奇的死讯使每个人不由得推测，人事上会因此发生什么变动，同时照例使认识他的人都暗自庆幸：“还好，死的是他，不是我。”

“嘿，他死了，可我没有死。”人人都这样想，或者有这样的感觉。伊凡·伊里奇的知交，他的所谓朋友，都同时不由自主地想，这下子他们得遵循习俗，参加丧礼，慰问遗孀了。

费多尔·瓦西里耶维奇和彼得·伊凡内奇是伊凡·伊里奇最知心的朋友。

彼得·伊凡内奇跟伊凡·伊里奇在法学院时是同学，自认为受过伊凡·伊里奇的恩惠。

午饭时，彼得·伊凡内奇把伊凡·伊里奇的死讯告诉了妻子，同时讲了争取把内弟调到本区的想法。饭后他没休息，就穿上礼服，乘车到伊凡·伊里奇家里去了。

伊凡·伊里奇家门口停着一辆自备轿车和两辆出租马车。在前厅衣帽架旁的墙上，靠着带穗子和擦得闪闪发亮的金银饰带的棺盖。两位穿黑衣的太太在这里脱去皮外套。其中一位是伊凡·伊里奇的姐姐，彼得·伊凡内奇认识她；另一位没有见过面。彼得·伊凡内奇的同事施瓦尔茨从楼上下来，一看见他进门，就站住向他使了个眼色，仿佛在说：“伊凡·伊里奇真没出息，咱们可不至于如此。”

施瓦尔茨脸上留着英国式络腮胡子，瘦长的身体穿着礼服，照例表现出一种典雅庄重的气派，但这同他天生的顽皮性格不协调，因此显得很滑稽。彼得·伊凡内奇心里有这样的感觉。

彼得·伊凡内奇让太太们先走，自己则慢吞吞地跟着她们上楼。施瓦尔茨在楼梯顶上站住，没有下来。彼得·伊凡内奇懂得施瓦尔茨的用意：他想跟他约定，今晚到什么地方去打桥牌。太太们上楼向孀妇屋

里走去；施瓦尔茨却一本正经地抿着厚嘴唇，眼睛里露出戏谑的神气，挤挤眉向彼得·伊凡内奇示意，死人在右边房间。

彼得·伊凡内奇进去时照例有点困惑，不知做什么好。但有一点他很清楚，凡是到这种场合，画十字总是不会错的。至于要不要同时鞠躬，他可没有把握，因此选择了个折中的办法：他走进屋里，动手画十字，同时微微点头，好像在鞠躬。在画十字和点头时，他向屋子里偷偷环顾了一下。有两个青年和一个中学生，大概是伊凡·伊里奇的侄儿们，正一面画十字，一面从屋子里出来。一个老妇人一动不动地站在那里。一个眉毛弯得出奇的女人在对她低声说话。诵经士身穿法衣，精神饱满，神态严峻，大声念着什么，脸上表现出神圣不可侵犯的样子，充当餐室侍仆的庄稼汉盖拉西姆蹑手蹑脚地从彼得·伊凡内奇面前走过，把什么东西撒在地板上。彼得·伊凡内奇一看见这情景，立刻闻到淡淡的腐尸臭。他上次探望伊凡·伊里奇时，在书房里看到过这个庄稼汉。当时他在护理伊凡·伊里奇，伊凡·伊里奇特别喜爱他。彼得·伊凡内奇一直画着十字，向棺材、诵经士和屋角桌上的圣像微微鞠躬。后来，他觉得十字已画得够了，就停下来打量死人。

死人躺在那里，也像一般死人那样，显得特别沉重，僵硬的四肢陷在棺材衬垫里，脑袋高高地靠在枕头上，蜡黄的前额高高隆起，半秃的两鬓凹进去，高耸的鼻子仿佛压迫着上唇。同彼得·伊凡内奇上次看见他时相比，他的模样大变了，身体更瘦了，但他的脸也像一般死人那样，比生前好看，显得端庄。脸上的神态似乎表示，他已尽了责任，而且尽得很周到。此外，那神态还好像在责备活人或者提醒他们什么事。彼得·伊凡内奇却觉得没有什么事需要提醒他，至少没有事跟他有关系。他心里有点不快，就又匆匆画了个十字——他自己也觉得这个十字画得太快，未免有点失礼——转身往门口走去。施瓦尔茨宽宽地叉开两腿站在穿堂里等他，双手在背后玩弄着大礼帽。彼得·伊凡内奇瞧了瞧服饰雅致、模样顽皮可笑的施瓦尔茨，顿时精神振作起来。他知道施瓦尔茨性格开朗，不会受这里哀伤气氛的影响。他那副神气仿佛表示：伊凡·伊里奇的丧事绝没有理由破坏他们的例会，也就是说不能妨碍他们今天晚上就拆开一副新牌，在仆人点亮的四支新蜡烛照耀下打牌。总之，这次丧事不能影响他们今晚快乐的聚会。他就把这个想法低声告诉从旁边走过的彼得·伊凡内奇，并建议今晚到费多尔·瓦西里耶维奇家打牌。不过，彼得·伊凡内奇今天显然没有打牌的运气。普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜同几位太太从内室出来了。她身材矮胖，尽管千方百计要自己消瘦，可是肩膀以下的部分却一个劲儿向横里发展。她穿一身黑衣，头上包一块花边头巾，眉毛像站在棺材旁那个女人一样弯得出奇。她把她们送到灵堂门口，说：“马上要做丧事礼拜了，你们请进。”

施瓦尔茨微微点头站住，显得犹豫不决，是不是接受这个邀请。

普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜认出彼得·伊凡内奇，叹了一口气，走到他跟前，握住他的手说：“我知道您是伊凡·伊里奇的知心朋友……”她说到这里对他瞧瞧，等待他听了这话后做出相应的反应。彼得·伊凡内奇知道，既然刚才应该画十字，那么这会儿就得握手，叹气，说一句：“真是想不到！”他就这样做了。做了以后，他发觉达到了预期的效果：他感动了，她也感动了。

“现在那边还没有开始，您来一下，我有话要跟您说，”孀妇说，“您扶着我。”

彼得·伊凡内奇伸出手臂挽住她，他们向内室走去。经过施瓦尔茨身边时，施瓦尔茨失望地向彼得·伊凡内奇使了个眼色。“唉，牌打不成了！要是我们另外找到搭档，您可别怪我们。要是您能脱身，五人一起玩也行。”他那淘气的目光仿佛在这么说。

彼得·伊凡内奇更深沉更悲伤地叹了口气，普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜便感激地捏了捏他的手臂。他们走进灯光暗淡、挂着玫瑰红花布窗帘的客厅，在桌旁坐下来：她坐在沙发上，彼得·伊凡内奇坐在弹簧损坏、凳面凹陷的矮沙发凳上。普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜想叫他换一把椅子坐，可是觉得此刻说这些话不得体，就作罢了。彼得·伊凡内奇坐到沙发凳上时，想起伊凡·伊里奇当年装饰这客厅时曾同他商量，最后决定用这种带绿叶的玫瑰红花布做窗帘和沙发套。客厅里摆满家具杂物，孀妇走过时，她那件黑斗篷的黑花边在雕花桌上挂住了。彼得·伊凡内奇欠起身，想帮她解开斗篷，沙发凳一摆脱负担，里面的弹簧立刻蹦起来，往他身上弹。孀妇自己解开斗篷，彼得·伊凡内奇又坐下来，把跳动的弹簧重新压下去。但孀妇没有把斗篷完全解开，彼得·伊凡内奇又欠起身，弹簧又往上蹦，还噔地响了一声。等这一切都过去了，她拿出一块洁净的麻纱手绢，哭起来。斗篷钩住和沙发凳的弹簧蹦跳这些插曲使彼得·伊凡内奇冷静下来，他皱紧眉头坐着。这当儿，伊凡·伊里奇的男仆索科洛夫走进来，把这种尴尬局面打破了。他报告普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜，她指定的那块坟地要价两百卢布。普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜止住哭，可怜巴巴地瞟了一眼彼得·伊凡内奇，用法语说她的日子很难过。彼得·伊凡内奇默默地做了个手势，表示他深信她说的是实话。

“您请抽烟。”她用宽宏大量而又极其悲痛的语气说，然后同索科洛夫谈坟地的价钱。彼得·伊凡内奇一面吸烟，一面听她怎样详细询问坟地的价格，最后决定买哪一块。谈完坟地，她又吩咐索科洛夫去请唱诗班。索科洛夫走了。

“什么事都是我自己料理。”她对彼得·伊凡内奇说，把桌上的照相簿挪到一边。接着发现烟灰快掉到桌上，连忙把烟灰碟推到彼得·伊凡内奇面前，嘴里说：“要是说我悲伤得不能做事，那未免有点做作。

相反，现在只有为他的后事多操点心，我才感到安慰……至少可以排遣点悲伤。”她掏出手绢，又要哭，但突然勉强忍住，打起精神，镇静地说：“我有点事要跟您谈谈。”

彼得·伊凡内奇点点头，不让他身下蠢蠢欲动的沙发弹簧再蹦起来。

“最后几天他真是难受。”

“非常难受吗？”彼得·伊凡内奇问。

“唉，太可怕了！他不停地叫嚷，不是一连几分钟，而是一连几个钟头。三天三夜嚷个不停。实在叫人受不了。我真不懂我这是怎么熬过来的。隔着三道门都听得见他的叫声。唉，我这是怎么熬过来的哟！”

“当时他神志清醒吗？”彼得·伊凡内奇问。

“清醒，”她喃喃地说，“直到最后一分钟都清醒。他在临终前一刻钟跟我们告了别，还叫我们把伏洛嘉带开。”

彼得·伊凡内奇想到，他那么熟识的这个人，原先是快乐的孩子，小学生，后来成了他的同事，最后竟受到这样的折磨。尽管他觉得自己和这个女人都有点做作，但想到这一点，心里却十分恐惧。他又看见那个前额和那个压住嘴唇的鼻子，不禁感到不寒而栗。

“三天三夜极度的痛苦，然后死去。这种情况也可能随时落到我的头上。”他想，刹那间感到毛骨悚然。但是，他自己也不知怎的，一种常有的想法很快就使他镇静下来：“这种事只有伊凡·伊里奇会碰上，我可绝不会碰上。这种事不应该也不可能落到我的头上。”他想到这些，心情忧郁，但施瓦尔茨分明向他做过暗示，他不该有这种心情。彼得·伊凡内奇思考了一下，镇静下来，详细询问伊凡·伊里奇临终前的情况，仿佛这种事故只会发生在伊凡·伊里奇身上，可绝不会发生在他身上。

在谈了一通伊凡·伊里奇肉体上所受非人痛苦的情况以后（这种痛苦，彼得·伊凡内奇是从普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜神经所受的影响上领会的），孀妇显然认为该转到正题上了。

“唉，彼得·伊凡内奇，真是难受，真是太难受了，太难受了。”她又哭起来。

彼得·伊凡内奇叹着气，等她擦去鼻涕眼泪，才说：“真是想不到……”

接着她又说起来，说到了显然是她找他来的主要问题。她问他，丈夫去世后怎样向政府申请抚恤金。她装作向彼得·伊凡内奇请教，

怎样领取赡养费，不过他看得出，因丈夫去世她可以向政府弄到多少钱，这事她已经了解得清清楚楚，比他知道得还清楚。她不过是想知道，可不可以通过什么办法弄到更多的钱。彼得·伊凡内奇竭力思索，想到几种办法，但最后只是出于礼节骂了一通政府的吝啬，说不可能弄到更多的钱了。于是她叹了一口气，显然是要摆脱这位来客。他理会了，就摁灭香烟，站起身，同孀妇握了握手，走到前厅。

餐厅里摆着伊凡·伊里奇十分得意地从旧货店买来的大钟。彼得·伊凡内奇在那里遇见神父和几个来参加丧事礼拜的客人，还看见一位熟识的美丽小姐，就是伊凡·伊里奇的女儿。她穿一身黑衣，腰身本来很苗条，如今似乎变得更苗条了。她的神态忧郁、冷淡，甚至还有点愤慨。她向彼得·伊凡内奇鞠躬，但那副神气显出仿佛他有什么过错似的。女儿后面站着一个同样面带愠色的青年。彼得·伊凡内奇认识他是法院侦讯官，家里很有几个钱，而且听说是她的未婚夫。彼得·伊凡内奇沮丧地向他们点点头，正要往死人房间走去，这时楼梯下出现了逝者在中学念书的儿子。这孩子活脱就是年轻时的伊凡·伊里奇。彼得·伊凡内奇记得伊凡·伊里奇在法学院念书时就是这个模样。这孩子眼睛里含着泪水，神态也像那些十三四岁的愣小子。他一看见彼得·伊凡内奇，就忧郁而害臊地皱起眉头。彼得·伊凡内奇向他点点头，走进灵堂。丧事礼拜开始了：又是蜡烛，又是呻吟，又是神香，又是眼泪，又是啜泣。彼得·伊凡内奇皱紧眉头站着，眼睛瞅着自己的双脚。他一眼也不看死人，直到礼拜结束他的心情都没有受悲伤气氛的影响，并且第一个走出灵堂。前厅里一个人也没有。充任餐厅侍仆的庄稼汉盖拉西姆从灵堂奔出来，用他那双强壮的手臂努力地在—排外套中间翻寻着，终于把彼得·伊凡内奇的外套找出来，递给他。

“嗯，盖拉西姆老弟，你说呢？”彼得·伊凡内奇想说话应酬一下，“可怜不可怜哪？”

“这是上帝的意思！我们都要到那里去的。”盖拉西姆露出一排洁白整齐的庄稼汉的牙齿，说完就像在紧张地干活那样猛地推开门，大声呼喊马车夫，把彼得·伊凡内奇送上车，又奔回台阶上，仿佛在考虑还有些什么事要做。

在闻过神香、尸体和石碳酸的臭味以后，彼得·伊凡内奇特别爽快地吸了一大口新鲜空气。

“上哪儿，老爷？”马车夫问。

“不晚。还可以到费多尔·瓦西里耶维奇家去一下。”

彼得·伊凡内奇就去了。果然，他到的时候，第一局牌刚结束，因此他就顺当地成了第五名赌客。

伊凡·伊里奇的身世极其普通、极其简单而又极其可怕。

他是个法官，去世时才四十五岁。他父亲是彼得堡一名官员，曾在好几个政府机关任职，虽不能胜任某些要职，但凭着他的资格和身份，从没被逐出官场，因此总能弄到一些有名无实的官职和六千到一万卢布的有名有实的年俸，并一直享受到晚年。

伊里亚·叶斐莫维奇·高洛文就是这样一个多余机关里的多余的三等文官。

he有三个儿子。伊凡·伊里奇排行第二。老大像他父亲一样官运亨通，不过在另一个机关，也快到领干薪的年龄。老三没有出息。他在几个地方都败坏了名声，眼下在铁路上供职。父亲也好，两位哥哥也好，特别是两位嫂子，不仅不愿同他见面，而且非万不得已从不会想到有他这样一个兄弟。姐姐嫁给了格列夫男爵，他同他岳父一样是彼得堡的官员。伊凡·伊里奇是家里所谓的佼佼者 [1]。他不像老大那样冷淡古板，也不像老三那样放荡不羁。他介于他们之间：聪明，活泼，乐观，文雅。他跟弟弟一起在法学院念过书。老三没有毕业，念到五年级就被学校开除了；伊凡·伊里奇则毕了业，而且成绩优良。他在法学院里就显示了后来终生具备的特点：能干，乐观，厚道，随和，但又能严格履行自认为应尽的责任，而他心目中的责任就是达官贵人所公认的职责。他从小不会巴结拍马，成年后还是不善于阿谀奉承，但从青年时代起就像飞蛾扑火那样追随上层人士，模仿他们的一举一动，接受他们的人生观，并同他们交朋友。童年时代和少年时代的热情在他身上消失得干干净净。他开始迷恋声色，追逐功名，最后发展到了自由放纵的地步。不过，他的本性还能使他保持一定分寸，不至于过分逾越常规。

在法学院里，他认为自己的有些行为很卑劣，因此很嫌恶自己。但后来看到地位比他高的人都在那样干，而且并不认为卑劣，他也就以为不以为意，不再把它们放在心上，即使想到也无动于衷。伊凡·伊里奇在法学院毕业，获得十等文官官衔，从父亲手里领到治装费，在著名的沙尔玛裁缝铺里定制了服装，表坠上挂一块刻着“高瞻远瞩” [2] 的纪念章，向导师和任校董的亲王辞了行，跟同学们在唐农大饭店欢宴话别，带着从最高级商店买来的时式手提箱、衬衣、西服、剃刀、梳妆用品和旅行毛毯，走马上任，当了省长特派员。这个官职是他父亲替他谋得的。伊凡·伊里奇到了外省，很快就像在法学院那样过得称心如意。他奉公守法，兢兢业业，生活得欢快而又不失体统。他有时奉命到各县视察，待人接物稳重得体，对上待下恰如其分，不贪赃枉法，而且总能圆满完成上司交下的差事，主要是处理好分裂派教徒事件。他虽然年轻放荡，但处理公务却异常审慎，甚至可以说是铁面无

私；在社交场中，他活泼风趣而又和蔼有礼，正像他的上司和上司太太——他们是他们家的常客——称赞他的那样，是个好小子 [3]。他同省里一位死缠住他这个风流法学家的太太有暧昧关系；还同一个女裁缝私通；有时同巡察的副官们狂饮欢宴，饭后还去花街柳巷寻欢作乐。他奉承上级长官，甚至长官夫人，手法高明，无懈可击，从未引起非议，人家至多说一句法国谚语：年轻时放荡在所难免。这一切他都干得体的面面，嘴里说的又是法国话，主要则是因为他跻身在最上层，Thnbsp；容易博得达官显贵的青睐。伊凡·伊里奇就这样干了五年。接着他的工作调动了，因为成立了新的司法机关，需要新的官员。

于是伊凡·伊里奇就调任了这样的新职。

伊凡·伊里奇被推荐任法院侦讯官的职务，他接受了，虽然这位置在另一个省里，因此他得放弃原有的各种关系，另起炉灶，重新结交朋友。朋友们给伊凡·伊里奇饯行，同他一起拍照，还赠给他一个银烟盒留念。那之后，他便走马上任去了。

伊凡·伊里奇当法院侦讯官同样循规蹈矩 [4]，公私分明，并且像做特派员一样受到普遍尊敬。对伊凡·伊里奇来说，侦讯官的工作比原来的工作有趣得多，迷人得多。以前让他感到扬扬得意的是，身穿精工缝制的文官制服，昂首阔步地经过战战兢兢等待接见的来访者和对他羡慕不已的官员们面前，一直走进长官办公室，并且跟长官一起喝茶吸烟；但那时直接听命于他的人，只有县警察局的局长和分裂派教徒，而且还是要在奉命出差的时候。他对待他们总是客客气气，使他们感到，他尽管操着生杀大权，却平易近人，毫无架子。那个时候，这样直接听命于他的人不多。如今伊凡·伊里奇当上法院侦讯官，他懂得就连达官贵人的命运也都操在他手里，他只要在公文上批几句，随便哪个要人都会成为被告或证人来到他面前，并且得站着回答他的问题，如果他不请他坐下的话。伊凡·伊里奇从不滥用权力，相反总是不露锋芒，而这种权力的意识和适当用权的技术，就成了他担任新职后最感兴趣的事。从事这项新职，也就是说审查工作，伊凡·伊里奇很快就掌握了一种本领，能排除一切与本案无关的情节，使各种错综复杂的案情在公文上表现得简单明了，不带丝毫个人意见，完全符合公文要求。这是一项新的工作，而伊凡·伊里奇则属于第一批执行1864年新法典的人。

自从在新地方就任法院侦讯官以来，伊凡·伊里奇结交了一批新朋友，建立了一些新关系，获得了新的社会地位，并多少采取了新作风。他在省里同政府保持一定距离，却周旋于司法界头面人物和豪门巨富之间，对当局稍表不满，发表温和的自由主义言论和开明观点。此外，伊凡·伊里奇就任新职后仍旧讲究服饰，注意仪表，只是不再刮

去下巴颏上的胡子而任其自然生长。

伊凡·伊里奇在新地方过得很愉快。他跟一批反对省长的人关系很好；薪俸比以前优厚；他逢场作戏，打打纸牌，以增添乐趣。他头脑聪敏，很会打牌，因此常常赢钱。

伊凡·伊里奇在新地方任职两年后遇见了后来成为他妻子的普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜·米海尔。她是伊凡·伊里奇出入的圈子里最迷人最伶俐最出色的姑娘。伊凡·伊里奇在办公之余，找点消遣，其中就包括同普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜戏谑调情。

伊凡·伊里奇任特派员时常常跳舞，但当上侦讯官后就难得跳了。如今他跳舞只是为了要显示，尽管他身为侦讯官和五等文官，跳舞水平可绝不比别人差。有时晚会将近结束，他就请普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜一起跳舞，主要借这种机会去征服普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜的心。她爱上了他。伊凡·伊里奇并没有明确想到要结婚，但既然人家姑娘爱上了他，他就问自己：“是啊，那么何不就结婚呢？”

普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜出身望族，长得不错，而且小有家产。伊凡·伊里奇可以指望找到一个更出色的配偶，但这个配偶也不错。

伊凡·伊里奇自己有薪俸收入，他希望她也有同样多的进款。她出身名门，又生得温柔美丽，很有教养。说伊凡·伊里奇同她结婚，是因为爱上这位小姐，并且发觉她的人生观同他一致，那不符合事实。说他结婚，是因为在他的圈子里大家都赞成这门婚事，那同样不符合事实。伊凡·伊里奇结婚是出于双重考虑：娶这样一位妻子是幸福的，而达官贵人们又都赞成这门亲事。

伊凡·伊里奇就这样结了婚。

在准备结婚和婚后初期，夫妻恩爱，妻子尚未怀孕，再加上崭新的家具，崭新的餐具，崭新的衣服，日子过得很美满。伊凡·伊里奇认为他原来的生活轻松愉快而又高尚体面，并且受到上流社会的赞许，如今结婚不仅不会损害这种生活，而且使它更加美满。但在妻子怀孕几个月后，出现了一种痛苦难堪而有失体统的新局面，那是他万万没有料到的，而且怎么也无法摆脱。

伊凡·伊里奇认为妻子完全是出于任性 [5]，破坏了快乐体面的生活，莫名其妙地动辄猜疑，要求他更加体贴她。不论什么事她都横加挑剔，动不动就对他大吵大闹。

起初伊凡·伊里奇想继续用快乐体面的人生态度来排除烦恼。他不管妻子的情绪，照旧高高兴兴地过日子：请朋友到家里来打牌，自己上俱乐部或者到朋友家串门子。可是有一次妻子气势汹汹地对他破口大骂。这以后只要他稍不顺她的意，她就把他臭骂一顿，显然非把他

制服不可，也就是说要他安守在家里，并且像她一样唉声叹气，无病呻吟，这使伊凡·伊里奇感到心惊胆战。他懂得了，夫妇生活，至少是他同妻子的生活，并不能始终维持快乐和体面，相反，这样的气氛常常会被损害，因此必须设法防范。伊凡·伊里奇借口公务繁忙，来对付普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜。他发现这种办法很有效，因此常用它来保卫自己的独立天地。

孩子出生后，喂养很费事，常常发生这样那样的麻烦，不是婴儿害病就是做母亲的害病，有时是真病，有时是假病。不管怎样，伊凡·伊里奇都得照顾，尽管他对这些事一窍不通。伊凡·伊里奇保卫自己独立天地、不受家庭干扰的欲望越来越强烈。

妻子的脾气越来越暴躁，要求越来越苛刻，伊凡·伊里奇也越来越把生活的重心转移到公务上。他更加喜爱官职，醉心功名。

不久，在结婚一年后，伊凡·伊里奇懂得了，夫妇生活虽然也有一些好处，但却是一件很复杂很痛苦的事。而要尽到自己的责任，过一种受社会赞许的体面生活，必须像做官一样建立适当的关系。

伊凡·伊里奇就给自己建立了这样的夫妇关系。他对家庭生活的要求，只是能吃到家常便饭，生活上有照料和过床第生活，而这些都是她能向他提供的。他主要的要求是维持社会所公认的体面的夫妇关系。此外，他就自寻欢乐，获得了欢乐也就心满意足。要是家里遇到不愉快，他就立刻逃到公务活动的独立天地里去，并在那里自得其乐。

伊凡·伊里奇当侦讯官，声誉显赫，三年后就升任副检察官。新的官职、重要的地位、控诉和拘捕任何人的权力、当众的演说、辉煌的功绩——这一切使伊凡·伊里奇更加官迷心窍。

孩子一个个生下来。妻子变得越来越乖戾，越来越易怒，但伊凡·伊里奇确立的家庭关系几乎不受妻子脾气的影响。

伊凡·伊里奇在这个城市里任职七年，接着被调到另一个省里当检察官。他们搬了家，手头的钱不多，妻子又不喜欢新地方。薪俸尽管比原来多，但生活成本也高了，再说又死了两个孩子，因此伊凡·伊里奇就感到家庭生活比以前更乏味了。

普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜搬到新地方后，不论遇到什么麻烦，总要责怪丈夫。夫妇间不论谈什么事，尤其是谈教育孩子的问题，总会联想到以前的不和，引起新的争吵。夫妇俩如今难得有恩爱的时刻，即使有，也是很短暂的。他们在爱情的小岛上临时停泊一下，不久又会掉进互相敌视的汪洋大海，彼此冷若冰霜。要是伊凡·伊里奇认为家庭生活不该如此，他准会对这种冷漠感到伤心，不过他不仅认为这样的局面是正常的，而且正是他所企求的。他的目标就是要尽量摆脱家

庭生活的烦恼，而表面上又要装得若无其事，保持体面。为了达到这一目的，他尽量少同家人待在一起，如果不得已必须这样做，也总是竭力找有旁人在场的机会。不过，伊凡·伊里奇这样过日子，主要靠的是他有公务。他把全部生活乐趣都集中在官场的天地里。而这种乐趣支配了他的整个身心。意识到自己的权力，对任何人都操有生杀大权，每次走进法庭和遇到下属时那种威风凛凛的气派（即使只是表面的），在上司与下属之间周旋的本领，尤其是自觉高明的办事能力——这一切都使他扬扬得意，再加上跟同事们谈天、宴会和打牌，他的生活就显得很充实。总之，伊凡·伊里奇的生活过得合乎他的愿望：快乐而体面。

就这样他又过了七年。大女儿已经十六岁，另外又死了一个孩子，只剩下一个男孩在中学念书。这个孩子是引起夫妇争吵的一大因素。伊凡·伊里奇要送他读法学院，而普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜却偏把他送进普通中学。女儿在家里学习，成绩良好；儿子学得也不错。

三

伊凡·伊里奇婚后就这样过了十七年的光阴。现在他已是一个老检察官了。他推辞了几次工作上的调动，一心想找个更称心的职司，不料出了一件不愉快的事，把他生活的安宁给破坏了。伊凡·伊里奇想谋取大学城首席法官的位置，但被戈佩捷足先得。伊凡·伊里奇十分生气，提出责问，同戈佩吵嘴，又冒犯顶头上司；他从此受冷遇，下一次任命也没有他的份儿。

这是1880年，也是伊凡·伊里奇一生中最倒霉的年头。他一方面入不敷出，另一方面又被人家遗忘。他觉得人家待他极不公平，人家却认为对他已仁至义尽。就连父亲都认为无须再帮助他了。他觉得大家都把他抛弃了，并认为他有三千五百卢布年俸已很不错，甚至可说是十分幸福了。人家待他这么不公平，妻子经常责骂他，家里入不敷出，开始负债。这种情况当然谈不上正常，而且只有他一个人知道。

今年夏天，伊凡·伊里奇为了节省开支，同妻子一起到内弟乡下度假。

在乡下不做事，伊凡·伊里奇第一次不仅感到无聊，而且十分愁闷。他认定无法这样过活，必须断然采取措施。

伊凡·伊里奇不能入睡，在露台上踱了个通宵，决定上彼得堡奔走一番，争取调到其他部门工作，以惩罚他们，惩罚那些不会赏识他能的人。

第二天早晨，他不顾妻子和内弟的劝阻，乘车上彼得堡。

他唯一的目的是弄到一个年俸五千卢布的位置。他不再计较是

哪个机关，是哪个派别和哪种工作。他只要一个位置，年俸五千卢布的位置，不论政府机关、银行、铁路、玛丽皇后御用机关，甚至海关都行，但一定要有五千卢布收入，一定要离开那个不会赏识他才能的机关。

伊凡·伊里奇此行取得了意外收获。在库尔斯克火车站，头等车厢里上来一个熟人，名叫伊林。伊林告诉他库尔斯克省刚接到电报，部里最近人事上有重大变动，彼得·伊凡内奇的位置将由伊凡·谢苗内奇接任。

这次调动，除了对国家有一定影响外，对伊凡·伊里奇具有特殊意义，因为起用了新人彼得·彼得罗维奇和他的朋友扎哈尔·伊凡内奇。这对他伊凡·伊里奇极其有利，因为扎哈尔·伊凡内奇是伊凡·伊里奇的同学，又是他的好朋友。

在莫斯科，这个消息得到了证实。伊凡·伊里奇来到彼得堡，找到了扎哈尔·伊凡内奇，后者答应给他在原来的司法部里谋一个好差事。

一个星期后，他给妻子发了一封电报。

“扎哈尔接替米勒，我申请后即可提升。”

伊凡·伊里奇通过这次人事调动在他的旧部里获得意外任命：比同事高两级，年俸五千，再加调差费三千五百。伊凡·伊里奇消除了对原来对头和整个机关的怨气，感到十分得意。

伊凡·伊里奇回到乡下，兴高采烈。他好久没有这样快活了。普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜也很高兴，夫妇俩和好了。伊凡·伊里奇讲到他在彼得堡怎样受祝贺，原来的对头怎样厚着脸皮巴结他，怎样羡慕他的地位，特别讲到他在彼得堡怎样受人尊敬。

普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜听着他讲，装出相信的样子，也不打岔，心里却盘算着怎样到新地方去重新安排生活。伊凡·伊里奇高兴地看到，她的想法同他的想法不谋而合，他们一度坎坷的生活重又变得快乐而体面了。

伊凡·伊里奇只回家几天。九月十日他就得走马上任。此外，他还得在新地方安顿下来，把家具什物从省里运去，再要添置和定做许多新东西。总之，要根据他同普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜几乎一致的想法把新居布置好。

现在，一切都进行得称心如意，他同妻子又意气相投。他们俩一起生活的时间很少像现在这样投契，除了婚后头几年，还不曾有过。伊凡·伊里奇本想举家搬走，可他的嫂子和姐夫对伊凡·伊里奇一家忽然十分亲热，弄得伊凡·伊里奇只好独自先走。伊凡·伊里奇走了，事业上一帆风顺，同妻子言归于好，这两件事互为因果，使他心情愉

快。他找到一座精美的住宅，恰合夫妇俩的心意，高大宽敞的老式客厅、豪华舒适的书房、妻子的房间、女儿的房间、儿子的书房，一切都是为他们特意设计的。伊凡·伊里奇亲自布置房间，选择墙纸，添置家具——从旧货店买来的，式样特别古雅，定制了沙发套和窗帘。房子布置得越来越漂亮，符合他的理想。他布置到一半，发觉比他希望的更美。他相信，等全部完工，将更加富丽堂皇，而绝不会流于庸俗。临睡前，他想象他的前厅将是什么样子。他瞧着没有布置好的客厅，仿佛看到壁炉、屏风、古董架、散放着的小椅子、墙上的挂盘和铜器都已安放得井井有条。他想到妻子和女儿在这方面跟他有同样的爱好，看到这种排场，准会大吃一惊，不禁暗暗高兴。她们一定想不到会有这样的气派。他特别得意的是买到一些价廉物美的古董，使整座房子显得额外豪华。他在信里故意把情况说得差一些，这样她们一看到就会更加惊讶。他热衷于装饰新居，就连对心爱的公务都不那么感兴趣了。有时法院开庭，他也心不在焉：他在考虑究竟用什么样的窗帘顶檐，直的还是拱的。他对这事兴致勃勃，亲自动手安放家具，重新挂上窗帘。有一次他爬到梯子上，指点愚笨的沙发裁缝怎样挂窗帘，一不留神失足掉下来，但他是个强壮而灵活的汉子，立刻站住了，只是腰部撞在窗框上。伤处痛了一阵，不久就好了。这一时期，伊凡·伊里奇觉得自己特别快乐和健康。他写信说：“我感到自己仿佛年轻了十五岁。”他原想到九月底把房子布置好，结果拖到十月半。不过，房子布置得十分雅致——不仅他自己这么认为，凡是看到的人都这么说。

其实，房子里的摆设无非是那种不太富裕却一味模仿富裕人家的小康之家的气派，千篇一律地尽是花缎、红木家具、盆花、地毯、古铜器、发亮铜器等等。一定阶级的人总是拿这些东西来表示他们一定的身份。伊凡·伊里奇家里的摆设同人家没有什么两样，因此引不起人家的注意，但他却扬扬自得，以为与众不同。他到车站去接家眷，把他们带到装修一新的寓所里，系白领带的男仆打开摆满鲜花的前厅，他们走进客厅、书房，高兴得欢呼起来。他领他们到各处观看，得意扬扬地听着他们的称赞，容光焕发，感到十分幸福。当天晚上喝茶的时候，普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜随便问到他是怎么摔跤的，他就笑着做给他们看，他怎样从梯子上掉下来，把沙发裁缝吓坏了。

“幸亏我练过体操。要是换了别人，准会摔坏的，可我只在这儿撞了一下，摸摸有点疼，但已经好多了，只是有点青肿。”

就这样他们在新居开始生活，并且也像一般人移居到新地方那样，觉得还少一个房间，收入虽然增加，但还嫌钱少——少这么五百卢布。不过总的来说，他们感到称心如意了。最初他们过得特别愉快，房子还没有完全布置好，需要再买些什么，定制些什么，有些东西需要搬动，有些东西需要调整。尽管夫妇之间有时意见分歧，但两

人对新的生活都很满意，而且有许多事要做，因此没有发生大的争吵。等一切都安排完毕，他们开始感到有点空虚，但当时还需要结交一批新朋友，培养新习惯，因此生活还是很充实。

伊凡·伊里奇上午在法院办公，下午回家吃饭，起初那段时光情绪很好，虽然为房子的事有时也有点烦恼（例如，他发现桌布或沙发罩子上有污点，窗帘系带断了，就会发脾气，因为看到他煞费苦心置办的东西被损坏，心里难过）。不过，伊凡·伊里奇的生活还是过得合乎他的理想：轻松、愉快而体面。他每天早晨九时起床，喝咖啡，看报，然后穿上制服去法院。那儿已为他准备好“轭”，让他一到就套到身上：接见来访者，处理与诉讼有关的问题，主持诉讼案件，出席公开开庭和预备庭。他必须排除各种外来干预，免得妨碍诉讼程序，同时严禁徇私枉法，严格依法办事。要是有人想探听什么事，而这事不属伊凡·伊里奇主管，他就不能同这人发生任何关系，但要是这人有正式公文，上面写明事由，那么伊凡·伊里奇就会根据法律许可的范围尽力去办，并且办得不违反人情，也就是说面子上过得去。但只要公事一结束，其他关系也就结束了。分清法律和人情这种本领伊凡·伊里奇已达到登峰造极的地步，而且凭着天赋的才能和长期的经验，他有时还会故意把法律和人情混淆起来。他之所以敢于这样做，那是因为他自信总有能力划清两者的界限，如果需要的话。伊凡·伊里奇办这种事不仅轻松、愉快和体面，简直可以说是得心应手。在休庭时，他吸烟、喝茶，随便谈谈政治、社会新闻和纸牌，而谈得最多的还是官场中的任命。然后，他好像第一小提琴手，出色地演奏完毕，疲劳地乘车回家。回到家里，发现母女俩出去了，有时在接待客人，儿子上学了，有时在跟补课教师复习功课。一切都井井有条。饭后要是没有客人来，伊凡·伊里奇就看些当时流行的书籍。晚上，他坐下来处理公事：批阅文件，查看法典，核对证词。他干这些，既不感到无聊，也不觉得有趣。要是有机会打牌，那么处理公事就感到无聊；要是没有机会打牌，那么处理公事总比独自闲坐或者跟妻子面面相相对要好得多。伊凡·伊里奇喜欢举行便宴，邀请有权有势的先生夫人参加。这种消遣跟其他同样身份的人没有差别，犹如他的客厅跟人家的客厅没有差别一样。

他们家里还举行过一次舞会。舞会办得很好，伊凡·伊里奇心情愉快，可惜最后为蛋糕糖果的事同妻子大闹了一场。普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜有她的打算，但伊凡·伊里奇坚持要到最高级的糖果铺去买糕点，结果买了许多蛋糕。争吵就是由于蛋糕太多吃不完，而糖果铺的账却高达四十五卢布引起的。争吵很激烈，闹得很不愉快。普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜骂他：“傻瓜，低能。”伊凡·伊里奇气得双手抱住脑袋，恨恨地说出离婚之类的话来。不过，晚会本身还是很快的，前来参加的都是社会名流。伊凡·伊里奇同特鲁峰诺娃公爵夫人跳舞。特

鲁峰诺娃公爵夫人的姐姐就是著名的“消灭苦难会”的创办人。身居要职的乐趣在于自尊心的满足，社会活动的乐趣在于虚荣心的满足，但伊凡·伊里奇的真正乐趣却在于打牌。他认为，不管生活上遇到什么烦恼，那像蜡烛一样驱除黑暗的最大乐趣，就是同几个规矩矩的好搭档坐下来一起打牌，而且一定要四人一起（五人一起打就很难有结果，虽然得装出很感兴趣的样子），认认真真地打（要是顺手的话），然后吃点夜宵，喝一大杯葡萄酒。打过牌以后睡觉，尤其是稍微赢一点钱（赢得太多也不好），伊凡·伊里奇觉得特别愉快。

他们就这样过着日子。他们家的来客都是达官贵人，有的地位显赫，有的年少英俊。

夫妻和女儿待人的态度完全一致。凡是满脸堆笑、投奔到他们那间墙上装饰着日本盘子的客厅来的潦倒亲友，他们都加以排斥。不久，这些寒酸的亲友便不再上门，高洛文家的来客就限于达官贵人。年轻人纷纷追求丽莎，其中包括彼特利歇夫。那是德米特里·伊凡内奇·彼特利歇夫的儿子，又是他财产的唯一继承人，现任法院侦讯官。他也在热烈地追求丽莎，弄得伊凡·伊里奇已在跟普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜商量：要不要让他们一起坐三驾马车，或者举办一次堂会看看表演。他们就这样过着日子，一切都称心如意，没有任何变化。

四

家里人个个身体健康。只有伊凡·伊里奇有时说，他嘴里有一种怪味，左腹有点不舒服，但不能说有病。

这种不舒服的感觉逐渐增长，虽还没有转变为疼痛，但他经常感到腰部发胀，情绪恶劣。他的心情越来越坏，影响了全家快乐而体面的生活。夫妇吵嘴的事越来越多，轻松愉快的气氛消失了，体面也很难维持。争吵更加频繁，夫妇之间相安无事的日子少得就像汪洋大海里的小岛。

如今普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜说丈夫脾气难弄，那倒不是没有理由的。她说话喜欢夸张，往往夸张地说，他的脾气一直很坏，要不是她心地善良，这二十年可真没法忍受。的确，现在的争吵总是由伊凡·伊里奇引起的。他吃饭总要发脾气，往往从吃汤开始。他一会儿发现碗碟有裂痕，一会儿批评饭菜烧得不好吃，一会儿责备儿子吃饭把臂肘搁在桌上，一会儿批评女儿的发式不正派。而罪魁祸首总是普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜。普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜起初向他回敬，也对他说了一些难听的话，但有两三次他一开始吃饭就勃然大怒。她明白了，这是一种由进食而引起的病态，就克制自己，不再还嘴，只是催他快吃。普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜认为自己的忍让是一种值得称道的美德。她认定丈夫脾气极坏，给她的生活带来不幸。她开始可怜自

己。她越是可怜自己，就越是憎恨丈夫。她巴不得他早点死，但又觉得不能这样想，因为他一死就没有薪俸了。而这一点却使她更加恨他。她认为自己不幸极了，因为就连他的死都不能拯救她。她变得很容易发脾气，但又强忍着，而她这样勉强忍住脾气，却使他的脾气变得更坏。

有一次夫妻争吵，伊凡·伊里奇特别不讲理。事后他解释说，他确实脾气暴躁，但这是由于病的缘故。普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜就对他说，既然有病，就得治疗，要他去请教一位名医。

他乘车去了。一切都不出他所料，一切都照章办理。又是等待，又是医生装出一副煞有介事的样子——这种样子他是很熟悉的，就跟他自己在法庭上一样，——又是叩诊，又是听诊，又是各种不问也知道的多余问题，又是那种威风凛凛的神气，仿佛在说：“你一旦落到我手里，就得听我摆布。我知道该怎么办，对付每个病人都是这样的。”一切都同法庭上一样。医生对待他的神气，就如他在法庭上对待被告那样。

医生说，如此这般的症状表明您有如此这般的病，但要是化验不能证明如此这般的病，那就得假定您有如此这般的病。要是假定有如此这般的病，那么……对伊凡·伊里奇来说，只有一个问题是重要的：他的病有没有危险？但医生对这个不合时宜的问题置之不理。从医生的观点来说，这问题没有意思，不值得讨论；存在的问题只是估计一下可能性：是游走肾，还是慢性盲肠炎。这里不存在伊凡·伊里奇的生死问题，只存在游走肾和盲肠炎之间的争执。在伊凡·伊里奇看来，医生已明确认定是盲肠炎，但又保留说，等小便化验后可以得到新的资料，到那时再做进一步诊断。这一切，就跟伊凡·伊里奇上千次振振有词地对被告宣布罪状一模一样。医生也是那么得意扬扬，甚至从眼镜上方瞧了一眼“被告”，振振有词地做了结论。从医生的结论中伊凡·伊里奇断定，情况严重，对医生或其他人都无所谓，可是对他却非同小可。这结论对伊凡·伊里奇是个沉重的打击，使他十分怜悯自己，同时十分憎恨那遇到如此严重问题却无动于衷的医生。

不过他什么也没有说，就站起来，把钱往桌上一放，叹了一口气。“也许我们病人常向您提些不该问的问题，”他说，“一般说来，这病是不是有危险？”

医生用一只眼睛从眼镜上方狠狠地瞪了他一下，仿佛在说：被告，你说话要是超出规定的范围，我将不得不命令把你带出法庭。

“我已把该说的话都对您说了，”医生说，“别的，等化验结果出来了再说。”医生结束道。

伊凡·伊里奇慢吞吞地走出诊所，垂头丧气地坐上雪橇回家。一路

上他反复分析医生的话，竭力把难懂的医学用语翻译成普通的话，想从中找出问题的答案：“我的病严重？十分严重？或者还不要紧？”他觉得医生所有的话，都表示病情严重。伊凡·伊里奇觉得街上的一切都是阴郁的：马车夫是阴郁的，房子是阴郁的，路上行人是阴郁的，小铺子是阴郁的。他身上的疼痛一秒钟也没有停止，听了医生模棱两可的话后就觉得越发厉害。伊凡·伊里奇如今更加心情沉重地忍受着身上的疼痛。

他回到家里，给妻子讲了看病的经过。妻子听着。他讲到一半，女儿戴着帽子进来，准备同母亲一起出去。女儿勉强坐下来听他讲这无聊的事，但她听得不耐烦了，母亲也没有听完他的话。

“哦，我很高兴，”妻子说，“今后你一定要准时吃药。把药方给我，我叫盖拉西姆到药房去抓药。”说完她就去换衣服。

妻子在屋子里时，他不敢大声喘气，等她走了，他才深深地叹了一口气。

“好吧，”伊凡·伊里奇说，“也许真的还不要紧……”

他听医生的话，服药，养病。验过小便后，医生又改了药方。不过，小便化验结果和临床症状之间有矛盾。不知怎的，医生说的与实际情况不符。也许是医生疏忽了，也许是撒谎，也许有什么事瞒着他。

不过伊凡·伊里奇还是照医生的话养病，最初心里感到安慰。

伊凡·伊里奇看过病后，努力执行医生的指示，讲卫生，服药，注意疼痛和大小便。现在他最关心的是疾病和健康。人家一谈到病人、死亡、复原，特别是谈到跟他相似的病，他表面上装作镇定，其实全神贯注地听着，有时提些问题，把听到的情况同自己的病做着比较。

疼痛没有减轻，但伊凡·伊里奇强迫自己认为好一点了。没有事惹他生气，他还能欺骗自己。要是同妻子发生争吵，公务上不顺利，打牌输钱，他立刻感到病情严重。以前遇到挫折他总是希望时来运转，打牌顺手，获得大满贯，因此还能忍受。可是现在每次遇到挫折，他都会悲观绝望，丧失信心。他对自己说：“唉，我刚刚有点好转，药物刚刚见效，就遇到这倒霉的事……”于是他恨那种倒霉事，恨给他带来不幸并要置他于死命的人。他明白这种愤怒在危害他的生命，但他无法自制。照理他应该明白，他这样怨天尤人只会使病情加重，因此遇到不愉快的事，不应该放在心上，可是他的行为正好相反。他说，他需要安宁，并且特别警惕破坏安宁的事。只要他的安宁稍稍遇到破坏，他就大发雷霆。他读医书，向医生请教，结果有害无益。情况是逐渐恶化的，因此拿今天同昨天比较，差别似乎并不大，他还能聊以自慰，但同医生一商量，就觉得病情在不断恶化，而且发展得很

快。尽管如此，他还是经常请教医生。

这个月里他又找了一位名医。这位名医的话，简直同原来那位一模一样，但问题的提法不同。请教这位名医，只增加伊凡·伊里奇的疑虑和恐惧。另外有位医生，是他朋友的朋友，也很出名。这位医生对他的病做了完全不同的诊断。尽管保证他能康复，但提出的问题和假设却使伊凡·伊里奇更加疑虑。一个提倡顺势疗法的医生又做了另一种诊断，给了不同的药，伊凡·伊里奇偷偷地服了一个礼拜。可是，一个礼拜后并没有见效，伊凡·伊里奇对原来的疗法丧失了信心，对这种新疗法也丧失了信心，于是越发沮丧了。有一次，一位熟识的太太给他介绍圣像疗法。伊凡·伊里奇勉强听着，并相信她的话。但这事使他不寒而栗。“难道我真的那样神经衰弱吗？”他自言自语。“废话！真是荒唐，这样神经过敏要不得，应该选定一个医生，听他的话好好疗养。就这么办，这下子主意定了。我不再胡思乱想，我要严格遵照这种疗法，坚持到夏天。到那时会见效的。别再犹豫不决了！”这话说说容易，实行起来可难了。腰痛在折磨他，越来越厉害，一刻也不停。他觉得嘴里的味道越来越难受，还有一股恶臭从嘴里出来，胃口越来越差，体力越来越弱。他不能欺骗自己：他身上出现了一种空前严重的情况。这一点只有他自己明白，周围的人谁也不知道，或者不想知道。他们总以为天下太平，一切如旧。这一点使伊凡·伊里奇觉得格外难受。家里人，尤其是妻子和女儿，热衷于社交活动。他看到，她们什么也不明白，还埋怨他情绪不好，难以伺候，仿佛还是他不对似的。他看出，尽管她们嘴里没说，他已成了她们的累赘，妻子对他的病已有定见，不管他说什么或做什么，她的态度都不会变。

“不瞒您说，”她对熟人说，“伊凡·伊里奇也像一切老实人那样，不能认真遵照医生的话养病。今天他听医生的话服药，吃东西；明天我一疏忽，他就忘记吃药，还吃鳊鱼（那是医生禁止的），而且坐下来打牌，一打就打到深夜一点钟。”

“哼，几时有过这种事？”伊凡·伊里奇恼怒地说，“总共在彼得·伊凡内奇家打过一次。”

“昨天不是跟谢贝克一起打过吗？”

“反正我痛得睡不着……”

“不管怎么说，你这样就永远好不了，还要折磨我们。”

普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜向人家也向伊凡·伊里奇本人说，他生病主要是他自己不好，给她这个做妻子的带来痛苦。伊凡·伊里奇觉得她有这样的看法是很自然的，但心里总感到难受。

在法院里，伊凡·伊里奇发现或者心里感到人家对他抱着奇怪的态度：一会儿，人家把他看作一个不久将把位置空出来的人；一会儿，

朋友们不怀恶意地嘲笑他神经过敏，因为他自认为有一种神秘可怕的东西，在不断吮吸他的精神，硬把他往那儿拉。朋友们觉得这事挺好玩，就拿来取笑他。尤其是施瓦尔茨说话诙谐生动而又装得彬彬有礼，使伊凡·伊里奇想起十年前他自己的模样，因而格外生气。

来了几个朋友，坐下来打牌。他拿出一副新牌，洗了洗，发了牌。他把红方块跟红方块叠在一起，总共七张。他的搭档说：没有王牌，给了他两张红方块。还指望什么呢？快乐，兴奋，得了大满贯。伊凡·伊里奇突然又感到那种抽痛，嘴里又有那股味道。他在这种情况下还能赢得大满贯而高兴，未免太荒唐了。

他瞧着他的搭档米哈伊尔·米哈伊洛维奇，看他怎样用厚实的手掌拍着桌子，客客气气地不去抓一墩牌，却把它推给伊凡·伊里奇，使他一举手就能享受赢牌的乐趣。“他是不是以为我身子虚得手都伸不出去了？”伊凡·伊里奇想，忘记了王牌，却用更大的王牌去压搭档的牌，结果少了三墩牌，失去了大满贯。最可怕的是他看见米哈伊尔·米哈伊洛维奇脸色十分痛苦，却表现得若无其事。他怎么能若无其事，这一点想想也可怕。

大家看出他很痛苦，对他说：“要是您累了，我们就不打了。您休息一会儿吧。”休息？不，他一点也不累，可以把一圈牌打完。大家闷闷不乐，谁也不开口。伊凡·伊里奇觉得是他害得大家这样闷闷不乐，但又无法改变这种气氛。客人们吃过晚饭，各自走散了。伊凡·伊里奇独自留在家，意识到他的生命遭到了毒害，还毒害了别人的生命，这种毒不仅没有减轻，而且越来越深地渗透到他的全身。

他常常带着这样的思想，再加上肉体上的疼痛和恐惧躺到床上，疼得大半夜不能合眼。可是天一亮又得起来，穿好衣服，乘车上法院，说话，批公文，要是不上班待在家里，那么一天二十四小时，每个小时都得活受罪。而且，在这样的生死边缘上，他只能独自默默地忍受，没有一个人了解他，也没有一个人可怜他。

五

就这样过了两个月光景。新年前夕，他的内弟来到他们城里，住在他们家。那天，伊凡·伊里奇上法院尚未回家。普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜上街买东西去了。伊凡·伊里奇回到家里，走进书房，看见内弟体格强壮，脸色红润，正在打开手提箱。他听见伊凡·伊里奇脚步声，抬起头，默默地对他瞧了一会儿。他的眼神向伊凡·伊里奇说明了问题。内弟张大嘴，正要喔唷一声叫出来，但立刻忍住了。这个动作证实了一切。

“怎么，我的样子变了吗？”

“是的……有点变。”

接着，不管伊凡·伊里奇怎样想使内弟再谈谈他的模样，内弟却绝口不提。普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜一回来，内弟就到她屋里去了。伊凡·伊里奇锁上房门，去照镜子，先照正面，再照侧面。他拿起同妻子合拍的照片，拿它同镜子里的自己做着比较。变化很大。然后他把双臂露到肘部，打量了一番，才放下袖子，在软榻上坐下来，脸色变得漆黑。

“别这样，别这样。”他对自己说，霍地站起来，走到写字台边，打开卷宗，他开始批阅公文，可是脑子里什么也进不去。他打开门，走到前厅，客厅的门关着。他踮着脚走到门边，侧着耳朵听。

“不，你说得过分了。”普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜说。

“怎么过分？你没发觉，他已经像个死人了。你看看他的眼睛，没有一点光。他这是怎么搞的？”

“谁也不知道。尼古拉耶夫（一位医生）说如此这般，可我不知道。列谢季茨基（名医）说的正好相反……”

伊凡·伊里奇回到自己屋里，躺下来想：“肾，游走肾。”他回忆起医生们对他说过话，肾脏怎样离开原位而游走。他竭力在想象中捕捉这个肾脏，不让它游走，把它固定下来。这事看上去轻而易举。“不，我还是去找找彼得·伊凡内奇（那个有医生朋友的朋友）。”他打了铃，吩咐套车，准备出去。

“你上哪儿去，约翰？”妻子露出异常忧愁和矫揉造作的贤惠神情问。

这种矫揉造作的贤惠使他生气。他阴沉着脸对她瞅了一眼。

“我去找彼得·伊凡内奇。”

他去找这个有医生朋友的朋友。然后跟他一起到医生家去。他遇见医生，跟他谈了好半天。

医生根据解剖学和生理学对他的病做了分析，他全听懂了。

盲肠里有点毛病，有点小毛病。全会好的。只要加强一个器官的功能，减少另一个器官的活动，多吸收一点，就会好的。吃饭时，他晚到了一点。吃过饭，他兴致勃勃地谈了一通，但好一阵不能定下心来做事。最后他回到书房，立刻动手工作。他批阅公文，处理公事，但心里念念不忘有一件要事被耽误了。等公事完毕，他才记起那件事就是盲肠的毛病。但他故作镇定，走到客厅喝茶。那里有几个客人，正在说话，弹琴，唱歌。他得意的未来女婿——法院侦讯官也在座。据普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜说，伊凡·伊里奇那天晚上过得比谁都快

活，其实他一分钟也没有忘记盲肠的毛病被耽误了。十一点钟他向大家告辞，回自己屋里去。自从生病以来，他就独自睡在书房里。他走进屋里，脱去衣服，拿起一本左拉的小说，但没有看，却想着心事。他想象盲肠被治愈了。通过吸收，排泄，功能恢复正常。“对了，就是那么一回事，”他自言自语，“只要补养补养身体就好了。”他想到了药，支起身来，服了药，又仰天躺下，仔细体味药物怎样在治病，怎样在制止疼痛。“只要按时服药，避免不良影响就行；我现在已觉得好一点了，好多了。”他按按腰部，按上去不疼了。“是的，不疼了，真的好多了。”他灭了蜡烛，侧身躺下……盲肠在逐渐恢复，逐渐吸收。突然他又感觉到那种熟悉的隐痛，痛得一刻不停，而且很厉害。嘴里又是那种恶臭。他顿时心头发凉，头脑发晕。“天哪！天哪！”他喃喃地说。“又来了，又来了，再也好不了啦！”突然他觉得完全不是那么一回事。“哼，盲肠！肾脏！”他自言自语，“问题根本不在盲肠，不在肾脏，而在生和……死。是啊，有过生命，可现在它在溜走，在走，而我又留不住它。是啊！何必欺骗自己呢？除了我自己，不是人人都很清楚我快死了吗？问题只在于还有几个礼拜、几天，还是现在就死。原来有过光明，现在却变成一片黑暗。我此刻在这个世界，但不久就要离开！到哪儿去？”他觉得浑身发凉，呼吸停止，只听见心脏在扑扑跳动。

“等我没有了，那还有什么呢？什么也没有了。等我没有了，我将在哪儿？难道真的要死了吗？不，我不愿死。”他霍地跳起来，想点燃蜡烛，用颤动的双手摸索着。蜡烛和烛台被碰翻，落到地上。他又仰天倒在枕头上。“何必呢？反正都一样。”他在黑暗中瞪着一双眼睛，自言自语。“死。是的，死。他们谁也不知道，谁也不想知道，谁也不可可怜我。他们玩得可快乐了（他听见远处传来喧闹和伴奏声）。他们若无其事，可他们有朝一日也要死的。都是傻瓜！我先死，他们后死，他们也免不了一死。可他们还乐呢。畜生！”他愤怒得喘不过气来。他痛苦得受不了。难道谁都得受这样的罪吗！他坐起来。

“总有什么地方不对头，我得定下心，从头至尾好好想一想。”他开始思索。“对了，病是这样开始的。先是腰部撞了一下，但过了一两天我还是好好的。稍微有点疼，后来疼得厉害了，后来请医生，后来泄气了，发愁了，后来又请医生，但越来越接近深渊。体力越来越差，越来越接近……越来越接近……我的身子虚透了，我的眼睛没有光。我要死了，可我还以为是盲肠有病。我想治好盲肠，其实是死神临头了。难道真的要死吗？”他又感到魂飞魄散，呼吸急促。他侧身摸索火柴，用臂肘撑住床几。臂肘撑得发痛，他恼火了，撑得更加使劲，结果把床几推倒了。他绝望得喘不过气来，又仰天倒下，恨不得立刻死去。

这当儿，客人们纷纷走散。普拉斯柯菲·费多罗夫娜送他们走。她听见什么东西倒下，走进来。

“你怎么了？”

“没什么，不留神把它撞倒了。”

她走出去，拿着一支蜡烛进来。他躺着，喘息得又重又急，好像刚跑完了几里路，眼睛停滞地瞧着她。

“你怎么了，约翰？”

“没……什么。撞……倒了。”他回答，心里却想，“有什么可说的。她不会明白的。”

她确实不明白。她扶起床几，给他点上蜡烛，又匆匆走掉了：她还送客。

等她回来，他仍旧仰天躺着，眼睛瞪着天花板。

“你怎么了，更加不舒服吗？”

“是的。”

她摇摇头，坐下来。

“我说，约翰，我们把列谢季茨基请到家里来好吗？”

这就是说，不惜金钱，请那位名医来出诊。他冷笑了一声说：“不用了。”她坐了一会儿，走到他旁边，吻了吻他的前额。

她吻他的时候，他从心底里憎恨她，好容易才忍住不把她推开。

“再见。上帝保佑你好好睡一觉。”

“嗯。”

六

伊凡·伊里奇看到自己快要死了，经常处于绝望中。

他心里明白，他快要死了，但他对这个念头很不习惯，他实在不理解，怎么也不能理解。

他在基捷韦帖尔的逻辑学里读到这样一种三段论法：盖尤斯是人，凡人都要死，因此盖尤斯也要死。他始终认为这个例子只适用于盖尤斯，绝对不适用于他。盖尤斯是人，是个普通人，这个道理完全正确；但他不是盖尤斯，不是个普通人，他永远是个与众不同的特殊人物。他原来是小伊凡，有妈妈，有爸爸，有两个兄弟——米嘉和伏洛嘉，有许多玩具，有马车夫，有保姆，后来又有了妹妹卡嘉，还有儿童时代、少年时代和青年时代的喜怒哀乐。难道盖尤斯也闻到过他

小伊凡所喜爱的那种花皮球的气味吗？难道盖尤斯也那么吻过妈妈的手，听到过妈妈绸衣褶裥的声吗？难道盖尤斯也曾在法学院里因点心不好吃而闹过事吗？难道盖尤斯也那么谈过恋爱吗？难道盖尤斯能像他那样主持审讯吗？

盖尤斯的确是要死的，要他死是正常的，但我是小伊凡，是伊凡·伊里奇，我有我的思想感情，跟他截然不同。我不该死，要不真是太可怕了。

这就是他的心情。

“我要是像盖尤斯那样也要死，那我一定会知道，一定会听到内心的声音，可是我心里没有这样的声音。我和我的朋友们都明白，我跟盖尤斯完全不同。可是如今呢！”他自言自语，“这是不可能的，不可能发生的，可是偏偏发生了。这是怎么搞的？这事该怎么理解？”

他无法理解，就竭力驱除这个想法，把这个想法看成是虚假、错误和病态的，并且用正确健康的想法来挤掉它。但这不只是思想，而是现实，它出现了，摆在他面前。

他故意想想别的事来排挤这个想法，希望从中找到精神上的支持。他试图用原来的一套思路来对抗死的念头。但奇怪得很，以前用这种办法可以抵挡和驱除死的念头，如今却不行。近来，伊凡·伊里奇常常想恢复原来的思绪，以驱除死的念头。有时他对自己说：“我还是去办公吧，我一向靠工作过活。”他摆脱心头的种种疑虑，到法院去。他跟同事们谈话，在法庭上坐下来，照例漫不经心地扫一眼人群，两条干瘦的胳膊搁在麻栎椅扶手上，照例侧身凑近旁边的法官，挪过卷宗，同他耳语几句，然后猛地抬起眼睛，挺直身子，说几句老套，宣布开庭。但审讯到一半，腰部不顾正在开庭，突然又抽痛起来。伊凡·伊里奇定下神，竭力不去想它，可是没有用。它又来了，站在他面前，打量着他。他吓得呆若木鸡，眼睛里的光也熄灭了。他又自言自语：“难道只有它是真的吗？”同事和下属惊奇而痛心地看着，像他这样一位精明能干的法官竟然说话颠三倒四，在审讯中出差错。他竭力振作精神，定下心来，勉强坚持到庭审结束，闷闷不乐地回家去。他明白，法院开庭也不再能回避他想回避的事，他在审讯时也不能摆脱它。最最糟糕的是，它吸引他，并非要他有什么行动，而只是要他瞧着它，面对面地瞧着它，什么事也不做，难堪地忍受着折磨。

为了摆脱这种痛苦，伊凡·伊里奇寻找另一种屏风来自卫，但另一种屏风也只能暂时保护他，不久又破裂了，或者变得透明了，仿佛它能穿透一切，什么东西也挡不住它。

有一次他走进精心布置的客厅——他摔跤的地方，他嘲弄地想，正是为了布置它而献出了生命，因为他知道他的病是由跌伤引起的

——他发现油漆一新的桌上有被什么东西划过的痕迹。他研究原因，发现那是被照相簿上弯卷的青铜饰边划破的。他拿起他深情地贴上照片的照相簿，对女儿和她那些朋友的粗野很恼火——有的地方撕破了，有的照片被颠倒了。他把照片仔细整理好，把照相簿饰边扳平。

然后他想重新布置，把照相簿改放到盆花旁的角落里。他吩咐仆人请女儿或者妻子来帮忙，可是她们不同意他的想法，反对搬动。他同她们争吵、生气。但这样倒好，因为他可以不再想到它，不再看见它。

不过，当他亲自动手挪动东西的时候，妻子对他说：“啊，让仆人搬吧，你又要糟蹋自己了。”这当儿，它突然又从屏风后面出现，他又看见了它。它的影子一闪，他还希望它能再消失，可是他又注意到自己的腰。腰还是在抽痛。他再也无法把它忘记，它明明在盆花后面瞧着他。“这是干什么呀？”

“真的，我为了这窗帘就像冲锋陷阵一样送了命。难道真是这样吗？多么可怕而又多么愚蠢哪！这不可能！不可能！但这是事实。”

他回到书房里躺下，又同它单独相处。他同它又面面相觑，但对它束手无策。他只能瞧着它，浑身发抖。

七

伊凡·伊里奇生病的第三个月的情况怎样，很难说，因为病情是逐步发展的，不易察觉。但妻子也好，女儿也好，儿子也好，用人也好，朋友也好，医生也好，主要是他自己，都知道，大家唯一关心的事是，他的位置是不是快空出来，活着的人能不能解除由于他存在而招惹的麻烦，他自己是不是快摆脱痛苦。

他的睡眠越来越少；医生给他服鸦片，注射吗啡，但都不能减轻他的痛苦。他在昏昏沉沉中所感到的麻木，起初使他稍微好过些，但不久又感到同样痛苦，甚至比清醒时更不好受。

家里人遵照医生的指示给他做了特殊的饭菜，但他觉得这种饭菜越来越没有滋味，越来越倒胃口。

他大便这件事也被做了特殊的安排。每次大便他都觉得很痛苦，因为不清洁，不体面，有臭味，还得麻烦别人帮忙。

不过，在这件不愉快的事上，伊凡·伊里奇倒也得到一种安慰。每次大便总是由男仆盖拉西姆伺候。

盖拉西姆是个年轻的庄稼汉，衣着整洁，容光焕发，因为长期吃城里伙食长得格外强壮。他性格开朗，总是乐呵呵的。这个整洁的小伙子身穿俄罗斯民族服，做着这种不体面的事，总使伊凡·伊里奇感到

困窘。

有一次，他从便盆上起来，无力拉上裤子，就倒在沙发上。他看见自己皮包骨头的大腿，不禁心惊胆战。

盖拉西姆脚蹬散发着柏油味的大皮靴，身上系着干净的麻布围裙，穿着干净的印花布衬衫，卷起袖子，露出年轻强壮的胳膊，带着清新的冬天空气走进来。他目光避开伊凡·伊里奇，竭力抑制着从焕发的容光中表现出来的生的欢乐，免得病人见了不高兴，走到便盆旁。

“盖拉西姆。”伊凡·伊里奇有气无力地叫道。

盖拉西姆打了个哆嗦，显然害怕自己什么地方做得不对，慌忙把他那张刚开始长胡子的纯朴善良而又青春洋溢的脸转过来对着病人。

“老爷，您有什么吩咐？”

“我想，你做这事一定很不好受。你要原谅我，我是没有办法。”

“哦，老爷，好说。”盖拉西姆闪亮着眼睛，露出一排洁白健康的牙齿。“那算得了什么？您有病嘛，老爷。”

他用他那双强壮的手熟练地做着做惯的事，轻悄地走了出去。过了五分钟，又那么轻悄地走回来。

伊凡·伊里奇一直那么坐在沙发上。

“盖拉西姆，”当盖拉西姆把洗干净的便盆放回原处时，伊凡·伊里奇说，“请你帮帮我，你过来。”盖拉西姆走过去。“你搀我一把。我自己爬不起来，德米特里被我派出去了。”

盖拉西姆走过去。他用他那双强壮的手，也像走路一样轻松、利索而温柔地把主人抱起来，一只手扶住他，另一只手给他拉上裤子，想让他坐下。但伊凡·伊里奇要求把他扶到长沙发上。盖拉西姆一点也不费劲，稳稳当当地把他抱到长沙发上坐下。

“谢谢。你真行，干得真轻巧。”

盖拉西姆又微微一笑，想走。可是伊凡·伊里奇同他一起觉得很愉快，不肯放他走。

“还有，请你把那把椅子给我推过来。不，是那一把，让我搁腿。腿搁得高，好过些。”

盖拉西姆端过椅子，轻轻地把它放在长沙发前，然后抬起伊凡·伊里奇的双腿放在上面。当盖拉西姆把他的腿高高抬起时，他觉得舒服些。

“腿抬得高，我觉得舒服些，”伊凡·伊里奇说，“你把这个枕头给

我垫在下面。”

盖拉西姆照他的吩咐做了。他又把他的腿抬起来放好。盖拉西姆抬起他的双腿，他觉得确实好过些。双腿一放下，他又觉得不舒服。

“盖拉西姆，”伊凡·伊里奇对他说，“你现在有事吗？”

“没有，老爷。”盖拉西姆说，他已学会像城里仆人那样同老爷说话。

“你还有什么活要干？”

“我还有什么活要干？什么都干好了，只要再劈点木柴留着明天用。”

“那你把我的腿这么高高抬着，行吗？”

“有什么不行的？行！”盖拉西姆把主人的腿抬起来，伊凡·伊里奇觉得这样一点也不疼了。

“那么劈柴怎么办？”

“不用老爷您操心。这我来得及的。”

伊凡·伊里奇叫盖拉西姆坐下抬着他的腿，并同他谈话。真奇怪，盖拉西姆抬着他的腿，他觉得好过多了。

从此以后伊凡·伊里奇就常常把盖拉西姆唤来，要他用肩膀扛着他的腿，并喜欢同他谈天。盖拉西姆做这事轻松愉快，态度诚恳，使伊凡·伊里奇很感动。别人身上的健康、力量和生气往往使伊凡·伊里奇感到屈辱；只有盖拉西姆的力量和生气不仅没有使他觉得伤心，反而使他感到安慰。

伊凡·伊里奇觉得最痛苦的事就是听谎言，听大家出于某种原因都相信的那个谎言，他只是病了，并不会死，只要安心治疗，一定会好的。可是他知道，不论采取什么办法，他都不会好了，痛苦只会越来越厉害，直到死去。这个谎言折磨着他。他感到痛苦的是，大家都知道，他自己也知道他的病很严重，但大家都讳言真相而撒谎，还要迫使他一起撒谎。谎言，在他临死前夕散布的谎言，把他不久于人世这样严肃可怕的大事，缩小到访问、挂窗帘和晚餐吃鲑鱼等小事，这使他感到极其痛苦。说也奇怪，好多次当他们就他的情况编造谎言时，他差一点大声叫出来：“别再撒谎了，我快要死了。这事你们知道，我也知道，所以大家别再撒谎了。”但他从来没有勇气这样做。他看到，他不久于人世这样严肃可怕的事，被周围的人看成只是一件不愉快或者不体面的事（就像一个人走进会客室从身上散发出臭气一样），还要勉强维持他一辈子苦苦撑住的“体面”。他看到，谁也不可怜他，谁也不想了解他的真实情况。只有盖拉西姆一人了解他，并且

可怜他。因此只有同盖拉西姆在一起他才觉得好过些。盖拉西姆有时通宵扛着他的腿，不去睡觉，还说：“您可不用操心，老爷，我回头会睡个够的。”这时他感到安慰。或者当盖拉西姆脱口而出亲热地说：“要是您没病就好了，我这样伺候伺候您算得了什么？”他也感到安慰。只有盖拉西姆一人不撒谎，显然也只有他一人明白真实情况，并且认为无须隐讳，但他怜悯日益消瘦的老爷。有一次伊凡·伊里奇打发他走，他直截了当地说：“我们大家都要死的。我为什么不能伺候您呢？”他说这话的意思就是，现在他不辞辛劳，因为伺候的是个垂死的人，希望将来有朝一日轮到他的时候也有人伺候他。

除了这个谎言，或者正是由于这个谎言，伊凡·伊里奇觉得特别痛苦的是，没有一个人像他所希望的那样可怜他。伊凡·伊里奇长时期受尽折磨，有时特别希望——尽管他不好意思承认——有人像疼爱有病的孩子那样疼爱他。他真希望有人疼他，吻他，对着他哭，就像人家疼爱孩子那样。他知道，他是个显赫的大官，已经胡子花白，因此这是不可能的，但他还是抱着这样的希望。他同盖拉西姆的关系近似这种关系，因此跟盖拉西姆在一起，他感到安慰。伊凡·伊里奇想哭，要人家疼他，对着他哭，不料这时他的法院同事谢贝克走来了，伊凡·伊里奇不仅没有哭，没有表示亲热，反而板起脸，现出严肃和沉思的神气，习惯成自然地说了他对复审的意见，并且坚持自己的看法。他周围的这种谎言和他自己所做的谎言，比什么都厉害地毒害了他生命的最后日子。

八

有一天早晨，伊凡·伊里奇知道这是早晨，因为每天早晨都是盖拉西姆从书房里出去，男仆彼得进来吹灭蜡烛，拉开一扇窗帘，悄悄地收拾房间。早晨也好，晚上也好，礼拜五也好，礼拜天也好，反正都一样，反正没有区别：永远是一刻不停的令人难堪的疼痛；他意识到生命正在无可奈何地消逝，但还没有完全消逝；那愈益逼近的可怕而又可恨的死，只有它才是真实的，其他一切都是谎言。在这种情况下，几天、几个礼拜和几小时有什么区别？

“老爷，您要不要用茶？”

“他还是老一套，知道老爷太太每天早晨都要喝茶。”他想，接着回答说，“不用了。”

“您要不要坐到沙发上去？”

“他得把屋子收拾干净，可我在这里碍事。我太邋遢，太不整齐了，”他想了想回答说，“不，不用管我。”

男仆继续收拾屋子。伊凡·伊里奇伸出一只手。彼得殷勤地走过

去。

“老爷，您要什么？”

“我的表。”

彼得拿起手边的表，递给他。

“八点半了。她们还没有起来吗？”

“还没有，老爷。瓦西里·伊凡内奇（这是儿子）上学去了，普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜关照过，要是您问起，就去叫醒她。要去叫她吗？”

“不，不用了。”他回答，接着想，“要不要喝点茶呢？”于是就对彼得说：“对了，你拿点茶来吧。”

彼得走到门口。伊凡·伊里奇独自留着觉得害怕。“怎么把他留住呢？有了，吃药。”他想了想，说：“彼得，给我拿药来。”接着又想：“是啊，说不定吃药还有用呢。”他拿起匙子，把药吃下去。“不，没有用。一切都是胡闹，都是欺骗，”他一尝到那种熟悉的甜腻腻的怪味，就想，“不，我再也不能相信了。可是那个疼，那个疼，要是能停止一会儿就好了。”他呻吟起来。彼得向他回过头来。“不，你去吧，拿茶来。”

彼得走了，剩下伊凡·伊里奇一个人。他又呻吟起来。他疼得很厉害，可呻吟主要不是由于疼痛，而是由于悲伤。“老是那个样子，老是那样的白天和黑夜。但愿快一点。什么快一点？死，黑暗。不，不！好死不如赖活！”

彼得托着茶盘进来，伊凡·伊里奇茫然看了他好一阵，认不出他是谁，不知道他是来干什么的。他这种目光弄得彼得很狼狈。彼得现出尴尬的神色，伊凡·伊里奇才醒悟过来。

“噢，茶……”他说，“好的，放着。你帮我洗洗脸，拿一件干净衬衫来。”

伊凡·伊里奇开始梳洗。他断断续续地洗手，洗脸，刷牙，梳头，然后照照镜子。他感到害怕，特别是看到他的头发怎样贴着苍白的前额。

彼得给他换衬衫。他知道他要是看到自己的身体，一定会更加吃惊，因此不往身上看。梳洗完毕了，他穿上晨衣，身上盖了一条方格毛毯，坐到扶手椅上喝茶。有那么一会儿他觉得神清气爽，但一喝茶，立刻又感到那种味道、那种疼痛。他勉强喝完茶，伸直腿躺下来。他躺下，让彼得走。

还是那个样子。一会儿出现了一线希望，一会儿又掉进绝望的海

洋。老是疼，老是疼，老是悲怆凄凉，一切都是老样子。独个儿待着格外悲伤，想叫个人来，但他知道同人家待在一起更难受。“最好再来点儿吗啡，把什么都忘记。我要请求医生，叫他想点别的办法。这样可真受不了，真受不了！”

一小时、两小时就这样过去了。忽然前厅里响起了铃声。会不会是医生？果然是医生。他走进来，精神饱满，容光焕发，喜气洋洋。那副神气仿佛表示：你们何必这样大惊小怪，我这就来给你们解决问题。医生知道，这样的表情是不得体的，但他已经习惯了，改不掉，好像一个人一早穿上大礼服，就这样穿着一家家去拜客，没有办法改变了。

医生生气勃勃而又使人宽慰地搓搓手。

“啊，真冷，可把我冻坏了。让我暖和暖和身子。”他说这话时的神气仿佛表示，只要稍微等一下，等他身子一暖和，就什么问题都解决了。

“嗯，怎么样？”

伊凡·伊里奇觉得，医生想说：“情况怎么样？”但他觉得不该那么问，就说：“晚上睡得怎么样？”

伊凡·伊里奇望着医生的那副神气表示：“您老是撒谎，怎么不害臊？”但医生不理睬他的表情。

伊凡·伊里奇就说：“还是那么糟。疼痛没有消除，也没有减轻。您能不能想点办法……”

“啊，你们病人总是这样。嗯，这会儿我可暖和了，就连普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜那么仔细，也不会对我的体温有意见了。嗯，您好。”医生说握着握病人的手。

接着医生收起戏谑的口吻，现出严肃的神色给病人看病：把脉，量体温，叩诊，听诊。

伊凡·伊里奇清清楚楚地知道，这一切都毫无意思，全是骗人的，但医生跪在他面前，身子凑近他，用一只耳朵忽上忽下地细听，脸上显出极其认真的神气，像体操运动员一般做着各种姿势。伊凡·伊里奇面对这种场面，屈服了，就像他在法庭上听辩护律师发言一样，尽管他明明知道他们都在撒谎以及为什么撒谎。

医生跪在沙发上，还在他身上敲着。这当儿门口传来普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜绸衣裳的窸窣声，还听见她在责备彼得没有及时向她报告医生的来到。

她走进来，吻吻大夫，立刻振振有词地说，她早就起来了，只是

不知道医生来了才没有及时出来迎接。

伊凡·伊里奇对她望望，打量着她的全身，对她那白净浮肿的双手和脖子、光泽的头发和充满活力的明亮眼睛感到嫌恶。他从心底里憎恨她。她的亲吻更激起他对她的难以克制的憎恨。

她对待他和他的病还是老样子。正像医生对病人的态度都已定型不变那样，她对丈夫的态度也已定型不变：她总是亲昵地责备他没有按照规定服药休息，总是怪他自己不好。

“喂，这人就是不听话！不肯按时吃药。尤其是他睡的姿势不对，两腿搁得太高，这样睡对他不好。”

她告诉医生他怎样叫盖拉西姆扛着腿睡。

医生鄙夷不屑而又和蔼可亲地微微一笑，仿佛说：“有什么办法呢？病人总会做出这样的蠢事来，但情有可原。”

检查完毕，医生看了看表。这时普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜向伊凡·伊里奇宣布，不管他是不是愿意，她今天就去请那位名医来，让他同米哈伊尔·达尼洛维奇（平时看病的医生）会诊一下，商量商量。

“请你不要反对。我是为我自己才这样做的。”她嘲讽地说，让他感到这一切都是为她而做的，因此他不该拒绝。他不作声，皱起眉头。他觉得周围是一片谎言，很难判断是非曲直。

她为他做的一切都是为了她自己。她对他说这样做是为了她自己，那倒是真的，不过她的行为叫人很难相信，因此必须从反面来理解。

十一点半，那位名医果然来了。又是听诊，又是当着他的面一本正经地交谈，而到了隔壁房间又是谈肾脏，谈盲肠，又是一本正经地问答，又是避开他现在面临的生死问题，大谈什么肾脏和盲肠有毛病，米哈伊尔·达尼洛维奇和名医又都主张对肾脏和盲肠进行治疗。

名医临别时神态十分严肃，但并没有绝望。伊凡·伊里奇眼睛里露出恐惧和希望的光芒仰望着名医，怯生生地问他，是不是还能恢复健康。名医回答说，不能保证，但可能性还是有的。伊凡·伊里奇用满怀希望的目光送别医生，他的样子显得那么可怜，以至普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜走出书房付给医生出诊费时都忍不住哭了。

被医生鼓舞起来的希望并没有持续多久。还是那个房间，还是那些图画，还是那些窗帘，还是那种墙纸，还是那些药瓶，还是他那个疼痛的身子。伊凡·伊里奇呻吟起来，给自己注射了吗啡，便迷迷糊糊睡着了。

他醒来时，天色开始发黑。仆人给他送来晚餐，他勉强吃了一点

肉汤。于是一切如旧，黑夜又来临了。

饭后七点钟，普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜走进他的房间。她穿着晚礼服，丰满的胸部被衣服绷得隆起，脸上有扑过粉的痕迹。早晨她就提起，今晚她们要去看戏。萨拉·贝娜到这个城里做访问演出，她们订了一个包厢。那也是他的主意。这会儿，他把这事忘记了，她那副打扮使他生气。不过，当他记起是他要她们订包厢去看戏的，认为孩子们看这戏可以获得美的享受，他就把自己的愤怒掩饰起来。

普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜进来的时候得意扬扬，但仿佛又有点负疚。她坐下来，问他身体怎么样，不过他看出，她只是为了应酬几句才问的，并非真的想了解什么，而且知道也问不出什么来。接着她就讲她要讲的话：她本来说什么也不愿去，可是包厢已经订了，爱伦和女儿，还有彼特利歇夫（法院侦讯官，未来的女婿）都要去，总不能让他们自己去，她其实是宁可待在家里陪他的。现在她只希望她不在家时，他能照医生的嘱咐休息。

“对了，费多尔·彼得罗维奇（未来的女婿）想进来看看你，行吗？还有丽莎。”

“让他们来好了。”

女儿走进来。她打扮得漂漂亮亮，露出部分年轻的身体。对比之下，他觉得更加难受。她却公然显示她健美的身体。显然她正在谈恋爱，对妨碍她幸福的疾病、痛苦和死亡感到嫌恶。

费多尔·彼得罗维奇也进来了。他身穿燕尾服，头发烫出波纹，雪白的硬领夹着青筋毕露的细长脖子，胸前露出一大块白硬衬，瘦长的黑裤裹着两条强壮的大腿，手上套着雪白的手套，拿着大礼帽。

一个中学生在后面悄悄走进来。这个可怜的孩子穿一身崭新的学生装，戴着手套，眼圈发黑——伊凡·伊里奇知道为什么会这样。

他总是很怜悯儿子。儿子那种满怀同情的怯生生目光使他心惊胆战。伊凡·伊里奇觉得除了盖拉西姆以外，只有儿子一人了解他、同情他。

大家都坐下来，又问了一下病情。接下来是一片沉默。丽莎问母亲要望远镜。母女俩争吵起来，不知是谁拿了，放在什么地方。这事弄得大家都很不高兴。

费多尔·彼得罗维奇问伊凡·伊里奇有没有看过萨拉·贝娜。伊凡·伊里奇起初没听懂他问什么，后来才说：

“没有，您看过吗？”

“看过了，她演过《阿德里安娜·莱科芙露尔》。”

普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜说，她演那种角色特别好。女儿不同意她的看法。大家谈到她的演技又典雅又真挚——那题目已谈过不知多少次了。

谈话中间，费多尔·彼得罗维奇对伊凡·伊里奇瞧了一眼，不作声了。其他人跟着瞧了一眼，也不作声了。伊凡·伊里奇睁大眼睛向前望望，显然对他们很生气。这种尴尬的局面必须改变，可是怎么也无法改变。必须设法打破这种沉默，谁也不敢这样做，大家都害怕，唯恐这种礼貌周到的虚伪做法一旦被揭穿，真相就会大白。丽莎第一个鼓起勇气，打破了沉默。她想掩饰大家心里都有的感觉，却脱口而出：

“嗯，要是去的话，那么是时候了。”她瞧了瞧父亲送给她的表，说。接着对未婚夫会意地微微一笑，衣服窸窣响着站起来。

大家都站起来，告辞走了。

等他们一走，伊凡·伊里奇觉得好过些，因为虚伪的局面结束了，随着他们一起消失了，但疼痛依旧。依旧是那种疼痛，依旧是那种恐惧，一点也没有缓和，而是每况愈下。

时间还是一分钟又一分钟、一小时又一小时地过去，一切如旧，没完没了，而无法避免的结局却越来越使人不寒而栗。

“好了，你去叫盖拉西姆来。”他对向他提出了问题的彼得给出了这样的回答。

九

妻子深夜才回家。她蹑着脚悄悄进来，但他还是听见她的脚步声。他睁开眼睛，连忙又闭上。她想打发盖拉西姆走开，自己陪他坐一会儿。他却睁开眼睛，说：

“不，你去吧。”

“你很难受吗？”

“老样子。”

“服点鸦片吧。”

他同意了，服了点鸦片。她走了。

直到凌晨三时，他一直处在痛苦的迷糊状态中。他仿佛觉得人家硬把他这个病痛的身子往一个又窄又黑又深的口袋里塞，一个劲地往下塞，却怎么也塞不到袋底。这件可怕的事把他折磨得好苦。他又害怕，又想往下沉，不断挣扎，越挣扎越往下沉。他突然跌了下去，随即惊醒过来。依旧是那个盖拉西姆坐在床脚，平静而耐心地打着瞌睡。他却躺在那里，把那双穿着袜子的瘦腿搁在盖拉西姆肩上；依旧

是那支有罩的蜡烛，依旧是那种一刻不停的疼痛。

“你去吧，盖拉西姆。”他喃喃地说。

“不要紧，老爷，我坐坐。”

“不，你去吧。”

他放下腿，侧过身子来睡。他开始可怜自己。他等盖拉西姆走到隔壁屋里，再也忍不住，就像孩子般痛哭起来。他哭自己的无依无靠，哭自己的孤独寂寞，哭人们的残酷，哭上帝的残酷和冷漠。

“你为什么要这样做？为什么把我带到这儿来？为什么？为什么这么狠心地折磨我？……”

他知道不会有谁回答，但又因得不到也不可能得到回答而痛哭。疼痛又发作了，但他一动不动，也不呼号。他自言自语：“痛吧，再痛吧！可是为了什么呀？我对你做了什么啦？这是为了什么呀？”后来他安静了，不仅停止哭泣，而且屏住呼吸，提起精神来。他仿佛不是在倾听说话声，而是在倾听灵魂的呼声，倾听自己思潮的翻腾。

“你要什么呀？”这是他听出来的第一句明确的话。“你要什么呀？你要什么呀？”他一再问自己，“要什么？”——“摆脱痛苦，活下去。”他自己回答。

他又全神贯注地倾听，连疼痛都忘记了。

“活下去，怎么活？”心灵里有个声音问他。

“是的，活下去，像我以前那样活得舒畅而快乐。”

“像你以前那样，活得舒畅而快乐吗？”心灵里的声音问。于是他开始回忆自己一生中美好的日子。奇怪的是，所有那些美好的日子现在看来一点也不美好，只有童年的回忆是例外。童年时代确实有过欢乐的日子，要是时光能倒转，那是值得重温的。但享受过当年欢乐的人已经不存在了，存在的似乎只有对别人的回忆。

自从伊凡·伊里奇变成现在这个样子以来，过去的欢乐都在他眼里消失了，或者说，变得不足道了，变得令人讨厌了。

离童年越远，离现在越近，那些欢乐就越显得不足道、越可疑。这是从法学院开始的。在那里还有点真正美好的事：还有欢乐，还有友谊，还有希望。但读到高年级，美好的时光就越来越少。后来开始在官府供职，又出现了美好的时光：那是对一个女人的倾慕。后来生活又浑浑噩噩，美好的时光更少了，越来越少，越来越少。

结婚……是那么意外，那么叫人失望。妻子嘴里的臭味，放纵情欲，装腔作势！死气沉沉地办公，不择手段地捞钱，就这样过了一

年，两年，十年，二十年——始终是那么一套。而且越是往后，就越是死气沉沉。我在走下坡路，却还以为在上山。就是这么一回事。大家都说我官运亨通，步步高升，其实生命在我脚下溜掉……如今瞧吧，末日到了！

这究竟是怎么一回事？为什么会这样？生活不该那么无聊，那么讨厌。不该！即使生活确是那么讨厌，那么无聊，那又为什么要死，而且死得那么痛苦？总有点不对头。

“是不是我的生活有些什么地方不对头？”他忽然想到。“但我不论做什么都是循规蹈矩的，怎么会不对头？”他自言自语，顿时找到了唯一的答案：生死之谜是无法解答的。

如今你到底要什么呢？要活命？怎么活？像法庭上听到民事执行吏高呼“开庭了！”时那样活。“开庭了，开庭了！”他一再对自己说。“喏，现在要开庭了！可我又没有罪！”他恨恨地叫道。“为了什么呀？”他停止哭泣，转过脸来对着墙壁，一直思考着那个问题：为什么要忍受这样的恐怖？为什么？

然而，不管他怎样苦苦思索，都找不到答案。他头脑里又出现了那个常常出现的想法：这一切都是由于他生活过得不对头。他重新回顾自己规规矩矩的一生，立刻又把这个古怪的想法驱除掉。

十

又过了两个礼拜。伊凡·伊里奇躺在沙发上已经起不来了。他不愿躺在床上，就躺在长沙发上。他几乎一直面对墙壁躺着，孤独地忍受着那难以摆脱的痛苦，孤独地思索着那难以解答的问题：“这是怎么回事？难道真的要死吗？”心里有个声音回答说：“是的，是要死的。”——“为什么要受这样的罪？”那声音回答说：“不为什么，就是这样。”除此以外就什么也没有了。

自从伊凡·伊里奇开始生病，自从他第一次看医生以来，他的心情就分裂成两种对立的状态，两种状态交替出现着：一会儿是绝望地等待着神秘而恐怖的死亡，一会儿是充满希望和紧张地观察自己身上的器官。一会儿眼前出现了功能暂时停止的肾脏或者盲肠，一会儿又出现了无可避免的神秘而恐怖的死亡。

这两种心情从一开始生病就交替出现；但随着病情的发展，他就觉得肾脏的功能越来越可疑，越来越虚幻，而日益逼近的死亡却越来越现实。

他只要想想三个月前的身体，再看看现在的情况，看看他怎样一步步不停地走着下坡路，任何侥幸的心情就自然而然土崩瓦解了。

近来，他面向沙发背躺着，感到异常孤寂，那是一种身处在闹市和许多亲友中间却没有理睬他而感到的孤寂，即使跑遍天涯海角都找不到的孤寂。身处在这种可怕的孤寂中，他只能靠回忆往事度日。一幕幕往事像图画般浮现在他眼前。他总是从近期的事开始，一直回忆到遥远的过去，回忆到童年时代，然后停留在那些往事上。譬如他从今天给他端来的李子酱，就会想到童年吃过的干瘪法国李子，觉得别有风味，吃到果核，满口生津。同时他又会想到当年的种种情景：保姆、兄弟、玩具。“那些事别去想了……太痛苦了。”伊凡·伊里奇对自己说，思想又回到现实上来。他瞧着羊皮沙发上的皱纹和沙发背上的纽扣。“山羊皮很贵，又不牢；有一次就为这事争吵过。还记得当年我们撕坏父亲的皮包，因此受罚，但那是另一种山羊皮，是另一次争吵……妈妈还送包子来给我们吃。”他的思想又停留在童年时代，他又感到很难过。他竭力驱散这种回忆，想些别的事。

在对一系列往事的回忆中，他又想到了那件事：他怎样生病和病情怎样恶化。他想到年纪越小，越是充满生气。生命里善的因素越多，生命力也就越充沛。两者互为因果。“病痛越来越厉害，整个生命也就越来越糟，”他想，“生命开始还有一点光明，后来却越来越暗淡，消逝得越来越快，离死越来越近。”他忽然想到，一块石子落下总是不断增加速度，生命也是这样，带着不断增加的痛苦，越来越快地掉落下去，掉进痛苦的深渊。“我在飞逝……”他浑身打了个哆嗦，试图抗拒，但知道这是无法抗拒的。他的眼睛虽已疲劳，却依旧瞪着前面，瞪着沙发背。他等待着，等待着那可怕的坠落、震动和灭亡。“无法抗拒。”他自言自语，“真想知道，为什么会这样？可是无法知道。要是说我生活得不对头，那还有理由解释，可是不能这么说。”他对自己说，想到自己一辈子奉公守法，过着正派而体面的生活。“不能这么说，”他露出冷笑，仿佛人家会看到他这个样子，并且会因此受骗似的，“可是找不到解释！折磨，死亡……为了什么呀？”

十一

这样过了两个礼拜。在这期间发生了伊凡·伊里奇夫妇所希望的那件事：彼特里歇夫正式来求婚。这事发生在一天晚上。第二天，普拉斯柯雅·费多罗夫娜走进丈夫房间，考虑着怎样向他宣布彼特里歇夫求婚的事，但就在那天夜里，伊凡·伊里奇的病情又有新的发展。普拉斯柯雅·费多罗夫娜发现他又躺在长沙发上，但姿势跟以前不同。他仰天躺着，呻吟着，眼睛呆滞地瞪着前方。

她谈起吃药的事。他把目光转到她身上。她没有把话说完，因为她发现他的目光里充满对她的愤恨。

“看在基督的分儿上，让我安安静静地死吧！”他说。

她正想出去，但这当儿女儿进来向他请安。他也像对妻子那样对女儿望望，而对女儿问候病情的话只冷冷地说，他不久就会让她们解脱的。母女俩默不作声，坐了一会儿走了。

“我们究竟有什么过错呀？”丽莎对母亲说，“仿佛都是我们弄得他这样似的！我可怜爸爸，可他为什么要折磨我们？”

医生按时来给他看病。伊凡·伊里奇对他的问题只回答“是”或者“不是”，并愤怒地盯住医生，最后说：

“您明明知道毫无办法，那就让我去吧！”

“我们可以减轻您的痛苦。”医生说。

“这点您也办不到，让我去吧！”

医生走到客厅，告诉普拉斯柯菲雅·费多罗夫娜情况很严重，只有一样东西可以减轻他的痛苦，就是鸦片。

医生说，他肉体上的痛苦很厉害，这是事实，但精神上的痛苦比肉体上的痛苦更厉害，而这也是让他最难受的事。

他精神上的痛苦就是，那天夜里他瞧着盖拉西姆睡眠惺忪、颧骨突出的善良的脸，忽然想：我这辈子说不定真的过得不对头。

他忽然想，以前说他这辈子生活过得不对头，他是绝对不同意的，但现在看来可能是真的。他忽然想，以前他有过轻微的冲动，反对豪门权贵肯定的好事，这种冲动虽然很快就被他自己克制住，但说不定倒是正确的，而其他一切可能都不对头。他的职务，他所安排的生活，他的家庭，他所献身的公益事业和本职工作，这一切可能都不对头。他试图为这一切辩护，但忽然发现一切都有问题，没有什么可辩护的。

“既然如此，那么现在在我将离开世界的时候，发觉我把天赋予我的一切都糟蹋了，但又无法挽救，那可怎么办？”他自言自语。他仰天躺着，重新回顾自己的一生。早晨他看到仆人，后来看到妻子，后来看到女儿，后来看到医生，他们的一举一动、一言一语，都证实他夜间所发现的可怕真理。他从他们身上看到了自己，看到了他赖以生活的一切，并且明白这一切都不对头，这一切都是掩盖着生死问题的可怕的大骗局。这种思想增加了他肉体上的痛苦，比以前增加了十倍。他不断呻吟，辗转反侧，扯着身上的衣服。他觉得衣服束缚他，使他喘不过气来。他为此憎恨它们。

医生给了他大剂量鸦片，他昏睡过去，但到吃晚饭时又开始折腾。他把所有的人都赶走，不断地翻来覆去。

妻子走过来对他说：“约翰，心肝，你就为了我（为了我？）这

么办吧。这没有什么害处，常常还有点用。真的，这没什么。健康的人也常常……”

他睁大眼睛，问：“什么事？进圣餐吗？干什么呀？不用了！不过……”

她哭了。

“好吗，我的亲人？我去叫我们的神父来，他这人挺好。”

“好，太好了。”他说。

神父来了，听了他的忏悔，他觉得好过些，疑虑似乎减少些，痛苦也减轻了，刹那间心里看到了希望。他又想到了盲肠，觉得还可以治愈。他含着眼泪进了圣餐。

他进了圣餐，又被放到床上，刹那间觉得好过些，并且又出现了生的希望。他想到他们曾建议他动手术。“活下去，我要活下去！”他自言自语。妻子走来祝贺；她敷衍了几句，又问：“你是不是感到好些？”他眼睛不看她，嘴里说：“是。”她的服装，她的体态，她的神情，她的腔调，全都向他说明一个意思：“不对头。你过去和现在赖以生活的一切都是谎言，都是对你掩盖生死大事的骗局。”他一想到这点，心头就冒起一阵愤恨，随着愤恨又感觉到肉体上的痛苦，同时意识到不可避免的临近的死亡。接着又增加了一种新的感觉：拧痛、刺痛和窒息。

当他说“是”的时候，他的脸色是可怕的。他说了一声“是”，眼睛直盯住她的脸，接着使出全身的力气迅速地把脸转过去，伏在床上嚷道：“都给我走，都给我走，让我一个人待着！”

十二

自从那时起，他连续三天一刻不停地惨叫，叫得那么可怕，就是隔着两道门听了也觉得毛骨悚然。当他回答妻子的时候，他明白他完了，无法挽救了，末日到了，生命的末日到了，可是生死之谜始终没有解决，永远是个谜。

“哎哟！哎哟！哎哟！”他用不同的音调惨叫着。他开始嚷道：“我不要！”接下去又是哎哟哎哟地惨叫。

整整三天，他一刻不停地在那个黑口袋里拼命挣扎，而一个肉眼看不见的力量却无可抗拒地把他往口袋里塞。他好像一个死刑犯，落到刽子手手里，知道没有生路了。他每分钟都感觉到，不管他怎样挣扎，他是越来越接近那恐怖的末日了。他觉得他的痛苦在于他正被人塞到那个黑窟窿里去，而更痛苦的是他不能爽爽快快地落进去。他之所以不能爽爽快快地落进去，是因为他认为他的生命是有价值的。这种对

自己生命的肯定，阻碍了他，不让他走，使他特别痛苦。

突然，他的胸部和腰部受到猛烈的打击，呼吸更加困难，他掉到窟窿里。在窟窿底里有一道亮光。他觉得自己仿佛身处在火车车厢里，你以为火车在前进，其实却在后退。这时他突然辨出了方向。“是的，一切都不对头，”他自言自语，“但没有关系，可以纠正的。可怎样才算‘对头’呢？”他问自己，接着突然沉默了。

第三天傍晚，他临终前两小时，念中学的儿子悄悄地进来，走到父亲床跟前。垂死的人一直在惨叫，挥动双臂。他的一只手落在儿子头上。儿子捉住他的手，把它贴在嘴唇上，哭了起来。

就在这时候，伊凡·伊里奇掉了下去，看见了光。他领悟到他的生活过得不对头，但还可以纠正。他问自己：怎样才“对头”，接着一动不动地留神听着。他感到有人在吻他的手。他睁开眼睛，对儿子瞧了一眼。他可怜起儿子来。妻子走到他跟前。他对她瞧了一眼。她张开嘴，鼻子上和面颊上挂着眼泪，露出绝望的神情瞧着他。他为她难过。“是的，我把他们害苦了，”他想，“他们真可怜，但等我一死，他们就会好过些。”他想把这话说出来，可是没有力气说。“不过，何必说呢，应该行动。”他想。他对着妻子用目光示意说：“带他走……可怜……你也……”他还想说“原谅我”，但却说了“原来我”。他已经没有力气纠正，只摆了摆手，知道谁需要听懂自然会懂的。

他恍然大悟，原来折磨他的东西消失了，从四面八方消失了，从一切方面消失了。他可怜他们，应该使他们不再受罪。应该使他们，也使自己摆脱种种痛苦。“多么简单，多么快乐。”他想。“疼痛呢？”他问自己，“它哪儿去了？噢，疼痛，你在哪儿啊？”

他留神倾听。“噢，它在这里。好吧，疼就疼吧。”

“那么死呢？它在哪里？”

他寻找着往常折磨他的死的恐惧，可是没有找到。它在哪里？是什么样的死啊？他一点也不觉得恐惧，因为根本没有死。

没有死，只有光。

“原来如此！”他突然说出声来。“多么快乐呀！”

对于他，这一切都只是一刹那的事。

这一刹那的含义没有再变。但旁人看到，临死前他又折腾了两小时。他的胸膛里咯咯发响，皮包骨头的身体不断抽搐。接着咯咯声越来越少，喘息也越来越微弱。

“过去了！”有人在他旁边说。

他听见这话，心里重复了一遍。“死过去了，”他对自己说，“再也

不会有死了。”

他吸了一口气，吸到一半停住，两腿一伸就死了。

[1] 原文为法语。（说明：书中脚注均为编者注。）

[2] 原文为法语。

[3] 原文为法语。

[4] 原文为法语。

[5] 原文为法语。

三死

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秋天，两辆马车在大道上疾驰。前面的轿车上坐着两个女人。一个是贵夫人，身体消瘦，脸色苍白。另一个是使女，脸色红润，体态丰满。使女干枯的短发老从褪色的帽子里掉下来，她只好用戴破手套的冻红的手不时把头发塞进去。她那高高的胸脯裹着粗披巾，散发出健康的气息。她那双乌溜溜的眼睛时而望望窗外掠过的田野，时而怯生生地瞧瞧太太，时而不安地打量马车的角落。她的鼻子前面晃动着太太那顶挂在网架上的帽子，她的膝盖上躺着一条小狗，她的腿因地上放着一堆匣子而高高地翘着，在车座弹簧的抖动声和车窗玻璃的叮叮声中，可以隐隐听见她的鞋底碰到匣子的声音。

贵夫人双手叠放在膝盖上，闭着眼睛，稍稍皱起眉头，从胸膛里咳嗽着，身子靠在背后的靠垫上微微摇晃。她头上戴着一顶白色睡帽，娇嫩白净的脖子上系着一条浅蓝色头巾。睡帽底下露出笔直的头皮，把她那搽过油的平整的淡褐色头发分开，苍白的头皮显得没有生气，像死人的皮肤一样。她的脸清秀美丽，但皮肤松弛枯黄，两颊和颧骨泛出红潮。她的嘴唇干燥，不断翕动；稀疏的睫毛没有卷起；凹陷的胸脯使她的旅行呢外套现出一条条直褶。她双目紧闭，脸上现出疲倦、烦躁和常有的痛苦神色。

听差双肘支着软椅，在驭座上打瞌睡。驿车夫神气活现地吆喝着，赶着四匹热汗淋漓的高头大马，偶尔回头望望后面篷车上吆喝着的一名马车夫。宽阔的平行车辙在泥泞的石灰路上均匀而迅速地向前提展。天空阴沉寒冷，黑雾不断降落到田野和大路上。马车里很闷，散发出花露水和尘土的气味。病人把头往后一靠，慢慢睁开眼睛，她那双眼睛又大又亮，黑得很美。

当使女外套的下摆稍稍触到太太的腿时，她就用消瘦的纤手神经质地把它推开，并且说：“又来了！”她的嘴痛苦地瘪了一下。玛特廖莎双手提起外套，用强壮的腿支起身子，坐得远一点。她那娇嫩的脸上泛起鲜艳的红晕。病人那双美丽的乌黑眼睛紧紧盯着使女的一举一动。太太两手按住座位，也想支起身子坐得高些，但她力不从心。她的嘴瘪了一下，整个脸由于无可奈何的自嘲而变得难看。“你哪怕帮我一把也好啊！唉！不必了！我自己也能，只是对不起，别把你这些麻袋之类的东西都放在我背后！别这么弄，别碰我！”太太闭上眼

睛，接着又迅速地抬起眼皮，瞧了使女一眼。玛特廖莎望着她，咬着红红的下唇。病人从胸膛里吐出深沉的叹息，但叹息到一半又变成了咳嗽。她转过脸去，皱起眉头，双手按住胸口。咳嗽完了，她又闭上眼睛，仍旧一动不动地坐着。轿车和篷车驶进了村庄。玛特廖莎从披巾下伸出一只胖鼓鼓的手，画了个十字。

“什么事？”太太问。

“到站了，太太。”

“我问你为什么画十字？”

“有座教堂，太太。”

病人转身对着窗外，睁大眼睛望着马车经过的那座乡村教堂，动手慢慢地画十字。

轿车和篷车同时在驿站前停下。病人的丈夫和医生下车来到轿车跟前。

“您觉得怎么样？”医生把着她的脉问。

“哦，怎么样，亲爱的，不太累吧？”丈夫用法语问，“你不想下车吗？”

玛特廖莎抱起包裹缩在角落里，免得妨碍他们谈话。“没什么，还是那样，”病人回答，“我不下车。”

丈夫站了一会儿，走进驿站。

玛特廖莎霍地跳下马车，蹣跚地跑过泥泞地，也走进驿站大门。

“就算我身体不好，也不能成为您不吃早饭的理由。”

病人含笑对站在车窗旁的医生说。

“他们谁也不来管我。”医生刚轻手轻脚地离开她，跑上驿站台阶，她就这样自言自语，“他们身体好，什么都不在乎。哦！天哪！”

“怎么样，爱德华·伊凡诺维奇？”丈夫遇到医生，快乐地笑着搓搓手说，“我吩咐他们把食盒拿进来，您觉得怎么样？”

“行。”医生回答。

“那么，她怎么样？”丈夫压低声音，扬起眉毛，叹了口气说。

“我说过，她不仅到不了意大利，能到莫斯科就算不错了。特别是碰到这种天气。”

“那怎么办呢？哦，天哪！天哪！”丈夫用手掩住眼睛说。“拿到这儿来！”他对端食盒进来的仆人说。

“本来就该待在家里。”医生耸耸肩膀回答。

“您说，我有什么办法呢？”丈夫反问道，“不瞒您说，我曾想尽办法留住她，我提到费用，提到不得不撇在家里的孩子，提到我的工作，可她什么都不听。她定了在国外生活的计划，仿佛她是个健康人。但如果把她的病情如实告诉她，那就等于要她的命。”

“其实她已经没命了，华西里·德米特里奇，这一点您心里要有数。人没有肺不能活，而肺又不能重新生出来。这确实很让人伤心，难受，但是有什么办法呢？你我所能做到的，只是让她死得尽可能平静些。现在得请神父了。”

“哦，天哪！您要明白我的处境，要问问她有什么遗愿。听天由命吧，我可不能对她说这事。您知道，她这人多么善良……”

“不论怎么说，您还得劝她等路冻硬了再走，”医生意味深长地摇摇头说，“要不路上会出事……”

“阿克秀莎，喂，阿克秀莎！”驿站长的女儿从头上套上一件短袄，在泥泞的后门台阶上跺着脚，尖声喊道，“我们去瞧瞧希尔金家的太太，据说她得了肺病，要到外国去，我还从没见过害痼病的人是什么样子。”

阿克秀莎从门里跳出来，两人手拉着手跑到大门外。她们放慢脚步走过马车，向开着的车窗张望了一下。病人向她们转过头来，发现她们好奇的神色，就皱起眉头转过脸去。

“我的妈呀！”驿站长的女儿连忙转过头来说，“她原来是个多么漂亮的美人，可现在变成什么样了？简直可怕。阿克秀莎，你看见了吗？看见了吗？”

“是啊，真瘦呀！”阿克秀莎附和说，“我们假装到井边去，再去看看。瞧，她转过头去，可我还是看见了。真可怜，玛莎。”

“路上真泥泞啊！”玛莎回答。接着两人都跑回大门里去。

“我的样子一定很可怕，”病人想，“但愿快一点到国外，快一点到国外，到了那边很快就会康复了。”

“你觉得怎么样，我亲爱的？”丈夫走到马车跟前，嘴里还嚼着东西说道。

“问来问去就是这句话，”病人想，“自己还在吃东西！”

“没什么。”她透过牙缝说。

“要知道，亲爱的，我担心这种天气赶路对你更不好。爱德华大夫也这么说。我们还不如回去吧？”

她气呼呼地不吭声。

“天气说不定会好起来，到那时路也就好走了，你的身体也会好些，那时我们再一起去。”

“对不起。要是我早先不听你的话，我现在已到了柏林，身体也完全康复了。”

“有什么办法呢，我的天使，你知道那是办不到的。可现在，你要是肯再等一个月，你的身体就会大大康复，我也可以把事情办完，我们还可以把孩子带去……”

“孩子们身体健康，可是我有病。”

“不过你要明白，亲爱的，在这样的天气里，万一你的病在路上加重……不然至少还在家里。”

“家里，家里怎么样？……叫我死在家里吗？”病人暴躁地说。但死这个字显然使她害怕，她恳求而又询问似的对丈夫瞧瞧。丈夫垂下眼睛没作声。病人的嘴突然像孩子似的瘪了一下，接着眼泪夺眶而出。丈夫用手帕捂住脸，默默地从马车旁走开去。

“不，我要去。”病人抬起眼睛望着天空，抱着双臂，嘴里断断续续地低声说着话。“天哪！这是为什么呀？”她说。泪水流得更多了。她热烈地祈祷了很久，但胸口还是感到疼痛，喘不过气来；天空、田野和道路还是那么阴沉灰暗，秋天的黑雾还是那样不密不稀地落在泥泞的道路上、屋顶上、马车上和车夫们的皮袄上。车夫们热烈而快乐地交谈着，给车轮抹油，套车。

二

轿车套好了，但车夫还在磨蹭。他走进车夫休息的小屋。小屋里又热又闷又暗，充满人气和烤面包、白菜、羊皮袄的气味。正房里有几个车夫，厨娘在炉灶旁忙碌着，炕上躺着一个穿羊皮袄的病人。

“费多尔叔叔！费多尔叔叔！”一个身穿羊皮袄、腰里插着鞭子的年轻车夫走进屋来招呼病人。

“懒鬼，你找费多尔干什么！”一个车夫答应说，“瞧，人家在马车里等你哪。”

“我想问他借双靴子，我那双破了。”小伙子把头发往后一甩，又把手套塞在腰里，回答。“他睡着了？喂，费多尔叔叔！”他走到炕边，又喊道。

“什么事？”一个微弱的声音答应道，接着一张红褐色的瘦脸从炕上探下来。接着，一只毛茸茸的苍白瘦弱的大手拉上一件粗呢大衣，

盖住穿着肮脏衬衫的瘦肩膀。“给我点水喝，老弟，你有什么事？”

小伙子递给他一勺水。

“是这么回事，费多尔，”他迟疑不决地说，“你现在大概用不着新靴子了，给我吧，你大概不会到处跑了。”

病人把疲软无力的头俯在光滑的勺子上，稀疏的下垂胡子浸在浑浊的水里，他吃力而贪婪地喝着水。他那蓬乱的胡子很脏，凹陷无神的眼睛勉强抬起来望着小伙子的脸。喝完水，他想举起手来擦擦湿嘴唇，可是没有力气，只能在大衣袖子上蹭一蹭。他没吭声，困难地用鼻子呼吸着，勉强打起精神直盯着小伙子的脸。

“也许你已经答应别人了，”小伙子说，“那就算了。主要是外面地上泥泞，我得出去干活，因此我就想：把费多尔那双靴子借来吧，他大概用不着了。也许你自己要用，那就直说吧……”

病人胸口有什么东西涌上来，咕噜咕噜直响。他佝偻着身子，拼命咳嗽起来。

“他要靴子做什么？”厨娘突然怒气冲冲地嚷起来，嚷得整个屋子都能听见，“他有一个多月没下炕了。嘿，听见他那个咳嗽呀，我连心口都疼了。他要靴子做什么？总不会让他穿着新靴子入土吧。上帝恕我直说，他早该上路了。瞧他那个咳嗽。得把他搬到别的屋子或者什么地方去！听说城里有这种医院，要不他占着整个角落，怎么行。弄得你没有一点儿空地方，还讲究什么干净。”

“喂，谢廖加！快上车，老爷们等着哪！”驿站长向屋里喊道。

谢廖加没等到回答想走，但病人一面咳嗽，一面用目光表示他有话要说。

“谢廖加，你把靴子拿去吧。”他忍住咳嗽，歇了一会儿，“但你听我说，我死后你得给我买块墓碑。”他哑着嗓子加了一句。

“谢谢叔叔，那我拿去了，墓碑我会给你买的。”

“喂，伙计们，听见了没有？”病人还有话要说，但他又佝偻着身子喘不过气来。

“好，听见了，”一个车夫说，“去吧，谢廖加，上车吧，要不站长又要跑来了。你知道，希尔金家的太太正病着呢。”

谢廖加连忙脱下他那双大得出奇的破靴子，把它扔到长凳底下。费多尔叔叔那双新靴子正好合脚，谢廖加端详着那双靴子，向马车走去。

“瞧，多漂亮的靴子！我来给你上点油。”当谢廖加爬上驭座、拿

起缰绳时，一个手拿刷子的车夫说，“白白送给你了？”

“你眼红是不是？”谢廖加回答，拉拉粗呢大衣的下摆把腿盖好。“走吧！我的宝贝！”他挥挥鞭子向马吆喝道。于是载着乘客、各种箱子的轿车和篷车就在泥泞的大路上飞驰，渐渐隐没在灰蒙蒙的秋雾里。

生病的车夫留在闷热小屋的炕上，他咳不出痰，好不容易翻了个身，才安静下来。

小屋里，到傍晚一直有人进进出出，来这里吃饭，但谁也不理会病人。晚上，厨娘爬到炕上，伸手从他的腿边拿走羊皮袄。

“你别生我的气，娜斯塔西雅，”病人说，“我很快就会把这地方给你腾出来的。”

“好，好，那有什么，没关系，”娜斯塔西雅含糊地说，“叔叔，你哪儿疼呀？你说吧。”

“五脏六腑都难受。天知道是怎么回事。”

“咳嗽的时候嗓子大概疼吧？”

“哪儿都疼。我快死了，就是那么回事。喔唷，喔唷，喔唷！”病人呻吟道。

“你把腿盖盖好，就这样。”娜斯塔西雅说，顺手替他拉好粗呢大衣，从炕上爬下来。

夜里，小屋里灯光暗淡。娜斯塔西雅和十来个车夫睡在地板上 and 长凳上，大声打着呼噜。只有病人一人在炕上翻来覆去，微弱地呻吟着，咳嗽着。到早上，他一点声音也没有了。

“昨天晚上我做了一个怪梦，”第二天，厨娘在晨光熹微中伸着懒腰说，“我梦见费多尔叔叔从炕上爬下来，出去劈柴。他说：‘娜斯塔西雅，我来帮你忙。’我就对他说：‘你怎么能劈柴呢？’他却抓起斧头就劈，劈得很有劲，只见木屑飞溅开来。我说：‘你不是有病吗？’他说：‘不，我好了。’他说着抡起斧头猛劈，可把我吓了一跳。我大叫一声就醒了。莫非他死了？喂，费多尔叔叔！叔叔！”

费多尔没有回答。

“可不是，他也许是死了？让我去瞧瞧。”一个刚醒来的车夫说。

一条长满黄褐色茸毛的手臂从炕上垂下来，又白又凉。

“他大概死了，得去告诉驿站长。”车夫说。

费多尔没有亲人，他是个外乡人。第二天，他被埋在小树林后面

的新墓地里。娜斯塔西雅一连好几天逢人就说她的梦，并且说是她第一个发现费多尔死了。

三

春天来了。在城里潮湿的街上，湍急的流水潺潺地流过上冻的畜粪；熙来攘往的人群穿着鲜艳的衣衫，热闹地交谈着。在围着篱笆的花园里，树木已经发芽，树枝飒飒地在微风中摇摆。到处都有清澈的水流动着，滴下来……麻雀叽叽喳喳地欢叫，鼓动小翅膀飞来飞去。在向阳的一边，篱笆上、房屋上、树木上，一切都在晃动，一切都闪闪发亮。空中、地上和人们心里都洋溢着青春的欢乐。

大街上一座大公馆门前刚铺上干草；那位急于出国的垂死的女病人就在这个公馆里。

在一间关着的房门口站着病人的丈夫和一个上了年纪的女人。一位神父坐在沙发上，垂下眼睛，手里拿着一包用长巾包着的东西。一位老太太——病人的母亲——躺在屋角那张高背安乐椅里，伤心地哭着。一个使女拿着一块干净手帕伺候老太太；另一个使女用什么东西揉着老太太的太阳穴，并且吹着她睡帽底下的白发。

“嗯，基督保佑您，我亲爱的。”病人丈夫对站在门口上了年纪的女人说，“她那么信任您。您又那么会同她说话，去吧，您去好好劝她。”

他正要给她开门，但表姐拦住他，几次拿手帕按在自己眼睛上，猛地摇摇头。

“好了，这下子我不像哭过了。”她说，接着自己打开门走进去。

丈夫心里十分焦急，似乎完全手足无措。他向老太太走去，但没走几步又转过身，穿过房间，走到神父跟前。神父对他瞧瞧，扬起眉毛，叹了一口气。他那浓密的花白大胡子也扬起来，接着又垂下。

“天哪！天哪！”丈夫说。

“有什么办法？”神父叹息着说，眉毛和胡子又向上扬起，然后又垂下来。

“她妈妈也在这儿！”丈夫几乎绝望地说，“她可受不了这样的打击。要知道她是多么爱她呀，我没见过谁像她这样爱女儿……神父，您最好想法子安慰安慰她，劝她离开这儿。”

神父站起来，走到老太太跟前。

“是的，做母亲的心是谁也无法估量的，”他说，“不过上帝是仁慈的。”

老太太的整个脸突然抽搐起来，她神经质地打着嗝。

“上帝是仁慈的，”等她稍微平静下来，神父继续说，“我可以告诉您，在我的教区里有一个病人，比玛丽雅·德米特里耶夫娜的病重得多，但有个普通市民用草药很快就把他治好了。而且那个市民现在就在莫斯科。我对华西里·德米特里奇说过，不妨请他来试试。至少对病人是个安慰。上帝是万能的。”

“不，她已经没救了，”老太太说，“上帝不召我去，却要把她带走。”接着，她更厉害地打着神经质的嗝，一会儿就昏过去了。

病人的丈夫双手捂住脸，从屋子里跑出来。

他在走廊里首先遇见他那个六岁的男孩，男孩正一个劲儿地追着妹妹。

“请问，要不要把孩子们带到妈妈那儿去？”保姆问。

“不，她不愿看见他们，这会使她伤心的。”

男孩站了一会儿，凝神瞧瞧父亲的脸，突然撒腿向前跑去，嘴里快乐地嚷嚷着。“爸爸，她好像一匹黑马！”男孩指指妹妹叫道。

这时候在另一个房间里，表姐坐在病人旁边，巧妙地和她谈着话，使她对死有个思想准备。医生在另一扇窗前调药水。

病人穿着宽大的白色睡袍坐在床上，四周围着枕头，默默地望着表姐。

“唉，表姐，”病人突然打断她的话说，“你不用来给我做思想准备。不要把我当孩子。我是个基督徒。我什么都知道。我知道我活不长了。我也知道我的丈夫要是早点听我的话，现在我已经到了意大利，说不定——简直可以肯定——身体已经好了。大家都这么对他说。可是有什么办法呢，看来这是上帝的意思。我们大家都有许多罪孽，这一点我知道，但我相信上帝是仁慈的，人人都会得到宽恕，人人准会得到宽恕。我竭力了解自己。我知道我也有许多罪孽，表姐。因此我受了那么多苦。我一直在努力忍受痛苦……”

“那么，我去叫神父来好吗，表妹？你领了圣餐，一定会好过些。”表姐说。

病人点点头表示同意。

“上帝啊！饶恕我这个罪人吧。”她喃喃地说。

表姐走出去，对神父使了个眼色。

“她是个天使！”她含泪对病人丈夫说。

丈夫哭了，神父走进门去，老太太还是不省人事，第一间屋里鸦雀无声。五分钟后，神父从屋里出来，取下长巾，理理头发。

“感谢上帝，她现在比较安静了，”他说，“她想看看你们。”表姐和丈夫走了进去。病人正望着圣像低声哭泣。

“恭喜你，我亲爱的。”丈夫说。

“谢谢！我现在觉得好多了，我感到说不出的快乐，”病人说，薄薄的嘴唇上露出一丝微笑，“上帝真是仁慈！他是仁慈和万能的，是不是？”她又双眼饱含泪水，目光虔诚地望着圣像。

然后她仿佛突然想起什么事，示意丈夫到她跟前去。“我求你的事，你总是不肯做。”她用微弱的声音不满地说。

丈夫伸长脖子，恭顺地听着。“什么事，我亲爱的？”

“我跟你说过多少次，这些医生什么也不懂，倒是有些郎中能治病……神父说……有一个市民……去把他找来。”

“把谁找来呀，我亲爱的？”

“天哪！你什么也不愿懂！……”病人皱起眉头，闭上眼睛。

医生走到她跟前，拿起她的手。她的脉搏显然越来越弱。他对丈夫使了个眼色。病人发现这眼色，害怕地环顾了一下。表姐转过脸去，哭起来。

“不要哭，不要折磨自己，也不要折磨我，”病人说，“这样你会使我失去最后的安宁。”

“你是个天使！”表姐吻着她的手说。

“不，吻这儿，只有对死人才吻手。天哪！天哪！”

当天晚上，病人已成了一具尸体，尸体入殓后，灵柩停在公馆大厅里。大厅门户紧闭，里面坐着一名诵经士，用鼻音有节奏地念着大卫的诗篇。明亮的烛光从高高的银烛台上投射到死者苍白的额上，投射到那双僵硬的白蜡似的手上，投射到膝盖和脚趾处可怕地凸出的袈衣的挺直皱褶上。诵经士并不懂得所念的诗句，只是有节奏地念着；在肃静的屋子里，诗句古怪地交替响起和静止。从遥远的房间里时而传来孩子们的说话声和脚步声。

“你掩面，他们便惊惶，”诗篇说，“你收回他们的气，他们就死亡，归于尘土。你发出你的灵，他们便受造，你使地面更换为新。愿耶和华的荣耀存到永远。”

死者的脸严峻、平静而庄严。她那冰凉的洁白前额、她那紧闭的嘴都一动不动。她看上去全神贯注。但现在她是否理解这些庄严的诗

句呢？

四

一个月后，贵夫人的墓上盖起了一座石头小教堂。车夫的坟上却还没有石碑，坟上长出嫩绿的青草，成为这里埋葬着一个人的仅有标志。

“谢廖加，你真造孽，不给费多尔买块石碑，”驿站的厨娘有一次说，“你说过，冬天买，冬天买，可是到现在还不守信用。你这是当着我的面说的。他来找过你一次了，你再也不买，他还会来，会把你掐死的。”

“什么，难道我说话不算数吗？”谢廖加回答，“石碑我会买的，我答应过，我会买的，我会花一个半卢布去买。我没有忘记，但得去把它运回来。哪天进城，我一定去买。”

“你哪怕先去竖个十字架也好，”一个年老的车夫插嘴说，“要不太不像话。靴子倒穿在脚上了。”

“叫我到哪儿去弄十字架呀？总不能用木柴削一个吧？”

“你这算什么话？木柴是削不出来的，你带把斧头一早到小树林去，在那儿做一个不就得了吗？砍一棵白蜡树什么的，不就可以做个十字架吗？要不你还得请护林员喝酒。为这么一根废料请他喝酒可划不来。瞧，前天我弄断一根撬棒，我就去砍了一根新的，挺结实，谁也没说过一句话。”

第二天清早，天色刚亮，谢廖加就拿着斧头到小树林里去。

大地万物盖着一层灰白的寒露，没有照到阳光的露水一滴一滴地滴下来。东方破晓，微弱的曙光映在薄云片片的苍穹上。地上的小草，枝头的树叶，都纹丝不动。只有树丛中鸟雀的扑翼声和地上沙沙的响声偶尔打破树林的寂静。在树林边缘，突然响起一阵与大自然格格不入的响声，然后又沉寂了。接着响声又起，并且在一棵一动不动的树干周围有节奏地重复着。一棵树的树梢异乎寻常地颤动起来，苍翠欲滴的叶子飒飒发响，一只红胸鸽栖在树枝上，叽叽地叫着鼓动翅膀，摇摇尾巴，落到另一棵树上。

斧头低低地发出越来越重浊的响声，湿润的白木片飞落到露珠滚滚的草地上，在砍击声中传出一声轻微的折裂声。整棵树颤动了一下，向一边倾斜，又迅速地挺直，根部恐惧地摇摆着。一瞬间又万籁俱寂，接着那棵树向一边倾斜的树干上又发出折裂声，于是枯枝折断，树枝下垂，一棵树树梢朝下轰隆一声倒在潮湿的地上。斧头声和脚步声都静止了。那只红胸鸽叫了一声，拍拍翅膀往高处飞去。被它

的翅膀触动的树枝摇晃了一会儿，又像其他树枝一样一动不动了。树林披着纹丝不动的枝叶，在开阔的新的空地上更加快乐地展示出它们的美丽。

最初的几道阳光穿过透明的云片在空中闪了一下，然后照遍大地和天空。朝雾在谷地里像波浪似的翻腾，草木上露珠滚滚，闪闪发亮，透明的云片在蓝幽幽的空中迅速地飞散开来。鸟儿在树丛中扑腾，兴高采烈地啁啾；苍翠欲滴的叶子在树梢上快乐而宁静地飒飒作响，而那些活着的树木的枝叶也在倒下的死树上面庄严地微微晃动。

Leo Tolstoy

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

The Death of
Ivan Ilyich

Nº 27

‘It is only
a bruise.’

The Death of Ivan Ilyich

1

In the large law court building, during an adjournment of the Melvinsky trial, the members of the Bench and the public prosecutor had come together in the office of Ivan Yegorovich Shebek, and the conversation touched on the celebrated Krasovsky case. Fyodor Vasilyevich argued vehemently that it was beyond their jurisdiction, Ivan Yegorovich had his own view and was sticking to it, while Pyotr Ivanovich, who had kept out of the discussion at the outset and was still not contributing, was perusing a copy of the *Gazette* which had just been delivered.

‘Gentlemen!’ he said. ‘Ivan Ilyich is dead.’

‘Is he really?’

‘Here you are. Read it yourself,’ he said to Fyodor Vasilyevich, handing him the paper, fresh off the press and still smelling.

There was an announcement within a black border : ‘It is with profound sorrow that Praskovya Fyodorovna Golovina informs family and friends that her beloved husband, Ivan Ilyich Golovin, Member of the Court of Justice, passed away on the 4th of February this year, 1882. The funeral will take place on Friday at 1 p. m.’

Ivan Ilyich had been a colleague of the gentlemen assembled there, and they had all liked him. He had been ill for several weeks, and the word was that his ill-ness was incurable. His post had been kept open for him, but there was an understanding that in the event of his death Alexeyev would step into his place, and Alexeyev’s place would be taken by either Vinnikov or Shtabel. So, the first thought that occurred to each of the assembled gentlemen on hearing the news of his death was how this death might affect his own prospects, and those of their acquaintances, for transfer or promotion.

‘I’m sure to get Shtabel’s job now, or Vinnikov’s,’ thought Fyodor Vasilyevich. ‘They promised me ages ago, and a promotion

like that would give me another eight hundred roubles a year, plus expenses.'

'I must apply to have my brother-in-law transferred from Kaluga,' thought Pyotr Ivanovich. 'My wife will be delighted. She won't be able to tell me I never do any-thing for her people.'

'I had a feeling he wasn't going to get better,' said Pyotr Ivanovich. 'It's sad.'

'What was actually wrong with him?'

'The doctors couldn't decide. Well, they could, but they all decided differently. The last time I saw him I thought he was going to come through it.'

'And I haven't been to see him since Christmas. I kept meaning to go.'

'Was he all right financially?'

'His wife had a bit of money, I think. Nothing very much.'

'Well, we'll have to go and see her. They live an awfully long way away.'

'For you they do. Where you live, everywhere's a long way away.'

'Look at that. He can't forgive me for living across the river,' said Pyotr Ivanovich, smiling at Shebek. The conversation turned to the long distances between the different parts of the city, and then they walked back into session.

Apart from the speculations aroused in each of them by this death, concerning the transfers and possible changes that this death might bring about, the very fact of the death of someone close to them aroused in all who heard about it, as always, a feeling of delight that he had died and they hadn't.

'There you have it. He's dead, and I'm not'was what everyone thought or felt. But his closest acquaintances, Ivan Ilyich's so-called friends, couldn't help thinking that they would now have to fulfil some tedious social obligations such as attending the funeral and calling on the widow to express their condolences.

Closest of all were Fyodor Vasilyevich and Pyotr Ivanovich.

Pyotr Ivanovich was an old friend from law school, and he felt indebted to Ivan Ilyich.

Over dinner he told his wife about the death of Ivan Ilyich and the mooted possibility of her brother being transferred to their district, and then, dispensing with his usual nap, he put on a dress-coat and set off for Ivan Ilyich's house.

At the entrance stood a carriage and two cabs. Down-stairs in the entrance hall, next to the coat stand, a coffin lid with silk brocade, tassels and gold braid that had been powdered and polished stood propped against a wall. Two ladies in black were taking off their fur cloaks. He knew one of them, Ivan Ilyich's sister, but not the other. His colleague Schwartz was at the top of the stairs about to come down, but when he saw Pyotr Ivanovich he stopped and gave him a wink that seemed to say, 'Ivan Ilyich has messed things up - not what you or I would have done.'

Schwartz's face, with its English sidewhiskers and his lean figure in formal dress, exuded, as always, an air of elegant solemnity and, although the solemnity belied his playful personality, it was particularly poignant here, or so it seemed to Pyotr Ivanovich.

Pyotr Ivanovich allowed the ladies to pass on ahead, and slowly followed them upstairs. Instead of coming down, Schwartz stood waiting at the top. Pyotr Ivanovich knew why; he clearly wanted to arrange a game of whist somewhere that evening. The ladies proceeded upstairs to see the widow, but Schwartz pursed his lips tightly with all seriousness, though his eyes had a mischievous look as he twitched his eyebrows, directing Pyotr Ivanovich off to the right and into the room where the dead man lay.

Pyotr Ivanovich entered the room, and hesitated, as people always do on these occasions, not knowing pre-cisely what to do. The only thing he was certain of was that in this situation you couldn't go wrong if you made the sign of the cross. Whether or not you should bow at the same time he wasn't sure, so he went for a compromise, crossing himself as he walked in and giving a bit of a bow as he did so. At the same time, as far as hand and head movements permitted, he glanced round the room. Two young persons, nephews apparently, one of them a schoolboy, were crossing themselves as they left the room. A little old woman was

standing there motionless. And a lady with curiously arched eyebrows was whispering to her. A church reader in a frock-coat - a hearty character of considerable spirit - was reading something out in a loud voice and a tone that brooked no contradiction. Gerasim, the peasant who waited at table, darted ahead of Pyotr Ivanovich, sprinkling something on the floor. Seeing this, Pyotr Ivanovich instantly recognized a slight smell of decaying flesh. When he had visited Ivan Ilyich for the last time he had seen this peasant in Ivan Ilyich's room, acting as a sick nurse, and Ivan Ilyich had had a special fondness for him.

Pyotr Ivanovich kept on crossing himself, and aimed a slight bow midway between the reader, the coffin and the icons on the corner table. Then, when the business of crossing himself seemed to be going on too long, he paused and took a close look at the dead man.

The dead man lay as all dead men lie, unusually heavy with his dead weight, with rigid limbs sinking into the soft lining of the coffin and his head bowed for eternity on the pillow, and he displayed what dead people always display, a waxen yellow forehead (with bald patches over his hollow temples) and a protruding nose that seemed to be pressing down hard on his upper lip. He had changed a good deal; he was even thinner than he had been when Pyotr Ivanovich had last seen him, but, as with all dead bodies, his face had acquired greater beauty, or, more to the point, greater significance, than it had had in life. Its expression seemed to say that what needed to be done had been done, and done properly. More than that, the expression contained a reproach, or at least a reminder, to the living. The reminder seemed out of place to Pyotr Ivanovich, or at least he felt it didn't apply to him personally. But an unpleasant feeling came over him, and he crossed himself again, hurriedly - too hurriedly, he thought, the haste was almost indecent - before turning and heading for the door.

Schwartz was waiting for him in the next room with his feet planted wide apart and both hands fiddling with the top hat held behind his back. One glance at his mischievous, immaculately elegant figure and Pyotr Ivanovich felt restored. He could see that Schwartz was above all this, and would be impervious to anything that might have been depressing. His very appearance spoke volumes : in no way would the occasion of Ivan Ilyich's funeral

serve as a reason for cancelling their usual session; in other words, nothing would prevent them from breaking open a new pack and riffling through the cards that evening while a servant set up four new candles. There was, in fact, no reason to think that this occasion should stop them having a good time that very evening. He said so in a low voice to Pyotr Ivanovich as he walked past, proposing that they meet for a game at Fyodor Vasilyevich's.

But Pyotr Ivanovich was clearly not destined to play whist that evening. Praskovya Fyodorovna, a short, plump woman whose body expanded from the shoulders down despite her best efforts to the contrary, done out in black, with a lace shawl over her head and the same curiously arched eyebrows as the lady facing the coffin, emerged from her chambers with some other ladies, showed them to the door of the dead man's room, and said, 'The service is about to begin. Do go in.'

Schwartz made an indeterminate bow, and stood there without accepting or rejecting this invitation. Praskovya, recognizing Pyotr Ivanovich, gave a sigh, went straight up to him, took him by the hand, and said, 'I know you were a good friend to Ivan Ilyich...' And she looked at him, anticipating a suitable response. Pyotr Ivanovich knew that just as he had had to cross himself in there, out here it was necessary to squeeze her hand and say with a sigh, 'Believe me...' And that's what he did. Having done it, he felt that the desired effect had been achieved - he had been touched, and she had been touched.

'Let's go in before they get started. I must have a word with you,' said the widow. 'Give me your arm.'

Pyotr Ivanovich offered an arm and they made their way into the inner rooms, walking past Schwartz, who gave Pyotr Ivanovich a gloomy wink. 'No whist for you, then. You won't mind if we find another partner. We might make up a fivesome when you can get free,' said his mischievous glance.

Pyotr Ivanovich sighed even more deeply and plainly, and Praskovya showed her gratitude by squeezing his hand. Proceeding into her drawing-room, which was done out in pink cretonne and lit by one dismal lamp, they sat down near to a table, she on a sofa, he on a low pouffe with broken springs that wobbled unevenly as he sat on it. Praskovya had wanted to warn him off into another chair,

but a warning like that did not seem appropriate in the circumstances, so she thought better of it. As he sat down on his pouffe, Pyotr Ivanovich remembered the time when Ivan Ilyich had been decorating this room and had asked his advice about this pink cretonne with the green leaves. On her way past the table to sit down on the sofa - the room was crammed with furniture and knick-knacks - Praskovya snagged the black lace of her black shawl on the carved edge of the table. Pyotr Ivanovich rose slightly to disentangle it, thus releasing the pouffe, which quivered and pushed up at him. The widow began disentangling the lace herself, so Pyotr Ivanovich sat down again, crushing the rebellious pouffe back into submission. But the widow had not finished disentangling herself, so Pyotr Ivanovich rose again, and so did the pouffe, rebellious and even creaking. When this was all over, she took out a clean cambric handkerchief and burst into tears. But Pyotr Ivanovich had cooled somewhat after the episode with the lace and the battle with the pouffe, and he sat there with a scowl on his face. The embarrassment was broken when Sokolov, Ivan Ilyich's footman, came in to report that the plot which Praskovya had chosen in the cemetery was going to cost two hundred roubles. She had stopped weeping, and she looked at Pyotr Ivanovich with a victimized air as she told him in French how hard things were for her. Pyotr Ivanovich made a silent gesture to acknowledge his absolute conviction that it could not be otherwise.

'Do smoke if you would like to,' she said in a tone of voice that was magnanimous yet flat with defeat, and she went on to discuss the cost of the plot with Sokolov. As he lit his cigarette, Pyotr Ivanovich heard that she had made detailed enquiries about the cost of various plots of land before settling on the one she wanted. That was not all : once the plot had been ordered, she went on to make arrangements for the choir. Then Sokolov left.

'I'm doing everything myself,' she told Pyotr Ivanovich, pushing aside some albums on the table. Noticing that the table was under threat from the cigarette, she swiftly moved an ashtray across and spoke again. 'I think it would be hypocritical to claim that I cannot manage practicalities because of my grief. On the contrary, if anything can... I won't say console me, but... take my mind off things, it's seeing to what has to be done about him.' She took out her handkerchief again as if on the verge of tears, but suddenly she

seemed to get a grip on her feelings, snapped out of it and spoke calmly. 'But there is one thing I would like to discuss with you.'

Pyotr Ivanovich bowed his head. The springs shifted under him, but he did not let them have their way.

'He suffered terribly those last few days.'

'Did he really?' asked Pyotr Ivanovich.

'Oh yes, terribly. The last few minutes, no, hours really, he never stopped screaming. He screamed for three solid days without stopping for breath. It was unbearable. I don't know how I got through it. You could hear him three rooms away. Oh, I've been through it all right!'

'And was he conscious?' asked Pyotr Ivanovich.

'Yes,' she whispered. 'To the very end. He said goodbye a quarter of an hour before he died, and he was still ask-ing us to take Volodya away.'

For all the disagreeable awareness of hypocrisy, his own and hers, the thought of the suffering endured by a man he had known so well, first as a happy young lad, then as a schoolboy, then as an adult colleague, left Pyotr Ivanovich with a feeling of horror. Once again he could see that forehead, the nose pressing down on the upper lip, and he felt a pang of fear for himself.

'Three days and three nights of horrible suffering, and then death. Just think, it could happen to me any time, now,' he thought, and he felt that momentary pang of fear. But immediately he was saved, without knowing how, by the old familiar idea that this had happened to Ivan Ilyich, not him, and it could not and would not happen to him, and that kind of thinking would put him in a gloomy mood, for which there was no need, as Schwartz's face had clearly demonstrated. Pursuing this line of thought, Pyotr Ivanovich calmed down and began to show a close interest in the details of Ivan Ilyich's death, as if death was a chance experience that may have applied to Ivan Ilyich but certainly didn't apply to him.

After giving a detailed account of the truly horrendous physical agony that Ivan Ilyich had endured (details that Pyotr Ivanovich learned only in terms of the distressing effect they had had on Praskovya), the widow clearly saw that it was now necessary to

get down to business.

‘Oh, Pyotr Ivanovich, it’s dreadful, absolutely dread-ful.’ She burst into tears again.

Pyotr Ivanovich gave a sigh, and waited for her to blow her nose. When she had blown her nose, he said, ‘Believe me...’ Then she spoke out again, and told him what must have been the main reason for consulting him : it was all a matter of using the death of her husband to get some money from the Treasury. She made it seem as if she was asking Pyotr Ivanovich’s advice about getting a pension, but he could see that here she knew more than he did, she knew the finest details of this subject down to the last penny that could be screwed out of the Treasury in terms of death benefits. What she wanted to know was whether there might be some way of screwing a bit more out of them. Pyotr Ivanovich tried to think of some way of doing this but, having given it some thought and doing the decent thing by cursing the government for being so stingy, he said he thought there was no more to be had. Upon which she gave a sigh, and made no bones about getting rid of her visitor. He got the message, stubbed his cigarette out, stood up, shook hands, and went out into the hall.

In the dining-room with the clock that Ivan Ilyich had prided himself on having acquired in an antique shop, Pyotr Ivanovich came across a priest and a number of people that he knew, here for the funeral, and he saw a pretty young lady whom he also knew, Ivan Ilyich’s daughter. She was all in black. Her tiny waist looked tinier than ever. She looked gloomy, assertive, almost truculent. She bowed to Pyotr Ivanovich in a way that suggested he was to blame for something. Behind the daughter stood a wealthy young man, also known to Pyotr Ivanovich, who looked no less offended - he was an examining magistrate, her fiancé by all accounts. Pyotr Ivanovich gave a gloomy bow in their direction and was about to walk through into the dead man’s room when Ivan Ilyich’s schoolboy son, the image of his father, appeared from behind the stairwell. This was the little Ivan Ilyich that Pyotr Ivanovich remembered from law school. His tear-filled eyes were those of a twelve-or thirteen-year-old boy who has lost his innocence. Seeing Pyotr Ivanovich, he looked embarrassed and scowled morosely. Pyotr Ivanovich gave him a nod and walked into the dead man’s room. The funeral service was soon under way - candles, moaning,

incense, tears, sobbing. Pyotr Ivanovich stood there with a frown on his face, staring at the legs of those in front of him. Not once did he look at the dead man or succumb to any feelings of weakness; he was one of the first to leave. There was no one in the hall. Gerasim, the servant of peasant stock, darted out of the dead man's room, and sorted through all the fur coats with his big strong hands before finding Pyotr Ivanovich's coat and handing it over.

'Gerasim. How are you feeling, my boy?' said Pyotr Ivanovich, who had to say something. 'A bit sad?'

'Tis God's will, sir.' 'Twill come to us all,' said Gerasim, displaying an even white row of peasant's teeth, and then, with the air of a man with a lot of work to do, he wrenched the door open, called the driver up and sprang back to the porch steps, wondering what else needed to be done.

Pyotr Ivanovich found it particularly pleasant to inhale the fresh air after the incense, the corpse and carbolic.

'Where to, sir?' asked the coachman.

'It's still quite early. I think I'll drop in on Fyodor Vasilyevich.'

And that's where he went. And there they were, sure enough, finishing the first rubber. He was just in time to make up a fifth.

2

The past history of Ivan Ilyich's life had been straight-forward, ordinary and dreadful in the extreme.

Ivan Ilyich had died at forty-five, a member of the Court of Justice. He was the son of an official who had worked his way through various ministries and departments in Petersburg, carving out the kind of career which brings people to a position from which, despite their obvious incapacity for doing anything remotely useful, they cannot be sacked because of their status and long years of service, so they end up being given wholly false and fictitious jobs to do for which they receive salaries that are anything but fictitious, anything from six to ten thousand a year, and this enables them to live on to a ripe old age.

Such a man was Ilya Yefimovich Golovin, Privy Coun-cillor, superfluous member of various superfluous institutions.

He had three sons. Ivan Ilyich was the second son. The eldest had carved out the same career as his father but in a different ministry, and was now near to achieving the kind of seniority that confers sinecure status. The third son was a failure. He had gone through a series of jobs, ruining his prospects in all of them, and he now worked for the railways. His father, his brothers and especially their wives not only hated meeting him but forgot his existence unless compelled to do otherwise. Their sister had married Baron Greff, a Petersburg official cut from the same cloth as his father-in-law. Ivan Ilyich was what they called *le phénix de la famille*. He was neither as cold and starchy as the elder brother nor as profligate as the younger. He was halfway between - an intelligent, lively, personable and decent man. He had attended law school along with his younger brother. The younger brother didn't finish the course; he was expelled in the fifth grade, whereas Ivan Ilyich passed with honours. As a student he was already the kind of person he remained for the rest of his life, a capable man, cheerful and kind, sociable and convinced of the need to follow the path of duty - duty being anything so designated by higher authority. Boy and man he had avoided toadyism, but from his earliest years he was like a moth to the flame in being drawn towards people in authority, he assumed their mannerisms along with their philosophy of life, and he was on good terms with them. All the distractions of childhood and youth had passed him by leaving scarcely a trace; he had succumbed to both sensuality and vanity, and then in the top classes to liberal thinking, but always within limits unerringly set by his own instinctive feelings.

In his student days he had done things that at first he thought of as utterly revolting, things that made him feel disgusted with himself even as he was doing them, but in later life, noticing that the same things were being done by people of high standing without a qualm, although he couldn't quite bring himself to think they were good, he did manage to dismiss them, and he felt no pangs of remorse when he recalled them.

When he graduated from law school, qualifying for the tenth grade of the civil service, and received enough money from his father to buy his basic necessities, Ivan Ilyich ordered a new set of clothes from Scharmer's, hung a medallion on his watch chain inscribed with the words *Respice finem*, said goodbye to the prince

and principal, dined at Donon's with his friends, and set off for one of the provinces with his fashionable luggage, linen, clothes, shaving tackle, toiletries and travelling rug, all ordered and purchased from the very best shops, to take up a position arranged for him by his father as special assist-ant to the governor.

In the provinces it did not take Ivan Ilyich long to arrange a lifestyle that was as easy and agreeable as the one he had enjoyed at law school. He did his work, pursued his career and at the same time discreetly enjoyed himself. He went off now and then on official visits to country districts, cutting a dignified figure with superiors and inferiors alike, and he prided himself on carrying out his duties, especially in matters concerning religious dissidents, with scrupulous fairness and incorruptibility.

In his official duties, despite his youth and an attitude of some frivolity, he was exceedingly conservative, bureaucratic and even forbidding, but on the social side he was often amusing and witty, and always pleasantly polite - what the governor and the governor's wife called a *bon enfant* , and with them he was like one of the family.

In the provinces he had an affair with a lady only too keen to liaise with a smart young lawyer. There was also a milliner, and there were drinking sessions with visiting aides-de-camp, as well as after-dinner excursions to a certain street on the outskirts. There was a need to work on the governor and even the governor's wife in order to win them over. But all of this bore the stamp of high respectability to such an extent that no one could have called it by a bad name; all of it was catered for by what the French describe as 'youth having its fling'. All of it was conducted with clean hands, in clean linen, in French phrases, and - what mattered most - at the highest level of society, which meant with approval from those in authority.

Ivan Ilyich spent five years in this kind of service, but the time came for a career change. New legal institutions were opening up; new men were needed.

Ivan Ilyich became one of the new men.

Ivan Ilyich was offered the post of examining magis-trate, and he took it, even though it meant moving to a new province,

dropping all his old contacts and establishing new ones. Ivan Ilyich was given a send-off by his friends, who presented him with a silver cigarette case; they had a group photograph taken, and off he went to his new job.

As an examining magistrate Ivan Ilyich was just as *comme il faut* and respectable, just as capable of separating official duty from private life and earning respect as he had been when working as a special assistant to the governor. The new work itself struck Ivan Ilyich as far more interesting and rewarding than his earlier job. Before, he had quite liked strutting about in his Scharmer uniform, sauntering past anxious petitioners and envious officials and walking straight into the governor's office, where he would sit down for a cup of tea and a smoke. But not many people had been under his authority - only the rural police chiefs and the religious dissidents that he came across on his assignments - and he loved to treat these dependent people with a courteous, almost comradely spirit, he loved to let them feel that although he had the power to crush them he was being straight with them, treating them like friends. There had not been many of them then, but now that Ivan Ilyich was an examining magistrate he felt that everyone without exception was in his power, even the most important and self-satisfied of people; at a stroke from his pen on headed notepaper any important or self-satisfied person could be brought before him as a defendant or witness to answer questions and be kept on his feet if Ivan Ilyich chose not to let him sit down. Far from abusing this power, he did his best to play it down, but his consciousness of that power and the very chance to play it down were what gave his new job its interest and appeal. In the work itself, the process of investigation, Ivan Ilyich soon mastered the technique of distancing himself from all irrelevancies and reducing the most complicated cases to a version that could be set down on paper in objective outline, excluding any personal opinion on his part, while observing all the necessary formalities, which was what mattered most. This was the new way of working, and he was one of the first men to implement the reformed Legal Code of 1864.

Ivan Ilyich's transfer to a new town and the post of examining magistrate meant meeting new people and making new contacts; he also struck a new attitude, and slightly changed his tone. The new attitude involved distancing himself somewhat from the provincial

authorities while cultivating the best circles among the judiciary and the wealthy gentry of the town, and the new tone entailed mild dissatisfaction with the government, a degree of liberalism and a civilized man's sense of public duty. At the same time, without compromising the fastidiousness of his dress sense, in his new situation he left his chin unshaven, allowing his beard to grow as and where it wanted.

In his new town, too, Ivan Ilyich set himself up very nicely. The section of society opposed to the governor was friendly and agreeable, his pay had gone up, and one thing that made his life particularly pleasurable was the playing of whist, which he now took to with the enjoyment of a skilled card-player, astute, quick-thinking and almost invariably a winner.

After two years working in the new town Ivan Ilyich met his future wife. Praskovya Fyodorovna Mikhel was the most attractive, intelligent and colourful young lady in the social circle frequented by Ivan Ilyich. To the list of other distractions and relaxations from his work as an examining magistrate Ivan Ilyich added a mild flirtation with Praskovya.

When he had been an assistant on special commissions Ivan Ilyich had been quite a dancer, but now he was an examining magistrate he took to the floor much less frequently. When he danced it was only as if to say, 'Look, I may be part of the reformed system, and I've got as far as Grade 5, but if you want to see me on the floor I can show you that even in dancing I can be the best.' So, just occasionally, he would take to the floor with Praskovya at the end of an evening, and it was actually while dancing like this that he won her heart. She fell in love with him. Ivan Ilyich had no clear and definite plans for marriage, but once the girl fell in love with him he began to wonder. 'When all's said and done, why shouldn't I get married?' he asked himself.

This young woman, Praskovya Fyodorovna, belonged to a good family, and she was quite attractive. She also came with a little money. Ivan Ilyich might have held out for a more brilliant partner, but she was herself a decent catch. Ivan was earning good money, and he could count on something similar from her. It would be a good match - she was a nice girl, quite pretty and a thoroughly decent young woman. To claim that Ivan Ilyich got married

because he was in love with his bride, and saw in her someone who shared his outlook on life, would have been no more justifiable than to say that he married because the match met with the approval of the society that he moved in. Ivan Ilyich married for both reasons. He was pleasing himself by acquiring such a wife, but at the same time he was appealing to his superiors and their sense of propriety.

So, Ivan Ilyich got married.

The process of getting married, and the early days of married life, with conjugal caresses, new furniture, new crockery, new linen, everything up to his wife's pregnancy, went very smoothly, to the extent that Ivan Ilyich was beginning to think that marriage would not disrupt his easy, agreeable and enjoyable lifestyle, which was decency itself, approved of by society and something that Ivan Ilyich considered to be part of life itself - and it might even improve it. But it was at this stage, during the first months of his wife's pregnancy, that something happened, something new, unexpected, unpleasant, difficult and disgusting, something that could not have been anticipated and could not in any way be got rid of.

For no reason that Ivan Ilyich could fathom, other than what he called *gaîté de coeur*, his wife did begin to disrupt the pleasant and decent run of his life. She became jealous of him for no apparent cause, demanded his closest attention, laid into him and started arguments that were unpleasantly vulgar.

At first Ivan Ilyich hoped to escape the unpleasantness of his new situation by relapsing into the same carefree but respectable way of life that had stood him in good stead before - he tried to ignore his wife's moodiness and carry on in the easy, agreeable way that he had formerly enjoyed, inviting friends round for a game of cards and trying to get out and drive round to the club or visit people close to him. But there came a time when his wife started shouting at him so furiously, using such foul language, determined to keep on yelling at him when he failed to do what she wanted, obviously with every intention of keeping it up until he came to heel, stayed in and went through the same anguish that she felt, that Ivan Ilyich was horrified. He realized that married life - at least with his wife - didn't always mean enjoyment and decency, but, on the contrary, it often disrupted them, and it was therefore necessary to guard against such disruptions. And Ivan Ilyich began to seek

ways of doing this. His work was the one thing that impressed Praskovya, and it was through work and the commitments associated with it that he took on his wife and asserted his own independence.

When the baby was born, with the various difficulties with feeding, the real and imaginary illnesses of mother and child, which demanded his sympathetic involvement even though he understood nothing about them, the need for Ivan Ilyich to safeguard his independence became even more urgent.

As his wife grew more and more irritable and demanding, Ivan Ilyich gradually shifted his life's centre of gravity on to his work. He loved his work more and more, and became more ambitious than he had been.

It didn't take him long - no more than a year after his wedding - to realize that although married life did provide some conveniences, it was actually rather a complex and difficult business, and the path of duty, which meant leading a decent life approved of by society, called for a clearly defined attitude, as at work.

And Ivan Ilyich managed to establish such an attitude towards his married life. He required of it whatever domestic conveniences it could provide in terms of meals on the table, a good household and a bed and, most important, the outward show of respectability that society required. Beyond this, he required some enjoyment and pleasure, and if he found this he was very thankful, but if he was met with rejection and crabbiness he immediately took himself off into his own separate, carefully guarded world, the world of work which gave him pleasure.

Ivan Ilyich was considered a good colleague, and within three years he was promoted to assistant chief prosecutor. His new responsibilities, the importance that they entailed, the opportunity of bringing people before the court and sending them to prison, the publicity given to his speeches, and the success enjoyed by Ivan Ilyich in these matters - all of this made his work seem even more enjoyable.

Other children were born. His wife was becoming more and more bad-tempered and crabby, but the new attitude established by Ivan Ilyich towards his home life made him all but impervious to

her crabbiness.

After serving for seven years in the same town Ivan Ilyich was transferred to another province, as public prosecutor. They moved, they were short of money, and his wife didn't like the town they had moved to. His salary had gone up, but so had their living expenses. On top of that, two of their children died, and family life became even more unpleasant for Ivan Ilyich.

Praskovya blamed her husband for all the setbacks they were suffering in their new place of residence. Most of the topics of conversation between husband and wife, especially about bringing up the children, led to questions that reminded them of past arguments, and new arguments were liable to flare up at any moment. They were left with a few short periods of amorousness that came over them as husband and wife, but these did not last long. These were nothing more than little islands where they could anchor for a while, only to plunge back into a sea of hidden hostility as they grew further and further apart. This growing apart might have upset Ivan Ilyich if he had thought there was anything wrong with it, but now not only did he consider this state of affairs to be quite normal, he saw it as the whole point of his role in the family. His role was to distance himself increasingly from all the unpleasantness and give it an air of harmless respectability; this he achieved by spending less and less time with the family, and when he was forced to be with them he sought to safeguard his own position by ensuring the presence of others. But the main thing was that Ivan Ilyich did have his work. It was in the world of his work that the whole interest of his life came into focus. And this interest absorbed him totally. The knowledge of the power that he wielded, the possibility of ruining anyone that he fancied ruining, the gravitas (even if it was all outward show) which could be sensed as he walked into court or dealt with his subordinates, the success that he was enjoying with his superiors and subordinates alike, and, above all, his masterly handling of the cases - all of this gave him pleasure, and, along with chit-chat with colleagues, dinners and whist, filled his life to the full. And so, life in general proceeded for Ivan Ilyich just as he thought it should proceed - pleasantly and respectably.

He lived like this for about seven years. Their daughter, the eldest child, was now sixteen, another child had died and their one

remaining son was the subject of strong disagreement. Ivan Ilyich wanted to send him to law school, but Praskovya had defied him by putting him down for the high school. The daughter was being educated at home, and was developing nicely; the boy too was doing quite well at his studies.

3

This was the course that Ivan Ilyich's life had taken during the seventeen years that followed his wedding. He was now a senior public prosecutor who had turned down several transfers in the hope of securing an even more desirable position, but then suddenly an unpleasant circumstance arose which looked like completely disrupting the peaceful progress of his life. Ivan Ilyich was expecting an appointment as presiding judge in a university town, but Hoppe pipped him at the post and got the job. Ivan Ilyich was livid, and he made some insinuations, taking issue with Hoppe himself and his immediate superiors. He was met with a chill rebuff, and was overlooked again when the next appointment came up.

This was in 1880. That year was the hardest he ever lived through. It was a year in which it transpired, for one thing, that they couldn't make ends meet financially, and, for another, that he was a forgotten man and, whereas he saw himself as the victim of an outrageously cruel injustice, everyone else thought it was just the way things went. Even his father saw it as no duty of his to help out. He felt deserted by everyone; they all thought that his situation, with a salary of three thousand five hundred roubles, was perfectly normal, even fortunate. He was the only person who knew that, with all the injustices that had been visited upon him, with nothing but nagging from his wife, and the debts that were now mounting up because he was living beyond his means - he was the only one who knew that his position was anything but normal.

That summer, in order to cut costs, he took leave of absence and went with his wife for a country holiday at her brother's place. In the country, with no work to occupy him, Ivan Ilyich had his first experience of not just boredom but unbearable anguish. He decided he couldn't go on like this - definite steps must be taken.

During a sleepless night, the whole of which he spent pacing the terrace, he decided he would go to Petersburg and make

representations; he would get his own back on those men who had underestimated him, by changing ministries. Next morning he defied all the remonstrations from his wife and brother-in-law, and left for Petersburg.

He went with one aim in mind : to get himself a position that would bring in five thousand a year. By now he had no allegiance to any particular ministry, faction or function. All he needed was a job, a job that would bring in five thousand a year, in administration, in one of the banks, with the railways, in one of the charitable institutions set up by the Dowager Empress Maria, even in the customs service; all that mattered was five thousand a year and an immediate transfer from the ministry where he was so undervalued.

And his trip was crowned with unexpected, unbelievable success. At Kursk, an acquaintance of his, F. S.Ilyin, got into his first-class carriage, sat down and told him that the governor of the province had just received a telegram informing him of a reshuffle in the ministry - Pyotr Ivanovich was being replaced by Ivan Semyonovich.

The proposed reshuffle, whatever its impact on Russia at large, meant something special to Ivan Ilyich : the emergence of Pyotr Petrovich, and also apparently his friend, Zakhar Ivanovich, was very good news for him. Zakhar Ivanovich was a colleague and friend.

The new development had been confirmed in Moscow; now, arriving in Petersburg, Ivan Ilyich looked up Zakhar, who promised him a definite position in his former department, the Ministry of Justice.

Within a week he was able to send the following telegram to his wife : *Zakhar replaces Miller. Appointment mine with first report.*

Because of this change of staff Ivan Ilyich had suddenly achieved a position in his former ministry which put him two grades higher than his colleagues, with five thousand a year plus three thousand five hundred roubles removal expenses. All the acrimony that he had felt towards his enemies and the ministry in general was forgotten, and Ivan Ilyich was a happy man.

He returned to the country feeling in high spirits, more

contented than he had been for a long time. Praskovya's spirits had also picked up, and a truce was declared between the two of them. Ivan Ilyich described how hon-oured he had been in Petersburg, how his former enemies had been put to shame and were now licking his boots, how people envied him his new position, and, most of all, how popular he had been in Petersburg.

Praskovya listened to all of this, pretending to believe it and not querying anything, but her real interest was only in sketching out the new way of life that they would lead in the city to which they were moving. And Ivan Ilyich was delighted to see that her plans were his plans, they were together as one, and that his life, having hit a bad patch, was now getting back to its old way, its true path of happy enjoyment and respectability.

Ivan Ilyich had not come back for long. He had to take up his duties on the 10th of September, and before that he had to settle into new surroundings, have all his things brought in from the provinces, buy in and order up many more items - in other words he had set up home just as he had worked things out in his own mind, which was almost exactly as Praskovya had worked things out in her own heart.

And now that everything had been set up so success-fully, and he and his wife were agreed in their aims, having lived together so little of late, they came together more closely than at any time since they were first married. Ivan Ilyich had intended to move his family in straightaway, but at the insistence of his sister-in-law and brother-in-law, who were suddenly all over Ivan Ilyich and his family, it was arranged for him to go on alone.

Ivan Ilyich set out on his journey. The happy feelings brought on by his success and a rapprochement with his wife, each intensifying the other, never left him. He found a delightful place, a dream apartment for him and his wife. The spacious, high-ceilinged reception rooms with their old-fashioned décor, the gracefully appointed and comfortable study, the rooms for his wife and daughter, the classroom for his son - all of it seemed to have been designed with them in mind. Ivan Ilyich took it upon himself to organize the fittings and furnishings; he chose the wallpaper, purchased furniture, predominantly of the old-fashioned style which he considered to be *comme il faut*, the upholstery... and the whole

thing grew and grew, approaching the ideal that he had set himself. Even halfway through the refurbishment, the whole thing exceeded his expectations. He could see how elegant it would all be, quite *comme il faut* and devoid of vulgarity, when it was completed. As he went to sleep he would imagine what the large reception room was going to look like. When he glanced into the half-finished drawing-room he could envisage the fireplace, the screen, the whatnot and the little chairs dotted about the room, the plates and dishes on the walls and the bronze pieces, everything in its proper place. He enjoyed the thought of surprising Pasha and Lizanka, who were not without taste themselves. This was beyond their expectations. He had been particularly successful in tracking down antiques and buying them at bargain prices; they now gave the whole place an air of distinction. He deliberately understated everything in his letters home so that they would be surprised. He was so taken up with all of this that the work he loved so dearly interested him less than he had thought it would. In court he found his mind wandering; he would be miles away, wondering whether to have plain or moulded cornices with his curtains. He became so involved that he often did the work himself, rearranging the furniture and rehangng the curtains. On one occasion, climbing a stepladder to show a dull-witted upholsterer how to hang the draperies, he slipped and fell, though he was strong and agile enough to hold on, and all he did was bump his side on a window-frame knob. The bruised place hurt for a while but it soon passed off. And all this time Ivan Ilyich felt particularly well and in the best of spirits. 'I seem to have shed fifteen years,' he wrote home. He had hoped to get it all finished by the end of September, but things dragged on until mid-October. Still, it was magnificent, and he wasn't the only one to say so - everybody did.

But these were essentially the accoutrements that appeal to all people who are not actually rich but who want to look rich, though all they manage to do is look like each other : damasks, ebony, plants, rugs and bronzes, anything dark and gleaming - everything that all people of a certain class affect so as to be like all other people of a certain class. And his arrangements looked so much like everyone else's that they were unremarkable, though he saw them as something truly distinctive. When he met his family at the railway station, brought them home and ushered them into his well-lit furnished apartment and a footman wearing a white tie opened

the door into the entrance hall decorated with flowers, and then they went into the drawing-room and the study, ooh-ing and ah-ing with delight, he was a very happy man, showing them around everywhere, revelling in their praise and beaming with delight. That evening, as they took tea, when Pras-kovya asked him casually about his fall he gave a laugh and demonstrated how he had gone flying and given the upholsterer a scare.

‘It’s a good job I’m athletic. Any other man would have killed himself, but all I did was bruise myself a bit here. It hurts when you touch it, but it’s getting better. It is only a bruise.’

And so they began life in their new abode, where, as always happens with people who have recently settled in, they found themselves just one room short, and their new income wouldn’t quite run to it, though it was only a matter of five hundred roubles or so. Still, they were very nicely off, especially during the early days when not everything was finished and work was still to be done - things had to be bought, ordered, rearranged, adjusted. There were one or two disagreements between husband and wife, but both of them were so satisfied and so busy that everything resolved itself without serious arguments. When there was nothing more to be finished off they developed a feeling of dullness and a sense of something missing, but by this time they had got to know new people and formed new habits. Their lives had filled out.

Ivan Ilyich would return for lunch after a morning in court and in those early days he tended to be in a good mood; any slight distress that he suffered came from the apartment itself. (The slightest stain on a tablecloth or upholstery, or a loose cord on the draperies annoyed him; he had put so much effort into the furnishings that the slightest disturbance upset him.) But, all things considered, Ivan Ilyich’s life went along, as he saw it, just as life ought to go - easily, pleasantly, decently. He rose at nine, drank some coffee, read the newspaper, then put on his uniform and went to court. There, the collar that he worked in had been worn into shape and he soon found that it fitted him well - the petitioners, the enquiries received, the office, the public sessions and the administrative meetings. In all of this the trick was to eliminate the element of crude everyday life that always disrupts the smooth flow of official business; no relationships should be entered into beyond the official ones, the reason behind any relationship had to be

strictly official and the relationship itself had to be strictly official. Say, for example, a person arrives wanting to know something. This is not the responsibility of Ivan Ilyich; he can have no relationship with such a person. But if this person were to approach him in his capacity as a member of the judiciary and in a relationship that can be set down on letterhead paper, within the terms of that relationship Ivan Ilyich will do anything he can, and do it decisively, while maintaining a semblance of friendly human relations - nothing more than common courtesy. At the point where an official relationship breaks off, everything else breaks off, too. The skill of compartmentalizing the official side of things and keeping that apart from his own real life was one that Ivan Ilyich possessed in the highest degree; long practice and natural talent had enabled him to refine it to such a degree that now he could act like a virtuoso performer, occasionally allowing himself to mix human and official relationships by way of a joke. He allowed himself this liberty because he felt strong enough whenever necessary to reinstate the distinction between the official and the human by discarding the latter. This was more than just an easy, pleasant and decent thing for Ivan Ilyich to do - he was acting like a virtuoso performer. During his breaks he would have a smoke, drink tea and chat, exchange a word or two about politics, current affairs and cards, and a whole lot more about who was in and who was out. And he would go home tired, but feeling like a virtuoso performer, a first violin in the orchestra, who has given of his best. At home his daughter and his wife would either have been out visiting or would have entertained someone at home, while his son, back from school, would have had a session with his private tutors and gone on to cram whatever it is they teach in schools. Everything was fine. After dinner, if there were no guests, Ivan Ilyich sometimes read a book that people were talking about, and later in the evening he sat down to do some work, reading through papers, studying the law, comparing depositions and sorting them by statute. This neither bored nor amused him. He found it boring when he might have been playing whist, but if whist was off it was better than just sitting there on his own or with his wife. What gave Ivan Ilyich real pleasure, though, was having little dinner parties to which he would invite ladies and gentlemen of good social standing and passing the time with them precisely as such people invariably do pass the time, in the way that his drawing-room was exactly like all

the others.

One day they held an evening party with dancing. Ivan Ilyich enjoyed it and everything went swimmingly, except for a big row between him and his wife over the cakes and sweets. Praskovya had had her own ideas, but Ivan Ilyich had insisted on bringing in an expensive caterer who had provided too many cakes; the leftovers had caused the row when the caterer's bill came to forty-five roubles. The row was a big one, very nasty, and it ended with Praskovya calling him a stupid fool while he clutched his head and muttered something about divorce. But he still enjoyed the party. The best people were there and Ivan Ilyich danced with Princess Tru-fonova, whose sister had famously founded the charity known as 'Take Away My Sorrow'. Pleasure derived from work was self-indulgence, pleasure derived from social-izing tickled his vanity, but real pleasure came to Ivan Ilyich only from playing cards. He was prepared to admit that, at the end of the day, with any amount of unpleasantness behind him, the one pleasure that outshone all others like a beacon was to sit down and play whist with quiet-mannered partners, good players, always in a four-some (sitting out was such a bore when there were five, and you had to pretend not to mind) , and playing seriously and playing well (when you got a decent hand) before going on to supper with a glass of wine. And after a game of cards, especially if he had won a small amount (big winnings were not nice) , Ivan Ilyich would go to bed in the very best of spirits.

This was how they lived. They moved in the best of circles, receiving people of quality, and the younger set.

In their attitude towards the circle of their acquaintances husband, wife and daughter were of one mind. Without collusion, each of them in the same way shrugged off and discarded all the shabby friends and relatives who flocked around fawning on them in the drawing-room with the Japanese plates on the walls. It wasn't long before the shabby friends stopped flocking around and left the Golovin family to the best people in society and no one else. Young men were attracted to their little Liza and one examining magistrate by the name of Petrishchev, the son of Dmitriy Ivanovich Petrishchev and his sole heir, became so attentive towards her that Ivan Ilyich mentioned this once or twice to Praskovya and wondered whether they ought perhaps to take them

out for a ride in a troika or set up some private theatricals. This was how they lived. This was how things went, nothing changed, and everything was fine.

4

They were all in good health. The fact that Ivan Ilyich sometimes complained of a strange taste in his mouth and a funny feeling in his left side didn't count as ill health. But as it happened this funny feeling began to get worse and turned into, if not pain exactly, a constant dragging sensation in his side, which put him in a bad mood. And this bad mood, which got worse and worse, began to spoil the pleasant, easy-going and respectable way of life that the Golovins had just set up for them-selves. There were more and more quarrels between husband and wife, the pleasant, easy-going way of life lapsed, and they were hard put to keep up an appearance of decency. Once again scenes became more and more frequent. They were left once again with nothing more than those little islands, all too few of them, on which husband and wife could come together without an explosion.

And now Praskovya began to say, not without justification, that her husband was a hard man. With her usual capacity for exaggeration she claimed that he had always been horrible like that and only her good nature had enabled her to put up with it for twenty years. It was true that all the arguments now began on his side. His jibes always started just as they sat down to dinner, often over the soup. There was always something - if it wasn't chipped crockery or something wrong with the food, he would go on about his son putting his elbow on the table or his daughter's hair. And it was always Praskovya's fault. To begin with, Praskovya would take issue with him and say something nasty, but on a couple of occasions he flew into such a rage at the beginning of dinner that she realized this was a pathological condition brought on by consuming food, so she bit it all back, stopped objecting and got on with her dinner as fast as she could. Praskovya took great pride in biting things back. Convinced that her husband was a horrible man who had made her life a misery, she was now sorry for herself. And the sorrier she became, the more she hated her husband. She began to wish he was dead, and then not to, because without him there would be no income. All of which made her even more exasperated

with him. She felt thoroughly miserable at the thought that not even his death could rescue her. She was exasperated, though she hid it, but her hidden exasperation served only to strengthen his exasperation.

After one scene during which Ivan Ilyich had been particularly unfair and after which, by way of explanation, he had admitted being exasperated but claimed he was ill, she told him that if he was ill he needed treatment and insisted that he must go and see a famous doctor.

He did. The whole thing turned out just as he had expected, and as it always does. He was made to wait, the doctor was full of his own importance - an attitude he was familiar with because it was one that he himself assumed in court - then came all the tapping and listening, the questions with predetermined and obviously superfluous answers, the knowing look that seemed to say, 'Just place yourself in our hands and we'll sort it out, we know what we're doing, there's no doubt about it, we can sort things out the same way as we would for anyone you care to name.' It was just like being in court. The way he looked at the accused in court was exactly the way he was being looked at now by the famous doctor.

The doctor was holding forth. Such-and-such demonstrates that in your insides there is such-and-such, but if this is not confirmed by our tests on this-and-that then you will need to go on to such-and-such. And if you go on to such-and-such, then... and so on. As far as Ivan Ilyich was concerned there was only one question that mattered : is this condition life-threatening or not? But the doctor treated this question as irrelevant, and ignored it. From the doctor's point of view it was a pointless question not worthy of discussion; the only thing was a balancing of probabilities - floating kidney, chronic colitis, problem with the blind gut. The question of Ivan Ilyich living or dying didn't arise; there was just this conflict between the floating kidney and the blind gut. And before his very eyes the doctor resolved the conflict at a brilliant stroke in favour of the floating kidney, with the sole proviso that new evidence might emerge from the urine test, and if that happened the case would have to be reviewed. All of it from start to finish was precisely what Ivan Ilyich himself had done to the accused a thousand times and with no less brilliance. Brilliant indeed was the doctor's summing-up of the situation as he looked in triumph bordering on delight

over his glasses at his own prisoner in the dock. From the summary Ivan Ilyich drew only one conclusion : he was in a bad way and the doctor didn't care, nobody cared probably, but he was in a bad way. And this conclusion left Ivan Ilyich with a sickly feeling, filling him with self-pity and great animosity towards the doctor who showed so much indifference to such an important question.

But he said nothing about it. He got up, laid his money on the table and said, with a sigh, 'I'm sure that when we're ill we ask a lot of pointless questions. But, er, is it life-threatening or not...?'

The doctor glared at him through one eye over his glasses as if to say, 'Prisoner in the dock, if you will not confine yourself to answering the questions put to you I shall have to arrange for you to be removed from the courtroom.'

'I have already told you what I consider necessary and appropriate. Anything further will be determined by the tests.' The doctor bowed.

Ivan Ilyich walked out slowly, climbed gloomily into his sledge and drove home. All the way back he kept going over in his mind everything the doctor had said, trying to translate his confusingly complex technicalities into everyday speech and find in them an answer to one question : am I in a bad way, a really bad way, or is it nothing to worry about just now? And it seemed to him that the message from all that the doctor had said was yes, you're in a very bad way. Ivan Ilyich thought the streets looked dismal. The drivers looked dismal, the houses looked dismal, and so did the pedestrians and the shops. And in the light of the doctor's confusing pronouncements the pain, that dull, nagging pain that never went away, was taking on a new and more serious significance. It was with a new feeling of dejection that Ivan Ilyich focused on it.

He reached home and started to tell his wife. His wife listened closely, but halfway through his account their daughter came in wearing a little hat - she and her mother were on their way out. She made an effort to sit down and listen to his boring story, but she couldn't contain herself for long and her mother gave up listening.

'Well, I'm very pleased,' said his wife. 'And now, you listen to me. Make sure you take your medicine properly. Give me the prescription and I'll send Gerasim to the chemist's.' And she went

off to get dressed.

He had hardly paused for breath while she was in the room, and when she went out he gave a deep sigh.

‘Oh well,’ he said. ‘Maybe that’s right. Nothing to worry about just now...’

He started taking his medicine and following the doctor’s instructions, though these were changed once the urine test results were in. But at this point it turned out that there was some confusion over the test itself and what was supposed to follow it. Without getting at the doctor, it was becoming clear that what was going on was not what the doctor had said. He must have overlooked something, or he had been telling lies, or he was hiding something.

Nevertheless, Ivan Ilyich started to follow his instructions, and from the process of doing so he derived some comfort for a while. Since his visit to the doctor Ivan Ilyich had made it his main preoccupation to follow all instructions to the letter in matters of hygiene, the taking of medicine, focusing on his pain and monitoring all his bodily functions. His main interests were in human sickness and human health. When he overheard anyone talking about people who had fallen ill, died or recovered, especially if the illness sounded like his own, he tried to hide his agitation but he listened closely, asked lots of questions and applied what he heard to his own illness.

The pain was not getting any less, but Ivan Ilyich made every effort to make himself believe he was feeling better. And he was able to delude himself as long as nothing upset him. But the moment he fell out with his wife, or something went wrong at work or he got a bad hand at whist, he felt the full force of his illness. Before this he had been able to withstand setbacks like these, expecting to put things right before long, to win through, succeed again, come out with a grand slam. But now the slightest setback cut the ground from under him and left him in despair. He would say to himself, ‘Look at that. I was just starting to get better and the medicine was just beginning to work, and now this damn thing comes up, this rotten luck...’ And he raged against his misfortune or against those people who were causing his problems and killing him off; he sensed that it was his own rage that was killing him and he

couldn't control it. It ought to have been obvious to him that raging against his situation and the people around him was only feeding his illness and, because of that, he ought to ignore any unpleasant developments, but he thought the exact opposite : he told himself he needed peace of mind so he had to get on to anything that disrupted his peace of mind, and the slightest disruption left him exasperated. His situation was made worse by the fact that he had taken to reading medical books and consulting doctors. The decline was so gradual that he was able to delude himself by comparing one day with another and seeing little difference. But the moment he consulted a doctor he thought he was going downhill, and fast. Yet, despite this, he kept on consulting the doctors.

That month he went to see another celebrity. This celebrity told him more or less the same as the first one, but put things differently. And the consultation with this celebrity served only to reinforce Ivan Ilyich's doubts and fears. A friend of a friend - a very good doctor - diagnosed something entirely different and, even though he swore he would get better, his questions and assumptions confused Ivan Ilyich even more and deepened his suspicions. A homeopath produced yet another diagnosis and gave him some medicine, which Ivan Ilyich took for a week or so without telling anyone. But by the end of the week, feeling no better and losing faith in every treatment that had been prescribed so far including that one, he felt more despondent than ever. One day a lady of his acquaintance talked to him about the curative powers of icons. Ivan Ilyich caught himself listening closely to what she was saying, and beginning to accept it as fact. This scared him. 'Am I really going weak in the head?' he wondered. 'Nonsense. It's all rubbish! I'm not falling for stupid ideas like that. I'd rather pick one doctor and stick to what he says. That's what I'm going to do. That's it. I'm going to stop thinking about it, and follow the treatment to the letter until the summer. Then we'll see. No more shilly-shallying.' This was easy to say but impossible to do. The pain in his side went on wearing him down and seemed to be getting worse, nagging incessantly, while the taste in his mouth got more and more peculiar and he began to think that his breath smelt awful, and his appetite and strength fell away. The time for fooling himself was over : something new and dreadful was going on inside Ivan Ilyich, something significant, more significant than anything in his whole life. And he was the only one who knew it; the people around him

didn't know, or didn't want to know - they thought that every-thing in the world was going on as before. This was what tormented Ivan Ilyich more than anything. He could see that his family - especially his wife and daughter, whose visiting season was in full swing - had no inkling; it annoyed them that he was not much fun and asked so much of them - as if he was to blame. Despite their best efforts to hide it, he could see that he was in their way. His wife had developed an attitude to his illness and she was sticking to it whatever he might say or do. Her attitude went like this : 'You know what it's like,' she would say to her friends. 'Ivan Ilyich can't be like other people. He won't stick to his treatment. One moment he takes his drops and eats what he's supposed to, and goes to bed when he should; the next day, if I'm not watching him, he doesn't take his medicine, he eats sturgeon - which he's not allowed - and he stays up playing whist until one in the morning.'

'Oh, come on,' says Ivan Ilyich. 'I did that once, with Pyotr Ivanovich.'

'What about yesterday, with Shebek?'

'It made no difference. I couldn't sleep with all that pain...'

'Well, it doesn't matter why. Only you'll never get better like that, and it's getting us down.'

Praskovya's attitude towards Ivan Ilyich's illness, of which she made no secret to other people or to him, was that it was all his fault; he was making his wife's life a misery yet again. Ivan Ilyich felt she was doing this unconsciously, but that didn't make things any easier for him.

In court Ivan Ilyich noticed, or thought he noticed, the same strange attitude towards him. There were times when he thought people were watching him closely like a man who was about to give up his job; at other times his associates would make friendly little jokes about the way he worried over his health, as if this ghastly, fearful, unheard-of thing that had got going inside him and was now incessantly gnawing at him and inexorably taking him away was a good subject and a laughing matter. The one who infuriated him most was Schwartz, with his playfulness, *joie de vivre* and all-round respectability which recalled the Ivan Ilyich of ten years before.

His friends have come round for a game of cards. They take their places and deal, softening the new cards. He sorts his diamonds - seven of them. His partner bids no trumps and supports him with two diamonds. Couldn't be better. This should be a wonderful, joyous moment - a grand slam is on. But suddenly he feels that gnawing pain, that taste in his mouth, and he is struck by the bar-barity of rejoicing in a grand slam.

He glances across at his partner, Mikhail Mikhaylovich, who is tapping the table with an eager hand, politely and graciously holding back from grabbing the tricks and pushing them towards Ivan Ilyich so that he can enjoy the pleasure of raking them in without having to make any effort or reaching very far. 'Does he think I'm too weak to reach out?' thinks Ivan Ilyich, forgetting what are trumps and overtrumping his partner with his own, which leaves them three tricks short of a grand slam. And worst of all, he can see how upset Mikhail Mikhaylovich is, and he doesn't care. And it is awful to think why he doesn't care.

They can all see that he is distraught, and they say to him, 'We can stop if you're feeling tired. Why don't you have a rest?' Rest? No, he's *not tired*. They finish the rub-ber. They are all gloomy and silent. Ivan Ilyich senses that he has caused the gloom, and he cannot dispel it. They have supper and go home, and Ivan Ilyich is left there alone with the knowledge that his life has been poisoned and is poisoning other people's lives, and the poison is not wearing off, it is working its way deeper and deeper into his very being.

And he has to take this knowledge to bed with him, along with the physical pain and the terror, often to spend a near-sleepless night because of the pain. And next morning he has to get up again, put on his clothes, go to court, talk, write or, if he doesn't go out, stay in with every one of those twenty-four hours that make up a day and a night, each one of them an agony. And he has to live like this on the edge of destruction, alone, with nobody at all to understand and pity him.

5

One month passed like this, then another. His brother-in-law came to their town to stay with them for the New Year celebrations. Ivan Ilyich was in court when he arrived. Praskovya was out

shopping. On his return Ivan Ilyich walked into his study and found his brother-in-law already there, a strong, fit young man, busy unpacking his own suitcase. He looked up when he heard Ivan Ilyich approaching and stared at him in silence for a moment. That stare told Ivan Ilyich every-thing. His brother-in-law opened his mouth to exclaim, but managed to restrain himself. That movement confirmed everything.

‘I’ve changed, haven’t I?’

‘Well ... you have rather.’

And after this, however hard Ivan Ilyich tried to raise the subject of his appearance, his brother-in-law wouldn’t say a word. Praskovya arrived home and her brother went to see her. Ivan Ilyich locked the door and went to have a good look at himself in the mirror, full face, then in profile. He picked up a photograph of himself with his wife and compared his likeness with what he now saw in the mirror. The difference was enormous. Then he pulled his sleeves up, looked at his arms, pulled his sleeves back down and sat down on an ottoman, looking blacker than night.

‘No, no. I mustn’t,’ he told himself. He jumped up and went to his desk, where he opened a file and began to read, but he couldn’t go on. He opened the door and went out into the hallway. The door into the drawing-room was shut. He tiptoed over to it and started to listen.

‘No, you’re exaggerating,’ Praskovya was saying.

‘What do you mean, exaggerating? You can’t see it. He’s a dead man. Look at his eyes - there’s no light in them. What is it he’s got exactly?’

‘Nobody knows. Nikolayev [yet another doctor] said something, but I don’t know what it was. Leshchetitsky [the celebrity] said the exact opposite...’

Ivan Ilyich walked away back into his room, lay down and started to think things over. ‘Kidney, a floating kid-ney...’ He could remember everything the doctors had told him about it becoming detached and starting to wander. With an effort of his imagination he tried to catch the kidney, stop it moving and fix it strongly. It seemed to take so little effort. ‘No, I’m going back to Pyotr Ivanovich [the friend who was the doctor’s friend].’ He rang the bell, ordered

the carriage and prepared to go out.

'*Jean* , where are you going?' asked his wife, looking very gloomy but uncharacteristically kind.

The uncharacteristic kindness infuriated him. He gave her a dark look. 'I've got to go and see Pyotr Ivanovich.'

He went to see the friend with the friend who was the doctor, and on with him to the doctor himself, who was in. They had a long talk.

Going through the details of anatomy and physiology in terms of what the doctor considered to be happening in his insides made everything quite clear to him.

There was a little bit of something, a tiny little thing, in his blind gut. It could all be put right. By raising the energy level in one organ and lowering the activity of another, absorption could be achieved and everything would be all right. He was a little late for dinner. He talked cheerfully after dinner, but for some time he couldn't bring himself to go to his room and work. Eventually he did go off to his study and he got straight down to it. He worked at the files for a while, but he couldn't shrug off the awareness that he had some important unfinished personal business that would have to be attended to in the end. When he had finished the files he remembered that this personal business meant thinking about his gut. But instead of giving in to this he went to take tea in the drawing-room. They had guests - there was conversation, piano-playing and singing - and among them was the examining magistrate who was such a good match for his daughter. As Praskovya remarked, he enjoyed the evening more than usual, but never for a minute did he forget that he had some important unfinished thinking to do, about his gut. At eleven o'clock he said goodnight and went to his room. He had been sleeping alone since his illness began, in a tiny little room next to his study. He went in, undressed and took up a Zola novel, but instead of reading it he lapsed into thought. And in his imagination the longed-for healing of his blind gut took place; absorption was followed by evacuation and its proper function was restored. 'Yes, that's how it goes,' he said to himself. 'All you have to do is give nature a helping hand.' He remembered his medicine, eased himself up and took it, then lay on his back focusing on the good that the medicine was doing and the

way it was getting rid of the pain. 'Keep taking it regularly and avoid anything harmful. I feel a bit better already, a lot better.' He felt his side - no pain to the touch. 'No, there's no feeling there. It really is getting a lot better.' He put out the candle and lay on his side...

Absorption; the blind gut was curing itself. Then suddenly he could feel the same old dull gnawing pain, quiet, serious, unrelenting. The same nasty taste in his mouth. His heart sank and his head swam. 'O God! O God!' he muttered. 'It's here again, and it's not going away.' And suddenly he saw things from a completely different angle. 'The blind gut! The kidney!' he said to himself. 'It's got nothing to do with the blind gut or the kidney. It's a matter of living or... dying. Yes, I have been alive, and now my life is steadily going away and I can't stop it. No. There's no point in fooling myself. Can't they all see - everybody but me - that I'm dying? It's only a matter of weeks, or days - maybe any minute now. There has been daylight; now there is darkness. I have been *here* ; now I'm going there. *Where* ?' A cold shiver ran over him; he stopped breathing. He could hear nothing but the beat-ing of his heart.

'When I'm dead, what happens then? Nothing happens. So where shall I be when I'm no longer here? Is this really death? No, I won't have it!' He jumped up, tried to light the candle, fumbling with trembling hands, dropped the candle and the stick on the floor and flopped back down on to his pillow. 'Why bother? It doesn't make any difference,' he said to himself, staring into the darkness with his eyes wide open. 'Death. Yes, it's death. And not one of them knows, or wants to know. They have no pity for me. Too busy playing.' (Through the door he could hear the distant sounds of a singing voice and the accompaniment.) 'They don't care, but they're going to die, too. Fools! Me first, then them, but they've got it coming to them. And they're enjoying themselves! Animals!' He was choking with spite. And he felt a wave of agonizing, unbearable misery. It surely wasn't possible that everybody everywhere should be condemned to this awful horror. He sat up.

'Something's not right. I've got to calm down and think it through from the beginning.' And he began to think. 'Yes, the beginning of the illness. I banged my side, but I felt just the same that day and the next. A bit of dis-comfort, then a bit more, then doctors, depression, worry, more doctors, and all the time I was

getting nearer and nearer to the edge. Less and less strength. Nearer and nearer. And I've been wasting away. No light in my eyes. Death is here, and I've been worrying about my gut. Worrying about getting my gut better, and this is death. Is it really death?

Horror swept over him again, he gasped for breath, bent over and groped for the matches, leaning with one elbow on the bedside table. It was in his way, hurting him; he lost his temper with it, pressing down on it even harder in exasperation, and knocked it over. Breathless and in despair, he flopped down on to his back, expecting to die at any moment.

By this time the guests were leaving. Praskovya was seeing them out. She heard something fall, and came in.

'What's the matter?'

'Nothing. I just dropped something.'

She went out and came back with a candle. He lay there, puffing and panting heavily like a man who has just run a mile. His eyes settled on her.

'What's the matter, *Jean* ?'

'No-thing. I... dropped it.' ('No use talking to her. She won't understand,' he thought.)

And she didn't. She picked up the candle and lit it for him, then she hurried out of the room to say goodnight to another guest.

When she came back he was still lying there on his back, staring upwards.

'What's wrong? Are you feeling worse?'

'Yes.'

She shook her head and sat down.

'Listen, *Jean*. I think perhaps we ought to ask Lesh-chetitsky to visit you at home.'

This meant asking the celebrated doctor to come to them, whatever the expense. He gave her a vitriolic smile and said no. She sat there for a while, then came over and kissed him on the forehead.

He hated her with every fibre of his being while she was

kissing him, and it took all his strength not to push her away.

‘Goodnight. God willing, you’ll soon go to sleep.’

‘Yes.’

6

Ivan Ilyich could see that he was dying, and he was in constant despair.

In the depths of his soul Ivan Ilyich knew he was dying but, not only could he not get used to the idea, he didn’t understand it, couldn’t understand it at all.

All his life the syllogism he had learned from Kiese-wetter’s logic - Julius Caesar is a man, men are mortal, therefore Caesar is mortal - had always seemed to him to be true only when it applied to Caesar, certainly not to him. There was Caesar the man, and man in gen-eral, and it was fair enough for them, but he wasn’t Caesar the man and he wasn’t man in general, he had always been a special being, totally different from all others, he had been Vanya with his mama and his papa, with Vitya and Volodya, with his toys, and the carriage-driver, then little Katya, with all the delights, sorrows and rapture of child-hood, boyhood and youth. Did Caesar have anything to do with the smell of that little striped leather ball that Vanya had loved so much? Was it Caesar who had kissed his mother’s hand like that, and was it for Caesar that the silken folds of his mother’s dress had rustled the way they did? Was he the one who had rebelled at law school over the provision of snacks? Had Caesar been in love like him? Could Caesar chair a session like him?

Yes, Caesar is mortal and it’s all right for him to die, but not me, Vanya, Ivan Ilyich, with all my feelings and thoughts - it’s different for me. It can’t be me having to die. That would be too horrible.

These were the feelings that came to him.

‘If I had to be like Caesar and die, I would have been aware of it, an inner voice would have told me, but there hasn’t been anything like that on the inside. I’ve always thought - and all my friends have, too - that we’re not the same as Caesar. And now look what’s happened!’ he said to himself. ‘It can’t be. It can’t be, but it is. How can it be? What’s it all about?’

He couldn't understand, and he tried to banish the idea - it was false, wrong and morbid - and replace it with proper, healthy thinking. But the same thought - it wasn't just a thought but something that seemed like reality - kept coming back and facing him.

And in order to dispel these thoughts he started calling up different thoughts one after another, hoping to get support from them. He tried to get back to his earlier ways of thinking which had once protected him from thinking about death. But, strange to say, everything that once had protected him by hiding and eliminating any awareness of death was unable to perform that function now. In these latter days Ivan Ilyich spent most of his time trying to get back to the earlier ways of feeling that had protected him from death. He would say to himself, 'I must get down to some work. When all's said and done it's what I've been living for.' And he would go off to court banishing all his doubts, get into conversation with his colleagues and casually take his seat as he had done so many times before, contemplating the crowd before him with a pensive air and resting his wasted hands on the oaken arms of his chair, leaning over in his usual way to exchange whispered words with a colleague while toy-ing with a file before raising his eyes suddenly and sitting up straight in order to go through the familiar words and begin the proceedings. But then suddenly there it was, the pain in his side, irrespective of where they had got to in the proceedings, and it was beginning to gnaw at him. Ivan Ilyich focused on it, drove the thought of it away, but it continued to make itself felt. *It* kept coming back, facing him and looking at him, while he sat there rigid, the fire went out of his eyes and he began to wonder whether *It* was the only truth. And his colleagues and subordinates looked on in distress, amazed that he, a man of such brilliant and subtle judgement, was getting confused and making mistakes. He would pull himself together, try to bring himself round and somehow bring the session to a conclusion, only to return home sadly aware that his judicial work could no longer hide him, as it once had done, from what he wanted to conceal, that he could not use his judicial work to rid himself of *It*. And the worst thing was that *It* was distracting him not in order to make him do something but only to get him to look *It* straight in the eye, just look at *It* and do noth-ing but suffer beyond words.

And in order to escape from this situation Ivan Ilyich sought other forms of consolation, other ways of screening it off; other screens appeared and for a while they seemed to be the saving of him, but immediately they were not so much destroyed as shone right through; it was as if *It* could penetrate anything, no defence being any good.

Sometimes in these latter days he would go into the drawing-room that he had furnished - the very room where he had had his fall, the room which (it was bitterly amusing to reflect) he had given his life to furnish, because he knew his illness had started with that bruise - he would go in and notice a scratch on a lacquered table top left behind by something sharp. Looking for the cause he would find it in the decorative bronzework on an album with one edge bent up. He would pick up the album, an expensive one which he had compiled with loving care, annoyed at the carelessness shown by his daughter and her friends - it was torn in places and some of the photographs were upside down. He would go to a lot of trouble sorting it out and bending the bronzework back into place.

Then it would occur to him to move this entire *établissement* of albums over into a corner near the flowers. He would call the footman. Either his wife or his daughter would come to help. They wouldn't agree, they would take issue with him, he would argue and lose his temper - but none of this mattered because he had stopped remembering *It*. *It* was nowhere to be seen.

But once, when he was moving something himself, his wife said, 'Let the servants do that. You'll hurt yourself again,' and suddenly *It* flashed through the screen - he saw *It*. *It* flashed at him and, even as he longed for *It* to disappear, he couldn't help focusing on his side - still there, the same ache that would not be ignored, and *It* was staring straight at him from behind the flowers. What was it all about?

'And that's the truth of it - I've lost my life here on this curtain, my battleground. Have I really? How horrible and how stupid! *It* can't be! *It* can't be, but it is.'

He would go into his study, lie down and find himself alone again with *It*. Face to face with *It*. Nothing to be done about *It*. Only stare at *It* and go cold.

How it came about in the third month of Ivan Ilyich's illness no one could have said, because it came on imperceptibly, by stages, but it happened that all of them - his wife, and daughter, and son, and the servants, and their friends, and the doctors, and most importantly he himself - everybody knew that the only interesting thing about him now was whether it would take him a long time to give up his place, finally release the living from the oppression caused by his presence, and himself be released from his suffering.

He slept less and less. He was given opium and injected with morphine, but this brought no relief. To begin with, the dull feeling of anguish which he experienced in his semi-conscious state gave him a sense of relief simply by being something new, but then it became just as agonizing as the raw pain, perhaps more so.

They gave him special food cooked from recipes provided by the doctors, but the food became more and more tasteless, more and more repulsive.

For the call of nature he also had special arrangements, and each time it was agonizing. The agony came from the dirtiness, the unseemliness, the smell and also the knowledge that someone else had to be involved in it.

But this most unpleasant business brought one consolation to Ivan Ilyich. The person who came to take things away was Gerasim, the peasant servant who waited on them at table.

Gerasim was a clean, fresh peasant lad, always bright and cheerful, who had fattened up on city food. To begin with, Ivan Ilyich was embarrassed to watch him, always so neatly dressed in his Russian costume, performing such a distasteful service.

One day as he got up from the chamber pot not strong enough to pull up his own trousers he collapsed into a soft armchair and looked down in horror at his bared puny thighs with their starkly protruding muscles.

Who should come in but Gerasim, wearing his thick boots and exuding both their nice tarry smell and that of the fresh winter air, Gerasim with his light but firm tread, sporting a clean hessian apron and a clean cotton shirt, with his sleeves rolled up his bare strong young arms, and without a glance at Ivan Ilyich - to spare the sick

man's feelings he was clearly suppressing the joyful vitality that shone from his face - he walked over to the pot.

'Gerasim,' said Ivan Ilyich feebly.

Gerasim started, clearly worried that he might have done something wrong, and in one swift movement he presented to the sick man his fresh, kind, open young face which was showing the first traces of a beard.

'Yes, sir?'

'This is not very nice for you, is it? You'll have to for-give me. I can't help it.'

'Please don't worry, sir.' And Gerasim's eyes flashed as he bared his young white teeth. 'It's no trouble. You're a sick man.'

And with his quick strong hands he did his usual thing and walked out with a light step. And five minutes later with the same light step he came back in.

Ivan Ilyich was still sitting there in his armchair.

'Gerasim , 'he said, when the lad had replaced the clean, freshly washed chamber pot, 'would you mind helping me? Over here.' Gerasim came across. 'Lift me up, please. I can't manage it on my own, and I've sent Dmitriy away.'

Gerasim came over. In one movement that was as easy as his way of walking, he put his strong arms gently round Ivan Ilyich, lifted him up and held him with one hand, pulled up his trousers with the other, and tried to settle him down. But Ivan Ilyich asked to be taken across to the sofa. effortlessly and apparently without tightening his grip, Gerasim took him, almost carried him, to the sofa and settled him down there.

'Thank you. You do everything so... nicely. So well.'

Gerasim gave another smile and made as if to leave the room. But Ivan Ilyich felt so comfortable with him that he didn't feel like letting him go.

'That's better... Would you mind moving that chair over here? No, that one. Under my legs. It feels easier when my legs are up high.'

Gerasim brought the chair over, set it squarely on the floor

without banging it down, and lifted Ivan Ilyich's legs up on to it. Ivan Ilyich felt an easing of the pain as Gerasim raised his legs.

'I feel better when my legs are up,' said Ivan Ilyich. 'Would you put that cushion under me?'

Gerasim did so. He raised his legs again and put the cushion under them. Again Ivan Ilyich felt better when Gerasim was holding his legs. When he lowered them he felt worse.

'Gerasim,' he asked, 'are you busy just now?'

'Not in the slightest, sir,' said Gerasim, who had learned from the townspeople how to speak to the masters.

'What do you have on at the moment?'

'What do I have on? I've done everything there is to do - except chop the firewood for tomorrow.'

'Well, I'd like you to hold my legs up. Would you mind?'

'Of course not. I don't mind.' Gerasim held his legs up, and Ivan Ilyich could have sworn that in this position he couldn't feel any pain.

'But what about the firewood?'

'Don't you worry about that, sir. We'll manage.'

Ivan Ilyich told Gerasim to sit down and hold his legs up. He struck up a conversation and, strangely enough, he seemed to feel better with Gerasim holding his legs.

After that Ivan Ilyich would send for Gerasim now and then and have his legs held up on his shoulders. He liked it when they talked to each other. Gerasim did all of this easily, willingly and with a kindliness that Ivan Ilyich found moving. Health, strength and vitality in all other people were offensive to Ivan Ilyich; only Gerasim's strength and vitality gave him comfort rather than distressed him.

Ivan Ilyich's worst torment was the lying - the lie, which was somehow maintained by them all, that he wasn't dying, he was only ill, and all he had to do was keep calm and follow doctor's orders and then something good would emerge. Whereas he knew that, whatever was done to him, nothing would emerge but more and more agony, suffering and death. And this lie was torture for him -

he was tortured by their unwillingness to acknowledge what they all knew and he knew; they wanted to lie to him about his terrible situation, and they wanted him - they were compelling him - to be a party to this lie. All this lying to him, lie upon lie, on the eve of his death, lying that was inexorably reducing the sol-emn act of his death to the same level as their social calls, their draperies, the sturgeon for dinner... it was all a terrible torment for Ivan Ilyich. And strangely enough, on many occasions when they were acting out this farce in front of him, he was within a hair's breadth of scream-ing at them, 'Stop all this lying! You know and I know that I'm dying, so the least you can do is stop lying to me.' But he never quite had the nerve to do it. He could see that the awful, terrible act of his dying had been reduced by those around him to the level of an unpleas-ant incident, something rather indecent (as if they were dealing with someone who had come into the drawing-room and let off a bad smell) , and this was done by exploiting the very sense of decency that he had been observing all his life. He could see that no one had any pity for him because no one had the slightest desire to understand his situation. Gerasim was the only one who did understand his situation, and he was sorry for him. This was why Ivan Ilyich felt comfortable only with Ger-asim. It was a comfort to him when Gerasim, sometimes for nights on end, held his legs up and refused to go to bed, saying, 'Please don't worry about it, Ivan Ilyich. I'll catch up on my sleep.' Or else he would suddenly address him in familiar language and add, 'It'd be different if you weren't ill, but with things the way they are why shouldn't I help you out?' Gerasim was the only one who didn't lie to him; everything showed that he was the only one who understood what was going on and saw no need to hide it. He just felt sorry for his weak and emaciated master. Once, when Ivan Ilyich was dismissing him, he put it quite bluntly : 'We've all got to die one day. Why shouldn't I give you a hand?' This was to say there was a good reason for not making a fuss about helping out : he was doing it for a dying man and he hoped that when his time came someone would help him out in the same way.

Apart from all this lying, or perhaps because of it, the most tormenting thing of all for Ivan Ilyich was the fact that no one showed him any pity in the way that he wanted them to. There were some moments, after long periods of suffering, when what Ivan Ilyich wanted more than anything else - however embarrassed

he would have been to admit it - what he wanted was for someone to take pity on him as if he were a sick child. He wanted to be kissed and cuddled and have a few tears shed over him in the way that children are cuddled and comforted. He knew he was a big man and something of a greybeard, which made this impossible, but nevertheless that is what he wanted. And his relationship with Gerasim offered something close to this, which was why the relationship with Gerasim gave him comfort.

Here is Ivan Ilyich wanting to weep, wanting to be cuddled and have tears shed over him, when in comes his colleague Shebek and, instead of weeping and getting some tenderness, Ivan Ilyich puts on a solemn and serious face, looks thoughtful and from sheer habit not only comments on the significance of a decision handed down by the Court of Cassation, but goes on to defend it strongly.

It was this living a lie, all around him and within him, that did most to poison the last days in the life of Ivan Ilyich.

8

It was morning. It was morning only because Gerasim had gone and Pyotr the servant was there, putting out the candles, opening one curtain and quietly tidying up. Morning or evening, Friday or Sunday - it didn't matter, it was all the same - grinding, agonizing pain, never for a moment relenting; an awareness of life hopelessly slipping away but not yet gone; the same terrible, relentless approach of hateful death, the only reality; and still all that lying. With all of this, what did the days, weeks and hours matter?

'Can I get you some tea, sir?'

'He likes good order. The masters must have their tea in the morning,' he thought, but all he said was, 'No.'

'Would you care to move over to the sofa, sir?'

'He wants to tidy the room, and I'm in the way. I am dirt and disorder,' he thought, but all he said was, 'No. Leave me alone.'

The servant went about his work again. Ivan Ilyich stretched out one hand. Pyotr came over ready to help.

'What can I do for you, sir?'

'My watch.'

Pyotr took the watch, which was lying nearby, and handed it over.

‘Half-past eight. Are they still in bed?’

‘No, sir, they’re not. Master Vasily [his son] has gone to school and madam asked me to wake her if you wanted her. Shall I do that?’

‘No. Don’t brother.’ Ivan Ilyich wondered whether to try some tea. Yes. ‘Bring me some tea.’

Pyotr moved towards the door. Ivan Ilyich felt terrified at the thought of being left alone. How could he stop him leaving? Oh yes, medicine. ‘Pyotr, would you give me my medicine?’ Well, why not? The medicine might help. He took a spoonful and swallowed it. No, it wouldn’t help. It was all rubbish. Just pretending. He felt sure of this as the old familiar taste returned, sickly and beyond hope. No, his faith was gone. And the pain, the pain, why couldn’t it ease up just for a minute? He gave a groan. Pyotr came back in.

‘No, carry on. Get me some tea.’

Pyotr left the room. Ivan Ilyich groaned, not really from the pain, however terrible that was, but from anguish. It was the same thing all the time, day and night, with no end to it. Make it soon. Make *what* soon? Death, darkness. No, no. Anything was better than death!

When Pyotr came back in with the tea tray Ivan Ilyich looked at him distractedly for some time, unable to work out who he was or what he was doing there. Pyotr was embarrassed by the long look. The embarrassment brought Ivan Ilyich to his senses.

‘Yes,’ he said. ‘Tea... Good. Leave it there. But I’d like you to help me get washed and put a clean shirt on.’

And Ivan Ilyich began to wash himself. With pauses for rest he washed his hands and face, cleaned his teeth, combed his hair and then took a look in the mirror. He was horrified. The most horrible thing was the limp way his hair stuck to his pallid forehead.

As he had his shirt changed he knew it would be more horrible still to glance down at his body, so he looked away. At last it was done. He put on his dressing-gown, wrapped a rug around himself and sat down in the arm-chair with his tea. For one moment he felt

refreshed, but at the first drink of tea there it was again, the same taste, the same pain. He forced the tea down, then lay back and stretched out his legs. He lay down and told Pyotr he could go.

The same thing again. One glittering drop of hope followed by a raging sea of despair, and nothing but pain, more pain, more anguish, always the same thing. It was depressing to be left alone, and he felt like calling somebody in, but he knew in advance that to have other people there would be even worse. Oh, for another dose of morphine - he might lose himself in that. He must tell that doctor to think of something else. 'I can't go on like this. I can't.'

An hour goes by like this, then another. The bell rings in the hall - could it be the doctor? Yes, it is the doctor, fresh and cheerful, fleshy and hearty, with a look on his face that seems to say, 'Well now, you seem to have had a bit of a fright, but we'll soon sort you out.' The doctor knows that this look is out of place here, but he has assumed it once and for all and he can't get rid of it any more than a man who has gone out visiting can get rid of the frock-coat he put on that morning.

The doctor rubs his hands cheerfully, reassuringly.

'Chilly out there. Thick frost. Give me a minute to get warmed up.' His manner of speaking implies that he won't take long, he just needs to warm up and once he is warmed up he'll put everything right.

'Right then. How are you feeling?'

Ivan Ilyich senses that the doctor feels like saying, 'How's tricks?' but even he can see that this won't do, so he says, 'What sort of night did you have?'

Ivan Ilyich fixes the doctor with a look that seems to ask whether anything would ever make him feel too ashamed to go on lying. The doctor does not wish to understand.

So Ivan Ilyich says, 'No change. Terrible. The pain won't go. It's there all the time. There must be something you can do!'

'Yes, it's normal for patients like you to say that sort of thing. Right then. I think I'm warm enough now. Your good lady is a stickler for these things, but even she wouldn't say I was too cold. So. Good morning to you...' And the doctor shakes him by the hand.

And now, dropping all the banter, the doctor adopts a serious attitude and begins to examine the patient - pulse, temperature, tapping and listening.

Ivan Ilyich knows full well - it is beyond doubt - that this is all nonsense, an empty sham, but when the doctor goes down on his knees, reaches across him, applies his ear higher up and lower down, and then with the gravest look on his face performs a selection of gymnastic contortions, Ivan Ilyich accedes to this just as he once acceded to speeches from lawyers even when he was well aware that they were lying, and why they were lying.

The doctor is still kneeling on the sofa, busily tapping away, when from the doorway comes the rustling of a silk dress and Praskovya can be heard reproaching Pyotr for not letting her know the doctor has arrived.

She comes in, kisses her husband and immediately begins to make it clear that she has been up for some time and only a little misunderstanding has prevented her from being there when the doctor arrived.

Ivan Ilyich looks at her searchingly, resenting everything about her, the whiteness, fullness and cleanliness of her arms and neck, the sheen of her hair and the light in her eyes that are so full of life. He loathes her with every fibre of his being. Physical contact with her is agony for him because it brings on a surge of loathing.

Her attitude towards him and his illness is still the same. Just as the doctor has worked out an attitude towards his patients which he cannot now get rid of, she has worked out a particular attitude towards him - he is failing to do something he ought to do, and it's his fault, and she lovingly reproaches him for it - and she has not been able to rid herself of this attitude towards him.

'He just won't do as he's told! He forgets to take his medicine. And the worst thing is he will lie there in a position that must be bad for him - with his legs up.'

She described how he got Gerasim to hold his legs up for him.

The doctor gave a sweetly condescending smile. 'Can't be helped,' he seemed to be saying. 'These sick people do sometimes have silly ideas. We can't blame them.'

When the examination was over the doctor consulted his watch and then Praskovya informed Ivan Ilyich that, like it or not, she had invited a celebrated specialist to visit them that day and, along with Mikhail Danilovich (the name of the regular doctor) , he would conduct an examination and consultation.

‘Now please don’t argue with me. I’m doing this for myself,’ she said sarcastically, implying that she was doing it all for him and this alone deprived him of any right to refuse. He scowled and said nothing. He felt that the lies that enveloped him were now so messy that he could hardly make sense of anything.

Everything she did for him she was doing for herself, and she told him she was doing for herself what she was actually doing for herself, but she made it sound so implausible that he was forced to assume the opposite.

Sure enough, at half-past eleven, the celebrated specialist arrived. More soundings and grave consultations both in his presence and in the next room concerning the kidney and the blind gut, with questions and answers expressed with such an air of gravity that, instead of the real life-and-death question which was the only one staring him in the face, up came the question of his kidney and blind gut, which were not doing quite what they should and which would shortly be set upon by Mikhail Danilovich and made to work properly.

The celebrated specialist took his leave looking serious but not hopeless. And in answer to the question put to him diffidently by Ivan Ilyich, whose eyes were glistening with fear and hope, as to whether there was any possibility of recovery, he replied that nothing could be guaranteed but there was a possibility. The look of hope on Ivan Ilyich’s face as he watched the doctor leave was so pathetic that when she saw it Praskovya actually burst into tears as she walked out of the study to give the celebrated specialist his fee.

The lifting of his spirits induced by the doctor’s words of encouragement was short-lived. It was still the same room, the same pictures, curtains, wallpaper, medicine bottles, and the same body, his body, still suffering, racked with pain. And Ivan Ilyich began to moan, so they gave him an injection and he lapsed into unconsciousness.

When he came to, it was getting dark. They brought him his dinner. He forced down a little thin soup, then it was the same again, with another night coming on.

When dinner was over, at seven o'clock, Praskovya came in dressed for going out, with her ample breasts well supported and traces of powder on her face. That morning she had reminded him that they were going to the theatre. Sarah Bernhardt was in town, and they had a box which they had taken at his insistence. By now he had forgotten this, and he was offended to see her dressed up. But he hid his feelings when he remembered having insisted that they reserve the box and go, this being an aesthetic experience of educational value for the children.

As she came in Praskovya had looked pleased with herself, if rather guilty. She sat down on the edge of a chair and asked how he was feeling, though he could see that she was asking for the sake of asking rather than to find out, since she knew there was nothing to find out, and then she launched into what she felt she had to say, that nothing would have induced her to go out tonight, but the box had been reserved, Hélène and her daughter were going and so was Petrishchev (their daughter's fiancé, the examining magistrate), and they couldn't be allowed to go alone. But for that, she would have preferred to stay in with him. And he must be sure to follow the doctor's orders while she was out.

'Oh yes, and Fyodor[the fiancé]would like to come in. Do you mind? And Liza.'

'Let them come in.'

In came his daughter, dressed up to the nines, an exposed young body - while his body was causing him so much suffering. And she was flaunting it. Healthy and strong, obviously in love, she had no time for the illness, suffering and death that were marring her happiness.

In came Fyodor Petrovich, also in evening dress and sporting an *à la Capoul* hairstyle. The veins stood out on his long neck which was squeezed into its tight collar over a vast expanse of white shirtfront, and his narrow black trousers were tightly stretched over his strong thighs. One of his hands wore a close-fitting white glove and he carried an opera hat.

Creeping in unobtrusively behind him came the school-boy, wearing a new uniform and gloves, poor chap, with terrible dark blue rings under his eyes, the meaning of which was not lost on Ivan Ilyich.

He had always felt sorry for his son. And his fright-ened, compassionate look was dreadful to behold. Apart from Gerasim, Ivan Ilyich thought, Vasya was the only one who understood and felt sorry for him.

They all sat down and asked how he was feeling. Then for a while no one spoke. Liza asked her mother whether she had the opera glasses. Mother and daughter had a little argument about who had put them where. It ended nastily.

Fyodor asked Ivan Ilyich whether he had ever seen Sarah Bernhardt. At first Ivan Ilyich didn't quite catch what the question was, but then he said, 'No. Have you?'

'Yes. In *Adrienne Lecouvreur*. '

Praskovya mentioned something she had been particularly good in. Her daughter demurred. They were off into a conversation about her charm and naturalism as an actress, the same old conversation that everybody else has.

In the midst of it Fyodor looked across at Ivan Ilyich and suddenly broke off. The others looked, and they stopped, too. Ivan Ilyich was staring straight ahead, his eyes glittering, and he was obviously furious with them. Things had to be put right, but there was absolutely no way of putting things right. Somehow the silence had to be broken. No one made a move, and everyone was becoming terrified that the living lie demanded by propriety would somehow be shattered and seen by everyone for what it was. It was Liza who made the first move. She broke the silence. She wanted to cover up what everyone was feeling, but by speaking out she revealed it.

'Oh well, if we're *going* it's time we got started,' she said, glancing at her watch, a present from her father, and she smiled almost imperceptibly at her young man to convey something known only to the two of them as she got up, rustling her skirts.

They all got up, took their leave and drove off.

When they had gone Ivan Ilyich seemed to feel easier; the lie had gone, gone away with them - but the pain was still there. That same pain, that same feeling of dread made sure that nothing was harder, nothing easier. Every-thing was worse.

Once again the minutes passed one after another, then the hours one after another; it was always the same, end-lessly, and the inevitable end itself was all the more horrible.

‘Yes, send Gerasim in,’ he said in reply to a question from Pyotr.

9

It was late at night when his wife returned. She tiptoed into the room, but he heard her; he opened his eyes and rapidly closed them again. She wanted to dismiss Ger-asim and sit with him herself. He opened his eyes and said, ‘No. You go.’

‘Are you in a lot of pain?’

‘It doesn’t matter.’

‘Take some opium.’

He consented, and drank some. She went away.

Until about three in the morning he was in a state of excruciating pain and delirium. He dreamt that somehow he was being forced, along with his pain, into the depths of a narrow black sack, being forced further and further in and not quite getting there. It was a harrowing, agon-izing process. And he was scared, he wanted to get through and out, he was struggling, trying to help. Then suddenly he lost his hold and fell, and woke up. Gerasim was still there, sitting at the foot of the bed, dozing quietly, patiently. And he himself was lying there with his withered stockinged legs raised up on Gerasim’s shoulders. The same candle was there, with its shade, and the same unremitting pain.

‘Go away, Gerasim,’ he whispered.

‘I don’t mind, sir. I’ll just sit here for a bit longer.’

‘No, you go away.’

He lowered his legs, turned sideways on to one arm and felt sorry for himself. He waited only for Gerasim to go out into the

next room, and then he could restrain himself no longer : he burst into tears like a child. He was weeping because of his own helpless state, and his loneliness, and other people's cruelty, and God's cruelty, and God's non-existence.

'Why hastThou done all of this? Why hastThou brought me to this point? Why oh why dostThou torture me like this?...'

He was not expecting any answers; he was weeping because there were not and could not be any answers. The pain struck him again, but he didn't move and didn't call out. He said to himself, 'Here it comes again. Hit me then! But what's it for? What have I done toThee? What is it for?'

Then he fell silent, and not only stopped crying, he stopped breathing. Suddenly he was all ears; he seemed to be listening not to a voice speaking in words but to the voice of his soul, the thoughts welling up in his mind.

'What do you want?' was the first expressible concept that came to him. 'What do you want? What do you want?' he repeated to himself. 'What is it?'

'No more pain. Staying alive,' came the answer.

And once again his concentration became so intense that not even the pain could distract him.

'Staying alive? How?' asked the voice of his soul.

'Oh, life like it used to be. Happy and good.'

'Life like it used to be? Happy and good?' came the voice.

And in his imagination he started to run through the best times of his happy life. But what was strange was that all the best times of his happy life no longer seemed anything like what they had been before. Nothing did - except the first recollections of his childhood. There, in his childhood, there was something truly happy that he could have lived with if it returned. But the person living out that happiness no longer existed; it was like remembering someone quite different.

At the point where he, today's Ivan Ilyich, began to emerge, all the pleasures that had seemed so real melted away now before his eyes and turned into something trivial and often disgusting.

And the further he was from childhood, the nearer he got to the present day, the more trivial and dubious his pleasures appeared. It started with law school. That had retained a little something that was still really good : there was fun, there was friendship, there was hope. But in the last years the good times had become more exceptional. Then, at the beginning of his service with the governor, some good times came again : memories of making love to a woman. Then it became all confused, and the good times were not so many. After that there were fewer still; the further he went the fewer there were.

Marriage... an accident and such a disappointment, and his wife's bad breath, and all that sensuality and hypocrisy! And the deadliness of his working life, and those money worries, going on for a year, two years, ten, twenty - always the same old story. And the longer it went on the deadlier it became.

'It's as if I had been going downhill when I thought I was going uphill. That's how it was. In society's opinion I was heading uphill, but in equal measure life was slipping away from me... And now it's all over. Nothing left but to die!

'So what's it all about? What's it for? It's not possible. It's not possible that life could have been as senseless and sickening as this. And if it has really been as sickening and senseless as this, why do I have to die, and die in agony? There's something wrong. Maybe I didn't live as I should have done?' came the sudden thought. 'But how can that be when I did everything properly?' he wondered, instantly dismissing as a total impossibility the one and only solution to the mystery of life and death.

'So, what *do* you want now? To live? Live how? To live as you do in court when the usher yells out, "The Court is in session!"' 'Court in session, sessions in court,' he repeated to himself. 'Here comes judgement! But I'm not guilty,' he cried out angrily. 'What is this for?'

And he stopped crying, turned to face the wall and let his mind dwell on one single question : 'Why all this horror? What's the reason for it?'

But, for all his dwelling on it, he could find no answer. And whenever the thought occurred to him - which it often did - that all

this was happening to him because he had been living the wrong kind of life, he would instantly remember how proper his life had been and dismiss such a bizarre notion.

10

Another two weeks went by. Ivan Ilyich no longer rose from his sofa. He didn't care to lie in bed, so he lay on the sofa. And lying there, almost invariably facing the wall, he endured all the inexplicable agony in solitude, and in solitude he brooded on the same inexplicable question : 'What is this? Can it really be death?' And an inner voice would reply, 'Yes, that's what it is.' 'What is this torture for?' And the voice would reply, 'It's just there. It's not for anything.' Above and beyond this there was nothing.

From the very onset of his illness, since the first time he had driven round to see the doctor, his life had divided itself into two opposite and alternating moods : either despair and the anticipation of a horribly incomprehensible death, or hope accompanied by an obsessive fascination for the workings of his body. He had eyes for only two things : either a kidney or blind gut that had temporarily stopped doing what it should do, or a horribly incomprehensible death, which there was no way to avoid.

These two moods alternated in him from the very out-set of his illness, but the further the illness progressed the more dubious and preposterous his notions of a kidney became, and the more realistic was his awareness of impending death.

All he had to do was remember what he had been like three months before and what he was now, remember how steadily he had gone downhill, and any possibility of hope was shattered.

In his last days of solitude, when he found himself lying there facing the back of the sofa, solitude in the midst of a populous city and his own friends and family - a solitude more complete than anything anywhere, at the bottom of the sea or in the bowels of the earth - in these last days of terrible solitude Ivan Ilyich lived only by recreating the past. Images of his past life came back to him one after another. This process always began with the most recent ones and proceeded back to the most remote, to childhood, and there it lingered. If Ivan Ilyich remembered the stewed prunes he had been offered for dinner that day he would remember the raw and wrinkly

French prunes of his childhood, their special taste and how his mouth watered when he got down to the stone, and along with the memory of that taste would come a whole series of further memories of that time : his nurse, his brother, his toys. 'No, don't, not that. It's too painful,' Ivan Ilyich would say to himself, transporting himself back to the present : there it was - a button of the back of the sofa, creases in the morocco. 'Morocco is expensive, and it doesn't wear well. It started an argument. But that was different morocco and a different argument - when we tore father's briefcase and got punished, and mother brought us some tarts.' Once again his thoughts were settling on his childhood, and again they were too painful for Ivan Ilyich, so he tried to drive them away and think of something else.

And once again, along with this train of recollections, another train of recollections troubled his spirit - the way in which his illness had grown and got worse. Here, too, the further back he went the more life there was. More goodness in life, more of life itself. The two things were merging. 'It's like the pain getting worse and worse - all of my life has been getting worse and worse,' he thought. There was one point of light back there at the beginning of life, but after that everything had been getting blacker and blacker. 'In inverse proportion to the square of the distance from death,' he thought. And this image of a stone accelerating as it flies down imprinted itself on his soul. Life, a series of increasing sufferings, flies ever faster towards its end, the most terrible suffering. 'I'm flying somewhere...' He would shiver and shudder, trying to resist, but he knew by now that resistance was impossible, and he would turn his eyes to the back of the sofa, eyes that were weary of looking, but couldn't stop looking, at what lay ahead. And he was waiting, waiting for that terrible fall, shock and annihilation. 'Resistance is impossible,' he would say to himself. 'But if only I could see what it's all about! No, that's impossible, too. There would be an explanation if I could say I've been wrong in the way I've lived my life. But you couldn't say that. It's not possible,' he would tell himself, recalling how fastidious he had been about the propriety and respectability of his life. 'You can't say that. It's not possible,' he would tell himself, twisting his lips into a smile as if someone might see it and be taken in by it. 'There is no explanation. Agony and death... What for?'

Two weeks went by like this. During those two weeks an event took place that Ivan Ilyich and his wife had been hoping for : Petrishchev made a formal proposal. It hap-pened one evening. The next morning Praskovya came in to see her husband, wondering how best to break the news of Fyodor's proposal, but during that night Ivan Ilyich's condition had taken another turn for the worse. Praskovya found him on the same sofa, but in a different position. He was lying flat on his back, moaning and staring ahead with a fixed look.

She started talking about his medicine. He transferred his gaze to her. She didn't finish what she had started to say; there was so much enmity in that gaze, and it was levelled straight at her.

'For Christ's sake, let me die in peace!' he said.

She made as if to leave the room, but at that moment in walked their daughter, who came over to say good morning. He gave her the same look he had directed at his wife, and in response to her enquiries about his health he said drily that soon he would no longer be a burden to them. Both of them sat on for a while, saying nothing, and then they left.

'What have we done wrong?' Liza asked her mother. 'Anyone would think it was our fault. I'm sorry for Papa, but why do we have to suffer?'

The doctor arrived at his usual time. Ivan Ilyich responded to him with a yes and no, fixing him with a malevolent look, and finally he said, 'Look, you know you can't help me. Just leave me alone.'

'We can ease the pain,' said the doctor.

'You can't. Leave me alone.'

The doctor went out into the drawing-room and told Praskovya that things were very bad. Only one thing could help - opium. That might ease the pain, which must be dreadful.

The doctor said that the physical pain must be dread-ful, which was true. But more dreadful than the physical pain was the suffering in spirit, his greatest agony.

His spiritual suffering took the form of a thought that had suddenly struck him that night as he looked at Ger-asim's sleepy-eyed, good-natured face with its high cheekbones. 'What if I really have been *wrong* in the way I've lived my whole life, my conscious life?'

It occurred to him that what had once seemed a total impossibility - that he had not lived his life as he should have done - might actually be true. It occurred to him that the slight stirrings of doubt he had experienced about what was considered good by those in the high-est positions, slight stirrings that he had immediately repudiated - that these misgivings might have been true and everything else might have been wrong. His career, the ordering of his life, his family, the things that pre-occupied people in society and at work - all of this might have been wrong. He made an attempt at defending these things for himself. And suddenly he sensed the feebleness of what he was defending. There was nothing to defend.

'But if it's like that,' he said to himself, 'and I am leav-ing this life knowing I have ruined everything I was given, and it can't be put right, what then?' He lay on his back and started to go through his whole life again in a different way. Next morning, when he saw his servant, then his wife, then his daughter, then the doctor - their every movement and every word bore out the terrible truth that had been revealed to him during the night. In them he saw himself and all he had lived by, and he could clearly see that it was all wrong; it was all a gross decep-tion obscuring life and death. This knowledge exacerbated his physical suffering, making it ten times worse. He moaned and writhed, and clutched at his clothing, which seemed to be choking and stifling him. And he hated them for it.

After being given a heavy dose of opium he lost con-sciousness, but by dinner time it had all begun again. He sent everyone away and lay there tossing and turning.

His wife came to him and said, '*Jean* , darling, please do this for my sake.' (For *her* sake?) 'It can't do any harm, and it often helps. Look, it's nothing much. Even healthy people...'

He opened his eyes wide.

'What? Take communion? What for? I'm not doing that... Oh, I

don't know...'

She burst into tears.

'All right, my dear? I'll send for our priest. He's such a nice man.'

'All right. That's fine,' he said.

When the priest came and heard his confession, Ivan Ilyich relaxed, feeling some relief from his doubts and therefore from his suffering, and he experienced a moment of hope. His mind turned again to his blind gut and the possibility of a cure for it. When he took communion there were tears in his eyes.

When he was laid down after taking communion he felt better for a while; there was hope that he might live on. His thoughts turned to the operation that he had been offered. 'I want to live. I do want to live,' he said to himself. His wife came in to greet him after communion. She said the usual things, and then added : 'You really do feel better, don't you?'

'Yes,' he said, looking away.

Her clothes, her figure, the look on her face, the sound of her voice - all said the same thing to him : 'This is wrong. Everything you have lived by, and still do, is a lie, a deception that hides life and death away from you.' And the moment this thought occurred to him, his hatred welled up, and along with the hatred came physical suffering and agony, and along with the agony came awareness of the inevitable destruction that was now so close. There was something different about it : a twisting, shooting pain, and constricted breathing.

The look on his face as he said 'Yes' had been dreadful. When he had got the word out, looking straight at her, he wrenched himself over face down remarkably quickly for one so weak, and roared at her : 'Get out! Go away! Leave me alone!'

12

From that moment on the screaming began. It went on unbroken for three days, so terrible that people two rooms away were horrified to hear it. At the moment when he had answered his wife he had realized he was done for, there was no way back, the

end was here, the absolute end, and his unresolved doubts would remain as doubts.

‘Oh! Oh! Oh!’ he cried, varying the tone. He began by crying out, ‘Oh no!’ and went on screaming the letter ‘o’. Throughout the three days, during which time had ceased to exist for him, he struggled with the black sack into which he was being crammed by an invisible, unstop-pable force. He resisted like a condemned man resisting his executioner, knowing that he is not going to be spared, and with every minute that passed he sensed that, despite all his fighting and struggling, he was getting nearer and nearer to the thing that terrified him. He sensed that the pain came from being thrust into that black hole and, what was worse, not being able to get through. What was preventing him from getting through was his insistence that his life had been a good one. This vindication of his lifestyle was holding him down, pre-venting him from moving on, and causing him the greatest suffering.

Suddenly he felt a strong jolt in his chest and side, and a further constriction of his breathing. He was into the hole, and there at the end of the hole a kind of light was shining. What was happening to him was like when he had been in a railway carriage and you think you are going forwards but you are really going backwards, and suddenly you know what the right direction is.

‘Yes, it’s all been wrong,’ he told himself, ‘but that doesn’t matter. It’s possible to do the right thing. But what is the right thing?’ he wondered, and suddenly he was calm.

It was nearing the end of the third day, an hour before his death. At that very moment his schoolboy son crept in to see his father and came over to his bed. The dying man was still screaming desperately and waving his arms about. His hand happened to catch the boy’s head. The boy took hold of it, pressed it to his lips and burst into tears.

This was the very moment when Ivan Ilyich had fallen through and seen a light, and it was revealed to him that his life had not been what it should have been, but that it could still be put right. He was wondering what the right thing was, and he had calmed down, listening. Now he could feel someone kissing his hand. He opened his eyes and looked at his son. He felt sorry for him. His wife came over. He looked at her. With her mouth open and the

tears not wiped away from her nose and cheek she was looking at him in despair. He felt sorry for her.

‘Yes, I’m hurting them,’ he thought. ‘They feel sorry for me, but they’ll be all right when I’m dead.’ He wanted to tell them this, but he wasn’t strong enough to get the words out. ‘Anyway... no good talking. Must *do* something.’ He looked at his wife, motioned to their son and said : ‘Take him away... sorry for him... and you...’ He tried to say, ‘Forgive me,’ but it came out as, ‘For goodness...’ Too weak to correct himself, he waved his hand knowing that he who needed to would understand.

And suddenly everything was clear to him : what had been oppressing him and would not go away *was* now going away, all at once, on two sides, ten sides, all sides. He felt sorry for them, and he must do something to stop hurting them. Set them free, and free himself from all this suffering. ‘So nice, and so simple,’ he thought. ‘But what about the pain?’ he wondered. ‘Where’s it gone? Hey, pain, where are you?’

He listened and waited.

‘Oh, here it comes. So what? Bring on the pain.’

‘What about death? Where is it?’

He was looking for his earlier, accustomed fear of death, but he couldn’t find it. Where was death? What death? There was no fear whatsoever, because there was no death.

Instead of death there was light.

‘So that’s it!’ he said suddenly, out loud. ‘Oh, bliss!’

All of this happened to him in a single moment, and the meaning of that moment was not going to change. For those present, his agony went on for another two hours. There was a rattling in his chest. His wasted body shook. Then the rattling and the wheezing dwindled away.

‘He’s gone!’ said someone over him.

He caught these words and repeated them in spirit. ‘Death has gone,’ he told himself.

‘It’s gone.’

He took in some air, stopped halfway through a deep breath,

stretched out, and died.

Three Deaths

1

It was autumn. Two carriages were bowling along the highway at a fast trot. In the first carriage there were two women. One was a lady, thin and pale. The other was her maid, with a shiny red face and a stout figure; her short, dry hair kept straggling out from under her faded bon-net, and she pushed it back fitfully with a red hand in a torn glove. Her full bosom, covered by a thick cloth of carpet material, exuded good health, and her black eyes were busy; one moment they were peering through the window at the fields flashing by, then they would glance across diffidently at the mistress, or watch the corners of the carriage with some concern. In front of the maid's nose dangled her mistress's bonnet, hanging from the rack, and on her knees lay a puppy. Her feet, raised up on boxes standing on the floor, could just about be heard drumming along with the creaking springs and the rat-tling of the window-panes.

With her hands folded on her lap and her eyes shut the lady rocked feebly against the cushions placed behind her back, frowned slightly and gave a little cough from time to time. She wore a white nightcap on her head, and a light blue scarf was wound round her delicate white neck. A straight parting disappeared under her nightcap, dividing her remarkably sleek, pomaded, light brown hair, and there was something deathly and desiccated in the white skin that formed the parting. The withered, yellowing skin hung loosely over the thin but beautiful contours of her face, with crimson on her prominent cheekbones. Her lips were dry and restless, her thinning eyelashes had no curl in them, and a cloth travelling cloak lay in straight folds across her sunken chest. Even though her eyes were shut, the lady's face gave an impression of weariness, irritation and continual suffering.

A footman, wedged into his seat with his elbows on the sides, was dozing on the box. The coach driver drove his four big, sweating horses, yelling them on and glancing back now and then

at another driver calling to him from a little open carriage behind them. Broad tyre tracks spread themselves evenly in speeding parallel lines along the limy, muddy road. The sky was grey and cold, and a damp mist was settling on the fields. Inside the carriage it was stuffy, smelling of eau-de-Cologne and dust. The invalid lady put her head back and opened her eyes. Her eyes were splendidly dark, and glittering.

‘Again,’ she said, and her beautiful thin hand nervously pushed away the hem of her maid’s cloak which was brushing lightly against her leg, and her mouth was contorted with pain. Matryosha gathered up her cloak with both hands, half-rose on her strong legs and shifted away. Her fresh face was flushed bright red. The splendidly dark eyes of the invalid lady followed the maid’s every movement. Her mistress gripped the seat with both hands and also tried to lift herself and sit up higher, but she couldn’t manage it. Her mouth contracted and her whole face twisted itself into an expression of impotent, malevolent irony. ‘A fat lot of help you are! Oh, don’t bother! I can do it myself, and you needn’t shove all your bags behind me. Please don’t! No, don’t touch me. You’ve no idea!’ The lady closed her eyes, then raised her eyelids again sharply and glared at her maid. Matryosha looked back at her, biting her red lower lip. A heavy sigh arose in the invalid’s bosom, but it was a sigh that cut itself short as it turned into a cough. She looked away, scowl-ing, and clutched at her chest with both hands. When the coughing spasm was over she closed her eyes again and sat there without moving. The two carriages, one large and one small, drove into the village. Matryosha reached out from under her cover and made the sign of the cross.

‘What is it?’ asked her mistress.

‘A post station, madam.’

‘Why are you crossing yourself? That’s what I’m ask-ing you.’

‘There’s a church, madam.’

The invalid turned towards the window and began crossing herself slowly, her eyes widening at the sight of the country church that her carriage was driving past.

The two carriages stopped together by the church. From the small one two men emerged : the invalid lady’s husband and a

doctor. They walked over to the large carriage.

‘How are you feeling?’ asked the doctor, taking her pulse.

‘How are you, darling? Not too tired?’ asked her husband, in French. ‘Would you like to get out?’

Matryosha had scraped up her belongings and was squeezing back into the corner so as not to interfere with their conversation.

‘Not too bad. Just the same,’ the sick woman replied. ‘I’m not getting out.’

The husband stood there for a short while, then went into the station building.

Matryosha skipped down from the carriage and ran tiptoeing in through the gateway.

‘If I feel bad, that’s no reason for you to miss lunch.’ The sick lady gave a feeble smile as she spoke to the doctor, who was standing by her window.

‘They’re not bothered about me, any of them,’ she added, talking to herself, as soon as the doctor had walked gently away and trotted up the steps into the station house. ‘They’re all right, and that’s all that matters. Oh! My God!’

‘Well then, Edward Ivanovich,’ said the husband, rubbing his hands with a cheerful smile as he welcomed the doctor in. ‘I’ve told them to bring the lunch basket in. How does that strike you?’

‘Not a bad idea.’ replied the doctor.

‘How is she doing, then?’ the husband asked with a sigh, lowering his voice and raising his eyebrows.

‘I’ve told you. She won’t make it, not to Italy. She’ll need God’s grace to get to Moscow. Especially in this weather.’

‘What can we do, then? Oh, my God! My God!’ The husband buried his face in one hand. ‘Put it down here,’ he said to the man who was bringing in the lunch basket.

‘She should have stayed put,’ answered the doctor with a shrug.

‘Oh yes, but what could I have done?’ the husband protested. ‘Look, I did all I could to stop her. I told her how about the money involved, leaving the children behind, my work. She just wouldn’t

listen. She was plan-ning her life abroad as if she was well again. And telling her about her condition - well, that would have been the same as killing her off.'

'She's already been killed off. That's what you must realize, Vasily Dmitrich. A person cannot live without lungs, and lungs won't grow back. It's sad, it's hard to bear, but what can you do? Only one thing matters for you and me - to give her the most peaceful ending we can. And for that we need a priest.'

'Oh, my God! You can imagine my situation, having to remind her about her last wishes. Whatever happens, I'm not going to talk to her about that. You know how good she is...'

'Well, try and persuade her to wait until the roads are frozen over,' said the doctor, with a meaningful shake of his head. 'Otherwise something nasty might happen out on the road...'

'Aksyusha! Hey, Aksyusha!' yelled the stationmaster's daughter, throwing a jacket over her head and stamping on the dirty back porch. 'Let's go and have a look at that Shirkin lady. She's supposed to be goin'abroad with that disease in her chest. I ain't never seen how it is with them consumptives.'

Aksyusha skipped out on to the threshold, and both girls ran out through the gate, linking hands. They slowed down, walked past the carriage and took a look in through the lowered window. The sick lady turned to face them, but when she saw their curiosity she scowled and looked away.

'Gosh!' said the stationmaster's daughter, whirling her head round. 'She must have been a real beauty - and now look what's happened to her. It's horrible. Did you see her, Aksyusha? Did you see her?'

'Yes, all thin, wasn't she?' said Aksyusha, eager to back her up. 'Let's go and have another look, as if we're going to the well. She looked away, see, and I never got a good look. It's such a pity, Masha.'

'Yes, but look at all this mud!' said Masha, and they both ran back in through the gate.

'I must be a terrible sight,' thought the invalid lady. 'Must get going, as soon as we can, go abroad. I'll soon get better there.'

‘Now then, how are you feeling, my dear?’ said her husband, coming over to the carriage and chewing as he came.

‘Always the same question,’ thought the sick woman, ‘but he’s eating.’

‘So-so,’ she managed to get out, through clenched teeth.

‘Do you know what, my dear, I’m afraid you’re going to feel worse out on the road in this weather, and Edward says the same. Don’t you think we should go back home?’

Furious with him, she said nothing.

‘The weather might improve, the road could harden up, and you might feel better. Then we could all travel together.’

‘I’m sorry. If I had stopped listening to you ages ago I’d be in Berlin by now, and I’d be better again.’

‘We can’t help it, my angel. It just wasn’t possible, as you know. And now, if you would just stay on for another month, you’d feel so much better, I could get my business finished and we could bring the children...’

‘The children are well. I’m not.’

‘Darling, you must understand. In this kind of weather, if you take a turn for the worse out on the road... I mean, when you’re at home, at least...’

‘What? What could I do at home? ...Die there?’ The sick woman’s response was venomous. But the word ‘die’ had clearly shaken her; she looked at her husband imploringly, her eyes questioning. He looked down, saying nothing. The woman’s mouth crumpled like a child’s, and tears streamed from her eyes. The husband buried his face in a handkerchief, and he walked away from the carriage without a word.

‘No, I’m going on,’ she said, raising her eyes to the heavens and folding her arms. She began to whisper incoherently. ‘Oh my God, what’s it all for?’ she said, her tears flowing faster than ever. For some time she prayed, fervently, but her chest felt so painful and tight, the sky, the fields and the road looked so steeped in their gloomy grey, and the autumn mist never thickened and never thinned as it drizzled down in the same old way on to the muddy

road, the roofs, the carriage and the thick coats of the drivers chatting to each other in ringing, cheerful voices while they greased the wheels and got the horses ready for the carriage.

2

The carriage was ready, but the driver was in no hurry. He had disappeared into the drivers' cabin. Inside it was hot and stuffy, dark and oppressive, smelling of people, newly baked bread, cabbage and sheepskins. There were one or two drivers there, a cook was fussing over the stove, and on the stove-top itself a sick man lay stretched out on some sheepskins.

'Uncle Fedya! Hey, Uncle Fedya!' said the young driver, still wearing his top-coat and a whip in his belt, as he came in and spoke to the sick man.

'What'm you doin'hangin'about here askin'after Fedya?' responded another driver. 'Look, they'm waitin'for you out in the carriage.'

'I want to ask him about his boots. Mine are worn out,' answered the young man, tossing his hair back and straightening the mittens in his belt. 'Maybe he's asleep. Hey, Uncle Fedya!' he repeated, walking over to the stove.

'You what?' came a feeble voice, and a thin, ruddy face bent down from the stove-top. A broad, skinny, pale and hairy arm jerked a coat up over a bony shoulder in a dirty shirt. 'Give us something to drink, me lad. What was you saying?'

The lad offered him some water in a dipper.

'Well, Fedya, it's...er...like this,' he said, shifting from one foot to the other. 'I don't imagine you needs new boots now. You could let me've'em. Seems as if you won't be doing no walking.'

The sick man brought his weary head down to the shiny dipper, wetting his thin, straggling whiskers in the dark water as he drank feebly but thirstily. His matted beard was dirty, and his sunken clouded eyes didn't find it easy to look up at the young man's face. Finishing with the water, he tried to lift one hand to wipe his wet lips, but he couldn't manage it and he wiped himself on the coat sleeve. Saying nothing, he breathed in heavily through his nose and looked the young man straight in the eye, getting his

strength up.

‘Maybe they’re already spoken for,’ said the young man. ‘If they are, it doesn’t matter. The thing is - it’s wet out there, and I’ve got my work to do, and I just thought I’d ask old Fedya about his boots - maybe he don’t need them any more. Perhaps you do need them. Just tell me...’

There was a rumbling and a gurgling in the sick man’s chest. He bent double and started choking on a throaty cough that never really got going.

‘How can he need them?’ the cook snapped unexpectedly, speaking angrily to the whole cabin. ‘He ain’t been down off that stove for a couple of months. You can hear him. Gives you a pain inside just to listen to him. Can’t be needing no boots, can he? They’re not going to bury him with new boots on. His time’s up, God forgive me, I’m a sinner. You can see he’s cracking up. He ought be taken away into another hut or somewhere else. What I’m saying is, there’s hospitals in town. And what right has he got taking up all that corner? No two ways about it. Some of us don’t have no room at all. And they keeps telling you to keep the place clean.’

‘Hey, Sergey! Get yourself on board. The master and mistress is waiting,’ called the post-controller from outside.

Sergey made as if to go, without waiting for a response, but the sick man’s eyes signalled while he was coughing that he wanted to give him an answer.

‘You can have my boots, Sergey,’ he said, stifling his cough. ‘But listen,’ he added wheezily, ‘you buy me a stone when I’m dead.’

‘Thanks, Uncle. All right, I’ll take them. And I really will get you a stone.’

‘That’s it, then. You heard that, lads.’ The sick man was finding it hard to speak, and he bent double again, choking.

‘Sure, we heard,’ said one of the drivers. ‘Get going, Sergey, or the boss’ll be back. That Shirkin lady’s not well, you know.’

Sergey slipped off his worn-out boots - they were too big for him - and chucked them under the bench. Uncle Fyodor’s new boots

fitted him nicely, and Sergey looked down at them as he walked out to the carriage.

‘Nice pair of boots! Let me grease them for you,’ said a driver with a handful of axle grease as Sergey got up on his box and gathered the reins. ‘Got’em for nothing?’

‘Not jealous, are you?’ Sergey replied, half-rising and tucking the bottom of his coat round his legs. ‘Forget it! Come on, me beauties!’ he cried to the horses, cracking the whip, and the two carriages - one large and one small, with their drivers, bags and baggage - disappeared into the grey autumn mist, rocking as they sped away down the wet road.

The sick driver was left behind on his stove in the stuffy hut. Unable to stifle his coughing, he made a big effort, turned on to his other side and lay there still and quiet.

The hut was busy until late in the day with people coming and going and having their supper. Not a sound came from the sick man. As night drew on, the cook climbed up on to the stove and reached across his legs to get at her long coat.

‘Don’t moan at me, Nastasya,’ said the sick man. ‘I’ll soon make room for you in this corner.’

‘All right. All right. Don’t go on about it.’ ‘Taint noth-ing,’ muttered Nastasya. ‘Where’s it hurt, Uncle? You can tell me.’

‘It’s me insides. All gone wrong. God knows what.’

‘Throat giving you trouble, with all that coughing?’

‘It all hurts. Time for me to die - and that’s it. Oh, oh, oh...’ moaned the sick man.

‘Cover your feet up.’ Ere, like this,’ said Natasha, clam-bering down and pulling his coat over him as she did so.

A night light burned feebly in the hut. Nastasya and a dozen drivers were asleep on the floor or on benches, snoring loudly. Only the sick man could be heard wheez-ing and coughing as he tossed and turned on the stove. When morning came he was completely quiet.

‘I’ve had a fantastic dream,’ said the cook, stretching herself in the half-light of a new morning. ‘Uncle Fyodor got down from the

stove and went out to chop some wood. "Come on, Nastasya," he says. "Let me give you some help." And I says to him, "How can you go out chopping wood?" but off he goes with the axe, chopping away like mad and the chips flying everywhere. "What's all this?" I says. "I thought you was ill." He says, "No, I'm all right now", and he swings that axe round - scared me stiff, he did. I shouted out and woke up. He's not dead, is he? Uncle Fyodor. Hey, Uncle!

Fyodor didn't answer.

'I wonder if he has died. Ought to go and have a look,' said one of the drivers, who had just woken up.

The scrawny arm dangling down from the stove, covered in reddish hair, was cold and pale.

'Go and tell the boss it looks like he's dead,' said the driver.

Fyodor didn't have any relatives - he came from miles away. They buried him the next day in the new cemetery beyond the wood, and for several days Nastasya went around telling everybody about her dream and how she had been the first to find out Uncle Fyodor was dead.

3

It was now spring. Gurgling rivulets of water ran down the wet city streets, scurrying between frozen chunks of manure; people bustled about in a bright display of colour and sound given off by their clothing and their chatter. In little fenced-off gardens the buds had begun to swell on the trees, and you could just catch the murmur of branches rocking in the breeze. Limpid droplets dripped and trickled everywhere... Sparrows squawked and twittered amidst a fluttering of tiny wings. On the sunny side, on fences, houses and trees, everything shimmered and shone. Joy and youth shone in the sky, and on earth and in the heart of man.

One of the main streets, outside a large house belonging to a member of the gentry, had been strewn with fresh straw; inside, the lady who had been rushing to travel abroad lay dying.

The sick lady's husband and an elderly woman stood by the closed doors of her room. On the sofa sat a priest with downcast eyes, holding on to something wrapped in his stole. In one corner an old woman reclined in a high-backed armchair - the sick lady's

mother - weeping bitter tears. At her side, holding a clean handkerchief, stood a maid waiting to be called; another maid was using some sort of cloth to massage the old woman's temples while she blew upon her grey head under her cap.

'Christ be with you, my dear,' said the husband of an elderly lady standing with him by the door. 'She has so much faith in you, and you know exactly how to talk to her. Try and persuade her, as nicely as you can. Go in and see her.'

He was about to open the door for her, but she, a cousin of the invalid, stopped him, pressed a handkerchief to her eyes several times, and shook her head.

'Now I don't look as if I've been crying,' she said, opening the door herself and walking through.

The husband was in a state of extreme agitation; he looked distraught. He set off towards the old woman, but within a few strides he turned away and headed for the priest. The priest looked at him, raised his eyebrows to Heaven and sighed. His thick beard, shot through with grey, also raised and lowered itself.

'My God, my God!' said the husband.

'What can we do?' said the priest with another sigh, and once again his eyebrows and his short beard were raised and lowered.

'And her mother's here!' said the husband, on the verge of despair. 'That will finish her off. So much love, so much love for her, and she... oh, I don't know. Maybe you could comfort her, Father, and get her to go away.'

The priest got up and went to the old lady.

'Quite so,' he said. 'No one can appreciate a mother's heart. But God is merciful.'

The old lady's face suddenly started to twitch all over, and she was retching with hysteria.

'God is merciful,' continued the priest once she was a little calmer. 'I can tell you this. In my parish there was a man who was ill - much worse than Marya Dmitrievna - and - do you know what? - he was cured in no time by a tradesman with some herbs. And you'll find that trades-man alive in Moscow today. I was just saying

to Vasily Dmitrievich that we might give him a try. At least it would bring some comfort to the poor woman. For God, all things are possible.'

'No, she's not going to live,' put in the old woman. 'It should be me, but God's taking her.' And her hysterical retching came on so strongly that she fell into a faint.

The invalid's husband buried his face in his hands and rushed out of the room.

Out in the passage the first person he ran into was a six-year-old boy chasing a younger girl as fast as his legs would carry him.

'What would you like me to do? Should I take the children in to see their mother?' asked the nanny.

'No, she doesn't want to see them. It will upset her.'

The boy stopped for a moment, looked his father straight in the face, lashed out with his foot and ran off again yelling with delight.

'She's being a black horse, Daddy!' cried the little boy, pointing to his sister.

Meanwhile, in the next room the invalid's cousin was sitting at her side, conducting a forced conversation in which she was trying to prepare her for death. The doctor stood by another window, stirring his drink.

The sick woman was sitting up in bed, clad in a white dressing-gown and beset with pillows on every side, watching her cousin in silence.

'Oh, my dear friend,' she said, suddenly interrupting, 'don't prepare me. Don't treat me like a child. I'm a Christian. I know it all. I know I haven't got long to live, and I know that if only my husband had listened to me I'd have been in Italy by now, and I might have been better - I probably would have been. Everybody told him. But there's nothing we can do. It seems to have been God's will. We all bear many sins, I know that, but I trust in God's mercy that all will be forgiven. It must surely be that all will be forgiven. I am trying to come to terms with myself. I too have borne many sins, my dear. But think how much I have suffered. I've tried to bear my sufferings with patience...'

‘So, should I tell the priest to come in? You’ll feel better when you’ve taken communion,’ said her cousin.

The invalid inclined her head in agreement.

‘God forgive me, sinner that I am,’ she whispered.

Her cousin went out and winked at the holy father.

‘She’s an angel!’ she said to the husband with tears in her eyes.

The husband burst into tears, the priest walked in through the door, the old woman was still lost to the world, and in the room itself all was completely quiet. Five minutes later the priest emerged from the room, took off his stole and ran a hand through his hair.

‘Thank God she’s calmer now,’ he said. ‘She wants to see you.’

The cousin and the husband went in. The invalid was weeping softly, looking at an icon.

‘Well done, my darling,’ said her husband.

‘Thank you! I feel so well now. I feel a kind of sweetness,’ said the invalid, a gentle smile playing on her thin lips. ‘God is so merciful! Isn’t that right? So merciful, and omnipotent.’ And she looked at the icon again, her eyes brimming with tears and eager with supplication.

Then suddenly she seemed to remember something. She beckoned her husband closer. ‘You never want to do what I ask,’ she said in a feeble and petulant voice.

Her husband craned his neck, listening submissively. ‘What’s that, darling?’

‘How many times have I told you the doctors are ignorant? There are folk healers, and they can cure people... The priest was telling me just now... about a tradesman... Send for him.’

‘Who?’

‘Oh God! You’re determined not to understand!...’ The invalid scowled and closed her eyes.

The doctor came over and took her hand. Her pulse was getting noticeably weaker and weaker. He winked at the husband. The invalid noticed the gesture and looked round in alarm.

‘Don’t cry, and torment yourself or me,’ said the patient. ‘You’re taking away my last consolation.’

‘You’re an angel!’ said her cousin, kissing her hand.

‘No. Kiss me here. Only dead people get kissed on the hand. Oh God! Oh God!’

By that evening the patient had become a body, and the body lay in its coffin in the biggest room in the large house. A deacon sat alone in that great room with the doors wide open, intoning the Psalms in a nasal voice. A bright waxy light fell from the tall silver candlesticks on to the pallid face of the dead lady, the heavy waxen hands and the frozen folds of her pall, which stuck up horribly at her knees and toes. The deacon droned on, with no understanding of his words - words which rang out and died away horribly. Now and then the sounds of chil-dren’s voices and their rumpus floated in from a distant room.

‘Thou hidestThy face, they are troubled,’ ran the psal-ter. ‘Thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust. Thou sendest forthThy spirit, they are cre-ated, andThou renewest the face of the earth. The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever.’

The face of the dead lady was stern, tranquil and majes-tic. Neither on her clear cold brow nor on her tightly closed lips was there any movement. She was all ears. But was she even now understanding those solemn words?

4

A month later a stone chapel had been erected above the dead lady’s grave. Above the driver’s grave the stone had yet to appear; nothing more than bright green grass came up from the mound that served as the only indication of the past existence of a man.

‘It’ll be a sin on your conscience,’ said the cook one day at the post station, ‘if you don’t buy a stone for Fyo-dor. You kept on saying, “It’s winter. It’s winter,” but now it’s different - why don’t you keep your promise? You know I witnessed it. He’s been back once to ask why you haven’t bought it. Next time he’ll throttle you.’

‘What are you on about? Have I gone back on my word?’ Sergey answered. ‘I’m going to buy him a stone, like I said, and I will. I’ll shell out one and a half roubles. I haven’t forgotten, but it’s

got to be fetched. When I'm in town I'll go and buy it.'

'At least you ought to stick a cross up, that's what I says,' put in an old driver. 'Tis just plain wrong if you don't. You'm wearing his boots.'

'Where am I going to get a cross from? I can't chop one out of a log.'

'Can't chop one out of a log - what are you talking about? Take your axe, get yourself out in the forest first thing, and you can cut one there. Go on, cut a little ash tree down... and there's your cross. Either that or buy the forester a few drinks. Doesn't mean you've got to treat him for any old bit of rubbish. Couple of days ago when I broke me splinter bar I cut meself a smashing new one, and nobody said nothing about it.'

Early next morning at the crack of dawn Sergey took his axe and went into the woods.

Everything was covered with a cold blanket of dew that was still settling, untouched by the sun. The east was getting imperceptibly brighter, reflecting its feeble light on the vault of heaven that was still thinly veiled with clouds. Not a blade of grass below, not a leaf on the top-most branches stirred. Only now and then the disturbing sounds of wings flapping in the brushwood or a rustling on the ground intruded on the silence of the forest. Then suddenly a strange noise, alien to the world of nature, rang out and died away on the edge of the forest. But the noise came again and repeated itself rhythmically at the bottom of the trunk of one of the motionless trees. One of the treetops gave an unusual shudder, its sappy leaves whispering, and a little robin who had been sitting on one of its branches gave a chirrup and flitted about a couple of times before cocking its tail and transferring to another tree.

Down below, the ring of the axe sounded more and more muffled, sappy white splinters flew down on to the dewy grass, and through the chopping came a slight creaking sound. The tree shook throughout its whole body, lurched over and quickly straightened up, wobbling with alarm upon its roots. Everything was quiet for a moment, but then the tree lurched again, another creak came from its trunk, and with its branches snapping and its boughs dangling it crashed down crown first on to the damp ground. The sounds of

chopping and the foot-steps stopped. The robin gave a chirrup and fluttered up higher. Its wings snagged against a twig, which shook for a moment or two before settling its leaves like all the others. The trees revelled in the beauty of their branches all the more joyously in the newly created space.

The first rays of the sun found their way through the thinning clouds, shone out against the sky and ran across the ground and sky together. Mist rolled down the valleys in waves, the dew glittered as it toyed with the greenery, and limpid whitening cloudlets sped across the azure firmament. Birds stirred in the thickets, twittering their happy song for all they were worth. On high, the succulent leaves whispered in peace and joy, and the boughs of the living trees slowly stirred themselves, looking down in majesty on the dead tree that lay flat out on the ground.



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P E N G U I N



C L A S S

N° 28

我们为何为同一件事哭和笑

企鹅经典：小黑书 第三辑

[法]蒙田/著

马振骋/译



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How We Weep and Laugh at the Same Thing

Montaigne wrote and revised his Essays between 1570 and 1592. This edition published in Penguin

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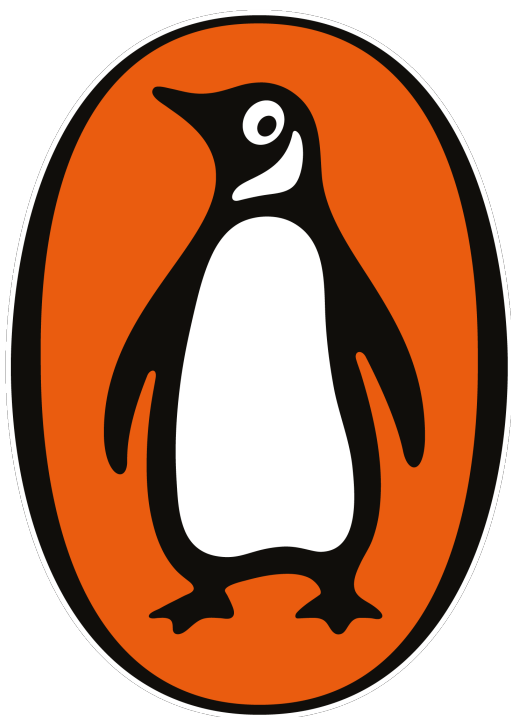
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我们为何为同一件事哭和笑

[理解矛盾情感的复杂性，能够使我们避免片面解读伟人及其悲痛。] [1]

我们在史书中读到，安提柯对儿子非常不满，因为他刚才在一场争斗中把他的敌人皮洛士国王杀了，提了头颅来献给他；他看到头颅却号啕大哭起来。还有洛林的勒内公爵打败勃艮第的查理公爵后不久也为他的死亡惋惜，还在他的葬礼上服丧。在奥雷战役中，蒙福尔伯爵战胜查理·德·布卢瓦，赢得了他的布列塔尼公爵封邑，战胜者看到敌人的尸体，深表哀悼。但是读了这些不应该立刻惊叫：

普天之下，人的心灵
都隐藏这些不同的感情，
脸上表现时而喜悦时而阴郁。

——彼特拉克

有人把庞培的首级献给恺撒时，史书记载说他转过头去，仿佛看到了丑恶、惨不忍睹的情景。他们两人长期一起商量国家大计，同舟共济，相互协助，建立联盟，所以不应该认为这个举动完全是装腔作势，像这位说的：

他想这回可以安心当岳丈了。
眼泪是挤出来的，
呻吟发自欢愉的心。

——卢卡努

因为，虽然我们大部分行为实际上只是门面与装饰，有时也可能是真心的：

继承人当面哭，背后笑。

——普布利流斯·西鲁斯

然而在评判这些事时，必须考虑我们的心灵怎样经常受各种情欲的冲击。就像我们的躯体内是各种体液 [2] 的大汇合，根据我们的性情使其中一种占主导地位；同样，我们的心灵内也有各种不同的活动冲击它，必然也有一个活动统率全局。但是这种优势并不会一直保持下去，我们的心灵变化不定，那些原本较弱的活动也会趁势反扑，收复失地。从这里看出，不但孩子一切都天真地从本性出发，经常为同一件事哭和笑，我们中间也有人虽然很想出外旅行，在跟家人和朋友道别时，却也不能吹嘘，否则会感到勇气受挫；眼泪若没有完全流出来，至少踏上马镫时会黯然神伤。不管好人家的女儿心里燃着怎样的热情，还是要把她们从母亲的脖子上拉下来，送到夫婿家，不管这位好心的同伴怎么说：

维纳斯是不是跟新娘有冤仇，

还是为了哄骗快活的爹娘，

在房前床边流几滴眼泪？

眼泪也可能不是真的！上帝帮帮我吧！

——卡图鲁斯

一个人人皆曰可杀的人死了，还是有人悼念，也是不奇怪的。

当我斥责仆人时，真的是火冒三丈，不是装模作样骂几声；但是怒气发过以后，他若对我有所要求，我还是乐意帮他忙；我立即把这一页翻了过去。当我骂他笨蛋蠢驴，不是要他一辈子背这个名声，也不想收回这句话立即再称他是正人君子。没有一种品质只配我们拥有，而且永远拥有。如果自言自语算不上是疯子行为，没一天我不听到心里在骂自己：“大笨蛋！”这绝不是在说我自己真是这样的人。

如果谁看到我在妻子面前一会儿冷若冰霜，一会儿春风满面，就认为这都是装的，他就是个傻子。尼禄下令淹死自己的母亲，跟她分手时突然动了情，对这次母子诀别感到厌恶与怜悯。

有人说太阳放光不是连续不断的，它是不停地让一束束新光照射着我们，以至我们辨别不出而以为是连续的了：

太阳，不歇的以太之源，火的洪流，

使天空永远白昼如新，

光明接着光明。

我们的心灵也是巧思纷呈，细流无声。

阿尔塔巴努斯无意中看到他的侄子泽尔士，问他为什么刚才神色大异。泽尔士正在考虑他的军队无比强大，要通过赫勒斯旁海峡去进攻希腊。起初看到有成千上万人归他指挥，踌躇满志，面露欣喜之情。但是继而就在同时想到那么多的生命至迟在本世纪内就要消失，不由得皱起眉头，伤心得落下了眼泪。

我们曾经坚定不移地报仇雪耻，为胜利而欢天喜地，可是也因而落泪。我们不是为了胜利而落泪，事情没有丝毫变化，只是我们不是怀着同一颗心去看待它，看到的就是另一副面目。因为每件事都有不同的侧面、不同的光线。心头想起血缘之亲、昔日的情谊，根据不同情况会激动一时，但是轮廓的闪现那么突然，我们无法把握。

说到速度，什么也比不上

思想的闪动，要来就来，

思想灵活多变，超过任何

置于目光下、落入感觉中的物体。

——卢克莱修

由于这个原因，要用这一系列断断续续的闪念构筑一个物体，必然会出差错。蒂莫利昂经过深思熟虑大义灭亲以后，他哭了，他哭的不是祖国恢复了自由，他哭的不是暴君，他哭的是他的兄弟。当他的一部分职责完成后，另一部分职责又要他履行了。

[1] 每篇散文前的附加内容均为英文版译者M. A. 斯克列奇 (M. A. Screech) 单独添加，由谢万容单独翻译。——编者注

[2] 古希腊有“体液学说”，认为机体的生命取决于四种体液：血液、黏液、黄胆汁和黑胆汁。每一种液体与一定的“气质”相适应，每个人的气质则取决于他体内占优势的那种液体。例如，在蒙田那个时代，人们认为忧郁症是体液不平衡、黑色胆汁分泌过多所致。——编者注

论良心

[良心最初指纵容默许。良心的概念深深吸引着蒙田，即我们个人的是非观，抑或是我们的负罪感与正义感。宗教战争期间，蒙田目睹了种种残忍行径、诬告栽赃，见惯了对犯人的严刑拷打，由此开始重点反思良心。他发现，非常奇怪的是，“拷问”（刑讯逼供）所依凭的道德准则似乎正是出于人们对良心力量的尊重——一个人内心是负罪还是无辜，都体现在他忍受苦痛的能力是削弱还是增强上。蒙田此篇主要受圣·奥古斯丁和璜·路易斯·斐微斯的启发。关于奥古斯丁的《上帝之城》，斐微斯曾经写下一篇激情洋溢的笔记，谈论要减少人们对酷刑的过度信任。]

内战时期，我的兄弟拉勃鲁斯领主和我有一次在旅途中，遇见一位风度翩翩的贵族，他属于我们的敌对派别，但是我并不知道，因为他掩饰得很巧妙。这类战争中最糟的是局势错综复杂，从外表、语言和穿戴来说，敌人和你无法得以区分，双方接受同样的法律，遵守同样的习俗，呼吸同样的空气，难免混淆不清。我害怕在一个陌生地方遇见我们的军队，不得不说出自己的名字，这时真是生死难卜。我以前遇到过这样的事，在那次不幸的遭遇中，我人马俱损，不但如此，他们还残忍地杀害了一名意大利宫廷侍从贵族，我精心培育过他，一个有着光明前程的年轻的命就这样消失了。

但是那位贵族非常容易惊慌失措，我看他每次遇见骑马的人过来，穿越效忠于国王的城市，都吓得要死，我终于猜到他的恐惧是由于他的良心而来的。这名青年觉得，人家通过他的面具和大氅上的十字架可以看到他内心的秘密意图。良心的力量竟是那么奇妙！良心使我们背叛，使我们控诉，使我们战斗；在没有外界证人的情况下，良心会追逐我们，反对我们：

用无形的鞭子抽打，充当刽子手。

——朱维纳利斯

这已是妇孺皆知的故事：一个名叫贝苏斯的帕奥尼人，被人指责说他故意打下一个鸟窝，把里面的小鸟统统杀光，他说自己做得有理，因为小鸟不停地无端指责他害死了自己的父亲。这桩弑父罪进行得滴水不漏，直到那时也没有人知晓；但是良心提出了申冤，使这个背上沉重赎罪包袱的人无法自制。

柏拉图认为，惩罚紧紧跟在罪恶的后面，赫西俄德纠正了柏拉图的说法，他说惩罚是与罪恶同时开始的。谁在等待惩罚，就在受惩罚；谁该受惩罚，就在等待惩罚。恶意给怀恶意的人带来痛苦：

做坏事的人最受做坏事的苦！

——拉丁谚语

胡蜂刺伤了人，但是自己受害更深，因为它从此失去了自己的刺和力量。

它们把自己的生命留在了伤疤里。

——维吉尔

由于自然界的矛盾对立规律，斑蝥身上分泌一种自身毒液的解毒素。所以，即使人在作恶时感受到乐趣，良心上却会适得其反，产生一种憎恶感，引起许多痛苦和联想，不论睡时醒时都折磨着自己。

这样的罪人不在少数，

在睡梦或谵妄中自怨自艾，

泄露了长期隐藏的罪过。

——卢克莱修

暴君阿波罗多罗斯在梦中见到自己被斯基泰人剥掉了皮，放在一口锅里煮，他的心喃喃地对他说：“你的所有痛苦都是我引起的。”伊壁鸠鲁说：“坏人无处藏身，因为他们躲在哪儿都不安宁，良心会暴露他们。”

没有一名罪人在自我判决中得到赦免，

这才是主要的惩罚。

——朱维纳利斯

良心可使我们恐惧，也可使我们坚定和自信。我敢于说人生道路上经过许多险阻而步伐始终不乱，就是因为我对自己的意图深有了解，自己的计划光明正大。

人的内心充满恐惧还是希望，

全凭良心的判断。

——奥维德

这类例子成千上万，这里只需举出同一个人物的三个例子。

西庇阿有一次在罗马人民面前被指控犯了一桩大罪，他不但不要
求宽恕或向法官讨情，还对他们说：“好哇，你们还不是靠了我才有
权力审判每个人，如今竟要起我的脑袋来了。”

又一次，人民法庭对他起诉，他决不声辩，只是侃侃而
谈：“来吧，我的公民们，去向神祇拜谢，也是在今天这样的日子，
让我战胜了迦太基人。”说罢，他大踏步向神庙走去，只见所有人跟
在他后面，其中还有他的起诉人。

又是人民法庭应加图的要求，传讯西庇阿，要他对安蒂奥克省的一
切开支做出汇报。西庇阿为此事来到元老院，从袍子下抽出账册，
说这本账册把一切收支原原本本记了下来；但是他没有同意把它转交
给法院档案室保存，说他不愿意自取其辱，便在元老院当着众人的面
亲手把账册撕成碎片。我不相信这个饱经沧桑的灵魂会弄虚作假。李
维说他天性慷慨豪爽，一向气度恢宏，他决不会当个罪人，低三下四
去声辩自己是无辜的。

苦刑是一项危险的发明，这像是在检验人的耐性而不是检验人的
真情。能够忍受苦刑的人会隐瞒真情，不能够忍受苦刑的人也会隐瞒
真情。痛苦能够使我供认事实，为什么就不能使我供认非事实呢？另
一方面，如果那个受到无理指责的人有耐性忍受这些折磨，罪有应得
的人难道就没有耐性忍受这些折磨，去获得美好的生命报偿吗？

我相信这项发明的理论基础是建立在良心力量的想法上。因为对
有罪的人，似乎利用苦刑可以使他软弱，说出他的错误；然而无罪
的人则会更加坚强，不畏苦刑。说实在的，这个方法充满不确定性和危
险。

为了躲过难忍的痛苦，什么话不会说，什么事不会做呢？

痛苦会迫使无辜的人撒谎。

——普布利流斯·西鲁斯

审判者折磨人是为了不让他清白死去，而结果是让那个人受尽折
磨后清白死去。成千上万的受刑者脑袋里装满了假忏悔。我想到亚历
山大审判菲罗塔斯的情景，以及他受折磨的过程。我尤其要以菲罗塔
斯作为例子。

然而有人却说，揭示人类弱点的许多发明中，苦刑还是痛苦最少

的一项发明。

依我看来也是最不人道、最无意义的发明！有许多被希腊和罗马称为野蛮的国家，在这方面却不及希腊和罗马野蛮，它们认为折磨和杀害一个人们对其错误还只是心存怀疑的人，是可怕的残酷行为。你不知道实情，他又能怎么样呢？你不想无缘无故地杀他，对他做的事却比杀他还糟糕，你没有不公正吗？事情就是如此：多少次他宁愿无缘无故地死去，也不愿接受审讯，这种审讯往往比死刑还痛苦，这等于在执行死刑以前已把人处决了。

我不知道从哪儿听来这个故事，但是它如实地代表了我们良心的公正。一名村妇在一位军队司令兼大法官面前控诉一名士兵，说他抢去了她仅剩下的喂几个小孩的一点点面糊，这支军队已把四周村庄掠夺一空。然而没有证据。这位将军首先告诫妇女要对自己说的话仔细想一想，若是诬告就要判罪，她坚持不改口，将军下令割开士兵的肚子验证事实真相。妇女说的话是对的。罪证确凿。

命运与理智经常相遇在一条道上

[罗马的审查官对蒙田有关命运（区别于天意）的言论甚是不满——这很奇怪，因为几个世纪以来，变幻莫测的命运以及命运之轮早已是老生常谈。（“命运”一词在蒙田散文中出现多达三百五十次。）]

命运变幻无常，在我们面前展现的面貌也就千变万化。这不也是在明白无误地伸张正义吗？瓦朗蒂努瓦公爵恺撒·波齐亚决心要毒死科尔内托的红衣主教阿德里安，他的父亲亚历山大六世教皇偕同他到梵蒂冈吃晚饭。公爵事先差人送了一瓶毒酒交给司膳总管，嘱他好好看管。教皇在儿子之前到，要求喝酒，司膳总管以为这是瓶好酒，交给他就是给教皇喝的，就倒了一杯敬教皇；公爵本人恰在上点心时赶到，以为他自己的那瓶酒还没开过，也就拿来喝了；这样父亲立即暴死，儿子长期受病痛折磨，命运更加悲惨。

有时候命运好像有意跟我们作对。德斯特雷领主是旺多姆殿下的军旗手，里克领主是阿尔斯霍特公爵的随从副官，虽分属对立的部队，但都在追求封凯泽尔领主的妹妹（在前线相邻的两支部队常有这样的事）。里克领求婚成功；但是在婚礼那天，不幸的是新郎在上床之前，要去逞能来取悦新娘，离家到了圣奥梅尔附近跟人交了手，却让德斯特雷领主占了上风，把他捉了当俘虏。

离开年轻郎君的怀抱，

让一个冬天，又一个冬天，

在漫漫长夜中烧尽了他们的烈火。

——卡图鲁斯

为了摆足威风，德斯特雷迫使那位夫人亲自来向他求情，把他的俘虏客客气气还给她；人也确实放了，法国贵族从不拒绝夫人的要求。

君士坦丁（一世），海伦娜的儿子，创立了君士坦丁帝国；多少世纪以后，又是一个君士坦丁（十一世），也是海伦娜的儿子，断送了君士坦丁帝国。这不像是巧妙的命运安排吗？

有时候，命运喜欢跟奇迹争高低。我们知道克洛维斯国王围困昂古莱姆时，城墙自个儿坍塌，如有神助。布歇援引某位作者的话，虔

诚者罗伯特二世国王在围城时，偷偷离开前线溜回奥尔良庆祝圣埃尼昂节，正当他弥撒做到中途顶礼膜拜时，围城的城墙不攻自破了。这跟我们在米兰战争中发生的事恰恰相反。朗佐统帅在为我们包围阿罗纳城时，命人在一堵大墙下埋炸药。这堵墙突然被炸离地面，又直挺挺落下竖在地基上，被困的人还是安然无恙。

有时候，命运还会治病。费雷斯的亚逊胸口长了个脓疮，医生都已束手无策，他一心要摆脱折磨，即使死了也甘心。在一次战役中他奋不顾身冲进敌阵，被刺穿身子，恰巧伤在病患处，脓疮破裂，这下子治愈了。

命运在艺术技艺方面不是还超过了画家普罗托盖纳斯吗？画家画了一条疲劳的狗，全身什么部位都感到很称心，但就是狗嘴里的口水画得不中意，他对自己的画发起了脾气，拿起一块蘸满各种颜料的海绵朝它扔了过去，要把它都擦掉；命运让那块海绵恰好扔在狗嘴上，在上面留下的正是艺术家想画而画不出的艺术效果。

有时，命运不是在指导我们、改正我们吗？英格兰伊莎贝尔女王率领一支军队去支援儿子反对她的丈夫，要从泽兰回到王国内；她若按原计划抵达港口必然完了，敌人都在那里等着她，但是命运却不顾她的意愿让她在一个安全地点登了陆。那位古人，拿起石头要砸狗，却砸死了自己的老娘，不是很有理由念一念这句诗吗？

命运比我们更有主意。

——米南德

蒂莫利昂在西西里岛阿德拉诺暂住，伊塞特召了两名士兵要杀他。他们决定在他献祭时动手。他们混在人群中，正在相互发信号趁机下手时，突然来了第三个人，在其中一位头上狠狠砍了一剑，待他死在地上后，自己拔腿就跑。那位同伴以为自己被人识破，脱不了身，奔到祭台，答应把一切都招供出来，要求宽恕。

正当他在交代阴谋过程时，那第三个人被大家当作谋杀犯抓住了，推推搡搡穿过人群到了蒂莫利昂和在场的显贵面前。这时那个人大叫饶命，说他杀死的只是杀他父亲的凶手。他运气来得正好，当场有人证明他的父亲确是在利恩泰奈人的城里被那个他杀死报仇的人杀的。他由于这件巧事得到了一大笔赏金，既报了父亲的仇，又救了西西里父母官的命。这样的命运在讨回公道方面，是任何人精心制定的法律也难以达到的。

最后一个例子。这件事还不能清楚说明命运总是倾向于善良与赤诚之心吗？伊格纳蒂乌斯父子被罗马三世执政放逐，决定做出惊人之举，互相结束对方的生命，不让暴政者得逞施加酷刑。他们手握宝剑

朝着对方奔去。命运指挥着他们的剑头，两剑都立即夺去他们的生命，为了表彰这么美好的父子情，还让他们有力气从洞穿的身子里抽出鲜血淋漓的手臂与宝剑，相互紧紧拥抱，再也一动不动。刽子手无法把他们分离，只得一下子割下两人的头颅，让两具尸体始终有尊严地贴在一起，伤口对着伤口深情地吮吸着对方的血与残留的生命。

论对懦夫行为的惩罚

[文艺复兴时期的法律学者，如安德烈·蒂亚居伊想要通过研究人的动机与局限，从而缓和社会的严刑峻法。在这里，蒙田效仿前者，对战争年代的男士们表达了深切担忧。]

曾听到一位亲王、杰出的将领说过，一名士兵不能因丧失勇气而被处死。他在用餐时听到德·韦尔万领主一案，后者因献出布洛涅而被判处死刑。

因软弱造成的错误与因恶意造成的错误，中间有巨大的差别，这样说实在是道理的。恶意是我们有心鼓动自己违背天性形成的理智规则。至于软弱，不妨也拿天性来自我辩护，说是它造成了我们这样的不完美和缺陷，以至不少人想到，只有违背自己良心做事才可以加以责备。这条规则，使一部分人形成这样的看法，反对对异教徒和无信仰者使用极刑，同样认为律师和法官不必承担无知渎职的责任。

但是，说到懦夫行为，最常见的惩罚是当众羞辱。据说这条规则最早是由法学家夏隆达斯提出的，在他以前，希腊法律以死刑处分临阵脱逃的人。夏隆达斯只是罚那些人穿上妇女服装在广场中央坐三天，指望他们羞愧后恢复勇气，还能入伍打仗。“与其让男人血流在地上，还不如让他血涌到脸上。”（德尔图良）

从前，罗马法律对逃兵也是判死罪。据阿米阿努斯·马西利纳斯的叙述，在帕提亚战役中，有十名士兵冲锋时转身往回跑，朱利安皇帝先把他们逐出军队，后来据说依古法处死。然而另一次，有人犯了相似的罪过，他只是处分他们跟囚徒一起待在辎重部队。罗马人对在卡尼战役中逃跑的士兵，还有在同一场战争中随同执政官法尔维乌斯吃败仗的士兵，惩罚再严也不至把他们处死。

然而有一事必须提防，羞辱使他们失去颜面，不但会使他们冷漠无情，还会将他们变为敌人。

在我们祖辈那个时代，弗朗杰领主当过德·夏蒂永元帅的副官，受德·夏巴纳元帅派遣，取代杜·吕德大人当富恩塔拉比亚总督。他把富恩塔拉比亚拱手让与西班牙人，因此被废除贵族称号，他与他的后代都被贬为平民，要缴人头税，不准入伍当兵。这一严厉的判决是在里昂执行的。后来纳索伯爵带军队开进吉兹时，城里的全体贵族都遭到类似的惩罚；后来其他类似的事也复如此处理。

然而，如果无知与懦夫行为过于恶劣或明显，超出了一般的程度，那时就有理由把它看成是确凿的证据，说明当事人的狡猾和恶意，并以此定罪。

论言过其实

[尽管蒙田对语言的运用已炉火纯青，他本人却鄙视文字，崇尚行动或“实事”。早在开始散文创作之前，他就曾在雷蒙德·塞朋德《自然神学》一书译作的开篇献词——“给父亲的一封信”中表达了该观点。对“行动胜于雄辩”的尊重，正是他景仰古代斯巴达王国的原因，同时也是当世所欠缺的品质。]

从前一位修辞学家说，他的职业是把小事物说得大，显得大。这就像鞋匠给一对小脚丫做上一双大鞋子。在斯巴达靠吹牛说谎为职业就会挨鞭子。我相信阿基达默斯国王听到修昔底德的回答不会不表示惊讶。国王问他与伯里克利角斗谁更强，他回答说：“这不好验证，因为我在角斗中把他摔倒在地，他却说服在场观看的人说他并没有倒地，于是他赢了。”

有人让女人戴上面纱，涂脂抹粉，这为害不大，因为不能看到她们处在自然状态，不是大不了的损失；而其他人要欺骗的不是我们的眼睛，而是我们的判断，要歪曲和败坏的是事物的本质。像克里特、斯巴达这样的城邦，局势稳定，治理有方，并不重视雄辩家。

阿里斯托给修辞学下了个聪明的定义：说服老百姓的技术。苏格拉底、柏拉图则说是骗人和拍马的艺术。有人从大道理上否定它，却在自己的训诫中到处使用。

伊斯兰教禁止向孩子传授修辞学，因为它无用。

雅典人发现修辞学的使用在都城里有上升趋势，这是很有害的，下令把煽动情绪的主要篇章，连同前言和结论部分一齐删去。

修辞学的发明，是为了操纵和煽动一群乌合之众和暴徒。这个工具专门用于病态政体，就像是药。在那些庸人、无知的人或任何人独占一切的地方，如雅典、罗德岛和罗马，在那些局势纷争不已的地方，演说家才应运而生。的确，在这些政体里，很少有人是不靠口才而平步青云的；庞培、恺撒、克拉苏、卢库卢斯、兰图卢斯，都是慷慨陈词以后得到极大的支持，最后登上权柄的高位，他们依仗口才更甚于军队，这与太平盛世的看法是相悖的。

L.沃卢姆努斯当众演说，支持Q.法比乌斯和P.德基乌斯当选为执政官，他说：“这些人是为战争而生的，建功立业的大人物，打嘴仗也毫不示弱，是真正的执政人才；头脑精明，说话服众和博学多才，

可以管理城市，执政主持民事裁判工作。”

当局一片混乱，内战的风暴搅得人心惶惶时，罗马城内的雄辩家如沐春风，就像一块没有开垦的荒地上野草丛生。这样看来，由单独君主控制的政府不像其他政府那样需要这种东西；因为百姓愚昧轻信，耳边听了甜言蜜语，很容易受到操纵和误导，不会用理智的力量去审察和认识事物的真相；对这种轻信态度，我要说，在君主个人身上是不容易存在的，良好教育与好言规劝也较为容易使他免受这种毒药的伤害。在马其顿和波斯就没出过一个有名气的雄辩家。

我刚才跟一位意大利人谈过话，才引起我说了上面一番话。他曾给已故的红衣主教加拉法当过司膳总管，直至主教过世。我请他谈谈他的差使。他神色严肃，把这门讲究口腹之欲的学问，一本正经地说了一通，仿佛在跟我讲神学的大道理。他向我细分不同的胃口：饥饿时的胃口，上了两三道菜后的胃口；什么方法吃了只不过使胃舒服，什么方法引得胃口大开；调料使用方法，一般的，特殊的，针对菜肴的特点和作用；不同季节的沙拉也不同，有需要加热的，也有需要冷食的，如何搭配花色使它们赏心悦目。在这之后，又说到上菜的顺序，其中的微妙大有讲究。

怎样切兔肉，如何斩鸡块，

当然都大有学问。

——朱维纳利斯

言辞里充满崇论闳议，就像在发表治国大略。这使我想起我的朋友：

太咸啦！烧糊啦！淡啦！恰到好处！

下次就照这样做！我教他们，

以我浅薄的学识尽心尽力。

总之，德梅亚，我要他们

拿锅子当镜子，教他们毫不留一手。

——泰伦提乌斯

埃米利乌斯·波勒斯从马其顿回来，宴请希腊人；希腊人对他宴会的组织安排大加赞赏；但是我这里说的不是他们做了什么，而是他们说了什么。

我不知道别人听了是不是与我有同感。当我听到我们的建筑师踌躇满志，大谈壁柱、下楣、挑檐、科林斯和陶立克柱型，还有他们类似的行话，我不由自主地想到阿波里东宫；实际上，我发现那是指我家厨房上那几条质地单薄的横档。

当你听到有人说替代、隐喻、讽喻这类语法词汇，那不是像在指某个罕见冷僻的语言现象吗？其实是涉及你的女仆唠叨的用语。

还有一种与此相近的花招，就是用罗马人的显赫官衔来称呼我们的官吏，然而他们在职务上没有丝毫相似之处，更没有那样的权威与权力。这种做法我相信，总有一天会说明我们这个世纪的荒谬绝伦，把古代荣耀了几个世纪的一两位人物的最光辉称号，不恰当地加到我们中意的人身上。称柏拉图是神，这是举世公认的，谁也不会嫉妒。然而意大利人，他们自诩整体上跟他们那个时代的其他民族相比，更为隽智和明白事理，这话有点道理，但是不久前却把那个尊号安到了阿雷蒂诺头上，这一位除了说话诙谐刻薄，确有高明之处，只是经常牵强附会，莫名其妙。就算他口才高明，我也看不出他有什么才能超越他同一世纪的大多数作家，更不用说跟古人的神号相去甚远了。

“伟大”这个词，我们却动辄加在并不比群众伟大的亲王身上。

探讨哲学就是学习死亡

[蒙田一直以来安于愁思，如今却是轻描淡写。他被死亡的恐惧所困扰，这种恐惧通常源于行将就木时所遭受的折磨——以前人们往往难逃临死的苦痛。对此，蒙田的处理可谓言辞雄辩，却并不客观冷漠，而是努力找寻普通人身上的美好品质。]

西塞罗说，探讨哲学不是别的，只是准备死亡。尤因探讨与静观可以说是让我们的灵魂脱离肉体而独自行动，有点像在学习与模拟死亡；或者也可以说，人类的一切智慧与推理归根结底，就是要我们学习不怕死亡。

说实在的，理智不是在冷嘲热讽，而是把目标定在使我们满足上。理智的工作，总的是要人活得好，要我们如《圣经》所说的“终身喜乐行善”。世上人人都是这种看法，尽管表达形式各有不同，快乐是我们的目标；与此不同的看法一出笼就被排斥，若有人说什么他的目的是让我们受苦受难，那谁会去听呢？

在这方面，哲学宗派之间的分歧只表现在口头上。“别去听那些美妙的妖言。”（塞涅卡）在这么一个神圣的学科中不应该有那么多的顽固与恶言。某人不论扮演什么角色，扮演的总是他自己。他们不论说什么，即使谈到美德，瞄准的最终目标也是感官享乐。他们听到这个词那么反感，而我偏要在他们耳边说个不休。如果这个词意味着最强的欢乐与极度的满足，那时美德的介入才胜过其他东西的介入。这种感官享乐不论如何纵情胡闹，粗野强健，也只是更加享乐而已。我们还不如称为欢乐，更容易接受，更温和自然，而不是曾用的“精力”一词。

另一种感官享乐——若也可用这个好名词的话——较为庸俗，也是应该相提并论的，但并不更占优势。我觉得它不像美德那样不包含放肆与邪念。除了感受更短暂、更流动、毫无新鲜感，它还有熬夜、挨饿、辛苦和血与汗；此外还有各种各样的情感折磨，然后再有这种沉重的满足，这无异于一种受罪了。

我们还大错特错地认为，这些磨难可以成为温情的刺激物与调味品，好像大自然中的万物相生相克；也不要说当我们转向美德时，同样的障碍与困难会压倒它，使它变得严峻、不可接近；而在美德介入的情况下，会使这种神圣完美的欢乐更高尚、更兴奋、更昂扬，要胜过低级的享乐许多。

一个人权衡他的所失与所得，不知道美德的温馨与作用，当然是不配认识这种欢乐的。有人劝导我们说美德的追求艰辛曲折，美德的享受则是愉快的，这岂不是在对我们说它不会令人快乐吗？因为哪个人曾有法子获得过它呢？最成功的人也只是做到向往它，接近它，而没有获得过它。

但是那些人错了，要知道追求我们所认识的任何乐趣，这本身就是乐趣；行动包含的乐趣，存在于我们眼前的美好目标，因为这是与大部分激情共生共灭的。在美德中闪闪发光的愉悦福乐，自有千百条渠道小路，引导你进入第一个入口，直至最后一道墙。那时美德的主要好处是对死亡的蔑视，这样使人的一生过得恬然安逸，让我们专注于愉悦的享受，不如此，其他一切享乐都会黯然无光。

这说明为什么一切规则都集中和会合在这个主题上。虽则那些规则也一致认为要蔑视痛苦、贫困和其他隶属于人生的遭遇，这在关心的程度上不一样，因为有的遭遇不是必然发生的（许多人一生中并没有经历过贫困，有的还不曾有过疼痛的病患，如音乐师色诺菲吕斯，他活了一百零六岁，身体一直良好），还可以在万不得已时轻生，把烦恼一了百了。但是死亡本身则是不可避免的。

人人都被推向同一个方向，

我们的命运在缸里转动，

迟早会从里面跃出，

上了船，

带往不归路。

——贺拉斯

因而，要是死亡使我们害怕，这就成了一个说不完的痛苦话题，而又不能使心情纾解一丝一毫。死亡从哪儿都可以向我们袭击；我们就会不停地左右窥视，像进了一座疑阵以防不测：“这就像永世悬在坦塔罗斯头上的岩石。”^[3]（西塞罗）我们的法院经常把罪犯送到案发地点处决，一路上押着他们经过漂亮的房子，让他们拣好吃的吃个痛快：

……西西里岛的盛宴

也引不起他的馋涎。

鸟语与琴声

都不能使他入眠。

——贺拉斯

不妨想一想，他们能够高兴起来吗？游街的最终意图昭然若揭，难道不会败坏他们领受这一切恩典的兴致？

他打听道路，他掐算日子，

走了多少还剩下多少，

想到眼前的极刑痛不欲生。

——克洛迪安

我们生涯的终点是死亡，我们必须注视的是这个结局；假若它使我们害怕，怎么可能走前一步而又不发愁呢？凡人的药方是把它置之脑后。只是愚蠢透顶才会这么懵然无知！真是把马笼头套在了驴子尾巴上。

因为他决定了往回走。

——卢克莱修

他经常跌入陷阱也就不足为奇了。这让我们这些人一说到死亡就害怕，大多数人像听到魔鬼的名字一样画十字。由于遗嘱中必然提到这件事，就别指望在医生给他们宣读终审判决以前，他们会动手立遗嘱。在痛苦与惊慌之间，他们会以怎样清晰的判断力，给你凑合出一份遗嘱，只有天知道了。

由于这个词听在他们的耳朵里太刺激，这个声音对他们又像不吉利，罗马人学会了用婉转的说法来减弱或冲淡它的含意。不说：他死了，他停止了生命；只说：他活过了。只要是“活”，即使过去式也感到安慰。我们的“故人某某”就是从他们那里借来的。

说到这里，是不是像俗语说的，时间就是金钱？我生于一五三三年二月的最后一天，是按现行的以正月为一年之始的年历来说的 [4]。恰好十五天前刚过了三十九岁，至少还可以活那么久；可是急着去考虑那么远的事不是发疯吗？但怎么说呢，年轻人与老年人同样都会抛下生命。刚刚进来的人照样可以随即离去。再衰老的人，只要还看到玛士撒拉 [5] 走在前面，都相信自己的身子还可以撑上二十年。

再说，你这个可怜的傻瓜，谁给你规定了寿限啦？你这是根据医

生的胡说八道。还不如瞧一瞧事实与经验吧。按照事物的常规，你活到今天已是鸿运高照了。你已超过了常人的寿数。为了证明这一点，算一算你的朋友中间有多少人在你这个年龄以前已经谢世，肯定比达到你的年龄的人要多。再来列一张表，记上一生中名声显赫的人，我敢打赌在三十五岁前死的要比在这以后死的多。把耶稣基督作为人类的楷模，也是十分理智与虔诚的，因为耶稣在三十三岁就结束了人生。亚历山大是最伟大的凡人，也是在这岁数去世的。

死亡又有多少种袭击方式？

时时刻刻需要提防危险，

人是难以预料的。

——贺拉斯

且不说发高烧和胸膜炎病人。谁想到一位布列塔尼公爵会在人群中挤死？我的邻居克莱芒五世教皇进入里昂也是这样。你没看到我们的一位国王在比武游戏中被误伤害了命吗？他的一位祖先竟会被一头公猪撞死？埃斯库罗斯眼看一幢房子要坍塌，徒然躲到空地上，有一只苍鹰飞过空中，从爪子里丢下一块乌龟壳，把他砸死了。还有人被一颗葡萄核梗死；一位皇帝在梳头时被梳子划破头皮而死；埃米利乌斯·李必达脚绊在门槛上，奥菲迪乌斯进议院时撞上了大门。还有死于女人大腿间的教士科内利乌斯·加吕，罗马巡逻队长蒂日利努斯，曼图亚侯爵吉·德·贡萨格的儿子吕多维可。

更糟糕的例子是柏拉图派哲学家斯珀西普斯和我们的一位教皇。可怜的伯比乌斯法官给诉讼一方八天期限，自己却突然得病，没有活到那个时候。凯乌斯·朱利乌斯是医生，在给病人上眼药膏时，死神来给他闭上了眼睛。我还该说一说我自己的弟弟，圣马丁步兵司令，年二十三岁，早已显出大胆勇敢，打网球时球击中他左耳上方，表面看不出挫伤和破裂，他甚至没有坐下来休息，但是五六小时后，他死于这次球击引起的中风。

这些都是发生在我们眼前的例子，稀松平常，怎么还能够不去想到死亡呢？怎么能够不觉得死神每时每刻在掐我们的脖子呢？

你们或许会对我说，既然不管怎样总是要来的，大家就不用去操这份心了吧？我同意这个看法；若有什么方法可以躲过死亡的袭击，即使是藏在一张牛皮底下，我也不是个会退缩回避的人。因为我只要过得自在就够了；我自己尽量往最好的方面去做，至于荣耀与表率则不在我的考虑之内。

我宁可被人看成傻子与呆子，

只要我的古怪令我痛快，叫我开心，
也不去当个聪明人愤愤不平。

——贺拉斯

以为这样就能做到了，这也是妄想。他们来了，他们去了，他们骑马，他们跳舞，闭口不谈死亡。这一切多么美好。毫不注意，毫不防范，当死亡降临到他们身上，或者他们的妻儿朋友身上时，则悲痛欲绝，呼天抢地，愤怒失望！你们几曾见过如此萎靡、恍惚、混乱！我们必须及早防范。一个头脑明白的人，对待死亡却像动物似的混混沌沌，我认为这是要不得的，也会让我们付出沉重的代价。如果死亡是个可以躲开的敌人，我建议大家不妨拿起胆小鬼的武器。但是既然它是不可避免的，既然退缩求饶和勇敢面对，它都是要把你抓走的：

他对逃跑中的壮汉穷追不舍，
也不放过胆怯的后生
露出的腿弯与背脊。

——贺拉斯

既然没有铁甲保护你：
躲在盔甲下也是枉然，
死神会让他露出后缩的脑袋。

——普罗佩提乌斯

我们必须学习挺身而出，面对它进行斗争。为了打落它的气势，我们必须采取逆常规而行的办法。不要把死亡看成是一件意外事，要看成是一件常事，习惯它，脑子里常常想到它。时时刻刻让它以各种各样的面目出现在我们的想象中。马匹惊跳，瓦片坠落，针轻轻一刺，立即想到：“要是这就是死亡呢？”这时候我们要坚强，要努力。

欢天喜地的时候，总是想到我们的生存状态，不要纵情而忘乎所以，记得多少回乐极会生悲，死亡会骤然而至。埃及人设宴，席间在上好菜时，叫人抬上一具干尸，作为对宴客的警告。

照亮你的每一天都当作最后一天，
赞美它带来的恩惠与意外的时间。

——贺拉斯

死亡在哪里等着我们是很不确定的，那就随时恭候它。事前考虑死亡也是事前考虑自由。谁学习了死亡，谁也就学习了不被奴役。死亡的学问使我们超越任何束缚与强制。一个人明白了失去生命不是坏事，那么生命对他也就不存在坏事了。可怜的马其顿国王当了波勒斯·伊米利厄斯的俘虏，差人求他不要把他带到凯旋仪式上，伊米利厄斯答复说：“让他向自己求情吧。”

其实，在一切事情上，天公若不助一臂之力，手段与心计都很难施展。我本性并不忧郁，但爱好空想。从小对什么事都没像对死亡想得那么多，即使在放荡的岁月也是这样。

年少风流，青春欢悦。

——卡图鲁斯

在女人堆里寻欢作乐时，有人以为我站在一旁醋性大发，或者抱着希望拿不定主意，其实我在想着今已不知是谁的那个人，他就在几天前突然发高烧一命呜呼了；当他离开这样一次盛会时，满脑子是闲情、爱欲和好时光，像我一样，耳边也响着同样的话：

好时光即将消逝，消逝后再不回来。

——卢克莱修

这个想法不会比其他事情更叫我皱眉头。最初想到这类事不可能没有感触。但是日子一久，翻来覆去想多了，无疑也就习以为常了，否则我会终日提心吊胆；因为从来没有人会那么舍弃生命，没有人会那么不计较寿命的长短。直到今天为止，我一直精力充沛，极少生病，健康既没有使我对生命的期望增大，疾病也没有使我对生命的期望减少。我觉得自己每分钟都在逃过一劫。我不停地对自己唱：“另一天会发生的事，今天也会发生。”

说真的，意外与危险并不使我们更靠近死亡。如果我们想到，即使没有这桩好像威胁着我们的最大事件，还有成千上万桩其他事件悬在我们头上，我们就会明白，不论精力充沛还是高烧难退，在海上还是在家里，战场上还是休息中，死亡离我们都一样近。“谁都不比谁更脆弱，也不比谁对明天更有把握。”（塞涅卡）

去世前我有事要做，即使只需一小时就可完成，我也不敢说一定有时间去做完。日前有人翻阅我的记事册，发现一份备忘录，列上我在死前要做的事。我实实在在地对他说，那时我离家才一里地，还精神十足，心情愉快，但还是匆匆把这些事记了下来，因为没把握一定

能够回到家。我这个人脑子随时随地在想东西，随即把它们记在心里，时刻做好充分准备；当死亡突然降临，对我也不算是突如其来的新鲜事。

应该随时穿好鞋子，准备上路，尤其要注意和做到的是这事只与自己有关。

短短的一生内何必计划成堆？

——贺拉斯

不算上这件事我们已经够忙碌的了。有一个人抱怨死亡，只是因为死亡使他功亏一篑，没有打完一场漂亮的胜仗；另一个人自思自叹，没把女儿嫁出去或把孩子教育安排好就会撒手人寰；这人舍不得抛下妻子，那人离不开儿子，这都是人生的主要乐趣。

我现在——感谢上帝——处于这样的状态下，可以应召离开，对什么事都毫无牵挂，虽然对人生尚有依恋，失去它会感到哀伤。我正在给自己松绑，已跟大家告别了一半，除了对自己。没有人对离开世界做了那么干脆与充分的准备，那么彻底摆脱一切，如同我正在做的一样。

可怜啊可怜，他们说，只要一个凶日

就会掳走我在世上的全部财富！

——卢克莱修

而建筑师说：

工程未完成，前功尽弃，

墙头砌到一半，摇摇欲坠。

——维吉尔

凡事不必筹备过于长期的规划，至少对于看不到其完成的事也保持热诚。我们生来是为了行动：

当我死时，但愿正在工作。

——奥维德

我愿意大家行动，尽量延长生命的功能，死神来时我若正在园子里种菜，不在乎它，更不在乎园子还没种完。我看见过一个人死去，

他到了人生最后关头，不停地埋怨命运割断了他手中的历史之线，他还只写到我们的第十五或第十六位国王。

谁也不能说，对财物的留恋

不会也存在于你的残骸中。

——卢克莱修

应该摆脱这些庸俗有害的心态。正因为如此，坟墓盖在教堂附近，在城市里人来人往最多的地方，据利库尔戈斯说，这是为了让男女老少不要看到死人而发毛，不断看见骸骨、坟墓和送灵，提醒着我们什么是人的处境：

古代用杀人给宴会助兴，

让武士相互残杀，

身子跌倒在酒杯上，

鲜血洒满宴席。

——西流斯·伊塔利库斯

埃及人在宴会结束后，给宾客展示一张死神的巨像，举像的人对着他们大叫：“喝吧，玩吧，死后你就是这个样。”因而我也养成了习惯，不但心里老惦记着死，嘴边也念叨着死，干什么都没那么乐意地去打听人的死亡，他们那时说过些什么，脸上表情怎么样，神态如何；读史书时也最注意这方面的章节。

我的书里充斥着这些例子，也可看出我对这些材料情有独钟。如果我编书，就要出一部集子，评论形形色色的死亡。教人如何死亡，也是在教人如何生活。

狄凯阿科斯编了一部题目类似的书，但内容不同，不很实用。

有人跟我说，事实远远超出想象，当人到了那个地步，剑法再高明也有失手时。让他们去说吧，事前考虑必定大有裨益。再说，脸不变色心不动，从容前赴，难道不算本领吗？

况且，大自然会伸出援助之手，给我们勇气。如果是暴卒，我们来不及害怕。若情况相反，我发觉随着病情的进展，也自然而然对生命日益蔑视。我发现身体有病时比身体健康时更易下决心去死。尤其我并不眷恋人生的欢乐，理由是我已开始失去享受的乐趣，对死亡也看得不如以前那么害怕。这使我希望做到离生愈远，离死愈近，也愈

容易实行生与死的交替。

我在许多情况下试验过恺撒的说法：事物远看时常比近看显得大。我发觉自己健康时要比生病时更怕死亡。当我高高兴兴时，欢乐与力量使我把生与死的状态看得明显不成比例，成倍夸大烦恼以及它们造成的心理压力，我真的有病缠身时从来不至于如此。

我希望死亡来时我也有这样好的心态。体验变化与衰退很正常：这好比是大自然悄悄让我们在不知不觉中衰败凋零。往日青春年少的活力，在一位老人身上还留下多少？

唉，老人身上还剩下多少生命。

——马克西米努斯

恺撒有一名卫兵，神情憔悴，在街上向他走来，要求他批准自己去寻死。恺撒看他失魂落魄的样子，风趣地回答：“你居然以为自己在活着。”谁要是猝然消失，我相信我们谁都难以忍受。但是我们被它牵着手，从一条感觉不出的斜坡上，慢慢地一步步滑入这种惨境，再与之相适应。所以当青春在我们身上消逝时我们不觉得震动。虽然从本质与实情来说，青春消逝也是一种死亡，要比郁郁而死及寿终正寝更加严酷的死亡。尤其从恶活到不活这个跳跃不是很沉重，还比不得从青春欢乐的人生跌入痛苦艰难的境地。

佝偻的身躯背不起重担，心灵也是如此。必须让心灵开朗飞扬才能顶住这个死敌的压力。因为心灵害怕时就永远不会安宁。一旦心灵安宁了，它就可以自豪地说，焦虑、恐惧甚至微不足道的烦恼不足以干扰它。这差不多超越了我们人类的处境。

坚如磐石的心动摇不了，

无论是暴君威逼的目光，

亚得里亚海上肆虐的风暴，

还是朱庇特的霹雳掌。

——贺拉斯

心灵就成了情欲与贪婪的主宰，匮乏、羞耻、贫困和其他一切厄运的主宰。谁能够主宰谁就应去获得这种心灵优势。这才是至高无上的自由，让我们养成浩气去取笑武力与不公，嘲弄监牢与铁链：

我叫你戴上手铐脚镣，

交给一个恶吏看管——神会来救我的。

——你是说：我会死的，以死来一了百了？

——贺拉斯

在我们的宗教中，人最可靠的基础就是蔑视生命。不光是理智的推理要我们这样做：有一件东西失去后不可能后悔，我们又为什么害怕失去呢？而且既然我们受到那么多死亡方式的威胁，害怕一切方式还不如忍受一种方式而少受些痛苦吧？既然死亡是不可避免的，什么时候来也就不管它了吧？当苏格拉底听人说：“三十僭主已经判了你死刑。”他回答：“自然法则也会轮到他们的。”

走在摆脱一切苦难的旅程上难过起来，这是何等的愚蠢！

一切事物随我们诞生而诞生，同样，一切事物随我们死亡而死亡。为一百年后我们不会活着的一切哭泣，犹如为一百年前我们不曾活过的一切哭泣，都是一样傻。死亡是另一种生命的开始，正如我们当年哭闹着到来，正如我们艰难地走进这个生命，正如我们进去时换下了以前的面纱。

凡事仅有一次也就无所谓痛苦。有什么理由为瞬息的事去担那么长久的忧？活得短与活得长在死亡面前都一样。对于不复存在的东西，长与短也不存在。亚里士多德说，希帕尼斯河上有些小动物只能活上一天。上午八点钟死的属于青春夭折，下午五点钟死的属于寿终正寝。对这段时间的幸与不幸斤斤计较，我们中间谁见了不会嘲笑？我们最长与最短的生命，若与永恒相比，或者跟山川、星辰、树木甚至某些动物相比，也是同样可笑。

但是大自然逼迫我们走上这条路。它说：你们怎么来到也就怎么走出这个世界。从死到生这条路你们走时不热情也不害怕，从生到死你们也这样去走。你们的死亡是宇宙秩序的一个组成部分，地球生命中的一刹那——

世人之间传递生命，

就像赛跑手交接火炬。

——卢克莱修

事物这样紧密安排，我能为你做出任何改变吗？这是你诞生的条件，死亡也是你的一部分；你这是在躲避自己。你享受的人生对生与对死均是有份的。你诞生的第一天引导你走向死，也同样引导你走向生。

第一时刻提供生命，同时也侵蚀生命。

——塞涅卡

诞生时开始了死亡，根源中包含了终结。

——马尼利乌斯

你生活的一切，是从生命那里窃取的；你活着是对生命的侵害。你一生中不断营造的是死亡。当你在生命中，你也是在死亡中。当你不再活着时，你的死亡也过去了。

因此，你若更喜欢如此，在活过了以后再死吧。可是在生活中你是个垂死的人，垂死的人要比已死的人遭受死亡的冲击更严酷，更强烈，更本质。

你若得到过人生的好处，享尽了欢乐，那就心满意足地走吧。

为何不像酒足饭饱的宾客一样离开人生宴席？

——卢克莱修

你若不曾欢度人生，它对你没有用处，失去它又有什么要紧的呢？你留下又做什么用呢？

必然要失去的时间，一事无成的时间，

又何必苦苦去延长呢？

——卢克莱修

生命本身既不好也不坏：按照你给它什么位子才会有好坏之分。你若生活了一天，也就一切都看见了。一天与天天是相同的。没有其他的光，也没有其他的暗。这个太阳，这个月亮，这些星星，这样的排列，跟你的祖先欣赏到的一样，也将让你的后代同样欣赏。

你的祖先看到的不是别的，

你的后代也不会看到其他。

——马尼利乌斯

再差的话，我的喜剧里每一幕的演员搭配与剧情变化也都在一年内轮转一遍。如果你注意到我的四季更替，这四季包含了尘世的童年、青年、壮年和老年。它完成它的工作，没有其他奥妙，只是周而

复始，永无止境。

我们绕着我们永远待着的圈子在转。

——卢克莱修

一年四季环绕着自己的足迹转动。

——维吉尔

我决不会故意给你设计其他的新消遣。

我不能给你有什么创新，

新的游戏同老的游戏一样。

——卢克莱修

你给别人让出位子，犹如别人曾给你让出位子。

平等是公正的主要组成部分。人人逃脱不了的地方你也逃脱不了，这能怨谁吗？不管你活着还是不活，你不能把你死的时间减少一二。这一切都是徒劳的，你在你害怕的这个状态里依然待得这么长，犹如你在吃奶的婴儿时期死去一样——

你就是称心如意活了几世纪，

死亡还是千秋万代存在下去。

——卢克莱修

我将妥善安排你，不让你有任何怨言——

你知道吧，死亡不会让

另一个你活下来，站在

你的尸体前哭泣。

——卢克莱修

也不让你留恋你那么难舍的生命——

无人会想起他一己的生命，

我们也不会悼念自身伤心。

——卢克莱修

死比无还不值得害怕，还有什么比无更少的吗？

在我们看来死亡代表失去，

但已经是无，还能失去什么呢？

——卢克莱修

这跟你在生时与死时都无关。生时，因为你还存在；死时，因为你不再存在。

谁都不会在寿数已尽前去世。你死后留下的时间，正如你生前过去的时间，都不是你的，跟你无关。

从前天长地久的时间，

对我们已了无影踪。

——卢克莱修

你的生命不论在何地结束，总是整个留在了那里。生命的价值不在于岁月长短，而在于如何度过。有的人寿命很长，但内容很少；当你活着的时候要提防这一点。你活得是否有意义，这取决于你的意愿，不是岁数多少。你不停往那儿走的地方，你可曾想过会走不到吗？何况条条道路都是有尽头的。

如果有人相伴可以给你安慰，世界不正是跟你并肩而行吗？

你的生命结束，万物跟随你死亡。

——卢克莱修

不是一切都随着你摇晃而摇晃吗？哪有什么不跟着你一起衰老的呢？成千上万的人、动物、其他生灵都在你死亡的一刻死亡：

白天接着黑夜，黑夜接着白天，

不会听不到

葬礼上的哭丧声

与婴儿的呱呱声响成一片。

既然身后无路，倒退又有什么用？你见过不少人很乐意死去，借此结束了莫大的苦难。但是不乐意死去的，你曾经见过吗？有的事你没亲自经历过，也没通过别人体验过，就加以谴责，岂不是太天真了吗？你为什么要抱怨我和命运？我们错待你了吗？是你控制我们，还是我们控制你？你虽说年纪还不大，生命却已经到了尽头。人无论大小都是一个完整的人。人及其生命都不是以尺子来丈量的。萨图恩是掌管时间与生命的神，儿子喀戎听了他的介绍不死的条件后，断然拒绝永生。

“你可以想象对于人来说永生永世不死，实在比我给他规定的有限人生更难忍受，更艰苦。如果你不会死，你会不停地咒骂我没给你准备死亡。我有意在死亡中增添了一些悲情，免得你看到死亡来得方便，过于迫切和随便地去拥抱它。为了让你把节制铭记在心，既不逃避生，也不逃避死——这是我对你的要求——我把生与死调节在苦与乐之间。

“你们七贤中的第一人泰勒斯，我教导他说生与死并无区别；因而，有人问他为什么不去死，他非常聪明地回答：‘因为这并无区别。’

“水、土、火以及我们这个球体建筑的其他组件，既构成你的生命，也构成你的死亡。你为什么担心最后一天？它并不比其他的每一天更促成你的死亡。劳累不是最后一步走出来的，只是在最后一步表现出来了。每天都走向死亡，最后一天走到了。”

以上是我们大自然母亲的忠告。我经常思忖怎么会这样，就是战争期间，我们在自己和别人身上见到死亡的面目，不像在家里见到的那么狰狞，无从相比，要不又是一大群医生与哭哭啼啼的人。同样是死，村民与老百姓心里要比其他阶层的人泰然得多。

我相信实际上还是我们围绕死者露出可怕的神情，制造阴沉的气氛，比死亡本身更加吓人。生活完全变了样，老母妻儿号啕大哭，惊慌发呆的亲友前来吊丧，脸色苍白、两眼垂泪的一大群仆人四处张罗，不见日光的一个房间里点着蜡烛，床头围着医生与教士；总之，我们四周惊恐万状。在那时候，我们未死的人也被埋葬在土里了。孩子看到自己的小朋友戴了面具会害怕，我们也是这样。人的面具与事物的面具同样应该摘掉。摘掉以后，我们发现罩在面具之下的这个死亡，跟不久前一名仆人或丫鬟平平静静的死亡并无两样。

铲除了这一切繁文缛节，死亡是幸福的！

[3] 据希腊神话，坦塔罗斯把儿子剥成碎块祭神，触怒主神宙斯，将他永世置于随时会砸落的岩石下。（说明：书中脚注除特别标明的之外，均为译者注。）

[4] 原先以复活节为一年之始。

[5] 《圣经·旧约》中的人物，据说活了九百六十九岁。

Michel
de Montaigne

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

How We Weep
and Laugh at
the Same Thing

N° 28

‘No one
characteristic
clasps us purely
and universally
in its embrace.’

How We Weep and Laugh at the Same Thing

[An understanding of the complexity of conflicting emotions helps us to avoid trivial interpretations of great men and their grief.]

When we read in our history books that Antigonus was severely displeased with his son for having brought him the head of his enemy King Pyrrhus who had just been killed fighting against him and that he burst into copious tears when he saw it; and that Duke René of Lorraine also lamented the death of Duke Charles of Burgundy whom he had just defeated, and wore mourning at his funeral; and that at the battle of Auroy which the Count de Montfort won against Charles de Blois, his rival for the Duchy of Brittany, the victor showed great grief when he hap-pened upon his enemy's corpse : we should not at once exclaim ,

Et cosi aven che l'animo ciascuna

Sua passion sotto et contrario manto

Ricopre, con la vista hor'chiara hor bruna.

[Thus does the mind cloak every passion with its opposite, our faces showing now joy, now sadness.]

When they presented Caesar with the head of Pompey our histories say that he turned his gaze away as from a spectacle both ugly and displeasing. There had been such a long understanding and fellowship between them in the management of affairs of State, they had shared the same fortunes and rendered each other so many mutual services as allies, that we should not believe that his behaviour was quite false and counterfeit - as this other poet thinks it was :

tutumque putavit

Jam bonus esse socer; lachrimas non sponte cadentes

Effudit, gemitusque expressit pectore læto.

[And now he thought it was safe to play the good father-in-law; he poured out tears, but not spontaneous ones, and he forced out groans from his happy breast.]

For while it is true that most of our actions are but mask and cosmetic, and that it is sometimes true that

Hoereditas fletus sub persona risus est;

[Behind the mask, the tears of an heir are laughter;]

nevertheless we ought to consider when judging such events how our souls are often shaken by conflicting emotions. Even as there is said to be a variety of humours assembled in our bodies, the dominant one being that which normally prevails according to our complexion, so too in our souls : although diverse emotions may shake them, there is one which must remain in possession of the field; nevertheless its victory is not so complete but that the weaker ones do not sometimes regain lost ground because of the pliancy and mutability of our soul and make a brief sally in their turn. That is why we can see that not only children, who artlessly follow Nature, often weep and laugh at the same thing, but that not one of us either can boast that, no matter how much he may want to set out on a journey, he still does not feel his heart a-tremble when he says goodbye to family and friends : even if he does not actually burst into tears at least he puts foot to stirrup with a sad and gloomy face. And however noble the passion which enflames the heart of a well-born bride, she still has to have her arms prised from her mother's neck before being given to her husband, no matter what that merry fellow may say :

Est ne novis nuptis odio venus, anne parentum

Frustrantur falsis gaudia lachrimulis,

Ubertim thalami quas intra limina fundunt?

Non, ita me divi, vera gemunt, juverint.

[Is Venus really hated by our brides, or do they mock their parents'joy with those false tears which they pour forth in abundance at their chamber-door? No. So help me, gods, their sobs are false ones.]

And so it is not odd to lament the death of a man whom we would by no means wish to be still alive.

When I rail at my manservant I do so sincerely with all my mind : my curses are real not feigned. But once I cease to fume, if he needs help from me I am glad to help him : I turn over the page. When I call him a dolt or a calf I have no intention of stitching such labels on to him for ever : nor do I believe I am contradicting myself when I later call him an honest fellow. No one characteristic clasps us purely and universally in its embrace. If only talking to oneself did not look mad, no day would go by without my being heard growling to myself, against myself, 'You silly shit!' Yet I do not intend that to be a definition of me.

If anyone should think when he sees me sometimes look bleakly at my wife and sometimes lovingly that either emotion is put on, then he is daft. When Nero took leave of his mother whom he was sending to be drowned, he nevertheless felt some emotion at his mother's departure and felt horror and pity.

The sun, they say, does not shed its light in one continuous flow but ceaselessly darts fresh rays so thickly at us, one after another, that we cannot perceive any gap between them :

Largus enim liquidi fons luminis, ætherius sol

Inrigat assidue cœlum candore recenti,

Suppeditatque novo confestim lumine lumen.

[That generous source of liquid light, the æthereal sun, assiduously floods the heavens with new rays and ceaselessly sheds light upon new light.]

So, too, our soul darts its arrows separately but imperceptibly.

Artabanus happened to take his nephew Xerxes by sur-prise. He teased him about the sudden change which he saw come over his face. But Xerxes was in fact thinking about the huge size of his

army as it was crossing the Hellespont for the expedition against Greece; he first felt a quiver of joy at seeing so many thousands of men devoted to his service and showed this by a happy and festive look on his face; then, all of a sudden his thoughts turned to all those lives which would wither in a hundred years at most : he knit his brow and was saddened to tears.

We have pursued revenge for an injury with a resolute will; we have felt a singular joy at our victory... and we weep : yet it is not for that that we weep. Nothing has changed; but our mind contemplates the matter in a different light and sees it from another aspect : for everything has many angles and many different sheens. Thoughts of kinship, old acquaintanceships and affections suddenly seize our minds and stir them each according to their worth : but the change is so sudden that it escapes us :

Nil adeo fieri celeri ratione videtur

Quam si mens fieri proponit et inchoat ipsa.

Ocius ergo animus quam res se perciet ulla,

Ante oculos quarum in promptu natura videtur.

[Nothing can be seen to match the rapidity of the thoughts which the mind produces and initiates. The mind is swifter than anything which the nature of our eyes allows them to see.]

That is why we deceive ourselves if we want to make this never-ending succession into one continuous whole. When Timoleon weeps for the murder which, with noble determination, he committed, he does not weep for the liberty he has restored to his country; he does not weep for the Tyrant : he weeps for his brother. He has done one part of his duty : let us allow him to do the other.

On conscience

[Conscience originally meant connivance. Conscience in the sense of our individual consciousness of right and wrong or of our own guilt or rectitude fascinated Montaigne. It became a vital concern of his during the Wars of Religion with their cruel-ties, their false accusations and their use of torture on prisoners. Such moral basis as there was for the 'question' (judicial torture) seems, curiously enough, to have been a respect for the power of conscience - of a man's inner sense of his guilt or innocence which would strengthen or weaken his power to withstand pain. A major source of Montaigne's ideas here is St Augustine and a passionate note by Juan Luis Vives in his edition of the City of God designed to undermine confidence in torture.]

During our civil wars I was travelling one day with my brother the Sieur de la Brousse when we met a gentleman of good appearance who was on the other side from us; I did not know anything about that since he feigned otherwise. The worst of these wars is that the cards are so mixed up, with your enemy indistinguishable from you by any clear indication of language or deportment, being brought up under the same laws, manners and climate, that it is not easy to avoid confusion and disorder. That made me fear that I myself would come upon our own troops in a place where I was not known, be obliged to state my name and wait for the worst. That did happen to me on another occasion : for, from just such a mishap, I lost men and horses. Among others, they killed one of my pages, pitifully : an Italian of good family whom I was carefully training; in him was extinguished a young life, beautiful and full of great promise.

But that man of mine was so madly afraid! I noticed that he nearly died every time we met any horsemen or passed through towns loyal to the King; I finally guessed that his alarm arose from his conscience. It seemed to that wretched man that you could read right into the very secret thoughts of his mind through his mask and the crosses on his greatcoat. So wondrous is the power of

conscience! It makes us betray, accuse and fight against ourselves. In default of an outside testimony it leads us to witness against ourselves :

Occultum quatiens animo tortore flagellum.

[Lashing us with invisible whips, our soul torments us.]

The following story is on the lips of children : a Paeon-ian called Bessus was rebuked for having deliberately destroyed a nest of swallows, killing them all. He said he was right to do so : those little birds kept falsely accusing him of having murdered his father! Until then this act of parricide had been hidden and unknown; but the aveng-ing Furies of his conscience made him who was to pay the penalty reveal the crime.

Hesiod corrects that saying of Plato's, that the punishment follows hard upon the sin. He says it is born at the same instant, with the sin itself; to expect punishment is to suffer it : to merit it is to expect it. Wickedness forges torments for itself,

Malum consilium consultori pessimum,

[Who counsels evil, suffers evil most,]

just as the wasp harms others when it stings but especially itself, for it loses sting and strength for ever :

Vitasque in vulnere ponunt.

[In that wound they lay down their lives.]

The Spanish blister-fly secretes an antidote to its poi-son, by some mutual antipathy within nature. So too, just when we take pleasure in vice, there is born in our con-science an opposite displeasure, which tortures us, sleeping and waking, with many painful thoughts.

Quippe ubi se multi, per somnia sæpe loquentes,

Aut morbo delirantes, procraxe ferantur,

Et celata diu in medium peccala dedisse.

[Many indeed, often talking in their sleep or delirious in illness, have proclaimed, it is said, and betrayed long-hidden sins.]

Apollodorus dreamed that he saw himself being flayed by the Scythians then boiled in a pot while his heart kept muttering, 'I am the cause of all these ills.' No hiding-place awaits the wicked, said Epicurus, for they can never be certain of hiding there while their conscience gives them away.

Prima est hæc ultio, quod se

Judice nemo nocens absolvitur.

[This is the principal vengeance : no guilty man is absolved : he is his own judge.]

Conscience can fill us with fear, but she can also fill us with assurance and confidence. And I can say that I have walked more firmly through some dangers by reflecting on the secret knowledge I had of my own will and the innocence of my designs.

Conscia mens ut cuique sua est, ita concipit intra

Pectora pro facto spemque metumque suo.

[A mind conscious of what we have done conceives within our breast either hope or fear, according to our deeds.]

There are hundreds of examples : it will suffice to cite three of them about the same great man.

When Scipio was arraigned one day before the Roman people on a grave indictment, instead of defending him-self and flattering his judges he said : 'Your wishing to judge, on a capital charge, a man through whom you have authority to judge the Roman world, becomes you well!'

Another time his only reply to the accusations made against him by a Tribune of the People was not to plead his cause but to say : 'Come, fellow citizens! Let us go and give thanks to the gods for the victory they gave me over the Carthaginians on just such a day as this!' Then as he started to walk towards the temple all the assembled people could be seen following after him - even his prosecutor.

Again when Petilius, under the instigation of Cato, demanded that Scipio account for the monies that had passed through his hands in the province of Antioch, Scipio came to the Senate for this purpose, took his account-book from under his toga and declared that it contained the truth about his receipts and expenditure; but when he was told to produce it as evidence he refused to do so, saying that he had no wish to act so shamefully towards himself; in the presence of the Senate he tore it up with his own hands. I do not believe that a soul with seared scars could have counterfeited such assurance. He had, says Livy, a mind too great by nature, a mind too elevated by Fortune, even to know how to be a criminal or to condescend to the baseness of defending his innocence.

Torture is a dangerous innovation; it would appear that it is an assay not of the truth but of a man's endurance. The man who can endure it hides the truth : so does he who cannot. For why should pain make me confess what is true rather than force me to say what is not true? And on the contrary if a man who has not done what he is accused of is able to support such torment, why should a man who has done it be unable to support it, when so beautiful a reward as life itself is offered him?

I think that this innovation is founded on the importance of the power of conscience. It would seem that in the case of the guilty man it would weaken him and assist the torture in making him confess his fault, whereas it strengthens the innocent man against the torture. But to speak the truth, it is a method full of danger and uncertainty. What would you not say, what would you not do, to avoid such grievous pain?

Etiam innocentes cogit mentiri dolor.

[Pain compels even the innocent to lie.]

This results in a man whom the judge has put to the torture lest he die innocent being condemned to die both innocent and tortured. Thousands upon thousands have falsely confessed to capital charges. Among them, after considering the details of the trial which Alexander made him face and the way he was tortured, I place Philotas.

All the same it is, so they say, the least bad method that human frailty has been able to discover. Very inhumanely, however, and

very ineffectually in my opinion. Many peoples less barbarous in this respect than the Greeks and the Romans who call them the Barbarians reckon it horrifying and cruel to torture and smash a man of whose crime you are still in doubt. That ignorant doubt is yours : what has it to do with him? You are the unjust one, are you not? who do worse than kill a man so as not to kill him without due cause! You can prove that by seeing how frequently a man prefers to die for no reason at all rather than to pass through such a questioning which is more painful than the death-penalty itself and which by its harshness often anticipates that penalty by carrying it out.

I do not know where I heard this from, but it exactly represents the conscience of our own Justice : a village woman accused a soldier before his commanding general - a great man for justice - of having wrenched from her little children such sops as she had left to feed them with, the army having laid waste all the surrounding vil-lages. As for proof, there was none. That general first summoned the woman to think carefully what she was saying, especially since she would be guilty of perjury if she were lying; she persisted, so he had the soldier's belly slit open in order to throw the light of truth on to the fact. The woman was found to be right. An investiga-tory condemnation!

Fortune is often found in Reason's train

[The Roman censor was not too happy about Montaigne's writing about Fortune (as distinct from Providence) - strangely so, since fickle Fortune and Fortune's Wheel were centuries-old commonplaces. (The word Fortune itself occurs some 350 times in the Essays.)]

The changeableness of Fortune's varied dance means that she must inevitably show us every kind of face. Has any of her actions ever been more expressly just than the following? The Duke of Valentino decided to poison Adrian the Cardinal of Corneto, to whose home in the Vatican he and his father Pope Alexander VI were coming to dine; so he sent ahead a bottle of poisoned wine with instructions to the butler to look after it carefully. The Pope, chancing to arrive before his son, asked for a drink; that butler, who thought that the wine had been entrusted to him merely because of its quality, served it to him; then the Duke himself, arriving just in time for dinner and trusting that nobody would have touched his bottle, drank some too, so that the father died suddenly while the son, after being tormented by a long illness, was reserved for a worse and different fortune.

Sometimes it seems that Fortune is literally playing with us. The Seigneur d'Estrées (who was then ensign to Mon-seigneur de Vendôme) and the Seigneur de Licques (a lieutenant in the forces of the Duke of Aerschot) were both suitors of the sister of the Sieur de Fouquerolle - despite their being on opposite sides, as often happens with neighbours on the frontier. The Seigneur de Licques was successful. However, on his very wedding-day and, what is worse, before going to bed, the bridegroom desired to break a lance as a tribute to his new bride and went out skirmishing near St Omer; there, he was taken prisoner by the Seigneur d'Estrées who had proved the stronger. To exploit this advantage to the full, d'Estrées compelled the lady -

Conjugis ante coacta novi dimittere collum,

Quam veniens una atque altera rursus hyems

Noctibus in longis avidum saturasset amorem.

[Forced to release her embrace of her young husband before the long nights of a couple of winters had sated her eager love] -

personally to beg him, of his courtesy, to surrender his prisoner to her. Which he did, the French nobility never refusing anything to the ladies...

Was the following not Fate apparently playing the art-ist? The Empire of Constantinople was founded by Constantine son of Helena : many centuries later it was ended by another Constantine son of Helena!

Sometimes it pleases Fortune to rival our Christian miracles. We hold that when King Clovis was besieging Angoulême, by God's favour the walls collapsed of them-selves; Bouchet borrows from some other author an account of what happened when King Robert was laying siege to a certain city : he slipped off to Orleans to celebrate the festival of St Aignan; while he was saying his prayers, at a certain point in the Mass the walls of the besieged city collapsed without being attacked. But Fortune produced quite opposite results during our Milanese wars : for after Captain Renzo had mined a great stretch of the wall while besieging the town of Arona for us French it was blown right up in the air, only to fall straight back on to its foundations all in one piece so that the besieged were no worse off.

Sometimes Fortune dabbles in medicine. Jason Phereus was given up by his doctors because of a tumour on the breast; wishing to rid himself of it even by death, he threw himself recklessly into battle where the enemy was thick-est; he was struck through the body at precisely the right spot, lancing his tumour and curing him.

Did Fortune not surpass Protogenes the painter in mas-tery of his art? He had completed a portrait of a tired and exhausted dog; he was pleased with everything else but could not paint its foaming slaver to his own satisfaction; irritated against his work, he grabbed a sponge and threw it at it, intending to blot everything out since the sponge was impregnated with a variety of paints : Fortune guided his throw right to the mouth of the dog and produced the

effect which his art had been unable to attain.

Does she not sometimes direct our counsels and correct them? Queen Isabella of England had to cross over to her kingdom from Zealand with her army to come to the aid of her son against her husband; she would have been undone if she had landed at the port she had intended, for her enemies were awaiting her there; but Fortune drove her unwillingly to another place, where she landed in complete safety. And that Ancient who chucked a stone at a dog only to hit his stepmother and kill her could he not have rightly recited this verse :

Ταυτόματον ἡμῶν καλλίῳ βουλεύεται.

‘Fortune has better counsel than we do.’ Icetes had bribed two soldiers to murder Tomoleon during his stay in Adrana in Sicily. They chose a time when he was about to make some sacrifice or other; they mingled with the crowd; just as they were signalling to each other that the time was right for their deed, along comes a third soldier who landed a mighty sword-blow on the head of one of them and then ran away. His companion, believing he was discovered and undone, ran to the altar begging for sanctuary and promising to reveal all the truth. Just as he was giving an account of the conspiracy the third man was caught and was being dragged and manhandled through the crowd towards Timoleon and the more not-able members of the congregation : he begged for mercy, saying that he had rightly killed his father’s murderer, immediately proving by witnesses which good luck had conveniently provided that his father had indeed been murdered in the town of the Leontines by the very man against whom he had taken his revenge. He was granted ten Attic silver-pounds as a reward for his good luck in saving the life of the Father of the Sicilian People while avenging the death of his own father. Such fortune sur-passes in rightness the right-rules of human wisdom.

To conclude. Does not the following reveal a most explicit granting of her favour as well as her goodness and singular piety? The two Ignatii, father and son, having been proscribed by the Roman Triumvirate, nobly decided that their duty was to take each

other's life and so frustrate the cruelty of those tyrants. Sword in hand they fell on each other. Fortune guided their sword-points, made both blows equally mortal and honoured the beauty of such a loving affection by giving them just enough strength to withdraw their forearms from the wounds, blood-stained and still grasping their weapons, and to clasp each other, there as they lay, in such an embrace that the executioners cut off both their heads at once, allowing their bodies to remain nobly entwined together, wound against wound, lovingly soaking up each other's life-blood.

On punishing cowardice

[Renaissance Jurisconsults such as Tiraquellus were concerned to temper the severity of the Law by examining motives and human limitations. Montaigne does so here in a matter of great concern to gentlemen in time of war.]

I once heard a prince, a very great general, maintain that a soldier should not be condemned to death for coward-ice : he was at table, being told about the trial of the Seigneur de Vervins who was sentenced to death for sur-rendering Boulogne.

In truth it is reasonable that we should make a great difference between defects due to our weakness and those due to our wickedness. In the latter we deliberately brace ourselves against reason's rules, which are imprinted on us by Nature; in the former it seems we can call Nature herself as a defence-witness for having left us so weak and imperfect. That is why a great many people believe that we can only be punished for deeds done against our conscience : on that rule is partly based the opinion of those who condemn the capital punishment of heretics and misbelievers as well as the opinion that a barrister or a judge cannot be arraigned if they fail in their duty merely from ignorance.

Where cowardice is concerned the usual way is, cer-tainly, to punish it by disgrace and ignominy. It is said that this rule was first introduced by Charondas the law-giver, and that before his time the laws of Greece condemned to death those who had fled from battle, whereas he ordered that they be made merely to sit for three days in the market-place dressed as women : he hoped he could still make use of them once he had restored their courage by this disgrace - '*Suffundere malis hominis sanguinem quam effundere .*' [Make the blood of a bad man blush not gush.]

It seems too that in ancient times the laws of Rome condemned deserters to death : Ammianus Marcellinus tells how the Emperor Julian condemned ten of his sol-diers to be stripped of their rank and then suffer death, 'following,' he said, 'our Ancient

laws'.Elsewhere how-ever Julian for a similar fault condemned others to remain among the prisoners under the ensign in charge of the baggage. Even the harsh sentences decreed against those who had fled at Cannae and those who in that same war had followed Gnaeus Fulvius in his defeat did not extend to death.

Yet it is to be feared that disgrace, by making men desperate, may make them not merely estranged but hostile.

When our fathers were young the Seigneur de Franget, formerly a deputy-commander in the Company of My Lord Marshal de Châtillon, was sent by My Lord Marshal de Chabannes to replace the Seigneur Du Lude as Gov-ernor of Fuentarabia; he surrendered it to the Spaniards. He was sentenced to be stripped of his nobility, both he and his descendants being pronounced commoners, liable to taxation and unfit to bear arms. That severe sentence was executed at Lyons. Later all the noblemen who were at Guyse when the Count of Nassau entered it suffered a similar punishment; and subsequently others still.

Anyway, wherever there is a case of ignorance so crass and of cowardice so flagrant as to surpass any norm, that should be an adequate reason for accepting them as proof of wickedness and malice, to be punished as such.

On the vanity of words

[Montaigne, despite his own mastery of language, despised words and admired deeds or 'matter'. He showed this before he embarked on the Essays in the dedicatory letter of his translation of Raymond Sebond's Natural Theology, addressed to his father. What Montaigne admired in ancient Sparta - and what he found lacking in his own day - was a genuine respect for action over rhetoric.]

In former times there was a rhetorician who said his job was to make trivial things seem big and to be accepted as such. He is a cobbler who can make big shoes fit little feet. In Sparta they would have had him flogged for practising the art of lying and deception. And I am sure that Archidamus their king did not hear without amazement the answer given by Thucydides when he asked him whether he was better at wrestling than Pericles : 'That,' Thucydides replied, 'would be hard to prove : for after I have thrown him to the ground in the match he persuades the spectators that he did not have a fall and is declared the winner.' Those who hide women behind a mask of make-up do less harm, since it is not much of a loss not to see them as they are by nature, whereas rhetoricians pride themselves on deceiving not our eyes but our judgement, bastardizing and corrupting things in their very essence. Countries such as Crete and Sparta which maintained themselves in a sound and regulated polity did not rate orators very highly.

Ariston wisely defined rhetoric as the art of persuading the people; Socrates and Plato, as the art of deceiving and flattering; and those who reject this generic description show it to be true by what they teach. The Mahometans will not allow their children to be taught it because of its uselessness. And the Athenians, despite the fact that the practice of it was esteemed in their city, realizing how pernicious it was, ordained that the main part of it which is to work on the emotions should be abolished, together with formal introductions and perorations.

It is a means invented for manipulating and stirring up the mob

and a community fallen into lawlessness; it is a means which, like medicine, is used only when states are sick; in states such as Athens, Rhodes and Rome where the populace, or the ignorant, or all men, held all power and where everything was in perpetual turmoil, the ora-tors flooded in. And in truth few great men in those countries managed to thrust themselves into positions of trust without the help of eloquent speech : Pompey, Caesar, Crassus, Lucullus, Lentulus and Metellus all made it their mainstay for scrambling up towards that grandiose authority which they finally achieved, helped more by rhetoric than by arms, contrary to what was thought right in better times. For Lucius Volumnius, making a public address in favour of the candidates Quintus Fabius and Publius Decius during the consular elections, declared, 'These are great men of action, born for war; they have consular minds, uncouth in verbal conflict. Subtle, eloquent, learned minds are good but for Praetors, admin-istering justice in the City.'

Rhetoric flourished in Rome when their affairs were in their worst state and when they were shattered by the storms of civil war, just as a field left untamed bears the most flourishing weeds.

It would seem that polities which rely on a monarch have less use for it than the others : for that animal-stupidity and levity which are found in the masses, making them apt to be manipulated and swayed through the ears by those sweet harmonious sounds without succeeding in weighing the truth of anything by force of reason - such levity, I repeat, is not so readily found in one individual man; and it is easier to protect him by a good education and counsel from being impressed by that poison. No famous orator has ever been seen to come from Macedo-nia or from Persia.

What I have just said was prompted by my having talked with an Italian who served as chief steward to the late Cardinal Caraffa until his death. I got him to tell me about his job. He harangued me on the art of feeding with a professional gravity and demeanour as though he were explaining some important point of Theology. He listed differences of appetite : the appetite you have when you are hungry, the one you have after the second and third courses; what means there are of simply satis-fying it or of sometimes exciting it and stimulating it; how to govern the commonwealth of sauces, first in gen-eral then in particular, listing the qualities of every ingredient and its effects; the different green-stuffs in their season,

the ones which must be served hot, the ones which must be served cold as well as the ways of decorating them and embellishing them to make them look even more appetizing. After all that he embarked upon how the service should be ordered, full of fine and weighty considerations :

nec minimo sane discrimine refert

Quo gestu lepores, et quo gallina secetur!

[For it is of no small importance to know how to carve a hare or a chicken!]

And all this was inflated with rich and magnificent words, the very ones we use to discuss the government of an empire. I was reminded of that man in the poem :

Hoc salsum est, hoc adustum est, hoc lautum est parum,

Illud recte; iterum sic memento; sedulo

Moneo quæ possum pro mea sapientia.

Postremo, tanquam in speculum, in patinas, Demea,

Inspicere jubeo, et moneo quid facto usus sit.

[‘This is too salty; this has been burned; this needs to be properly washed; this is excellent - remember that next time.’I advise them carefully as far as my wisdom allows; finally I tell them, Demea, to polish the dishes until they can see their faces in them as in a mirror. I tell them the lot.]

Even the Greeks after all highly praised the order and arrangement which were observed in the banquet which Paulus Aemilius threw for them on his return from Macedonia; but I am not talking here of deeds but of words.

I cannot tell if others feel as I do, but when I hear our architects inflating their importance with big words such as pilasters, architraves, cornices, Corinthian style or Doric style, I cannot stop my thoughts from suddenly dwelling on the magic palaces of Apollidon : yet their deeds concern the wretched parts of my kitchen-door!

When you hear grammatical terms such as metonymy, metaphor and allegory do they not seem to refer to some rare, exotic tongue? Yet they are categories which apply to the chatter of your chambermaid.

It is a similar act of deception to use for our offices of state the same grandiloquent titles as the Romans did, even though they have no similarity of function and even less authority and power. Similar too - and a practice which will, in my judgement, bear witness one day to the singular ineptitude of our century - is our unworthily employing for anybody we like those glorious cognomens with which Antiquity honoured one or two great men every few hundred years. By universal acclaim Plato bore the name *divine* , and nobody thought to dispute it with him : now the Italians, who rightly boast of having in general more lively minds and saner discourse than other peoples of their time, have made a gift of it to Aretino, in whom (apart from a style of writing stuffed and sim-mering over with pointed sayings, ingenious it is true but fantastical and far-fetched, and apart from his eloquence - such as it is) I can see nothing beyond the common run of authors of his century, so far is he from even approach-ing that 'divinity' of the Ancients.

And the title Great we now attach to kings who have nothing beyond routine greatness.

To philosophize is to learn how to die

[Montaigne comes to terms with his melancholy, now somewhat played down. He remains preoccupied with that fear of death - fear that is of the often excruciating act of dying - which in older times seems to have been widespread and acute. His treatment is rhetorical but not impersonal. Montaigne is on the way to discovering admirable qualities in common men and women.

Cicero says that philosophizing is nothing other than getting ready to die. That is because study and contemplation draw our souls somewhat outside ourselves, keeping them occupied away from the body, a state which both resembles death and which forms a kind of apprenticeship for it; or perhaps it is because all the wisdom and argument in the world eventually come down to one conclusion; which is to teach us not to be afraid of dying.

In truth, either reason is joking or her target must be our happiness; all the labour of reason must be to make us live well, and at our ease, as Holy Scripture says. All the opinions in the world reach the same point, that pleasure is our target even though they may get there by different means; otherwise we would throw them out immediately, for who would listen to anyone whose goal was to achieve for us pain and suffering?

In this case the disagreements between the schools of philosophy are a matter of words. '*Transcurramus solertissimas nugas*.' [Let us skip quickly through those most frivolous trivialities.] More stubbornness and prickliness are there than is appropriate for so dedicated a vocation, but then, no matter what role a man may assume, he always plays his own part within it.

Even in virtue our ultimate aim - no matter what they say - is pleasure. I enjoy bashing people's ears with that word which runs so strongly counter to their minds. When pleasure is taken to mean the most profound delight and an exceeding happiness it is a better companion to virtue than anything else; and rightly so. Such pleasure is no less seriously pleasurable for being more lively, taut,

robust and virile. We ought to have given virtue the more favourable, noble and natural name of pleasure not (as we have done) a name derived from *vis* (vigour) .

There is that lower voluptuous pleasure which can only be said to have a disputed claim to the name not a privileged right to it. I find it less pure of lets and hindrances than virtue. Apart from having a savour which is fleeting, fluid and perishable, it has its vigils, fasts and travails, its blood and its sweat; it also has its own peculiar sufferings, which are sharp in so many different ways and accompanied by a satiety of such weight that it amounts to repentance.

Since we reckon that obstacles serve as a spur to that pleasure and as seasoning to its sweetness (on the grounds that in Nature contraries are enhanced by their contraries) we are quite wrong to say when we turn to virtue that identical obstacles and difficulties overwhelm her, making her austere and inaccessible, whereas (much more appropriately than for voluptuous pleasure) they ennoble, sharpen and enhance that holy, perfect pleasure which virtue procures for us. A man is quite unworthy of an acquaintance with virtue who weighs her fruit against the price she exacts; he knows neither her graces nor her ways. Those who proceed to teach us that the questing after virtue is rugged and wearisome whereas it is delightful to possess her can only mean that she always lacks delight. (For what human means have ever brought any-one to the joy of possessing her?) Even the most perfect of men have been satisfied with aspiring to her - not possessing her but drawing near to her. The contention is wrong, seeing that in every pleasure known to Man the very pursuit of it is pleasurable : the undertaking savours of the quality of the object it has in view; it effectively constitutes a large proportion of it and is consubstantial with it. There is a happiness and blessedness radiating from virtue; they fill all that appertains to her and every approach to her, from the first way in to the very last barrier.

Now one of virtue's main gifts is a contempt for death, which is the means of furnishing our life with easy tranquillity, of giving us a pure and friendly taste for it; without it every other pleasure is snuffed out. That is why all rules meet and concur in this one clause. It is true that they all lead us by common accord to despise pain, poverty and the other misfortunes to which human lives are

subject, but they do not do so with the same care. That is partly because such misfortunes are not inevitable. (Most of Mankind spend their lives without tasting poverty; some without even experiencing pain or sickness, like Xenophilus the musician, who lived in good health to a hundred and six.) It is also because, if the worse comes to worse, we can sheer off the bung of our misfortunes whenever we like : death can end them. But, as for death itself, that is inevitable.

Omnes eodem cogimur, omnium

Versatur urna, serius ocius

Sors exitura et nos in æter-

Num exitium impositura cymbœ.

[All of our lots are shaken about in the Urn, destined sooner or later to be cast forth, placing us in everlasting exile via Charon's boat.]

And so if death makes us afraid, that is a subject of continual torment which nothing can assuage. There is no place where death cannot find us - even if we constantly twist our heads about in all directions as in a suspect land : '*Quæ quasi saxum Tantalø semper impendet.* ' [It is like the rock for ever hanging over the head of Tantalus.] Our assizes often send prisoners to be executed at the scene of their crimes. On the way there, take them past fair mansions and ply them with good cheer as much as you like -

...non Siculœ dapes

Dulcem elaborabunt saporem,

Non avium cytharœque cantus

Somnum reducent -

[even Sicilian banquets produce no sweet savours; not even the music of birdsong nor of lyre can bring back sleep] -

do you think they can enjoy it or that having the final purpose of their journey ever before their eyes will not spoil their taste for

such entertainment?

Audit iter, numeratque dies, spacioque viarum

Metitur vitam, torquetur peste futura

[He inquires about the way; he counts the days; the length of his life is the length of those roads. He is tortured by future anguish.]

The end of our course is death. It is the objective necessarily within our sights. If death frightens us how can we go one step forward without anguish? For ordinary people the remedy is not to think about it; but what brutish insensitivity can produce so gross a blindness? They lead the donkey by the tail :

Qui capite ipse suo instituit vestigia retro.

[They walk forward with their heads turned backwards.]

No wonder that they often get caught in a trap. You can frighten such people simply by mentioning death (most of them cross themselves as when the Devil is named) ; and since it is mentioned in wills, never expect them to draw one up before the doctor has pronounced the death-sentence. And then, in the midst of pain and terror, God only knows what shape their good judgement kneads it into!

(That syllable 'death' struck Roman ears too roughly; the very word was thought to bring ill-luck, so they learned to soften and dilute it with periphrases. Instead of saying *He is dead* they said *He has ceased to live* or *He has lived*. They found consolation in living, even in a past tense! Whence our 'late' (*feu*) So-and-So : 'he was' So-and-So.)

Perhaps it is a case of, 'Repayment delayed means money in hand', as they say; I was born between eleven and noon on the last day of February, one thousand five hundred and thirty-three (as we date things nowadays, beginning the year in January) ; it is exactly a fortnight since I became thirty-nine : 'I ought to live at least as long again; meanwhile it would be mad to think of something so far off'. - Yes, but all leave life in the same circumstances, young and old alike. Everybody goes out as though he had

just come in. Moreover, however decrepit a man may be, he thinks he still has another twenty years to go in the body, so long as he has Methuselah ahead of him. Silly fool, you! Where your life is concerned, who has decided the term? You are relying on doctors' tales; look at facts and experience instead. As things usually go, you have been living for some time now by favour extraordinary. You have already exceeded the usual term of life; to prove it, just count how many more of your acquaintances have died younger than you are compared with those who have reached your age. Just make a list of people who have ennobled their lives by fame : I wager that we shall find more who died before thirty-five than after. It is full of reason and piety to take as our example the manhood of Jesus Christ : his life ended at thirty-three. The same term applies to Alexander, the greatest man who was simply man.

Death can surprise us in so many ways :

Quid quisque vitet, nunquam homini satis

Cautum est in horas.

[No man knows what dangers he should avoid from one hour to another.]

Leaving aside fevers and pleurisies, who would ever have thought that a Duke of Brittany was to be crushed to death in a crowd, as one was during the state entry into Lyons of Pope Clement, who came from my part of the world! Have you not seen one of our kings killed at sport? And was not one of his ancestors killed by a bump from a pig? Aeschylus was warned against a falling house; he was always on the alert, but in vain : he was killed by the shell of a tortoise which slipped from the talons of an eagle in flight. Another choked to death on a pip from a grape; an Emperor died from a scratch when combing his hair; Aemilius Lepidus, from knocking his foot on his own doorstep; Aufidius from bumping into a door of his Council chamber. Those who died between a woman's thighs include Cornelius Gallus, a praetor; Tigillinus, a captain of the Roman Guard; Ludovico, the son of Guy di Gonzaga, the Marquis of Mantua; and - providing even worse examples - Speucippus the Platonic philosopher, and one of our Popes.

Then there was that wretched judge Bebius; he was just granting a week's extra time to a litigant when he died of a seizure : his own time had run out. Caius Julius, a doctor, was putting ointment on the eyes of a patient when death closed his. And if I may include a personal example, Captain Saint-Martin, my brother, died at the age of twenty-three while playing tennis; he was felled by a blow from a tennis-ball just above the right ear. There was no sign of bruising or of a wound. He did not even sit down or take a rest; yet five or six hours later he was dead from an apoplexy caused by that blow.

When there pass before our eyes examples such as these, so frequent and so ordinary, how can we ever rid ourselves of thoughts of death or stop imagining that death has us by the scruff of the neck at every moment?

You might say : 'But what does it matter how you do it, so long as you avoid pain?' I agree with that. If there were any way at all of sheltering from Death's blows - even by crawling under the skin of a calf - I am not the man to recoil from it. It is enough for me to spend my time contentedly. I deal myself the best hand I can, and then accept it. It can be as inglorious or as unexemplary as you please :

proetulerim delirus inersque videri,

Dum mea delectent mala me, vel denique fallant,

Quam sapere et ringi.

[I would rather be delirious or a dullard if my faults pleased me, or at least deceived me, rather than to be wise and snarling.]

But it is madness to think you can succeed that way. They come and they go and they trot and they dance : and never a word about death. All well and good. Yet when death does come - to them, their wives, their children, their friends - catching them unawares and unprepared, then what storms of passion overwhelm them, what cries, what fury, what despair! Have you ever seen anything brought so low, anything so changed, so confused?

We must start providing for it earlier. Even if such brutish indifference could find lodgings in the head of an intelligent man

(which seems quite impossible to me) it sells its wares too dearly. If death were an enemy which could be avoided I would counsel borrowing the arms of cowardice. But it cannot be done. Death can catch you just as easily as a coward on the run or as an honourable man :

Nempe et fugacem persequitur virum,

Nec parcit imbellis juventœ

Poplitibus, timidoque tergo;

[It hounds the man who runs away, and it does not spare the legs fearful backs of unwarlike youth;]

no tempered steel can protect your shoulders;

Ille licet ferro cautus se condat œre,

Mors tamen inclusum protrahet inde caput;

[No use a man hiding prudently behind iron or brass : Death will know how to make him stick out his cowering head;]

we must learn to stand firm and to fight it.

To begin depriving death of its greatest advantage over us, let us adopt a way clean contrary to that common one; let us deprive death of its strangeness; let us frequent it, let us get used to it; let us have nothing more often in mind than death. At every instant let us evoke it in our imagination under all its aspects. Whenever a horse stumbles, a tile falls or a pin pricks however slightly, let us at once chew over this thought : ‘Supposing that was death itself?’ With that, let us brace ourselves and make an effort. In the midst of joy and feasting let our refrain be one which recalls our human condition. Let us never be carried away by pleasure so strongly that we fail to recall occasionally how many are the ways in which that joy of ours is subject to death or how many are the fashions in which death threatens to snatch it away. That is what the Egyptians did : in the midst of all their banquets and good cheer they would bring in a mummified corpse to serve as a warning to the guests :

Omnem crede diem tibi diluxisse supremum.

Grata superveniet, quæ non sperabitur hora.

[Believe that each day was the last to shine on you. If it comes, any unexpected hour will be welcome indeed.]

We do not know where death awaits us : so let us wait for it everywhere. To practise death is to practise freedom. A man who has learned how to die has unlearned how to be a slave. Knowing how to die gives us freedom from subjection and constraint. Life has no evil for him who has thoroughly understood that loss of life is not an evil. Paulus Aemilius was sent a messenger by that wretched King of Macedonia who was his prisoner, begging not to be led in his triumphant procession. He replied : 'Let him beg that favour from himself.'

It is true that, in all things, if Nature does not lend a hand art and industry do not progress very far. I myself am not so much melancholic as an idle dreamer : from the outset there was no topic I ever concerned myself with more than with thoughts about death - even in the most licentious period of my life.

Jucundum cum aetas florida ver ageret.

[When my blossoming youth rejoiced in spring.]

Among the games and the courting many thought I was standing apart chewing over some jealousy or the uncertainty of my aspirations : meanwhile I was reflecting on someone or other who, on leaving festivities just like these, had been surprised by a burning fever and his end, with his head full of idleness, love and merriment - just like me; and the same could be dogging me now :

Jam fuerit, nec post unquam revocare licebit.

[The present will soon be the past, never to be recalled.]

Thoughts such as these did not furrow my brow any more than others did. At first it does seem impossible not to feel the sting of such ideas, but if you keep handling them and running through them you eventually tame them. No doubt about that. Otherwise I would, for my part, be in continual terror and frenzy : for no man ever had less confidence than I did that he would go on living; and no man ever counted less on his life proving long. Up till now I

have enjoyed robust good health almost uninterruptedly : yet that never extends my hopes for life any more than sickness shortens them. Every moment it seems to me that I am running away from myself. And I ceaselessly chant the refrain, 'Anything you can do another day can be done now.'

In truth risks and dangers do little or nothing to bring us nearer to death. If we think of all the millions of threats which remain hanging over us, apart from the one which happens to appear most menacing just now, we shall realize that death is equally near when we are vigorous or feverish, at sea or at home, in battle or in repose. '*Nemo altero fragilior est : nemo in crastinam sui certior.*' [No man is frailer than another : no man more certain of the morrow.]

If I have only one hour's work to do before I die, I am never sure I have time enough to finish it. The other day someone was going through my notebooks and found a declaration about something I wanted done after my death. I told him straight that, though I was hale and healthy and but a league away from my house, I had hastened to jot it down because I had not been absolutely certain of getting back home. Being a man who broods over his thoughts and stores them up inside him, I am always just about as ready as I can be : when death does suddenly appear, it will bear no new warning for me. As far as we possibly can we must always have our boots on, ready to go; above all we should take care to have no outstanding business with anyone else.

Quid brevi fortes jaculamur œvo

Multa?

[Why, in so brief a span do we find strength to make so many projects?]

We shall have enough to do then without adding to it.

One man complains less of death itself than of its cutting short the course of a fine victory; another, that he has to depart before marrying off his daughter or arranging the education of his children; one laments the company of his wife; another, of his son; as though they were the principal attributes of his being.

I am now ready to leave, thank God, whenever He pleases,

regretting nothing except life itself - if its loss should happen to weigh heavy on me. I am untying all the knots. I have already half-said my adieus to everyone but myself. No man has ever prepared to leave the world more simply nor more fully than I have. No one has more completely let go of everything than I try to do.

Miser o miser, aiunt, omnia ademit

Una dies infesta mihi tot proemia vitæ.

['I am wretched, so wretched,' they say : 'One dreadful day has stripped me of all life's rewards.']

And the builder says :

Manent opera interrupta, minaeque

Murorum ingentes.

[My work remains unfinished; huge walls may fall down.]

We ought not to plan anything on so large a scale - at least, not if we are to get all worked up if we cannot see it through to the end.

We are born for action :

Cum moriar, medium solvere inter opus.

[When I die, may I be in the midst of my work.]

I want us to be doing things, prolonging life's duties as much as we can; I want Death to find me planting my cabbages, neither worrying about it nor the unfinished gardening. I once saw a man die who, right to the last, kept lamenting that destiny had cut the thread of the history he was writing when he had only got up to our fifteenth or sixteenth king!

Illud in his rebus non addunt, nec tibi earum

Jam desiderium rerum super insidet una!

[They never add, that desire for such things does not linger on in your remains!]

We must throw off such humours; they are harmful and vulgar.

Our graveyards have been planted next to churches, says Lycurgus, so that women, children and lesser folk should grow accustomed to seeing a dead man without feeling terror, and so that this continual spectacle of bones, tombs and funerals should remind us of our human condition :

Quin etiam exhilarare viris convivia cœde

Mos olim, et miscere epulis spectacula dira

Certantum ferro, sœpe et super ipsa cadentum

Pocula respersis non parco sanguine mensis;

[It was once the custom, moreover, to enliven feasts with human slaughter and to entertain guests with the cruel sight of gladiators fighting : they often fell among the goblets, flooding the tables with their blood;]

so too, after their festivities the Egyptians used to display before their guests a huge portrait of death, held up by a man crying, 'Drink and be merry : once dead you will look like this'; similarly, I have adopted the practice of always having death not only in my mind but on my lips. There is nothing I inquire about more readily than how men have died : what did they say? How did they look? What expression did they have? There are no passages in the history books which I note more attentively. That I have a particular liking for such matters is shown by the examples with which I stuff my book. If I were a scribbler I would produce a compendium with commentaries of the various ways men have died. (Anyone who taught men how to die would teach them how to live.) Dicearchus did write a book with some such title, but for another and less useful purpose.

People will tell me that the reality of death so far exceeds the thought that when we actually get there all our fine fencing amounts to nothing. Let them say so : there is no doubt whatsoever that meditating on it before-hand confers great advantages. Anyway, is it nothing to get even that far without faltering or feverish agitation?

But there is more to it than that : Nature herself lends us a hand and gives us courage. If our death is violent and short we have no time to feel afraid : if it be otherwise, I have noticed that as an illness gets more and more hold on me I naturally slip into a kind of contempt for life. I find that a determination to die is harder to digest when I am in good health than when I am feverish, especially since I no longer hold so firmly to the pleasures of life once I begin to lose the use and enjoyment of them, and can look on death with a far less terrified gaze. That leads me to hope that the further I get from good health and the nearer I approach to death the more easily I will come to terms with exchanging one for the other. Just as I have in several other matters assayed the truth of Caesar's assertion that things often look bigger from afar than close to, I have also found that I was much more terrified of illness when I was well than when I felt ill. Being in a happy state, all pleasure and vigour, leads me to get the other state quite out of proportion, so that I mentally increase all its discomforts by half and imagine them heavier than they prove to be when I have to bear them.

I hope that the same will apply to me when I die. It is normal to experience change and decay : let us note how Nature robs us of our sense of loss and decline. What does an old man still retain of his youthful vigour and of his own past life?

Heu senibus vitae portio quanta manet.

[Alas, what little of life's portion remains with the aged.]

When a soldier of Caesar's guard, broken and worn out, came up to him in the street and begged leave to kill himself, Caesar looked at his decrepit bearing and said with a smile : 'So you think you are still alive, then?'

If any of us were to be plunged into old age all of a sudden I do not think that the change would be bearable. But, almost imperceptibly, Nature leads us by the hand down a gentle slope; little by little, step by step, she engulfs us in that pitiful state and breaks us in, so that we feel no jolt when youth dies in us, although in essence and in truth that is a harsher death than the total extinction of a languishing life as old age dies. For it is not so grievous a leap from a wretched existence to non-existence as it is from a sweet existence in full bloom to one full of travail and pain.

When our bodies are bent and stooping low they have less strength for supporting burdens. So too for our souls : we must therefore educate and train them for their encounter with that adversary, death; for the soul can find no rest while she remains afraid of him. But once she does find assurance she can boast that it is impossible for anx-iety, anguish, fear or even the slightest dissatisfaction to dwell within her. And that almost surpasses our human condition.

Non vultus instantis tyranni

Mente quatit solida, neque Auster

Dux inquieti turbidus Adriæ,

Nec fulminantis magna Jovis manus.

[Nothing can shake such firmness : neither the threatening face of a tyrant, nor the South Wind (that tempestuous Master of the Stormy Adriatic) nor even the mighty hand of thundering Jove.]

She has made herself Mistress of her passions and her lusts, Mistress of destitution, shame, poverty and of all other injuries of Fortune. Let any of us who can gain such a superiority do so : for here is that true and sovereign freedom which enables us to cock a snook at force and injustice and to laugh at manacles and prisons :

in manicis, et

Compeditibus, sævo te sub custode tenebo.

Ipse Deus simul atque volam, me solvet : opinor,

Hoc sentit, moriar. Mors ultima linea rerum est.

['I will shackle your hands and feet and keep you under a cruel gaoler.' - 'God himself will set me free as soon as I ask him to.' (He means, I think, 'I will die' : for death is the last line of all.)]

Our religion has never had a surer human foundation than contempt for life; rational argument (though not it alone) summons us to such contempt : for why should we fear to lose something which, once lost, cannot be regretted? And since we are

threatened by so many kinds of death is it not worse to fear them all than to bear one? Death is inevitable : does it matter when it comes? When Socrates was told that the Thirty Tyrants had condemned him to death, he retorted, 'And nature, them ! '

How absurd to anguish over our passing into freedom from all anguish. Just as our birth was the birth of all things for us, so our death will be the death of them all. That is why it is equally mad to weep because we shall not be alive a hundred years from now and to weep because we were not alive a hundred years ago. Death is the origin of another life. We wept like this and it cost us just as dear when we entered into this life, similarly stripping off our former veil as we did so. Nothing can be grievous which occurs but once; is it reasonable to fear for so long a time something which lasts so short a time? Living a long life or a short life are made all one by death : *long* and *short* do not apply to that which is no more. Aristotle says that there are tiny creatures on the river Hypanis whose life lasts one single day : those which die at eight in the morning die in youth; those which die at five in the evening die of senility. Which of us would not laugh if so momentary a span counted as happiness or unhappiness? Yet if we compare our own span against eternity or even against the span of mountains, rivers, stars, trees or, indeed, of some animals, then saying *shorter* or *longer* becomes equally ridiculous.

Nature drives us that way, too : 'Leave this world,' she says, 'just as you entered it. That same journey from death to life, which you once made without suffering or fear, make it again from life to death. Your death is a part of the order of the universe; it is a part of the life of the world :

inter se mortales mutua vivunt...

Et quasi cursores vitaï lampada tradunt.

[Mortal creatures live lives dependent on each other; like runners in a relay they pass on the torch of life.]

Shall I change, just for you, this beautiful interwoven structure! Death is one of the attributes you were created with; death is a part of you; you are running away from yourself; this *being* which you enjoy is equally divided between death and life. From the day you

were born your path leads to death as well as life :

Prima, quae vitam dedit, hora, carpsit.

[Our first hour gave us life and began to devour it.]

Nascentes morimur, finisque ab origine pendet.

[As we are born we die; the end of our life is attached to its beginning.]

All that you live, you have stolen from life; you live at her expense. Your life's continual task is to build your death. You are *in* death while you are *in* life : when you are no more *in* life you are after death. Or if you prefer it thus : after life you are dead, but during life you are dying : and death touches the dying more harshly than the dead, in more lively a fashion and more essentially.

'If you have profited from life, you have had your fill; go away satisfied :

Cur non ut plenus vitae conviva recedis?

[Why not withdraw from life like a guest replete?]

But if you have never learned how to use life, if life is useless to you, what does it matter if you have lost it? What do you still want it for?

Cur amplius addere quæris

Rursum quod pereat male, et ingratum occidat omne?

[Why seek to add more, just to lose it again, wretchedly, without joy?]

Life itself is neither a good nor an evil : life is where good or evil find a place, depending on how you make it for them.

'If you have lived one day, you have seen everything. One day equals all days. There is no other light, no other night. The Sun, Moon and Stars, disposed just as they are now, were enjoyed by your grandsires and will enter-tain your great-grandchildren :

Non alium videre patres : aliumve nepotes

Aspicient.

[Your fathers saw none other : none other shall your progeny discern.]

And at the worst estimate the division and variety of all the acts of my play are complete in one year. If you have observed the vicissitude of my four seasons you know they embrace the childhood, youth, manhood and old age of the World. Its play is done. It knows no other trick but to start all over again. Always it will be the same.

Versamur ibidem, atque insumus usque;

[We turn in the same circle, for ever;]

Atque in se sua per vestigia volvitur annus.

[And the year rolls on again through its own traces.]

I have not the slightest intention of creating new pastimes for you.

Nam tibi proeterea quod machiner, inveniamque

Quod placeat, nihil est, eadem sunt omnia semper.

[For there is nothing else I can make or discover to please you : all things are the same for ever.]

Make way for others as others did for you. The first part of equity is equality. Who can complain of being included when all are included?

'It is no good going on living : it will in no wise shorten the time you will stay dead. It is all for nothing : you will be just as long in that state which you fear as though you had died at the breast;

licet, quod vis, vivendo vincere secla,

Mors æterna tamen nihilominus illa manebit.

[Triumph over time and live as long as you please : death eternal will still be waiting for you.]

‘And yet I shall arrange that you have no unhappiness :

In vera nescis nullum fore morte alium te,

Qui possit vivus tibi te lugere peremptum,

Stansque jacentem.

[Do you not know that in real death there will be no second You, living to lament your death and standing by your corpse.]

“You”will not desire the life which now you so much lament.

Nec sibi enim quisquam tum se vitamque requirit...

Nec desiderium nostri nos afficit ullum.

[Then no one worries about his life or his self; ...we feel no yearning for our own being.]

Death is less to be feared than nothing - if there be any-thing less than nothing :

multo mortem minus ad nos esse putandum

Si minus esse potest quam quod nihil esse videmus.

[We should think death to be less - if anything is‘less’tan what we can see to be nothing at all.]

‘Death does not concern you, dead or alive; alive, because you are : dead, because you are no more.

‘No one dies before his time; the time you leave behind you is no more yours than the time which passed before you were born; and does not concern you either :

Respice enim quam nil ad nos ante acta vetustas

Temporis æterni fuerit.

[Look back and see that the aeons of eternity before we were

born have been nothing to us.]

‘Wherever your life ends, there all of it ends. The usefulness of living lies not in duration but in what you make of it. Some have lived long and lived little. See to it while you are still here. Whether you have lived enough depends not on a count of years but on your will.

‘Do you think you will never arrive whither you are ceaselessly heading? Yet every road has its end. And, if it is a relief to have company, is not the whole world pro-ceeding at the same pace as you are?

Omnia te vita perfuncta sequentur.

[All things will follow you when their life is done.]

Does not everything move with the same motion as you do? Is there anything which is not growing old with you? At this same instant that you die hundreds of men, of beasts and of other creatures are dying too.

Nam nox nulla diem, neque noctem aurora sequuta est,

Qua non audierit mistos vagitibus ægris

Ploratus, mortis comites et funeris atri.

[No night has ever followed day, no dawn has ever followed night, without hearing, interspersed among the wails of infants, the cries of pain attending death and sombre funerals.]

‘Why do you pull back when retreat is impossible? You have seen cases enough where men were lucky to die, avoiding great misfortunes by doing so : but have you ever seen anyone for whom death turned out badly? And it is very simple-minded of you to condemn something which you have never experienced either yourself or through another. Why do you complain of me or of Destiny? Do we do you wrong? Should you govern us or should we govern you? You may not have finished your stint but you have finished your life. A small man is no less whole than a tall one. Neither men nor their lives are measured by the yard. Chiron refused immortality when he was told of its characteristics by his

father Saturn, the god of time and of duration.

‘Truly imagine how much less bearable for Man, and how much more painful, would be a life which lasted for ever rather than the life which I have given you. If you did not have death you would curse me, for ever, for depriving you of it.

‘Seeing what advantages death holds I have deliberately mixed a little anguish into it to stop you from embracing it too avidly or too injudiciously. To lodge you in that moderation which I require of you, neither fleeing from life nor yet fleeing from death, I have tempered them both between the bitter and the sweet.

‘I taught Thales, the foremost of your Sages, that living and dying are things indifferent. So, when asked “why he did not go and die then,” he very wisely replied : “Because it is indifferent.”

‘Water, Earth, Air and Fire and the other parts of this my edifice are no more instrumental to your life than to your death. Why are you afraid of your last day? It brings you no closer to your death than any other did. The last step does not make you tired : it shows that you are tired. All days lead to death : the last one gets there.’

Those are the good counsels of Nature, our Mother.

I have often wondered why the face of death, seen in ourselves or in other men, appears incomparably less terrifying to us in war than in our own homes - otherwise armies would consist of doctors and cry-babies - and why, since death is ever the same, there is always more stead-fastness among village-folk and the lower orders than among all the rest. I truly believe that what frightens us more than death itself are those terrifying grimaces and preparations with which we surround it - a brand new way of life : mothers, wives and children weeping; visits from people stunned and beside themselves with grief; the presence of a crowd of servants, pale and tear-stained; a bedchamber without daylight; candles lighted; our bedside besieged by doctors and preachers; in short, all about us is horror and terror. We are under the ground, buried in our graves already! Children are frightened of their very friends when they see them masked. So are we. We must rip the masks off things as well as off people. Once we have done that we shall find underneath only that same death which a valet and a chambermaid got through

recently, without being afraid. Blessed the death which leaves no time for preparing such gatherings of mourners.



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My life had stood a loaded gun

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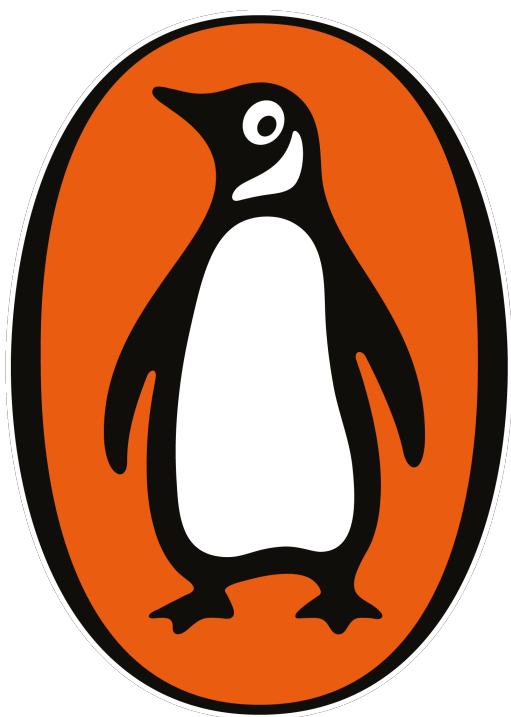
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* 关于本书中破折号的使用说明：因狄金森习惯在句末用英文短破折号“—”来表达诗歌的节奏感，中文译本保留了这一用法，但因汉语标点符号的使用规则，统一改为中文长破折号“——”。

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早上好，午夜！

渴望就像种子

一只癞蛤蟆会见光而死！

狄金森诗集版本概要

A wounded deer leaps highest

A precious, mouldering pleasure'tis

To fight aloud is very brave

The brain within its groove

I'm nobody! Who are you?

I can wade grief

I like to see it lap the miles

Is Heaven a physician?

I took my power in my hand

Before I got my eye put out

Heart not so heavy as mine

I know that he exists

'Tis little I could care for pearls

I felt a cleavage in my mind

The reticent volcano keeps

One of the ones that Midas touched

I dreaded that first robin so

A route of evanescence

Who robbed the woods

The leaves, like women, interchange

It sounded as if the streets were running

The rat is the concisest tenant.
Where ships of purple gently toss
Blazing in gold and quenching in purple
There is a word
He fumbles at your spirit
Because I could not stop for Death
Essential oils are wrung :
Death is like the insect
Bereaved of all, I went abroad
I felt a funeral in my brain
Fame is a fickle food
My Wheel is in the dark —
Summer begins to have the look
To-day or this noon
The Bible is an antique volume
Candor, my tepid Friend
On my volcano grows the grass —
Color, Caste, Denomination —
Doom is the House Without the Door —
I dwell in Possibility
To intercept his yellow plan
All the letters I can write
It's coming — the postponeless Creature
My life had stood a loaded gun
Good morning, Midnight!

Longing is like the seed

A toad can die of light!

一只受伤的鹿跳得最高，
我听那猎人讲：
那不过是死的惊恐，
然后矮树丛寂然不动。

被重击的岩石迸涌，
被践踏的钢铁涌流：
面颊总是骤然绯红
当一阵潮热激刺！

欢乐是苦痛的铠甲，
在内里它小心武装，
以免任何人察觉血迹
而惊呼“你受伤了”！

[1] 狄金森原诗均无标题，为查阅方便，目录取每首诗首句为标题。——编者注

那是一种珍贵，粉碎成尘的愉悦，
与一本古老的书相遇，
他恰恰穿着他的世纪的衣裳；
一种特权，我想，

握着他可敬的手，
在我们的手里温暖他，
一段，或者两段回程，抵达
他年轻时候的岁月。

检视他古雅的看法，
打开他的知识，
关于我们的心灵共同关注的
过去的文学。

学者最感兴趣的，
竞争追逐的，
当柏拉图是一种确然，
索福克勒斯 [2] 是个人；

当萨福 [3] 是个活生生的女孩，
贝阿特丽切穿着
被但丁神话了的长袍。
事实，多少世纪前，

他寻常般遍历，
就像有人会来到城里
告诉你你所有的梦都会成真：
他住在梦诞生的地方。

他的出现是魅惑，
你祈求他不要走；
老卷本摇摇他们羊皮纸的头
吊人胃口，就这样。

[2] 索福克勒斯（Sopocēls，约公元前496—前406），古希腊悲剧家之一。——编者注

[3] 萨福（Sappho，约公元前7—前6世纪），古希腊女诗人，出身贵族。——编者注

响亮地战斗很勇敢，
可是勇士，据我所知，
胸中满怀
骑士的悲痛。

他赢了，王国看不见，
他失败，无人察觉，
没有哪个国以对爱国者的爱
瞩目他垂死的双眼。

我们相信，为这样的人
天使们身披羽翅列队，
按等级依序前行，甚至脚
和制服都是白雪。

大脑在它的沟槽中
均衡并且真实地运动；
可要是让一个碎片骤然偏转，
对你来说那样
更易让水回流；
当洪水已裂开山峦，
并为自己挖出一道迂回之路，
还毁掉了磨坊！

我谁都不是！你是谁？
难道你也寂寂无名？
那我们俩就是一对——别吭声！
他们会驱逐我们，你知道。

做个有头脸的人物多无趣！
多风光，像只青蛙
一整天对着一片爱慕的泥沼
宣扬自己的名字！

我能涉水蹚过，
 整池的悲伤，——
 我习惯了。
 可是快乐微微一推
 就折断了我的脚，
 我歪倒——醉了。
 别让哪颗石子笑，
 那是新酒，——
 那是一切！

力量只是痛苦，
 通过自律，拧成股，
 直到沉重都挂起。
 把没药 [4] 给巨人们
 他们会萎靡，就像常人。
 给他们喜马拉雅山，——
 他们会扛着他！

[4] 没药，中药名，为橄榄科植物地丁树的干燥树脂。——编者

🐾 [5]

我喜欢看它折叠里程
并舔过山谷，
然后停下来在水槽那儿补给；
之后，令人惊愕，绕过

一叠群山，
盛气凌人，窥探
路边的棚屋；
然后修剪一副残骸

好和它的半边毛皮合体，再蜿蜒穿过， [6]
用可怕，呜呜的音节
一路抱怨；
之后追赶自己跑下山

像半尼其 [7] 一样嘶鸣；
然后，像一颗星星般准时，
停在它自己的马厩门口
温顺而全能——

[5] 这首诗是写火车的。19世纪时，人们对火车有许多好奇和想象。诗文中常见，绘画、摄影也一样。（说明：书中脚注除特别标明之外，均为译者注。）

[6] 这句是关于火车运动对风景裁剪的形象描述。火车行过，穿过风景，如同撕裂一个完整的身体，同时遮挡了一半风景。“quarry”是被捕获的鹿的一部分骨架，扔给猎狗吃的。“pare”是剥皮修剪。诗中第一节让人联想到猫儿、马儿，而到第二节，对火车代表的工业革命这个庞然大物，心理上感觉可怕，还不明所以，狄金森对感受到的它潜在的全能和毁灭性做了隐喻。这两句的力量，体现

了一个诗人捕捉集体心理、预言时代的能力。文德勒谈这首诗，问诗中可能暗示了哪些动物，其实它既暗示某些动物，又暗示了上帝，科技来临相当于上帝重现。狄金森的父亲曾致力于把火车引入艾摩斯特市，火车站后来就设在离狄金森家不远的地方。文德勒说诗中的火车是狄金森自己的戏仿，表面上看知书达礼，温文尔雅，实际上却像那个庞大的机器一般，充满兽性和全能。

[7] 半尼其，出自《马可福音》3：17：“还有西庇太的儿子雅各和雅各的兄弟约翰，又给这两个人起名叫半尼其，就是雷子的意思。”

老天是个医生吗？
他们说他能治病；
可是死后的药
不可得。

老天是座金库吗？
他们谈论我们所拥有的；
可是那种磋商
我不是加入其中的一员。

💙 [8]

我手中紧握我的力量
和世界作对；
没有大卫拥有的那么多力量，
可我双倍勇敢。

我的石子投中了，可我自己
是那唯一栽倒的人。
难道歌利亚太巨大，
还是我太小？

[8] 本诗可参见圣经故事：大卫与歌利亚之战。

在我把我的眼睛弄瞎前，
我不妨也像其他
有眼睛的生命一样看，
不晓得还有其它办法。

可要是告诉我，就今天，
我也许能自个儿拥有
整个天空，我告诉你我的心
就我的那么大小，会裂开。

草地是我的，山脉是我的，——
所有的森林，无止尽的星星，
在我有限的双眼之间
我所能尽取的正午。

点水的鸟儿的动作，
闪电连接的道路，
要喜欢尽由我的眼睛去看，——
这消息会让我呆若木鸡！

那么，安全点，仅以我搁在
窗台上的灵魂猜想
其他生命的眼睛也看着那儿，
而对太阳毫无戒备。

不像我的心那般沉重的心，
悠然晚归，
它经过我的窗口
给自己吹着一个小曲儿，——

漫不经心的一段，一支谣曲，
一首街头小调；
可是对我恼怒的耳朵来说
却是多么甜美的抚慰，

就好像一只食米鸟，
闲逛到这边，
一边欢歌一边沉思接着又欢歌，
歌声婉转缓缓消逝。

那就好像一条潺湲的小溪
流过艰辛的路程
让流血的双脚跳起小步舞
却不知为何。

明日，夜会再度来临，
疲惫，也许，酸痛。
啊，号角，在我窗边，
恳求你再来溜达。

我知道他存在
在某处，在沉默中。
从我们粗俗的眼前
他藏起了他珍稀的生命。

这片刻间的游戏，
这愚蠢的埋伏，
只是为了让喜乐
自己赢得惊讶！

可倘若这游戏
证实刺穿了最诚挚的心，
倘若欢喜在死亡
僵硬的凝视中呆滞，

难道那乐子
不是看来太过奢侈？
难道那玩笑
不是伸得太远？

我可以为珍珠操点心
它拥有广袤的大海；
或领针，当皇帝
把红宝石骤雨般朝我猛扔；

或者金子，他是矿山的王公；
或钻石，当我看见
可以配上一个穹顶的王冠
持续为我加冕。

我感觉我的心神中有一道裂缝
好像我的大脑已经裂开；
我试图拼起它，严丝合缝，
却不能让它们对齐。

我努力让后面的念头接上
前面的念头，
可是次序散开无法控制
就像地板上的线球。

缄默的火山藏着
他永不休眠的计划；
不向任何靠不住的人
吐露他粉色的规划。

如果自然不讲
耶和华告诉她的故事，
难道没有一个倾听者
人性就不能够幸存？

被她紧扣的双唇告诫
让多嘴的人随便。
人所藏着的唯一秘密
是不朽。

没能把我们全都触摸的米达斯 [9] ，
摸过的东西中的一个，
是那倾心相诉的浪子，
乐而无忧的金莺。

这般沉醉，他用
戏谑的占卜 [10] 否认它；
这般炫目，我们错把他
当成一座降落的藏宝窟 [11] 。

花言巧语的家伙，骗子，
贪图享欲的人，一个贼，——
偶尔也是一个演说家，
销魂首领；

果园的耶稣，
一边欺骗一边诱走
全部的玫瑰精油
为他的潜逃之需。

金丝雀的光芒，
鸟中的流星，
谣曲和歌手
露天表演般的华丽道别。

我从没想过伊阿宋

是为了寻求什么金羊毛；
可那时我是个乡下人，
想法只为图个安宁。

可要是真有个伊阿宋，
传统容忍我
看苹果树上
他失去的报偿。

[9] 米达斯，希腊神话中弗里吉亚国王，“点石成金”的出处来自他的故事。他解救了酒神狄俄尼索斯的老师西勒诺斯，酒神允他实现他的愿望，他希望触手所碰一切成金。愿望实现，最终他的女儿也被他变成了一座金子雕像。他悔恨不已，再求酒神解救。酒神让他去帕克托罗斯河洗澡，洗去了点石成金的魔力。米达斯后舍弃王位，追随酒神。“米达斯的触摸”因此成为一个隐喻。

[10] “占卜”（divine），参见《创世记》44：15：约瑟对他们说：你们做的是什么事呢？你们岂不知像我这样的人必能占卜吗？

[11] “藏宝窟”（mine），一词双关，既是“藏宝库”，也暗指“我的宝贝”“我的珍宝”。

我如此畏惧那第一只知更鸟，
但是现在他已经驯服，
我习惯了他成长，——
尽管，他有些伤人。

我想要是我能只活到
那第一声鸣叫过去，
不是所有林中的钢琴
都有力量撕碎我——

我不敢与水仙花相见，
因为害怕她们黄色的长袍
会以完全相异于
我自己的风尚刺穿我。

我希望青草快点长，
这样当去看的时候，
他就会太高，最高的一个
能够伸展到看着我。

我受不了蜜蜂要来，
我希望他们远远待在
他们所去的那些幽暗国度：
他们有什么话对我说？

可是，他们在这儿；没一个生命爽约，

没有一朵花避开
温柔地顺从我，
髑髅地的女王。

在他走时每一个都向我致敬，
而我是我孩子气的羽毛
在哀恸中明白
他们无情地鼓鸣时，飘举。

一条隐没的路；
有一只旋转的轮子；
绿宝石的振鸣，
胭脂虫的急奔；
树丛上的每一朵花
调整乱转的头，——
突尼斯来的信，或许，
早晨一趟轻松的出行。

谁劫掠了树林，
不知提防的树林？
毫无疑心的树木
拿出他们的荚壳和青苔
取悦他的幻想。
他好奇，浏览他们的小饰物，
他抓取，他夺走。
一本正经的铁杉，
还有枞树会说什么？

树叶，像女人，交换
精明的私语；
有点头称赞，也有
暗示的推断。

两种情形下的对话者
享受秘密，——
对曝光泄露
达成绝不违背的约定。

听起来街道在奔跑，
然后街道又静静站立。
日食是我们在窗口能看到的一切，
敬畏是我们能感受到的一切。

渐渐地，最勇敢的人偷偷溜出他的隐蔽所，
去看看时间是不是还在那儿。
自然戴着它绿玉色的花冠，
搅动着更新鲜的空气。

老鼠是最节俭的房客。
他不付房租，——
否认义务，
蓄意如此。

让我们的聪明受挫、
探测或绕行，

恨无法伤害
这般悄悄的敌人。

法令
也不禁止他，
合法得
如同公正。

紫色的船只轻轻摇荡
在黄水仙的大海之上，
奇妙的水手融入其中，
而后——码头寂然。

熠然铄金，熄灭于紫色，
猎豹般跃向天空，
而后在古老的地平线
俯下她斑驳的脸，去死；

倾身低俯与厨房窗户般高，
触摸屋顶，微染谷仓，
对着草地飞吻她的女帽，——
白日的魔术师走了！

有一个词
它带着一把剑
能刺穿一个全副武装的人。
它掷出它带刺的音节，——
马上又变得沉默。

可在它落下的地方
被拯救的人
会在爱国日告诉，
某个佩戴肩章的兄弟
尽情呼吸。

不管那气喘吁吁的太阳在哪儿奔跑，
不管白天在哪儿浪游，
有它无声的进攻，
有它的胜利！
看那最精准的神枪手！
最成功的射击！
时间最崇高的目标
是一个灵魂“被忘记”！

他笨拙地触弄你的精神，
就像演奏者触弄琴键，
在他们奏出完整的音乐前；
他让你一点一点地惊叹，

让你脆弱不堪的心性准备
迎接那飘然出尘的打击，
以那轻柔的音槌，在很远处听到，
然后近了，变得那么缓慢。

你的呼吸有时间得以舒展，
你的大脑浮想联翩，——
发出唯一庄严的雷击
它剥去你赤裸灵魂的头皮。

因为我不能为死亡而停步，
他亲切地为我止步；
马车只载着我们自己
还有不朽。

我们驾马缓行，他不疾不徐，
而我也放下
我的劳作，还有我的悠闲，
因为他殷勤有礼。

我们经过一个学校，孩子们在玩耍，
围成一圈扭打，
我们经过谷物凝视着的田野，
我们经过落日。

我们在一所房子面前稍歇
它像是地上隆起的肿块；
屋顶几乎看不见，
飞檐不过是个土堆。

从那时起已是许多世纪；可每个世纪
都感觉比那一天短暂；
我初猜那天马儿的头
是朝向永生。

精油被榨出：
玫瑰中的花油
不只是被太阳榨取，
它也是技艺的礼物。

寻常的玫瑰衰败；
可这朵，在女子的抽屉里，
创造了夏天，当那女子
躺在无尽的玫瑰经颂祷中。

死亡像那虫子
威胁着树，
足能杀死它，
但可能被引诱。

用香脂诱惑它，
用刀子寻找它，
思量，它是否让你付出
生命中的一切。

如果它已经钻出
技艺所及之处，
敲响大树并离开它，——
这是害虫的意愿。

丧失了一切，我出国远游，
并未减少丧失感
在一座新的半岛上，——
坟墓先我而行，

很快我也找到我的寄居处，
而当我寻找我的床，
它却是一座坟墓，在枕头上
安放下我的头。

我醒来，发现它比我先醒，
我起来，——它跟着我；
我想把它扔在人群中，
把它丢进大海，

在一杯杯人工安眠剂中
把它的形影睡去，——
坟墓消失了，可是铲子
还保留在记忆中。

我感觉大脑里有一场葬礼，
送葬者，来来去去，
不停地踩踏，踩踏，直到似乎
感知挣脱而出。

当他们都坐下来，
一场仪式像一面鼓
不停地敲啊敲，直到我以为
我的意识变得麻木。

然后我听到他们举起一个棺材，
又一次，踩着那铅做的靴子，
嘎吱嘎吱穿过我的灵魂，
而后空间开始鸣响，

仿佛整个天穹是一口钟，
而存在只是一只耳朵，
我和沉默是某种奇怪的种类，
遇难，孤独，就在这儿。

声名是浮浪不定的食物
在一个飘移的盘子上，
它的桌子曾为一个客人摆好，可是
不会再摆第二次。

乌鸦检视它的碎屑，
以嘲弄的聒聒
飞过它去找农夫的谷物；
人们吃了它而死去。

我的轮子在黑暗中，——
我看不到一根轮辐，
可是知道它嘀嗒嗒的脚
绕了一圈又一圈。

我的脚踩在浪涛上——
一条人迹罕至的路，
可是所有的路
尽头都有一块空地。

有些人放弃了织布机，
有些在忙碌的坟墓
找到稀奇的消遣，
有些用崭新、庄重的脚步
尊贵地经过大门，
把问题又抛回给你和我。

夏天开始有了样子，
迷人大书的穷究者
不情愿，可的确察觉——
姗姗来迟的树叶上新的收获。

秋天开始得以暗示
从云朵的女帽那儿，
或是萦绕永在的山峦的
那条披肩上深沉的颜色。

眼睛开始贪得无厌，
冥想精练了言辞，
一株远树的染匠
重拾他绚烂的活计。

结束是一切的归程，
几乎是终年常在，
然后逃脱了稳定，
召回到不朽。

今天或这个正午，
她待得这么近，
我几乎都摸到了她；
今夜她卧着
经过街邻——
还有树干和尖塔——
此刻越过了猜想。

圣经是一部古老的书
 由消逝的人们写成，
 应圣灵的建议——
 主题——伯利恒——
 伊甸园——那古老的家园——
 撒旦——敌将，
 犹大——伟大的失职者，
 大卫——游吟诗人。
 罪恶——一个著名的绝境
 其他人必须抵制，
 “虔信的”男孩子们
 非常孤独——
 别的男孩已经“迷失”。
 若故事有个巧言讲述者
 所有的男孩都会来——
 俄耳甫斯的布道惑人，
 它并不谴责。



真挚，我不温不火的朋友，
别来和我戏耍！
心灵的没药和穆哈
是它的有失平衡。

我的火山上长了青草，——
一个沉思的地点，
一只鸟儿会去挑选的地方
将是通常的想法。

火在下面熏烧得多红，
草皮多不安全——
我透露了吗，我的孤独
将充满敬畏。

颜色，地位，教派——
这些是时间的事儿，
死亡的分类划分
不知道它们是什么。

就像在睡眠中——这儿的一切都被遗忘，
教义丢在脑后，
死亡硕大的民主的手指
抹去了名号。

假若是茧蛹——他才不操心——
假若他收起
金色或红棕的蝶蛹，
都同样是蝴蝶

从死亡一清二楚的
他的昏冥中，它们浮现；
我们最细微的直觉
注定不可信。

厄运是没有大门的房子——
它从太阳那儿进来，
然后梯子被扔掉
因为逃跑没戏。

外面它们都在干什么
在梦里情景各异，
当松鼠玩耍，野莓死掉——
万物向上帝躬身致意。

我栖居于可能性中，
比散文更漂亮的一座房子，
有更多窗户，
比门高级。

房间，是雪松木的——
眼睛不能穿透；
而经久的房顶
是天空的复折屋顶 [12]。

让最漂亮的客人——
拥有——这个——
我窄小的双手展开的广阔
好收集乐园。

[12] 这个版本中第二节第四行的“gambels”（三角墙）是1933年版本中手稿辨识中辨认为错误的词语，严重影响这首诗的准确和人们的理解。正确的词语应当是“gambrels”（复折屋顶）。

要阻挡他黄色的计划，
太阳不允许
大气的反复无常；
甚至当雪

像恶作剧的男孩扔起雪球
到他的眼睛里，
他也不过是转过头；
正忙于崇高的事业！

催动大地
磁吸大海是他的事儿，
并让天象各安其所——
可每个过客

都认为我们更繁忙，
就像一只飘荡的微不足道的蜜蜂
支持一道闪电，
理应是颗炸弹！

（用一朵花）
所有我能写的信
都没有这一封漂亮，
丝绒的音节，
长毛绒的句子，
红宝石的深度，深不见底，
藏起，轻诉，为你——
是一只蜂鸟演唱它
它刚刚啜饮了我！

它来了——毫不迟延的造物，
它获得街区现在又获得了大门，
从所有其他的栓扣中挑选了它的门闩，
进来，说——“你认识我吗，先生？”
简单的问候和确然相认，
要是敌人便无畏——要是朋友便简洁，
用薄饼和冰溜装扮每座房子，
并且拿出去一座送给上帝。

我的生命是一杆上实弹的枪
立在角落，直到一天
主人经过——验明正身，
带走我。

一时我们游荡在绝美的树林，
一时我们猎取母鹿——
而每次我代他而言
群山径自回应。

若我微笑，热忱的光
便闪耀山谷——
就像一张维苏威的脸，[\[13\]](#)
让它的喜悦由衷焕发。

而在夜晚，当我们美好的白日结束，
我守护着我主人的头，
那比曾经共享的
厚厚的鸭绒枕头要好。

对他的仇敌我无比仇恨，
不用第二次刺激
我便投以怒黄之眼
或是按下断然的拇指。

尽管可能是我而不是他活得更久，

他却必须比我活得更久，
因为我只有杀戮的技艺——
却没有去死的力量。

[13] 维苏威是意大利那不勒斯的著名火山。

早上好，午夜！
我就回家，
白天厌倦了我——
可我怎能厌倦他？

阳光照耀之处是可爱的地方，
我喜欢逗留——
可是现在——早晨不想要我——
那么晚安，白天！

我能看，不能吗？
当东方变红的时候？
那时，山峦有它们的办法，
让心游历海外。

你没有那么美，午夜——
我选择白天，
可接受一个小女孩吧
他却转过身去！



渴望就像种子
在地里努力，
相信如果它求情
最终会被发现。

时辰和区域
每个情境都不清楚，
必须达到何种恒心，
在它终见太阳之前！

一只癞蛤蟆会见光而死！

死亡是癞蛤蟆和人
共同的权利，——
也是伯爵和蠓虫的

特权。

还要妄自尊大吗？

小蚋虫的霸权
和你的一样大。

狄金森诗集版本概要

狄金森生前的诗歌作品主要在朋友和家人之间流传。在1850年至1866年间，共有10首诗由她的朋友交给报纸匿名发表。1878年，诗人海伦·亨特·杰克逊（Helen Hunt Jackson）哄诱狄金森在《诗人的面具》（A Masque of Poets）中发表了一些诗歌，这是一本作者完全匿名的诗集。

1886年狄金森去世后，她的妹妹拉维尼亚发现了数百首之前狄金森从未示人的诗歌手稿。狄金森总共留下了大约1800首诗歌。拉维尼亚认为狄金森的诗歌理应得到出版。在她的努力下，梅布尔·卢米斯·托德（Mabel Loomis Todd）和托马斯·温特沃斯·希金森（Thomas Wentworth Higginson）于1890年编辑出版了第一本狄金森诗集《狄金森诗歌》（*Poems of Emily Dickinson*）。两位编辑对狄金森的诗歌按照当时的诗歌阅读传统和他们自己对诗歌的认识做了大量修改，包括规范标点、增加标题、按照韵律需要修改用词等等。第一版诗集取得了很大成功，一年后，他们又出版了《狄金森诗歌第二卷》（*Poems of Emily Dickinson, Second Series*）。其后，托德又分别于1894年编辑出版了《狄金森书信集》（*Dickinson's Letters*）和1896年的《狄金森诗歌第三卷》（*Poems of Emily Dickinson, Third Series*）。

狄金森的外甥女玛莎·狄金森·比安奇（Martha Dickinson Bianchi）不赞同托德和希金森对狄金森诗歌的过度编辑，根据她从拉维尼亚和狄金森的嫂嫂苏珊·狄金森（Susan Dickinson）那儿继承的狄金森手稿，先后编辑出版了六卷狄金森诗歌。她采取了与托德截然不同的编辑方式，不改变原诗的韵律，不添加标题。1945年，托德的女儿完成了托德生前未完成的对所保留的全部狄金森手稿的编辑，出版了《旋律霹雳》（*Bolts of Melody*）。这样，在几个不同的版本中，狄金森的大多数诗歌均得以出版，但是并没有一个完整收录所有诗歌的选集。

1955年托马斯·H·约翰逊（Thomas H. Johnson）的《狄金森诗歌》出版。约翰逊的版本基本完整收录了狄金森的诗歌。他依据狄金森手稿，忠实于狄金森的原文。此外，他对狄金森的诗歌按照年代进行了排列。这是一个划时代的文学事件，对诗歌界和读者重新认识评价狄金森起到了决定性作用。

拉尔夫·W·富兰克林在约翰逊的成就之上，进一步关注手稿和诗人的书写过程。1981年，他出版了带有狄金森手稿复印件的版本《狄金森手稿集》（*The Manuscript Books of Emily Dickinson*）。之后，1998年他又出版了《狄金森诗歌全集》（*The Poems of Emily Dickinson*）。2016年克蕾斯坦纳·米勒（*Cristanne Miller*）编辑出版了一个全新版本《狄金森诗歌：如她所保留》（*Emily Dickinson's Poems: As She Preserved Them*），声称最忠实地保留了狄金森诗歌原作的状态。

2016年重印的《企鹅经典：小黑书》系列中的这本狄金森诗选，是1933年马丁·塞克尔（*Martin Secker*）从玛莎·狄金森·比安奇1924年编选出版的《狄金森诗全集》（*The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*）中摘选的。这个版本目前已经非常罕见了。自从1955年约翰逊版本出版以来，通行的英文版本和各种翻译版本都是以约翰逊、富兰克林等人的版本为基础编辑翻译的。这个早期版本的再版，对读者和研究者了解早期狄金森诗歌出版和认知状况非常有益，可以和大家熟悉的通行版本对照阅读。

周琰

2018年7月

Emily Dickinson

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

My life had
stood a
loaded gun

N° 29

‘It’s coming—
the postponeless
Creature . . .’

A wounded deer leaps highest,
I've heard the hunter tell;
'Tis but the ecstasy of death,
And then the brake is still.

The smitten rock that gushes,
The trampled steel that springs :
A cheek is always redder
Just where the hectic stings!

Mirth is the mail of anguish,
In which it caution arm,
Lest anybody spy the blood
And 'You're hurt' exclaim!

A precious, mouldering pleasure'tis
To meet an antique book,
In just the dress his century wore;
A privilege, I think,

His venerable hand to take,
And warming in our own,
A passage back, or two, to make
To times when he was young.

His quaint opinions to inspect,
His knowledge to unfold
On what concerns our mutual mind,
The literature of old;

What interested scholars most,
What competitions ran
When Plato was a certainty,
And Sophocles a man;

When Sappho was a living girl,
And Beatrice wore
The gown that Dante deified.
Facts, centuries before,

He traverses familiar,
As one should come to town
And tell you all your dreams were true :

He lived where dreams were born.

His presence is enchantment,
You beg him not to go;
Old volumes shake their vellum heads
And tantalize, just so.

To fight aloud is very brave,
But gallanter, I know,
Who charge within the bosom,
The cavalry of woe.

Who win, and nations do not see,
Who fall, and none observe,
Whose dying eyes no country
Regards with patriot love.

We trust, in plumed procession,
For such the angels go,
Rank after rank, with even feet
And uniforms of snow.

The brain within its groove
Runs evenly and true;
But let a splinter swerve,
'Twere easier for you
To put the water back
When floods have slit the hills,
And scooped a turnpike for themselves,
And blotted out the mills!

I'm nobody! Who are you?
Are you nobody, too?
Then there's a pair of us — don't tell!
They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!
How public, like a frog
To tell your name the livelong day
To an admiring bog!

I can wade grief,
Whole pools of it, —
I'm used to that.
But the least push of joy
Breaks up my feet,
And I tip — drunken.
Let no pebble smile,
'Twas the new liquor, —
That was all!

Power is only pain,
Stranded, through discipline,
Till weights will hang.
Give balm to giants,
And they'll wilt, like men.
Give Himmaleh, —
They'll carry him!

I like to see it lap the miles,
And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks;
And then, prodigious, step

Around a pile of mountains,
And, supercilious, peer
In shanties by the sides of roads;
And then a quarry pare

To fit its sides, and crawl between,
Complaining all the while
In horrid, hooting stanza;
Then chase itself down hill

And neigh like Boanerges;
Then, punctual as a star,
Stop — docile and omnipotent —
At its own stable door.

Is Heaven a physician?
They say that He can heal;
But medicine posthumous
Is unavailable.

Is Heaven an exchequer?
They speak of what we owe;
But that negotiation
I'm not a party to.

I took my power in my hand
And went against the world;
'Twas not so much as David had,
But I was twice as bold.

I aimed my pebble, but myself
Was all the one that fell.
Was it Goliath was too large,
Or only I too small?

Before I got my eye put out,
I liked as well to see
As other creatures that have eyes,
And know no other way.

But were it told to me, to-day,
That I might have the sky
For mine, I tell you that my heart
Would split, for size of me.

The meadows mine, the mountains mine, —
All forests, stintless stars,
As much of noon as I could take
Between my finite eyes.

The motions of the dipping birds,
The lightning's jointed road,
For mine to look at when I liked, —
The news would strike me dead!

So, safer, guess, with just my soul
Upon the window-pane
Where other creatures put their eyes,
Incautious of the sun.

Heart not so heavy as mine,
Wending late home,
As it passed my window
Whistled itself a tune, —

A careless snatch, a ballad,
A ditty of the street;
Yet to my irritated ear
An anodyne so sweet,

It was as if a bobolink,
Sauntering this way,
Carolled and mused and carolled
Then bubbled slow away.

It was as if a chirping brook
Upon a toilsome way
Set bleeding feet to minuets
Without the knowing why.

To-morrow, night will come again,
Weary, perhaps, and sore.
Ah, bugle, by my window,
I pray you stroll once more!

I know that he exists
Somewhere, in silence.
He has hid his rare life
From our gross eyes.

'Tis in instant's play,
'Tis a fond ambush,
Just to make bliss
Earn her own surprise!

But should the play
Prove piercing earnest,
Should the glee glaze
In death's stiff stare,

Would not the fun
Look too expensive?
Would not the jest
Have crawled too far?

'Tis little I could care for pearls
Who own the ample sea;
Or brooches, when the Emperor
With rubies pelteth me;

Or gold, who am the Prince of Mines;
Or diamonds, when I see
A diadem to fit a dome
Continual crowning me.

I felt a cleavage in my mind
As if my brain had split;
I tried to match it, seam by seam,
But could not make them fit.

The thought behind I strove to join
Unto the thought before,
But sequence unravelled out of reach
Like balls upon a floor.

The reticent volcano keeps
His never slumbering plan;
Confided are his projects pink
To no precarious man.

If nature will not tell the tale
Jehovah told to her,
Can human nature not survive
Without a listener?

Admonished by her buckled lips
Let every babbler be.
The only secret people keep
Is Immortality.

One of the ones that Midas touched,
Who failed to touch us all,
Was that confiding prodigal,
The blissful oriole.

So drunk, he disavows it
With badinage divine;
So dazzling, we mistake him
For an alighting mine.

A pleader, a dissembler,
An epicure, a thief, —
Betimes an oratorio,
An ecstasy in chief;

The Jesuit of orchards,
He cheats as he enchants
Of an entire attar
For his decamping wants.

The splendor of a Burmah,
The meteor of birds,
Departing like a pageant
Of ballads and of bards.

I never thought that Jason sought
For any golden fleece;
But then I am a rural man,

With thoughts that make for peace.

But if there were a Jason,
Tradition suffer me
Behold his lost emolument
Upon the apple-tree.

I dreaded that first robin so,
But he is mastered now,
And I'm accustomed to him grown, —
He hurts a little, though.

I thought if I could only live
Till that first shout got by,
Not all pianos in the woods
Had power to mangle me.

I dared not meet the daffodils,
For fear their yellow gown
Would pierce me with a fashion
So foreign to my own.

I wished the grass would hurry,
So when'twas time to see,
He'd be too tall, the tallest one
Could stretch to look at me.

I could not bear the bees should come,
I wished they'd stay away
In those dim countries where they go :
What word had they for me?

They're here, though; not a creature failed,
No blossom stayed away
In gentle deference to me,

The Queen of Calvary.

Each one salutes me as he goes,
And I my childish plumes
Lift, in bereaved acknowledgment
Of their unthinking drums.

A route of evanescence
With a revolving wheel;
A resonance of emerald,
A rush of cochineal;
And every blossom on the bush
Adjusts its tumbled head, —
The mail from Tunis, probably,
An easy morning's ride.

Who robbed the woods,
The trusting woods?
The unsuspecting trees
Brought out their burrs and mosses
His fantasy to please.
He scanned their trinkets, curious,
He grasped, he bore away.
What will the solemn hemlock,
What will the fir-tree say?

The leaves, like women, interchange
Sagacious confidence;
Somewhat of nods, and somewhat of
Portentous inference,

The parties in both cases
Enjoining secrecy, —
Inviolable compact
To notoriety.

It sounded as if the streets were running,
And then the streets stood still.
Eclipse was all we could see at the window,
And awe was all we could feel.

By and by the boldest stole out of his covert,
To see if time was there.
Nature was in her beryl apron,
Mixing fresher air.

The rat is the concisest tenant.
He pays no rent, —
Repudiates the obligation,
On schemes intent.

Balking our wit
To sound or circumvent,
Hate cannot harm
A foe so reticent.

Neither decree
Prohibits him,
Lawful as
Equilibrium.

Where ships of purple gently toss
On seas of daffodil,
Fantastic sailors mingle,
And then — the wharf is still.

Blazing in gold and quenching in purple,
Leaping like leopards to the sky,
Then at the feet of the old horizon
Laying her spotted face, to die;

Stooping as low as the kitchen window,
Touching the roof and tinting the barn,
Kissing her bonnet to the meadow, —
And the juggler of day is gone!

There is a word
Which bears a sword
Can pierce an armed man.
It hurls its barbed syllables, —
At once is mute again.

But where it fell
The saved will tell
On patriotic day,
Some epauletted brother
Gave his breath away.

Wherever runs the breathless sun,
Wherever roams the day,
There is its noiseless onset,
There is its victory!
Behold the keenest marksman!
The most accomplished shot!
Time's sublimest target
Is a soul 'forgot'!

He fumbles at your spirit
As players at the keys
Before they drop full music on;
He stuns you by degrees,

Prepares your brittle substance
For the ethereal blow,
By fainter hammers, further heard,
Then nearer, then so slow

Your breath has time to straighten,
Your brain to bubble cool, —
Deals one imperial thunderbolt
That scalps your naked soul.

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children played
At wrestling in a ring;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses'heads
Were toward eternity.

Essential oils are wrung :
The attar from the rose
Is not expressed by suns alone,
It is the gift of screws.

The general rose decays;
But this, in lady's drawer,
Makes summer when the lady lies
In ceaseless rosemary.

Death is like the insect
Menacing the tree,
Competent to kill it,
But decoyed may be.

Bait it with the balsam,
Seek it with the knife,
Baffie, if it cost you
Everything in life.

Then, if it have burrowed
Out of reach of skill,
Ring the tree and leave it, —
'Tis the vermin's will.

Bereaved of all, I went abroad,
No less bereaved to be
Upon a new peninsula, —
The grave preceded me,

Obtained my lodgings ere myself,
And when I sought my bed,
The grave it was, reposed upon
The pillow for my head.

I waked, to find it first awake,
I rose, —it followed me;
I tried to drop it in the crowd,
To lose it in the sea,

In cups of artificial drowse
To sleep its shape away, —
The grave was finished, but the spade
Remained in memory.

I felt a funeral in my brain,
And mourners, to and fro,
Kept treading, treading, till it seemed
That sense was breaking through.

And when they all were seated,
A service like a drum
Kept beating, beating, till I thought
My mind was going numb.

And then I heard them lift a box,
And creak across my soul
With those same boots of lead, again,
Then space began to toll

As all the heavens were a bell,
And Being but an ear,
And I and silence some strange race,
Wrecked, solitary, here.

Fame is a fickle food
Upon a shifting plate,
Whose table once a Guest, but not
The second time, is set.

Whose crumbs the crows inspect,
And with ironic caw
Flap past it to the Farmer's corn;
Men eat of it and die.

My Wheel is in the dark, —
I cannot see a spoke,
Yet know its dripping feet
Go round and round.

My foot is on the tide —
An unfrequented road,
Yet have all roads
A 'clearing' at the end.

Some have resigned the loom,
Some in the busy tomb
Find quaint employ,
Some with new, stately feet
Pass royal through the gate,
Flinging the problem back at you and me.

Summer begins to have the look,
Peruser of enchanting Book
Reluctantly, but sure, perceives —
A gain upon the backward leaves.

Autumn begins to be inferred
By millinery of the cloud,
Or deeper color in the shawl
That wraps the everlasting hill.

The eye begins its avarice,
A meditation chastens speech,
Some Dyer of a distant tree
Resumes his gaudy industry.

Conclusion is the course of all,
Almost to be perennial,
And then elude stability
Recalls to immortality.

To-day or this noon
She dwelt so close,
I almost touched her;
Tonight she lies
Past neighborhood —
And bough and steeple —
Now past surmise.

The Bible is an antique volume
Written by faded men,
At the suggestion of Holy Spectres —
Subjects — Bethlehem —
Eden — the ancient Homestead —
Satan — the Brigadier,
Judas — the great Defaulter,
David — the Troubadour.
Sin — a distinguished Precipice
Others must resist,
Boys that 'believe'
Are very lonesome —
Other boys are 'lost'.
Had but the tale a warbling Teller
All the boys would come —
Orpheus' sermon captivated,
It did not condemn.

Candor, my tepid Friend,
Come not to play with me!
The Myrrhs and Mochas of the Mind
Are its Iniquity.

On my volcano grows the grass, —
A meditative spot,
An area for a bird to choose
Would be the general thought.

How red the fire reeks below,
How insecure the sod —
Did I disclose, would populate
With awe my solitude.

Color, Caste, Denomination —
These are Time's affair,
Death's division classifying
Does not know they are.

As in sleep — all here forgotten,
Tenets put behind,
Death's large democratic fingers
Rub away the brand.

If Circassian — He is careless —
If He put away
Chrysalis of Blonde or Umber,
Equal butterfly

They emerge from His obscuring;
What Death knows so well,
Our minuter intuitions
Deem incredible.

Doom is the House Without the Door —
'Tis entered from the sun,
And then the ladder's thrown away
Because escape is done.

'Tis varied by the dream
Of what they do outside,
When squirrels play and berries die —
And hundreds bow to God.

I dwell in Possibility,
A fairer house than Prose,
More numerous of windows,
Superior of doors.

Of chambers, as the cedars —
Impregnable of eye;
And for an everlasting roof
The gables of the sky.

Of visitors — the fairest —
For occupation — this —
The spreading wide my narrow hands
To gather Paradise.

To intercept his yellow plan
The sun does not allow
Caprices of the atmosphere;
And even when the snow

Heaves balls of specks like vicious boy
Directly in his eye,
Does not so much as turn his head —
Busy with majesty!

'Tis his to stimulate the earth,
And magnetize the sea,
And bind astronomy in place —
Yet any passer-by

Would deem Ourselves the busier,
As the minutest bee
That rides supports a thunder,
A bomb to justify!

(*With a flower*)

All the letters I can write
Are not fair as this,
Syllables of velvet,
Sentences of plush,
Depths of ruby, undrained,
Hid, lip, for thee —
Play it were a humming bird
And just sipped me!

It's coming — the postponeless Creature,
It gains the block and now it gains the door,
Chooses its latch from all the other fastenings,
Enters with a—'You know me, Sir?'
Simple salute and certain recognition,
Bold — were it enemy — brief were it friend,
Dresses each house in crêpe and icicle,
And carries one out of it to God.

My life had stood a loaded gun
In corners, till a day
The owner passed — identified,
And carried me away.

And now we roam the sov'reign woods,
And now we hunt the doe —
And every time I speak for him
The mountains straight reply.

And do I smile, such cordial light
Upon the valley glow —
It is as a Vesuvian face
Had let its pleasure through.

And when at night, our good day done,
I guard my master's head,
'Tis better than the eider duck's
Deep pillow to have shared.

To foe of his I'm deadly foe,
None stir the second time
On whom I lay a yellow eye
Or an emphatic thumb.

Though I than he may longer live,
He longer must than I,
For I have but the art to kill —

Without the power to die.

Good morning, Midnight!
I'm coming home,
Day got tired of me —
How could I of him?

Sunshine was a sweet place,
I liked to stay —
But Morn didn't want me — now —
So good night, Day!

I can look, can't I?
When the East is red?
The hills have a way, then,
That puts the heart abroad.

You are not so fair, Midnight —
I chose Day,
But please take a little Girl
He turned away!

Longing is like the seed
That wrestles in the ground,
Believing if it intercede
It shall at length be found.

The hour and the zone
Each circumstance unknown,
What constancy must be achieved
Before it see the sun!

A toad can die of light!
Deaths is the common right
Of toads and men, —
Of earl and midge

The privilege.
Why swagger then?
The gnat's supremacy
Is large as thine.



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On the Beach at Night Alone

Leaves of Grass published in many different editions, with many additional poems, between 1855

and 1892. This book makes a small selection. This selection published in Penguin Classics 2015. The

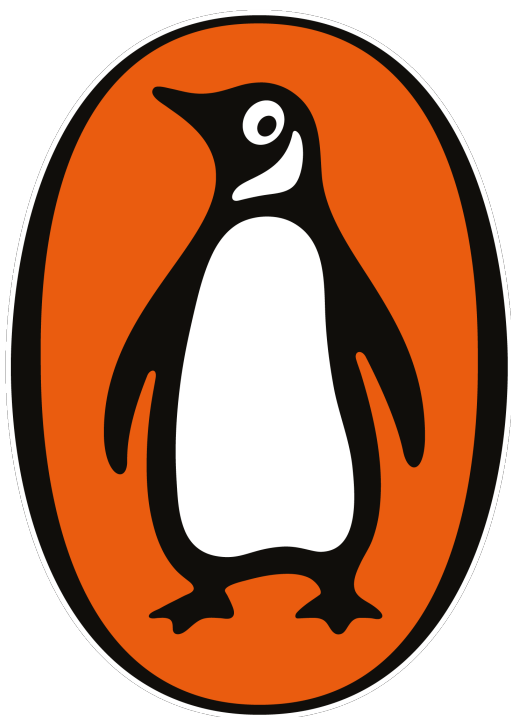
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CLASSICS

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Tears

To the Man-of-War Bird

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The World Below the Brine

On the Beach at Night Alone

Song for All Seas, All Ships

Patroling Barnegat

After the Sea-Ship

候鸟

普遍性之歌 [\[1\]](#)

—

来呀，缪斯说，
为我唱一首没有诗人唱过的歌，
为我歌咏普遍性吧。

在我们这广阔的地球中，
深不可测的厚度和熔渣之间，
它中心的中央安然包裹着、
栖息着完美的种子。

每个生命或多或少享有它的一份，
一切出生都是它的出生，掩藏不掩藏，种子都在等待。

二

看啊！目光犀利而卓然挺拔的科学，
如同从高峰上俯视着现代人，
不断地发出绝对的律令。

但再看啊！灵魂，超乎一切科学之上，

历史由于它一层层环绕了地球，
整个星河由于它在天空上转动。

经过漫长周折的螺旋之路，
（如同海上一条因风转舵的船）
部分的由于它向恒常的汇流；
真实的由于它向理想的趋近 [2]。

由于它，神秘的演化
不但令正义合理，也令我们称之为邪恶者合理。

从无论什么样的面具底下，
从溃烂的巨大躯干之中，从奸诈和诡计和泪水之中，
将出现健康和欢乐，普遍的欢乐。

脱开病态的和浮浅的主体，脱开恶劣的多数，人和国家的变化无穷的欺骗，

如电、没有污染，分劈着、充盈着一切，
只有良善是普遍的。

三

在疾病和哀愁丛生的群山之上，
一只无拘无束的鸟儿永远展翅悬停着，停着，
高高地处在更纯净、更快乐的风中。

从最浓重的缺憾的云翳那里，
永远会放射一道完美的光，
闪现天堂的荣耀。

对着潮流和习俗的争吵，
对着巴别塔般的喧嚣、震耳欲聋的狂欢，
一缕清音，依稀可辨，安抚着每一个间歇，
那是最终的合唱，来自某个遥远的海岸。

啊，蒙福的眼睛、快乐的心，
能看见、能认识宏伟的迷宫中
一条细细的指引之线。 [3]

四

而你，阿美利加 [4] ，
你为了宏图的顶点、它的理想和它的成真，
你为了这些（并非为你自己）而来临。

你也包围一切，
拥抱着、提携着、迎接着一切，你也通过崭新的大道，
向理想趋近。

别的大陆上局限的信仰、过去的伟大，
不是给你的，你拥有自己的伟大，
属灵的信仰和广博，吸收着、容纳着一切，
适合一切人的一切。

一切，一切追求不朽，
爱如同静静包裹万物的光，
大自然的改善福佑万物，

花儿、时令的果实、神圣和从不爽约的果园，
形态、事物、各种生长、各种人性，都在成熟为精神的形象。

神啊，为了让我能歌唱那个理想，
请向我，向我所爱的男女赐予这不灭的信仰，

不管你从整体 [5] 中保留什么，也请赐予我们蕴含在时间和空间
中的对你蓝图的信念，
健康、和平、普遍的拯救。

它是否是一个梦？
不，但没有它则是梦，
辜负它，生命的传承和财富就是个梦，
全世界都会是一个梦。

开拓者！啊，开拓者！

来呀，我脸面黝黑的孩子们，
排好队形，准备好你们的武器，
手枪带上了吗？锋利的斧子带上了吗？
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

因为我们不能在这里徘徊，
我们必须前进，亲爱的，我们必须一马当先，
我们是年轻力壮的民族，别的民族全依靠我们，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

啊，你们青年，西部的青年，
如此性急、充满活力，充满男儿的骄傲和友情，
我清楚看见了你们，西部的青年，看见你们大步当先，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

年长的民族止步了吗？
他们在大洋彼岸暮气沉沉，不再学习了吗？
我们来扛起这永恒的使命、责任和课业吧，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

我们将过去的一切抛在身后，
一个更新、更强的世界，多种多样的世界，豁然开朗，
我们抓住这鲜活健朗的世界，劳动和行进的世界，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

我们的分遣队源源不断进发，

走下悬崖，穿过关隘，攀上陡峭的山岭，
我们在未知的道路中征服、占据、冒险、勇闯，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

我们砍倒原始的森林，
我们截停江河的流水，我们摇动大地，钻探内里，
我们测量广阔的原野，我们在处女地垦荒，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

我们是科罗拉多的男人，
从巨大的山峰，从庞大的齿形山脉和高原，
从矿井和沟壑，从狩猎的小径上，我们来了，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

从内布拉斯加来，从阿肯色来，
我们是内陆中部的人种，从密苏里来，与大陆血脉相连，
伙伴们扣紧彼此的手，所有的南方人，所有的北方人，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

啊，不可阻挡，不知停歇的民族！
啊，大家都可爱！对大家的柔情令我胸口作痛！
啊，我伤怀而又雀跃，我欣喜若狂地爱着大家，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

举起那伟大的母亲般的女主人，
高高地摇动着娇巧的女主人，比一切灿烂如星的女主人都高，
(你们全都低下头吧，)
举起有獠牙并且好战的女主人，严峻、冷漠、武装的女主人，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！ [6]

看，我的孩子们，勇敢的孩子们，
看在我们后方的蜂拥人群的分儿上，我们决不能退让或动摇，
以往世代的数以百万的幽灵在我们身后皱眉催促，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

前进又前进，紧簇的队伍，
永远有增补，死者的位置被迅速填充，
穿越战斗，穿越战败，依然前行而永不停止，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

啊，在前进中死去！
我们当中有人委顿而死吗？时候到了吗？
那么我们在行进中死去正当其时，缺口会迅速填补！
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

世界上所有的脉搏，
各就各位地以西部运动的拍子，为我们跳动，
有单独有联合，稳稳地移向前方，全为我们，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

生活中复杂多变的盛会，
所有的形态和展览，所有干活的工人，
所有的水手和陆上的人，所有的主人和奴隶，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

所有不幸的沉默的恋人，
所有在监狱坐牢的人，所有的义人和恶人，

所有欢喜的人，所有哀愁的人，所有活着的人，所有垂死的人，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

我也跟我的灵魂和肉体，
组成好奇的三者，我们在路途上跋涉、游荡，
穿过死荫之地的这些海岸，幽灵们紧紧相随，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

看，那迅疾滚动的星球！
看，它四周的兄弟星球，所有一簇簇的恒星和行星，
所有灿烂的白昼，所有多梦的神秘之夜，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

这一切关乎我们，和我们同在，
它都是为了初始而必要的劳作，后继者尚在胚胎中等待，
我们这今日向前的队伍，我们开辟着行进的道路，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

你们啊，西部的女儿！
你们啊，青春的和年长的女儿！你们啊，母亲们和妻子们！
你们千万不要失散，在我们的队伍里你们团结向前吧，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

潜伏在大草原上的歌手！

（别的大陆上裹着尸衣的诗人呀，你们已完成工作，可以歇息了，）

很快我会听见你们来临的婉转歌喉，很快你们会起来跟我们同行，

开拓者！啊，开拓者！

不是为了甜美的娱乐，
不是靠枕和软鞋，不是宁静的日子和学者的生活，
不是安全乏味的财富，寡淡的享受对我们无用，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

贪嘴的宴饮者总是在宴饮？
肥胖的沉睡者总是在睡觉？他们锁门上闩了吗？
我们的餐食粗糙如故，毯子铺地而眠，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

夜幕降临了吗？

近来的路是否太过辛苦？我们是否气馁地停下过，在路途上垂头打盹儿？

但是我让你们在小径上休息短短的一小时，放空身心，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

直到随着号角的吹响，
黎明远远地发出呼唤——听！我听见它嘹亮清楚的呼声，
快呀！赶到军队的前头！——快呀！冲上你们的位置，
开拓者！啊，开拓者！

给你

不管你是谁，我只怕你行走的是梦中的道路，
我只怕这些所谓的现实即将从你的脚下和手中消融。

即便此刻，你的五官、欢乐、言谈、房子、职业、举止、烦恼、
蠢事、装束、罪行，也已经散逸离开你，

你真正的灵魂和肉体出现在我面前，

它们摆脱了事务，摆脱了商业、店铺、工作、农场、衣服、房子、
购买、出售、进食、饮酒、受苦、死亡。

不管你是谁，现在我把手放在你身上，你来做我的诗，
我以嘴唇俯近你的耳朵低语，
我爱过很多女人和男人，但是都没有我爱你这么深。

噢，过去我拖沓又迟钝，
我许久以前就应该径直向你奔来，
我早就应该仅仅叨念着你，我早就应该仅仅歌唱着你。

我会离开所有人来创作你的赞美诗，
没有人曾经了解你，但是我了解你，
没有人曾经公平地对待你，你也未曾公平地对待自己，
没有人觉得你处处完美，只有我觉得你完美，
没有人不会把你放在次要位置，只有我这个人决不同意把你放在
次要位置，
只有我一人看见你内在的潜能，不让任何主人、所有权人、优越
者、上帝凌驾于你。

画家们画出人头攒动的群体和一切的中心人物，
从中心人物的头部放射金色的光轮，
但是我画出无数的头部，画笔下却没有一个不带着金色的光轮，

从我的手从每个男人和女人的大脑中它流泻出来，永远灿烂。

啊，关于你，我能唱多少壮阔和荣耀的歌！

你还不知道你是什么，你一生都在自己身上酣睡，

你的眼皮大部分时间就像闭着一般，

你做过的事已经在滑稽模仿中回来，

（你的节俭、知识、祈祷，如果不在滑稽模仿中回来，还能怎样回来？）

滑稽模仿并不是你，

我看见你潜藏在其下和其中，

我在无人追逐你的地方追逐你，

沉默、书桌、轻佻的表情、黑夜、日常习惯，如果这些对别人和你自己构成一重重的掩盖，你对于我却是没有掩盖的，

刮净的脸、游移的眼神、不纯净的肤色，如果这些阻挡着别人却并不阻挡我，

光鲜的衣着、畸形的体态、烂醉、贪婪、早死，我把这些全都抛在一边。

凡是男人或女人具有的天赋，你无一不具备，

凡是男人或女人具有的贤德和美好，也同样存于你身上，

别人身上的任何胆量或毅力，也同样存于你身上，

任何等待着别人享受的快乐，也同样等待着你来享受。

至于我，我什么也不给任何人，除了我谨慎交给你的，

每当我咏唱任何人，乃至上帝的荣耀之歌，那都是我为你唱的荣耀之歌。

不管你是谁！要不顾风险获取你自己的一切！

这些东方和西方的气象跟你相比都平淡无奇，

这些广阔的草原、滔滔不息的江河，你就像它们一样广阔而滔滔不息，

这些天昏地暗、狂风暴雨、雷霆、大自然的运动、分解时显现的
挣扎，你是掌控它们的男女主宰，

你就是大权在握的男女主宰，掌控着大自然、狂风暴雨、痛苦、
激情、分解。

镣铐从你的脚踝脱落，你找到可靠的独立，

无论老少、无论男女，粗鲁、卑微、被其他人拒绝，你不管什么
本性都传播你自己，

穿过出生、生命、死亡、埋葬，通路都齐备，没有一样缺少，

穿过愤怒、丧失、野心、无知、厌倦，你凭着本性举足落步。

法兰西，合众国的第18年 [7]

一个伟大的年份和地方。

一声粗嘎不协调的新生的尖叫传出，比什么都更深地触动母亲的心。

我行走在我的东部海岸上，
听见那小嗓子隔着浪涛传来，

看见那神圣的婴儿在她醒来的地方哀哀啼哭，炮声隆隆，咒骂声、嘶喊声、建筑物的倒塌声不绝，

阴沟中流淌的血、一具具尸体、成堆的尸体、被死囚车运走的尸体并不那么令我恶心，

屠杀的碾压并不那么令我绝望——频频齐发的枪弹并不那么令我震惊。

我苍白、沉默、冷峻，我能对那种常年积怨的报复说什么？

我能期求不一样的人性？

我能期求人民有木头和石头的品性？

还是期求正义在命运或时间中得不到伸张？

啊，自由！啊，你是我的伙伴！

这里也有火光，有霰弹和斧子的储存，以备必要的时候拿出来，

这里也压抑已久，却永远不会被摧毁，

这里也终会奋起反抗，杀气腾腾、慷慨激昂，

这里也要求着彻底的清算。

所以我要拿起笔向海的那边遥遥致敬，

我并不否认有血红可怕的降生和洗礼，

但是我记得所听见的小嗓子的啼哭，于是我无比信任地等待，不管要多久，

从今以后我要为一切土地维护那个遗留的事业，心怀悲哀但雄辩有力，

我带着爱意把这些话语送去巴黎，

猜想那里有些歌曲作者将会明白我的含义，

因为我猜想法兰西依然有音乐的潜流，滔滔汨汨，

啊，我已经听见乐器在拨动，响声很快就会淹没一切干扰的杂音，

啊，我觉得东风吹来了一首胜利和自由的进行曲，

它传到这里，使我欣喜得如痴如狂，

我要快快把它变作言辞，说明它的真意，

我还要为你唱一支歌，我的女人 [8] 。

我和我的全部 [9]

我和我的全部，永远在锻炼，

为了抵受冷和热，为了举枪能瞄准，为了航船，为了骑马，为了生育出众的孩子，

为了随时清晰地说话，为了在普通人中间感到亲切，

也为了在大地和海洋情势可怕时站住脚跟。

不为了做一个刺绣工，

（永远会有许多刺绣工，我也欢迎他们，）

却为追求事物的本质，并追求男子和女子的内在。

不为了雕出装饰品，

却为了用潇洒自如的刻刀凿出许多无上神明的头和四肢，为了合众国使他们得以行走和说话。

让我用自己的方式，

让别人去生成律法，我不要理会律法，

让别人去歌颂杰出的人并支持和平，我支持骚动和冲突。

我不歌颂杰出的人，我对公认最高明的人也当面指责。

（你是谁？是什么让你一生偷偷地内疚？

你要回避自己的一生？你要在翻拣和闲话中度过一生？

你是谁，念念叨叨地死记硬背，年份、页数、语言、往事，

至今也意识不到你没法儿恰当地说一个词儿？）

让别人去完成范例吧，我从来未完成范例，

我像大自然一样用无穷的律法来开始篇章，新鲜现代而持久。

我不把什么当作义务给予，

别人作为义务给予的，我作为活生生的冲动给予。

（我要把心的行动作为义务来给予吗？）

让别人去解决问题，我什么都不解决，我唤起无法回答的问题，
我看见并触摸的他们是谁，他们怎么样？

这些像我一样的人怎么样？他们用温柔的直接和迂回的路线吸引我贴近。

我呼吁世界不要轻信我朋友们的讲述，而要像我一样，聆听我的敌人，

我要求你永远拒绝那些要解说我的人，因为我也解说不了自己，
我要求不要因我建立任何理论或学派，
我要求你潇洒地离开，就像我做的那样潇洒地离开。

在我之后，远景！

啊，我看见生命并不短促，而是悠长得难以计量，
从此我在世界上行走，贞洁，自持，清早就起床，稳健地成长，
每小时都是未来几个世纪的精子，还属于更久以后的世纪。

我必须紧紧跟上空气、水、大地的这些不断的教诲，
我感受到我没有时间可以浪费。

流星的一年（1859—1860） [10]

流星的一年！沉思的一年！

我要用回顾的文字系定你的一些事情和征兆，

我要歌唱你的第16届总统任期的竞争，

我要歌唱一位高个子的白发老人，如何在弗吉尼亚登上绞刑架，

（我就在左右，咬紧牙关默默站着，观看，

我站在你身边，老人，当时你平静冷漠，只是年纪和没有愈合的伤口使你颤抖着，登上了绞刑架；）

我要在我丰富的歌曲中歌唱你各州的人口普查报告，那些人口和产品的报表，我要歌唱你的航船和运载的货物，

曼哈顿骄傲的黑船纷纷来了，有的满载移民，有的装着黄金从巴拿马地峡来，

我要歌唱这一切，我要对所有前来的人表示欢迎，

我也要歌唱你，英俊少年！年轻的英格兰王子，我欢迎你！

（你可曾记得你和贵族随从们经过曼哈顿的汹涌人群？

我站在人群中，只对你依依不舍地注目；）

我也不要忘了歌唱那条大船开进我海湾的奇观，

伟大东方号形体匀称而庄重，她以600英尺 [11] 的身长，开进我的海湾，

她迅速地行驶，被无数的小船包围，小船我也不忘歌唱；

不忘北方出现的不期而至的彗星，闪耀在天宇，

不忘奇异浩大的流星队伍，炫目而清晰，在我们头上笔直飞行，

（一瞬间，只有一瞬间，队伍在我们头上划过一簇簇超凡的光球，

然后离去了，沉没在黑夜中，不见了；）

对这些骤然来去的事情，我歌唱——我借着它们的微光来照亮并拼凑这些颂歌，

你的颂歌呀，啊，善恶杂陈的一年——预感不祥的一年！

彗星和流星的一年，短暂又奇异——看！这儿还有一个也同样短暂又奇异！

既然我匆匆地掠过你，很快要坠落不见，这首歌是什么呢？
我除了是你的一颗流星还是什么？

因为前人

—

因为前人，
因为我的父系母系和以往各时代的积累，
因为那些倘若没有，就不会有今时此地之我的一切，因为埃及、
印度、腓尼基、希腊和罗马，
因为凯尔特人、斯堪的纳维亚人、阿尔比人和撒克逊人 [12]，
因为古时的海上冒险、法律、手工技艺、战争和旅行，
因为诗人、北欧诗人、萨迦、神话和神谕 [13]，
因为奴隶的售卖，因为狂热者，因为吟游诗人、十字军和修道士，
因为我们来到这个新大陆之前的那些旧大陆，
因为那些日益衰落的王国和国王，
因为那些日益衰落的宗教和神父，
因为从我们自己眼前的大海岸回望而去的小海岸，
因为向前奔去终于到达现在的数不清的年头，
你和我已经抵达—阿美利加已经抵达，正在创造今年，
今年！它推动着自己奔向数不清的未来岁月。

二

啊，但是这无关岁月—而是关于我，关于你，
我们触碰所有的法律并估量所有的前人，
我们是北欧诗人、传神谕的人、修道士和骑士，我们容纳了他们
还大有余地，
我们站在无始无终的时间之内，我们站在恶与善之内，一切围绕

我们转动，黑暗和光明同样多，
太阳和它的星系围绕我们转动，
它的太阳，它太阳的太阳，全都围绕我们转动。

至于我，（矛盾的、狂躁的，身处暴烈的日子中间，）
我有所有人的意念，我是所有人并信仰所有人，
我相信唯物论是真的，唯灵论是真的，什么我都不排斥。

（我忘了什么吗？忘了过去的任何东西吗？
到我这里来，不管是谁，不管是什么，直到我给你承认。）

我尊重亚述 [14]、中国、条顿 [15] 和希伯来人，
我接纳每一个理论、神话、神和半神，
我清楚从前的故事、圣书、族谱都是真的，没有例外，
我坚信过去的每一天都非得那样不可，
决不可能胜过它实际的样子。

而今天则一定是这样，阿美利加一定是这样，
今天和阿美利加决不可能胜过它们实际的样子。

三

以各州的名义，以你和我的名义：过去，
以各州的名义，以你和我的名义：现在的时间。

我知道过去伟大，未来也将会伟大，
我知道两者奇异地接合于现在的时间，
（为了我展现的他，为了平凡的普通人，如果你是普通人，这便

是为了你，)

今天我所在之处，你所在之处，就有一切时日、一切民族的中心。

民族和时日对于我们曾经衍生的、将要衍生的一切意义也尽在其间。

百老汇大街的庆祝游行 [16]

—

从大洋西边的日本来了

彬彬有礼、脸颊微黑、带两把佩剑的使节，

他们靠坐在敞篷四轮马车上，没有帽子，面无表情，今天驱车穿过曼哈顿。

自由啊 [17]！我不知别人是否看见我的所见，

在队伍中跟日本贵族们一起的，还有跑腿的人，

走在后面，流连在前面、周围，或在行列中前进，

但是我要给你唱一首亲身见闻的歌，自由。

当百万双脚的曼哈顿自由自在走下她的人行道，

当声如惊雷的礼炮用我喜爱的豪迈咆哮叫我抖擞，

当浑圆的炮口从我喜爱的浓烈硝烟中吐出它们的敬意，

当火光闪烁的礼炮使我精神大振，云霞在我的城市上空蒙了一层如纱如影的华盖，

当数不清的华丽杆子，码头上的密林，彩色缤纷，

当每一条盛装打扮的船都把她的旗帜升到最高，

当信号旗低垂而沿街的窗户挂下彩带，

当百老汇被行走和驻足的人完全占领，最是密密麻麻，

当房屋的正面万头攒动，当千万双眼睛同时盯住一个方向，

当来自岛国的客人们行进，当游行队伍前移到视线之内，

当传召令发下，当等候数千年的答案有了回应，

我也站起身，回应着，走下人行道，汇入人群，和大家一同注视。

神采飞扬的曼哈顿！

阿美利加的同志们！东方，终于到我们这里来了。

到我们，到我的城市中间，

我们高峻的大理石屋顶和美丽的铁构建筑分列两旁，中间的大街走着游行队伍，

今天地球另一端的人来了。

女创世者来了，

语言的巢穴、诗歌的传递者、远古的遗民，

脸色红润，思虑深沉，出神陶醉，激情炽热，

香气蒸腾，衣裳宽大而飘逸，

有黝黑的面容，有专注的灵魂和闪亮的眼睛，

梵天的子民来了。

看呀，我悦耳的歌！游行队伍中的这些那些都向我们闪现，

队伍随着移动而变化，像个神奇的万花筒在我们眼前移动变化。

因为不只有使节或来自岛屿的晒黑的日本人，

轻巧沉默的印度人出现了，甚至亚细亚大陆也出现了，

它的过去，它的死者，

在如夜如晨的朦胧中发生的奇观和无法索解的寓言，

包裹着的奥秘，古老而未知的蜜蜂，

北方，闷热的南方，东方的亚述，希伯来人，最古的古人，

巨大而荒凉的城市，滑行的此刻，所有这些那些都在庆祝的游行中。

地理学，全世界，都在其中，
大洋 [18]，成群的岛屿，波利尼西亚，更远的海岸，
今后你要面向的海岸——你呀，自由！你金色的西海岸和它遥遥相对，
那里的国家和它们的居民，千百万人一起奇妙地身临此地，
拥挤的集市，两侧或尽头都神像成行的庙宇，和尚、婆罗门和喇嘛，
官老爷、农民、商人、机械工和渔夫，
歌女和舞女、沉醉迷狂的人、宫禁里的皇帝，
孔夫子自己、大诗人和英雄豪杰、战士、各个种姓，所有人，
聚集成群，从四面八方涌来，从阿尔泰的山岭，
从西藏，从中国的四条蜿蜒长流的大江，
从南方的许多半岛和仿佛大陆般的岛屿，从马来西亚，
这些以及属于它们的一切都向我清楚显现，被我领会，
我也被它们领会，被它们友爱地拥抱，
最后如同在这里一样我歌咏他们所有人，自由！为了他们也为了你。

因为我也扬起了声音加入这游行的行列，
我是歌手，我在盛会之上发出洪大的歌声，
我歌咏我那西海上的世界，
我歌咏远方众多的海岛，密集如满天的星辰，
我歌咏那空前壮阔的新帝国，在灵视之中看见了它，
我歌咏女主人阿美利加，我歌咏一个更高的权威，
我歌咏一千座新兴的城市，将要在那些海岛群中拔地而起，
我的帆船和蒸汽船在群岛中间穿梭，
我的星条旗在风中拍动，
商路打开了，沉睡的几个世纪结束使命，民族再生，再次青春，
人生、事业都恢复了一目标我不知道——但是古老的亚洲一定会更新，

从这一天开始被世界包围。

三

你呀，世界的自由！

你将会千秋万代稳坐当中，

因为今天亚洲的贵族从一边来到你面前，

因为明天英国女王要从另一边派她的长子来见你。

迹象在倒转，地球被合围，

圆环已合拢，旅程已结束，

盒子盖只是微微打开着，香气却从整个盒子里喷涌而出。

年轻的自由！对待那可敬的亚洲、一切的母亲，

你从今以后要始终体贴而热情，因为你就是一切，

向那个越过群岛向你发来消息的远方母亲俯下你骄傲的头吧，

就这一次俯下你骄傲的头吧，年轻的自由。

那些孩子向西漫游了那么久吗？跨过那么宽广的地方吗？

自乐园 [19] 以来迷茫的世代向西闯荡了那么久吗？

多少个世纪为了你、为了某些原因，朝那个方向不断前行而不为人知？

时代都理由充分，它们已大功告成，现在它们也应该被掉转方向，从那边朝你行来，

自由 呀，时代现在也应该看在你的分儿上，顺从地向东挺进。

[1] 写《普遍性之歌》前，惠特曼经受了一些个人生活的考验，包括中风瘫痪和丧母之痛。此诗重申了他的信仰，也反映出他研读黑格尔哲学受到的影响。（说明：书中脚注除特别标明的之外，均为译者注。）

[2] “真实”者，指世间存在的各种殊相；“理想”者，指普遍性的事物共相。

[3] 希腊神话中，英雄忒修斯凭借阿里阿德涅交给他的线团，循着细线前行，走出迷宫。

[4] 本书出于声韵与音节字数的考量，统一使用“阿美利加”来翻译America，而不用美利坚或美国。

[5] “整体”的原文ensemble是超验主义的概念，这股思潮认为万物都包含宇宙的缩影。惠特曼受超验主义代表人物爱默生影响很深。

[6] 读者若觉得这五行突兀难解，可以查看乔万尼·巴蒂斯塔·提埃坡罗（Giovanni Battista Tiepolo）绘于18世纪的著名穹顶画《行星和大陆的寓言》中的美洲一幅，那里便有一个作为美洲化身的“女主人”。

[7] 此诗写于1860年，是美国南北战争（1861—1865）爆发前夕，当时的社会气氛已是山雨欲来（参见《流星的一年》）。惠特曼在诗中想象远在他出生之前的一个年份—法国大革命时期“革命法庭”活动到达高潮的1794年，那年是美利坚合众国成立的第18年。

[8] “我的女人”原文为法语ma femme，也表示“我的妻子”，这里指拟人化的民主理想。

[9] 此诗可说是惠特曼创作观的阐述，他将《草叶集》视为以文字表达的全部自己。

[10] 此诗写于1865年美国南北战争结束时。诗中回忆的总统竞选是1860年林肯对道格拉斯的宣战，林肯当选总统。被处死的老人是美国起义领袖、废奴主义者约翰·布朗，处决时间在1859年12月。年轻的英格兰王子指维多利亚女王的长子爱德华（后来的英王爱德华七世），1860年10月他18岁，到访纽约，惠特曼的日记中有记载。伟大东方号是著名的英国铁制蒸汽轮船，1860年首次航越大西洋，6月末抵达纽约。“预感不祥的一年”一语指当时战争已如箭在弦上的气氛。

[11] 一英尺约为25到34厘米。——编者注

[12] 这一行诗里全是古意盎然的名称。阿尔比恩（Albion）是大不列颠岛最古老的名称，阿尔比人（Alb）即阿尔比恩的居民。

[13] 北欧诗人原文为skald，在维京人时期，他们是斯堪的纳维亚（北欧）地区传诵英雄传奇的诗人，萨迦（saga）是北欧从前用来流传神话、史诗和英雄故事的文学类型。

[14] 亚述：兴起于两河流域的国家。公元前8世纪末，亚述帝国

逐步强大，先后征服了小亚细亚东部、埃及等地，亚述人在两河流域频繁活动约两千年，后失去霸主地位，不再有独立的国家。——编者注

[15] 条顿：古代日耳曼人的一个分支，公元前4世纪时分布在易北河下游的沿海地带，后来逐步和日耳曼其他民族融合，后世以条顿人泛指日耳曼人及其后裔。——编者注

[16] 此诗最初发表于1860年6月27日的《纽约时报》，纪念11天前在纽约市百老汇大街上欢迎访美日本使团的庆祝游行。

[17] 原文是Libertad，惠特曼习惯用这个西班牙语单词的大写来表示拟人化的自由。

[18] 当指太平洋。

[19] 即伊甸园，象征人类最初纯真原始的状态。

海流

出自晃荡不停的摇篮 [20]

出自晃荡不停的摇篮，

出自学舌鸟的喉咙、往复如梭的音乐，

出自九月的午夜，

荒芜的沙地和远处的田野上，起了床的孩子独自游荡，光着头，
光着脚，

沐浴在一阵阵洒落的光晕下，

俯临着影子们像是活的一样交缠扭摆的神秘游戏，

走出了荆棘和黑莓生长的灌木丛，

记忆中的那只鸟，在我耳边唱过歌，

记忆中悲伤的兄弟，让我听见一阵高低起伏的歌声，

从迟迟升起又胀鼓鼓的仿佛含着泪水的半个黄月亮底下，

从薄雾里最先响起的那些渴望和爱的乐音，

从我心中一千个永不停息的应答，

从自此苏醒的无数词句，

从那个比什么都更强大更悦耳的词语，

从词句如今又开始重返的故地，

就像一群飞鸟，啁啾、腾起、从头顶掠过，

匆匆被送到这里，趁着一切还没有被我忘却，

一个男人，由于这些泪水又成了小男孩，

扑倒在沙地上，面对海浪，

我，痛苦和欢乐的歌手、连接今天和未来的人，

接纳一切暗示来运用它们，但又迅速地跃过它们，为一件往事歌唱。

从前在鲍玛诺克 [21] ，
当空气中飘着丁香的芬芳，五月的草正在生长，
从亚拉巴马来了两个披着羽毛的客人，
双双落在海岸上的荆棘丛里，
他们的窝，有四只浅绿带褐色斑点的蛋，
每天那雄鸟在附近飞来飞去，
每天那雌鸟蹲在窝里，安安静静，眼睛发亮，
每天，我这好奇的男孩，从不走得太近，从不惊动他们，
小心地窥察着、吸收着、转译着。

闪呀！闪呀！闪呀！
倾注你的温暖，太阳！
我们晒太阳，双双做伴。

双双做伴！
风吹向南，风吹向北，
白天明亮，夜晚黑暗，
家乡，或者远离家乡的河流山脉，
只要我们相守，
就一直唱歌，忘记时光。

突然有一天，
上午雌鸟没有蹲在鸟巢里，
也许被捕杀了，她的伙伴不知道，
下午也没有回来，第二天也没有，
再也没有出现。

从此以后整个夏天在大海的声音中，
在黑夜里满月当空而天气较平静的时分，
在波涛哗哗汹涌的海上，
或者白天在丛丛荆棘之上，
我时常看见那只遗留的雄鸟飞过，
听见那来自亚拉巴马的孤独客声。

吹吧！吹吧！吹吧！

海风狂吹鲍玛诺克的海岸吧；
我等呀等，直到你把我的伙伴吹回来。

是的，当星光闪烁，
他彻夜站在长满青苔的木桩尖上，
几乎就在海浪的拍拍打打中，
孤单的歌手，奇异而催泪。
他呼唤他的伙伴，
他倾吐的心声，人类中只有我懂得。

是的，我懂得我的兄弟，
别人也许不懂，但我一直珍重每一粒乐音。
因为我不止一次懵懵懂懂地溜到海滩，
安静，避开月光，把自己藏在阴影里，
现在还记得那些模糊的形状、回响、种种声音和景象，
浪花破开的白手臂不知疲倦地挥舞着，
我，光脚的孩子，被风吹动着头发，
倾听了很久很久。

倾听来保存、来歌唱，时而转译乐音，
来追随你的歌声，兄弟。

抚慰！抚慰！抚慰！

后浪紧紧地抚慰着前浪，
又被下一个浪紧紧地拥抱、拍打，
但是我所爱的不抚慰我了，不抚慰了。

低垂的月亮，迟迟升起，
它那么迟缓——噢，我想它是重负着爱情，爱情。

啊，大海疯狂地扑向陆地，
怀着爱情，爱情。

啊，黑夜！我看见的莫不是我的爱侣在浪花里翻飞？
我在那白浪里看见的小黑点是什么？

嘹亮！嘹亮！嘹亮！

我嘹亮地呼唤你，我的爱侣！
我抛出我高亢清晰的声音越过波浪，
你一定知道在这里的是谁，是谁，
你一定知道我是谁，爱侣。

低垂的月亮！

你黄褐色脸盘上的暗点是什么？

啊，就是她的形状，我伙伴的形状！

月亮啊别再扣留她，还给我吧。

陆地！陆地！噢，陆地！

不管我转向何方，噢，我想你可以交还我的伙伴，只要你肯，
因为不管我望向何方，我都好像是依稀看见了她。

啊，上升的星星！

也许我渴望的那个也会升上天空，和你们一同升起。

啊，喉咙！啊，颤动的喉咙！

发出更清晰的声音越过空气！

穿透树林、大地，

我渴望的那个一定在某地切盼着听见你。

放声歌唱吧！

寂寞此地，黑夜之歌！

孤单爱恋之歌！死亡之歌！

在那迟缓的、消殒的黄月亮下面歌唱！

啊，在月亮下，在她几乎沉入大海的地方！

啊，不顾一切的绝望之歌。

但是轻些！压低！

轻些！让我只是呢喃吧，

你呀，喧嚣的大海，请你也停一停，
因为我相信我听见了伙伴正在什么地方回应着，
那么微弱，我得安静，安静地听，
但不能彻底安静，那样她可能不会立即来我这儿。

来这儿呀爱侣！

我在这儿！这儿！

我只用这刚能听见的歌声向你宣告我自己，
这轻柔的呼唤是给你的，我的爱，给你的。

不要上当去了别的地方，
那是风的呼啸，不是我的声音，
那是翻飞的、翻飞的浪花，
那些是树叶的影子。

噢，黑暗！噢，徒然！

噢，我多么苦闷多么哀伤。

啊，天空中月亮旁边的褐色光晕，低垂在海上！

啊，海中散乱的倒影！

啊，喉咙！啊，搏动的心！

我彻夜无效地唱着，无效。

啊，过往！啊，快活的日子！啊，欢乐的歌！

在空中，在树林，在田野上，
爱过！爱过！爱过！爱过！爱过！
但是我的伙伴不再，不再跟着我了！
我俩不再双双。

咏叹调沉寂了，
别的一切都还继续，星光闪闪，
风在吹，鸟的乐音在久久地回响，
凶猛的老母亲 [22] 不断发出她愤怒的呻吟，
在鲍玛诺克岸边沙沙作响的灰色海滩上，
半个黄月亮变大了，耷拉着，下垂着，几乎贴到大海的脸，
男孩心醉神迷，波浪戏弄着他的赤脚，空气撩拨着他的头发，
长久禁闭在心里的爱，现在自由了，现在终于轰然爆发了，
咏叹调的含义，耳朵、灵魂，迅速地将它储存，
奇异的眼泪淌下脸颊，
三者 [23] 在那里对话，各有各的言说，
低声部是狂野的老母亲在不断地叫着，
阴冷地应和着男孩的灵魂的提问节奏，嘶嘶吐出某个淹没的秘密，
回答那起步的诗人。
不是精灵就是鸟了！（男孩的灵魂说，）
你真是在对你的伙伴唱歌？还是其实是对我？
因为，那时是个孩子，我舌头的用处还在沉睡，现在却听见了你的话语，
现在我一瞬间知道了我为何而生，我觉醒了，
已经有一千名歌手、一千首歌，比你的歌更清晰、更嘹亮，也更哀伤，
一千种婉转的回声被我内心的生命振起，永不消亡。

哦，你这孤独的歌手，只身唱歌，投影出我的未来，
哦，孤独的我在倾听，我将会永远不息让你不被遗忘，
我将永远不会逃避，永远不会有震颤的回应、
有不得满足的爱的呼喊被我听而不闻，
我将永远不再是那一夜之前的平静的孩子，
在那下沉的黄月亮照临的海边，
使者在那里被唤醒，看见了火，甜蜜的内心地狱，未知的渴求，
我的天命。

啊，给我线索！（它潜伏在这黑夜的某个地方，）
啊，如果我可以得到那么多，再多给一些！

就一个词吧，（因为我能征服它，）
那个最终的词，超乎一切的词，
不着痕迹，送来了一—它是什么？—我在倾听；
你低语着的就是它吗，海浪，一直是它？
从你晶莹的浪沫和潮湿的沙中来的就是它？

大海对此回答，
没有延宕，没有匆忙，
一整夜都在对我低语，在天亮前已十分清楚，
喃喃对我说着那个低沉悦耳的词：死亡，
一再地说死亡，死亡，死亡，死亡，
嘶嘶发出的美妙音调，不像那鸟鸣也不像我这孩子的激动心跳，
却渐渐向我一个人贴近，在我脚边簌簌响动，
从那里平稳地爬上我的耳朵，轻柔地冲洗我的全身，
死亡，死亡，死亡，死亡，死亡。

这我没有忘记，
但对于我那幽暗的精灵和兄弟，
在鲍玛诺克的灰色海滩月光下给我唱的歌，
我将它和一千首应答的歌任意融合，
使我自己觉醒于那个时刻的歌，
海浪传来的那个词是开启它们的钥匙，
那钥匙关乎最甜蜜的歌和一切的歌，
那强大悦耳的词，悄悄爬上我的脚——

（或者像一个老婆婆晃动着摇篮，衣裳发出好闻的气味，在旁边
弯腰，）

大海给我的低语。

当我跟生命之海一同退潮

—

当我跟生命之海一同退潮，
当我在熟悉的海岸漫步，
当我行走在那里，涟漪不断冲洗着你，鲍玛诺克，
细浪沙沙涌上来，嘶哑地响动，
那里凶猛的老母亲不断哭叫着被风浪放逐的人，这秋日傍晚默想
的我，向南方凝望，
内心放电般流动的豪迈诗情一度将我抓住，
那个追踪脚下百千行 [24] 的精灵将我凭附，
沉渣积在海的边缘，代表地球上所有的水域和所有的陆地。

我被深深吸引，目光从南方转回，垂下，追随那些狭长的堆集，
谷糠、麦秆、碎木片、海草、海胶 [25]，
浮渣、闪亮岩石的鳞屑、咸莴苣的叶子—潮水的遗留，
几英里的行走，另一侧响着波浪破开的声音，
当时当刻，鲍玛诺克令我想起物我一致的古老观念，
你这鱼形的岛呀，你向我呈现过这些，
当我在熟悉的海岸漫步，
当我内心带电、行走着寻思题材的时候。

二

当我再走向不熟悉的海岸，
当我倾听那哀歌，遇难的男男女女的声音，

当我吸进向我扑来的不可触及的微风，
当神秘莫测的海洋对着我席卷而来，越来越近，
我也最多不过像是一片冲上来的碎片，
一些沙子和死去的叶，差可收集，
收集、糅合我自己于沙子和碎片之中。
啊，困顿、受阻、弯腰贴近地面，
我由于自己曾经胆敢张嘴而深感压迫，
现在已知道我发出过的所有吹嘘都对我反唇相讥，我从来不曾理解自己的身份和本质。
在我所有狂傲的诗歌面前真正的我从未被触碰，被表露，完全不可即，
退缩在远处，用戏仿祝贺的手势和鞠躬嘲弄着我，
对我写下的每个词遥遥发出一串串反讽的笑声，
默默指着这些歌，再指指下面的流沙。
我感受到我没有真的明白过什么，哪怕只是一样东西，这是谁也做不到的，
大自然在这里利用海的景象对我拨弄，射中我、刺痛我，
因为我曾经胆敢张嘴唱歌。

三

你们这两个海，我向你们逼近，
我们都一样喃喃地责备着卷起沙子和漂流物，不知原因，
这些小碎片确实代表你们和我和所有的人。

你这脆弱的海岸，布满一道道残渣，
你这鱼形的岛，我取用脚下的一切，
父亲 [26]，属于你的就属于我。

我也这样，鲍玛诺克，
我也有过破灭的泡沫，经过漫漫无边的漂流，被冲上你的岸滩，
我也只是一道漂浮的碎屑，
鱼形的岛，我也在你身上留下小小的残骸。

我扑向你的胸膛，父亲，
我紧紧地贴着你，让你不能松开我，
我牢牢抱住你直到你给我一个答案。

亲吻我，父亲，
用你的嘴唇抚慰我，就像我抚慰那些我爱的人，
当我拥抱着你，请用气息对我说我所羡慕的喃喃之中的秘密。

四

退潮吧，生命之海，（水流将会回来，）
不要停止你的呻吟，凶猛的老母亲，
不断地为被你放逐的人哭叫吧，但不要害怕我、拒绝我，
当我触摸你或向你收集，不要那么嘶哑而愤怒地对着我的脚沙沙涌上来。

我对你和所有人心怀温柔，
我为自己而收集，也为这个幽灵，它俯视我们前进的方向，追踪我和我的全部。

我和我的全部，散乱的堆集、小小的尸体，
浮沫，雪一般白，泡影，
（看，从我僵死的嘴唇终于流出渗出物，
看，那五光十色在闪亮，在滚动的，）

一团团麦秆、沙子、碎块，
因许多互相矛盾的情绪而浮游至此，
来自风暴、长久的沉寂、黑暗、汹涌，
默想着，思索着，一口气息、一滴咸泪、一抹液体或泥土，
全都一样出自无穷尽酝酿翻腾的过程，
一两朵疲软的花，已破败，也照样漂浮在浪头上，随波逐流，
大自然呜咽的哀歌也照样对我们播送，
云中的号角也照样在我们所来的地方吹响，
我们，捉摸不定，不知自己从何方来到这里，在你面前散开，
你在那高处或行或坐，
不管你是谁，我们也在你脚下零落。

泪水 [27]

泪水！泪水！泪水！

黑夜里，孤独时，泪水，

在白色海岸上滴落，滴落，被沙滩吮干，

泪水，一颗星星也不闪，处处幽暗而荒凉，

从蒙头人的眼睛里流出潮湿的泪水；

啊，那幽灵是谁？那幽暗中流泪的影子是谁？

那不形成形状的一团，弯着腰，蹲在沙滩上的是什么？

涌流的泪水，抽泣的泪水，挣扎，间杂着喘气的放声号哭；

啊，暴风雨，凝聚了，升腾了，在海滩一带横冲直撞！

啊，狂野阴森的黑夜暴雨，挟着风——啊，狠狠地喷射！

啊，白天里那么文静有礼的幽灵，面容平和，步子沉稳，

但在无人看见的黑夜，你肆意地飞驰——啊，海洋也搅乱，

迸裂出泪水！泪水！泪水！

给军舰鸟 [28]

你先在暴风雨之上一夜沉睡，
再抖擞巨大的翅膀腾空醒来，
（冲破了风暴？你越过它向上飞升，
安歇在天空，天空是推你摇篮的奴仆，）
如今蓝色的一点，远远地遨游太空，
迎着这里甲板上的光线我对你仰望，
（我是个斑点，茫茫世界中浮游的一个微粒。）

在远远的海上，
一夜惊涛将船只的残骸零散地搁在岸边以后，
如今重新出现快乐宁静的白天，
玫瑰色轻盈的黎明、闪耀的太阳，
一大片蔚蓝清澈的长空里，
你也重新出现了。
你天生是大风的手，（羽翼占满身体，）
能应付天空大地大海和飓风，
你驭风而行的船从不收帆，
接连数日、数周也不知疲倦、继续向前，穿过空间，在诸域旋
转，
黄昏时俯瞰过塞内加尔，早晨就到了阿美利加，
你在闪电和雷云中间游戏，
在这些之中，在你的体验中，你拥有我的灵魂，
何等的快乐！何等的快乐属于你！

在船上的舵轮旁

在船上的舵轮旁，
一个年轻舵手小心地操纵航向。

透过浓雾，海岸上哀哀响彻着
一口海洋钟——啊，是波浪摇动的一口警钟。

啊，你给了很好的提醒，你这口钟在暗礁旁鸣响，
鸣响，鸣响，警告船只不要误撞翻沉。

因为舵手啊，警惕的你在意那响亮的告诫，
拨转了船头，满载的货船张着灰色船帆顺应风向，加速离去，
雍容美丽的船带着她所有的珍宝加速离去，欢快又安全。

但是那只船，不朽的船啊！船上的船啊！
肉体的船，灵魂的船，一直航行，航行，航行。

在黑夜的海滩上

在黑夜的海滩上，
站着一个孩子和她的父亲，
观看着东方，秋季的天空。

在那幽暗的高处，
贪婪吞噬的云，埋葬云，一团团黑压压地张开，
阴沉而迅速地横扫天空压下来之际，
在东方依然余留的一带澄辉中间，
升起了大而静穆的众星之王朱庇特 [29]，
离它不远，略高一点的地方，
游动着纤巧的七姊妹星 [30]。
孩子握着父亲的手从海滩仰望，
那些埋葬云胜利地下降，顷刻间就要吞食一切，
她静静地哭了。
别哭，孩子，
别哭，我的宝贝，
让我用亲吻擦掉你的泪水，
那些贪婪吞噬的云的胜利不会长久，
它们不会长久地占有天空，它们吞食星星只是一个幻象，
朱庇特会出来的，耐心点，过天晚上再看，七姊妹星会出来的，
它们是不朽的，所有这些银色和金色的星星都会再次闪光，
大的星星和小的星星都会再次闪光，它们会长存，
巨大而不朽的恒星、长存而默想的卫星都会再次闪光。

那么，我的小心肝，你只为朱庇特难过吗？
你只惦记被埋葬的星星？

有一点点什么，
（我用嘴唇抚慰着你，低声加一句，
我给你最初的一个暗示、难题和言外之意，）
有一点点什么甚至比星星更为不朽，
（许多埋葬，许多日日夜夜，正在过去，）
有一点点什么甚至比灿烂的朱庇特更能长存，
比太阳或任何旋转的卫星更长，
也长过光彩夺目的七姊妹星。

海水之下的世界

海水之下的世界，

海底的森林，千枝万叶，

海莴苣、大片的苔藓、奇异的花和种子、茂密的缠结、罅隙孔
穴、粉红色的草皮，

斑斓的彩色，淡灰和绿、紫、白、金，光线穿透海水的游戏，

无声的游泳者置身岩石、珊瑚、海胶、杂草、丛生植物中间，还有游泳者的食物，

懒惰的生物在那里悬浮觅食，或贴近海底慢慢地爬行，

抹香鲸上到海面喷出气体和水花，摆动尾鳍玩耍，

目光呆滞的鲨鱼、海象、海龟、毛茸茸的海豹，还有鱼，

那里有激情、战争、追逐、种群、海洋深处的景象、海里众生呼吸的浓稠空气，

从那里转换到这里的景象，转换到像我们一样行走此界的生物所呼吸的轻快空气，

再从我们这里转换到另种生物行走的其他界域。

独自在黑夜的海滩上

独自在黑夜的海滩上，
当老母亲来回摇晃着吟唱她那沙哑的歌，
当我看着明亮的群星闪烁，我想到万千宇宙和未来的钥匙 [31]。

一种茫茫的相似将万物勾连，
一切星球，长成的、未长成的，小的、大的，那些恒星、卫星、行星，
一切空间的距离，不管多宽广，
一切时间的距离，一切无生命的形态，
一切灵魂，一切活着的肉体，尽管它们从不相同，或处于从不相同的世界，
一切气体的、液体的、植物的、矿物的演变，游鱼、走兽，
一切民族、肤色、野蛮、文明、语言，
一切曾经存在或可能存在于这个星球，或任何星球上的个体，
一切生命和死亡，一切过去、现在、未来，
这种茫茫的相似贯通它们，历来就贯通着，
也会永远地贯通它们，并紧致地把持和包围它们。

给所有大海、所有船的歌

—

今天来一曲简短粗朴的宣叙调 [32] ，
关于航行四海的船，各有特殊的旗帜和信号旗，
关于船上无名的英雄——关于远远散开望不到边的海浪，
关于飞溅的浪花，还有呼啸或吹动的海风，
源于这些产生的一首歌，唱给各国的水手，一波波，如同潮水。

关于少壮和年老的船长，还有伙计，和所有无所畏惧的水手，
关于那极少一撮人，精挑细选，沉默寡言，从不为命运所惊讶，
从不因死亡而惶恐，
是你呀，老海洋，你静静地千里挑一，选择了他们，
大海你及时地拣选了族人，联合了各国，
声音沙哑的老保姆，他们受你哺育，象征着你，
像你一样无可屈服、桀骜不驯。

（不管在海上还是陆地，英雄们从来零零星星地出现，
这血统始终保有而从未丧失，虽然稀罕，却留着足够的种子。）

二

大海啊，招展你那些各国不同的旗帜！
招展各式各样的信号旗，始终让人看见！
但是请你在一切之上为你自己和人类的灵魂特别保留一面旗，
一个用精神织就而代表万国的徽号、人类昂扬超越死亡的标志，

代表一切勇敢的船长和一切无所畏惧的水手和伙计，
也纪念一切忠于职守而沉入海底的人，
这是他们的记忆，由一切无所畏惧的老少船长编织而成，
一面普世的信号旗，在一切时代轻灵地飘扬，俯临着所有勇敢的水手，
所有大海、所有船。

巡行巴尼加特 [33]

张狂又张狂的风暴，大海翻滚着巨浪，
咆哮不停的风，低声部永不间断地发出嗡嗡，
一阵阵恶魔般的笑声刺耳地鸣响，
浪、风、午夜，最野蛮的三位一体鞭打着，
那边黑影堆里乳白色的梳子 [34] 纷纷扫下来，
凶猛的雪片斜打着海滩的冰棱和沙子，
灭绝的东风穿过那里的幽暗扑袭着，
穿过锐利的旋风和飞澜警惕而坚定地前进，
（那远远的东西！是条翻沉的船？红色信号灯是否在闪烁？）
海滩的冰棱和沙子不知疲倦地漫游直到黎明，
坚定地、缓慢地，穿过无休无止的沙哑咆哮，
沿着被那些乳白色梳子扫出的午夜边缘，
一群迷蒙、怪异的形体，挣扎着，跟黑夜对抗，
那野蛮的三位一体在警觉地注视。

在海船后面

在海船后面，在呼呼的风后面，
在桅杆和绳索拉紧的灰白船帆后面，
底下，千万个波浪在奔走，高高抬着脖子，
不停地向着大船的航迹流动而去，
海洋的波浪们汨汨冒着水泡，惬意地东张西望，
波浪，起伏的波浪，形状不定，高高低低，你追我赶，
欢笑而轻快，跑着弧线，奔向旋转的急流，
那里是大船的航行和转向把海面破开的地方，
大大小小的波浪便在那汪洋中热切地流动，
在海船过处的航迹中，波浪在阳光下闪耀、游戏，
一支混杂的队伍，带着无数斑斓的泡沫和碎片，
追随着雍容疾驰的船，追随她的航迹。

[20] 这是惠特曼自传性的名篇，像歌剧（启迪惠特曼开创其自由体的艺术形式）一般层次繁复，大开大阖。诗中有几个独立又有所交融的声音，分别为成年时的诗人、学舌鸟和童年时的诗人，大海则以暗示向童年时的诗人发出话语。

[21] 鲍玛诺克：纽约州长岛的印第安语名称，惠特曼出生在那里，他对这个能唤起他童年回忆的名称情有独钟。

[22] 惠特曼常用老母亲来喻指大海。他写诗有时喜欢采用一些法文词，法文中“母亲”（la mère）与“大海”（la mer）同音。

[23] 三者指雄鸟、大海和孩子。

[24] 原文lines可能暗指诗行，惠特曼有多首涉及漫步的诗，这似乎是他获取灵感的一种方式。

[25] Sea-gluten（海胶）是惠特曼生造的复合词，可能指海中动物的黏稠分泌物或富含蛋白的动物组织。

[26] 父亲喻指生养了诗人的鲍玛诺克岛，与大海母亲相对，可能也兼指和诗人关系疏离的生身父亲。

[27] 英文tear既表示裂口（名词）、撕裂（动词），也表示眼

泪，此诗利用了词义的这个叠合来组织意象。

[28] 惠特曼依据法国史学家儒勒·米什莱的一首诗作的英译本而改写成此诗。早在尚未出版《草叶集》的年轻岁月，惠特曼已读过米什莱的著作，颇受其熏陶。

[29] 即木星。

[30] 即金牛座的昴宿星团。希腊神话中，七姊妹星是肩负天宇的阿特拉斯的七个女儿。

[31] “钥匙”（clef）一词为法文，意思是可以用它解开宇宙的奥秘。

[32] 宣叙调又译朗诵调，原指歌剧里介乎歌唱和说话之间的演唱方式，与咏叹调相比，宣叙调着重叙事，旋律简单。

[33] 巴尼加特是新泽西州的一个长达30英里的海湾，惠特曼晚年住在新泽西州肯顿，有时会到访此地。原诗为十四行商籁体，每行均以现在分词-ing形式来结尾；不计括号部分的问句，全诗始终没有出现陈述句的谓语动词，从头到尾用状语成分来描述情态，紧张感十足。

[34] Comb可以表示梳子，也可以表示鸡冠或蜂窝状的东西，这里暗喻浪头。

译后记

这本小册子分为两个部分，共十九首诗。惠特曼晚年亲自编订了《草叶集》（1891—1892）最终版，企鹅出版社从中摘选两个相邻而完整的子集《候鸟》《海流》组成了这个微型选本。

《候鸟》探索了不同类型的运动变化，有宇宙从缺陷趋于完美的进程，有美国向西的开拓，有自我身份的追寻，也有历史的波澜、文明的盛衰。这组诗并不包含惠特曼的代表作，但是它视野宏大，富于诗人早期作品的特色，自有动人之处。《海流》则喻示着诗人创作重心的转变：基调从开拓精神、唯物论和个人性走向了内省、唯灵论以及同物无虑的信仰。而自《草叶集》问世以来，恐怕《海流》就比《候鸟》更能抓住读者的心，它语调亲密，多用诗人童年记忆中的大海、沙滩、星月、飞鸟组织意象，探索那“勾连万物”的“茫茫相似”（《独自在黑夜的海滩上》）。诗与诗环环相扣，回味无穷，头两首《出自晃荡不停的摇篮》《当我跟生命之海一同退潮》早已成为经典，值得一读再读。

十几年前，由于成长和爱情的经历，我被惠特曼的一些诗深深打动，翻译过诗人最终收录在子集《芦笛》的一组十二首诗以及另一首自传性的名作##There Was a Child Went Forth\$\$(标题拙译为《有一个孩子脱颖而出》)。《草叶集》在我国已经有多个全译本，选译本更难计数，我本来以为自己不会再动翻译惠特曼的念头了。文学译本有时代性，此番企鹅出版社希望用新文字来呈现这位19世纪大诗人的风貌，我考虑后愿意尝试。翻译它，从准备到译成不过短短几个月，却重新燃烧起我对惠特曼的热情。译稿完成对于我大概不会是结束，而是一个新开始。

无论选择与否，我们都走在前人铺过的路上（见本书《因为前人》一诗）。我事先挑选了两个颇受好评的《草叶集》全译本作参考，工作之中也将它们展卷置于案头。我借鉴了这些译本的样式和语调，有时遇到特别优美灵巧的处理，自问无法更进一步或别开生面的时候，就沿用了前辈的译法。为此，我要郑重向这两位前辈译者——邹仲之先生和已故的赵萝蕤先生致以谢忱和敬意。然而，任何译本都只是一种诠释，原文才是译者的圣经。我对每首诗的主题、词义、句法、韵律都独立推敲，任何细节均不欲盲从前贤，务求从原著中得到肺腑之中的感情共鸣及理性体会才落笔。翻译有时像是跟作者对话，但这次翻译与其说是惠特曼和我的对话，不如说是四方（他、三位译

者)隔着时空的交谈,只不过我只记录了自己的心得。当下读来,我满意这份记录,但是选手并不能同时做裁判。本人在原诗理解和风格再现方面跟前辈有何差异,在文字取舍间可能有何得失,我不想自己举例,感兴趣的读者可以自行比较。盼望大家慷慨赐教,推动惠特曼中译的继续进步。

本书的编辑白嫻提了许多细致而宝贵的意见,令译稿得有寸进,也要向她道谢。

除了上述两个译本,此书的注释、译后记里对本书两组诗的阐释,还参考了Routledge出版社1998年版《惠特曼百科全书》、Norton出版社的英文《草叶集》,并其他几部英文传记和研究专著。

惠特曼自由奔放的诗篇给人潇洒的印象,却绝非随意散漫的创作:从他36岁时自费出版薄薄一册的《草叶集》首版开始,到72岁临终前发表极厚重的第九版《草叶集》定本,数十年之间,诗人屡次仔细修改自己的每首作品,使技法趋于成熟、内容趋于饱满,有手稿和不同版次为证。如果说诗在翻译中折损属于必然,那么我也努力追随了前人的脚步来减少折损,力求从形式和精神两方面趋近原作。惠特曼擅长以“你”呼唤读者,常令人在当下看见自己,肉体灵魂都感受到他的永在。希望我的工作没有辜负诗人的一片苦心。

郑远涛2018年5月记于美国西海岸

(时为惠特曼出生月、他诞辰的第199周年)

Walt
Whitman

P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

On the Beach
at Night
Alone

Nº 30

‘All nations,
colors,
barbarisms,
civilizations,
languages . . .’

BIRDS OF PASSAGE

Song of the Universal

1

Come said the Muse,
Sing me a song no poet yet has chanted,
Sing me the universal.

In this broad earth of ours,
Amid the measureless grossness and the slag,
Enclosed and safe within its central heart,
Nestles the seed perfection.

By every life a share or more or less,
None born but it is born, conceal'd or unconceal'd the seed is
waiting.

2

Lo! keen-eyed towering science,
As from tall peaks the modern overlooking,
Successive absolute fiats issuing.
Yet again, lo! the soul, above all science,
For it has history gather'd like husks around the globe,

For it the entire star-myriads roll through the sky.

In spiral routes by long detours,
(As a much-tacking ship upon the sea,)
For it the partial to the permanent flowing;
For it the real to the ideal tends.

For it the mystic evolution,
Not the right only justified, what we call evil also justified.

Forth from their masks, no matter what,
From the huge festering trunk, from craft and guile and tears,
Health to emerge and joy, joy universal.
Out of the bulk, the morbid and the shallow,
Out of the bad majority, the varied countless frauds of men and
states,
Electric, antiseptic yet, cleaving, suffusing all,
Only the good is universal.

3

Over the mountain-growths disease and sorrow,
An uncaught bird is ever hovering, hovering,
High in the purer, happier air.

From imperfection's murkiest cloud,
Darts always forth one ray of perfect light,
One flash of heaven's glory.

To fashion's, custom's discord,
To the mad Babel-din, the deafening orgies,
Soothing each lull a strain is heard, just heard,
From some far shore the final chorus sounding.

O the blest eyes, the happy hearts,
That see, that know the guiding thread so fine,
Along the mighty labyrinth.

4

And thou America,
For the scheme's culmination, its thought and its reality,
For these (not for thyself) thou has arrived.

Thou too surroundest all,
Embracing carrying welcoming all, thou too by pathways broad
and new,
To the ideal tendest.

The measur'd faiths of other lands, the grandeurs of the past,
Are not for thee, but grandeurs of thine own,
Deific faiths and amplitudes, absorbing, comprehending all,
All eligible to all.

All, all for immortality,
Love like the light silently wrapping all,
Nature's amelioration blessing all,

The blossoms, fruits of ages, orchards divine and certain,
Forms, objects, growths, humanities, to spiritual images
ripening.

Give me O God to sing that thought,
Give me, give him or her I love this quenchless faith,
In Thy ensemble, whatever else withheld withhold not from us,
Belief in plan of Thee enclosed in Time and Space,
Health, peace, salvation universal.

Is it a dream?
Nay but the lack of it the dream,
And failing it life's lore and wealth a dream,
And all the world a dream.

Pioneers! O Pioneers!

Come my tan-faced children,
Follow well in order, get your weapons ready,
Have you your pistols? have you your sharp-edged axes?
Pioneers! O pioneers!

For we cannot tarry here,
We must march my darlings, we must bear the brunt of danger,
We the youthful sinewy races, all the rest on us depend,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O you youths, Western youths,
So impatient, full of action, full of manly pride and friendship,
Plain I see you Western youths, see you tramping with the
foremost,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Have the elder races halted?
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied over there beyond
the seas?
We take up the task eternal, and the burden and the lesson,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the past we leave behind,
We debouch upon a newer mightier world, varied world,
Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labor and the
march,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

We detachments steady throwing,
Down the edges, through the passes, up the mountains steep,
Conquering, holding, daring, venturing as we go the unknown
ways,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

We primeval forests felling,
We the rivers stemming, vexing we and piercing deep the
mines within,

We the surface broad surveying, we the virgin soil upheaving,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Colorado men are we,
From the peaks gigantic, from the giant sierras and the high
plateaus,

From the mine and from the gully, from the hunting trail we
come,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

From Nebraska, from Arkansas,
Central inland race are we, from Missouri, with the continental
blood intervein'd,

All the hands of comrades clasping, all the Southern, all the
Northern,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

O resistless restless race!
O beloved race in all! O my breast aches with tender love for
all!

O I mourn and yet exult, I am rapt with love for all,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Raise the mighty mother mistress,

Waving high the delicate mistress, over all the starry mistress,
(bend your heads all,)

Raise the fang'd and warlike mistress, stern, impassive,
weapon'd mistress,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

See my children, resolute children,

By those swarms upon our rear we must never yield or falter,
Ages back in ghostly millions frowning there behind us urging,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

On and on the compact ranks,

With accessions ever waiting, with the places of the dead
quickly fill'd,

Through the battle, through defeat, moving yet and never
stopping,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

O to die advancing on!

Are there some of us to droop and die? has the hour come?

Then upon the march we fittest die, soon and sure the gap is
fill'd,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the pulses of the world,

Falling in they beat for us, with the Western movement beat,
Holding single or together, steady moving to the front, all for

us,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Life's involv'd and varied pageants,

All the forms and shows, all the workmen at their work,

All the seamen and the landmen, all the masters with their
slaves,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the hapless silent lovers,

All the prisoners in the prisons, all the righteous and the
wicked,

All the joyous, all the sorrowing, all the living, all the dying,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

I too with my soul and body,

We, a curious trio, picking, wandering on our way,

Through these shores amid the shadows, with the apparitions
pressing,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Lo, the darting bowling orb!

Lo, the brother orbs around, all the clustering suns and planets,

All the dazzling days, all the mystic nights with dreams,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

These are of us, they are with us,

All for primal needed work, while the followers there in
embryo wait behind,

We to-day's procession heading, we the route for travel

clearing,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

O you daughters of the West!

O you young and elder daughters! O you mothers and you wives!

Never must you be divided, in our ranks you move united,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Minstrels latent on the prairies!

(Shrouded bards of other lands, you may rest, you have done your work,)

Soon I hear you coming warbling, soon you rise and tramp amid us,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Not for delectations sweet,

Not the cushion and the slipper, not the peaceful and the studious,

Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame enjoyment,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Do the feasters gluttonous feast?

Do the corpulent sleepers sleep? have they lock'd and bolted doors?

Still be ours the diet hard, and the blanket on the ground,

Pioneers! O pioneers!

Has the night descended?

Was the road of late so toilsome? did we stop discouraged

nodding on our way?

Yet a passing hour I yield you in your tracks to pause oblivious,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Till with sound of trumpet,

Far, far off the daybreak call — hark! how loud and clear I hear
it wind,

Swift! to the head of the army! -swift! spring to your places,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

To You

Whoever you are, I fear you are walking the walks of dreams,

I fear these supposed realities are to melt from under your feet
and hands,

Even now your features, joys, speech, house, trade, manners,
troubles, follies, costume, crimes, dissipate away from you,

Your true soul and body appear before me,

They stand forth out of affairs, out of commerce, shops, work,
farms, clothes, the house, buying, selling, eating, drinking,
suffering, dying.

Whoever you are, now I place my hand upon you, that you be
my poem,

I whisper with my lips close to your ear,

I have loved many women and men, but I love none better than
you.

O I have been dilatory and dumb,

I should have made my way straight to you long ago,

I should have blabb'd nothing but you, I should have chanted
nothing but you.

I will leave all and come and make the hymns of you,

None has understood you, but I understand you,

None has done justice to you, you have not done justice to
yourself,

None but has found you imperfect, I only find no imperfection
in you,

None but would subordinate you, I only am he who will never

consent to subordinate you,

I only am he who places over you no master, owner, better,
God, beyond what waits intrinsically in yourself.

Painters have painted their swarming groups and the centre-figure of all,

From the head of the centre-figure spreading a nimbus of gold-color'd light,

But I paint myriads of heads, but paint no head without its nimbus of gold-color'd light,

From my hand from the brain of every man and woman it streams, effulgently flowing forever.

O I could sing such grandeurs and glories about you!

You have not known what you are, you have slumber'd upon yourself all your life,

Your eyelids have been the same as closed most of the time,

What you have done returns already in mockeries,

(Your thrift, knowledge, prayers, if they do not return in mockeries, what is their return?)

The mockeries are not you,

Underneath them and within them I see you lurk,

I pursue you where none else has pursued you,

Silence, the desk, the flippant expression, the night, the accustom'd routine, if these conceal you from others or from yourself, they do not conceal you from me,

The shaved face, the unsteady eye, the impure complexion, if these balk others they do not balk me,

The pert apparel, the deform'd attitude, drunkenness, greed, premature death, all these I part aside.

There is no endowment in man or woman that is not tallied in

you,

There is no virtue, no beauty in man or woman, but as good is in you,

No pluck, no endurance in others, but as good is in you,

No pleasure waiting for others, but an equal pleasure waits for you.

As for me, I give nothing to any one except I give the like carefully to you,

I sing the songs of the glory of none, not God, sooner than I sing the songs of the glory of you.

Whoever you are! claim your own at any hazard!

These shows of the East and West are tame compared to you,

These immense meadows, these interminable rivers, you are immense and interminable as they,

These furies, elements, storms, motions of Nature, throes of apparent dissolution, you are he or she who is master or mistress over them,

Master or mistress in your own right over Nature, elements, pain, passion, dissolution.

The hobbles fall from your ankles, you find an unfailing sufficiency,

Old or young, male or female, rude, low, rejected by the rest, whatever you are promulges itself,

Through birth, life, death, burial, the means are provided, nothing is scanted,

Through angers, losses, ambition, ignorance, ennui, what you are picks its way.

France, the 18th Year of These States

A great year and place.

A harsh discordant natal scream out-sounding, to touch the mother's heart closer than any yet.

I walk'd the shores of my Eastern sea,

Heard over the waves the little voice,

Saw the divine infant where she woke mournfully wailing,
amid the roar of cannon, curses, shouts, crash of falling buildings,

Was not so sick from the blood in the gutters running, nor from
the single corpses, nor those in heaps, nor those borne away in the
tumbrils,

Was not so desperate at the battues of death-was not so shock'd
at the repeated fusillades of the guns.

Pale, silent, stern, what could I say to that long-accrued
retribution?

Could I wish humanity different?

Could I wish the people made of wood and stone?

Or that there be no justice in destiny or time?

O Liberty! O mate for me!

Here too the blaze, the grape-shot and the axe, in reserve, to
fetch them out in case of need,

Here too, though long repress, can never be destroy'd,

Here too could rise at last murdering and ecstatic,

Here too demanding full arrears of vengeance.

Hence I sign this salute over the sea,

And I do not deny that terrible red birth and baptism,

But remember the little voice that I heard wailing, and wait

with perfect trust, no matter how long,

And from to-day sad and cogent I maintain the bequeath'd
cause, as for all lands,

And I send these words to Paris with my love,

And I guess some chansonniers there will understand them,

For I guess there is latent music yet in France, floods of it,

O I hear already the bustle of instruments, they will soon be
drowning all that would interrupt them,

O I think the east wind brings a triumphal and free march,

It reaches hither, it swells me to joyful madness,

I will run transpose it in words, to justify it,

I will yet sing a song for you ma femme.

Myself and Mine

Myself and mine gymnastic ever,

To stand the cold or heat, to take good aim with a gun, to sail a boat, to manage horses, to beget superb children,

To speak readily and clearly, to feel at home among common people,

And to hold our own in terrible positions on land and sea.

Not for an embroiderer,

(There will always be plenty of embroiderers, I welcome them also,)

But for the fibre of things and for inherent men and women.

Not to chisel ornaments,

But to chisel with free stroke the heads and limbs of plenteous supreme Gods, that the States may realize them walking and talking.

Let me have my own way,

Let others promulge the laws, I will make no account of the laws,

Let others praise eminent men and hold up peace, I hold up agitation and conflict.

I praise no eminent man, I rebuke to his face the one that was thought most worthy.

(Who are you? and what are you secretly guilty of all your life?

Will you turn aside all your life? will you grub and chatter all your life?

And who are you, blabbing by rote, years, pages, languages, reminiscences,

Unwitting to-day that you do not know how to speak properly

a single word?)

Let others finish specimens, I never finish specimens,

I start them by exhaustless laws as Nature does, fresh and modern continually.

I give nothing as duties,

What others give as duties I give as living impulses,

(Shall I give the heart's action as a duty?)

Let others dispose of questions, I dispose of nothing, I arouse unanswerable questions,

Who are they I see and touch, and what about them?

What about these likes of myself that draw me so close by tender directions and indirections?

I call to the world to distrust the accounts of my friends, but listen to my enemies, as I myself do,

I charge you forever reject those who would expound me, for I cannot expound myself,

I charge that there be no theory or school founded out of me,

I charge you to leave all free, as I have left all free.

After me, vista!

O I see life is not short, but immeasurably long,

I henceforth tread the world chaste, temperate, an early riser, a steady grower,

Every hour the semen of centuries, and still of centuries.

I must follow up these continual lessons of the air, water, earth,

I perceive I have no time to lose.

Year of Meteors (1859-60)

Year of meteors! brooding year!

I would bind in words retrospective some of your deeds and signs,

I would sing your contest for the 19th Presidentiad,

I would sing how an old man, tall, with white hair, mounted the scaffold in Virginia,

(I was at hand, silent I stood with teeth shut close, I watch'd,

I stood very near you old man when cool and indifferent, but trembling with age and your unheal'd wounds you mounted the scaffold ;)

I would sing in my copious song your census returns of the States,

The tables of population and products, I would sing of your ships and their cargoes,

The proud black ships of Manhattan arriving, some fill'd with immigrants, some from the isthmus with cargoes of gold,

Songs thereof would I sing, to all that hitherward comes would I welcome give,

And you would I sing, fair stripling! welcome to you from me, young prince of England!

(Remember you surging Manhattan's crowds as you pass'd with your cortege of nobles?

There in the crowds stood I, and singled you out with attachment;)

Nor forget I to sing of the wonder, the ship as she swam up my bay,

Well-shaped and stately the Great Eastern swam up my bay, she was 600 feet long,

Her moving swiftly surrounded by myriads of small craft I forget not to sing;

Nor the comet that came unannounced out of the north flaring

in heaven,

Nor the strange huge meteor-procession dazzling and clear
shooting over our heads,

(A moment, a moment long it sail'd its balls of unearthly light
over our heads,

Then departed, dropt in the night, and was gone;)

Of such, and fitful as they, I sing — with gleams from them
would I gleam and patch these chants,

Your chants, O year all mottled with evil and good-year of
forebodings!

Year of comets and meteors transient and strange-lo! even here
one equally transient and strange!

As I flit through you hastily, soon to fall and be gone, what is
this chant,

What am I myself but one of your meteors?

With Antecedents

1

With antecedents,

With my fathers and mothers and the accumulations of past
ages,

With all which, had it not been, I would not now be here, as I
am,

With Egypt, India, Phenicia, Greece and Rome,

With the Kelt, the Scandinavian, the Alb and the Saxon,

With antique maritime ventures, laws, artisanship, wars and
journeys,

With the poet, the skald, the saga, the myth, and the oracle,

With the sale of slaves, with enthusiasts, with the troubadour,
the crusader, and the monk,

With those old continents whence we have come to this new
continent,

With the fading kingdoms and kings over there,

With the fading religions and priests,

With the small shores we look back to from our own large and
present shores,

With countless years drawing themselves onward and arrived
at these years,

You and me arrived-America arrived and making this year,

This year! sending itself ahead countless years to come.

2

O but it is not the years — it is I, it is You,

We touch all laws and tally all antecedents,

We are the skald, the oracle, the monk and the knight, we easily include them and more,

We stand amid time beginningless and endless, we stand amid evil and good,

All swings around us, there is as much darkness as light,

The very sun swings itself and its system of planets around us,

Its sun, and its again, all swing around us.

As for me, (torn, stormy, amid these vehement days,)

I have the idea of all, and am all and believe in all,

I believe materialism is true and spiritualism is true, I reject no part.

(Have I forgotten any part? any thing in the past?

Come to me whoever and whatever, till I give you recognition.)

I respect Assyria, China, Teutonia, and the Hebrews,

I adopt each theory, myth, god, and demi-god,

I see that the old accounts, bibles, genealogies, are true, without exception,

I assert that all past days were what they must have been,

And that they could no-how have been better than they were,

And that to-day is what it must be, and that America is,

And that to-day and America could no-how be better than they are.

In the name of these States and in your and my name, the Past,
And in the name of these States and in your and my name, the
Present time.

I know that the past was great and the future will be great,
And I know that both curiously conjoint in the present time,
(For the sake of him I typify, for the common average man's
sake, your sake if you are he,)

And that where I am or you are this present day, there is the
centre of all days, all races,

And there is the meaning to us of all that has ever come of
races and days, or ever will come.

A Broadway Pageant

1

Over the Western sea hither from Nippon come,
Courteous, the swart-cheek'd two-sworded envoys,
Leaning back in their open barouches, bare-headed, impassive,
Ride to-day through Manhattan.

Libertad! I do not know whether others behold what I behold,
In the procession along with the nobles of Nippon, the errand-bearers,

Bringing up the rear, hovering above, around, or in the ranks marching,

But I will sing you a song of what I behold Libertad.

When million-footed Manhattan unpent descends to her pavements,

When the thunder-cracking guns arouse me with the proud roar I love,

When the round-mouth'd guns out of the smoke and smell I love spit their salutes,

When the fire-flashing guns have fully alerted me, and heaven-clouds canopy my city with a delicate thin haze,

When gorgeous the countless straight stems, the forests at the wharves, thicken with colors,

When every ship richly drest carries her flag at the peak,

When pennants trail and street-festoons hang from the windows,

When Broadway is entirely given up to foot-passengers and foot-standers, when the mass is densest,

When the façades of the houses are alive with people, when
eyes gaze riveted tens of thousands at a time,

When the guests from the islands advance, when the pageant
moves forward visible,

When the summons is made, when the answer that waited
thousands of years answers,

I too arising, answering, descend to the pavements, merge with
the crowd, and gaze with them.

2

Superb-faced Manhattan!

Comrade Americanos! to us, then at last the Orient comes.

To us, my city,

Where our tall-topt marble and iron beauties range on opposite
sides, to walk in the space between,

To-day our Antipodes comes.

The Originatress comes,

The nest of languages, the bequeather of poems, the race of eld,
Florid with blood, pensive, rapt with musings, hot with
passion,

Sultry with perfume, with ample and flowing garments,

With sunburnt visage, with intense soul and glittering eyes,

The race of Brahma comes.

See my cantabile! these and more are flashing to us from the
procession,

As it moves changing, a kaleidoscope divine it moves changing
before us.

For not the envoys nor the tann'd Japanee from his island only,

Lithe and silent the Hindoo appears, the Asiatic continent itself
appears, the past, the dead,

The murky night-morning of wonder and fable inscrutable,

The envelop'd mysteries, the old and unknown hive-bees,

The north, the sweltering south, eastern Assyria, the Hebrews,
the ancient of ancients,

Vast desolated cities, the gliding present, all of these and more
are in the pageant-procession.

Geography, the world, is in it,

The Great Sea, the brood of islands, Polynesia, the coast
beyond,

The coast you henceforth are facing — you Libertad! from your
Western golden shores,

The countries there with their populations, the millions en-
masse are curiously here,

The swarming market-places, the temples with idols ranged
along the sides or at the end, bonze, brahmin, and llama,

Mandarin, farmer, merchant, mechanic, and fisherman,

The singing-girl and the dancing-girl, the ecstatic persons, the
secluded emperors,

Confucious himself, the great poets and heroes, the warriors,
the castes, all,

Trooping up, crowding from all directions, from the Altay
mountains,

From Thibet, from the four winding and far-flowing rivers of
China,

From the southern peninsulas and the demi-continental islands,
from Malaysia,

These and whatever belongs to them palpable show forth to
me, and are seiz'd by me,

And I am seiz'd by them, and friendlily held by them,

Till as here them all I chant, Libertad! for themselves and for you.

For I too raising my voice join the ranks of this pageant,
I am the chanter, I chant aloud over the pageant,
I chant the world on my Western sea,
I chant copious the islands beyond, thick as stars in the sky,
I chant the new empire grander than any before, as in a vision
it comes to me,
I chant America the mistress, I chant a greater supremacy,
I chant projected a thousand blooming cities yet in time on
those groups of sea-islands,
My sail-ships and steam-ships threading the archipelagoes,
My stars and stripes fluttering in the wind,
Commerce opening, the sleep of ages having done its work,
races reborn, refresh'd,
Lives, works resumed — the object I know not — but the old,
the Asiatic renew'd as it must be,
Commencing from this day surrounded by the world.

3

And you Libertad of the world!
You shall sit in the middle well-pois'd thousands and thousands
of years,
As to-day from one side the nobles of Asia come to you,
As to-morrow from the other side the queen of England sends
her eldest son to you.

The sign is reversing, the orb is enclosed,

The ring is circled, the journey is done,

The box-lid is but perceptibly open'd, nevertheless the perfume pours copiously out of the whole box.

Young Libertad! with the venerable Asia, the all-mother,

Be considerate with her now and ever hot Libertad, for you are all,

Bend your proud neck to the long-off mother now sending messages over the archipelagoes to you,

Bend your proud neck low for once, young Libertad.

Were the children straying westward so long? so wide the tramping?

Were the precedent dim ages debouching westward from Paradise so long?

Were the centuries steadily footing it that way, all the while unknown, for you, for reasons?

They are justified, they are accomplish'd, they shall now be turn'd the other way also, to travel toward you thence,

They shall now also march obediently eastward for your sake Libertad.

SEA-DRIFT

Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking

Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,

Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musical shuttle,

Out of the Ninth-month midnight,

Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond, where the child
leaving his bed wander'd alone, bareheaded, barefoot,

Down from the shower'd halo,

Up from the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting as if
they were alive,

Out from the patches of briars and blackberries,

From the memories of the bird that chanted to me,

From your memories sad brother, from the fitful risings and
fallings I heard,

From under that yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen as if
with tears,

From those beginning notes of yearning and love there in the
mist,

From the thousand responses of my heart never to cease,

From the myriad thence-arous'd words,

From the word stronger and more delicious than any,

From such as now they start the scene revisiting,

As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing,

Borne hither, ere all eludes me, hurriedly,

A man, yet by these tears a little boy again,

Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves,

I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter,

Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping beyond them,
A reminiscence sing.

Once Paumanok,

When the lilac-scent was in the air and Fifth-month grass was
growing,

Up this seashore in some briers,

Two feather'd guests from Alabama, two together,

And their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with brown,

And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand,

And every day the she-bird crouch'd on her nest, silent, with
bright eyes,

And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never
disturbing them,

Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

Shine! shine! shine!

Pour down your warmth, great sun!

While we bask, we two together.

Two together!

Winds blow south, or winds blow north,

Day come white, or night come black,

Home, or rivers and mountains from home,

Singing all time, minding no time,

While we two keep together.

Till of a sudden,
May-be kill'd, unknown to her mate,
One forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not on the nest,
Nor return'd that afternoon, nor the next,
Nor ever appear'd again.

And thenceforward all summer in the sound of the sea,
And at night under the full of the moon in calmer weather,
Over the hoarse surging of the sea,
Or flitting from brier to brier by day,
I saw, I heard at intervals the remaining one, the he-bird,
The solitary guest from Alabama.

Blow! blow! blow!

Blow up sea-winds along Paumanok's shore;

I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me.

Yes, when the stars glisten'd,
All night long on the prong of a moss-scallop'd stake,
Down almost amid the slapping waves,
Sat the lone singer wonderful causing tears.
He call'd on his mate,
He pour'd forth the meanings which I of all men know.

Yes my brother I know,
The rest might not, but I have treasur'd every note,
For more than once dimly down to the beach gliding,

Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself with the shadows,

Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the sounds and sights after their sorts,

The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,
I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair,
Listen'd long and long.

Listen'd to keep, to sing, now translating the notes,
Following you my brother.

Soothe! soothe! soothe!

Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,

*And again another behind embracing and lapping, every one close,
But my love soothes not me, not me.*

Low hangs the moon, it rose late,

It is lagging-O I think it is heavy with love, with love.

O madly the sea pushes upon the land,

With love, with love.

O night! do I not see my love fluttering out among the breakers?

What is that little black thing I see there in the white?

Loud! loud! loud!

Loud I call to you, my love!

High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves,

Surely you must know who is here, is here,

You must know who I am, my love.

Low-hanging moon!

What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow?

O it is the shape, the shape of my mate!

O moon do not keep her from me any longer.

Land! land! O land!

*Whichever way I turn, O I think you could give me my mate back
again if you only would,*

For I am almost sure I see her dimly whichever way I look.

O rising stars!

Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with some of you.

O throat! O trembling throat!

Sound clearer through the atmosphere!

Pierce the woods, the earth,

Somewhere listening to catch you must be the one I want.

Shake out carols!

Solitary here, the night's carols!

Carols of lonesome love! death's carols!

Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon!

O under that moon where she droops almost down into the sea!

O reckless despairing carols.

But soft! sink low!

Soft! let me just murmur,

And do you wait a moment you husky-nois'd sea,

For somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding to me,

So faint, I must be still, be still to listen,

But not altogether still, for then she might not come immediately to me.

Hither my love!

Here I am! here!

With this just-sustain'd note I announce myself to you,

This gentle call is for you my love, for you.

Do not be decoy'd elsewhere,

That is the whistle of the wind, it is not my voice,

That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the spray,

Those are the shadows of leaves.

O darkness! O in vain!

O I am very sick and sorrowful.

O brown halo in the sky near the moon, drooping upon the sea!

O troubled reflection in the sea!

O throat! O throbbing heart!

And I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.

O past! O happy life! O songs of joy!

In the air, in the woods, over fields,

Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!

But my mate no more, no more with me!

We two together no more.

The aria sinking,

All else continuing, the stars shining,

The winds blowing, the notes of the bird continuous echoing,

With angry moans the fierce old mother incessantly moaning,

On the sands of Paumanok's shore gray and rustling,

The yellow half-moon enlarged, sagging down, drooping, the
face of the sea almost touching,

The boy ecstatic, with his bare feet the waves, with his hair the
atmosphere dallying,

The love in the heart long pent, now loose, now at last
tumultuously bursting,

The aria's meaning, the ears, the soul, swiftly depositing,

The strange tears down the cheeks coursing,

The colloquy there, the trio, each uttering,

The undertone, the savage old mother incessantly crying,
To the boy's soul's questions sullenly timing, some drown'd
secret hissing,

To the outsetting bard.

Demon or bird! (said the boy's soul,)

Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it really to me?

For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping, now I have
heard you,

Now in a moment I know what I am for, I awake,

And already a thousand singers, a thousand songs, clearer,
louder and more sorrowful than yours,

A thousand warbling echoes have started to life within me,
never to die.

O you singer solitary, singing by yourself, projecting me,

O solitary me listening, never more shall I cease perpetuating
you,

Never more shall I escape, never more the reverberations,

Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent from me,

Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was before
what there in the night,

By the sea under the yellow and sagging moon,

The messenger there arous'd, the fire, the sweet hell within,

The unknown want, the destiny of me.

O give me the clew! (it lurks in the night here somewhere,)

O if I am to have so much, let me have more!

A word then, (for I will conquer it,)

The word final, superior to all,

Subtle, sent up — what is it? — I listen;

Are you whispering it, and have been all the time, you sea-waves?

Is that it from your liquid rims and wet sands?

Whereto answering, the sea,

Delaying not, hurrying not,

Whisper'd me through the night, and very plainly before daybreak,

Lisp'd to me the low and delicious word death,

And again death, death, death, death,

Hissing melodious, neither like the bird nor like my arous'd child's heart,

But edging near as privately for me rustling at my feet,

Creeping thence steadily up to my ears and laving me softly all over,

Death, death, death, death, death.

Which I do not forget,

But fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother,

That he sang to me in the moonlight on Paumanok's gray beach,

With the thousand responsive songs at random,

My own songs awaked from that hour,

And with them the key, the word up from the waves,

The word of the sweetest song and all songs,

That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my feet,

(Or like some old crone rocking the cradle, swathed in sweet garments, bending aside,)

The sea whisper'd me.

As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life

1

As I ebb'd with the ocean of life,
As I wended the shores I know,
As I walk'd where the ripples continually wash you Paumanok,
Where they rustle up hoarse and sibilant,
Where the fierce old mother endlessly cries for her castaways,
I musing late in the autumn day, gazing off southward,
Held by this electric self out of the pride of which I utter poems,
Was seiz'd by the spirit that trails in the lines underfoot,
The rim, the sediment that stands for all the water and all the land of the globe.

Fascinated, my eyes reverting from the south, dropt, to follow those slender windrows,
Chaff, straw, splinters of wood, weeds, and the sea-gluten,
Scum, scales from shining rocks, leaves of salt-lettuce, left by the tide,
Miles walking, the sound of breaking waves the other side of me,
Paumanok there and then as I thought the old thought of likenesses,
These you presented to me you fish-shaped island,
As I wended the shores I know,
As I walk'd with that electric self seeking types.

As I wend to the shores I know not,
 As I list to the dirge, the voices of men and women wreck'd,
 As I inhale the impalpable breezes that set in upon me,
 As the ocean so mysterious rolls toward me closer and closer,
 I too but signify at the utmost a little wash'd-up drift,
 A few sands and dead leaves to gather,
 Gather, and merge myself as part of the sands and drift.

O baffled, balk'd, bent to the very earth,
 Oppress'd with myself that I have dared to open my mouth,
 Aware now that amid all that blab whose echoes recoil upon
 me I have not once had the least idea who or what I am,
 But that before all my arrogant poems the real Me stands yet
 untouch'd, untold, altogether unreach'd,
 Withdrawn far, mocking me with mock-congratulatory signs
 and bows,
 With peals of distant ironical laughter at every word I have
 written,
 Pointing in silence to these songs, and then to the sand
 beneath.
 I perceive I have not really understood any thing, not a single
 object, and that no man ever can,
 Nature here in sight of the sea taking advantage of me to dart
 upon me and sting me,
 Because I have dared to open my mouth to sing at all.

You oceans both, I close with you,
We murmur alike reproachfully rolling sands and drift,
knowing not why,
These little shreds indeed standing for you and me and all.

You friable shore with trails of debris,
You fish-shaped island, I take what is underfoot,
What is yours is mine my father.

I too Paumanok,
I too have bubbled up, floated the measureless float, and been
wash'd on your shores,
I too am but a trail of drift and debris,
I too leave little wrecks upon you, you fish-shaped island.

I throw myself upon your breast my father,
I cling to you so that you cannot unloose me,
I hold you so firm till you answer me something.

Kiss me my father,
Touch me with your lips as I touch those I love,
Breathe to me while I hold you close the secret of the
murmuring I envy.

Ebb, ocean of life, (the flow will return,)
Cease not your moaning you fierce old mother,
Endlessly cry for your castaways, but fear not, deny not me,

Rustle not up so hoarse and angry against my feet as I touch
you or gather from you.

I mean tenderly by you and all,

I gather for myself and for this phantom looking down where
we lead, and following me and mine.

Me and mine, loose windrows, little corpses,

Froth, snowy white, and bubbles,

(See, from my dead lips the ooze exuding at last,

See, the prismatic colors glistening and rolling,)

Tufts of straw, sands, fragments,

Buoy'd hither from many moods, one contradicting another,

From the storm, the long calm, the darkness, the swell,

Musing, pondering, a breath, a briny tear, a dab of liquid or
soil,

Up just as much out of fathomless workings fermented and
thrown,

A limp blossom or two, torn, just as much over waves floating,
drifted at random,

Just as much for us that sobbing dirge of Nature,

Just as much whence we come that blare of the cloud-trumpets,

We, capricious, brought hither we know not whence, spread
out before you,

You up there walking or sitting,

Whoever you are, we too lie in drifts at your feet.

Tears

Tears! tears! tears!

In the night, in solitude, tears,

On the white shore dripping, dripping, suck'd in by the sand,

Tears, not a star shining, all dark and desolate,

Moist tears from the eyes of a muffled head;

O who is that ghost? that form in the dark, with tears?

What shapeless lump is that, bent, crouch'd there on the sand?

Streaming tears, sobbing tears, throes, choked with wild cries;

O storm, embodied, rising, careering with swift steps along the beach!

O wild and dismal night storm, with wind — O belching and desperate!

O shade so sedate and decorous by day, with calm countenance and regulated pace,

But away at night as you fly, none looking — O then the unloosen'd ocean,

Of tears! tears! tears!

To the Man-of-War Bird

Thou who hast slept all night upon the storm,
Waking renew'd on thy prodigious pinions,
(Burst the wild storm? above it thou ascended'st,
And rested on the sky, thy slave that cradled thee,)
Now a blue point, far, far, in heaven floating,
As to the light emerging here on deck I watch thee,
(Myself a speck, a point on the world's floating vast.)

Far, far at sea,

After the night's fierce drifts have strewn the shore with wrecks,

With re-appearing day as now so happy and serene,
The rosy and elastic dawn, the flashing sun,
The limpid spread of air cerulean,
Thou also re-appearest.

Thou born to match the gale, (thou art all wings,)
To cope with heaven and earth and sea and hurricane,
Thou ship of air that never furl'st thy sails,

Days, even weeks untired and onward, through spaces, realms gyrating,

At dusk that look'st on Senegal, at morn America,
That sport'st amid the lightning-flash and thunder-cloud,
In them, in thy experiences, had'st thou my soul,
What joys! what joys were thine!

Aboard at a Ship's Helm

Aboard at a ship's helm,
A young steersman steering with care.

Through fog on a sea-coast dolefully ringing,
An ocean-bell — O a warning bell, rock'd by the waves.

O you give good notice indeed, you bell by the sea-reefs
ringing,
Ringing, ringing, to warn the ship from its wreck-place.

For as on the alert O steersman, you mind the loud admonition,
The bows turn, the freighted ship tacking speeds away under
her gray sails,

The beautiful and noble ship with all her precious wealth
speeds away gayly and safe.

But O the ship, the immortal ship! O ship aboard the ship!

Ship of the body, ship of the soul, voyaging, voyaging,
voyaging.

On the Beach at Night

On the beach at night,
Stands a child with her father,
Watching the east, the autumn sky.

Up through the darkness,
While ravening clouds, the burial clouds, in black masses
spreading,
Lower sullen and fast athwart and down the sky,
Amid a transparent clear belt of ether yet left in the east,
Ascends large and calm the lord-star Jupiter,
And nigh at hand, only a very little above,
Swim the delicate sisters the Pleiades.
From the beach the child holding the hand of her father,
Those burial-clouds that lower victorious soon to devour all,
Watching, silently weeps.

Weep not, child,
Weep not, my darling,
With these kisses let me remove your tears,
The ravening clouds shall not long be victorious,
They shall not long possess the sky, they devour the stars only
in apparition,
Jupiter shall emerge, be patient, watch again another night, the
Pleiades shall emerge,
They are immortal, all those stars both silvery and golden shall
shine out again,
The great stars and the little ones shall shine out again, they
endure,

The vast immortal suns and the long-enduring pensive moons
shall again shine.

Then dearest child mournest thou only for Jupiter?
Considerest thou alone the burial of the stars?

Something there is,
(With my lips soothing thee, adding I whisper,
I give thee the first suggestion, the problem and indirection,)
Something there is more immortal even than the stars,
(Many the burials, many the days and nights, passing away,)
Something that shall endure longer even than lustrous Jupiter,
Longer than sun or any revolving satellite,
Or the radiant sisters the Pleiades.

The World Below the Brine

The world below the brine,

Forests at the bottom of the sea, the branches and leaves,

Sea-lettuce, vast lichens, strange flowers and seeds, the thick tangle, openings, and pink turf,

Different colors, pale gray and green, purple, white, and gold, the play of light through the water,

Dumb swimmers there among the rocks, coral, gluten, grass, rushes, and the aliment of the swimmers,

Sluggish existences grazing there suspended, or slowly crawling close to the bottom,

The sperm-whale at the surface blowing air and spray, or disporting with his flukes,

The leaden-eyed shark, the walrus, the turtle, the hairy sea-leopard, and the sting-ray,

Passions there, wars, pursuits, tribes, sight in those ocean-depths, breathing that thick-breathing air, as so many do,

The change thence to the sight here, and to the subtle air breathed by beings like us who walk this sphere,

The change onward from ours to that of beings who walk other spheres.

On the Beach at Night Alone

On the beach at night alone,

As the old mother sways her to and fro singing her husky song,

As I watch the bright stars shining, I think a thought of the clef
of the universes and of the future.

A vast similitude interlocks all,

All spheres, grown, ungrown, small, large, suns, moons,
planets,

All distances of place however wide,

All distances of time, all inanimate forms,

All souls, all living bodies though they be ever so different, or
in different worlds,

All gaseous, watery, vegetable, mineral processes, the fishes,
the brutes,

All nations, colors, barbarisms, civilizations, languages,

All identities that have existed or may exist on this globe, or
any globe,

All lives and deaths, all of the past, present, future,

This vast similitude spans them, and always has spann'd,

And shall forever span them and compactly hold and enclose
them.

Song for All Seas, All Ships

1

To-day a rude brief recitative,

Of ships sailing the seas, each with its special flag or ship-signal,

Of unnamed heroes in the ships — of waves spreading and spreading far as the eye can reach,

Of dashing spray, and the winds piping and blowing,

And out of these a chant for the sailors of all nations,

Fitful, like a surge.

Of sea-captains young or old, and the mates, and of all intrepid sailors,

Of the few, very choice, taciturn, whom fate can never surprise nor death dismay,

Pick'd sparingly without noise by thee old ocean, chosen by thee,

Thou sea that pickest and cullest the race in time, and unitest nations,

Suckled by thee, old husky nurse, embodying thee,

Indomitable, untamed as thee.

(Ever the heroes on water or on land, by ones or twos appearing,

Ever the stock preserv'd and never lost, though rare, enough for seed preserv'd.)

Flaunt out O sea your separate flags of nations!

Flaunt out visible as ever the various ship-signals!

But do you reserve especially for yourself and for the soul of man one flag above all the rest,

A spiritual woven signal for all nations, emblem of man elate above death,

Token of all brave captains and all intrepid sailors and mates,

And all that went down doing their duty,

Reminiscent of them, twined from all intrepid captains young or old,

A pennant universal, subtly waving all time, o'er all brave sailors,

All seas, all ships.

Patrolling Barnegat

Wild, wild the storm, and the sea high running,

Steady the roar of the gale, with incessant undertone
muttering,

Shouts of demoniac laughter fitfully piercing and pealing,

Waves, air, midnight, their savagest trinity lashing,

Out in the shadows there milk-white combs careering,

On beachy slush and sand spirts of snow fierce slanting,

Where through the murk the easterly death-wind breasting,

Through cutting swirl and spray watchful and firm advancing,

(That in the distance! is that a wreck? is the red signal
flaring?)

Slush and sand of the beach tireless till daylight wending,

Steadily, slowly, through hoarse roar never remitting,

Along the midnight edge by those milk-white combs careering,

A group of dim, weird forms, struggling, the night confronting,

That savage trinity warily watching.

After the Sea-Ship

After the sea-ship, after the whistling winds,
After the white-gray sails taut to their spars and ropes,
Below, a myriad myriad waves hastening, lifting up their necks,
Tending in ceaseless flow toward the track of the ship,
Waves of the ocean bubbling and gurgling, blithely prying,
Waves, undulating waves, liquid, uneven, emulous waves,
Toward that whirling current, laughing and buoyant, with
curves,

Where the great vessel sailing and tacking displaces the
surface,

Larger and smaller waves in the spread of the ocean yearnfully
flowing,

The wake of the sea-ship after she passes, flashing and
frolicsome under the sun,

A motley procession with many a fleck of foam and many
fragments,

Following the stately and rapid ship, in the wake following.



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弗吉尼亚

李

弗勒希小传

企鹅经典：小黑书 第四辑

[英]弗吉尼亚·伍尔夫/著

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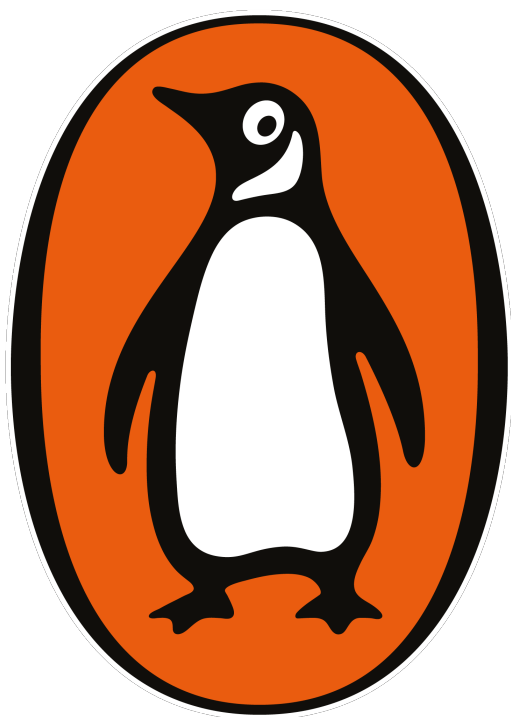
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“但事情并不简单，
而是很复杂。
倘若他咬了勃朗宁先生，
便等于也咬了她。
恨不是恨，
恨也是爱。”



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LITTLE BLACK
CLASSICS

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第一章 三英里十字标

/

这部传记的主人公，出自世人公认最古老的家族之一。因此，其名号之源起佚失不明，亦不足为奇。数百万年前，现今名为“西班牙”（Spain）的那个国家，在创世的混沌中躁动地翻腾不息。随着岁月流逝，植物出现了；根据自然规律，只要有植物的地方便会有兔子；而有兔子的地方，势必会有狗，这是上天的旨意。此事毋庸置疑，毫无争议。不过，说起为何捉兔子的狗被称作“西班牙猎犬”（Spaniel），疑难也就随之而来。有史学家提出，彼时迦太基人登陆西班牙，一千士兵齐声呼喊：“Span！Span！”因为每簇矮树中、每丛灌木里都有兔子飞蹿而出，陆地上热闹非凡，兔子遍地。而在迦太基语中，“span”即是“兔子”之意。因此，这块陆地便被称为“Hispania”，即“兔之乡”；而那些一看到兔子就撒腿开追的犬类，便被命名为西班牙猎犬，即猎兔犬。

我们中大多数人会满足于这种说法，不再深究。然而在真理的驱策下，有必要补充另一种截然不同的思路。有批学者声称，“Hispania”这个词与迦太基语中的“span”毫无关系，而是由巴斯克 [1] 语中的“españa”一词衍生而来，意为“边缘”或“边界”。若果真如此，就必须将这幅由兔子、灌木丛、狗与士兵构成的浪漫美好的图景从脑海中抹去，我们只能假定西班牙猎犬之所以得名，是因为西班牙被称为“españa”。第三派考古学者则坚持认为，正如一个男人会称呼自己的情妇“怪物”或“猴子”，西班牙人也会将自己最心爱的狗儿称作“弯弯”或“曲曲”（“españa”一词也包含这些意思）。但因为世人皆知西班牙猎犬的模样恰恰相反，所以这种猜测过于天马行空，不必当真。

略过上述乃至更多无须在此多言的理论，我们来到十世纪中叶的威尔士。那时西班牙猎犬这一品种已经出现，据说是好几个世纪前，由一个姓伊佛（Ebhör）或伊沃尔（Ivor）的西班牙家族引进，到了十世纪中叶俨然已是身价不菲的名犬。豪厄尔·达 [2] 在其《律法书》中记载道：“国王的西班牙猎犬价值一镑。”倘若我们回想一下一镑钱在公元九四八年能买到多少东西——多少妻妾、奴隶、马匹、公牛、火鸡和鹅——就会知道彼时西班牙猎犬已是价值连城、声名远扬了。它在国王身侧已有一席之地。其血统显赫历时之久，远胜于许多知名君主。当金雀花家族、都铎家族和斯图亚特家族还在别人家的田地里跟

在人后扶犁躬耕时，它已安闲自在地身居皇宫了；当霍华德家族、卡文迪什家族和拉塞尔家族 [3] 尚未从史密斯、琼斯和汤姆金斯 [4] 们当中脱颖而出时，西班牙猎犬家族早已卓尔不群。时节如流，从西班牙猎犬的主干上又陆续分出一些旁支。随着历史滚滚向前，西班牙猎犬在英国逐渐分化出至少七个不同的著名品种——克伦伯长毛垂耳狗、苏塞克斯猎狗、诺福克梗犬、黑色田野猎犬、可卡犬、爱尔兰水猎犬及英格兰水犬。它们皆源自同一种史前西班牙猎犬，特征却各不相同，因此享有的特权自然也不尽相同。至伊丽莎白女王在位时，菲利普·西德尼爵士 [5] 在其著作《世外桃源》 [6] 中称犬类中亦有贵族。“……灵缇、西班牙猎犬和猎犬，”他评述道，“第一类可视为犬中王公贵族，第二类可视为绅士，最后一类则是犬辈中的草莽。”

但倘若我们可以由此假设西班牙猎犬会像人类一样，以灵缇为尊，以猎犬为贱，那我们就不得不承认，犬类的高低贵贱比人类的尊卑来得更合情理——至少，凡是研究过西班牙猎犬俱乐部章程的人都会得出这一结论。在西班牙猎犬高贵庄严的外表上，缺陷与优点都一目了然。例如，浅色眼睛就不受欢迎，卷曲的耳朵就更糟糕了，天生的淡色鼻子或头顶上的冠毛 [7] 堪称致命缺陷。同样，西班牙猎犬的优点也有明确的界定：头部必须平滑；口鼻须上扬，但幅度不可过于突兀；头盖骨要相对圆润，发育良好，有足够的空间容纳睿智的大脑；眼睛须饱满有神，但不至于向外鼓出；脸部表情应大体上显得聪慧而温和。具备这些特征的西班牙猎犬备受青睐，作育种之用；而那些经年累月顶着冠毛、长着淡色鼻子的西班牙猎犬，则被剥夺了族群的种种特权和奖赏。日后，裁决者便将此奉为铁律，同时赏罚分明，以确保令行禁止。

然而，反观人类社会，我们会发现尊卑贵贱的标准是何等混乱——令人费解！没有哪个机构有权裁定人种孰优孰劣，“纹章院” [8] 或许是最接近西班牙猎犬俱乐部的组织了，至少在维护家族的正统性方面还下了些功夫。可当我们质问怎样才算出身高贵——眼睛的颜色应该是浅是深，耳朵应该是卷是直，头顶的鬃毛是否至关重要，我们的裁决者看的却只是纹章罢了。或许你一枚纹章也没有，那你便是无名之辈。可一旦你能证明自己持有十六枚四等分纹章 [9]，并有权佩戴冠状头饰，那么人们就会认为你不仅出身显赫，还是簪缨世族。因此在整个梅费尔 [10]，所有的松饼保温盘上都刻有蹲伏的狮子或跃起的美人鱼，无一例外。就连我们的亚麻布商都要在门上镶嵌皇室纹章，仿佛那样就可以证明他们的床单睡着足够安全。声称自己出身高贵的人比比皆是，人人都强调头衔的价值。可当我们追溯像波旁 [11]、哈布斯堡 [12] 还有霍亨索伦 [13] 那样的皇室，就不难发现，无论他们曾经头戴多少冠冕，身披多少四等分纹章，纹章上面又画着多少蹲伏或后足站立的狮子和豹子，他们如今都遭到罢黜，流亡在外，尊严尽失。

见此情形，我们只能摇摇头，承认还是西班牙猎犬俱乐部的裁决者眼光独到。——将注意力从这些大事件上挪开，来看看弗勒希在米特福德（Mitford）家中度过的早期生活，我们就会直接认识到此言非虚。十八世纪尾叶前后，著名的西班牙猎犬中的一支居住在雷丁 [14] 附近某位米德福德（Midford）或米特福德博士家中。这位绅士遵从纹章院的规定，选用字母“t”拼写自己的姓氏，从而自称是伯特勒姆城堡的米特福德家族在诺森伯兰的旁系后裔。他的妻子娘家姓拉塞尔，是真正的贝德福德公爵家族的后裔，虽说只是远亲。然而，由于米特福德博士的祖先在择偶时十分草率任性，毫无原则，导致他自称的高贵血统无人承认，传宗接代的资格也被剥夺。他的眼睛颜色很浅，耳朵卷曲，头部还有那致命的顶髻。换言之，他是个极其自私自利、鲁莽豪奢、市侩俗气，毫无诚意——嗜赌成性的人。他败光了自己的财产、妻子的财产和女儿的收入。他飞黄腾达时抛妻弃女，体弱多病时又回来压榨她们。但他确有两项优势：一是容貌英俊——他原本貌如太阳神阿波罗，直到因暴饮暴食和酗酒无度而变成了酒神巴克斯；二是他真心实意地爱狗。然而毋庸置疑的是，若是真有相当于西班牙猎犬俱乐部的人类机构，就算把姓氏拼写中的“d”改成“t”，就算自称和伯特勒姆城堡的米特福德家族沾亲带故，他亦不能免遭侮辱蔑视、排挤放逐，或是免于恶名昭著，被视作不该传宗接代的“杂种”。不过他是个人类，所以没有什么能阻止他娶到一位出身世家、血统高贵的名媛，也没有什么可以阻止他活过耄耋之龄，蒙养繁衍数代的灵缇和西班牙猎犬，并生养一个女儿。

所有对弗勒希确切出生年份的考据都以失败告终，月份和日子自然更不必提。不过他很可能生于一八四二年初，而——还极有可能是特雷（Tray，公元一八一六年生）的直系后代。可惜，能证明特雷是一条纯正的红色可卡犬的各项特质，只在诗歌这一不可靠的媒介中尚有记载。米特福德博士曾因特雷“在田野上表现优异”，拒绝以二十几尼 [15] 的价格把他卖掉，我们完全有理由相信弗勒希正是这条“纯种老可卡犬”之子。唉！对于幼年弗勒希的大部分细致描绘，我们也只能仰赖于诗歌了。他的毛色是那种特有的深棕色，在阳光照射下会闪闪发光，变成“通体金黄”。他“淡褐色的温柔眼眸透着惊异”，耳朵犹如“流苏”，“纤细的脚”上“穗毛覆盖”，尾巴粗壮。抛去押韵的需要和诗歌语言的不准确性，以上特征无不符合西班牙猎犬俱乐部的认证标准。我们不能否认，弗勒希的确是一条纯种的红色可卡犬，——具有该犬种所有的完美特征。

出生后的头几个月，他住在雷丁附近一间名为“三英里十字标”的雇工小屋里。米特福德家穷困潦倒——克伦哈波克是仅有的仆人——连椅套也由米特福德小姐亲手缝制，用的是最廉价的布料；家里最重要的家具似乎是一张大桌子，最重要的房间是一间宽敞的温室。弗勒希不

可能享受到豪华的待遇，譬如防雨犬舍，散步的水泥道，伴随左右的女仆或男仆，而眼下，这些本应是他这种等级的狗理当享有的。不过他依然茁壮成长——他天性活泼，尽情享受青春和性别天然赋予他的大多数乐趣及某些特权。米特福德小姐确实常常足不出户。她必须连续数小时为父亲高声朗读，再陪他玩克里比奇牌戏 [16]。等他终于呼呼大睡后，她还得上在温室的桌前不停地写啊写啊写啊，设法付账和还债。但最终，期待已久的时刻总算到来。她会把纸张推到一旁，扣上帽子，拿起雨伞，带着她的狗儿们去田野散步。西班牙猎犬天生极通人性，而弗勒希，正如他的故事所证明的那样，对人类情绪更是有着超乎寻常的敏锐感知力。看见亲爱的女主人总算能呼吸新鲜空气，任由风吹乱她的银发，为她自然清爽的脸庞增添红润，抚平她宽大眉头上的皱纹，他开心得欢欣雀跃——那种狂野一半是受她的喜悦感染。她大步穿过高高的草丛，他则四处跳跃着，不断拨开绿色的帘幕。清凉的露珠和雨滴在他鼻子周围散成一道道七彩的雾气，地面忽硬忽软、忽热忽冷，硌着、挠着、搔着他脚底柔软的肉垫。林林总总的味道微妙地交织杂糅，刺激着他的鼻孔：泥土浓郁的气息，花朵香甜的味道，树叶和荆棘无可名状的气味，穿过道路时的酸味儿，进入豆田间的呛鼻味儿。猛然，风刮来一股味道，比任何气味都更刺激、更浓烈、更折磨人——那味道扯开他的大脑，激发了千般直觉，释放出万种回忆——那是野兔的味道，是狐狸的味道。他仿佛被湍流裹挟的鱼儿，遽然一闪，越奔越远。他忘记了女主人，忘记了一切人类。他听见黑皮肤的人影高喊着：“Span！Span！”他听见鞭子劈啪抽打的声音。他拼命跑啊冲啊。终于，魔咒的力量消退了，他停下来，满是困惑，难为情地摇着尾巴，慢慢地小跑着穿过田野，回到米特福德小姐身旁。她正站在那里一边高喊：“弗勒希！弗勒希！弗勒希！”一边挥舞着雨伞。但至少有那么一次，天性的召唤变得尤为不可抗拒——狩猎的号角激起他内心深处的本能，唤醒了一种更狂暴、更强烈的情绪。在一声欣喜若狂的野性呼唤中，他跨越了一切记忆，抹去草丛、树木、野兔和狐狸。爱在他眼中点燃了火炬，他听见了维纳斯狩猎的号角！就这样，在远未脱离幼犬期时，弗勒希就当了父亲。

在一八四二年，即使是男子有了这种行为，也必须让作传之人找个借口替他搪塞过去；倘若是女人，则任何借口都不顶用，必须将她的名字可耻地从书中彻底抹去。不过，狗的道德标准，无论更好或更糟，总之必定与我们人类的标准大相径庭。从这点来看，弗勒希的行为，不仅在今日无须遮遮掩掩，即便在当时也不会为世上最纯洁、最坚贞的群体所不容。这句话绝非空口无凭，证据便是，皮由兹博士 [17] 的长兄迫切地希望买下弗勒希。根据皮由兹博士的性格，我们可以推断其兄长可能的性格，并由此断定，无论幼时何等轻浮，弗勒希身上想必具备某种严谨稳重、前途无量的潜能，预示了其未来的优异性情。不过他可爱的天性还有另一项更加重要的证明，那就是尽管皮

由兹先生想买，米特福德小姐却拒绝出售。在赚钱这件事情上她已黔驴技穷，完全不知道下部悲剧该写什么，下部年鉴如何编制，甚至不得不咬咬牙暂时向朋友求助。对她而言，拒绝皮由兹博士兄长的那笔钱定非易事。曾经有人出价二十英镑买弗勒希的父亲，米特福德小姐大可以为弗勒希要价十到十五英镑。这可是个大数目，拿在手上是一笔可观的钱财。有了这十到十五英镑，她可以更换新椅套，重新在温室种满花草草，为自己添置衣柜和满满一柜子服饰——“整整四年，”她在一八四二年写道，“我都没有买过一顶软帽、一件斗篷、一条长裙，甚至一副手套。”

但卖掉弗勒希绝无可能。他是少数与金钱无关的事物之一。而在这些事物当中，有一类更为珍贵，它们是精神的象征，是无价之宝，是无私友谊最恰当的代表。弗勒希难道不正是这种事物？难道她不该秉着友谊的精神，把他送给一位挚友——如果一个人真能有幸结识这样一位——一位与其说是朋友，更像是女儿的挚友？这位朋友整个夏季都与世隔绝，待在温波尔街某宅邸后侧的卧室里。这位朋友不是别人，正是英国首屈一指的女诗人，才华横溢、命运多舛、受人爱戴的伊丽莎白·巴雷特 [18] 本人！每当米特福德小姐注视着在阳光下翻滚跳跃的弗勒希，每当她身处巴雷特小姐的伦敦住所，坐在那间笼罩于常春藤阴影下的幽暗卧室里的一张长沙发上，这想法便愈加频繁地从她脑海中闪过。没错，弗勒希配得上巴雷特小姐，巴雷特小姐也配得上弗勒希。这是巨大的牺牲，也是必要的牺牲。因此，大概是在一八四二年初夏的某一天，或许有人看见惹人注目的一人一犬沿温波尔街而行——一位矮小敦实、衣衫褴褛的年长女士，面色红润、满鬓苍白，用狗链牵着一只精力异常充沛、好奇心极重、血统绝对纯正的金色小可卡犬。他们几乎走完了整条街，一直到五十号门前才终于停住。米特福德小姐略带惶恐地敲响门铃。

哪怕是今天，依然没有人能不带惶恐地敲响温波尔街上那些宅邸的门铃。那是伦敦街道中最庄严肃穆、最没有人情味的一条。的确，当整个世界仿佛即将毁于一旦、文明的基石摇摇欲坠时，你只消去一趟温波尔街，漫步在那条林荫道上，看一眼那些房子，思索它们的整齐划一，去为那些如出一辙的窗帘惊叹，去欣赏那些端正匀称的黄铜门环，观察屠夫解牛、厨工买肉，暗自估算那些住户的收入并推想他们随后也不免顺应上帝的安排，走向人生必然的结局；你只消去温波尔街，深吸一口权贵们呼吸的宁静空气，就能满怀感激地长叹一声：纵使科林斯 [19] 陷落、墨西拿 [20] 震毁，多少王权随风而逝，多少古代帝国已化为灰烬，温波尔街却始终岿然不动。从温波尔街转入牛津街，一声祷告便从心头冉冉升起，涌上嘴边：但愿温波尔街的一砖一瓦都不会重砌，每幅窗帘都无须清洗，屠夫终日供应，厨工始终能买到里脊肉、腰腿肉、胸脯肉、羊排及牛肉，但愿这一切永不改变，直

到永远。因为只要温波尔街存在一天，文明便可存续。

纵然是现在，温波尔街管家们的举止仍然一板一眼，而在一八四二年的夏天，他们更是小心翼翼。当时穿戴制服的规矩远比现在严苛：擦拭银器时须系戴绿色粗呢围裙，开启大门时须穿条纹马甲及黑色燕尾服，诸如此类的礼节都要严格遵守。因此米特福德小姐和弗勒希很有可能在门口等了至少有三分半钟。不过终于，五十号的大门轰然洞开，米特福德小姐和弗勒希被请入室内。米特福德小姐是这里的常客，尽管早已见惯眼前的巴雷特宅邸，却依旧为之折服。可面对此景，弗勒希感受到的无疑是难以抗拒、无与伦比的震撼。直到这一刻，除了三英里十字标的那间雇工小屋，他从未踏足任何其他住宅。小屋的木板光秃秃的，垫子均已磨损，座椅都很廉价。而这里没有一样东西是光秃秃的，没有一样东西是磨损的，也没有一样东西是廉价的——这弗勒希一眼就能看出来。主人，巴雷特先生，是位富商，家中人丁兴旺，有不少已经成年的儿女，还有与之相称的众多仆役。他的住宅装潢符合十九世纪三十年代晚期的流行风尚，无疑还带着些许东方风韵。正因为对东方着迷，他才在什罗普郡建造了一栋宅邸，为其装点上摩尔式建筑 [21] 中常见的穹顶与新月标志。温波尔街不会容忍那种奢靡，但我们可以想见，在那些高大幽暗的房间里，必定摆满了铺有软垫的厢式凳子和桃花心木雕刻，桌脚弯曲盘绕，金银丝线细工饰品端放其上；匕首与刀剑挂在深酒红色的墙壁上；壁龛中摆着他从东印度带回来的奇珍异宝，地板上铺着厚实的名贵地毯。

不过，当米特福德小姐跟着男管家，弗勒希跟在米特福德小姐身后小步走着时，鼻中所闻比眼前所见更令他吃惊。从楼梯的通风井飘来阵阵温暖的香气，来自烹制的烤肉、浇在禽肉上的卤汁和文火炖的汤——对鼻孔而言，要是闻惯了克伦哈波克每餐给的少得可怜的炸薯条和肉末土豆散发出的乏善可陈的味道，这些香味几乎和食物本身一样令人沉醉。和食物香气掺杂在一起的，还有很多其他的味道——杉木、檀香木和桃花心木的味道，男人与女人身体的气息，男仆和女仆的气息，外套和长裤的味道，硬布裙和斗篷的味道，织锦窗帘的味道，丝绒窗帘的味道，煤渣和雾的味道，红酒和雪茄的味道。他经过的每一个房间——餐厅、起居室、图书室、卧室——都飘出自己特有的味道，它们交织在一起，混合成屋内的总体气味。要是他先踏出一只脚爪，再迈出另一只，脚掌便会陷入柔软厚重的地毯中，因其充满柔情蜜意的爱抚而难以抬起。最后，他们来到房子尽头一扇关闭的门前，轻叩一下，门就轻轻开了。

巴雷特小姐的卧房想必一片幽暗——一如往常，正像各方记载的那样。绿色锦缎窗帘本就会将光线遮去不少，而到了夏天，窗台花盆中的常春藤、红花菜豆、田旋花和旱金莲还纷纷冒出，让光线更加昏暗。一开始，在这片暗淡的绿色阴翳中，弗勒希只看见五个白色球体

在半空中神秘莫测地闪烁，其余便什么都辨认不出了。这次，又是屋内的气味率先震慑住了他。想象一位学者一步步踱下台阶，进入一座陵墓，发现自己身处地下墓穴之中，里面覆满霉菌、泥土黏滑，充斥着腐朽—久远的酸臭味，而他只能借着手中那盏摇晃不停的小灯发出的光芒，模糊地看见几座半毁的大理石半身像在半空中闪闪发光，就这么深一脚浅一脚地来回转变着方向，瞥一眼这里，瞧一眼那里—只有这样一位探险家在古城废墟之下踏入墓穴时的种种心境，方可与弗勒希在温波尔街初次踏入病患卧室，并被古龙水的味道拨乱了每根神经时那种混乱的情感相提并论。

弗勒希非常缓慢而轻悄地用鼻子不断嗅闻，用脚爪不停抓刨，逐渐分辨出几件家具的轮廓。窗旁的庞然大物或许是个衣橱，旁边那个想来必是斗柜。房间中央逐步显形的像是一张镶了边的桌子，接着，扶手椅和书桌模糊而怪异的形状也慢慢显露。但是每样东西都经过乔装打扮。衣橱顶部立着三尊白色半身像；斗柜上高高竖起一个书架，书架又盖着猩红色的美利奴羊毛织物；盥洗台上装了一圈冠状的搁架，搁架上又立着另外两尊半身像。房间内没有一件东西保持原貌，每样东西同时又是另一样东西，就连遮光帘也不是普通薄纱制成的，而采用了精心设计的彩绘织物 [1]，上面画着城堡、城门、树林，还有几个正在散步的农人。梳妆镜的反射把所有物体照得更加扭曲，以至于屋内仿佛有十尊诗人的半身像而不是五尊，有四张桌子而不是两张。冷不丁，弗勒希生出一种更可怕的困惑。透过墙上的洞，他猛地瞥见了另一条狗，双目炯炯闪烁，吐着舌头，正盯着自己看！他目瞪口呆地僵在那里，随后满怀敬畏地走向前。

弗勒希就这样一会儿进一会儿退，几乎没听到低声细语、喋喋不休的说话声，只当是远方的风呼呼地拂过树梢。他谨小慎微、如履薄冰地继续勘查，就如探险家在森林中前进时，将步伐轻抬轻放，不确定阴影处是否藏着一头狮子，或某段树根是不是条眼镜蛇。然而最后，他意识到有几个庞然大物在自己头顶上喧哗，由于先前那一小时已经被弄得神经衰弱，他颤抖着躲到一扇屏风后。说话声停止了。一扇门关上了。一时间，他愣住了，既困惑又紧张。随后，记忆仿若张牙舞爪的老虎朝他扑将过来。他觉得自己孤立寡与—被遗弃了。他冲到门边，门是关着的。他抓挠着，倾听着。他听见正在下楼的脚步声。他听得出，那是女主人熟悉的脚步。脚步声戛然而止。—慢—声音再度响起，继续下楼而去。米特福德小姐正缓慢地拖着沉重的步伐，不情不愿地走下楼。她离开了，他听见她的脚步声渐行渐远，他被恐慌攫住了。随着米特福德小姐一步一步走下台阶，一扇又一扇门在他面前关上，随之一起远去的还有自由、田野、野兔、草地，以及他热爱、尊敬的女主人—那为他洗澡，打他，即便自己食不果腹却仍与他分享盘中食物的可亲可爱的老妇人—同样关闭的还有他所知晓的

一切快乐、爱与人类的善意！不好！前门也砰的一声合上了！他孤零零的。她把他抛弃了。

接着，绝望与痛苦之浪将他淹没，不可挽回、冷酷无情的命运将他击倒，他仰首长啸。一个声音唤道：“弗勒希。”他没有听见。那声音又唤了一遍：“弗勒希。”他大吃一惊。他原以为自己遗世独立。他转过身。难道房间里还有什么活物跟他在一起？沙发上有东西吗？无论那是什么，他只奢望这东西能去把门打开，这样他还有可能冲出去追上米特福德小姐，然后发现一切不过是一场捉迷藏的游戏，就像他们从前在家里的温室玩的一样——弗勒希箭步奔向沙发。

“噢，弗勒希！”巴雷特小姐喊道。生平第一次，她面对面看到他的脸；生平第一次，弗勒希看到了那位躺在沙发上的女士。

他们俩都惊诧万分。浓密的鬃发从巴雷特小姐的脸颊两侧垂荡下来，明亮的大眼睛熠熠生辉，一张大嘴带着笑意。弗勒希的两片大耳朵从脸颊两边垂下来，眼睛同样又大又亮，嘴也很宽。他们长得有些相像。他们互相注视时，心里都觉察到：这是我！——随即又想到：可我们又是多么不同！她有一张体弱多病、苍白憔悴的脸，一直以来与空气、光线和自由隔绝。他则有着动物幼崽红润温热的脸，健康——充满活力。各不相同，却又像是从一个模子里铸出来似的，他俩能否彼此唤醒对方身上蛰伏的个性，使对方更加完整呢？原来她本可以是这样；而他——噢，不！他俩之间隔着一道世间最不可逾越的物种鸿沟。她会说话，他却不能。她是个女人，他却是条狗。就这样，他们凝望着对方，如此惺惺相惜，却又如此迥然相异。然后，弗勒希纵身一跃，跳上沙发，趴到此后将永远属于他的地盘——巴雷特小姐脚边的毯子上。

[1] 巴斯克（Basque），欧洲比利牛斯山西部地区的古老居民，绝大多数居住在西班牙北部，是欧洲民族风俗、传统服饰保存最为完好的一个民族。（说明：书中脚注均为译者注。）

[2] 豪厄尔·达（Howel Dda，约880-950），公元10世纪时的威尔士国王，曾被尊称为“所有威尔士人的国王”。

[3] 霍华德、卡文迪什和拉塞尔皆为英国知名的贵族姓氏。

[4] 史密斯、琼斯和汤姆金斯是英国最为常见的平民姓氏。

[5] 菲利普·西德尼爵士（Sir Philip Sidney，1554-1586），伊丽莎白一世时期的廷臣、政治家、诗人和学者，被认为是当时的模范绅士。

[6] 此书的全名为《彭布罗克女伯爵的世外桃源》（The

Countesse of Pembroke's Arcadia)，是西德尼所写最长、最有名的散文体田园传奇故事。

[7] 犬类头顶的波浪状毛发。

[8] 西欧自公元12世纪始普遍使用纹章图案，因为从一开始纹章的使用就与封建等级有关，到中世纪后期，佩戴纹章表示出身高贵。英国纹章院建立于1484年，院长为世袭职位。

[9] 将盾四等分以显示继承权的一种方法。一个纹章持有者的婚生子女及一个纹章女继承人将继承两枚纹章，在父母死亡时，该纹章将在盾上分成四等份。

[10] 梅费尔 (Mayfair)，伦敦市上流住宅区。

[11] 波旁 (Bourbon)，是欧洲历史上一个跨国王朝，曾断断续续地统治过纳瓦拉、法国、西班牙、那不勒斯与西西里、卢森堡等国，以及意大利若干公国。

[12] 哈布斯堡 (Hapsburg)，欧洲历史上最强大、统治领域最广的皇室，曾统治神圣罗马帝国、西班牙王国、奥地利大公国、奥地利帝国、奥匈帝国。

[13] 霍亨索伦 (Hohenzollern)，欧洲的三大王朝之一，为勃兰登堡-普鲁士 (1415-1918) 及德意志帝国 (1871-1918) 的主要统治家族。

[14] 雷丁 (Reading)，英格兰南部伯克郡首府。

[15] 1663年英国发行的一种金币，等于21先令，1813年停止流通。后仅指等于21先令 (即1.05英镑) 的币值单位，常用于规定费用、价格等。

[16] 克里比奇牌戏，一种双人、三人或四人玩的纸牌戏，用插在有孔的记分板上的小钉记分。

[17] 皮由兹 (Edward Bouverie Pusey, 1800-1882)，英国东方语言学家、科学家，英国国教会内牛津运动的领导人之一。

[18] 伊丽莎白·巴雷特 (Elizabeth Barrett, 1806-1861)，英国维多利亚时代最受人尊敬的诗人之一。15岁时不幸骑马跌损了脊椎，从此下肢瘫痪达24年。她39岁那年结识了小她6岁的诗人罗伯特·勃朗宁，生命从此揭开了新的篇章。

[19] 科林斯 (Corinth)，古希腊南部海港城市，地处海峡要冲，是当时最强大繁荣的城市之一，后多次被攻陷和洗劫。

[20] 墨西拿 (Messina)，位于意大利西西里岛的东端，为海峡

最窄处，乃欧洲大陆进入西西里岛的隘口，多次在地震中倾覆。

[21] 指摩尔人结合伊斯兰教与基督教艺术风格创造的一种建筑类型，其特色包含不加装饰的拱顶、简单的马蹄形圆拱，或是拥有繁复装饰的拱形、有亮丽釉彩的青花磁砖，以及阿拉伯文或者几何图形的装饰。

第二章 后面的房间

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历史学家告诉我们，一八四二年的夏天只是一个平凡的夏天，然而对弗勒希来说，这个夏天是如此不同，他想必一定怀疑过这世界是否依然如故。那是一个在卧室里度过的夏天，是和巴雷特小姐一起度过的夏天，是在文明的心脏伦敦度过的夏天。起初，他除了那间卧室和里面的家具之外，看不到任何其他东西；但仅这些就够他大开眼界了。光是识别、区分并正确称呼他在那儿见到的这些各不相同的物件，就足以令他晕头转向。还没等他习惯那些桌子、半身像和盥洗台——他依然闻不惯古龙水的味道——他们就碰上一个难得的好天气：晴朗无风，暖而不热，干爽无尘，适合一个久卧病榻的人出去透透气。这一天来了，巴雷特小姐可以安心地进行大冒险，和姐妹一起出门购物。

叫好了马车，巴雷特小姐从沙发上起身，蒙上面纱，把自己包裹严实，走下楼梯。弗勒希当然跟着她一起去了。他一跃跳进马车，来到女主人身旁。他蜷缩在她的膝头，整个伦敦最壮观的盛况蓦地呈现在他面前，令他满眼惊奇。他们驶过牛津街。他看见几乎完全用玻璃盖成的房子，看见光彩夺目的饰带在窗前交叉着系在一起，窗沿上堆满了小丘似的粉红、紫色、黄色和玫瑰色的璀璨花朵。马车停了下来。他走进充满神秘感的拱廊商场，笼罩在彩色薄纱织成的云彩和罗网之中。上百万种从中国与阿拉伯远道而来的微弱、易散的芬芳钻入他的感官深处。柜台上长而亮泽的丝绸锦缎轻快地一闪而过，厚重的邦巴辛毛葛 [22] 缓缓卷动，色泽更为深沉。剪刀咔嚓作响，钱币闪闪发光，纸张折了又折，绳带系了又系。轻轻点头的羽饰，随风飘扬的饰带，仰首抬头的马儿，身披黄色制服的仆役，一晃而过的脸孔，一切都跳跃着，上上下下地舞蹈着。弗勒希沉浸在这包罗万象的感受中，满足地打盹、入眠、做梦，渐渐不省人事，直到被抱出车厢，温波尔街的大门再次在他身后合上。

翌日，见天气依旧宜人，巴雷特小姐勇敢地尝试了一项更为大胆的冒险——坐在巴思椅 [23] 上，让人推着她去温波尔街散步。弗勒希又一次陪她出门。他头一回听见自己的爪子在伦敦坚硬的人行道铺路石上嗒嗒作响。炎炎夏日里，伦敦街道散发出的所有气味头一回对他的鼻孔展开了猛烈进攻。他闻到排水沟里令人昏厥的臭味、铁栏杆腐蚀后发出的苦味、地下室里腾起的浓烈烟熏味——这些气味比他在雷丁周

边的田野中闻到过的任何气味都要复杂、腐败，它们相互抵触、混杂陈，超越了人类嗅觉可以辨别的范畴。因此尽管巴思椅不停前进，他却停下了脚步，惊愕地识别并细细品味这些气味，直到项圈被猛地一扯，被拽着继续前行。当他跟着巴雷特小姐的巴思椅在温波尔街上散步时，川流不息的人类躯体亦令他头晕目眩。硬衬裙在他头顶颼颼摆动，长裤刷过他的侧身，车轮时而擦着它的鼻尖碾过，驶过的货车携来极具破坏性的狂风，在他耳畔咆哮，掀动他脚掌周围的长毛。于是他惊惶地俯冲。幸运的是，项圈上的铁链拉住了他，巴雷特小姐把他紧紧抱在怀里，否则他说不定就冲出去出事了。

终于，带着每一根怦怦跳动的神经、每一种嗡嗡作响的感官，弗勒希总算来到了摄政公园。当他再次见到似乎阔别了多年的绿草、繁花和树林，昔日田野里狩猎的号角就响彻耳际，他立刻向前冲去，渴望像当年在家乡的田野里那般驰骋。然而，此刻却有某种沉重的力量卡在他颈部，使他向后踉跄跌倒。那儿难道不是树林和草丛吗？他问道。这些难道不是自由的信号吗？每次米特福德小姐出门散步时，他不都是径直向前冲吗？为什么在这里他却成了囚徒呢？他停下了脚步。在这儿，他观察到，团簇的花朵比老家的那些紧密得多，它们一株株整齐而僵硬地排列在窄小的地里，中间隔着一条条坚实的黑色步道。男士们头戴泛着光泽的高筒礼帽，脸色阴沉地在步道上来回走动。见到他们，他颤抖地靠近巴思椅，欣然接受了链条的庇护。于是，在对类似的散步习以为常之前，他脑中已经生成了一个全新的概念。通过拼凑各种现象，他得出一个结论：有花床的地方，就会有沥青步道；有花床和沥青步道的地方，就会有戴泛着光泽的高筒礼帽的男士们；有花床、沥青步道及戴泛着光泽的高筒礼帽的男士们的地方，狗就得用链条牵着。尽管公园大门告示上写的字他一个也不认识，却已无师自通地学会了一课——在摄政公园里，狗都必须用链条牵着。

从一八四二年夏天的种种奇妙体验中获得的核心知识，很快让他又新长了见识：犬类并不平等，而——是互不相同的。以前在三英里十字标，弗勒希不分轩輊地与小酒馆里的狗及乡绅的灵缇厮混，并不知道补锅匠的狗和自己有什么区别。而他孩子的母亲，虽美其名曰西班牙猎犬，也很可能只是条杂种狗，不是耳朵有所偏差，就是尾巴美中不足。然而，弗勒希很快便发现，伦敦的犬类严格地按照等级划分：有的狗拴了链条，有些则整天乱跑；有些坐马车出门透气，用紫色罐子喝水，有些却蓬头垢面、不戴项圈，在排水沟中苟——偷生。由此，弗勒希开始怀疑，或许狗也分三六九等，有些是高等的，另一些是低等的。偶尔，他会捕捉到人们对温波尔街上的狗评头论足的只言片语，由此证实了自己的猜测：“看见那条无赖没，绝对是杂种狗！……哎呀老天爷，这条西班牙猎犬真漂亮，绝对是英国血统最纯

正的之一！……可惜啊，他的耳朵要是能再卷一点儿就好了……看他的头顶还有顶髻！”

从男仆们站在邮筒旁或酒馆外交换赛马情报时说出的此类话语，还有他们或赞美或奚落的语调中，弗勒希在夏天结束前就明白了犬类之间也没有什么平等可言：有些狗尊贵，有些狗低贱。那么，他属于哪一类呢？弗勒希一回到家，就迫不及待地对着镜子仔细地审视起自己来。谢天谢地，他天生是条血统尊贵的狗！他的头部顺滑，眼睛凸出却不鼓起，脚周围覆盖着长毛，可以媲美温波尔街上血统最纯正的可卡猎犬。他满意地注意到自己喝水用的是紫色的水罐——那是他这个阶层的特权。他默默地低下脑袋，让链条扣住他的项圈——这是这一阶层必须付出的代价。差不多就在这时，巴雷特小姐注意到他瞪着镜子发愣，却做出了错误的判断。他是个哲学家，她思忖着，他准是在思索表象和现实之间的差别。事实正好相反，他其实是个贵族，正孤芳自赏呢！

可是夏日的好天气稍纵即逝。秋风渐起，巴雷特小姐又在自己的卧房安营扎寨，彻底过起了与世隔绝的生活。弗勒希的生活也同样发生了改变。在户外接受了一番教育之后，他如今又得在室内接受教育，而后者对弗勒希这种脾性的狗而言，无疑是史无前例的酷刑了。他唯有在巴雷特小姐的女仆威尔逊的陪伴下才能出门透气，出门时间往往又极短，马虎了事。其余时间他只能待在沙发上，蜷缩在巴雷特小姐脚边。这完全阻碍了他的本能，与他的天性背道而驰。去年，当伯克郡刮起阵阵秋风时，他还能在野地里奔跑，在收割后留下的麦茬堆间欢快地蹦跳；如今，当常春藤轻轻叩响窗玻璃时，巴雷特小姐就吩咐威尔逊去检查窗户有没有关紧。看到窗台花盆里栽种的红花菜豆和旱金莲的叶子渐渐变黄枯败，她把身上的印度披肩裹得更严实了。当十月的雨猛烈地敲打窗户，威尔逊便燃起壁炉，将煤炭堆得高高的。秋意渐浓，随后入冬，第一场雾染黄了空气。威尔逊和弗勒希甚至没法摸索着走到邮筒或药剂师那儿去。他们折回家后，发现房里一片昏暗，什么都看不清，只有那几尊惨白的半身像在衣橱上反射着黯淡的光。遮光帘上的农人和城堡都消失不见了，窗户玻璃上只能映出一片平淡无奇的黄色。弗勒希觉得自己和巴雷特小姐就像单独住在一个铺满垫褥、燃着炉火的洞穴里。屋外的车马络绎不绝，发出低沉模糊的回响；时不时会有嘶哑的叫声从下方的街道传来，“修旧椅子旧篮子喽”；有时又会传来阵阵管风琴的乐声，声音先是越来越近、越来越响，再一路远去、逐渐消失。但这些声音中没有一种意味着自由、行动或运动。无论是风雨交加的日子，还是富有自然气息的秋日，抑或是寒气逼人的隆冬，如今在弗勒希看来都同样毫无意义，他眼中只剩下温暖和静止，台灯的柔光，以及拉窗帘和拨捣炉火的动作。

一开始，这种感觉令他难以承受。若碰上多风的秋日，想到山鹑零零散散地在麦茬堆里栖息，他就忍不住绕着房间蹦跶。他仿佛在微风中听到了枪声。每当外面传来犬吠，他就会忍不住竖起颈毛，冲到门边。可只要巴雷特小姐唤他回去，并把手放在他的项圈上，他又无法抗拒另一种感觉——它如此急迫、矛盾、令人不悦——他不知道该如何称呼它，也不知道自己为什么会屈服于它。他一动不动地趴在她的脚边，驯服着、控制着、压抑着自己天性当中最强烈的本能——那便是他在卧室学校学到的最重要的一课，其难度之高，许多学者学习希腊语时都不曾如此费劲；在众多战役里，将军们为获胜付出的艰辛还不及它的一半。但彼时，巴雷特小姐就是老师。随着日子一周周过去，弗勒希越发强烈地感受到，他俩之间存在某种紧密的纽带，令人不适却又振奋人心。因此，倘若他的快乐会使她痛苦，那么他的快乐将不再是快乐，而是三倍的痛苦。这不争的事实每天都可以得到验证。有人开了门，吹着口哨唤他过去。他为什么不愿出去呢？他明明渴望新鲜空气和运动，长时间趴在沙发上已使他的四肢痠疼疼痛。他也始终闻不惯古龙水的味道。可是不行——尽管门敞开着，他也不愿从巴雷特小姐身边离开。他踌躇着走向门口，半路又折回沙发旁。“弗勒希，”巴雷特小姐写道，“是我的朋友——我的伙伴——爱我胜过爱屋外的阳光。”她没法出门，被桎梏于沙发上。“笼中鸟也有好故事。”她这样写道，事实也的确如此。而弗勒希呢，他本可以自由地拥抱整个世界，却选择放弃了温波尔街上的各种气味，只为陪伴在她左右。

然而，有时那纽带却几近断裂；他俩之间存在着理解上的鸿沟。有时他们会躺着互相凝视，脸上都写满了困惑。为什么，巴雷特小姐纳闷着，弗勒希会突然颤抖，发出呜咽的声音，猛地惊起并竖着耳朵听着什么。她什么也听不见，什么也看不到，房间里除了他俩别无他人。她完全猜不到原来是她姐妹养的查理王小猎犬福利刚从门外经过，或是某位仆役刚在地下室赏给那只古巴寻血犬卡蒂利内一根羊骨头。可是弗勒希对此一清二楚，他全都听见了，欲望与贪婪交替起伏，令他躁动难安。然而巴雷特小姐即使凭借诗人的卓越想象力，也无法猜透威尔逊那湿漉漉的雨伞对弗勒希而言意味着什么，不知道这会触发他怎样的回忆——他忆起森林和鸚鵡，还有哞哞叫着的野象；她也不可能知道，当凯尼恩先生被拉铃绳绊了个踉跄时，弗勒希听到的是黝黑的人影在山中咒骂，耳边萦绕的是一声声“Span！Span！”，在一阵含糊不清、融于血脉的狂怒中，他咬了这位先生。

同样的，弗勒希也琢磨不透巴雷特小姐的情绪。她竟可以手里拿着一根黑色的棍子，在一张白纸上来回划动，这么一躺就是好几个小时。她的眼睛里会突然盈满泪水，可这是为什么呢？“噢，我亲爱的霍恩先生，”她写道，“随后我的健康状况江河日下……接下来就被迫去托基 [24] 放逐自己了……那成了我终生的噩梦，它从我的生命中夺

走了太多，我在信中无法尽述；请您在任何情况下都不要提起。千万不要提及，亲爱的霍恩先生。”可房间里并没有什么声音或气味能惹哭巴雷特小姐啊。还有一次，巴雷特小姐依然挥舞着那根黑色棍子，却突然爆发出一阵笑声。她刚画好一张“简洁传神的弗勒希画像，滑稽得与我相像”。她在图下写道，可惜他“不完全是我的替身，因为他比我有用得更多”。她向弗勒希展示的那团黑色污迹有什么好笑的呢？他什么都闻不到，什么都听不见，屋子里除了他俩，并无他人。事实是他俩无法用言语交流，而这无疑引发了诸多误会。然而，这难道不也构成了他们之间一种特殊的亲密吗？“写作，”一次巴雷特小姐在一上午的艰辛创作后慨叹道，“写作，写作……”或许她确曾怀疑过：文字是否真的可以道尽一切？文字是否真能表达什么？文字难道不会摧毁那些超越文字的象征意义吗？至少有那么一次，巴雷特小姐似乎真这么认为。她当时正躺着，陷入沉思，完全忘了弗勒希的存在，心中的思绪是如此哀伤，以至于泪水滴落枕上。忽然间，有个毛茸茸的脑袋压在了她身上：大而明亮的双眼在她眼前闪烁。她一惊，那是弗勒希吗，还是牧羊的潘神？难道她不再是一个住在温波尔街上的病人，而成了阿卡狄亚 [25] 某片阴暗幽深树林中的希腊仙子？亲吻她嘴唇的，是那位蓄满虬髯的山神吗？在那一瞬间，她化身为林中仙子，弗勒希则变成了潘。太阳在燃烧，爱迸发出光芒。但假使弗勒希真能开口说话——他难道不是早该对爱尔兰的马铃薯病害发表一番真知灼见吗？

弗勒希的心中涌起了不同寻常的感受。当他看见巴雷特小姐纤细瘦弱的手优雅地从镶边圆桌上拿起某只银盒或某样珍珠饰物时，感觉自己那毛茸茸的爪子似乎也开始跟着收缩起来，不禁希望这爪子能化为十根修长的手指。当听见她低沉的声音发出不计其数的音节时，他希望有一天自己粗鲁的吼声也能变得像她口中吐出的字词一样，简单短小却蕴含着神秘的意义。当看见那几根手指还能握住一根笔直的棍子，一刻不停地在白纸上来回挥动时，他渴望有朝一日自己也能像她一样，把白纸涂黑。

然而，他真的能像她一样书写吗？——值得高兴的是，这个问题完全是多余的，因为在不争的事实面前，我们必须承认，一八四二至一八四三年间的巴雷特小姐并非什么林中仙子，而是一个卧床不起的病人；弗勒希也绝非什么诗人，只是一条红色的可卡犬；而温波尔街也不是阿卡狄亚，只是温波尔街而已。

就这样，悠长的时光在宅邸后部的那间卧房里悄然而逝，没留下任何踪影，只有上下楼梯的脚步声、从远处传来前门关闭的声响、扫帚轻敲地板的嗒嗒声和邮差的敲门声反映着光阴的流逝。卧房内，煤炭烧得噼啪作响，光影滑过五尊惨白的半身像的眉头，滑过书架以及盖在书架上的红色美利奴羊毛织布。不过有时，上下楼梯的脚步声不

是经过门口，而是停在门外。眼见门把手转动，门居然打开了，有人进了房间。多神奇啊，家具竟然改头换面！声音和气味形成的奇妙漩涡立即开始旋转！它们卷过桌脚，又撞上衣橱尖锐的边缘！来人或许是威尔逊，端来一盘食物或一杯药；也有可能是巴雷特小姐的两位姐妹之一——阿拉贝尔或亨丽埃塔；也有可能是巴雷特小姐七位兄弟中的一个——查尔斯、塞缪尔、乔治、亨利、艾尔弗雷德、塞普蒂默斯或奥克塔维厄斯。而——每周都有那么一两次，弗勒希会预感有什么重要的事情即将发生。床会被仔细地改装成沙发的模样，扶手椅会被拉到床边，巴雷特小姐自己则会得体地披上印度披肩。有人会把盥洗用具全都藏到乔叟和荷马的半身像底下，弗勒希也会由人梳洗一番。大约到了下午两三点，门外会传来特定、清晰却不尽相同的敲门声。巴雷特小姐会突然涨红了脸，微笑着伸出手。接着有人便会走进来——来人或许是亲爱的米特福德小姐，她面色红润、精神抖擞、喋喋不休，怀里还会抱着一把天竺葵。或许是凯尼恩先生，他是一位身形敦实、衣着考究、善良可亲的绅士，总会随身带一本书来。也可能是詹姆森太太，她的相貌特征和凯尼恩先生正好相反——她的“面容极其苍白——有着清澈的浅色眼眸，薄薄的双唇毫无血色……窄窄的鼻子和下巴向外凸出”。每位访客的举止、气味、声调和口音都各具特色：米特福德小姐喜欢喋喋不休地唠叨，态度虽欠稳重，却实实在在；凯尼恩先生彬彬有礼，富有教养，由于缺了两颗门牙而有些口齿不清 [2]；詹姆森太太一颗牙都不少，她的动作就和她说话的方式一样干脆利落。

弗勒希蜷缩在巴雷特小姐脚边，任由各种各样的声音在他头上轻轻飘荡，就这样过了一小时又一小时。巴雷特小姐笑着、告诫着、惊叫着、叹息着，随即又笑了。终于，弗勒希如释重负地意识到，他终于得到了片刻的安宁——就连米特福德小姐也有住口的时候。难道已经晚上七点了吗？她从中午起就一直待在这儿了！她得赶快起身去赶火车。凯尼恩先生合上他的书——他一直在大声朗读——背对着炉火站起身来。詹姆森太太以一种迅速而生硬的动作，把每根手指塞进手套，一拉到底。接着，他们或是轻轻拍拍弗勒希，或是扯扯他的耳朵。道别仪式总是冗长得令人难以忍受，但最终，詹姆森太太、凯尼恩先生，甚至连米特福德小姐都站起身来，道别告辞。他们时而会想起什么，又忘记什么，再找到什么，最后走到门边，打开门——谢天谢地——终于走了。

巴雷特小姐脸色苍白，满脸倦容地陷进枕头堆里。弗勒希爬到她身旁，紧贴着她。感谢上帝，他们俩又能独处了。但访客们停留的时间太长了，已经到了晚餐时间。地下室开始升腾起食物的香味。威尔逊端着巴雷特小姐的晚餐盘来到门口，把餐盘放在主人身旁的桌上，掀起盖子。然而经过更衣、谈话等一番折腾，再加上室内的高温以及道别引发的种种骚乱，巴雷特小姐已经累得没有力气进食了。看见盘

中为她准备的晚餐，肥羊排、山鹑翅（或是鸡翅），她只能发出一声轻叹。当着威尔逊的面，她会用刀叉胡乱地戳弄几下。可门一旦关上，只剩下他俩，她就立刻做了个手势。她举起叉子，上面叉着一整个鸡翅膀。弗勒希跑向前。巴雷特小姐点点头。弗勒希动作温和、小心翼翼地将鸡翅扯下来，不让一点儿残渣掉到地上，然后整个吞进肚中，不留半点儿痕迹。另有半个沾满浓郁奶油的米布丁也以同样的方式消失得无影无踪。没有什么能比弗勒希的配合更干净利落。他一如既往地趴在巴雷特小姐的脚边，显然睡着了；恢复了精神的巴雷特小姐躺着休息，看上去刚吃完一顿丰盛的晚餐。楼梯上再次传来一阵脚步声，比其他脚步声都要沉重、从容、坚定，在楼梯口戛然而止。庄重的敲门声响起，听起来不像是在请求获准进入，而是在要求里面的人开门。门打开了，一个最阴郁、最威严的年长男士走了进来——正是巴雷特先生本人。他的目光立刻扫过餐盘。食物都吃光了吗？她服从他的命令了吗？是的，盘子空了。巴雷特先生重重地坐进女儿身旁的那把椅子，仿佛在肯定她的顺从。当那幽暗的躯体靠近弗勒希时，阵阵惊惧令他瑟瑟发抖、脊背发凉，就像野蛮人在雷声的怒吼中听见上帝的声音时，立刻颤抖着躲进花丛中。随后威尔逊吹了声口哨，弗勒希满怀愧疚地偷溜了出去，蹑手蹑脚地爬出房间，冲下楼梯，仿佛巴雷特先生能看穿他的心思，而这些心思又十恶不赦。一股令他畏惧的力量潜入了卧房，他无力与之抗衡。有一次他意外闯回房里，只见巴雷特先生双膝跪地，在女儿身边祈祷。

[22] 邦巴辛毛葛（bombazine），丝、棉纱和毛等织成的斜纹布，通常染黑用作悼念服装。

[23] 巴思椅（bath-chair），一种轮椅，供病人或伤残人士使用，有的带有篷盖或玻璃罩。

[24] 托基（Torquay），英国英格兰西南部德文郡的一个海滨城镇，气候温暖。

[25] 阿卡狄亚（Arcady），古希腊地名，在今伯罗奔尼撒半岛中部，以其居民过着田园牧歌式淳朴生活著称，引申为“世外桃源”。

第三章 蒙面人

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在温波尔街宅邸深处的卧房里接受的这种教育，会对一条普通的狗产生深远影响。但弗勒希可不是什么普通的狗。他虽说精力充沛，却也喜欢沉思；他虽属于犬科，却对人类情绪极度敏感。对于这样一条狗，这间卧房内的氛围带来的影响非比寻常。所以，如果说他在变得敏感细腻的同时，弱化了自身一些更为严峻的品质，我们也不能怪罪于他。自然地，整日将希腊辞典枕于头下，他注定会变得不喜欢吠叫和咬人；他逐渐偏爱猫的安静，而不是狗的鲁莽好动。而与这两者相比，他又更偏好人情味儿。巴雷特小姐也竭尽全力来提高并培养他这方面的能力，让他精益求精。有一次，她从窗上取下一架竖琴，放在他身旁，问他是否觉得这架可以制造音乐的竖琴本身具有生命力。弗勒希经过一番凝视和聆听，似乎沉思和迟疑了片刻，最终认定答案为否。接着，她又会领着他一起站在镜子前，问他为什么会吠叫和颤抖。面朝他站着的那只小棕狗，不正是他自己吗？但什么才是“自己”呢？是人们看见的外表吗？还是他内心的本质呢？弗勒希同样琢磨起这个问题，却感到现实世界是如此复杂难懂，只好把身子贴近巴雷特小姐，热烈地亲吻她，内心的感情溢于言表——无论如何，至少这是真实的。

他此前从没思考过这些问题，情感上的困境刺激着他的神经。带着这样的情绪，他走下楼梯。因此如果他的行为举止中带有某种高傲和优越感，惹得那只凶恶的古巴寻血犬卡蒂利内怒从中来，扑上去狠狠咬了自己，那也不足为奇，而他只能哀号着奔上楼，向巴雷特小姐寻求安慰。弗勒希“不是什么英雄”，她总结道。但他为什么不是个英雄呢？难道她不应该对此承担部分责任吗？她为人率直公正，不会意识不到他是为了她才牺牲了自己的勇气，正如他早已为她牺牲了阳光与空气。诚然，这种神经质的敏感也有其缺点——当他扑到被拉铃绳绊倒的凯尼恩先生身上啃咬时，她感到满心歉疚；他整晚可怜的呜咽也令人讨厌，就因为他非要主人来喂，否则不肯进食，因此被罚不准到她床上去睡。然而她愿意承担过错，不嫌麻烦，因为弗勒希终究是爱她的。为了她，他拒绝了空气和阳光。“他值得被爱，不是吗？”她这样问霍恩先生。不论霍恩先生可能给出怎样的回答，巴雷特小姐都对自己的答案确信无疑。她爱弗勒希，弗勒希也值得她爱。

似乎没有任何东西能够摧毁他们之间的纽带——岁月仿佛只是把它

打磨得更为坚固、强韧，他们仿佛一生都将如此度过。从一八四二年到一八四三年，一八四三年又到了一八四四年，一八四四年又到了一八四五年。弗勒希已经不再是一条幼犬了，而是一条四五岁的成年犬，处于生命中的巅峰。而巴雷特小姐依旧躺在温波尔街的沙发上，弗勒希也依旧趴在她的脚边。巴雷特小姐过的是“笼中鸟”的生活。她有时会连续数周闭门不出，就算出门，每次顶多一两个小时，通常是乘马车去某家店铺，或是坐在轮椅上由人推去摄政公园。巴雷特一家从不离开伦敦城。巴雷特先生，他家的七兄弟、两姐妹，男管家，威尔逊及女仆们，卡蒂利内、福利，巴雷特小姐还有弗勒希，一直都生活在温波尔街五十号：在餐厅里用餐，在卧室里睡觉，在书房里抽烟，在厨房里烹饪，提热水壶，倒馊水桶——从一月到十二月，从不间断。椅罩稍微变得脏了些，地毯稍微变得旧了些，煤灰、泥巴、油烟、雾气，雪茄、红酒和肉的气味全都积聚在缝隙里、裂口中、布料表面、画框上，以及雕刻物件的旋涡纹饰里。巴雷特小姐卧室窗外的常春藤枝繁叶茂，长成的绿色帷帘也越积越厚。到了夏天，旱金莲和红花菜豆则在窗台上的花盆里竞相疯长。

不过，一八四五年一月初的一天夜里，邮差敲响了大门。信件如往常一样投进了信箱，威尔逊如往常一样下楼去取信。一切都如往常一样——其实邮差每天晚上都会来敲门，威尔逊每天晚上都会去取信，巴雷特小姐每天晚上都会收到一封信。可是今晚送来的信却不太一样，它十分不同寻常。还没等信封拆开，弗勒希就意识到了这点。他从巴雷特小姐取信的模样中看出了端倪，她把信转过来，盯着写下她名字的那刚健有力、龙飞凤舞的字迹。他从她手指难以描述的战栗中，从她撕开信封的迫不及待中，从她读信时聚精会神的表情中，看出了这封信与众不同。他注视着读信。在她读信时，他听见一个铃声，就像我们常在半睡半醒时从街上传来的喧闹声中辨认出某种为我们而响起的铃声。那声音虽然微弱却充满警惕，仿佛远方有人试图唤醒我们，警告我们发生了火灾或盗窃，或是某种将威胁到我们平静生活的灾难，让我们尚未醒来就感到警觉——同样的，在巴雷特小姐阅读那张沾了墨汁的小纸条时，一声警铃也传到了弗勒希的耳朵里，把他从睡梦中唤醒，警告他某种危险即将降临，他的安全将受到威胁，所以他不能入睡了。巴雷特小姐快速地读完那封信，又慢慢地再读了一遍，然后小心翼翼地吧信装回信封。她也一样不能入睡了。

几个夜晚之后，一封类似的信又赫然出现在威尔逊的托盘上。巴雷特小姐又一次快速读完了内容，再慢慢地看，看了一遍又一遍。接着她把信小心翼翼地收起来，没有和米特福德小姐长篇大论的信件一起收在抽屉里，而是单独收好。弗勒希长年累月地趴在巴雷特小姐脚旁的垫子上，他付出了昂贵的代价，才培养出这般敏锐的眼光，能洞悉别人察觉不到的蛛丝马迹。透过巴雷特小姐手指的抚触，他可以察

觉到，她现在只等待着一样东西——等邮差敲门，等托盘上出现那封信。起初，她会以规律的节奏轻轻地抚摸他；忽然——敲门声一响——她的手指就会猛地缩紧，把他牢牢钳住，直到威尔逊上楼。然后，她会取过信，把他松开，也彻底把他抛到脑后。

可是，他辩解道，只要巴雷特小姐的生活没有发生任何改变，这有什么可害怕的？确实没有任何改变。没有新的访客出现，凯尼恩先生照常来访，米特福德小姐照常来访，兄弟姐妹们照常出现；傍晚时分巴雷特先生也照常前来。他们什么都没有注意到，也毫不起疑。因此，当那封信连续几晚都没有出现，他便安慰自己，试着去相信敌人已经消失了。他想象那是个罩着长袍的男子，是个穿着斗篷、戴着兜帽的人，如窃贼那样一闪而过，经过时把门弄得咔嗒响，却发现此地禁卫森严，只好灰溜溜地悄悄走掉。弗勒希努力让自己相信危险已经解除，那名男子已经消失不见。结果那封信却再次出现。

随着信封出现得愈加频繁，甚至每晚都有，弗勒希才注意到巴雷特小姐身上有了细微的变化。弗勒希头一回见她如此坐立难安、心浮气躁。她读不进书也写不出东西。她站在窗边向外凝视。她焦虑地询问威尔逊天气如何——外面仍刮着东风吗？公园里是否有开春的迹象？噢，没呢，威尔逊回答，残酷的东风仍在肆虐。弗勒希感到，巴雷特小姐听了既如释重负又深感烦恼。她不停咳嗽，抱怨身体不适——但显然远不像往年刮东风时那么难受。待四下无人，她会把前一夜收到的信重读一遍。这是目前为止最长的一封，页数很多，排列紧凑，墨迹密密麻麻，零零散散地画了些细小突兀的象形文字。弗勒希从她脚边的位置能看到的只有这些，可他完全听不懂巴雷特小姐在轻声自语些什么，只感觉她读到最后一行并大声念出时（尽管他听不懂）——“您看两三个月后我能否与您相见？”——激动万分。

随后她提起笔，迅速又紧张地写了一页又一页。但巴雷特小姐写下的那些小小字符究竟意味着什么呢？“四月将至。倘若我们活得够久，其间还有五月和六月，或许，无论如何，我们可以……待暖和的天气让我恢复一丝生气，我愿意与您相见……但刚开始我会害怕您——尽管我在写下这些话时并不感到害怕。您是帕拉塞尔苏斯 [26]，我则是一名隐居者，我的神经早已在肢刑架上绷断了，如今只是软绵绵地悬挂着，只要听到一点儿脚步声、一下呼吸声，便会心悸颤抖。”

弗勒希看不懂她在他头顶上方一两英寸的地方写的什么，却像能读懂每个字的含义一般清楚地知道女主人挥笔时的烦躁是多么反常，也知道矛盾的欲望如何摄住了她的思绪——四月也许会来，也许不会来了；她也许可以立刻见到这个陌生的男人，也有可能永远也见不到他。弗勒希也和她一样，因一丁点儿脚步声和呼吸声而心悸颤抖着。日子冷酷无情地一天天过去。风卷起了遮光帘，阳光染白了半身像，

一只鸟儿在笼子里歌唱，有人沿着温波尔街叫卖鲜花。他心里清楚，所有这些声音都意味着四月即将到来，接着五月、六月也会来到——没有任何东西能够阻止那可怕的春天逐步逼近。到底有什么会随着春天一起到来呢？是某种骇人听闻的东西——某种恐怖——某种巴雷特小姐畏惧、弗勒希也同样畏惧的东西。现在他一听见脚步声便悚然惊起，然而那不过是亨丽埃塔。又传来了敲门声，但那只是凯尼恩先生。就这样，四月过去了，五月也过去了二十天。然后，就在五月二十一日那天，弗勒希知道那一天终于来临了。因为在五月二十一日这个星期二，巴雷特小姐对着镜子把自己上上下下打量个遍，仔仔细细地裹好印度披肩，吩咐威尔逊把扶手椅拉近一些，但不要太过近。她碰碰这个，又碰碰那个，然后便直挺挺地坐靠在枕头堆里。弗勒希全身紧绷地趴在她脚边。他们单独待在房间里，一起等待着。终于，马里波恩教堂的钟敲了两下；他们继续等待着。接着马里波恩教堂的钟又单独敲了一下——两点半到了一钟声慢慢停歇时，前门响起一声大胆的叩击声。巴雷特小姐顿时血色全无，纹丝不动地躺着。弗勒希也静静趴着。那可怕的、不可阻挡的脚步声上楼了。弗勒希知道，上来的正是那邪恶的午夜暗影——那个戴着兜帽的蒙面人。此刻，他的手正放在门上，门把转动，他就站在门口。

“勃朗宁先生到。”威尔逊通报。

弗勒希盯着巴雷特小姐，只见她突然两颊绯红，双目放光，红唇轻启。

“勃朗宁先生！”她叫道。

勃朗宁先生手里攥着自己的黄手套 [3]，眨着眼睛，穿着神气而体面，贸然迈开大步穿过房间。他握住巴雷特小姐的手，往摆在她沙发旁的那张椅子上坐。两人立刻交谈起来。

令弗勒希难以承受的是，他们谈话时，他深感孤独。曾经，他觉得自己仿佛和巴雷特小姐厮守在一个生了火的洞穴里。如今火已熄灭，洞穴里又黑又潮，而巴雷特小姐已置身洞外。他环顾四周，发觉一切都面目全非。书架、五尊半身像——它们不再是慈眉善目的神祇，满意地高坐其上——变得既陌生又严肃。他在巴雷特小姐的脚旁不停变换姿势，她却浑然不察。他哀哼着，两人却不闻不问。最后，他只好静静地趴着，全身紧绷，默默忍受痛苦。谈话还在继续，但不似其他谈话那般徐徐流动、涟漪荡漾。这谈话横冲直跃、激流猛进，时而戛然而止，时而又跳跃起来。弗勒希之前从没听过巴雷特小姐用那样的语调说话——如此富有活力、激情四射。他从未见过她的脸颊像此刻这般红润发亮，从未见过她的那双大眼睛像此刻这般熠熠生辉。钟响四声，他们两人仍讲个不停。接着四点半的钟声也响了，勃朗宁倏地跳了起来。他的每个动作都昭示着某种令人反感的魄力和令人不快的冒

失。一眨眼的工夫，他就把巴雷特小姐的手紧紧握在自己的手里，再拿上自己的帽子和手套，道了再会。他们听见他跑下楼梯的声音。门砰的一声在他身后关上。他就这么消失了。

但巴雷特小姐并没有倒靠在枕头堆里，像凯尼恩先生或米特福德小姐离开后那般萎靡。她依然笔直坐着，双眼依旧炽热，双颊也依旧光彩照人，似乎觉得勃朗宁先生还在身边。弗勒希碰了碰她，她吓了一跳，这才想起他来。她愉快地在他脑袋上轻轻拍了拍，随后面带微笑，用无比怪异的表情看着他——似乎希望他能开口说话——像是指望他也能感同身受。紧接着她又自嘲地笑了，仿佛觉得这个想法实在荒谬——弗勒希，可怜的弗勒希不可能体会她的心情。他也无法参透她所知道的一切。从未有过如此遥远而令人伤感的距离将他们隔开。他趴在那儿，遭人忽视，感觉自己根本就不存在似的。巴雷特小姐不再记得他的存在。

当天晚上，她连鸡骨头都啃得一干二净，连一丁点儿土豆残渣或鸡皮都没有扔给弗勒希。当巴雷特先生像往常一样进来探视时，他的迟钝令弗勒希感到不可思议。他坐在那个男人之前坐过的椅子上，头靠在那个男人靠过的靠垫上，却什么也没察觉。“难道你不知道，”弗勒希惊诧地想，“刚才谁坐在这把椅子上？难道你闻不出来吗？”对弗勒希而言，整个房间仍充斥着勃朗宁先生的气味。这气味从书架旁扫过，围绕着五尊苍白的半身像旋转，掀起一阵旋涡。可这位笨重的男士却坐在女儿身旁，完全沉浸在自己的世界里，对外界浑然不觉，不疑有他。弗勒希惊骇于他的迟钝，偷偷从他身旁溜出了房外。

尽管巴雷特小姐家人的后知后觉令人瞠目结舌，但随着时间一周周过去，他们也渐渐注意到巴雷特小姐身上的变化。她会走出自己的房间，到楼下客厅里坐坐。接着她还做了一件长久不曾做过的事——她竟然靠自己的双腿，和姐妹一起徒步走到了德文郡广场的大门口！她的朋友和家人无不为她的好转惊叹。但唯有弗勒希清楚她的力量源自何方——它来自那位坐在扶手椅里的黝黑男子。他来了一次又一次。起先每周只来访一次，接着是一周两次。他总是下午来下午走。巴雷特小姐总是单独约见他。即使有些日子他本人不现身，他的信也不会缺席。而他人离开之后，他送的花依然留在这儿。每天早晨只身一人时，巴雷特小姐就会给他写信。那个黝黑、整洁、鲁莽又精力充沛的男子，还有他的一头黑发，他红润的面庞，和那双黄手套，简直无处不在。如此一来，巴雷特小姐的身体自然会有起色，她当然可以开始走动了。连弗勒希都觉得自己已经不可能一动不动地趴着了。昔日的渴望再次被激发出来，他陷入了一种新的躁动，甚至入睡后沉浸于种种梦乡。自从离开三英里十字标后，他从未如此梦频——他梦见从高高的草丛里蹿出的野兔，尖叫着跃出的长尾野鸡，还有呼啸一声从麦茬堆中冲出的山鹑。他梦见自己在狩猎，正追着某只身上有斑点的西班牙

牙猎犬，可后者奔跑着逃脱了他的追捕。他一会儿在西班牙，一会儿在威尔士，一会儿在伯克郡，一会儿在手持警棍的摄政公园管理员面前狂奔。然后他睁开眼睛。眼前没有野兔，没有山鹑，没有啪啪作响的皮鞭，也没有高喊“Span！Span！”的黝黑男人，只有坐在扶手椅上的勃朗宁先生，正与躺在沙发上的巴雷特小姐聊天。

那个男人在的时候，睡觉是根本不可能的。弗勒希睁大眼睛趴着，聚精会神地倾听。这些轻言细语总是两点半到四点半之间在他的头顶碰撞交锋，有时甚至一周三次。尽管他对词意一无所知，但他凭借惊人的直觉准确地察觉到，那谈话的语气及声调在不断变化。刚开始，巴雷特小姐的声音显得勉强——具有某种不自然的活力，现在却带着他从未感觉到的温暖和自在。而——每次那个男人来时，总会有一些新的声音掺进他们的说话声中——他们时而发出怪异的吱吱声；时而又似一对疾飞的鸟从他头顶掠过；时而又发出咕咕咯咯的声响，像两只在巢中栖息的鸟儿。然后巴雷特小姐的声音再度响起，在空中翱翔盘旋，接着勃朗宁先生爆发出一连串尖锐刺耳的笑声，再后来只剩下一句嗡嗡絮语，含糊而微弱，仿佛两个声音已融为一体。可随着夏去秋来，弗勒希不胜恐慌地又注意到一种新的声调。那个男人的声音里出现了一种新的急迫感，一种新的压力和能量，弗勒希觉得这似乎让巴雷特小姐受到了惊吓。她的声音焦躁不安、犹豫不决，仿佛在畏缩、躲藏、抗辩，奄奄一息，仿佛在哀求着喘息和暂停，仿佛充满胆怯。然后，那个男人便沉默不语。

他们几乎完全没注意到弗勒希。在勃朗宁先生看来，他跟放在巴雷特小姐脚边的一段木头相差无几。有时在经过他旁边时，勃朗宁先生会突然飞速地挠挠他的头，力气很大，却不带感情。无论那搔头的动作有何意味，弗勒希对勃朗宁先生只感到极端厌恶。看到他那副西装革履、强健紧致、肌肉结实的模样，看到他用力攥紧黄手套的样子，弗勒希就恨得咬牙切齿。噢！这让他想在他的长裤上一口咬下去！然而他却不敢。一言以蔽之，一八四五年到一八四六年间的那个冬季是弗勒希此生最煎熬的时光。

冬去春来，弗勒希看不出这段交往有结束的迹象。然而这一切宛如一条河流，虽倒映着静立的树、吃草的牛群以及归巢的乌鸦，却仍不可避免地奔往瀑布。同样的，弗勒希也明白，这些日子也终将酿成大祸。关于变化的蛛丝马迹在空中萦绕，有时他感觉大规模的迁徙即将发生。家里总有一股莫名的骚动，仿佛是一次远行的前兆，但这真的可能吗？箱盒竟真的被拿出来掸灰，甚至难得一见地被纷纷打开，但立刻又被合上了。不，显然不是全家都要搬走。巴雷特小姐的兄弟姐妹们仍照常进出。每晚，在那个男人离开后，巴雷特先生仍在同一时间进来探视。那么，到底会发生什么事呢？因为随着一八四六年的夏天渐渐收尾，弗勒希相当确定变化就要发生。他可以从那连绵不绝

的谈话声中再次分辨出不同的语调。巴雷特小姐那原本像在哀求的、害怕的声音，现在已经不再闪烁其词，而是透露着一种弗勒希从未听到过的决心与胆量。如果巴雷特先生能听到她迎接那位僭越者时的声调，她招呼他时的笑声，还有被他紧握双手时的叹息，那该多好！可惜房间里除了他俩和弗勒希之外再无旁人。对弗勒希来说，这种变化是最令人恼怒的，因为巴雷特小姐不仅对勃朗宁先生的态度变了，对所有人的态度也都变了一尤其是对他自己。现在每当他凑上前亲近，她就颇不耐烦，总是用玩笑阻断他的热情，让他感觉昔日自己表达爱意的方式竟是那般微不足道、愚蠢做作。他的虚荣心遭到重创，妒火中烧。终于，七月来了，他决定强行夺回她的宠爱，甚至驱逐这个新来的家伙。如何一箭双雕他茫然不知，如何筹谋策划他也毫无头绪。但在七月八日那一天，他突然失控，扑向了勃朗宁先生，狠狠地咬了他一口！他的牙齿终于碰到了勃朗宁先生一尘不染的长裤布料！可是裤里的腿却像钢铁一般坚硬——相较之下，凯尼恩先生的腿简直软得像黄油。勃朗宁先生大手一挥，把他推开，继续讲话。无论是他还是巴雷特小姐，似乎都认为这次攻击不值一提。弗勒希矢尽援绝、铩羽而归，气喘吁吁地趴回自己的垫子上，怒不可遏又失望至极。然而，他错估了巴雷特小姐的眼力。待勃朗宁先生离开后，她把他唤到跟前，施以前所未有的最严厉的惩罚。她先是打他的耳朵——那也没什么，说来也怪，他还挺喜欢被打耳朵的，宁愿她再多打几下。但接下来她竟用冷静、确凿的语气说她以后再也不爱他了。一箭穿心。这么多年来，他们住在一起，分享一切，现在，只因为他一时糊涂，她就不再爱他了。随后，似乎为了更完整地展示她的驱逐令，她拿起勃朗宁先生送给她的花，往花瓶里插起来。弗勒希心想：她是故意的，这是个处心积虑、充满恶意的举动，为的是让他彻头彻尾地自惭形秽！“这朵玫瑰是他送的，”她好像在说，“这朵康乃馨也是。让我插一朵红色的在黄色的旁边，再插一朵黄色的在红色的旁边，然后将这枝绿叶放在这里……”待花儿一朵朵插好后，她后退一步，凝望着那一大丛娇艳欲滴的花——仿佛那戴着黄手套的男人就站在她眼前。可即使如此，即使在她插花的时候，她还是无法完全忽视弗勒希凝视她的目光。她不能不理睬“他脸上绝望的表情”，也无法不心生同情。“最后我终于说：‘弗勒希，如果你乖乖听话，现在可以过来道歉。’结果他立刻冲过来，全身颤抖地先亲了我的一只手，再亲了另一只，然后举起爪子让我握握，同时用哀求的眼神注视着我。你若看见了，一定也会像我一样原谅他。”她这是在对勃朗宁先生描述。而他当然答道：“噢，可怜的弗勒希。难道你认为我会因为他嫉妒的监视而不爱他、不尊敬他吗？他是因为同你亲近，才不愿再轻易亲近别人了啊！”要勃朗宁先生表现出宽宏大量并非难事，然而这轻易的宽宏大量或许正是扎在弗勒希身上最尖锐的一根芒刺。

几天后又发生了一件事，再次展示了曾经亲密无间的他们俩之间

如今产生了多大的隔阂，弗勒希再也指望不上获得巴雷特小姐的怜悯了。那天下午在勃朗宁先生离开后，巴雷特小姐决定和姐妹坐车去摄政公园。她们在公园大门外下车时，四轮马车的车门夹到了弗勒希的爪子，他“可怜兮兮地叫唤”，举起爪子给巴雷特小姐看，乞求同情。若是以前，他即便不这么做，也一定会受到百般呵护。可眼下，她的眼神里满是冷漠、嘲讽和批判。她嘲笑他，认定他在装模作样：“……他一踏上草地，立马拔腿狂奔，忘得一干二净。”她这么写道。她嘲弄地评论说：“弗勒希总喜欢夸大自己的不幸——他是拜伦派的——总爱扮演受害者 [27] 。”其实，沉浸在自己情感中的巴雷特小姐完全错怪了他。就算他的爪子被压断了，他还是会拔腿狂奔，因为那是对她嘲讽态度的回应——我要与你一刀两断——这便是他往前乱冲的含义。那一瞬间，花儿闻起来是苦的，草地灼烧着他的脚底，尘土充斥着他的鼻孔，令他幻灭。但他仍然继续奔跑——向前飞奔。“狗必须系狗链”——告示牌依旧在那儿，那位公园管理员还是头戴高帽、手持警棍，正执行这项规定。然而现在，“必须”这个词对他而言没有任何意义。爱的锁链已断，他现在想往哪里跑就往哪里跑。他可以去追山鹑，追西班牙猎犬，冲进大丽花丛里，踩烂鲜艳的红玫瑰与黄玫瑰。就让公园管理员挥舞他们的警棍吧——让他们把他打得脑浆四溅，让他肚破肠流地躺在巴雷特小姐的脚旁死掉——他一点儿都不在乎。自然，这些事儿都没发生。没人来追赶他，也没人注意到他。单独出巡的公园管理员忙着和一个保姆聊天。最后，他只好踱回巴雷特小姐身边，让她心不在焉地将狗链套在他的脖子上，带他回家。

经过这样的两次羞辱，不用说一条普通的狗，就连一个普通人，都可能从此一蹶不振。然而温软细腻的弗勒希却目光如炬，胸中的激情不仅能熊熊燃烧，也能默默阴燃。他决心与敌人面对面单挑，进行最后的决战，不容第三者介入，让双方自己分出个胜负。于是，到了七月二十一日，他在这个星期二的下午，溜下楼梯，伺机等在玄关。他没有等太久，很快便听见街上传来熟悉的脚步声，接着听见熟悉的叩门声。有人开门让勃朗宁先生进来。勃朗宁先生早已隐约感受到弗勒希正酝酿攻击，决定以柔克刚，当天带了一盒蛋糕来。见到弗勒希在玄关候着，勃朗宁先生明显是想亲善地抚摸他，或许还想好心地赏他一块蛋糕。真是够了！弗勒希异常凶狠地扑向敌人，牙齿再一次咬上勃朗宁的长裤。可惜在此紧要关头，昏了头的他忘了顶顶重要的一件事——保持安静。他叫了起来，在扑向勃朗宁先生的同时大声吠叫。结果吠声惊动全家，威尔逊闻声冲下楼梯，用力打他，将他制服。他在屈辱中被威尔逊牵走了。那真是莫大的耻辱——袭击勃朗宁先生，却被威尔逊揍了一顿。勃朗宁先生连一根手指头都没抬一下，拎着他的蛋糕，毫发无伤、气定神闲地走上楼梯，单独进入了卧房，弗勒希却被带走了。

他在厨房里被关了两个半小时禁闭，悲惨地和鹦鹉、甲虫、羊齿植物和锅盘共处一室，然后被召回巴雷特小姐房里。她躺在沙发上，姐妹阿拉贝尔坐在旁边。弗勒希自认有理，于是径直走向巴雷特小姐，可是她却不理睬他。他扭头看向阿拉贝尔，她只说了一句：“淘气的弗勒希，走开！”威尔逊也在房里——难缠的、毫不宽容的威尔逊，就是她向巴雷特小姐告的状。她于是揍了他，威尔逊说：“因为他该打！”接着又补充说她只是用手打。就是因为有她做证，弗勒希才成了罪人。巴雷特小姐认定那次袭击没头没脑，认定勃朗宁先生是宽容大度的好人，而弗勒希挨一个仆人的揍（没用鞭子），是因为“他该打”！这事就此定案，不必多费唇舌。巴雷特小姐已认定他有罪。“然后他趴在我脚旁的地板上，”她这样写道，“从眉毛底下抬眼偷瞄我。”但尽管弗勒希一个劲儿盯着巴雷特小姐看，她却怎么也不肯回看他一眼。就这样，她躺在沙发上，他趴在地板上。

被放逐的他趴在地毯上，情绪之纷乱有如身陷汹涌狂暴的漩涡。他的灵魂不是在岩石间冲撞、碎裂，就是好不容易找到一小块立足之地，艰难而缓慢地将自己拉出水面，爬回岸上，最后终于脱离了浩劫后的宇宙，俯瞰一个全然陌生的新世界。问题是，他这番经历到底算是哪个呢——是毁灭，还是新生？这是一个问题。他只能感知这两难困境的大致轮廓，因为他的挣扎是悄无声息的。弗勒希两次都欲倾全力，想要挫败敌人，但均以失败告终。为什么他会失败呢？他问自己。因为他爱巴雷特小姐。他抬眼注视躺在沙发上的她，见她表情严厉、一言不发，心里明白他必须爱她，直到永远。但事情并不简单，而是很复杂。倘若他咬了勃朗宁先生，便等于也咬了她。恨不是恨，恨也是爱。想到这里，弗勒希十分苦恼地甩甩耳朵，浑身不自在地在地板上翻了个身。勃朗宁先生就是巴雷特小姐，巴雷特小姐就是勃朗宁先生；爱即是恨，恨即是爱！他伸了个懒腰，哀鸣一声，从地板上抬起头来。时钟敲了八下，他已经在同一个地方整整趴了三个多小时，始终在痛苦挣扎、进退两难。

这时，就连严厉、冷漠无情的巴雷特小姐也放下了笔。“弗勒希坏透了！”她刚才在给勃朗宁先生的信中写道，“……如果人们都学弗勒希，像狗一样野蛮行事，那么他们也应该像狗一样为结果受惩罚！而你呢，你却如此和颜悦色地对待他！换作其他任何人，至少也会说几句‘狠话’。”其实真应该考虑买嘴套了，她心想。然后她抬起头，看见了弗勒希。这时，他脸上某种非同寻常的表情势必击中了她。她愣住了，放下笔。曾经，他用一个吻唤醒她，而她则把他想象成牧神潘；曾经，他吃的是鸡肉和浸满奶油的米布丁；曾经，他为了她放弃了阳光。于是，她把他叫到跟前，说自己原谅了他。

然而她因一念之仁原谅他，又将他抱回沙发上，仿佛在地板上忍受那些痛苦之后他并无任何长进，仍是过去的他，她完全没有意识到

他已幡然改变。这一切令弗勒希难以接受。不过此时他已精疲力竭，只好屈服。但几天后，他与巴雷特小姐之间发生了一件非比寻常的事，足以显示他感情深邃。那天勃朗宁先生离开之后，只剩下弗勒希与巴雷特小姐单独待在一块儿。平常他都会立刻跳到她脚旁的沙发上，但那天他却一反常态，没有要求钻进她怀里，却走向了那把椅子——现在被称作“勃朗宁先生的扶手椅”。通常那把椅子令他极度厌恶，因为上面仍保留着敌人的身姿留下的形状。可是那一刻，他却打赢了一仗，因为他心中突然充满宽容，不仅正视那把椅子，甚至“忽然陷入了狂喜”。巴雷特小姐全神贯注地观察着他不同寻常的表现。接着，她看见他将视线转向桌上。桌上仍摆放着勃朗宁先生送的那盒蛋糕。他在“提醒你你送的蛋糕仍留在桌上”。此刻蛋糕早就陈腐变质了，绝对不会引起任何食欲。弗勒希的意图非常明显——蛋糕新鲜时他不肯吃，因为那是敌人送的；现在蛋糕坏了，他倒愿意吃了，因为他已与对方化敌为友了，因为那是他将仇恨化成爱意的象征。没错，他表示自己现在愿意吃了。于是巴雷特小姐起身去拿蛋糕，递给他时顺便告诫了他一番。“我解释给他听，说这是你带给他吃的，他应该为过去的恶行感到惭愧，应该下定决心，从今以后好好爱你，不再咬你，这样我才能允许他接受你的好意。”弗勒希一边吞咽着已经受潮泡软的难吃糕饼——这玩意已经发霉发臭，一股酸味，招来苍蝇——一边用自己的语言信誓旦旦地重复她刚才说过的词：他发誓，从今以后会好好爱勃朗宁先生，再也不会咬他了。

他立即受到了奖赏——这奖赏不是走味的蛋糕，不是鸡翅，不是女主人的拥抱爱抚，也不是重新获准趴回巴雷特小姐脚旁的沙发。他的奖赏是精神上的，但奇怪的是，其效果却展现在肉体上。这几个月以来，仇恨一直压着他的灵魂，如同一根铁条，把一切自然的活力都压得腐朽、溃烂、死亡。如今，经过利刃的洗礼，完成了痛苦的手术，铁条被切除了，血液得以再度流通，神经又有了感觉，肌肉又重新长好，仿佛春天到来，万物复苏。弗勒希再次听见鸟鸣，感觉到树在发芽。当他趴在巴雷特小姐脚旁的沙发上，荣耀与欢愉在他的血管里流淌。他现在已站在他们一边，而不是与他们敌对；他们的希望、他们的心愿、他们的渴求，也都是他的了。现在弗勒希可以吠叫着应和勃朗宁先生了。他颈项上的毛会因勃朗宁简洁有力的话语而竖立：“我真希望一周七天全是星期二！”勃朗宁先生呼喊，“然后一个月全是星期二——一年——一辈子都是！”“我，”弗勒希重复他的话，“也想要一个月——一年——一辈子！你们想要的东西，就是我要的东西！我们是三个同谋者，要追逐最荣耀的使命；我们有同样的怜悯、同样的仇恨，我们反抗同样暗无天日的独裁暴政，也有同样的爱。”简言之，弗勒希将他所有的希望都寄托在同属于他们的光荣胜利上，尽管他对它只有模糊的感觉，却依然深信它必将来临。然而就在此时，弗勒希突如其来地整个跌入黑暗之中，一切来得毫无征兆，而——就发生在文明、

安全与友好的中心地带——那是九月一日，一个周二上午，他和巴雷特小姐及其姐妹就在维尔街的一家商店里。地牢的大门在他身后关上。他被偷走了。 [4]

[26] 帕拉塞尔苏斯（Paracelsus，1493-1541），瑞士医师、炼金师，促进了药物化学的发展。

[27] 原文为法语。

第四章 白教堂 [28]

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“今天早上，阿拉贝尔和我带着他，”巴雷特小姐写道，“坐马车去维尔街办点事。跟往常一样，他跟着我们进出店里。从店里出来上马车时，他还在我脚边。我转过身便唤道：‘弗勒希。’阿拉贝尔也四处找他。可弗勒希踪影全无！就在那一瞬间，他被人从车轮底下抓走了，你明白吗？”勃朗宁先生非常明白。巴雷特小姐忘了拴狗链，弗勒希就这样被偷走了。这便是一八四六年时温波尔街及附近街区的法则。

诚然，没有任何东西可以打破温波尔街表面的稳固和安宁。体弱多病者步履所及或巴思椅能被推到之处，放眼望去，皆是四层洋楼、大玻璃窗和桃花心木大门构成的赏心悦目的景致。哪怕乘坐双驾马车，只要马车夫小心谨慎，在下午的兜风行程中也不会越过礼仪与体面的边界。然而，如果你并非病弱之人，如果你不坐双驾马车，如果你——跟很多人一样——体格健全、充满活力——喜欢步行，那么你很可能会在距离温波尔街几步之遥的地方看到各种景象，听到各种用语，闻到各种味道，甚至开始疑虑温波尔街本身的安稳。在这一时期，当托马斯·比姆斯 [29] 先生打算到伦敦逛逛，见到的恰是此景。他感到惊讶，事实上他深受震动。威斯敏斯特区富丽堂皇的建筑鳞次栉比，然而其后便是破败的棚屋，人们成群地挤在屋内，屋子下方便是一群群牛——“每七英尺就挤着两个人”。他自感有责任把所见公之于众。然而一个人该如何不失文雅地描述一间位于牛棚之上、合住着两三个家庭的卧室，况——这牛棚甚至没有通风设备，牛就在卧室底下遭人挤奶、屠宰和烹食？当比姆斯先生尝试这么做时，他却发现，这项任务穷尽了英语语言中的所有词语。他还是认为自己有义务把下午散步经过伦敦最具贵族气派的几个教区时的见闻如实陈述。斑疹伤寒的感染概率是如此之高，富人不会知道自己面临何种危险。对于自己在威斯敏斯特、帕丁顿及马里波恩区的所见所闻，他根本做不到三缄其口。譬如，有一幢本来属于某位贵族的老宅邸，昔日的大理石壁炉台依然存在。房间皆由木头嵌板，楼梯扶栏上皆雕刻着花，然而地板已经腐烂，墙壁上沾满了污秽，成群的衣不蔽体的男男女女栖身于此，占据了古老的宴会厅。接着他继续往前走。这块儿某个有商业头脑的建筑商将一幢老宅夷平，取而代之的是一栋偷工减料的廉价公寓。雨沿着屋顶渗入室内，风则从墙缝中钻了进去。他看见有个孩子拿着个铁罐

在条鲜绿色的溪流里舀水，便问他这里的人喝不喝那溪里的水。是的，他们喝，还在里面洗澡，因为房东每周只肯供应两次水。这类景象之所以尤其令人吃惊，是因为在伦敦最安静、最文明的街区里——“最上流的教区也在所难免”——竟也能遇到此般场景。再比方说，就在巴雷特小姐卧室的后方，便是伦敦最不堪入目的贫民窟之一。肮脏败坏和体面富贵在那里交会。当然，还有些区域早已由穷人接管，无人干扰。在白教堂区，或托特纳姆考特路下面的那块三角地带，几个世纪以来，贫穷、罪恶与苦难一直在那里滋长繁衍、生生不息，无人干预。又好比圣贾尔斯区里大量密集的老房子，“俨然是罪犯的流放地，是一座不折不扣的贫民都市”。这流放地被称为“白嘴鸦”，称呼十分恰当，因为贫民们就是这般聚集在一起的。区内人挤人，户户相叠，仿佛黑压压地挤在树梢上的一群白嘴鸦。只不过这里的房子并非树木建成，甚至都不再是房子了。它们是由砖块砌成的牢房，由流满了脏污的巷道分隔开来。从早到晚，衣衫不整的各路人马在小巷里熙来攘往；入夜后，白天赴伦敦西区讨生活的盗贼、乞丐和娼妓又源源不断地涌回区内。警方对此束手无策。过路人只能加快脚步，不敢稍停，或许只会和比姆斯先生一样，在一堆旁征博引、托词规避和委婉客气的辞藻中悄悄暗示天下未必像理想中那样处处太平。霍乱有可能降临，而——即便有霍乱降临的征兆，也不至于这般躲闪。

不过那个征兆在一八四六年的夏天尚未出现。对于居住在温波尔街及附近街区的人来说，确保安全的唯一方法便是决不越雷池一步，而一带狗出门一定得系狗链。如果你跟巴雷特小姐一样一时疏忽，那就只好付出代价，正像巴雷特小姐此刻必须付出代价一样。温波尔街与圣贾尔斯区比邻而居的法则简单明了：圣贾尔斯区尽管偷，温波尔街必须乖乖付钱。因此，阿拉贝尔立刻“开始安慰我，告诉我顶多花十英镑，肯定能把他赎回来”。据估计，十英镑差不多是泰勒先生给可卡犬开的价。泰勒先生是这个地区的地头蛇，温波尔街的贵妇人只要一丢了狗，就会去找泰勒先生。由他开个价码，狗主人赶紧付钱，如果不付，几天之后温波尔街便会收到一个牛皮纸袋，里面装着狗头和狗爪——至少这是街坊上某位女士企图跟泰勒先生讨价还价之后的下场。不过巴雷特小姐当然愿意付钱，一回家便告知了兄弟亨利。亨利当天下午去见了泰勒先生，发现泰勒先生“坐在一间挂了油画的房间里抽雪茄”——据说泰勒先生仅靠温波尔街的狗，年收入便达两千到三千英镑。泰勒先生一口答应出面和他的“社区”交涉，狗第二天就会归还。这件事很伤脑筋，尤其眼下她正急着用钱，所以更让人恼火；可要是在一八四六年忘记给自己的狗拴狗链，这就是不可避免的后果！

但是对弗勒希，情况却很不一样。巴雷特小姐想到，弗勒希“并不知道我们可以把他赎回来”；他从来没有精通过人类社会的游戏法则。“这下他肯定要哭号一整个晚上，我很了解他。”九月一日星期

二的下午，巴雷特小姐在给勃朗宁写信时这样说道。就在巴雷特小姐给勃朗宁写信的同时，弗勒希正经历着他这辈子最恐怖的遭遇。他困惑极了，不明究竟，前一秒钟还在维尔街，置身于彩缎蕾丝之间，下一秒便整个儿地栽进布袋里，颠颠簸簸地被拎着迅速穿过几条街，最后终于被倒了出来——倒在这里！他发现自己在一片漆黑之中，又冷又湿。头晕脑涨过去之后，他渐渐分辨出自己身处一间低矮阴暗的房间——几把破椅子，一张破烂的床垫。接着有人捉住他的一条腿，把他紧紧拴在某样东西上。有什么东西趴在地板上——是人是兽，他辨别不出。巨大的靴子和曳地的长裙不断地进进出出，苍蝇嗡嗡地围着地上几片腐烂的臭肉。孩子们从黑暗的角落里爬出来，拧他的耳朵。他哀号一声，他的脑袋挨了重重的一击。他靠着墙蜷缩在只有几英寸的潮湿砖块上。这会儿，他能看见地板上挤满了形形色色的动物：一群狗你争我抢地嘶咬着一根腐臭的骨头，他们瘦得肋骨都快戳破肚皮了——他们饥不择食、又脏又病、毛发蓬乱。然而弗勒希看得出来，其实他们全都是血统最高贵的犬类，是系狗链的狗，是仆役养的狗——就像他自己一样。

他趴在那儿，连哼都不敢哼一声，一小时接着一小时过去了。渴是他最大的煎熬。他舔了一口身旁水桶里那深绿色的水，这一舔让他作起呕来，他宁愿渴死也不会再喝第二口。可是一只威风高贵的灵缇正贪婪地喝个不停。每次房门被踢开，他都抬头看：巴雷特小姐——是巴雷特小姐吗？她终于来了吗？但进来的是一个毛发浓密的恶棍，他把动物们全踢到旁边，踉踉跄跄地走到一把破椅子前，瘫坐了下去。然后夜色愈来愈浓，他几乎分辨不清地板上、床垫上、破椅子上都是些什么东西。有人将一小截蜡烛插在壁炉架上。外边的排水沟里燃着一团火。借着那团闪烁不定的微弱火光，弗勒希能看到从窗外经过的可怕脸庞不怀好意地睥睨着屋内。然后他们进到屋来，本来就满满当当的小房间愈加拥挤，他只好缩成一团，更加紧贴着墙趴着。这群可怕的怪物——有些衣衫褴褛，有些涂满胭脂、身插羽毛——要么蹲在地上，要么弓背围坐在桌旁。他们喝起酒来，不时恶言相向，拳脚相对。从扔到地板上的口袋里滚出更多的狗——小型宠物犬、塞特犬、指示犬……个个脖子都还套着项圈。还有一只巨大的凤头鹦鹉，一边振翅疾飞，从一个角落冲向另一个角落，一边尖叫着：“漂亮宝莉！漂亮宝莉！”那口音足以吓坏它的女主人，一位住在梅达韦尔区的寡妇。接下来女人们也打开了口袋，手镯、戒指和胸针倒了满桌，这些首饰跟弗勒希看巴雷特小姐及亨丽埃塔小姐戴的那些一样。那群牛鬼蛇神伸出爪子在首饰堆里乱抓，咒骂着，争吵着。狗儿乱吠，孩子们尖叫，色彩斑斓的凤头鹦鹉（温波尔街的一扇窗子里挂有鸟笼，弗勒希常在其中看到类似的一只鸟）也厉声叫着：“漂亮宝莉！漂亮宝莉！”一声急过一声，直到被一只忽然飞过来的拖鞋打中，它才住了口，狂乱地拍击着那对带有黄色斑点的鸽灰色大翅膀。于是蜡烛突然

一歪，倒了下来，房里一片漆黑。屋里也越来越热，那气味、那热度让人难以忍受。弗勒希的鼻子火烧火燎，皮毛抽搐起来。可是巴雷特小姐还是没有来。

巴雷特小姐躺在她位于温波尔街的沙发上。她很恼火，又很担忧，但并没有特别紧张。弗勒希当然会遭点罪，他会整夜哀号吠叫，不过只是几个小时的事情。泰勒先生会开个价，她只要照付，弗勒希就会被归还了。

九月二日星期三，白教堂区的贫民窟里晨曦微露。七零八落的玻璃窗渐渐变成灰色。光线爬上仰天躺在地板上的众多恶棍那毛发浓厚的脸上。弗勒希从遮蔽双眼的迷离之境中醒来，再一次面对现实。此刻眼前的一切便是现实——这个房间，这些恶棍，这群哀号着、乱咬着、被拴牢的狗，这片黑暗，这股潮湿。就在昨天，他还跟着高贵的女士们置身于彩缎环绕的商店里，可那是真的吗？温波尔街这个地方又真的存在吗？真有那么一个房间吗？那个房间里摆着盛满清水的紫色罐子，他曾经趴在那个房间的软垫上，还被赏过一块烤得恰好的鸡翅膀，他还出于嫉妒和愤怒咬了一位戴黄手套的男士，这样的房间真的有过吗？那样的生活与感情飘远了，消解了，变得虚幻起来。

在这里，光线穿过飞扬的尘土透进来，一个女人吃力地从一团麻袋里爬起来，跌跌撞撞地走出去拿啤酒。酗酒与咒骂再度开始。一个胖女人揪住弗勒希的两只耳朵，把他拎了起来，捅戳他的肋骨，拿他开了一个恶心的玩笑。她又把他扔回地上，引来众人爆笑。门被踢开又砰地关上。他每回都会抬头观望。是威尔逊吗？有没有可能是勃朗宁先生，或巴雷特小姐？但不是！只是另一个贼，另一个杀人犯。仅仅瞅一眼那些曳地的长裙，那些粗硬的靴子，他就愈加往角落里缩。有一次，有人朝他丢过来一根骨头，他试着去啃，但他的牙齿咬不动硬得像石头似的肉，那股恶臭也让他作呕。他更加口渴了，不得不舔舔从桶里洒出来的绿水。星期三慢慢过去，趴在破木地板上的他觉得越来越热，越来越渴，全身越来越酸痛，所有感受全都搅和在了一起。他对发生了什么也漠不关心，唯有门被打开时，他才会抬起头来看。可惜，每次都不是巴雷特小姐。

躺在温波尔街家里沙发上的巴雷特小姐愈加焦虑起来。显然事情进展多有不顺。泰勒答应过星期三下午到白教堂区去跟他的“社区”交涉。但星期三下午、星期三晚上都已过去，泰勒一直没有现身。她估摸这大概只是意味着价码抬高了一碰上这个节骨眼，实在很麻烦。然而，她当然还是要照付，“我不能没有弗勒希，你知道的。”她写信跟勃朗宁先生说，“我不能冒任何风险去讨价还价。”于是，她继续躺在沙发上一边写信给勃朗宁，一边竖着耳朵等待敲门声。但是只有威尔逊前来送信，前来送热水。上床睡觉时间都到了，弗勒希还没有归

来。

九月三日星期四，白教堂区东方欲晓。那扇门开了又关。趴在弗勒希身边哼唧了整个晚上的红色塞特犬被一个穿鼠皮背心的恶汉一把抱走了一命运会是如何呢？被宰杀和存活于此，哪一种更幸运？这般的苟活与那样死掉，哪一样更糟？喧嚣嘈杂、又饿又渴、臭气熏天——弗勒希想起自己曾经非常讨厌古龙水的味道——这一切迅速抹去了任何清醒的意念，驱走了所有的欲望。往昔的记忆碎片开始在他脑海里翻腾。那是年老的米特福德博士在田野里高声呼唤的声音吗？那是克伦哈波克在门口跟面包师傅说长道短吗？屋子里一阵嘎吱声，他还以为那是米特福德小姐捆扎一束天竺葵发出的声响。可那只是风——因为今天风雨交加——吹打着糊在破窗框上的牛皮纸；那只是阴沟里的醉鬼在胡言乱语；那只是角落里的老太婆一边在火上用平底锅烤鲱鱼，一边咕咕哝哝个不停。他被遗忘了，他被抛弃了。不会有人来救他，不会有人跟他说话——鸚鵡大叫着：“漂亮宝莉！漂亮宝莉！”而金丝雀没完没了地发出愚蠢的啁啾。

夜色再一次笼罩室内，托盘上竖起蜡烛，室外黯淡的光线闪烁不定。扛着布袋的凶恶之徒和涂脂抹粉的俗艳女人成群结队、拖拖拉拉地从门口进到屋里，纷纷栽倒在破床破桌上。又一个夜晚的黑暗降临在白教堂区。雨水持续而规律地从屋顶的一个漏洞滴下来，滴答滴答敲击着摆在下面接水的水桶。巴雷特小姐没有出现。

星期四，温波尔街晨光熹微，却不见弗勒希的踪影——也没有泰勒先生的消息。巴雷特小姐惊恐万分，四下打听。她把兄弟亨利叫来仔细盘问，这才发现被他给骗了。“魔头”泰勒前天晚上如约前来，并给出了条件：给“社区”六个几尼，再付他半个几尼。可是亨利没有告诉她，却禀报了巴雷特先生，结果当然是巴雷特先生吩咐亨利不许给钱，也不许向她透露这次会面。巴雷特小姐“极为恼怒”，恳求亨利立刻去找泰勒先生，付钱给他。亨利拒绝了，并“把爸爸搬出来做挡箭牌”。但这个时候把爸爸搬出来有什么用，她抗议道。他们在这里说爸爸如何如何的同时，弗勒希可能就被宰掉了。她下定决心，如果亨利不肯去，那她就自己去：“……如果他们不照我的话做，明天一早我就亲自去把弗勒希接回来。”她在信中如是告诉勃朗宁先生。

然而，巴雷特小姐发现此事说来容易做起来难。她去接弗勒希，就跟弗勒希回到她身边一样艰难，整条温波尔街都在跟她对着干。弗勒希被偷、泰勒索求赎金这件事现在已是尽人皆知。温波尔街坚决表明立场，反对白教堂区。失明的博伊德先生传话过来，表示他认为支付赎金将是“一桩可怕的罪行”。她的父亲及兄弟都联合起来反对她，——为了维护他们那个阶层的利益，出卖什么都在所不惜。可糟糕的是——尤其糟糕的是——勃朗宁先生凭借他的影响力、口才、学养和逻辑，

选择站在温波尔街，而不是弗勒希一边。他写道：倘若巴雷特小姐对泰勒屈服，不啻于对暴政屈服，对敲诈勒索者让步，她在助长邪恶压倒正义，助力恶行侵害无辜。倘若她满足了泰勒的要求，“……那些没有足够的钱支付赎金的穷困的狗主人，又该如何是好”？他的想象力大迸发，他想象如果泰勒哪怕只问他要五先令的赎金，他会怎么说。他会说：“‘你’必须对你那帮走狗的所作所为负责！我重申：‘你’别跟我说些什么砍狗头剁狗爪的废话。就像我实实在在地站在你眼前跟你说话一样，我将实实在在地穷毕生之力来打倒你，打倒你所代表的恶势力；我将实实在在地想尽办法揭发你和你的同谋共犯，送你们上绝路——我现在已经发现了‘你’，我再也不会放过……”如果勃朗宁先生有幸见到泰勒先生的话，他就准备这样当面回应泰勒。事实上，他意犹未尽，在同一个星期四下午赶上稍晚的邮车，又送来了第二封信，信里说：“……想到各阶层的压迫者在发现沉默弱者的秘密之后，是如何随心所欲、无所不用其极地操纵宰控他们时，真是让人毛骨悚然。”他并不是责备巴雷特小姐——对他而言，她所做的一切，没有一件不是完美的，没有一件是不可接受的。只是，他在星期五早晨继续写道：“……我认为这是令人惋惜的懦弱表现……”倘若她助长了泰勒的偷狗行为，便是在助长巴纳德·格雷戈里 [30] 盗取德行的行径。所以，对于那些被巴纳德·格雷戈里一类勒索之徒从名录上挑中，遭到恣意抹黑而刎颈自尽或逃亡国外的可怜虫，她也负有间接责任。“其实何必对世上最浅显易懂的道理发上这样一通陈词滥调呢？”就这样，勃朗宁先生每天在伦敦新十字区振振有词地写满两封信，并送过来。

巴雷特小姐躺在沙发上读那些信。让步本该是一件多么容易的事——说一句“在我看来你的见解比一百只可卡犬更有价值”本该是一件很容易的事。她大可往枕头上一靠，叹口气说：“我只是一名弱女子，对法律和正义一窍不通，你替我做决定吧！”这该多么容易啊。只要她拒付赎金，只要她反抗泰勒和以他为首的“社区”，那么即使弗勒希被杀，即使那可怕的包裹送到，被她打开，然后掉出他的脑袋和脚爪，罗伯特·勃朗宁也会站在她身边，向她保证她做了正确的事并赢得他的尊敬。可巴雷特小姐就是不甘示弱，她拿起笔，反驳罗伯特·勃朗宁。这都很有道理，她写道，引用多恩 [31] 的话、举格雷戈里为例，并想象自己正义凛然地回答泰勒先生——如果泰勒攻击的是她，如果格雷戈里诋毁的是她的名誉，她也会这么做——只要他们敢！可是，倘若那一群盗贼绑架的是她，倘若落在他们手里的是她，他们威胁要割掉她的耳朵并邮寄到新十字区，勃朗宁先生会怎么做呢？不管他会作何反应，反正她心意已决。弗勒希孤立无助，她有义务去救他。“可是弗勒希，可怜的弗勒希，他如此忠诚地爱我，我难道有权牺牲无辜的他，就为了表示我反对人世间如泰勒先生之流的罪恶吗？”不论勃朗宁先生可能会说什么，她都要去救弗勒希，哪怕她必须深入白教堂的

虎穴去接他，哪怕罗伯特·勃朗宁因此而鄙夷她。

于是，星期六那天，她开始穿衣打扮，而勃朗宁先生的信就展开着摆在她面前的桌上。她读了他信上所言：“再说一句——在这整个事件当中，我所致力反对的是在这个父权世界里所有当家的丈夫、父兄及统治者制定的一切可憎的规矩。”所以，要是她去了白教堂区，那就是站到了罗伯特·勃朗宁的对立面，就是反对了那些当家的丈夫、父兄及统治者。然而，她继续穿衣打扮。马车房里有条狗在嚎，它被拴了起来，孤苦无助地被残酷的人们掌控。那狗似乎在嚎着提醒她：“别忘了弗勒希！”她穿上鞋子，披上披风，戴上帽子。她又瞥了一眼勃朗宁先生的那封信。“我将娶你为妻。”她读道。但那条狗嚎个不停。她离开房间下了楼。

亨利·巴雷特迎向她，表示她若真的去做她扬言要做的事，就很有可能遭人抢劫甚至被谋害。她吩咐威尔逊去叫马车。尽管威尔逊吓得浑身筛糠，但还是顺从地照做了。马车到了。巴雷特小姐让威尔逊上车。威尔逊虽然认定自己死期将至，仍然上了车。巴雷特小姐告诉车夫去肖尔迪奇区的曼宁街。待巴雷特小姐自己也登车后，马车出发了。他们很快便将大玻璃窗、桃花心木大门与地下室采光井的栅栏甩在身后，进入了一个巴雷特小姐闻所未闻、想所未想的世界。他们在一个卧室地板下方就是牛群的世界，那里的人家都睡在窗户破了的房间里；这是一个每周只供水两次的世界，一个罪恶与贫穷滋养着罪恶与贫穷的世界。他们已经来到了正派体面的马车夫一无所知的区域。马车停住，车夫去一家酒馆问路。“里面出来两三个男人，‘噢，我敢说你们是来找泰勒先生的！’”一辆马车载着两位淑女出现在这个神秘的世界，只会为了一桩事，而那桩事已经无人不晓，就是那邪恶至极的事。其中一个男人跑进一栋屋子，出来后表示泰勒先生：“不在家！”“问我愿不愿意下车。威尔逊在一边害怕得要命，哀求我千万别做这种傻事。”一大群男人和男孩紧紧包围了马车。“那你愿不愿意见泰勒太太？”那男人问。巴雷特小姐一丁点见泰勒太太的意愿都没有，可这会儿一个肥硕超群的女人已从那屋子里走了出来，“一辈子的心宽养出来的体胖”。她告诉巴雷特小姐，她丈夫外出不在，“可能几分钟就回来，也可能几个小时后才回来——问我愿不愿意下车等他”。威尔逊使劲拉她的外衣。想象一下在那个女人的家里等人！坐在被一大群男人和男孩包围的马车里已经够糟了。于是巴雷特小姐便坐在马车里与那位“硕大的女匪”谈判。泰勒先生手上有她的狗，她说，泰勒先生答应会归还她的狗，能否请泰勒先生当天一定把狗送回温波尔街。“噢，当然可以！”胖女人堆着一脸无比亲切的笑容答道。她相信泰勒先生正是为此事才出门的。她一边说，一边“轻松地愉快地左右摇晃着脑袋”。

就这样，马车掉头，离开了肖尔迪奇区的曼宁街。威尔逊认

为“我们简直是虎口脱险”，巴雷特小姐自己则忧虑万分。“显然帮派在那里势力庞大，这些社区、这些‘千奇百怪的人’……的存在早已根深蒂固。”她写道。她的脑海中思潮汹涌，眼前充斥着各种影像。原来温波尔街的另一边是这副模样——这些面孔，这些屋子。她在酒馆外的马车里所看到的東西，比过去五年躺在温波尔街后面卧房里看到的東西加起来都多。“那些男人的脸！”她感叹道。那些面孔烙印在她的眼球上，刺激着她的想象力，即便是“圣洁的大理石神灵”——书架上那几尊半身像——也从未让她产生这么多灵感。在这里生活着跟她一样的女子；当她躺在沙发上阅读、写作时，那群人却在这个世界里如此活着。然而马车此时已再度行驶在两排四层的房屋中间，两侧熟悉的大门与窗户回归视线——有棱有角的砖道，黄铜门环，整齐划一的窗帘。终于到温波尔街五十号了。威尔逊飞快地跳下车——可以想象她意识到自己平安无事该有多么如释重负，但巴雷特小姐却似乎迟疑了片刻。她仍然看得见“那些男人的面孔”。多年后，当她坐在意大利阳光灿烂的阳台上写作时，那些面孔还会再次浮现于她的眼前 [5]。它们将激发她的灵感，让她写下《奥罗拉·利》长诗中最生动的章节。不过男管家已经打开了前门，她走上楼再次回到了自己的房间。

星期六是弗勒希遭囚禁的第五天。他竭尽力气，几乎不再抱有希望，气喘吁吁地趴在拥挤地板上的那个黑暗角落里。门猛地被摔开又砰地关上。粗哑的声音大喊着。女人们尖声叫着。鸚鵡喋喋不休，仿佛从未对梅达韦尔区的寡妇们说过话似的，然而现在邪恶的老妇也基本上不会咒骂它们。虫子在弗勒希的毛皮里爬来爬去，但他实在太虚弱了，太茫然麻木了，以至于他都懒得甩动自己的毛发。弗勒希之前的生活及其中的无数场景——雷丁、温室、米特福德小姐、凯尼恩先生、书架、半身像、遮光帘上的农人——全似一片片掉进大锅里的雪花一般融化得无影无踪。倘若他心中仍有一线希望，那也是寄托于某种无名无形的东西上——是一张他依然称作“巴雷特小姐”的模糊脸庞。她仍旧存在；世界上其他的一切都消失了，但她仍旧存在，尽管他们之间存在的道道鸿沟让她几乎不可能来解救他。黑暗再度降临，几乎快要碾碎他最后的一线希望——巴雷特小姐。

事实上，纵然到了这最后关头，温波尔街的各方势力仍在奋力阻止弗勒希与巴雷特小姐团圆。星期六下午，她躺着等待泰勒到来，正如那肥硕超群的女人允诺的。他终于来了，却没有带狗。他传话说，只要巴雷特小姐当场付他六个几尼，他“以自己的名誉发誓”，必定直奔白教堂区去把狗接过来。泰勒这个“大魔头”的名誉到底值多少，巴雷特小姐不敢说，可是“似乎也没有其他法子”，弗勒希的性命可是危在旦夕。她数了六个几尼，派人送下去给等在楼下走廊里的泰勒。只不过倒霉的是，当泰勒在走廊里等待，置身于雨伞堆、雕刻品、厚毛地毯和其他珍贵物品之间时，艾尔弗雷德·巴雷特走了进来。眼见大

魔头泰勒居然登堂入室出现在自己家里，他不禁大发脾气，暴跳如雷。他咒骂泰勒是“诈骗犯、骗子、贼”！泰勒先生于是反唇相讥。更糟的是，泰勒竟发誓“就算狗儿正一心期盼救援，你们也永远别想再见到他了！”说完他便冲出了房子。也就是说，第二天一早，血迹斑斑的包裹便会送到。

巴雷特小姐又一次飞快地更衣，冲下了楼。威尔逊在哪儿？让她去叫马车。她打算立马回肖尔迪奇区。全家人都跑来劝阻她：天色已晚，她已筋疲力尽。就算一个健康的男人这么做都是在冒险，她这么做简直是疯狂。他们就是这么对她说的。她的兄弟姐妹全都围着她，吓唬她，阻止她，“大骂我‘疯了’，执拗又任性——我也像泰勒先生一样被他们冠上了无数头衔”。但她坚持自己的立场。最后，他们终于明白了她疯狂的程度，无论冒什么样的风险，他们都非让步不可。塞普蒂默斯保证，只要白白 [32] 肯回到自己的房间，并“控制好脾气”，他愿意亲自去见泰勒，付清赎金，把狗接回来。

九月五日，白教堂区的暮光渐渐没入漆黑的夜色。房门又一次被踢开，一个毛茸茸的男人一把揪住弗勒希的脖子，把他从角落里拎了出来。弗勒希抬头看见宿敌那张令人惊悚的脸，不知等待自己的是死亡还是自由。其实除了鬼魂般萦绕不去的记忆之外，他什么都不在乎了。那男人弯下腰。他粗壮的手指为什么要在他的喉咙下摸索呢？是一把刀，还是一条链子？弗勒希跌跌撞撞，被半遮着眼，摇摇晃晃地带到了户外。

在温波尔街，巴雷特小姐咽不下晚餐。弗勒希是死是活，她完全没数。八点钟，敲门声响起，是勃朗宁先生的信像往常一样送来了。但门打开，信被送进来时，有什么东西也冲了进来——是弗勒希。他直冲向自己的紫色水罐。罐子里的水加满了三次，他却依旧喝个不停。巴雷特小姐观望着那条失魂落魄、晕头转向的脏狗一刻不停地喝水。“他见到我远不如我想象的那样热忱。”她评论道。是的，此刻这个世界上他渴望的东西只有一样——洁净的水。

话说回来，巴雷特小姐只是瞥了那些男人几眼，那些脸便让她终生难忘。弗勒希却任由他们摆布了整整五天。此刻他再度趴在软垫上，清凉的水似乎是唯一有存在感、有真实性的东西了。他一直在喝水。卧房里昔日的神祇——书架、衣橱、半身像——似乎失去了存在感。这间卧室不再代表全世界，它只是一个庇护所，只是在毒蛇猛兽潜行的森林中由一棵颤巍巍的酸模树遮蔽的一小片幽谷，每一棵树后面都藏着一个伺机出击的凶手。当他茫然而疲惫不堪地趴在巴雷特小姐脚边的沙发上时，耳畔依然回响着被拴住的狗的号叫和饱受惊吓的鸟的尖叫。每当门一打开，他都吓了一跳，总以为会有个毛发浓重的男人带着刀进来——那不过是带了一本书来的凯尼恩先生，或是戴着黄手套的

勃朗宁先生。可现在，见到凯尼恩先生和勃朗宁先生，他就往回缩。他不再信任他们。在那些堆满笑容的友善面孔之后，隐藏着背叛、残忍与欺骗。他们的抚摸是空洞的。他甚至不敢跟威尔逊一起走着去邮筒寄信。不用狗链拖，他是绝对不动的。每当他们说：“可怜的弗勒希，是不是有坏人把你偷走了？”他便抬起头来悲鸣或哀号。一记鞭响会让他闪电一般冲向地下室通风井的台阶，逃到安全地带。在屋里的时候，他会在沙发上更接近巴雷特小姐。只有她一个人没有抛弃他。他对她仍葆有些许信念。渐渐地，她身上的存在感越来越强烈了。精疲力竭、浑身战栗、肮脏不堪、骨瘦如柴的他就趴在她脚边的沙发上。

时光荏苒，白教堂的记忆也渐渐褪色，紧贴着巴雷特小姐趴在沙发上的弗勒希比以往更能读懂她的心思。他们曾经被迫分离，如今再度聚首；事实上，他俩从未如此心灵相通过。她的每一举每一动也都传递给了他。她现在似乎无时无刻不在有所动作。一个包裹的送达甚至让她跳了起来。她打开包裹，用颤抖的双手拿出一双厚皮靴，然后立刻把它们藏进橱柜的角落里。然后她躺下来，仿佛什么事都没发生似的，尽管事实并非如此。只剩他俩独处时，她起身，从抽屉里拿出一条钻石项链。她还拿出装勃朗宁先生信件的那个盒子。她把那双皮靴、那条项链和那盒信全都放进一个绒毡制的箱子里，接着——似乎听见有人上楼——迅速把箱子推到床底下，匆忙躺下，用披肩把自己盖好。这些偷偷摸摸的迹象，弗勒希预感，肯定暗示着某种危机的临近。难道他们要一起远走高飞？莫非他们将一起逃离这个充斥着偷狗贼和暴君的可怕世界？噢，若果真如此，该有多好！他兴奋得颤抖呜咽起来，但巴雷特小姐轻声命令他保持安静，他立刻就安静了下来，她也异常安静。她的兄弟姐妹进门来的时候，她总是安安静静地躺在沙发上；她也躺着跟巴雷特先生说话，一如往常。

可是到了星期六，即九月十二日那天，巴雷特小姐做了一件弗勒希从来没见过她做过的事。她梳妆打扮，似乎准备早餐后直接出门。更不同寻常的是，当弗勒希看着她换衣服时，他从她脸上的表情就清楚地知道她不会带他一起去，她要独自去办一件秘密的事。十点钟，威尔逊进了房间。她也穿戴整齐，仿佛准备出门散步。她们俩一起出去了，而弗勒希趴在沙发上等待她们回来。约摸一个小时之后，巴雷特小姐自个儿回来了。她没有看向他——她仿佛什么都看不见。她把手套脱了下来，在那么一瞬间，他看见一枚金戒指在她左手的一根手指上闪着光芒。然后他看着她摘下那枚戒指，把它藏进一个抽屉的最深处。接着她跟往常一样，在沙发上躺下。他趴在她身边，几乎不敢呼吸，因为他知道，无论发生了什么事，他们都必须不惜一切代价去保守那个秘密。

卧房内的生活也必须不惜一切代价地照常进行下去，然而一切都

不一样了。在弗勒希看来，就连每次拉开和关上遮光帘都像是在打信号。在那几尊半身像上移动的光影也在提醒、昭示着什么。房间里的每样东西似乎都意识到变化即将到来，都在准备迎接某件大事；可是一切又恭默守静、秘而不宣。兄弟姐妹们一如既往地进进出出，巴雷特先生一如既往地晚间来探视，一如既往地检查肉排是否吃完了，葡萄酒是否喝光了。有其他人在房间里的时候，巴雷特小姐一如既往地谈笑风生，丝毫不露有所隐瞒的蛛丝马迹。但那些人一旦离去，她会一边竖起耳朵留着神，一边匆匆忙忙、偷偷摸摸地拉出床底下的箱子，往里面装东西。这些紧张的迹象是确定无疑的。星期日，教堂的钟声响起。“那是什么钟声？”有人问。“是马里波恩教堂的钟声。”亨利埃塔小姐回答。弗勒希看见巴雷特小姐的脸色突然一片惨白。但其他人似乎什么都没有注意到。

就这样，星期一过去了，星期二、星期三、星期四也过去了。一如既往地吃喝、谈话和静卧于沙发上，这就像给他们覆盖了一块静默之毯。弗勒希在不安稳的睡梦中辗转反侧，他梦见他们在广袤的森林里，摸着黑一起蹲伏于蕨类植物和绿叶中，接着绿叶被拨开，他醒了过来。周围漆黑一片，可是在黑暗里，他看见威尔逊偷偷溜进房间，取出床底下的那个箱子，不声不响地拎了出去。那是九月十八日星期五的晚上。整个星期六早晨，他就那样趴在那儿，好像知道有条手帕随时会落地，有声低低的口哨随时会响起，这发出的可是生死攸关的信号。他看着巴雷特小姐自己穿好了衣服。四点差一刻，房门打开了，威尔逊走了进来。接着信号发出了一巴雷特小姐把他抱进怀里。她站了起来，走到门边。他俩驻足片刻，环顾房内：那是沙发，旁边摆着勃朗宁先生的扶手椅，那是几尊半身像和桌子。阳光透过常春藤的叶缝洒了进来，印有散步农人的遮光帘轻轻飘向窗外。一切都一如既往。一切似乎都等待着成千上万个类似的动作照旧进行，可是对巴雷特小姐和弗勒希来说，这却是最后一次。巴雷特小姐悄无声息地把门关上了。

他们悄无声息地溜下楼去，走过客厅、图书室、餐厅。每个房间看起来都习如往常，味道也和平日里并无二致；四下一片静谧，仿佛在炎热的九月午后沉睡着。卡蒂利内也趴在大厅的地毯上睡觉。他们走到前门，悄没声儿地转动门把手。一辆马车等在门外。

“去霍奇森旅馆。”巴雷特小姐说道。她的声音就像是耳语一般。弗勒希一动也不动地坐在她的膝盖上。世界上没有任何东西能让他打破此刻浩瀚无际的静默。

[28] 过去曾为伦敦的贫民区，最早即从一座白教堂开始发展，因而得名。

[29] 托马斯·比姆斯 (Thomas Beames, 1814或1815-1864), 牧师, 著有《伦敦的贫民窟: 过去、现在与未来》一书。

[30] 巴纳德·格雷戈里 (Barnard Gregory, 1796-1852), 英国记者、出版人兼演员。于1831年至1849年间发行《讽刺家》报, 并利用这份报纸发表伦敦社交界人士的丑闻, 以勒索对方。这种行为引发了几起著名的诽谤诉讼, 他也因此多次入狱。

[31] 多恩 (Donne, 1572-1631), 17世纪英国玄学派诗人、教士。诗作大多在去世后才印行。

[32] 白 (Ba), 即伊丽莎白 (Elizabeth) 的昵称。

第五章 意大利

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连续数小时、数天、数周，周遭似乎只剩黑暗与颠簸，只有乍现的光亮，随后进入漫长阴暗的隧道，被甩东甩西，又被仓促地拎到亮光下，看到巴雷特小姐靠近的脸颊，随后是纤细的树木、线条、铁轨和光影斑驳的高耸房屋——因为当时铁路运输有野蛮的规定，行程中狗必须关在狗箱里。然而弗勒希并不害怕，他们逃离了，他们把暴君和偷狗贼远远地甩在身后。尽情颠簸、尽情咔嚓吧，火车不断把他东摔西撞时，他喃喃自语道：“只要能让我们远离温波尔街和白教堂区就行。”最后，光线变得充足了，颠簸也停止了。他听见鸟儿在唱歌，树儿在风中叹息。抑或是水流的奔腾声吗？他终于睁开了眼睛，抖抖身上的毛皮。他看见了可以想见的最令人讶异的景象。巴雷特小姐身处湍急水流当中的一块岩石之上。树木向她探下身来，河水在她周围激荡。她危在旦夕。弗勒希纵身一跃，水花飞溅。他穿过河流，来到她身旁。“……他以彼得拉克的名义受洗了。”当他爬上石头到她身边时，巴雷特小姐如是言。原来他们来到了沃克吕兹 [33]，而她正栖身于彼得拉克之泉当中的岩石上。

随后是更多的颠簸，更多的咔嚓声，接下来他又一次在平稳的地面上站定了。黑暗被分开，光线倾泻而下，洒满他全身。这是一间阳光普照的巨大的空屋子，他站在房间的红色瓷砖上，发觉自己还活脱脱的，如梦初醒，又满怀困惑。他跑过来跑过去，这里嗅嗅，那里摸摸。这儿没有地毯和壁炉。这儿没有沙发，没有扶手椅，没有书架，也没有半身像。呛人的陌生气味刺激着他的鼻孔，让他打起喷嚏。光线极其强烈、澄澈，令他目眩神迷。他从未身处过这样的房间——如果这真是一个房间的话——如此坚硬、如此明亮、如此巨大，又如此空旷。巴雷特小姐坐在屋子中央一张桌子旁的椅子上，看上去比以往更加娇小。然后威尔逊带他出了门，他发现自己几乎啥也看不见，先是因为阳光，再是因为阴影。街道的一半仿佛燃烧般炙热，另一半却寒气逼人。路过的女人们身上裹着毛皮大衣，却又都打着阳伞遮阴。那条街异常干燥。尽管眼下已是十一月中旬，地面上却没有会弄湿他脚掌或黏结他脚毛的烂泥和水坑。这里没有地下室的采光井，也没有栏杆，更没有那浓烈的混杂气味，那气味总令他沿着温波尔街或牛津街散步时心有旁骛。话说回来，从尖锐的石头角落和干燥的黄色墙壁散发出来的新奇气味也异常刺鼻而古怪。接着，一股香甜得让人震惊的

气味从一幅舞动的黑色帘布后面传出来，像云朵般飘荡。他停住，抬起前爪，品味着；他尝试跟着气味往里走，从帘布下方往里钻。他一眼瞥见一个有低沉回响的、光影斑驳的大厅，大厅非常高，非常空旷。随后威尔逊惊恐地尖叫一声，利落地把他猛拉了回去。他们再度沿街道而行。街上的喧闹声震耳欲聋，仿佛所有人都在同一时刻高声吼叫。有别于伦敦那一成不变、催人入眠的嗡嗡声，这里咔嚓声、尖叫声、叮当声、吼嚷声、噼啪的鞭子声和当啷的铃铛声不绝于耳。弗勒希蹦这边跳那边，威尔逊也一样。为了避开运货马车、一头小牛、一队士兵和一群山羊，他们被迫上上下下人行道二十次。他感觉，和过去这么些年相比，自己反而更年轻、更敏捷了。他眼花缭乱却乐不可支，跌倒在红色地砖上，虽然以前他可以睡在温波尔街后面卧室的软枕头上，却从未睡得如此香甜。

不过没多久，弗勒希便意识到还有更深层次的差异，那便是比萨——他们如今居住的城市——有别于伦敦。两城的狗不相同。在伦敦，哪怕只是小跑到邮筒附近，他也不可避免地会碰到哈巴狗、寻回犬、斗牛犬、獒犬、柯利牧羊犬、纽芬兰犬、圣伯纳犬、猎狐犬或西班牙猎犬家族最著名的七种狗之一。他给每种狗都取了不同的名字，排了不同的等级。但是在比萨，尽管狗的数量大，却毫无等级之分。全都是——这可能吗？——杂种狗。他放眼望去，他们只是狗而已——灰狗、黄狗、斑纹狗、斑点狗，可无法从中辨认出哪只是西班牙猎犬、柯利牧羊犬、寻回犬或獒犬。难道犬业俱乐部在意大利毫无势力吗？难道西班牙猎犬俱乐部不为人知吗？难道这里没有法律规定冠毛是致命缺陷，有卷耳者为珍物，脚上的羽状毛必须予以保护，眉骨必须呈拱形——不可凸出？显然没有。弗勒希感觉自己像一位流亡在外的王子，是一群下里巴人中唯一的贵族。他是整个比萨城里唯一的纯种可卡犬。

弗勒希多年来一直被教导要将自己视为一条贵族狗。紫色水罐与狗链的法则深深浸透了他的灵魂。他失去了心理平衡一点儿也不足为奇。一个姓霍华德或卡文迪什的人落魄到泥屋里，混迹于一帮当地人当中，如果他时不时缅怀查茨沃斯 [34]，惆怅地怀念起夕阳照耀彩绘玻璃时的红地毯和饰满冠冕的长廊，这也情有可原。我们必须承认，弗勒希有势利的一面。很多年前米特福德小姐便已察觉到这一点。在伦敦，置身同级别以及更优秀的犬类当中，这个特性被压抑住了。如今再度抬头，他认为自己举世无双。他变得飞扬跋扈、放肆无礼。“弗勒希变成了一个十足的大王，想叫人开门的时候便吠个不停，让你心烦意乱。”勃朗宁夫人写道。“罗伯特，”她接着说，“宣称弗勒希认为他——我的丈夫——被创造出来是一门为他效劳的，看上去还真像是那么回事。”

“罗伯特”，“我的丈夫”——如果说弗勒希变了，那巴雷特小姐也一样。不仅仅是因为她现在自称勃朗宁夫人，还在阳光底下炫耀手上的

金戒指；她的变化和弗勒希的变化一样巨大。弗勒希一天能听到她说五十遍“罗伯特”和“我的丈夫”，而一语气当中的得意总让他颈毛倒竖、心跳加速。发生变化的不只是她的语言，她整个人都焕然一新了。比方说，以前她只能呷一小口波尔图葡萄酒，还抱怨头痛，现在却不同了，她能将基安蒂红葡萄酒一饮而尽——睡得更为香甜。餐桌上摆着的是一大串连枝带叶的橙子，而非一小颗去了皮、又酸又黄的果子。她不再坐带顶篷的四轮大马车去摄政公园，而是穿上厚靴子去攀岩。她不再乘着双驾马车辘辘地驶过牛津街，而是登上快散架的出租马车，一路颠簸到湖边欣赏山景。疲惫了，她不会挥手再叫另一辆马车，而是在石头上坐下观察蜥蜴。阳光普照时她满心欢喜，天寒地冻时她也欢喜满心。在滴水成冰的日子里，她会将从公爵森林里捡来的松枝丢进火里。他们一起坐在噼里啪啦的火苗前，闻着那股强烈的松香味儿。她总是不厌其烦地赞美意大利，批判英国。“……我们这些可怜的英国人，”她惊叹道，“需要学会享乐。他们需要经过阳光净化而非炉火的淬炼。”在意大利，太阳孕育了自由、生命与喜悦。你看不见任何男人打架，也听不见他们对骂；你也绝对看不到意大利人喝得烂醉——肖尔迪奇区“那群男人的脸”又浮现于她的眼前。她总是拿伦敦来跟比萨进行比较，说自己是多么地喜欢比萨。漂亮的女人可以独自行走于比萨街头。尊贵的女士们先倒空了自己的夜壶，再带着“无可否认的光鲜亮丽”去到宫廷。拥有铃声、杂种狗、骆驼、松树林的比萨，比拥有桃花心木大门及羊肩肉的温波尔街不知要好上多少倍。就这样，勃朗宁夫人每天一边将基安蒂红葡萄酒一饮而尽，再从橙子树枝上扯下一个橙子，一边赞美意大利，并为可怜、乏味、潮湿、阴霾、抑郁、昂贵、保守的英国悲叹。

诚然，威尔逊还将四平八稳的英式作派保持了一段时间。有关管家和地下室、前门与窗帘的记忆可没那么容易从心头抹去。“惊骇于维纳斯的有失体统”，她心有余悸地走出美术馆。后来，由于朋友的好意允许，她得以从门外瞥见大公爵宫廷的富丽堂皇，但她依然忠诚地坚持认为圣詹姆士教堂更胜一筹。“跟我们英国的宫廷比起来，”她报告说，“那地方……简直半零不落。”然而在她观赏的同时，一名大公爵侍卫绝佳的体格却吸引了她的注意。她的幻想被点燃，她的看法有点儿动摇，她的标准倾塌了。莉莉·威尔逊跟侍卫里吉先生陷入热恋[6]。

正如勃朗宁夫人探索着她的新自由，欣喜于她的新发现，弗勒希也忙于进行他的发现，探索他的自由。他们离开比萨之前——一八四七年春，他们迁居佛罗伦萨——弗勒希就坦然面对了这新奇一起初令他心烦意乱的事实，即犬业俱乐部的律法并非放诸四海而皆准。他设法让自己接受了淡色冠毛并非致命缺陷这一事实。他也相应地修正了自己的行为准则。他依照犬类社会的新观念行事，刚开始时还有点儿瞻前

顾后的，接下来便一日比一日平易起来。就算在比萨，勃朗宁夫人也注意到：“……他每天都出去跟小狗们说意大利话。”现在到了佛罗伦萨，昔日束缚他的最后一副镣铐也从他身上脱落了。解放的那一刻降临在去卡施奈公园的那一天。当弗勒希冲过“翡翠般”的草地，惊起“野鸡四下飞蹿”时，他突然忆起摄政公园及其规定：狗必须系狗链。可现在“必须”在哪里呢？狗链又在哪里呢？公园管理员和警棍又去哪儿了？全都消失不见了！和腐朽贵族社会的偷狗贼、犬业俱乐部及西班牙猎犬俱乐部一起消失了！和四轮马车、双驾马车一起消失了！和白教堂、肖尔迪奇一起消失了！他驰骋，他飞奔，他的毛皮闪亮，他的眼睛放光。他现在是全世界的的朋友，每一条狗都是他的兄弟。在这个新世界里，他不需要狗链，也不需要保护。如果勃朗宁先生迟迟不肯出去散步——他跟弗勒希现在成了最好的朋友——他会大胆地叫唤他。“在他面前站起来，用无法想象的骄横腔调吠叫。”勃朗宁夫人有点气恼地观察着——因为眼下她和弗勒希的关系远不如往昔亲昵。她不再需要他的红色毛皮、明朗双目来弥补自己缺失的体验。她已在葡萄园及橄榄树丛中找到了属于自己的牧神潘，他还出现在夜幕下的松木篝火旁。就这样，如果勃朗宁先生磨磨蹭蹭，弗勒希便会站起来吠叫；可要是勃朗宁先生宁愿待在家里写作，也没关系。弗勒希现在很独立了。爬满墙的紫藤和金链花正在盛开，花园中的紫荆怒放欲燃，野郁金香缀满田野。他为什么要等呢？他自己就跑了。如今他是自己的主人了。“……他独自跑出去，一去就是几个小时。”勃朗宁夫人写道，“……他对佛罗伦萨的每一条街都了如指掌——凡事都要有自己的主张了。我不再因为他不在就担心受怕。”她补充道，面带微笑地回忆起在温波尔街的痛苦时刻，只因她一时疏忽在维尔街忘拴狗链了，那帮贼便躲在马腿下面，伺机把他偷走。在佛罗伦萨，人们不知畏惧为何物；这里没有偷狗贼，她或许还叹口气想到，这里也没有一制的父亲。

但是坦白地讲，但凡圭迪府邸的门开着便要往外窜的弗勒希，可不是为了要观赏名画、探索黝暗的教堂或仰望模糊的壁画。他是为了享受某样东西，为了找寻这些年来他久违的某样东西。曾经，维纳斯的号角吹起狂野的音乐，在伯克郡的大地萦绕，他爱过帕特里奇先生的狗，她还给他生过一个孩子。现在，他又听见同样的声音响彻佛罗伦萨狭窄的街巷，而一经过这么多年的沉寂，那声音变得更为紧迫，更为猛烈了。此刻，弗勒希理解了人类永远不会理解的东西——纯粹的爱，简单的爱，彻底的爱，在清醒时分不会带来无尽忧虑的爱，问心无愧，无怨无悔；来了又去，仿若那采花的蜜蜂来了又去。今天的花儿是玫瑰，明天的花儿是百合；此刻是沼泽地里的野蓟，下一刻是温室里矫揉造作的套袋兰花。如此博爱，如此无忧无虑，弗勒希将小巷深处有斑点的西班牙猎犬、斑纹狗和黄狗——拥入怀中——无论是谁，都没有关系。对弗勒希来说，全都一样。号角声起，随风飘送，飘到

哪里，他追随到哪里。爱是一切，有爱便足够了。没有人责备他的放浪。每当弗勒希深夜迟归，甚至翌日清晨返家，勃朗宁先生只是大笑着说：“对于像他这么体面的狗来说实在丢人！”当弗勒希扑倒在卧室地板上，在用人造大理石镶嵌的圭迪家族纹章上沉沉睡去时，勃朗宁夫人也笑了。

圭迪府邸内的房间都很空旷。所有在他与世隔绝的那段日子里被遮罩覆盖的家具全都消失了。床就是床，盥洗台就是盥洗台，每样东西都呈现本来的面目而非其他。巨大的客厅零零散散放了几把旧式乌木雕花椅，壁炉上方挂了一面镜子，两旁有丘比特举着灯。勃朗宁夫人自己也把印度披肩扔到一边。她戴着一顶用颜色鲜艳的丝绸制成的无边小帽，这是她丈夫喜欢的。她的头发梳成了新的发式。夕阳西下，遮光板拉起时，她穿着白色薄棉裙在阳台上踱步。她喜欢坐在那儿观望并聆听街上的人们。

迁居佛罗伦萨没多久，有一天夜晚街上沸反盈天、脚步杂沓，他们冲上阳台一看究竟。一大群人从下面奔涌而过。他们举着横幅，又叫又唱。每扇窗子里都探满人头，所有的阳台都挤满了人。窗子里的人朝街上的人抛撒鲜花和月桂叶，而街上的人——庄严的男人，快活的年轻女子——彼此亲吻，对着阳台上的人高举起他们的宝宝。勃朗宁先生和夫人倚在栏杆上，不停地鼓掌。一条又一条的横幅经过。火把的光把它们照亮。其中一条写着“解放”，另一条写着“意大利统一”，还有“纪念烈士”“庇护九世万岁”及“莱奥波尔多二世万岁”——长达三个半小时，横幅不断经过，人们不停欢呼，勃朗宁和夫人站在点了六支蜡烛的阳台上不停挥手。弗勒希也跟着挤在他俩中间，前脚搭在基石上，努力地跟着欢呼了好久。但是最终——他装不下去了——他打起了哈欠。“他终于坦白了，他认为那群人闹得过久了。”勃朗宁夫人观察到。疲惫和疑虑将他占据，他生出一股下流的欲望。这究竟在干啥？他自问。这位大公爵是何许人物，他又许诺了什么？他们为什么都激动得如此离谱？——因为每当有横幅经过，勃朗宁夫人便热情地挥手再挥手，不知何故，这令他有点儿恼怒。他觉得，如此殷勤地对待一位大公爵未免过于夸张了。接着，就在大公爵本人经过时，他留意到有一条小狗停在门口。趁勃朗宁夫人沉浸在反常的兴奋中，他赶紧抓住机会，溜下阳台跑了。他穿过横幅和群众，一路尾随着她。她则越跑越远，跑入了佛罗伦萨的中心地带。大呼小叫声愈来愈遥远，人群的欢呼声渐渐隐没于岑寂当中。火把的光亮也熄灭了，只剩下一两点星光在阿尔诺河的涟漪中闪烁，弗勒希便和那条斑点西班牙猎犬并肩趴在河畔，蜷缩着依偎在泥地上的一个旧篮子里。他们迷失于爱情中，一直到旭日东升。弗勒希直到第二天上午九点才回到家。勃朗宁夫人满怀嘲讽地跟他打招呼——她想着，他至少应该记得今天是她第一个结婚周年纪念日吧。不过她料想“他一定是找到乐子了”。的确如此。当

她从四万人的大游行、大公爵的种种许诺及横幅上迎风招展的愿望中生出无法言说的满足感时，弗勒希无比欢喜的却是门边的那条小狗。

毋庸置疑，勃朗宁夫人与弗勒希在各自的发现之旅中抵达了截然不同的目的地——她发现的是大公爵，他发现的则是斑点西班牙猎犬。然而不可否认的是，将他们俩维系在一起的纽带依然牢固。弗勒希摒弃了那些“必须”的陈规，在卡施奈公园那翡翠般的草地上自由自在地驰骋起来，惊起的野鸡掠过一道红光或金光。只是他刚开始这么做，就感到了一种牵制，让他再度回归到蛰居家中的状态。起初也没什么——只是一点儿蛛丝马迹——一八四九年的春天，勃朗宁夫人开始忙着做起针线活儿来了。可眼前这幅景象之中总有什么令弗勒希觉得蹊跷。她向来不事女红。他注意到威尔逊移动了一张床，她还在一个抽屉里放了许多白色的衣物。他从地砖上仰起头，凝神观看，一心倾听。又有什么事情即将发生吗？他焦虑地寻找皮箱与打包的迹象。是要再一次远走高飞，再一次逃离吗？可这一回要逃往哪里，又躲避什么呢？这儿没什么可怕的，他向勃朗宁夫人保证。在佛罗伦萨，他们俩谁都不用忧心忡忡，不用害怕泰勒先生，或看到被包在棕色纸袋里的狗头。他困惑不解，这种种变动的迹象，据他的解读，并不意味着逃亡。这些迹象，以一种极其神秘的方式，象征着某种期待。当他观望着勃朗宁夫人如此泰然自若、安静沉稳地端坐于她那张矮椅上飞针走线时，他体味出即将发生的事不可避免。这也令人畏惧。时间一周一周地过去，勃朗宁夫人几乎足不出户。她坐在那儿，看上去在期盼某件盛事。难道她准备跟某个像泰勒一样的恶棍正面交锋，孤绝而无助地任他拳打脚踢？想到这个，弗勒希感同身受地颤抖起来。她绝计没有逃离的意图，没有收拾好的箱盒，也没有迹象显示有谁准备离开这栋房子——反倒像是有什么人即将抵达。嫉妒而焦虑的弗勒希严密监视着每个新来的访客。现在来拜访的人很多——布莱格登小姐、兰多尔先生、哈蒂·霍斯默、利顿先生——来圭迪府邸的绅士淑女实在太多了。勃朗宁夫人日复一日地坐在扶手椅里安静地穿针引线。

然后，在三月初的一天，勃朗宁夫人一整天都没有在客厅现身。其他人进进出出，勃朗宁先生和威尔逊也进进出出。看到他们进出时如此心烦意乱，弗勒希自个儿躲到了沙发底下。大伙儿在楼梯上咚咚咚地上上下下，奔来奔去，压低嗓门用各种陌生的语调呼来唤去。他们在楼上的卧室里走动，他则愈来愈往沙发的暗影深处钻。他身体里每一根神经都能感应到某种变化正在发生——某件可怕的事情正在进行。多年前，他曾经这样等候过，等着神秘蒙面人上楼梯的脚步声。最终门打开了，巴雷特小姐高喊：“勃朗宁先生！”现在来的是谁？是哪一位神秘人？日长似岁，他彻底被遗忘，没有人进客厅来。他趴在客厅里，没有吃的也没有喝的；现在纵然有一千只长着斑点的西班牙

猎犬在门口嗅来嗅去，他也只会躲开她们。因为随着时间一小时一小时地过去，他越发强烈地感觉有外物强行入侵家里。他从沙发罩的荷叶边底下往外偷瞄。两个举着灯的丘比特、乌木柜、法式椅子看上去都像被戳得七零八落；他感觉为了给那个看不见的东西腾出空间，自己似乎也挤到了墙边。他看到过勃朗宁先生一次，但他不再是以前那个勃朗宁先生了；他也看到过威尔逊一次，可她也变了一就好像他们都看到了那个他感觉到的无形之物。他们的眼睛里闪耀着奇特的光芒。

终于，看上去红光满面、衣衫不整却得意扬扬的威尔逊把他抱在怀里上了楼。他们进入卧房。笼罩在阴影中的房间里传来一阵如小羊叫唤般微弱的声音——枕头上有东西在挥动，是个活物。勃朗宁夫人完全没依靠旁人，连前门都没打开，仅凭一己之力就从一个人变成了两个人。那可怕的东西就在她身边挥舞手臂，呜呜叫着。无法掩饰的愤怒、嫉妒以及强烈的嫌恶涌上弗勒希的心头，他用力挣脱了威尔逊的怀抱，冲下了楼。威尔逊和勃朗宁夫人唤他回去；她们用爱抚引诱他，给他吃好吃的东西，却一点儿用也没有。他试图躲开那令人厌恶的景象，那让人反感的存在，直往沙发的阴影中和黑暗的角落里钻。“……整整两个星期，他陷入了深深的忧郁之中，无论大家如何费尽心力哄他都没有用。”——就算千头万绪忙得无法分身，勃朗宁夫人也不得不注意到这一点。倘若我们把人类的时间换算成狗的时间——我们也必须如此——想象一分钟如何膨胀成一小时，一小时又如何膨胀成一天，那么以人类的时间计算，弗勒希的“严重抑郁症”持续了足足六个月，这一结论毫不夸张。许多男男女女在不到六个月的时间就能将自己的爱恨情仇抛到九霄云外了。

但弗勒希不再是温波尔街时代那条不懂世故、未经教化的狗了。他早已吸取了教训。威尔逊揍过他。他被迫吞咽过陈腐变质的蛋糕，而他本可以在其新鲜时享用的。他曾发誓去爱勃朗宁先生而不去咬他。当他趴在沙发底下时，所有这些往事在他的心头翻腾；他终于想通了。他再一次得到了奖赏。必须承认的是，刚开始那个奖赏不具有实体性，甚至让人难以接受。宝宝被放到弗勒希的背上，这边宝宝揪扯着他的耳朵，那边他得驮着宝宝走来走去。可他如此温文尔雅，哪怕耳朵被揪，也只是转过头去“亲亲那双肥嘟嘟的浅凹进去的小光脚”，以至于三个月后，那团无助弱小、只会乱扯和哭闹的小肉球竟然开始对他青睐有加，“总的来说”——勃朗宁夫人是这么说的——比起别人，更喜欢他。然后，令人感到奇妙的是，弗勒希发现自己也喜欢上了宝宝。难道他们俩没有共通之处吗？难道宝宝不是有很多地方像弗勒希吗？难道他们不是对很多事有一致的看法和品位吗？就比如，欣赏风景这件事。对弗勒希而言，所有风景都是索然无趣的。这么多年来，他从来没学会正眼看看山峦。他们带他去瓦隆布罗萨 [35] 时，那

里森林的壮美却只让他感到无聊至极。宝宝几个月大的时候，他们再次乘坐马车进行长途旅行。宝宝躺在保姆的大腿上，弗勒希则坐在勃朗宁夫人的膝盖上。马车走啊走啊走个不停，费劲地登上亚平宁山脉的高峰。勃朗宁夫人简直喜不自禁，几乎离不开窗口。即便穷尽所有的英语词汇，她也找不到合适的表达来抒发自己的千万感触。“……亚平宁山脉的景色毓秀，几近梦幻。其形其色千变万化，精彩纷呈；山势突变，峰峦各异。栗树林因自身之重朝万丈深谷倾落，湍急的激流劈刹、撕扯着岩石。层峦叠嶂，竞相攀越，仿佛是彼此挤压形成，尽力绽放色彩。”——亚平宁山脉之美催生诸词，这些词句竞相涌现，彼此倾轧，彼此吞没。然而宝宝和弗勒希却一点儿也没感受到这种激动，体会到这种心余力绌。他们俩都默不作声。弗勒希“把头从窗口收回来，不认为那值得一看……他对树木山川之类的极其不屑”。勃朗宁夫人如是总结。马车继续辘辘地行驶着。弗勒希睡着了，宝宝也睡着了。终于，窗外有了灯光与房舍，男男女女来来往往。他们进入了一个村落。弗勒希顿时醒了，全神贯注起来。“……他如饥似渴，弹眼落睛，东看看西瞅瞅，让你觉得他在做笔记或是准备做笔记。”让他兴奋的是人类的生活场景。至少从这点看来，若想打动弗勒希的感官，美必须先通过结晶作用化成绿色或蓝紫色的粉末，再由某种神圣的注射器注入弗勒希的鼻孔，渗入他鼻孔深处的毛细血管才行；随后产生的反应也不是以文字的形式出现，而是沉寂的狂喜。勃朗宁夫人目力之所及，是他鼻子之所闻；她笔触之所记，是他嗅吸之所得。

至此，作传者迫不得已，须暂一搁笔。两三千字不足以形容我们眼前之所见——勃朗宁夫人便不得不坦言自己被亚平宁山脉击败了：“我实在无法向你描绘这一切。”她承认道——但用来形容我们闻到的气味的词儿却不过两三个。人类的鼻子几乎相当于不存在。世界上最伟大的诗人，也只能一边闻到玫瑰的味道，另一边闻到粪便的味道而已。至于二者之间的无穷变化，则从来没有人记录过。然而弗勒希却基本上活在这个嗅觉的世界里。爱首先是气味，形状与颜色也是气味，音乐、建筑、法律、政治和科学都是气味。对他而言，气味即宗教本身。光是描绘每天排骨或饼干带给他的最单纯的体验，都超出了我们的能力范围。就算是斯温伯恩先生 [36] 也无法形容出六月一个炎热的午后温波尔街上的味道对弗勒希而言意味着什么。至于描摹混杂在火把、月桂叶、熏香、横幅、蜡烛，以及被一只摆在樟脑堆里的丝缎高跟鞋踩碎的玫瑰花环等气味当中的一只西班牙猎犬的味道，或许只有莎士比亚才能办得到，前提是他能在写《安东尼奥和克莉奥佩特拉》时，中途停下来细细推敲——但莎士比亚并没有停住。在此承认我们能力有限后，只能认识到，对弗勒希来说，在他一生最充实、最自由、最快乐的那几年里，意大利主要意味着一连串的气味。爱情，想必会逐渐丧失吸引力；但气味长存。如今他们一家再度在圭迪府邸安

顿下来，所有人都各得其所。勃朗宁先生通常在一个房间里写作，勃朗宁太太则通常在另一个房间里写作，宝宝在儿童房里玩耍。而弗勒希则迷失于佛罗伦萨的大街小巷，享受气味的盛宴。他追随气味的指引，穿梭在大路与后街、广场与小巷之间，嗅闻着一种又一种味道：浓烈的、温和的、神秘的、美好的。他进进出出、上上下下——有人在打制铜器，有人在烘焙面包，女人们坐着梳理头发，鸟笼高高垒在堤道上，洒落在人行道上的葡萄酒留下深红的污渍，皮革、马具与大蒜各发其味，布匹被拍打着，藤叶在颤动，男人们坐下来喝酒吐痰掷骰子——他跑进跑出，或是鼻子贴着地面，畅饮所有的精华，或是抬头让鼻子在风中随气味共舞。他睡在被太阳晒热的地上——阳光让石头发臭味！他在隧道的阴影里探查——阴影让石头发酸味！他狼吞虎咽地吃下一整串一整串的熟葡萄，只因为那紫色的味道；意大利家庭主妇从阳台扔出来的硬山羊骨头或通心面之类的，他都会嚼嚼再吐出来——羊骨头和通心面的气味都是粗粝的、猩红的。他跟随令人沉迷的香甜气味，进入昏暗的大教堂里蓝紫色的迷宫中，一边嗅闻，一边企图舔舐镶有彩绘玻璃的墓穴上的金子。这并不意味着他的触觉就不灵敏了。他熟知佛罗伦萨大理石的光滑，还有沙砾与卵石的粗糙。帷幔陈旧的褶皱、光滑的石制手指和脚掌，都接受过他舌头的舔舐，以及他颤抖着的口鼻部的轻触。至于他无比敏感的肉垫，则清晰地拓印上了令人骄傲的拉丁语铭文。简言之，他对佛罗伦萨的熟悉程度，没有一个人类可与之抗衡，就连拉斯金 [37] 及乔治·艾略特 [38] 也无法企及。唯有不能说话的人方能领略弗勒希的感觉。他所有数不清的感觉，没有一样可用简陋的文字传达出来。

作传者虽然很乐意就此推断弗勒希的后半辈子是一场笔墨无法形容的快乐狂欢，并乐观地秉持这样一种观点：当小宝宝一天比一天多学会一个字，却因此日益远离感官知觉时，弗勒希将注定永远留在所有本质皆永葆至纯的天堂里，在这里万事万物皆以袒露的精神紧贴其赤诚的灵魂——可惜这并不是真的。弗勒希并没有活在这样的天堂里。只有在星际间遨游的神灵，像飞行距离远至冰雪极地与热带森林却从未见到过人类家园和人间袅袅烟火的鸟儿，或许——就我们所知——才能获得豁免，享受如此完满的幸福。可是弗勒希睡过人类的膝头，听过人类的声音，他的体内遍布属于人类的热情；他了解各种层次的嫉妒、愤怒和绝望。眼下正值盛夏，他饱受跳蚤之苦 [7]。太阳能催熟葡萄，同样也带来了跳蚤，这种讽刺显得十分残酷。“……在佛罗伦萨，萨沃纳罗拉 [39] 的殉道，”勃朗宁夫人写道，“并不比弗勒希在夏季受到的折磨惨烈多少。”跳蚤在佛罗伦萨房舍的每个角落里活蹦乱跳。它们从古老石头的每一条裂隙中，从陈旧帷幔的每一道皱褶里，从每一件斗篷、每一顶帽子和每一条毛毯里悄悄跃出。它们在弗勒希的皮毛里筑巢，一路啃咬到他皮毛的最深处。他又抓又搔，健康状况江河日下，变得阴郁、瘦弱而狂乱。米特福德小姐收到求救信。勃朗

宁夫人焦急地在信中询问：长跳蚤有何疗方？依然坐在三英里十字标的温室里写悲剧的米特福德小姐将笔放下，开始查阅老药方——要用什么样的五月花，什么种类的玫瑰花蕾。只是雷丁的跳蚤一掐就死了，佛罗伦萨的跳蚤却色泽鲜红、强壮有力。对它们来说，米特福德小姐的药粉大概只是鼻烟。绝望之下，勃朗宁先生和夫人只能跪在水桶旁，用上肥皂和刷子，竭尽全力清除这害虫，结果却徒劳无功。终于有一天，带弗勒希出去散步的勃朗宁先生注意到别人在指指点点，他听见有人指着弗勒希的鼻子低声说：“兽疥癣！”时至今日，“罗伯特已和我一样爱弗勒希”，带一位朋友下午出门散步，却听见他遭受这般侮辱，实在无法忍受。罗伯特，他太太写道，“对此忍无可忍”。现在只剩下一个办法了，但这一治疗方法与疾病本身一样极端。尽管弗勒希已变得十分亲民，对身份地位的象征物不再那么重视，但他依旧像菲利普·西德尼所宣称的那样，是一位天生的绅士。他的纯正血统不言自明；那一身毛皮对他而言，好比穷困潦倒的乡绅怀中那枚镌刻着家族纹章的金表——曾有万亩良田，如今缩水到只剩这小表一圈。勃朗宁此刻提议牺牲的正是他的皮毛。他把弗勒希唤到跟前，“抄起一把剪刀，把他全身上下剪得像头狮子”。

随着罗伯特·勃朗宁一刀一刀地剪，可卡犬的荣耀掉落于地，一个迥然不同、拙劣的动物模样从他的颈部渐渐生成。弗勒希觉得自己遭了阉割，受了轻贱，挨了羞辱。我现在是什么？他瞪着镜子思忖。镜子用一以贯之的残忍和坦率回答道：“你什么都不是。”他谁也不是。他显然不再是一条可卡犬了。然而当他对着镜子端详时，他的耳朵现在光秃秃的，不再卷曲，似乎在抽搐，就好像真理与欢笑这两位非凡的精灵在对着它们絮语似的。毕竟，什么也不是，不正是世界上最令人满足的状态吗？他又看了看。那是他的环状颈毛。戏仿那些自以为是的家伙的浮夸行径——从某种方面来看不也是一种经历吗？无论如何，不管他是如何解决这件事的，他毫无疑问摆脱了跳蚤的烦恼。他甩甩自己的颈毛，用他那无毛瘦弱的腿蹦跶起来，精神随之大振，仿若一位刚从病床上起身的大美人，发现自己已菊老荷枯、韶华不再，于是将衣裳和化妆品付之一炬，又想到自己再也不必对镜自怜，或为爱人情薄、情敌貌美而担惊受怕，便开怀大笑起来；或像一位穿了二十年浆硬了的绒面呢袍的牧师，把硬领子扔进垃圾桶里，再从橱柜里抽出伏尔泰的著作一般。就这样，弗勒希蹦蹦跳跳地跑走了，尽管被剪得像只秃狮子，却再也不必为跳蚤而苦恼了。“弗勒希，”勃朗宁夫人写信给她姐妹说，“非常有智慧。”或许当时她想到了希腊人所说的只有历经痛苦的磨炼才能获得快乐。他是真正的哲学家，虽然失去了皮毛，却不再受跳蚤之苦了。

可没过多久，弗勒希刚刚获得的哲学便受到了考验。一八五二年夏天，圭迪府邸内即将降临危机的种种迹象再度无声无息地聚集：抽

屉被拉开，绳头在箱子外晃荡……对狗而言，这份凶险就好比预示闪电的云之于牧羊人，预示战争的谣言之于政客。直指又一次变化、又一次旅行。但所为何来呢？皮箱被拖下来捆扎好，宝宝被保姆抱在怀里带出来，勃朗宁先生和夫人穿着旅行装束现身，出租马车停在门口。弗勒希达观地等在大厅。他们万事俱备之时，他也整装待发。现在所有人都坐进了马车，弗勒希轻盈地纵身一跃跟着跳上车。威尼斯、罗马或巴黎——他们这是要去哪儿呢？现在所有国家对他而言都毫无二致，四海之内皆兄弟。他已经吸取了教训。但当他终于从茫然中走出来时，却发现再多的哲学也不够用——他居然身处伦敦。

房子左右排列在以方方正正的砖头砌成的整洁道路的两旁。他脚下的人行道冰冷坚硬。从镶着黄铜门环的桃花心木大门里出来一位盛装淑女，身着一袭紫色毛绒拖地长裙，头别一顶缀饰着花朵的小花冠。她撩起大堆裙摆，带着倨傲的表情朝街上来回扫了两眼。马夫正弯腰将四轮大马车的踏脚放下。整条韦尔贝克街——这里正是韦尔贝克街——笼罩在豪华气派的红光中。这光不似意大利的光线那般澄澈凶猛，而是呈黄褐色，一因数以百万计的车轮不断碾过和数以百万计的马蹄不停践踏而尘土弥漫。伦敦正当盛季。人声鼎沸，嗡嗡声交织如云，会合而成的喧嚣覆盖住整个城市。一条威武的猎鹿犬由小侍童用链子牵着迎面走来。一位警察大摇大摆地踏着极有节奏的阔步经过，瞪着大牛眼左右察看。炖煮的味道、牛肉的味道、炙烤的味道、牛肉烧卷心菜的味道从上千个地下室里飘出来。一名穿制服的仆役将一封信投入邮箱。

为大都会的繁华所震慑，弗勒希踏上门阶的脚步踟蹰了片刻，威尔逊也顿住了。意大利的文明、宫廷、革命、大公爵和大公爵的侍卫们，此刻显得多么微不足道！当那名警察经过时，威尔逊不禁感谢上苍，还好她没嫁给里吉先生。接着，从街角一家酒馆里走出来一个邪恶的身影。一个男人不怀好意地睨视着。弗勒希一跃而上，冲进屋内。

一连几个星期，他都被严密地禁闭于韦尔贝克街一套寄宿公寓的起居室里。与外界隔离仍然是必要的，因为霍乱正在肆虐，贫民窟内的状况确实因霍乱而有了一丝许改善，可惜程度不大，狗儿被偷仍层出不穷，温波尔街的狗出入仍须系链。弗勒希当然有他的社交生活，他会在邮筒旁和酒馆外碰见其他的狗，他们以狗族与生俱来的优良教养欢迎他的回归。就像一位长年生活在东方，并沾染上若干当地习惯的英国贵族——谣传他确已皈依伊斯兰教，还跟一位中国洗衣女工育有一子——当他返回宫廷社交圈时，发现昔日老友们都宁愿忘记他曾误入歧途，还邀请他去查茨沃思，没人会提及他的妻子，而一大家都理所当然地认为他会加入家庭祷告——温波尔街上的那些指示犬及塞特犬也同样欢迎弗勒希加入他们，——对他的皮毛状态视若无睹。但眼下在弗勒

希看来，伦敦的狗似乎都有一定的病态。众所周知，卡莱尔夫人 [40] 的狗尼禄从顶楼窗口跳了出去 [8]，企图自杀。据说，这是因为他无法承受住在切尼洛的压力。重返韦尔贝克街的弗勒希对此确实深信不疑。禁足，满满当当的小物什，晚上的蟑螂，白天的苍蝇，萦绕不去的羊膻味，餐具柜上永不缺席的香蕉——所有这些，再加上跟好几位穿着隆重却不常或根本不洗澡的男男女女耳鬓厮磨，都令他脾气暴躁、神经紧张。他经常在寄宿公寓的小衣橱下一趴就是几个小时。溜出门是不可能的，因为前门永远锁着；他必须等着谁给他系上狗链，带他出去。

只有两件事打破了他客居伦敦数周一成不变的单调生活。晚夏的一天，勃朗宁一家前往法汉姆拜访查尔斯·金斯利牧师 [41]。此时的意大利，土地早已赤裸坚硬得像块砖，跳蚤也开始肆虐，有气无力的狗儿拖着步子从一个阴影挪到另一个阴影里，甚至为碰上的某尊多纳泰罗 [42] 的雕像抬起的手臂投下的细条影子而心怀感激。可在法汉姆，这里的田野绿草如茵，池塘碧波荡漾，树林絮絮低语。草皮细软得脚掌踏上去都会弹起来似的。勃朗宁一家与金斯利一家共度了一整天。又一次，当弗勒希跟在他们身后踱步时，往昔的号角突然响起，旧日的狂喜再度现身——那是只野兔，还是只狐狸？弗勒希驰骋在萨里郡 [43] 的田野上，仿佛在三英里十字标那段旧日时光之后再没有这样痛快地跑过了。一只野鸡嗖地腾起，划出紫色和金色的光芒。他差一点儿就咬住野鸡的尾羽了，但恰在此刻，有人大喝一声。皮鞭猛然抽响。是查尔斯·金斯利牧师在厉声唤他跟上吗？反正，他停止了奔跑。法汉姆的树林没有遭到一丝破坏。

几天后，他正趴在韦尔贝克街的客厅里，勃朗宁夫人穿着散步的衣服走了进来，把他从小衣橱底下唤出来。她将狗链套在他的项圈上。自一八四六年九月以来，他们第一次一起走向温波尔街。等来到五十号门前，他们如往昔一样停下了脚步。他们如往昔一样静静地等待。男管家如往昔一样应门缓慢。过了好些时候门终于打开。蜷在地垫上的是卡蒂利内吗？那只有牙的老狗打了个哈欠，伸了个懒腰，对他们视若无睹。就像当年离家下楼时一样，他们悄无声息、偷偷摸摸地爬上楼。勃朗宁夫人轻手轻脚地打开一扇又一扇房门，似乎害怕会在里面看到什么，从一间房走到另一间。她看着看着就神情忧伤起来。“……那些房间在我看来，”她写道，“不知道怎么回事，又小又阴暗，家具既不合适，也不方便。”常春藤依然轻叩着后面卧房的窗玻璃，彩绘遮光帘依然遮蔽着光线。什么都没有改变。这么多年来仿佛什么都没有发生过似的。就这样，她从一个房间走到另一个房间，悲伤地回忆着。但还没等她结束探视，弗勒希就万分焦虑起来。万一巴雷特先生忽然进来，发现了他们该怎么办？万一他眉头一皱，转动钥匙，把他们永远锁在后面的卧室里该怎么办？勃朗宁夫人终于把所有

的房门都关好，再一次悄没声儿地下了楼。没错，她说，在她看来，这栋房子需要好好打扫。

自那之后，弗勒希心中唯有一个愿望——永远离开伦敦，永远离开英国。直到发现自己身处穿越海峡、驶往法国的轮船甲板，他才快活起来。那是一趟波涛汹涌的航行。横穿海峡花费了八个小时。随着轮船颠簸摇晃，弗勒希那些骚动不安的混杂记忆也在他的心头翻来滚去——身穿紫色毛绒裙的淑女，拎着大包小包、衣衫褴褛的男人，摄政公园，在骑马侍卫簇拥下浩荡而过的维多利亚女王，翠绿的英国草地，恶臭的英国人行道——他躺在甲板上任这一幕幕场景滑过脑海。他抬起头，看见一位严肃、高大的男士倚栏而立。

“卡莱尔先生！”他听见勃朗宁夫人喊道，就在那一瞬间——可别忘了这次横渡很是艰险——弗勒希狂吐起来。水手们拎着手桶和拖把冲了过去。“……可怜的狗儿，他被特别下令驱逐下了甲板。”勃朗宁夫人说。因为甲板仍属英国领地，而狗是不可以在甲板上呕吐的。这便是他对故国海岸的最后致意。

[33] 沃克吕兹（Vaucluse），位于法国东南部，是法国最大的罐头番茄、西瓜、苹果、葡萄和樱桃产地。

[34] 查茨沃思（Chatsworth），位于英格兰德文郡，自1549年以来，一直为德文郡公爵的庄园。德文郡公爵的姓氏即为卡文迪什。建筑内收藏有众多珍贵的绘画、家具等文物，如17世纪之前欧洲画家的绘画、新古典主义雕塑和书籍。查茨沃思庄园多次被选为英国最受欢迎的庄园。

[35] 瓦隆布罗萨（Vallombrosa），意大利中北部村镇，建于11世纪，是著名的修道院所在地和避暑胜地。

[36] 斯温伯恩（Swinburne，1837-1909），英国维多利亚时代最后一位重要的诗人。在艺术手法上，他追求形象的鲜明华丽与大胆新奇、声调的和谐优美与婉转轻柔，对20世纪以来的诗人产生了深远的影响。

[37] 拉斯金（Ruskin，1819-1900），英国作家、艺术家、艺术评论家，还是哲学家、教师和业余的地质学家。他的重要作品有《现代画家》《建筑的七盏灯》《威尼斯之石》等。

[38] 乔治·艾略特（George Eliot，1819-1880），19世纪英国著名作家，与萨克雷、狄更斯、勃朗特姐妹齐名。主要作品有《弗洛斯河上的磨坊》《米德尔马契》等。

[39] 萨沃纳罗拉（Savonarola，1452-1498），多明我会修士，

佛罗伦萨宗教改革家。从1494年到1498年担任佛罗伦萨的精神和世俗领袖。他以反对文艺复兴艺术和哲学，焚烧艺术品和非宗教类书籍，毁灭他认为不道德的奢侈品，以及严厉的布道著称。

[40] 此处的卡莱尔夫人，应为托马斯·卡莱尔（Thomas Carlyle，1795-1881）的妻子。托马斯·卡莱尔是一位作家、历史学家、哲学家和极具影响力的社会评论家。他的妻子简（Jane Welsh Carlyle）也是位著名的作家。当时的许多文学泰斗是他们家的常客，比如查尔斯·狄更斯、勃朗宁夫妇和约翰·拉斯金等。

[41] 查尔斯·金斯利（Charles Kingsley，1819-1875），英国文学家、学者与神学家。早年曾先后就学于皇家学院、伦敦大学以及剑桥大学，后常年担任牧师、教授，并开始发表作品。他擅长儿童文学创作，作品具有世界声誉。

[42] 多纳泰罗（Donatello，1386？-1466），意大利文艺复兴初期佛罗伦萨雕塑家，写实主义雕塑的奠基人之一，研究过人体结构，代表作有《大卫》《加塔梅拉塔骑马像》等。

[43] 萨里郡（Surrey），英格兰东南部的郡，位于伦敦西南。

第六章 结局

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弗勒希现在老了。英格兰之旅以及由此激发的种种回忆毫无疑问使他身心俱疲。大家都注意到，自从返回后，他总是宁可待在阴影里，而不是阳光下，即便佛罗伦萨的阴影热过温波尔街的阳光。他在雕像下面伸展四肢趴着，在喷泉出水口下方蜷着，只为享受几滴不时溅在毛皮上的水珠，他就这样趴着打上好几个小时的盹。年轻的狗儿会来到他近旁，他会给他们讲白教堂和温波尔街的故事，他会描绘苜蓿的气味和牛津街的味道，他会将记忆中一场接一场的革命生动演绎——大公爵们上位又垮台，可左边巷子里那只带斑点的西班牙猎犬——她却生生不息，始终都在，他会这么说。接着，脾气暴躁的兰多尔先生会急匆匆走过，假装愤怒地对他挥挥拳头；好心的艾莎·布莱格登小姐会停下来，从手提袋里掏出一块甘甜的饼干。市场里的农妇在菜篮子的阴影处用树叶给他铺了张床，还时不时给他扔串葡萄。整个佛罗伦萨——不论身份高贵还是平凡，不论是人还是狗——都认识他，喜欢他。

可他却渐渐变得老态龙钟了，连喷泉下面都懒得去趴了——因为鹅卵石地面对他这身老骨头来说太硬了——而是趴在勃朗宁夫人卧室的地板上，那块用人造大理石镶成的圭迪家族的纹章特别平滑；或者躲在客厅桌子底下的阴影里。从伦敦返回后没多久，一天他摊开四足趴在那儿很快就睡沉了。他深陷于年老者那种无梦的酣睡中。事实上今天他睡得比往日更沉，在他熟睡之际，黑暗仿佛在他周围变得更为浓稠。倘若他真能梦到什么，也很可能是梦见自己睡在原始森林的最深处，远离所有的阳光，与人类的声响隔绝——虽然他偶尔会梦见自己听见某只睡梦中的鸟儿正发出喃喃的啁啾，或是风儿拂过枝头时一只沉思的小猴儿发出柔声的轻笑。

树枝被猛然分开，光线涌入——到处洒落着一道道炫目的光束。猴儿们吱吱唧唧，鸟儿惊起，高声啼警。他腾地起身，睡意全消。他的周围泛起一场惊天动地的骚乱。他原是躺在客厅一张普通桌子的桌脚中间睡着了，现在却被众多翻腾的裙摆和起伏的裤脚包围，连桌子本身都开始剧烈地左右摇晃。他不知道该往哪个方向跑。究竟发生了什么？天知道这桌子到底中了什么邪。他抬高嗓音长号一声以示询问。

可弗勒希的问题没有得到满意的答案。仅能在此罗列几项最单调乏味的事实。简言之，似乎在十九世纪初，布莱辛顿伯爵夫人从一位

魔术师那儿购买了一个水晶球，但伯爵夫人“从来不明白它的用途”。事实上，除了水晶本身之外，她从没在那个球里看到过任何别的东西。然而，在她去世后，她的私人物件被拍卖，于是这个球落到了那些“眼力更深邃，目光更澄澈”的人手里，这些人在球里看到了水晶之外的东西。至于这位买家是否为斯坦厄普大人，“目光更澄澈”的人是不是他，无从查证。但可以确定的是，到了一八五二年，斯坦厄普大人确实拥有一个水晶球，而——他可以在球里看到“太阳的精灵”。显而易见的是，热情好客的贵族当然不会独享此等景观，斯坦厄普大人就习惯在午宴时展示他的水晶球，邀请朋友也来看看太阳的精灵。球内的景象拥有某种令人愉悦的奇特性质——但乔利先生对此免疫。水晶球开始风靡一时。幸运的是，一位伦敦的眼镜制造商很快发现自己能够制造出同样的水晶球，尽管他既不是埃及人，也不是魔术师。可想而知，英国产的水晶价格不菲。因此，在十九世纪五十年代初，很多人都开始痴迷水晶球。然而，“绝大多数人，”斯坦厄普大人说，“会使用水晶球，却没有承认这件事的道德勇气。”精灵在伦敦的流行程度变得如此明目张胆，以至于触发了某种警报。斯坦利大人向爱德华·利顿 [44] 爵士提议，“政府应当指派调查委员尽可能深入地发掘事实真相”。不知即将成立官方调查委员会的传言是否使精灵们大为警惕，也不知精灵是否也跟肉身一样，倾向于在幽闭空间内大量繁殖，但毋庸置疑的是，精灵开始显现不安分的迹象，并——成群结队地逃出水晶球，在桌腿里重寻安身之所。——不论动机为何，总之这个策略是成功的。水晶球价格昂贵，而桌子却几乎人人有之。因此，一八五二年冬天勃朗宁夫人回到意大利时，发现精灵已先行抵达；佛罗伦萨的桌子差不多全都被精灵占领了，无一幸免。“从公使馆人员到英籍药剂师，”她写道，“大家都在‘伺候’桌子……无处不是。人们围坐在桌旁，可不是为了玩惠斯特牌。”不，那是在破译桌腿传达的信息。比如，如果被问及某个孩子的岁数，桌子便会“极智慧地用桌腿敲击地面表达自己，并根据字母表的次序一一作答”。既然一张桌子能说出你的孩子已经四岁了，那么它岂非无所不能？旋转桌在商店里做起了广告。墙上贴满宣传神奇的“里窝那 [45] 的发现”的海报。到一八五四年，这股潮流蔓延速度如此之快，“美国有四十万个家庭表示……曾经亲身享受过与精灵沟通的乐趣”。而在英国则有消息称，爱德华·布尔沃-利顿爵士进口了“数个美国敲击精灵”到内布沃思，结果喜人——当小阿瑟·拉塞尔在用早餐时看见“一个身着破旧旧晨衣、相貌怪异的老绅士”瞪着他时，他被告知布尔沃-利顿爵士相信自己可以隐身了 [9]。

勃朗宁夫人首次在午餐会上朝斯坦厄普大人的水晶球里探望时，什么都没看见——只不过看出它的确是个极能象征那个时代精神的东西。太阳的精灵也的确告诉她，她就要去罗马了；但由于她并不打算去罗马，她违背了太阳精灵的话。“话说回来，”她坦诚地补充说，“我喜欢不可思议。”如果不爱冒险，那就不是她了。她曾经冒着生命危

险前去曼宁街，在距离温波尔街不到半小时车程的地方，发现了一个她想象之外的世界。所以，为什么佛罗伦萨附近就不应该存在这样一个须臾可至的世界呢——一个更好、更美丽的世界，死者在那儿栖身，徒劳地想触及我们的世界？无论如何，她愿意冒这个险。于是她也在桌旁就座。在座的有利顿先生——那位隐身老先生的聪明儿子，弗雷德里克·坦尼森先生，鲍尔斯先生，以及维拉里先生——他们每个人都坐在桌旁。待桌腿踢够了后，他们继续坐在桌旁喝着茶吃着奶油草莓侃侃而谈，而“佛罗伦萨隐入紫色群山，群星闪耀”。“……我们讲述了何等奇妙的故事，我们发誓见到了何等的奇迹！噢，艾莎，我们这群人全是信徒，只有罗伯特除外……”随后，胡子花白又耳背的柯卡普先生突然冲了进来。他特意过来只为宣告：“神灵世界的确存在——未来之国度也一样。我承认。我终于确信了。”向来自诩“离无神论者仅一步之遥”的柯卡普先生之所以改变了信仰，仅仅是因为他尽管耳聋，却听见了“三声响亮的叩击，令他惊跳起来”！勃朗宁夫人还怎能跟桌子保持距离呢？“要知道我是个沉溺于幻想的人，期望敲遍现实世界的每一扇门，只为逃离。”她写道。因此，她召集那些信徒来圭迪府邸。他们坐在那儿把手放在客厅的桌子上，试图逃离。

弗勒希在极度的忧惧中惊起。裙裾和裤腿翻滚在他四周。桌子靠一条腿立着。可是无论围坐桌旁的那些绅士淑女听见或看到了什么，弗勒希却什么也没听见，什么也没看见。的确，桌子单腿站立着，但只要你用力压住一边，任何一张桌子都能如此。他自己就曾经掀翻过桌子，还为此被臭骂。不过，勃朗宁夫人此刻大眼圆睁瞪视着，似乎看见外面有什么不可思议的东西。弗勒希冲向阳台，四下张望。是不是又有一位大公爵在横幅和火把的簇拥下骑马经过？弗勒希看到的只有街角的老丐妇，她蜷伏在自己的一篮甜瓜旁。可勃朗宁夫人显然看见了什么，看见了某样非常美妙的东西。就像以前在温波尔街时，有一次她无端抽泣起来，他瞧不出其中的缘由；还有一次她举起一张满是涂鸦的纸开怀大笑。但这次不一样，她此刻表情当中的某种东西吓到了他。这个房间，这张桌子，这些裙裾和裤腿里的某种东西，是他极其不喜欢的。

数个星期过去了，勃朗宁夫人越发全心沉溺于窥视隐形之物。遇上晴朗的大热天，她不去看蜥蜴在石头里爬进爬出，而是在桌前坐下；遇到满天星斗的黑夜，她并不读书或在纸上书写，而是趁勃朗宁先生外出时召唤威尔逊。威尔逊打着哈欠来了。接着，她们会一起坐在桌旁，一直等到那件主要用来遮阴的家具开始踢地板，勃朗宁夫人宣告说，这是在告诉威尔逊她马上就要生病了。威尔逊回答说自己只是很困。但没多久，不依不饶、正直——非常英派的威尔逊尖叫着陷入了晕厥，勃朗宁夫人满屋子乱转，忙着找“卫生醋”。在弗勒希看来，如此虚度一个宁静的晚上让人无比心塞，坐着读书岂不更好。

毋庸置疑，这些悬疑，无法形容的难闻气味，桌腿踢地，人的尖叫和醋味儿，全都令弗勒希神经紧张。小宝宝佩尼尼祈祷“请让弗勒希的毛再长回来”，这完全没问题，这个愿望弗勒希可以理解。可是像那样非要有臭烘烘、粗鄙长相的人在场，以及让那张明明只是桃花心木做的结实桌子做出古怪动作的祈祷方式，却触怒了他，也同样触怒了他那位强壮睿智、衣衫考究的男主人。然而，对弗勒希来说，比任何气味、任何古怪动作都要糟糕得多的，是勃朗宁夫人凝视窗外时脸上的表情。她似乎看见了什么美妙的事物，而其实那里什么也没有。弗勒希就活生生地站在她跟前，她的视线却穿透他，好像他不存在似的。这是她给予他的最残酷的表情，比她当初看到他咬了勃朗宁先生的腿时所表现出的冷漠与愤怒更残忍，比那次在摄政公园看见他的爪子被门夹住时发出的嘲讽的笑声更伤人。有些时刻，他还真有点儿怀念温波尔街和那里的桌子。至少温波尔街五十号的桌子从来没有单腿站立过。那张周围箍了一道铁圈，搁着她心爱装饰品的小桌总是默默地纹丝不动。在那些远远逝去的日子里，他只要一跳上巴雷特小姐的沙发，她就会立马清醒过来，注视着他。而如今，他再一次跳上她的沙发，她对他却置若罔闻。她在写作，完全忽视了他。她继续写道——“同时，应灵媒的要求，精灵之手从桌上拿起一个花环，把它戴到我的头上。做此事的那只手若以人手的尺寸来看，非常巨大，白皙如雪，非常美丽。它离我很近，就和此刻我正在写字的手一样近，我看得一清二楚。”弗勒希用力抓抓她。她的目光依旧穿透他，好似他不存在。他跳下沙发，冲下楼梯，跑到街上去了。

这是个酷热的午后。街角那位年老的女乞丐趴在她的甜瓜上睡着了。阳光似乎在空气中嗡嗡作响。弗勒希贴着街道阴凉的一侧，沿早就熟稔于心的道路，小跑着往集市而去。整个广场到处都是遮阳篷、货摊和鲜艳的太阳伞，色彩斑斓。卖东西的妇人坐在一篮篮水果旁，鸽子扑扇着翅膀，钟声轰鸣，鞭子抽得啪啪响。佛罗伦萨那些五颜六色的杂种狗跑进跑出，嗅嗅刨刨。无处不是繁忙如蜂巢，热闹似火炉。弗勒希搜寻着阴影，投身于老朋友卡特琳娜身侧，在她大篮子的阴影里趴了下来。一个插着红色和黄色花朵的棕色罐子在旁边投下另一片阴影。一座雕像矗立于他们的上方，右臂向外伸展，使阴影的颜色变成更深的紫色。弗勒希趴在这块阴凉处，看着年轻的狗狗忙活自己的事。他们龇牙低吼，拉扯嘶咬，伸着懒腰打着滚，纵情享受着青春年少的快乐。他们互相追逐，进进出出，猛绕圈子，就像当年他在巷子里追逐那只有斑点的西班牙猎犬。他的思绪一度回到了雷丁——想起了帕特里奇先生的那条西班牙猎犬，想起了自己的初恋，想起了年少的痴狂与纯真。没错，他也曾经风华正茂。他并不嫉妒正享受当下的他们。他已经知道这个世界是个生活的好地方。他现在与世无争了。集市上的妇人挠了挠他的耳根。以前她经常因为他偷葡萄或做其他小小的坏事而打他，可现在他老了，她也老了。他看着她的甜瓜，她挠着

他的耳朵；她织着她的毛衣，他打着他的盹。苍蝇围着切开露出果肉的粉色大甜瓜嗡嗡个不停。

阳光炙烤着百合花的叶子和绿白相间的太阳伞，散发着宜人的气息。大理石雕像慢慢升温，变得如香槟般新鲜。弗勒希趴在那儿，让阳光烤着皮毛，直透裸露的肌肤。等烤完一边，他翻了个身，再继续烤另一边。市场里的人始终叽叽喳喳个不停，讨价还价；妇人来来往往，不时停下来用手指捏一捏蔬菜和水果。嗡嗡作响的人声不绝于耳，弗勒希就爱听这声音。不一会儿，他便在百合花的阴影里睡着了。他睡着了，就像狗在做梦时那样。眼下他的腿抽搐起来——他是梦到自己在西班牙猎兔吗？当兔子从灌木丛中飞蹿而出，他是不是正沿着炽热的山坡向上奔跑，而黝黑的男人大喊着：“Span！Span！”然后他又一动不动地趴着。接着他吠了起来，又快又轻，连着叫了好几声。或许他听见雷丁的米特福德博士正在催促他的灵缇前去狩猎。后来他又温顺地摇摇尾巴。他是听见米特福德小姐喊道“坏狗！坏狗！”，遂夹着尾巴回到站在芜菁田里猛挥雨伞的米特福德小姐身旁了吗？接下来他趴着打了一会儿鼾，陷入老者愉悦的沉睡当中。突然，他身上的每一块肌肉都开始抽搐。他猛地被吓醒了。他以为自己身处何方，白教堂区的坏蛋之中？是不是又有一把刀架在他的脖子上？

无论如何，他在惊恐中从梦里醒来。他匆匆飞奔而去，仿佛在冲向安全地带，仿佛在搜寻庇护之所。集市上的妇人们大笑起来，拿烂葡萄丢他，唤他回来，但他没有理会。他穿过街道，差点被运货马车碾压到——站着驾车的男人诅咒他，抄起皮鞭想抽他。光着半截身子的小孩在他飞逃而过时朝他扔鹅卵石，嚷嚷着“疯狗！疯狗！”^[46]。他们的母亲跑到门口，惊慌地把孩子们拉回家。那么他疯掉了？是不是太阳把他的脑袋烤坏了？还是他再一次听见了维纳斯狩猎的号角？抑或是某个美国敲击精灵——那些住在桌腿里的精灵之一，最终附身于他？不管是何原因，他抄近路穿过一条又一条街道，直抵圭迪府邸的大门口。他直接蹿上楼，径直冲进客厅。

勃朗宁夫人正躺在沙发上看书。他冲进去时，她抬起头来，吓了一跳。不，不是精灵——只是弗勒希罢了。她笑了。接着，当他跃上沙发，把脸贴上她的脸时，她曾经写过的一首诗突然浮现于脑海：

你看此狗。就在昨日

忘记他存在于斯的我沉入冥想

直到思绪联翩招来泪珠串串

泪湿双颊的我倚枕而卧
一个如福纳斯 [47] 般毛茸茸的脑袋，径直
突然探近我的脸——两只清澈的
金色大眼让我的眼睛一亮——一片垂耳
轻抚我的双颊，将泪痕擦干！
我先是讶异，仿若那阿卡狄亚人，
惊艳于暮色树林里的似羊之神；
可是，当蓄满虬髯的脸庞再贴近，
我的泪一扫而光，我知道那是弗勒希，
从惊讶与悲伤中脱身——感恩真正的潘神
虽是低等生物，却是他引我上爱的高峰。

多年以前的某一天，她在温波尔街写下这首诗，当时的她很不快乐。而如今她是幸福的。她日渐苍老，弗勒希亦是如此。她弯下腰，与他依偎了一会儿。她脸上的宽嘴、大眼，再加上浓密鬃发，依旧与他怪异地相似。尽管她与弗勒希各不相同，却又像是从一个模子里铸出来的，或许他俩彼此唤醒了对方身上蛰伏的个性，使对方更加完整了。然而她是个女人，他却是条狗。勃朗宁夫人接着看书。随后，她又看了看弗勒希。可他却没有回应。他身上发生了一种异乎寻常的变化。“弗勒希！”她叫道。但他阒然无声。他曾经活过，现在他死了 [10]。仅此而已。说来也怪，客厅里的桌子静立着，纹丝未动。

[44] 爱德华·利顿 (Edward Lytton, 1803-1873)，英国政治家、诗人和批评家。

[45] 原文为意大利语。里窝那为意大利地名。

[46] 原文为意大利语。

[47] 福纳斯 (Faunus)，古罗马神话当中的畜牧农林神，相当于古希腊神话中的潘。

参考资料

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必须承认，以上传记的参考资料来源极其有限，读者若有意查证事实真相或进行深入研究，可参阅：

诗作《致弗勒希，我的狗》《弗勒希，或福纳斯》，伊丽莎白·巴雷特·勃朗宁著（*To Flush, My Dog' & 'Flush, or Faunus'*）

《勃朗宁夫妇信札》两卷本（*The Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning*，2 vols）

《伊丽莎白·巴雷特·勃朗宁书信札》两卷本，弗雷德里克·凯尼恩编（*The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*，edited by Frederick Kenyon，2 vols）

《伊丽莎白·巴雷特·勃朗宁致理查德·亨吉斯特·霍恩书信札》两卷本，S.R.汤森德·迈耶编（*The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning Addressed to Richard Hengist Horne*，edited by S.R.Townshend Mayer，2 vols）

《伊丽莎白·巴雷特·勃朗宁致姐妹书信札：1846-1859》，伦纳德·赫克斯利编（*Elizabeth Barrett Browning: Letters to her sister*，1846-1859，edited by Leonard Huxley, LL.D.）

《信观伊丽莎白·巴雷特·勃朗宁其人》，珀西·卢伯克著（*Elizabeth Barrett Browning in her Letters*，by Percy Lubbock）

关于弗勒希的信息可参见《玛丽·拉塞尔·米特福德书信札》二册，H.乔利编（*Letters of Mary Russell Mitford*，edited by H.Chorley）

关于伦敦贫民窟的描绘可参考《伦敦的贫民窟》，托马斯·比姆斯著（*The Rookeries of London*，by Thomas Beames，1850）

原文注释

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[1] 彩绘织物——巴雷特小姐说：“我在打开的窗户前挂了一块透明的遮光帘。”她补充道，“爸爸取笑我说像糖果店的后窗，然而当阳光点燃城堡，他显然有所触动。”有人认为城堡及其他图样皆绘制在一片薄金属上，也有人认为那是一幅绣工精细的薄纱帘，但尚无确切定论。

[2] 凯尼恩先生由于缺了两颗门牙而有些口齿不清。——这里有夸大及臆测的成分。米特福德小姐为始作俑者。据称她在与霍恩先生的对话中曾说过：“你要知道，我们那位亲爱的朋友，除了自己的家人和一两位朋友外，从不见外人。她高度评价某某先生的‘朗读’技巧和出色品位，常请他为自己大声朗读新诗。……于是某某先生便站在壁炉前的地毯上，举起手稿，抬高音量，而我们亲爱的朋友则裹着印度披肩躺在沙发上，又厚又密的深色长发遮住低垂的头，全神贯注。现在，亲爱的某某先生掉了一颗门牙——其实不是门牙，而是门牙旁边的一颗牙——你看，这让发音出了问题。……一种讨喜的口齿不清、音节含混，所以‘silence’和‘ilence’听起来真的并无二致。……”毫无疑问，这位某某先生便是凯尼恩先生，因为维多利亚时代的人们对牙齿相关的话题出奇地敏感，因此必须隐去其名。只不过此事牵涉英国文学中更重要的问题。长久以来，巴雷特小姐被指耳朵有毛病。米特福德小姐则认为，凯尼恩先生牙齿的问题更值得诟病。但另一方面，巴雷特小姐本人却坚称自己作诗押韵跟他牙齿的缺失或她听力的低下，都没有关系。她写道：“我对韵文主题的重视，远甚于押韵的正确性，因此冷酷地决定孤注一掷，尝试多项实验。”因此她才会“冷酷地”把“angels”和“candles”、“heaven”和“unbelieving”、“islands”和“silence”当成同一个韵脚。当然，此事还待学者们定夺。然而任何一位研究过勃朗宁夫人性格及行为的人，想必都会认为无论对于艺术还是爱情，她都是一位刻意打破规则的人，因此才成为促成现代诗发展的“同谋共犯”。

[3] 黄手套——据奥尔夫人的《勃朗宁生平》记载，他戴柠檬黄的手套。布里德尔·福克斯夫人曾在一八三五至一八三六年见过他，她说过：“那时的他修长黝黑，非常帅气，而——容我在此暗示——有一点点纨绔子弟的味道，特别喜欢穿戴柠檬黄小山羊皮手套之类的东西。”

[4] “他被偷走了。”——事实上，弗勒希被偷了三次，但为求结构紧凑，这里将三次浓缩为一次。巴雷特小姐付给偷狗贼的赎金合计为二十英镑。

[5] 多年后，当她坐在意大利阳光灿烂的阳台上写作时，那些面孔还会再次浮现于她的眼前。——长诗《奥罗拉·利》中的人物皆为虚构，想必当勃朗宁夫人写这首诗时，部分最生动的诗行描写的就是伦敦的一个贫民窟（尽管对于一个艺术家而言，它自然是扭曲的，更何况她只是坐在一辆四轮马车上见过一次，威尔逊还拽着她的衣角）。显然，勃朗宁夫人对人类生活的满满好奇心，单靠卧室盥洗台上的荷马、乔叟半身像是满足不了的。

[6] 莉莉·威尔逊跟侍卫里吉先生陷入热恋。——莉莉·威尔逊的一生鲜为人知，亟须传记作者给予一注。勃朗宁夫妇信札中所提及的人物，除主要人物外，没有谁比威尔逊更能激发好奇心并心生困惑了。她的教名为莉莉，姓威尔逊。这就是我们知道的跟她的出身和成长背景相关的一切了。她可能是霍普恩德附近一位农场主的女儿，因为举止端庄、围裙洁净而受到巴雷特府邸厨师的赏识，得以来到府邸当差。那时候巴雷

特夫人找了个借口进到那个房间观察，认为她相当不错，于是指派她担任伊丽莎白小姐的女仆。又或者因为她是个伦敦佬，或是来自苏格兰——都有可能。无论如何，一八四六年时，她在服侍巴雷特小姐，而——是个“报酬不菲的仆人”——年薪十六英镑。由于她几乎跟弗勒希一样沉默寡言，所以她的性格几乎不为人知；又由于巴雷特小姐从未为她写过诗，她的面目远不如弗勒希清晰。不过从信札当中的各种暗示判断，显然她从一开始便属于严肃端庄到非人性化地步的英国女仆类型，在当时是英国地下室用人区的荣耀。同样显而易见的是，威尔逊对于权力及仪典也严格遵守。她极端尊敬“那个房间”；她肯定是第一个坚持下级仆役和上级仆役必须在不同的地方吃布丁的人。所有这些都隐匿在她用手打弗勒希后说的那句话当中——“因为他该打”。自不待言的是，如此推崇传统，势必催生对反传统的极端恐惧，因此当威尔逊面对曼宁街的下层社会时，她比巴雷特小姐更为惊悚，更为确定那些偷狗贼都是杀人犯。与此同时，她战胜恐惧，陪同巴雷特小姐登上马车的英雄行为，显示出对女主人的忠诚在她心中是多么地根深蒂固。巴雷特小姐去哪儿，威尔逊一定跟着去哪儿。私奔事件发生时，她成功地践行了这一原则。巴雷特小姐曾对威尔逊的勇气有所怀疑，但她的疑虑毫无根据。“威尔逊，”她写道——这些是她以巴雷特小姐的身份写给勃朗宁先生的最后一些文字——“对我不能再好了，而我……却指责她‘胆小’，怕她会胆怯！我开始认为胆小的人一旦受到适当的激励，会比谁都更勇猛。”顺便说一句，此处值得我们花费一秒钟关注一下仆役极不稳定的生活状态。如果威尔逊不跟巴雷特小姐走，就巴雷特小姐所知，肯定会“在日落前流落街头”，只怀揣着几个先令，或许还是从十六英镑年薪里攒下来的积蓄。接下来她将遭遇何种命运？由于十九世纪四十年代的英国小说鲜少讨论小姐贴身女仆的生活，传记作者的探照灯又从未探寻至如此低的阶层，这个问题恐怕永远无解。但威尔逊决定冒险，宣称将“跟随我到天涯海角”。她抛弃了地下室，抛弃了“那个房间”，还抛弃了温波尔街所代表的整个世界——这个世界对威尔逊意味着一切文明礼教，一切正确思想和体面生活——投身异国他乡的道德败坏与反宗教。再没有比观察威尔逊到了意大利之后，在英国式的礼教和与生俱来的热情之间所进行的挣扎更有趣的事了。她嘲笑意大利的宫廷，因意大利的名画而震惊。然而，“惊骇于维纳斯的有失体统”的她，却难得地没有忘记一项事实：任何女人脱光衣服之后，都是赤裸的。或许她曾经想过：就连我，每天也免不了得赤裸两三秒钟吧。所以，“她觉得自己应该再尝试一次，或许那令人心烦的端庄会消逝，谁知道呢”？它显然是迅速消失了！没多久，她不仅喜欢上意大利，还和大公爵的贴身侍卫里吉先生坠入爱河。这些侍卫都是既高尚又有道德的男士，一有人身高达六英尺。她戴起了订婚戒指，打发了一位来自伦敦的追求者，又开始学习意大利语。然而好景不长，待拨云散雾之后，我们看到威尔逊被抛弃了——“背信弃义的里吉解除了和威尔逊的婚约”。从中作梗的似乎是里吉的兄弟，他是普拉托的男子服饰用品批发商。里吉辞去大公爵贴身侍卫一职，采纳了兄弟的建议，在普拉托做起了男子服饰用品的零售买卖。或许是因为他的新工作需要一位对男子服饰用品有一业知识的妻子，或许是因为普拉托有个女孩具备了这类一业知识，可以肯定的是，他不再经常写信给威尔逊，尽管他本应该写。到底这位既高尚又有道德的男士干了什么坏事，令勃朗宁夫人在一八五〇年慨叹道：“（威尔逊）已经完全想开了，多亏她头脑清楚、个性稳健。她怎么能再继续爱这样的男人呢？”——里吉为何在如此短的时间里便被贬为“这样的男人”，我们无从猜测。被里吉抛弃的威尔逊与勃朗宁一家关系愈来愈密切。她不仅担任贴身女仆，还烘烤蛋糕、缝制衣裳，并——成为宝宝佩尼尼的慈爱保姆；宝宝就此认定她属于家庭成员之一，不叫她别的，而是直呼其名莉莉。一八五五年，威尔逊嫁于勃朗宁家的男仆——罗马尼奥利，“一位心地善良的好人”；两人共同照料勃朗宁宅邸一段时间。然而，一八五九年，罗伯特·勃朗宁“接下兰多尔监护人一职”，这个职位责任重大，一顾虑甚多，因为兰多尔的种种习惯让人头疼。“完全不懂得克制自己，”勃朗宁夫人写道，“却极善猜忌。”在种种状况下，威尔逊被指派做“他的保姆”，“除他的配额所余之外”，再领年薪二十二英镑。后来她的薪水一直加到了三十英镑，因为“老狮子”兰多尔“冲动如老虎”，他若对晚餐不满意，二话不说便把盘子扔出窗外或摔在地上；又常怀疑仆人偷偷打开桌子抽屉。担任他的保姆，诚如勃朗宁夫人所说：“须冒若千危险，换作是我，宁愿躲得远远的。”但对见识过巴雷特先生及各种精灵

的威尔逊来说，几个扔出窗外或摔在地上的盘子不过是小菜一碟——诸如此类的危险充斥着日常工作。

我们能够了解到的是，那一天确乎是不同寻常的一天。无论它是否始于某偏远的英国乡村，总之它是在威尼斯的雷佐尼科府邸结束的。至少到一八九七年她还住在那儿，当时她已经成了一名寡妇，而男主人正是她曾经挚爱并喂养长大的小男孩——巴雷特·勃朗宁先生。当她这位老妇人坐在威尼斯通红的夕阳前浮想联翩时，她大概也觉得这是不同寻常的一天吧。她那些嫁给农场帮工的朋友至今仍为买一品脱的啤酒而在英国的小巷间踉跄前行。而她却跟随巴雷特小姐私奔到了意大利，见识了林林总总的怪事——革命、侍卫、精灵，还有老把盘子扔出窗外的兰多尔先生。那时勃朗宁夫人已过世——坐在雷佐尼科府邸夕照窗前的老威尔逊心中想必感触良多。但我们若想假装猜得出她的心思，那可就太自不量力，因为她正是昔日那一大批高深莫测、守口如瓶、隐而不显的优良女仆的典范。——让我们引用她女主人的一句话替她盖棺定论吧：“天底下再也找不到比威尔逊更诚实、更真诚、更重感情的人了。”

[7] 他饱受跳蚤之苦。——显然十九世纪中叶的意大利因其跳蚤而闻名。事实上，这些跳蚤让他们打破了不可逾越的传统。比方说，一八五八年在罗马，纳撒尼尔·霍桑去跟布雷默小姐喝茶时：“我们谈到跳蚤——这种小昆虫在罗马无孔不入，入侵每个人的私生活，如此司空见惯，在所难免，以至于大家聊起蚤患之苦毫不避讳。可怜了娇小的布雷默小姐，替我们倒茶时就因一只跳蚤而不堪其扰……”

[8] 尼禄从顶楼窗口跳了出去。——据卡莱尔所说，尼禄（1849-1860）是条“毛发浓密的小古巴犬（可能是马耳他狗或是杂种狗），毛色主要为白色，是一条情深意重、充满活力的小狗，除此之外优点甚少，而——几乎毫无训练”。关于它的一生资料丰富，却不适用于此。只需提及它曾被偷，它的脖子上被绑了一张支票带回给卡莱尔，那金额足够买一匹马；而——“我把它抛进阿伯道尔的海里不止两三次，它一点儿都不喜欢”。一八五〇年，它从图书室的窗口跳出去，避开了通风井栏杆的尖顶，“啪嗒”一声摔在人行道上。“那是早餐后，”卡莱尔夫人说，“它一直站在敞开的窗户旁看小鸟……我躺在床上，突然听见伊丽莎白在松木隔板后面尖叫：噢，上帝！噢，尼禄！然后像狂风般冲下楼梯，跑出门外，来到街上……我穿着睡衣跟着冲出去找她……卡莱尔先生从卧室里下来，下巴上满是肥皂泡泡，问道：‘尼禄出什么事了？’——‘噢，先生，它肯定四条腿全摔断了！它刚从你的窗口跳出去！’——‘上帝保佑！’卡莱尔先生说完后便转身回去继续把胡子刮完。”然而，尼禄一根骨头都没摔断，活得好好的。后来他被一辆屠夫的运货马车碾过，终于在一八六〇年二月一日因那次车祸的后遗症去世，被埋在切尼洛花园内的一块小石碑下面。

它是否真的想自杀，还是诚如卡莱尔夫人暗示的，只是想跃起捉鸟而已，或许值得我们写一篇相当有意思的犬类心理学论文。有人认为拜伦的狗因为同情拜伦，也跟着他一起发了疯；还有人认为尼禄是因为卡莱尔先生的缘故，罹患不可救药的抑郁症。关于狗与时代精神的关系——譬如我们是否能形容某条狗是伊丽莎白时期的，或奥古斯都时期的，或维多利亚时期的——以及狗主人之诗作和哲学思想对他们的狗所造成的影响，这些主题值得大书特书，在此篇幅有限，无法深谈。我们只能说，尼禄跳楼的动机扑朔迷离。

[9] 布尔沃-利顿爵士相信自己可以隐身了。——休·杰克逊夫人在《维多利亚时代的童年》中写道：“阿瑟·拉塞尔爵士告诉我，多年以前，他还是个小孩子的时候，他母亲带他去内布沃思。第二天早晨他在大餐厅里吃早饭，一个身着破旧晨衣、相貌怪异的老绅士走了进来，缓缓绕餐桌而行，轮流瞪视每一位客人。他听见母亲的邻座对其耳语：‘不必理会，他以为自己可以隐身。’那便是利顿爵士本尊。”（第十七至第十八页）

[10] 现在他死了。——弗勒希当然是死了，但是他死亡的日期及方式都不为人知。唯一相关的记载是：“弗勒希寿终正寝，葬于圭迪府邸地穴。”勃朗宁夫人葬于佛罗伦萨的英国公墓，罗伯特·勃朗宁则葬于威斯敏斯特教堂。因此，弗勒希至今仍躺在勃朗宁夫妇曾经生活过的那幢宅邸之下。

‘Things are not
simple but
complex. If he
bit Mr Browning
he bit her too.
Hatred is not
hatred; hatred
is also love.’



Chapter 1 THREE MILE CROSS

It is universally admitted that the family from which the subject of this memoir claims descent is one of the greatest antiquity. Therefore it is not strange that the origin of the name itself is lost in obscurity. Many million years ago the country which is now called Spain seethed uneasily in the ferment of creation. Ages passed; vegetation appeared; where there is vegetation the law of Nature has decreed that there shall be rabbits; where there are rabbits, Providence has ordained there shall be dogs. There is nothing in this that calls for question or comment. But when we ask why the dog that caught the rabbit was called a Spaniel, then doubts and difficulties begin. Some historians say that when the Carthaginians landed in Spain the common soldiers shouted with one accord 'Span! Span!' - for rabbits darted from every scrub, from every bush. The land was alive with rabbits. And *span* in the Carthaginian tongue signifies Rab-bit. Thus the land was called Hispania, or Rabbit-land, and the dogs, which were almost instantly perceived in full pur-suit of the rabbits, were called Spaniels or rabbit dogs.

There many of us would be content to let the matter rest; but truth compels us to add that there is another school of thought which thinks differently. The word Hispania, these scholars say, has nothing whatever to do with the Carthagin-ian word *span*. Hispania derives from the Basque word *españa*, signifying an edge or boundary. If that is so, rabbits, bushes, dogs, soldiers - the whole of that romantic and pleasant picture, must be dismissed from the mind; and we must simply suppose that the Spaniel is called a spaniel because Spain is called España. As for the third school of antiquaries which maintains that just as a lover calls his mistress monster or monkey, so the Spaniards called their favourite dogs crooked or cragged (the word *españa* can be made to take these meanings) because a spaniel is notoriously the opposite - that is too fanciful a conjecture to be seriously entertained.

Passing over these theories, and many more which need not

detain us here, we reach Wales in the middle of the tenth century. The spaniel is already there, brought, some say, by the Spanish clan of Ebhor or Ivor many centuries previously; and certainly by the middle of the tenth century a dog of high repute and value. 'The Spaniel of the King is a pound in value,' Howel Dha laid it down in his Book of Laws. And when we remember what the pound could buy in the year AD 948 - how many wives, slaves, horses, oxen, turkeys and geese - it is plain that the spaniel was already a dog of value and reputation. He had his place already by the King's side. His family was held in honour before those of many famous monarchs. He was taking his ease in palaces when the Plantagenets and the Tudors and the Stuarts were following other people's ploughs through other people's mud. Long before the Howards, the Cavendishes or the Russells had risen above the common ruck of Smiths, Joneses and Tomkins, the spaniel family was a family distinguished and apart. And as the centuries took their way, minor branches broke off from the parent stem. By degrees, as English history pursues its course, there came into existence at least seven famous Spaniel families - the Clumber, the Sussex, the Norfolk, the Black Field, the Cocker, the Irish Water and the English Water, all deriving from the original spaniel of prehistoric days but showing distinct characteristics, and therefore no doubt claiming privileges as distinct. That there was an aristocracy of dogs by the time Queen Elizabeth was on the throne Sir Philip Sidney bears witness: '..... greyhounds, Spaniels and Hounds', he observes, 'whereof the first might seem the Lords, the second the Gentlemen, and the last the Yeomen of dogs', he writes in the *Arcadia*.

But if we are thus led to assume that the Spaniels followed human example, and looked up to Greyhounds as their superiors and considered Hounds beneath them, we have to admit that their aristocracy was founded on better reasons than ours. Such at least must be the conclusion of anyone who studies the laws of the Spaniel Club. By that august body it is plainly laid down what constitute the vices of a spaniel, and what constitute its virtues. Light eyes, for example, are undesirable; curled ears are still worse; to be born with a light nose or a topknot is nothing less than fatal. The merits of the spaniel are equally clearly defined. His head must be smooth, rising without a too-decided stoop from the muzzle; the skull must be comparatively rounded and well developed with plenty of room for brain power; the eyes must be full but not

gozzled; the general expression must be one of intelligence and gentleness. The spaniel that exhibits these points is encouraged and bred from; the span-iel who persists in perpetuating topknots and light noses is cut off from the privileges and emoluments of his kind. Thus the judges lay down the law and, laying down the law, impose penalties and privileges which ensure that the law shall be obeyed.

But, if we now turn to human society, what chaos and confusion meet the eye! No Club has any such jurisdiction upon the breed of man. The Heralds' College is the nearest approach we have to the Spaniel Club. It at least makes some attempt to preserve the purity of the human family. But when we ask what constitutes noble birth - should our eyes be light or dark, our ears curled or straight, are topknots fatal, our judges merely refer us to our coats of arms. You have none perhaps. Then you are nobody. But once make good your claim to sixteen quarterings, prove your right to a coronet, and then they say you are not only born, but nobly born into the bargain. Hence it is that not a muffineer in all Mayfair lacks its lion couchant or its mermaid rampant. Even our linendrapers mount the Royal Arms above their doors, as though that were proof that their sheets are safe to sleep in. Everywhere rank is claimed and its virtues are asserted. Yet when we come to survey the Royal Houses of Bourbon, Hapsburg and Hohenzollern, decorated with how many coronets and quarterings, couchant and rampant with how many lions and leopards, and find them now in exile, deposed from authority, judged unworthy of respect, we can but shake our heads and admit that the Judges of the Spaniel Club judged better. Such is the lesson that is enforced directly we turn from these high matters to consider the early life of Flush in the family of the Mitfords.

About the end of the eighteenth century a family of the famous spaniel breed was living near Reading in the house of a certain Dr Midford or Mitford. That gentleman, in conformity with the canons of the Heralds' College, chose to spell his name with a *t*, and thus claimed descent from the Northumberland family of the Mitfords of Bertram Castle. His wife was a Miss Russell, and sprang, if remotely, still decidedly from the ducal house of Bedford. But the mating of Dr Mitford's ancestors had been carried on with such wanton disregard for principles that no bench of judges could have

admitted his claim to be well bred or have allowed him to perpetuate his kind. His eyes were light; his ears were curled; his head exhibited the fatal topknot. In other words, he was utterly selfish, recklessly extravagant, worldly, insincere and addicted to gambling. He wasted his own fortune, his wife's fortune, and his daughter's earnings. He deserted them in his prosperity and sponged upon them in his infirmity. Two points he had in his favour indeed, great personal beauty - he was like an Apollo until gluttony and intemperance changed Apollo into Bacchus - and he was genuinely devoted to dogs. But there can be no doubt that, had there been a Man Club corresponding to the Spaniel Club in existence, no spelling of Mitford with a *t* instead of with a *d*, no calling cousins with the Mitfords of Bertram Castle, would have availed to protect him from contumely and contempt, from all the penalties of outlawry and ostracism, from being branded as a mongrel man unfitted to carry on his kind. But he was a human being. Nothing therefore prevented him from marrying a lady of birth and breeding, from living for over eighty years, from having in his possession several generations of greyhounds and spaniels and from begetting a daughter.

All researches have failed to fix with any certainty the exact year of Flush's birth, let alone the month or the day; but it is likely that he was born some time early in the year 1842. It is also probable that he was directly descended from Tray (c. 1816), whose points, preserved unfortunately only in the untrustworthy medium of poetry, prove him to have been a red cocker spaniel of merit. There is every reason to think that Flush was the son of that 'real old cocking spaniel' for whom Dr Mitford refused twenty guineas 'on account of his excellence in the field'. It is to poetry, alas, that we have to trust for our most detailed description of Flush himself as a young dog. He was of that particular shade of dark brown which in sunshine flashes 'all over into gold'. His eyes were 'startled eyes of hazel bland'. His ears were 'tasselled'; his 'slender feet' were 'canopied in fringes' and his tail was broad. Making allowance for the exigencies of rhyme and the inaccuracies of poetic diction, there is nothing here but what would meet with the approval of the Spaniel Club. We cannot doubt that Flush was a pure-bred Cocker of the red variety marked by all the characteristic excellences of his kind.

The first months of his life were passed at Three Mile Cross, a working man's cottage near Reading. Since the Mitfords had fallen on evil days - Kerenhappock was the only servant - the chair-covers were made by Miss Mitford herself and of the cheapest material; the most important article of furniture seems to have been a large table; the most important room a large greenhouse - it is unlikely that Flush was surrounded by any of those luxuries, rain-proof kennels, cement walks, a maid or boy attached to his person, that would now be accorded a dog of his rank. But he thrived; he enjoyed with all the vivacity of his temperament most of the pleasures and some of the licences natural to his youth and sex. Miss Mitford, it is true, was much confined to the cottage. She had to read aloud to her father hour after hour; then to play cribbage; then, when at last he slumbered, to write and write and write at the table in the greenhouse in the attempt to pay their bills and settle their debts. But at last the longed-for moment would come. She thrust her papers aside, clapped a hat on her head, took her umbrella and set off for a walk across the fields with her dogs. Spaniels are by nature sympathetic; Flush, as his story proves, had an even excessive appreciation of human emotions. The sight of his dear mistress snuffing the fresh air at last, letting it ruffle her white hair and redden the natural freshness of her face, while the lines on her huge brow smoothed themselves out, excited him to gambols whose wildness was half sympathy with her own delight. As she strode through the long grass, so he leapt hither and thither, parting its green curtain. The cool globes of dew or rain broke in showers of iridescent spray about his nose; the earth, here hard, here soft, here hot, here cold, stung, teased and tickled the soft pads of his feet. Then what a variety of smells interwoven in subtlest combination thrilled his nostrils; strong smells of earth, sweet smells of flowers; nameless smells of leaf and bramble; sour smells as they crossed the road; pungent smells as they entered bean-fields. But suddenly down the wind came tearing a smell sharper, stronger, more lacerating than any - a smell that ripped across his brain stirring a thousand instincts, releasing a million memories - the smell of hare, the smell of fox. Off he flashed like a fish drawn in a rush through water further and further. He forgot his mistress; he forgot all human kind. He heard dark men cry 'Span! Span!' He heard whips crack. He raced; he rushed. At last he stopped bewildered; the incantation faded; very slowly, wagging his tail sheepishly, he

trotted back across the fields to where Miss Mitford stood shouting 'Flush! Flush! Flush!' and waving her umbrella. And once at least the call was even more imperious; the hunting horn roused deeper instincts, summoned wilder and stronger emotions that transcended memory and obliterated grass, trees, hare, rabbit, fox in one wild shout of ecstasy. Love blazed her torch in his eyes; he heard the hunting horn of Venus. Before he was well out of his puppyhood, Flush was a father.

Such conduct in a man even, in the year 1842, would have called for some excuse from a biographer; in a woman no excuse could have availed; her name must have been blotted in ignominy from the page. But the moral code of dogs, whether better or worse, is certainly different from ours, and there was nothing in Flush's conduct in this respect that requires a veil now, or unfitted him for the society of the purest and the chastest in the land then. There is evidence, that is to say, that the elder brother of Dr Pusey was anxious to buy him. Deducing from the known character of Dr Pusey the probable character of his brother, there must have been something serious, solid, promising well for future excellence whatever might be the levity of the present in Flush even as a puppy. But a much more significant testimony to the attractive nature of his gifts is that, even though Mr Pusey wished to buy him, Miss Mitford refused to sell him. As she was at her wits' end for money, scarcely knew indeed what tragedy to spin, what annual to edit, and was reduced to the repulsive expedient of asking her friends for help, it must have gone hard with her to refuse the sum offered by the elder brother of Dr Pusey. Twenty pounds had been offered for Flush's father. Miss Mitford might well have asked ten or fifteen for Flush. Ten or fifteen pounds was a princely sum, a magnificent sum to have at her disposal. With ten or fifteen pounds she might have re-covered her chairs, she might have re-stocked her greenhouse, she might have bought herself an entire wardrobe, and 'I have not bought a bonnet, a cloak, a gown, hardly a pair of gloves', she wrote in 1842, 'for four years'.

But to sell Flush was unthinkable. He was of the rare order of objects that cannot be associated with money. Was he not of the still rarer kind that, because they typify what is spiritual, what is beyond price, become a fitting token of the disinterestedness of friendship; may be offered in that spirit to a friend, if one is lucky

enough to have one, who is more like a daughter than a friend; to a friend who lies secluded all through the summer months in a back bedroom in Wimpole Street, to a friend who is no other than England's foremost poetess, the brilliant, the doomed, the adored Elizabeth Barrett herself? Such were the thoughts that came more and more frequently to Miss Mitford as she watched Flush rolling and scampering in the sunshine; as she sat by the couch of Miss Barrett in her dark, ivy-shaded London bedroom. Yes; Flush was worthy of Miss Barrett; Miss Barrett was worthy of Flush. The sacrifice was a great one; but the sacrifice must be made. Thus, one day, probably in the early summer of the year 1842, a remarkable couple might have been seen taking their way down Wimpole Street - a very short, stout, shabby, elderly lady, with a bright red face and bright white hair, who led by the chain a very spirited, very inquisitive, very well-bred golden cocker spaniel puppy. They walked almost the whole length of the street until at last they paused at No.50. Not without trepidation, Miss Mitford rang the bell.

Even now perhaps nobody rings the bell of a house in Wimpole Street without trepidation. It is the most august of London streets, the most impersonal. Indeed, when the world seems tumbling to ruin, and civilisation rocks on its foundations, one has only to go to Wimpole Street; to pace that avenue; to survey those houses; to consider their uniformity; to marvel at the window curtains and their consistency; to admire the brass knockers and their regularity; to observe butchers tendering joints and cooks receiving them; to reckon the incomes of the inhabitants and infer their consequent submission to the laws of God and man - one has only to go to Wimpole Street and drink deep of the peace breathed by authority in order to heave a sigh of thankfulness that, while Corinth has fallen and Messina has tumbled, while crowns have blown down the wind and old Empires have gone up in flames, Wimpole Street has remained unmoved, and, turning from Wimpole Street into Oxford Street, a prayer rises in the heart and bursts from the lips that not a brick of Wimpole Street may be re-pointed, not a curtain washed, not a butcher fail to tender or a cook to receive the sirloin, the haunch, the breast, the ribs of mutton and beef for ever and ever, for as long as Wimpole Street remains, civilisation is secure.

The butlers of Wimpole Street move ponderously even to-day;

in the summer of 1842 they were more deliberate still. The laws of livery were then more stringent; the ritual of the green baize apron for cleaning silver; of the striped waistcoat and swallow-tail black coat for opening the hall door, was more closely observed. It is likely then that Miss Mitford and Flush were kept waiting at least three minutes and a half on the door-step. At last, however, the door of number fifty was flung wide; Miss Mitford and Flush were ushered in. Miss Mitford was a frequent visitor; there was nothing to surprise, though something to subdue her, in the sight of the Barrett family mansion. But the effect upon Flush must have been overwhelming in the extreme. Until this moment he had set foot in no house but the working man's cottage at Three Mile Cross. The boards there were bare; the mats were frayed; the chairs were cheap. Here there was nothing bare, nothing frayed, nothing cheap - that Flush could see at a glance. Mr Barrett, the owner, was a rich merchant; he had a large family of grown-up sons and daughters, and a retinue, proportionately large, of servants. His house was furnished in the fashion of the late 'thirties, with some tincture, no doubt, of that Eastern fantasy which had led him when he built a house in Shropshire to adorn it with the domes and crescents of Moorish architecture. Here in Wimpole Street such extravagance would not be allowed; but we may suppose that the high dark rooms were full of ottomans and carved mahogany; tables were twisted; filigree ornaments stood upon them; daggers and swords hung upon wine-dark walls; curious objects brought from his East Indian property stood in recesses, and thick rich carpets clothed the floors.

But as Flush trotted up behind Miss Mitford, who was behind the butler, he was more astonished by what he smelt than by what he saw. Up the funnel of the staircase came warm whiffs of joints roasting, of fowls basting, of soups simmering - ravishing almost as food itself to nostrils used to the meagre savour of Kerenhappock's penurious fries and hashes. Mixing with the smell of food were further smells - smells of cedarwood and sandalwood and mahogany; scents of male bodies and female bodies; of men servants and maid servants; of coats and trousers; of crinolines and mantles; of curtains of tapestry, of curtains of plush; of coal dust and fog; of wine and cigars. Each room as he passed it - dining-room, drawing-room, library, bedroom - wafted out its own contribution to the general stew; while, as he set down first one paw and

then another, each was caressed and retained by the sensuality of rich pile carpets closing amorously over it. At length they reached a closed door at the back of the house. A gentle tap was given; gently the door was opened.

Miss Barrett's bedroom - for such it was - must by all accounts have been dark. The light, normally obscured by a curtain of green damask, was in summer further dimmed by the ivy, the scarlet runners, the convolvuluses and the nasturtiums which grew in the window-box. At first Flush could distinguish nothing in the pale greenish gloom but five white globes glimmering mysteriously in mid-air. But again it was the smell of the room that overpowered him. Only a scholar who has descended step by step into a mausoleum and there finds himself in a crypt, crusted with fungus, slimy with mould, exuding sour smells of decay and antiquity, while half-obliterated marble busts gleam in mid-air and all is dimly seen by the light of the small swinging lamp which he holds, and dips and turns, glancing now here, now there - only the sensations of such an explorer into the buried vaults of a ruined city can compare with the riot of emotions that flooded Flush's nerves as he stood for the first time in an invalid's bedroom, in Wimpole Street, and smelt eau-de-Cologne.

Very slowly, very dimly, with much sniffing and pawing, Flush by degrees distinguished the outlines of several articles of furniture. That huge object by the window was perhaps a wardrobe. Next to it stood, conceivably, a chest of drawers. In the middle of the room swam up to the surface what seemed to be a table with a ring round it; and then the vague amorphous shapes of armchair and table emerged. But everything was disguised. On top of the wardrobe stood three white busts; the chest of drawers was surmounted by a bookcase; the bookcase was pasted over with crimson merino; the washing-table had a coronal of shelves upon it; on top of the shelves that were on top of the washing-table stood two more busts. Nothing in the room was itself; everything was something else. Even the window-blind was not a simple muslin blind; it was a painted fabric with a design of castles and gateways and groves of trees, and there were several peasants taking a walk. Looking-glasses further distorted these already distorted objects so that there seemed to be ten busts of ten poets instead of five; four tables instead of two. And suddenly there was a more terrifying confusion

still. Suddenly Flush saw staring back at him from a hole in the wall another dog with bright eyes flashing, and tongue lolling! He paused amazed. He advanced in awe.

Thus advancing, thus withdrawing, Flush scarcely heard, save as the distant drone of wind among the tree-tops, the murmur and patter of voices talking. He pursued his investigations, cautiously, nervously, as an explorer in a forest softly advances his foot, uncertain whether that shadow is a lion, or that root a cobra. At last, however, he was aware of huge objects in commotion over him; and, unstrung as he was by the experiences of the past hour, he hid himself, trembling, behind a screen. The voices ceased. A door shut. For one instant he paused, bewildered, unstrung. Then with a pounce as of clawed tigers memory fell upon him. He felt himself alone - deserted. He rushed to the door. It was shut. He pawed, he listened. He heard footsteps descending. He knew them for the familiar footsteps of his mistress. They stopped. But no - on they went, down they went. Miss Mitford was slowly, was heavily, was reluctantly descending the stairs. And as she went, as he heard her footsteps fade, panic seized upon him. Door after door shut in his face as Miss Mitford went downstairs; they shut on freedom; on fields; on hares; on grass; on his adored, his venerated mistress - on the dear old woman who had washed him and beaten him and fed him from her own plate when she had none too much to eat herself - on all he had known of happiness and love and human goodness! There! The front door slammed. He was alone. She had deserted him.

Then such a wave of despair and anguish overwhelmed him, the irrevocableness and implacability of fate so smote him, that he lifted up his head and howled aloud. A voice said 'Flush'. He did not hear it. 'Flush', it repeated a second time. He started. He had thought himself alone. He turned. Was there something alive in the room with him? Was there something on the sofa? In the wild hope that this being, whatever it was, might open the door, that he might still rush after Miss Mitford and find her - that this was some game of hide-and-seek such as they used to play in the greenhouse at home - Flush darted to the sofa.

'Oh, Flush!' said Miss Barrett. For the first time she looked him in the face. For the first time Flush looked at the lady lying on the sofa.

Each was surprised. Heavy curls hung down on either side of Miss Barrett's face; large bright eyes shone out; a large mouth smiled. Heavy ears hung down on either side of Flush's face; his eyes, too, were large and bright: his mouth was wide. There was a likeness between them. As they gazed at each other each felt: Here am I - and then each felt: But how different! Hers was the pale worn face of an invalid, cut off from air, light, freedom. His was the warm ruddy face of a young animal; instinct with health and energy. Broken asunder, yet made in the same mould, could it be that each completed what was dormant in the other? She might have been - all that; and he - But no. Between them lay the widest gulf that can separate one being from another. She spoke. He was dumb. She was woman; he was dog. Thus closely united, thus immensely divided, they gazed at each other. Then with one bound Flush sprang on to the sofa and laid himself where he was to lie for ever after - on the rug at Miss Barrett's feet.

Chapter 2 THE BACK BEDROOM

The summer of 1842 was, historians tell us, not much different from other summers, yet to Flush it was so different that he must have doubted if the world itself were the same. It was a summer spent in a bedroom; a summer spent with Miss Barrett. It was a summer spent in London, spent in the heart of civilisation. At first he saw nothing but the bedroom and its furniture, but that alone was surprising enough. To identify, distinguish and call by their right names all the different articles he saw there was confusing enough. And he had scarcely accustomed himself to the tables, to the busts, to the washing-stands - the smell of eau-de-Cologne still affected his nostrils disagreeably, when there came one of those rare days which are fine but not windy, warm but not baking, dry but not dusty, when an invalid can take the air. The day came when Miss Barrett could safely risk the huge adventure of going shopping with her sister.

The carriage was ordered; Miss Barrett rose from her sofa; veiled and muffled, she descended the stairs. Flush of course went with her. He leapt into the carriage by her side. Couched on her lap, the whole pomp of London at its most splendid burst on his astonished eyes. They drove along Oxford Street. He saw houses made almost entirely of glass. He saw windows laced across with glittering streamers; heaped with gleaming mounds of pink, purple, yellow, rose. The carriage stopped. He entered mysterious arcades filmed with clouds and webs of tinted gauze. A million airs from China, from Arabia, wafted their frail incense into the remotest fibres of his senses. Swiftly over the counters flashed yards of gleaming silk; more darkly, more slowly rolled the ponderous bombazine. Scissors snipped; coins sparkled. Paper was folded; string tied. What with nodding plumes, waving streamers, tossing horses, yellow liveries, passing faces, leaping, dancing up, down, Flush, satiated with the multiplicity of his sensations, slept, drowsed, dreamt and knew no more until he was lifted out of the carriage and the door of Wimpole Street shut on him again.

And next day, as the fine weather continued, Miss Barrett ventured upon an even more daring exploit - she had her-self drawn up Wimpole Street in a bath-chair. Again Flush went with her. For the first time he heard his nails click upon the hard paving-stones of London. For the first time the whole battery of a London street on a hot summer' s day assaulted his nostrils. He smelt the swooning smells that lie in the gutters; the bitter smells that corrode iron railings; the fuming, heady smells that rise from basements - smells more complex, corrupt, violently contrasted and com-pounded than any he had smelt in the fields near Reading; smells that lay far beyond the range of the human nose; so that while the chair went on, he stopped, amazed; defining, savouring, until a jerk at his collar dragged him on. And also, as he trotted up Wimpole Street behind Miss Barrett' s chair he was dazed by the passage of human bodies. Petti-coats swished at his head; trousers brushed his flanks; sometimes a wheel whizzed an inch from his nose; the wind of destruction roared in his ears and fanned the feathers of his paws as a van passed. Then he plunged in terror. Mer-cifully the chain tugged at his collar; Miss Barrett held him tight, or he would have rushed to destruction.

At last, with every nerve throbbing and every sense sing-ing, he reached Regent's Park. And then when he saw once more, after years of absence it seemed, grass,flowers and trees, the old hunting cry of the fields hallooed in his ears and he dashed forward to run as he had run in the fields at home. But now a heavy weight jerked at his throat; he was thrown back on his haunches. Were there not trees and grass? he asked. Were these not the signals of freedom? Had he not always leapt forward directly Miss Mitford started on her walk? Why was he a prisoner here? He paused. Here, he observed, the flowers were massed far more thickly than at home; they stood, plant by plant, rigidly in narrow plots. The plots were intersected by hard black paths. Men in shiny top-hats marched ominously up and down the paths. At the sight of them he shuddered closer to the chair. He gladly accepted the protection of the chain. Thus before many of these walks were over a new conception had entered his brain. Setting one thing beside another, he had arrived at a conclusion. Where there are flower-beds there are asphalt paths; where there are flower-beds and asphalt paths, there are men in shiny top-hats; where there are flower-beds and asphalt paths and men in shiny top-hats, dogs must be led on

chains. Without being able to decipher a word of the placard at the Gate, he had learnt his lesson - in Regent' s Park dogs must be led on chains.

And to this nucleus of knowledge, born from the strange experiences of the summer of 1842, soon adhered another; dogs are not equal, but different. At Three Mile Cross Flush had mixed impartially with tap-room dogs and the Squire' s greyhounds; he had known no difference between the tinker' s dog and himself. Indeed it is probable that the mother of his child, though by courtesy called Spaniel, was nothing but a mongrel, eared in one way, tailed in another. But the dogs of London, Flush soon discovered, are strictly divided into different classes. Some are chained dogs; some run wild. Some take their airings in carriages and drink from purple jars; others are unkempt and uncollared and pick up a living in the gutter. Dogs therefore, Flush began to suspect, differ; some are high, others low; and his suspicions were confirmed by snatches of talk held in passing with the dogs of Wimpole Street. 'See that scallywag? A mere mongrel! By gad, that' s a fine Spaniel. One of the best blood in Britain! Pity his ears aren' t a shade more curly There' s a topknot for you!'

From such phrases, from the accent of praise or derision in which they were spoken, at the pillar-box or outside the public-house where the footmen were exchanging racing tips, Flush knew before the summer had passed that there is no equality among dogs: some dogs are high dogs; some are low. Which, then, was he? No sooner had Flush got home than he examined himself carefully in the looking-glass. Heaven be praised, he was a dog of birth and breeding! His head was smooth; his eyes were prominent but not gozzled; his feet were feathered; he was the equal of the best-bred cocker in Wimpole Street. He noted with approval the purple jar from which he drank - such are the privileges of rank; he bent his head quietly to have the chain fixed to his collar - such are its penalties. When about this time Miss Barrett observed him staring in the glass, she was mistaken. He was a philosopher, she thought, meditating the difference between appearance and reality. On the con-trary, he was an aristocrat considering his points.

But the fine summer days were soon over; the autumn winds began to blow; and Miss Barrett settled down to a life of complete seclusion in her bedroom. Flush' s life was also changed. His

outdoor education was supplemented by that of the bedroom, and this, to a dog of Flush' s tempera-ment, was the most drastic that could have been invented. His only airings, and these were brief and perfunctory, were taken in the company of Wilson, Miss Barrett' s maid. For the rest of the day he kept his station on the sofa at Miss Barrett' s feet. All his natural instincts were thwarted and contradicted. When the autumn winds had blown last year in Berkshire he had run in wild scampering across the stub-ble; now at the sound of the ivy tapping on the pane Miss Barrett asked Wilson to see to the fastenings of the window. When the leaves of the scarlet runners and nasturtiums in the window-box yellowed and fell she drew her Indian shawl more closely round her. When the October rain lashed the window Wilson lit the fire and heaped up the coals. Autumn deepened into winter and the first fogs jaundiced the air. Wilson and Flush could scarcely grope their way to the pillar-box or to the chemist. When they came back, nothing could be seen in the room but the pale busts glimmering wanly on the tops of the wardrobes; the peasants and the castle had vanished on the blind; blank yellow filled the pane. Flush felt that he and Miss Barrett lived alone together in a cushioned and firelit cave. The traffic droned on per-petually outside with muffled reverberations; now and again a voice went calling hoarsely, 'Old chairs and baskets to mend', down the street: sometimes there was a jangle of organ music, coming nearer and louder; going further and fading away. But none of these sounds meant freedom, or action, or exercise. The wind and the rain, the wild days of autumn and the cold days of mid-winter, all alike meant nothing to Flush except warmth and stillness; the lighting of lamps, the drawing of curtains and the poking of the fire.

At first the strain was too great to be borne. He could not help dancing round the room on a windy autumn day when the partridges must be scattering over the stubble. He thought he heard guns on the breeze. He could not help running to the door with his hackles raised when a dog barked outside. And yet when Miss Barrett called him back, when she laid her hand on his collar, he could not deny that another feeling, urgent, contradictory, disagreeable - he did not know what to call it or why he obeyed it - restrained him. He lay still at her feet. To resign, to control, to suppress the most violent instincts of his nature - that was the prime lesson of the bedroom school, and it was one of such por-tentous

difficulty that many scholars have learnt Greek with less - many battles have been won that cost their generals not half such pain. But then, Miss Barrett was the teacher. Between them, Flush felt more and more strongly, as the weeks wore on, was a bond, an uncomfortable yet thrilling tightness; so that if his pleasure was her pain, then his pleasure was pleasure no longer but three parts pain. The truth of this was proved every day. Somebody opened the door and whistled him to come. Why should he not go out? He longed for air and exercise; his limbs were cramped with lying on the sofa. He had never grown altogether used to the smell of eau-de-Cologne. But no - though the door stood open, he would not leave Miss Barrett. He hesitated half-way to the door and then went back to the sofa. 'Flushie', wrote Miss Barrett, 'is my friend - my companion - and loves me better than he loves the sunshine without.' She could not go out. She was chained to the sofa. 'A bird in a cage would have as good a story', she wrote, as she had. And Flush, to whom the whole world was free, chose to forfeit all the smells of Wimpole Street in order to lie by her side.

And yet sometimes the tie would almost break; there were vast gaps in their understanding. Sometimes they would lie and stare at each other in blank bewilderment. Why, Miss Barrett wondered, did Flush tremble suddenly, and whimper and start and listen? She could hear nothing; she could see nothing; there was nobody in the room with them. She could not guess that Folly, her sister's little King Charles, had passed the door; or that Catiline the Cuba bloodhound had been given a mutton-bone by a footman in the basement. But Flush knew; he heard; he was ravaged by the alternate rages of lust and greed. Then with all her poet's imagination Miss Barrett could not divine what Wilson's wet umbrella meant to Flush; what memories it recalled, of forests and parrots and wild trumpeting elephants; nor did she know, when Mr Kenyon stumbled over the bell-pull, that Flush heard dark men cursing in the mountains; the cry, 'Span! Span!' rang in his ears, and it was in some muffled, ancestral rage that he bit him.

Flush was equally at a loss to account for Miss Barrett's emotions. There she would lie hour after hour passing her hand over a white page with a black stick; and her eyes would suddenly fill with tears; but why? 'Ah, my dear Mr Horne', she was writing. 'And then came the failure in my health and then the enforced

exile to Torquay which gave a nightmare to my life for ever, and robbed it of more than I can speak of here; do not speak of that any-where. *Do not speak of that*, dear Mr Horne.' But there was no sound in the room, no smell to make Miss Barrett cry. Then again Miss Barrett, still agitating her stick, burst out laughing. She had drawn 'a very neat and characteristic portrait of Flush, humorously made rather like myself', and she had written under it that it 'only fails of being an excel-lent substitute for mine through being more worthy than I can be counted'. What was there to laugh at in the black smudge that she held out for Flush to look at? He could smell nothing; he could hear nothing. There was nobody in the room with them. The fact was that they could not com-municate with words, and it was a fact that led undoubtedly to much misunderstanding. Yet did it not lead also to a peculiar intimacy? 'Writing', Miss Barrett once exclaimed after a morning's toil, 'writing, writing ' After all, she may have thought, do words say everything? Can words say anything? Do not words destroy the symbol that lies beyond the reach of words? Once at least Miss Barrett seems to have found it so. She was lying, thinking; she had forgotten Flush altogether, and her thoughts were so sad that the tears fell upon the pillow. Then suddenly a hairy head was pressed against her; large bright eyes shone in hers; and she started. Was it Flush, or was it Pan? Was she no longer an invalid in Wimpole Street, but a Greek nymph in some dim grove in Arcady? And did the bearded god himself press his lips to hers? For a moment she was transformed; she was a nymph and Flush was Pan. The sun burnt and love blazed. But suppose Flush had been able to speak - would he not have said something sensible about the potato disease in Ireland?

So, too, Flush felt strange stirrings at work within him. When he saw Miss Barrett's thin hands delicately lifting some silver box or pearl ornament from the ringed table, his own furry paws seemed to contract and he longed that they should fine themselves to ten separate fingers. When he heard her low voice syllabbling innumerable sounds, he longed for the day when his own rough roar would issue like hers in the little simple sounds that had such mysterious meaning. And when he watched the same fingers for ever crossing a white page with a straight stick, he longed for the time when he too should blacken paper as she did.

And yet, had he been able to write as she did? - The ques-tion

is superfluous happily, for truth compels us to say that in the year 1842-43 Miss Barrett was not a nymph but an invalid; Flush was not a poet but a red cocker spaniel; and Wimpole Street was not Arcady but Wimpole Street.

So the long hours went by in the back bedroom with nothing to mark them but the sound of steps passing on the stairs; and the distant sound of the front door shutting, and the sound of a broom tapping, and the sound of the post-man knocking. In the room coals clicked; the lights and shadows shifted themselves over the brows of the five pale busts, over the bookcase and its red merino. But sometimes the step on the stair did not pass the door; it stopped out-side. The handle was seen to spin round; the door actually opened; somebody came in. Then how strangely the furniture changed its look! What extraordinary eddies of sound and smell were at once set in circulation! How they washed round the legs of tables and impinged on the sharp edges of the wardrobe! Probably it was Wilson, with a tray of food or a glass of medicine; or it might be one of Miss Barrett's two sisters - Arabel or Henrietta; or it might be one of Miss Barrett's seven brothers - Charles, Samuel, George, Henry, Alfred, Septimus or Octavius. But once or twice a week Flush was aware that something more important was about to happen. The bed would be carefully disguised as a sofa. The armchair would be drawn up beside it; Miss Barrett herself would be wrapped becomingly in Indian shawls; the toilet things would be scrupulously hidden under the busts of Chaucer and Homer; Flush himself would be combed and brushed. At about two or three in the afternoon there was a peculiar, distinct and different tap at the door. Miss Barrett flushed, smiled and stretched out her hand. Then in would come - perhaps dear Miss Mitford, rosy and shiny and chattering, with a bunch of geraniums. Or it might be Mr Kenyon, a stout, well-groomed elderly gentleman, radiating benevolence, provided with a book. Or it might be Mrs Jameson, a lady who was the very opposite of Mr Kenyon to look at - a lady with 'a very light complexion - pale, lucid eyes; thin colourless lips a nose and chin projective without breadth'. Each had his or her own manner, smell, tone and accent. Miss Mitford burred and chattered, was fly-away yet substantial; Mr Kenyon was urbane and cultured and mumbled slightly because he had lost two front teeth; Mrs Jameson had lost none of her teeth, and moved as sharply and precisely as she spoke.

Lying couched at Miss Barrett's feet, Flush let the voices ripple over him, hour by hour. On and on they went. Miss Barrett laughed, expostulated, exclaimed, sighed too, and laughed again. At last, greatly to Flush's relief, little silences came - even in the flow of Miss Mitford's conversation. Could it be seven already? She had been there since midday! She must really run to catch her train. Mr Kenyon shut his book - he had been reading aloud - and stood with his back to the fire; Mrs Jameson with a sharp, angular movement pressed each finger of her glove sharp down. And Flush was patted by this one and had his ear pulled by another. The routine of leave-taking was intolerably prolonged; but at last Mrs Jameson, Mr Kenyon, and even Miss Mitford had risen, had said good-bye, had remembered something, had lost something, had found something, had reached the door, had opened it, and were - Heaven be praised - gone at last.

Miss Barrett sank back very white, very tired on her pillows. Flush crept closer to her. Mercifully they were alone again. But the visitor had stayed so long that it was almost dinner-time. Smells began to rise from the basement. Wilson was at the door with Miss Barrett's dinner on a tray. It was set down on the table beside her and the covers lifted. But what with the dressing and the talking, what with the heat of the room and the agitation of the farewells, Miss Barrett was too tired to eat. She gave a little sigh when she saw the plump mutton chop, or the wing of partridge or chicken that had been sent up for her dinner. So long as Wilson was in the room she fiddled about with her knife and fork. But directly the door was shut and they were alone, she made a sign. She held up her fork. A whole chicken's wing was impaled upon it. Flush advanced. Miss Barrett nodded. Very gently, very cleverly, without spilling a crumb, Flush removed the wing; swallowed it down and left no trace behind. Half a rice pudding clotted with thick cream went the same way. Nothing could have been neater, more effective than Flush's co-operation. He was lying couched as usual at Miss Barrett's feet, apparently asleep, Miss Barrett was lying rested and restored, apparently having made an excellent dinner, when once more a step that was heavier, more deliberate and firmer than any other, stopped on the stair; solemnly a knock sounded that was no tap of enquiry but a demand for admittance; the door opened and in came the blackest, the most formidable of elderly men - Mr Barrett himself. His eye at once sought the tray. Had the meal been

eaten? Had his commands been obeyed? Yes, the plates were empty. Signifying his approval of his daughter's obedience, Mr Barrett lowered himself heavily into the chair by her side. As that dark body approached him, shivers of terror and horror ran down Flush's spine. So a savage couched in flowers shudders when the thunder growls and he hears the voice of God. Then Wilson whistled; and Flush, slinking guiltily, as if Mr Barrett could read his thoughts and those thoughts were evil, crept out of the room and rushed down-stairs. A force had entered the bedroom which he dreaded; a force that he was powerless to withstand. Once he burst in unexpectedly. Mr Barrett was on his knees praying by his daughter's side.

Chapter 3 THE HOODED MAN

Such an education as this, in the back bedroom at Wimpole Street, would have told upon an ordinary dog. And Flush was not an ordinary dog. He was high-spirited, yet reflective; canine, but highly sensitive to human emotions also. Upon such a dog the atmosphere of the bedroom told with peculiar force. We cannot blame him if his sensibility was cultivated rather to the detriment of his sterner qualities. Naturally, lying with his head pillowed on a Greek lexicon, he came to dislike barking and biting; he came to prefer the silence of the cat to the robustness of the dog; and human sympathy to either. Miss Barrett, too, did her best to refine and educate his powers still further. Once she took a harp from the window and asked him, as she laid it by his side, whether he thought that the harp, which made music, was itself alive? He looked and listened; pondered, it seemed, for a moment in doubt and then decided that it was not. Then she would make him stand with her in front of the looking-glass and ask him why he barked and trembled. Was not the little brown dog opposite himself? But what is 'oneself'? Is it the thing people see? Or is it the thing one is? So Flush pondered that question too, and, unable to solve the problem of reality, pressed closer to Miss Barrett and kissed her 'expressively'. *That* was real at any rate.

Fresh from such problems, with such emotional dilemmas agitating his nervous system, he went downstairs, and we cannot be surprised if there was something - a touch of the supercilious, of the superior - in his bearing that roused the rage of Catiline, the savage Cuba bloodhound, so that he set upon him and bit him and sent him howling upstairs to Miss Barrett for sympathy. Flush 'is no hero', she concluded; but why was he no hero? Was it not partly on her account? She was too just not to realise that it was for her that he had sacrificed his courage, as it was for her that he had sacrificed the sun and the air. This nervous sensibility had its drawbacks, no doubt - she was full of apologies when he flew at Mr Kenyon and bit him for stumbling over the bell-pull; it was annoying when he moaned piteously all night because he was not allowed to sleep on

her bed - when he refused to eat unless she fed him; but she took the blame and bore the inconvenience because, after all, Flush loved her. He had refused the air and the sun for her sake. 'He is worth loving, is he not?' she asked of Mr Horne. And whatever answer Mr Horne might give, Miss Barrett was positive of her own. She loved Flush, and Flush was worthy of her love.

It seemed as if nothing were to break that tie - as if the years were merely to compact and cement it; and as if those years were to be all the years of their natural lives. Eighteen-forty-two turned into eighteen-forty-three; eighteen-forty-three into eighteen-forty-four; eighteen-forty-four into eighteen-forty-five. Flush was no longer a puppy; he was a dog of four or five; he was a dog in the full prime of life - and still Miss Barrett lay on her sofa in Wimpole Street and still Flush lay on the sofa at her feet. Miss Barrett's life was the life of 'a bird in its cage'. She sometimes kept to the house for weeks at a time, and when she left it, it was only for an hour or two, to drive to a shop in a carriage, or to be wheeled to Regent's Park in a bath-chair. The Barretts never left London. Mr Barrett, the seven brothers, the two sisters, the butler, Wilson and the maids, Catiline, Folly, Miss Barrett and Flush all went on living at 50 Wimpole Street, eating in the dining-room, sleeping in the bedrooms, smoking in the study, cooking in the kitchen, carrying hot-water cans and emptying the slops from January to December. The chair-covers became slightly soiled; the carpets slightly worn; coal dust, mud, soot, fog, vapours of cigar smoke and wine and meat accumulated in crevices, in cracks, in fabrics, on the tops of picture-frames, in the scrolls of carvings. And the ivy that hung over Miss Barrett's bedroom window flourished; its green curtain became thicker and thicker, and in summer the nasturtiums and the scarlet runners rioted together in the window-box.

But one night early in January 1845 the postman knocked. Letters fell into the box as usual. Wilson went downstairs to fetch the letters as usual. Everything was as usual - every night the postman knocked, every night Wilson fetched the letters, every night there was a letter for Miss Barrett. But to-night the letter was not the same letter; it was a different letter. Flush saw that, even before the envelope was broken. He knew it from the way that Miss Barrett took it; turned it; looked at the vigorous, jagged writing of her name. He knew it from the indescribable tremor in her fingers,

from the impetuosity with which they tore the flap open, from the absorption with which she read. He watched her read. And as she read he heard, as when we are half asleep we hear through the clamour of the street some bell ringing and know that it is addressed to us, alarmingly yet faintly, as if someone far away were trying to rouse us with the warning of fire, or burglary, or some menace against our peace and we start in alarm before we wake - so Flush, as Miss Barrett read the little blotted sheet, heard a bell rousing him from his sleep; warning him of some danger; menacing his safety and bidding him sleep no more. Miss Barrett read the letter quickly; she read the letter slowly; she returned it carefully to its envelope. She too slept no more.

Again, a few nights later, there was the same letter on Wilson's tray. Again it was read quickly, read slowly, read over and over again. Then it was put away carefully, not in the drawer with the voluminous sheets of Miss Mitford's letters, but by itself. Now Flush paid the full price of long years of accumulated sensibility lying couched on cushions at Miss Barrett's feet. He could read signs that nobody else could even see. He could tell by the touch of Miss Barrett's fingers that she was waiting for one thing only - for the postman's knock, for the letter on the tray. She would be stroking him perhaps with a light, regular movement; suddenly - there was the rap - her fingers constricted; he would be held in a vice while Wilson came upstairs. Then she took the letter and he was loosed and forgotten.

Yet, he argued, what was there to be afraid of, so long as there was no change in Miss Barrett's life? And there was no change. No new visitors came. Mr Kenyon came as usual; Miss Mitford came as usual. The brothers and sisters came; and in the evening Mr Barrett came. They noticed nothing; they suspected nothing. So he would quieten him-self and try to believe, when a few nights passed without the envelope, that the enemy had gone. A man in a cloak, he imagined, a cowed and hooded figure, had passed, like a burglar, rattling the door, and finding it guarded, had slunk away defeated. The danger, Flush tried to make himself believe, was over. The man had gone. And then the letter came again.

As the envelopes came more and more regularly, night after night, Flush began to notice signs of change in Miss Barrett herself. For the first time in Flush's experience she was irritable and

restless. She could not read and she could not write. She stood at the window and looked out. She questioned Wilson anxiously about the weather - was the wind still in the east? Was there any sign of spring in the Park yet? Oh no, Wilson replied; the wind was a cruel east wind still. And Miss Barrett, Flush felt, was at once relieved and annoyed. She coughed. She complained of feeling ill - but not so ill as she usually felt when the wind was in the east. And then, when she was alone, she read over again last night's letter. It was the longest she had yet had. There were many pages, closely covered, darkly blotted, scattered with strange little abrupt hieroglyphics. So much Flush could see, from his station at her feet. But he could make no sense of the words that Miss Barrett was murmuring to herself. Only he could trace her agitation when she came to the end of the page and read aloud (though unintelligibly), 'Do you think I shall see you in two months, three months?'

Then she took up her pen and passed it rapidly and nervously over sheet after sheet. But what did they mean - the little words that Miss Barrett wrote? 'April is coming. There will be both a May and a June if we live to see such things, and perhaps, after all, we may I will indeed see you when the warm weather has revived me a little But I shall be afraid of you at first - though I am not, in writing thus. You are Paracelsus and I am a recluse, with nerves that have been broken on the rack, and now hang loosely, quivering at a step and breath.'

Flush could not read what she was writing an inch or two above his head. But he knew just as well as if he could read every word, how strangely his mistress was agitated as she wrote; what contrary desires shook her - that April might come; that April might not come; that she might see this unknown man at once, that she might never see him at all. Flush, too, quivered as she did at a step, at a breath. And remorselessly the days went on. The wind blew out the blind. The sun whitened the busts. A bird sang in the mews. Men went crying fresh flowers to sell down Wimpole Street. All these sounds meant, he knew, that April was coming and May and June - nothing could stop the approach of that dreadful spring. For what was coming with the spring? Some terror - some horror - something that Miss Barrett dreaded, and that Flush dreaded too. He started now at the sound of a step. But it was only Henrietta. Then there was a knock. It was only Mr Kenyon. So April passed;

and the first twenty days of May. And then, on the 21st of May, Flush knew that the day itself had come. For on Tuesday, the 21st of May, Miss Barrett looked searchingly in the glass; arrayed herself exquisitely in her Indian shawls; bade Wilson draw the armchair close, but not too close; touched this, that and the other; and then sat upright among her pillows. Flush couched himself taut at her feet. They waited, alone together. At last, Marylebone Church clock struck two; they waited. Then Marylebone Church clock struck a single stroke - It was half-past two; and as the single stroke died away, a rap sounded boldly on the front door. Miss Barrett turned pale; she lay very still. Flush lay still too. Upstairs came the dreaded, the inexorable footfall; upstairs, Flush knew, came the cowed and sinister figure of midnight - the hooded man. Now his hand was on the door. The handle spun. There he stood.

'Mr Browning', said Wilson.

Flush, watching Miss Barrett, saw the colour rush into her face; saw her eyes brighten and her lips open.

'Mr Browning!' she exclaimed.

Twisting his yellow gloves in his hands, blinking his eyes, well groomed, masterly, abrupt, Mr Browning strode across the room. He seized Miss Barrett's hand, and sank into the chair by the sofa at her side. Instantly they began to talk.

What was horrible to Flush, as they talked, was his loneli-ness. Once he had felt that he and Miss Barrett were together, in a firelit cave. Now the cave was no longer firelit; it was dark and damp; Miss Barrett was outside. He looked round him. Everything had changed. The bookcase, the five busts - they were no longer friendly deities presiding approvingly-they were hostile, severe. He shifted his position at Miss Barrett's feet. She took no notice. He whined. They did not hear him. At last he lay still in tense and silent agony. The talk went on; but it did not flow and ripple as talk usually flowed and rippled. It leapt and jerked. It stopped and leapt again. Flush had never heard that sound in Miss Barrett's voice before - that vigour, that excitement. Her cheeks were bright as he had never seen them bright; her great eyes blazed as he had never seen them blaze. The clock struck four; and still they talked. Then it struck half-past four. At that Mr Browning jumped up. A horrid decision, a dreadful boldness marked every move-ment. In another

moment he had wrung Miss Barrett's hand in his; he had taken his hat and gloves; he had said good-bye. They heard him running down the stairs. Smartly the door banged behind him. He was gone.

But Miss Barrett did not sink back in her pillows as she sank back when Mr Kenyon or Miss Mitford left her. Now she still sat upright; her eyes still burnt; her cheeks still glowed; she seemed still to feel that Mr Browning was with her. Flush touched her. She recalled him with a start. She patted him lightly, joyfully, on the head. And smiling, she gave him the oddest look - as if she wished that he could talk - as if she expected him too to feel what she felt. And then she laughed, pityingly; as if it were absurd - Flush, poor Flush could feel nothing of what she felt. He could know nothing of what she knew. Never had such wastes of dismal distance separated them. He lay there ignored; he might not have been there, he felt. Miss Barrett no longer remembered his existence.

And that night she ate her chicken to the bone. Not a scrap of potato or of skin was thrown to Flush. When Mr Barrett came as usual, Flush marvelled at his obtuseness. He sat himself down in the very chair that the man had sat in. His head pressed the same cushions that the man's had pressed, and yet he noticed nothing. 'Don't you know', Flush marvelled, 'who's been sitting in that chair? Can't you smell him?' For to Flush the whole room still reeked of Mr Brown-ing's presence. The air dashed past the bookcase, and eddied and curled round the heads of the five pale busts. But the heavy man sat by his daughter in entire self-absorption. He noticed nothing. He suspected nothing. Aghast at his obtuseness, Flush slipped past him out of the room.

But in spite of their astonishing blindness, even Miss Barrett's family began to notice, as the weeks passed, a change in Miss Barrett. She left her room and went down to sit in the drawing-room. Then she did what she had not done for many a long day - she actually walked on her own feet as far as the gate at Devonshire Place with her sister. Her friends, her family, were amazed at her improvement. But only Flush knew where her strength came from - it came from the dark man in the armchair. He came again and again and again. First it was once a week; then it was twice a week. He came always in the afternoon and left in the afternoon. Miss Barrett always saw him alone. And on the days when he did not come, his letters came. And when he himself was gone, his flowers

were there. And in the mornings when she was alone, Miss Barrett wrote to him. That dark, taut, abrupt, vigorous man, with his black hair, his red cheeks and his yellow gloves, was everywhere. Naturally, Miss Barrett was better; of course she could walk. Flush himself felt that it was impossible to lie still. Old long-ings revived; a new restlessness possessed him. Even his sleep was full of dreams. He dreamt as he had not dreamt since the old days at Three Mile Cross - of hares starting from the long grass; of pheasants rocketing up with long tails streaming, of partridges rising with a whirr from the stubble. He dreamt that he was hunting, that he was chasing some spotted spaniel, who fled, who escaped him. He was in Spain; he was in Wales; he was in Berkshire; he was flying before park-keepers' truncheons in Regent' s Park. Then he opened his eyes. There were no hares, and no partridges; no whips cracking and no black men crying 'Span! Span!' There was only Mr Browning in the armchair talking to Miss Barrett on the sofa.

Sleep became impossible while that man was there. Flush lay with his eyes wide open, listening. Though he could make no sense of the little words that hurtled over his head from two-thirty to four-thirty sometimes three times a week, he could detect with terrible accuracy that the tone of the words was changing. Miss Barrett' s voice had been forced and unnaturally lively at first. Now it had gained a warmth and an ease that he had never heard in it before. And every time the man came, some new sound came into their voices - now they made a grotesque chattering; now they skimmed over him like birds flying widely; now they cooed and clucked, as if they were two birds settled in a nest; and then Miss Barrett' s voice, rising again, went soar-ing and circling in the air; and then Mr Browning' s voice barked out its sharp, harsh clapper of laughter; and then there was only a murmur, a quiet humming sound as the two voices joined together. But as the summer turned to autumn Flush noted, with horrid apprehension, another note. There was a new urgency, a new pressure and energy in the man' s voice, at which Miss Barrett, Flush felt, took fright. Her voice fluttered; hesitated; seemed to falter and fade and plead and gasp, as if she were begging for a rest, for a pause, as if she were afraid. Then the man was silent.

Of him they took but little notice. He might have been a log of wood lying there at Miss Barrett's feet for all the attention Mr

Browning paid him. Sometimes he scrubbed his head in a brisk, spasmodic way, energetically, without sentiment, as he passed him. Whatever that scrub might mean, Flush felt nothing but an intense dislike for Mr Browning. The very sight of him, so well tailored, so tight, so muscular, screwing his yellow gloves in his hand, set his teeth on edge. Oh! to let them meet sharply, completely in the stuff of his trousers! And yet he dared not. Taking it all in all, that winter - 1845-6 - was the most distressing that Flush had ever known.

The winter passed; and spring came round again. Flush could see no end to the affair; and yet just as a river, though it reflects still trees and grazing cows and rooks returning to the tree-tops, moves inevitably to a waterfall, so those days, Flush knew, were moving to catastrophe. Rumours of change hovered in the air. Sometimes he thought that some vast exodus impended. There was that indefinable stir in the house which precedes - could it be possible? - a journey. Boxes were actually dusted, were, incredible as it might seem, opened. Then they were shut again. No, it was not the family that was going to move. The brothers and sisters still went in and out as usual. Mr Barrett paid his nightly visit, after the man had gone, at his accustomed hour. What was it, then, that was going to happen? for as the summer of 1846 wore on, Flush was positive that a change was coming. He could hear it again in the altered sound of the eternal voices. Miss Barrett's voice, that had been pleading and afraid, lost its faltering note. It rang out with a determination and a boldness that Flush had never heard in it before. If only Mr Barrett could hear the tone in which she welcomed this usurper, the laugh with which she greeted him, the exclamation with which he took her hand in his! But nobody was in the room with them except Flush. To him the change was of the most galling nature. It was not merely that Miss Barrett was changing towards Mr Browning - she was changing in every relation - in her feeling towards Flush himself. She treated his advances more brusquely; she cut short his endearments laughingly; she made him feel that there was something petty, silly, affected, in his old affectionate ways. His vanity was exacerbated. His jealousy was inflamed. At last, when July came, he determined to make one violent attempt to regain her favour, and perhaps to oust the newcomer. How to accomplish this double purpose he did not know, and could not plan. But suddenly on the 8th of July his feelings overcame him. He flung himself on Mr Browning and bit

him savagely. At last his teeth met in the immaculate cloth of Mr Browning' s trousers! But the limb inside was hard as iron - Mr Kenyon' s leg had been butter in comparison. Mr Browning brushed him off with a flick of his hand and went on talking. Neither he nor Miss Barrett seemed to think the attack worthy of attention. Completely foiled, worsted, without a shaft left in his sheath, Flush sank back on his cushions panting with rage and disappointment. But he had misjudged Miss Barrett' s insight. When Mr Browning was gone, she called him to her and in flicted upon him the worst punishment he had ever known. First she slapped his ears - that was nothing; oddly enough the slap was rather to his liking; he would have welcomed another. But then she said in her sober, certain tones that she would never love him again. That shaft went to his heart. All these years they had lived together, shared everything together, and now, for one moment' s failure, she would never love him again. Then, as if to make her dis-missal complete, she took the flowers that Mr Browning had brought her and began to put them in water in a vase. It was an act, Flush thought, of calculated and deliberate mal-ice; an act designed to make him feel his own insignificance completely. 'This rose is from him', she seemed to say, 'and this carnation. Let the red shine by the yellow; and the yel-low by the red. And let the green leaf lie there -' And, setting one flower with another, she stood back to gaze at them as if he were before her - the man in the yellow gloves - a mass of brilliant flowers. But even so, even as she pressed the leaves and flowers together, she could not altogether ignore the fixity with which Flush gazed at her. She could not deny that 'expression of quite despair on his face'. She could not but relent. 'At last I said, "If you are good, Flush, you may come and say that you are sorry" ',on which he dashed across the room and, trembling all over, kissed first one of my hands and then another, and put up his paws to be shaken, and looked into my face with such beseeching eyes that you would certainly have forgiven him just as I did.' That was her account of the matter to Mr Browning; and he of course replied: 'Oh, poor Flush, do you think I do not love and respect him for his jealous supervision - his slowness to know another, having once known you?' It was easy enough for Mr Browning to be magnanimous, but that easy magnanimity was perhaps the sharpest thorn that pressed into Flush' s side.

Another incident a few days later showed how widely they

were separated, who had been so close, how little Flush could now count on Miss Barrett for sympathy. After Mr Browning had gone one afternoon Miss Barrett decided to drive to Regent's Park with her sister. As they got out at the Park gate the door of the four-wheeler shut on Flush's paw. He 'cried piteously' and held it up to Miss Bar-rett for sympathy. In other days sympathy in abundance would have been lavished upon him for less. But now a detached, a mocking, a critical expression came into her eyes. She laughed at him. She thought he was sham-ming: ' no sooner had he touched the grass than he began to run without a thought of it', she wrote. And she com-mented sarcastically, 'Flush always makes the most of his misfortunes - he is of the Byronic school - *il se pose en vic-time* '. But here Miss Barrett, absorbed in her own emotions, misjudged him completely. If his paw had been broken, still he would have bounded. That dash was his answer to her mockery; I have done with you - that was the meaning he flashed at her as he ran. The flowers smelt bitter to him; the grass burnt his paws; the dust filled his nostrils with disillusion. But he raced - he scampered. 'Dogs must be led on chains' - there was the usual placard; there were the park-keepers with their top-hats and their truncheons to enforce it. But 'must' no longer had any meaning for him. The chain of love was broken. He would run where he liked; chase partridges; chase spaniels; splash into the middle of dahlia beds; break brilliant, blowing red and yellow roses. Let the park-keepers throw their truncheons if they chose. Let them dash his brains out. Let him fall dead, disembow-elled, at Miss Barrett's feet. He cared nothing. But naturally nothing of the kind happened. Nobody pursued him; nobody noticed him. The solitary park-keeper was talking to a nursemaid. At last he returned to Miss Barrett and she absent-mindedly slipped the chain over his neck, and led him home.

After two such humiliations the spirit of an ordinary dog, the spirit even of an ordinary human being, might well have been broken. But Flush, for all his softness and silkiness, had eyes that blazed; had passions that leapt not merely in bright flame but sunk and smouldered. He resolved to meet his enemy face to face and alone. No third person should interrupt this final conflict. It should be fought out by the principals themselves. On the afternoon of Tuesday, the 21st of July, therefore, he slipped downstairs and waited in the hall. He had not long to wait. Soon he heard the tramp of the familiar footstep in the street; he heard the familiar

rap on the door. Mr Browning was admitted. Vaguely aware of the impending attack and determined to meet it in the most conciliatory of spirits, Mr Browning had come provided with a parcel of cakes. There was Flush waiting in the hall. Mr Browning made, evidently, some well-meant attempt to caress him; perhaps he even went so far as to offer him a cake. The gesture was enough. Flush sprang upon his enemy with unparalleled violence. His teeth once more met in Mr Browning's trousers. But unfortunately in the excitement of the moment he forgot what was most essential - silence. He barked; he flung himself on Mr Browning, barking loudly. The sound was sufficient to alarm the household. Wilson rushed downstairs. Wilson beat him soundly. Wilson over-powered him completely. Wilson led him in ignominy away. Ignominy it was - to have attacked Mr Browning, to have been beaten by Wilson. Mr Browning had not lifted a finger. Taking his cakes with him, Mr Browning proceeded unhurt, unmoved, in perfect composure, upstairs, alone to the bed-room. Flush was led away.

After two and a half hours of miserable confinement with parrots and beetles, ferns and saucepans, in the kitchen, Flush was summoned to Miss Barrett's presence. She was lying on the sofa with her sister Arabella beside her. Con-scious of the rightness of his cause, Flush went straight to her. But she refused to look at him. He turned to Arabella. She merely said, 'Naughty Flush, go away'. Wilson was there - the formidable, the implacable Wilson. It was to her that Miss Barrett turned for information. She had beaten him, Wilson said, 'because it was right'. And, she added, she had only beaten him with her hand. It was upon her evidence that Flush was convicted. The attack, Miss Barrett assumed, had been unprovoked; she credited Mr Browning with all virtue, with all generosity; Flush had been beaten off by a servant, without a whip, because 'it was right'. There was no more to be said. Miss Barrett decided against him. 'So he lay down on the floor at my feet,' she wrote, 'looking from under his eyebrows at me.' But though Flush might look, Miss Barrett refused even to meet his eyes. There she lay on the sofa; there Flush lay on the floor.

And as he lay there, exiled, on the carpet, he went through one of those whirlpools of tumultuous emotion in which the soul is either dashed upon the rocks and splintered or, find-ing some tuft of foothold, slowly and painfully pulls itself up, regains dry land, and

at last emerges on top of a ruined universe to survey a world created afresh on a different plan. Which was it to be - destruction or reconstruction? That was the question. The outlines only of his dilemma can be traced here; for his debate was silent. Twice Flush had done his utmost to kill his enemy; twice he had failed. And why had he failed, he asked himself? Because he loved Miss Barrett. Looking up at her from under his eyebrows as she lay, severe and silent on the sofa, he knew that he must love her for ever. Things are not simple but complex. If he bit Mr Browning he bit her too. Hatred is not hatred; hatred is also love. Here Flush shook his ears in an agony of perplex-ity. He turned uneasily on the floor. Mr Browning was Miss Barrett - Miss Barrett was Mr Browning; love is hatred and hatred is love. He stretched himself, whined and raised his head from the floor. The clock struck eight. For three hours and more he had been lying there, tossed from the horn of one dilemma to another.

Even Miss Barrett, severe, cold, implacable as she was, laid down her pen. 'Wicked Flush!' she had been writing to Mr Browning, '..... if people like Flush, choose to behave like dogs savagely, they must take the consequences indeed, as dogs usually do! And *you*, so good and gentle to him! Anyone but *you* would have said "hasty words" at least.' Really it would be a good plan, she thought, to buy a muz-zle. And then she looked up and saw Flush. Something unusual in his look must have struck her. She paused. She laid down her pen. Once he had roused her with a kiss, and she had thought that he was Pan. He had eaten chicken and rice pudding soaked in cream. He had given up the sunshine for her sake. She called him to her and said she forgave him.

But to be forgiven, as if for a passing whim, to be taken back again on to the sofa as if he had learnt nothing in his anguish on the floor, as if he were the same dog when in fact he differed totally, was impossible. For the moment, exhausted as he was, Flush submitted. A few days later, however, a remarkable scene took place between him and Miss Barrett which showed the depths of his emotions. Mr Browning had been and gone; Flush was alone with Miss Barrett. Normally he would have leapt on to the sofa at her feet. But now, instead of jumping up as usual and claiming her caress, Flush went to what was now called 'Mr Brown-ing' s armchair'. Usually the chair was abhorrent to him; it still held the

shape of his enemy. But now, such was the battle he had won, such was the charity that suffused him, that he not only looked at the chair but, as he looked, 'suddenly fell into a rapture'. Miss Barrett, watching him intently, observed this extraordinary portent. Next she saw him turn his eyes towards a table. On that table still lay the packet of Mr Browning's cakes. He 'reminded me that the cakes you left were on the table'. They were now old cakes, stale cakes, cakes bereft of any carnal seduction. Flush's meaning was plain. He had refused to eat the cakes when they were fresh, because they were offered by an enemy. He would eat them now that they were stale, because they were offered by an enemy turned to friend, because they were symbols of hatred turned to love. Yes, he signified, he would eat them now. So Miss Barrett rose and took the cakes in her hand. And as she gave them to him she admonished him, 'So I explained to him that *you* had brought them for him, and that he ought to be properly ashamed therefore for his past wickedness, and make up his mind to love you and not bite you for the future - and he was allowed to profit from your goodness to him'. As he swallowed down the faded flakes of that distasteful pastry - it was mouldy, it was fly-blown, it was sour - Flush solemnly repeated, in his own language, the words she had used - he swore to love Mr Browning and not bite him for the future.

He was instantly rewarded - not by stale cakes, not by chicken's wings, not by the caresses that were now his, nor by the permission to lie once more on the sofa at Miss Bar-rett's feet. He was rewarded, spiritually; yet the effects were curiously physical. Like an iron bar corroding and festering and killing all natural life beneath it, hatred had lain all these months across his soul. Now, by the cutting of sharp knives and painful surgery, the iron had been excised. Now the blood ran once more; the nerves shot and tingled; flesh formed; Nature rejoiced, as in spring. Flush heard the birds sing again; he felt the leaves growing on the trees; as he lay on the sofa at Miss Barrett's feet, glory and delight coursed through his veins. He was with them, not against them, now; their hopes, their wishes, their desires were his. Flush could have barked in sympathy with Mr Browning now. The short, sharp words raised the hackles on his neck. 'I need a week of Tuesdays,' Mr Browning cried, 'then a month - a year - a life!' I, Flush echoed him, need a month-a year-a life! I need all the things that you both need. We are all three conspirators in the most glorious of causes. We are joined in

sympathy. We are joined in hatred. We are joined in defiance of black and beetling tyranny. We are joined in love. - In short, all Flush' s hopes now were set upon some dimly apprehended but none the less certainly emerging triumph, upon some glorious victory that was to be theirs in common, when suddenly, without a word of warning, in the midst of civilisation, security and friendship - he was in a shop in Vere Street with Miss Barrett and her sister: it was the morning of Tuesday the 1st of September - Flush was tumbled head over heels into darkness. The doors of a dungeon shut upon him. He was stolen.

Chapter 4 WHITECHAPEL

'This morning Arabel and I, and he with us,' Miss Barrett wrote, 'went in a cab to Vere Street where we had a little business, and he followed us as usual into a shop and out of it again, and was at my heels when I stepped up into the carriage. Having turned, I said "Flush", and Arabel looked round for Flush - there was no Flush! He had been caught up in that moment, from *under* the wheels, do you under-stand?' Mr Browning understood perfectly well. Miss Barrett had forgotten the chain; therefore Flush was stolen. Such, in the year 1846, was the law of Wimpole Street and its neighbourhood.

Nothing, it is true, could exceed the apparent solidity and security of Wimpole Street itself. As far as an invalid could walk or a bath-chair could trundle nothing met the eye but an agreeable prospect of four-storeyed houses, plate-glass windows and mahogany doors. Even a carriage and pair, in the course of an afternoon's airing, need not, if the coach-man were discreet, leave the limits of decorum and respectability. But if you were not an invalid, if you did not possess a carriage and pair, if you were - and many people were - active and able-bodied and fond of walking, then you might see sights and hear language and smell smells, not a stone's-throw from Wimpole Street, that threw doubts upon the solidity even of Wimpole Street itself. So Mr Thomas Beames found when about this time he took it into his head to go walking about London. He was surprised; indeed he was shocked. Splendid buildings raised them-selves in Westminster, yet just behind them were ruined sheds in which human beings lived herded together above herds of cows - 'two in each seven feet of space'. He felt that he ought to tell people what he had seen. Yet how could one describe politely a bedroom in which two or three families lived above a cow-shed, when the cow-shed had no ventilation, when the cows were milked and killed and eaten under the bedroom? That was a task, as Mr Beames found when he came to attempt it, that taxed all the resources of the English language. And yet he felt that he ought to describe what he had seen in the course of an afternoon's walk through some of the most aristocratic parishes in

London. The risk of typhus was so great. The rich could not know what dangers they were running. He could not altogether hold his tongue when he found what he did find in West-minster and Paddington and Marylebone. For instance, here was an old mansion formerly belonging to some great noble-man. Relics of marble mantelpieces remained. The rooms were panelled and the banisters were carved, and yet the floors were rotten, the walls dripped with filth; hordes of half-naked men and women had taken up their lodging in the old banqueting-halls. Then he walked on. Here an enter-prising builder had pulled down the old family mansion. He had run up a jerry-built tenement house in its place. The rain dripped through the roof and the wind blew through the walls. He saw a child dipping a can into a bright-green stream and asked if they drank that water. Yes, and washed in it too, for the landlord only allowed water to be turned on twice a week. Such sights were the more surprising, because one might come upon them in the most sedate and civilised quarters of London - 'the most aristocratic par-ishes have their share'. Behind Miss Barrett's bedroom, for instance, was one of the worst slums in London. Mixed up with that respectability was this squalor. But there were certain quarters, of course, which had long been given over to the poor and were left undisturbed. In Whitechapel, or in a triangular space of ground at the bot-tom of the Tottenham Court Road, poverty and vice and misery had bred and seethed and propagated their kind for centuries without interference. A dense mass of aged build-ings in St Giles' s was 'wellnigh a penal settlement, a pauper metropolis in itself'. Aptly enough, where the poor conglom-erated thus, the settlement was called a Rookery. For there human beings swarmed on top of each other as rooks swarm and blacken tree-tops. Only the buildings here were not trees; they were hardly any longer buildings. They were cells of brick intersected by lanes which ran with filth. All day the lanes buzzed with half-dressed human beings; at night there poured back again into the stream the thieves, beggars and prostitutes who had been plying their trade all day in the West End. The police could do nothing. No single way-farer could do anything except hurry through as fast as he could and perhaps drop a hint, as Mr Beames did, with many quotations, evasions and euphemisms, that all was not quite as it should be. Cholera would come, and perhaps the hint that cholera would give would not be quite so evasive.

But in the summer of 1846 that hint had not yet been given; and the only safe course for those who lived in Wim-pole Street and its neighbourhood was to keep strictly within the respectable area and to lead your dog on a chain. If one forgot, as Miss Barrett forgot, one paid the penalty, as Miss Barrett was now to pay it. The terms upon which Wimpole Street lived cheek by jowl with St Giles' s were well known. St Giles' s stole what St Giles' s could; Wimpole Street paid what Wimpole Street must. Thus Arabel at once 'began to comfort me by showing how certain it was that I should recover him for ten pounds at most'. Ten pounds, it was reckoned, was about the price that Mr Taylor would ask for a cocker spaniel. Mr Taylor was the head of the gang. As soon as a lady in Wimpole Street lost her dog she went to Mr Taylor; he named his price, and it was paid; or if not, a brown paper parcel was delivered in Wimpole Street a few days later containing the head and paws of the dog. Such, at least, had been the experience of a lady in the neighbour-hood who had tried to make terms with Mr Taylor. But Miss Barrett of course intended to pay. Therefore when she got home she told her brother Henry, and Henry went to see Mr Taylor that afternoon. He found him 'smoking a cigar in a room with pictures' - Mr Taylor was said to make an income of two or three thousand a year out of the dogs of Wimpole Street - and Mr Taylor promised that he would confer with his 'Society' and that the dog would be returned next day. Vexatious as it was, and especially annoying at a moment when Miss Barrett needed all her money, such were the inevitable consequences of forgetting in 1846 to keep one' s dog on a chain.

But for Flush things were very different. Flush, Miss Bar-rett reflected, 'doesn' t know that we can recover him'; Flush had never mastered the principles of human society. 'All this night he will howl and lament, I know perfectly', Miss Bar-rett wrote to Mr Browning on the afternoon of Tuesday, the 1st September. But while Miss Barrett wrote to Mr Brown-ing, Flush was going through the most terrible experience of his life. He was bewildered in the extreme. One moment he was in Vere Street, among ribbons and laces; the next he was tumbled head over heels into a bag; jolted rapidly across streets, and at length was tumbled out - here. He found himself in complete darkness. He found himself in chillness and dampness. As his giddiness left him he made out a few shapes in a low dark room - broken chairs, a tumbled mat-tress. Then he

was seized and tied tightly by the leg to some obstacle. Something sprawled on the floor - whether beast or human being, he could not tell. Great boots and draggled skirts kept stumbling in and out. Flies buzzed on scraps of old meat that were decaying on the floor. Children crawled out from dark corners and pinched his ears. He whined, and a heavy hand beat him over the head. He cowered down on the few inches of damp brick against the wall. Now he could see that the floor was crowded with animals of different kinds. Dogs tore and worried a festering bone that they had got between them. Their ribs stood out from their coats - they were half famished, dirty, diseased, uncombed, unbrushed; yet all of them, Flush could see, were dogs of the highest breeding, chained dogs, footmen's dogs, like himself.

He lay, not daring even to whimper, hour after hour. Thirst was his worst suffering; but one sip of the thick green-ish water that stood in a pail near him disgusted him; he would rather die than drink another. Yet a majestic grey-hound was drinking greedily. Whenever the door was kicked open he looked up. Miss Barrett - was it Miss Bar-rett? Had she come at last? But it was only a hairy ruffian, who kicked them all aside and stumbled to a broken chair upon which he flung himself. Then gradually the darkness thickened. He could scarcely make out what shapes those were, on the floor, on the mattress, on the broken chairs. A stump of candle was stuck on the ledge over the fireplace. A flare burnt in the gutter outside. By its flickering, coarse light Flush could see terrible faces passing outside, leering at the window. Then in they came, until the small crowded room became so crowded that he had to shrink back and lie even closer against the wall. These horrible monsters - some were ragged, others were flaring with paint and feathers - squatted on the floor; hunched themselves over the table. They began to drink; they cursed and struck each other. Out tumbled, from the bags that were dropped on the floor, more dogs - lapdogs, setters, pointers, with their collars still on them; and a giant cockatoo that flustered and fluttered its way from corner to corner, shrieking 'Pretty Poll', 'Pretty Poll', with an accent that would have terrified its mistress, a widow in Maida Vale. Then the women's bags were opened, and out were tossed on to the table bracelets and rings and brooches such as Flush had seen Miss Barrett wear and Miss Henrietta. The demons pawed and clawed them; cursed and quarrelled over them. The dogs barked. The children shrieked, and

the splendid cockatoo - such a bird as Flush had often seen pendant in a Wimpole Street window - shrieked 'Pretty Poll! Pretty Poll!' faster and faster until a slipper was thrown at it and it flapped its great yellow-stained dove-grey wings in frenzy. Then the candle toppled over and fell. The room was dark. It grew steadily hotter and hotter; the smell, the heat, were unbearable, Flush' s nose burnt; his coat twitched. And still Miss Barrett did not come.

Miss Barrett lay on her sofa in Wimpole Street. She was vexed; she was worried, but she was not seriously alarmed. Of course Flush would suffer; he would whine and bark all night; but it was only a question of a few hours. Mr Taylor would name his sum; she would pay it; Flush would be returned.

The morning of Wednesday the 2nd September dawned in the rookeries of Whitechapel. The broken windows grad-ually became smeared with grey. Light fell upon the hairy faces of ruffians lying sprawled upon the floor. Flush woke from a trance that had veiled his eyes and once more real-ised the truth. This was now the truth - this room, these ruffians, these whining, snapping, tightly tethered dogs, this murk, this dampness. Could it be true that he had been in a shop, with ladies, among ribbons, only yesterday? Was there such a place as Wimpole Street? Was there a room where fresh water sparkled in a purple jar; had he lain on cushions; had he been given a chicken' s wing nicely roasted; and had he been torn with rage and jealousy and bitten a man with yellow gloves? The whole of that life and its emo-tions floated away, dissolved, became unreal.

Here, as the dusty light filtered in, a woman heaved her-self off a sack and staggered out to fetch beer. The drinking and the cursing began again. A fat woman held him up by his ears and pinched his ribs, and some odious joke was made about him - there was a roar of laughter as she threw him on the floor again. The door was kicked open and banged to. Whenever that happened he looked up. Was it Wilson? Could it possibly be Mr Browning? Or Miss Bar-rett? But no - it was only another thief, another murderer; he cowered back at the mere sight of those draggled skirts, of those hard, horny boots. Once he tried to gnaw a bone that was hurled his way. But his teeth could not meet in stony flesh and the rank smell disgusted him. His thirst increased and he was forced to lap a little of the green water that had been spilt from the pail. But as Wednesday wore on and he became hotter and more parched and still more

sore, lying on the broken boards, one thing merged in another. He scarcely noticed what was happening. It was only when the door opened that he raised his head and looked. No, it was not Miss Barrett.

Miss Barrett, lying on the sofa in Wimpole Street, was becoming anxious. There was some hitch in the proceedings. Taylor had promised that he would go down to Whitechapel on Wednesday afternoon and confer with 'the Society'. Yet Wednesday afternoon, Wednesday evening passed and still Taylor did not come. This could only mean, she supposed, that the price was going to be raised - which was inconvenient enough at the moment. Still, of course, she would have to pay it. 'I must have my Flush, you know', she wrote to Mr Browning. 'I can't run any risk and bargain and haggle.' So she lay on the sofa writing to Mr Browning and listening for a knock at the door. But Wilson came up with the letters; Wilson came up with the hot water. It was time for bed and Flush had not come.

Thursday the 3rd of September dawned in Whitechapel. The door opened and shut. The red setter who had been whining all night beside Flush on the floor was hauled off by a ruffian in a moleskin vest - to what fate? Was it better to be killed or to stay here? Which was worse - this life or that death? The racket, the hunger and the thirst, the reek-ing smells of the place - and once, Flush remembered, he had detested the scent of eau-de-Cologne - were fast obliterating any clear image, any single desire. Fragments of old memories began turning in his head. Was that the voice of old Dr Mitford shouting in the field? Was that Kerenhap-poch gossiping with the baker at the door? There was a rattling in the room and he thought he heard Miss Mitford tying up a bunch of geraniums. But it was only the wind - for it was stormy to-day - battering at the brown paper in the broken window pane. It was only some drunken voice raving in the gutter. It was only the old hag in the corner mumbling on and on and on as she fried a herring in a pan over a fire. He had been forgotten and deserted. No help was coming. No voice spoke to him - the parrots cried 'Pretty Poll, Pretty Poll', and the canaries kept up their senseless cheeping and chirping.

Then again evening darkened the room; the candle was stuck in its saucer; the coarse light flared outside; hordes of sinister men

with bags on their backs, of garish women with painted faces, began to shuffle in at the door and to fling themselves down on the broken beds and tables. Another night had folded its blackness over Whitechapel. And the rain dripped steadily through a hole in the roof and drummed into a pail that had been stood to catch it. Miss Barrett had not come.

Thursday dawned in Wimpole Street. There was no sign of Flush - no message from Taylor. Miss Barrett was very much alarmed. She made enquiries. She summoned her brother Henry, and cross-examined him. She found out that he had tricked her. 'The arch fiend' Taylor had come according to his promise the night before. He had stated his terms - six guineas for the Society and half a guinea for himself. But Henry, instead of telling her, had told Mr Barrett, with the result, of course, that Mr Barrett had ordered him not to pay, and to conceal the visit from his sister. Miss Barrett was 'very vexed and angry'. She bade her brother to go at once to Mr Taylor and pay the money. Henry refused and 'talked of Papa'. But it was no use talking of Papa, she protested. While they talked of Papa, Flush would be killed. She made up her mind. If Henry would not go, she would go herself: '..... if people won't do as I choose, I shall go down to-morrow morning, and bring Flush back with me', she wrote to Mr Browning.

But Miss Barrett now found that it was easier to say this than to do it. It was almost as difficult for her to go to Flush as for Flush to come to her. All Wimpole Street was against her. The news that Flush was stolen and that Taylor demanded a ransom was now public property. Wimpole Street was determined to make a stand against Whitechapel. Blind Mr Boyd sent word that in his opinion it would be 'an awful sin' to pay the ransom. Her father and her brother were in league against her and were capable of any treachery in the interests of their class. But worst of all - far worse - Mr Browning himself threw all his weight, all his eloquence, all his learning, all his logic, on the side of Wimpole Street and against Flush. If Miss Barrett gave way to Taylor, he wrote, she was giving way to tyranny; she was giving way to blackmailers; she was increasing the power of evil over right, of wickedness over innocence. If she gave Taylor his demand, '..... how will the poor owners fare who have not money enough for their dogs' redemption'? His imagination took fire; he imagined what he would say if Taylor

asked him even for five shillings; he would say, 'You are responsible for the proceedings of your gang, and *you* I mark - don't talk nonsense to me about cutting off heads or paws. Be as sure as that I stand here and tell you, I will spend my whole life in putting you down, the nuisance you declare yourself - and by every imaginable means I will be the death of you and as many of your accomplices as I can discover - but *you* I have discovered and will never lose sight of ' So Mr Browning would have replied to Taylor if he had had the good fortune to meet that gentleman. For indeed, he went on, catching a later post with a second letter that same Thursday afternoon, ' it is horrible to fancy how all the oppressors in their several ranks may, if they choose, twitch back to them by the heartstrings after various modes the weak and silent whose secret they have found out'. He did not blame Miss Barrett - nothing she did could be anything but perfectly right, perfectly acceptable to him. Still, he continued on Friday morning, 'I think it lamentable weakness ' If she encouraged Taylor who stole dogs, she encouraged Mr Barnard Gregory who stole characters. Indirectly, she was responsible for all the wretches who cut their throats or fly the country because some blackmailer like Barnard Gregory took down a directory and blasted their characters. 'But why write all this string of truisms about the plainest thing in the world?' So Mr Browning stormed and vociferated from New Cross twice daily. Lying on her sofa, Miss Barrett read the letters. How easy it would have been to yield - how easy it would have been to say, 'Your good opinion is worth more to me than a hundred cocker spaniels'. How easy it would have been to sink back on her pillows and sigh, 'I am a weak woman; I know nothing of law and justice; decide for me'. She had only to refuse to pay the ransom; she had only to defy Taylor and his Society. And if Flush were killed, if the dreadful parcel came and she opened it and out dropped his head and paws, there was Robert Browning by her side to assure her that she had done right and earned his respect. But Miss Barrett was not to be intimidated. Miss Barrett took up her pen and refuted Robert Browning. It was all very well, she said, to quote Donne; to cite the case of Gregory; to invent spirited replies to Mr Taylor - she would have done the same had Taylor struck her; had Gregory defamed her; - would that they had! But what would Mr Browning have done if the banditti had stolen her; had *her* in their power; threatened to cut off *her* ears and send them by post to New

Cross? Whatever he would have done, her mind was made up. Flush was helpless. Her duty was to him. 'But Flush, poor Flush, who has loved me so faithfully; have I a right to sacrifice *him* in his innocence, for the sake of any Mr Taylor' s guilt in the world?' Whatever Mr Browning might say, she was going to rescue Flush, even if she went down into the jaws of Whitechapel to fetch him, even if Robert Browning despised her for doing so.

On Saturday, therefore, with Mr Browning's letter lying open on the table before her, she began to dress. She read his 'one word more - in all this, I labour against the ex-crable policy of the world's husbands, fathers, brothers and domineerers in general'. So, if she went to Whitechapel she was siding against Robert Browning, and in favour of fathers, brothers and domineerers in general. Still, she went on dressing. A dog howled in the mews. It was tied up, help-less in the power of cruel men. It seemed to her to cry as it howled: 'Think of Flush'. She put on her shoes, her cloak, her hat. She glanced at Mr Browning' s letter once more. 'I am about to marry you', she read. Still the dog howled. She left her room and went downstairs.

Henry Barrett met her and told her that in his opinion she might well be robbed and murdered if she did what she threatened. She told Wilson to call a cab. All trembling but submissive, Wilson obeyed. The cab came. Miss Barrett told Wilson to get in. Wilson, though convinced that death awaited her, got in. Miss Barrett told the cab-man to drive to Manning Street, Shoreditch. Miss Barrett got in herself and off they drove. Soon they were beyond plate-glass win-dows, the mahogany doors and the area railings. They were in a world that Miss Barrett had never seen, had never guessed at. They were in a world where cows are herded under bedroom floors, where whole families sleep in rooms with broken windows; in a world where water is turned on only twice a week, in a world where vice and poverty breed vice and poverty. They had come to a region unknown to respectable cab-drivers. The cab stopped; the driver asked his way at a public-house. 'Out came two or three men. "Oh, you want to find Mr Taylor, I daresay!" ' In this mysterious world a cab with two ladies could only come upon one errand, and that errand was already known. It was sinister in the extreme. One of the men ran into a house, and came out saying that Mr Taylor ' "wasn' t at home! but wouldn' t I get out?" Wilson, in an aside of

terror, entreated me not to think of such a thing.' A gang of men and boys pressed round the cab. 'Then wouldn't I see Mrs Taylor?' the man asked. Miss Barrett had no wish whatever to see Mrs Taylor; but now an immense fat woman came out of the house, 'fat enough to have had an easy conscience all her life', and informed Miss Barrett that her husband was out: 'might be in in a few minutes, or in so many hours - wouldn't I like to get out and wait?' Wilson tugged at her gown. Imagine waiting in the house of that woman! It was bad enough to sit in the cab with the gang of men and boys pressing round them. So Miss Barrett parleyed with the 'immense feminine bandit' from the cab. Mr Taylor had her dog, she said; Mr Taylor had promised to restore her dog; would Mr Taylor bring back her dog to Wimpole Street for certain that very day? 'Oh yes, certainly,' said the fat woman with the most gracious of smiles. She did believe that Taylor had left home precisely on that business. And she 'poised her head to right and left with the most easy grace'.

So the cab turned round and left Manning Street, Shoreditch. Wilson was of opinion that 'we had escaped with our lives barely'. Miss Barrett herself had been alarmed. 'Plain enough it was that the gang was strong there. The Society, the "Fancy" had their roots in the ground', she wrote. Her mind teemed with thoughts, her eyes were full of pictures. This, then, was what lay on the other side of Wimpole Street - these faces, these houses. She had seen more while she sat in the cab at the public-house than she had seen during the five years that she had lain in the back bedroom at Wimpole Street. 'The faces of those men!' she exclaimed. They were branded on her eyeballs. They stimulated her imagination as 'the divine marble presences', the busts on the bookcase, had never stimulated it. Here lived women like herself; while she lay on her sofa, reading, writing, they lived thus. But the cab was now trundling along between four-storeyed houses again. Here was the familiar avenue of doors and windows: the pointed brick, the brass knockers, the regular curtains. Here was Wimpole Street and No.50. Wilson sprang out - with what relief to find herself in safety can be imagined. But Miss Barrett perhaps hesitated a moment. She still saw 'the faces of those men'. They were to come before her again years later when she sat writing on a sunny balcony in Italy. They were to inspire the most vivid passages in *Aurora Leigh*. But now the butler had opened the door, and she went upstairs to her room again.

Saturday was the fifth day of Flush' s imprisonment. Almost exhausted, almost hopeless, he lay panting in his dark corner of the teeming floor. Doors slammed and banged. Rough voices cried. Women screamed. Parrots chattered as they had never chattered to widows in Maida Vale, but now evil old women merely cursed at them. Insects crawled in his fur, but he was too weak, too indifferent to shake his coat. All Flush' s past life and its many scenes - Reading, the greenhouse, Miss Mitford, Mr Kenyon, the bookcases, the busts, the peasants on the blind - had faded like snow flakes dissolved in a cauldron. If he still held to hope, it was to something nameless and formless; the featureless face of someone he still called 'Miss Barrett'. She still existed; all the rest of the world was gone; but she still existed, though such gulfs lay between them that it was impossible, almost, that she should reach him still. Darkness began to fall again, such darkness as seemed almost able to crush out his last hope - Miss Barrett.

In truth, the forces of Wimpole Street were still, even at this last moment, battling to keep Flush and Miss Barrett apart. On Saturday afternoon she lay and waited for Taylor to come, as the immensely fat woman had promised. At last he came, but he had not brought the dog. He sent up a message - Let Miss Barrett pay him six guineas on the spot, and he would go straight to Whitechapel and fetch the dog 'on his word of honour'. What 'the archfiend' Taylor' s word of honour might be worth, Miss Barrett could not say; but 'there seemed no other way for it'; Flush' s life was at stake; she counted out the guineas and sent them down to Taylor in the passage. But as ill luck would have it, as Taylor waited in the passage among the umbrellas, the engravings, the pile carpet and other valuable objects, Alfred Barrett came in. The sight of the arch fiend actually in the house made him lose his temper. He burst into a rage. He called him 'a swindler, and a liar and a thief'. Thereupon Mr Taylor cursed him back. What was far worse, he swore that 'as he hoped to be saved, we should never see our dog again', and rushed out of the house. Next morning, then, the blood-stained parcel would arrive.

Miss Barrett flung on her clothes again and rushed down-stairs. Where was Wilson? Let her call a cab. She was going back to Shoreditch instantly. Her family came running to prevent her. It was getting dark. She was exhausted already. The adventure was

risky enough for a man in health. For her it was madness. So they told her. Her brothers, her sisters, all came round her threatening her, dissuading her, 'crying out against me for being "quite mad" and obstinate and wilful - I was called as many names as Mr Taylor'. But she stood her ground. At last they realised the extent of her folly. Whatever the risk might be they must give way to her. Septimus promised if Ba would return to her room 'and be in good humour' he would go to Taylor's himself and pay the money and bring back the dog.

So the dusk of the 5th of September faded into the black-ness of night in Whitechapel. The door of the room was once more kicked open. A hairy man hauled Flush by the scruff of his neck out of his corner. Looking up into the hideous face of his old enemy, Flush did not know whether he was being taken to be killed or to be freed. Save for one phan-tom memory, he did not care. The man stooped. What were those great fingers fumbling at his throat for? Was it a knife or a chain? Stumbling, half blinded, on legs that staggered, Flush was led out into the open air.

In Wimpole Street Miss Barrett could not eat her dinner. Was Flush dead, or was Flush alive? She did not know. At eight o'clock there was a rap on the door; it was the usual letter from Mr Browning. But as the door opened to admit the letter, something rushed in also; - Flush. He made straight for his purple jar. It was filled three times over; and still he drank. Miss Barrett watched the dazed, bewildered dirty dog, drinking. 'He was not so enthusiastic about see-ing me as I expected', she remarked. No, there was only one thing in the world he wanted - clean water.

After all, Miss Barrett had but glanced at the faces of those men and she remembered them all her life. Flush had been at their mercy in their midst for five whole days. Now as he lay on cushions once more, cold water was the only thing that seemed to have any substance, any reality. He drank continually. The old gods of the bedroom - the book-case, the wardrobe, the busts - seemed to have lost their substance. This room was no longer the whole world; it was only a shelter. It was only a dell arched over by one trem-bling dock-leaf in a forest where wild beasts prowled and venomous snakes coiled; where behind every tree lurked a murderer ready to pounce. As he lay dazed and exhausted on the sofa at Miss Barrett's feet the howls of tethered dogs, the screams of birds in terror still

sounded in his ears. When the door opened he started, expecting a hairy man with a knife - it was only Mr Kenyon with a book; it was only Mr Browning with his yellow gloves. But he shrank away from Mr Kenyon and Mr Browning now. He trusted them no longer. Behind those smiling, friendly faces was treach-ery and cruelty and deceit. Their caresses were hollow. He dreaded even walking with Wilson to the pillar-box. He would not stir without his chain. When they said, 'Poor Flush, did the naughty men take you away?' he put up his head and moaned and yelled. A whip cracking sent him bolting down the area-steps into safety. Indoors he crept closer to Miss Barrett on the sofa. She alone had not des-erted him. He still kept some faith in her. Gradually some substance returned to her. Exhausted, trembling, dirty and very thin, he lay on the sofa at her feet.

As the days passed and the memory of Whitechapel grew fainter, Flush, lying close to Miss Barrett on the sofa, read her feelings more clearly than ever before. They had been parted; now they were together. Indeed they had never been so much akin. Every start she gave, every movement she made, passed through him too. And she seemed now to be perpetually starting and moving. The delivery of a parcel even made her jump. She opened the parcel; with trembling fingers she took out a pair of thick boots. She hid them instantly in the corner of the cupboard. Then she lay down as if nothing had happened; yet something had happened. When they were alone she rose and took a diamond necklace from a drawer. She took out the box that held Mr Brown-ing's letters. She laid the boots, the necklace and the letters all in a carpet-box together and then - as if she heard a step on the stair - she pushed the box under the bed and lay down hastily, covering herself with her shawl again. Such signs of secrecy and stealth must herald, Flush felt, some approaching crisis. Were they about to fly together? Were they about to escape together from this awful world of dog-stealers and tyrants? Oh that it were possible! He trem-bled and whined with excitement; but in her low voice Miss Barrett bade him be quiet, and instantly he was quiet. She was very quiet too. She lay perfectly still on the sofa directly any of her brothers or sisters came in; she lay and talked to Mr Barrett as she always lay and talked to Mr Barrett.

But on Saturday, the 12th of September, Miss Barrett did what

Flush had never known her do before. She dressed herself as if to go out directly after breakfast. Moreover, as he watched her dress, Flush knew perfectly well from the expression on her face that he was not to go with her. She was bound on secret business of her own. At ten Wilson came into the room. She also was dressed as if for a walk. They went out together; and Flush lay on the sofa and waited for their return. An hour or so later Miss Barrett came back alone. She did not look at him - she seemed to look at nothing. She drew off her gloves and for a moment he saw a gold band shine on one of the fingers of her left hand. Then he saw her slip the ring from her hand and hide it in the darkness of a drawer. Then she laid herself down as usual on the sofa. He lay by her side scarcely daring to breathe, for whatever had happened, it was something that must at all costs be concealed.

At all costs the life of the bedroom must go on as usual. Yet everything was different. The very movement of the blind as it drew in and out seemed to Flush like a signal. And as the lights and shadows passed over the busts they too seemed to be hinting and beckoning. Everything in the room seemed to be aware of change; to be prepared for some event. And yet all was silent; all was concealed. The brothers and sisters came in and out as usual; Mr Barrett came as usual in the evening. He looked as usual to see that the chop was finished, the wine drunk. Miss Barrett talked and laughed and gave no sign when anyone was in the room that she was hiding anything. Yet when they were alone she pulled out the box from under the bed and filled it hastily, stealthily, listening as she did so. And the signs of strain were unmistakable. On Sunday the church bells were ring-ing. 'What bells are those?' somebody asked. 'Marylebone Church bells', said Miss Henrietta. Miss Barrett, Flush saw, went deadly white. But nobody else seemed to notice anything.

So Monday passed, and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday. Over them all lay a blanket of silence, of eating and talking and lying still on the sofa as usual. Flush, toss-ing in uneasy sleep, dreamt that they were couched together under ferns and leaves in the darkness, in a vast forest; then the leaves were parted and he woke. It was dark; but he saw Wilson come stealthily into the room, and take the box from beneath the bed and quietly carry it outside. This was on Friday night, the 18th of September. All Saturday

morning he lay as one lies who knows that at any moment now a handkerchief may drop, a low whistle may sound and the signal will be given for death or for life. He watched Miss Barrett dress herself. At a quarter to four the door opened and Wilson came in. Then the signal was given - Miss Bar-rett lifted him in her arms. She rose and walked to the door. For a moment they stood looking round the room. There was the sofa and by it Mr Browning' s armchair. There were the busts and the tables. The sunfiltered through the ivy leaves and the blind with peasants walking blew gently out. All was as usual. All seemed to expect a million more such movements to come to them; but to Miss Barrett and Flush this was the last. Very quietly Miss Barrett shut the door.

Very quietly they slipped downstairs, past the drawing-room, the library, the dining-room. All looked as they usually looked; smelt as they usually smelt; all were quiet as if sleeping in the hot September afternoon. On the mat in the hall Catiline lay sleeping too. They gained the front door and very quietly turned the handle. A cab was waiting outside.

'To Hodgson's', said Miss Barrett. She spoke almost in a whisper. Flush sat on her knee very still. Not for anything in the whole world would he have broken that tremendous silence.

Chapter 5 ITALY

Hours, days, weeks, it seemed of darkness and rattling; of sudden lights; and then long tunnels of gloom; of being flung this way and that; of being hastily lifted into the light and seeing Miss Barrett' s face close, and thin trees and lines and rails and high light-specked houses - for it was the bar-barous custom of railways in those days to make dogs travel in boxes - followed. Yet Flush was not afraid; they were escaping; they were leaving tyrants and dog-stealers behind them. Rattle, grind; grind, rattle as much as you like, he murmured, as the train flung him this way and that; only let us leave Wimpole Street and Whitechapel behind us. At last the light broadened; the rattling stopped. He heard birds singing and the sigh of trees in the wind. Or was it the rush of water? Opening his eyes at last, shaking his coat at last, he saw - the most astonishing sight conceivable. There was Miss Barrett on a rock in the midst of rushing waters. Trees bent over her; the river raced round her. She must be in peril. With one bound Flush splashed through the stream and reached her. ' he is baptized in Petrarch' s name', said Miss Barrett as he clambered up on to the rock by her side. For they were at Vaucluse; she had perched herself upon a stone in the middle of Petrarch' s fountain.

Then there was more rattling and more grinding; and then again he was stood down on a stable floor; the darkness opened; light poured over him; he found himself alive, awake, bewildered, standing on reddish tiles in a vast bare room flooded with sunshine. He ran hither and thither smelling and touching. There was no carpet and no fire-place. There were no sofas, no armchairs, no bookcases, no busts. Pungent and unfamiliar smells tickled his nostrils and made him sneeze. The light, in finitely sharp and clear, dazzled his eyes. He had never been in a room - if this were indeed a room - that was so hard, so bright, so big, so empty. Miss Barrett looked smaller than ever sitting on a chair by a table in the midst. Then Wilson took him out of doors. He found himself almost blinded, first by the sun, then by the shadow. One half of the street was burning hot; the other bitterly cold. Women went by wrapped

in furs, yet they carried parasols to shade their heads. And the street was dry as bone. Though it was now the middle of November there was neither mud nor puddle to wet his paws or clot their feathers. There were no areas and no railings. There was none of that heady confusion of smells that made a walk down Wimpole Street or Oxford Street so distracting. On the other hand, the strange new smells that came from sharp stone corners, from dry yellow walls, were extraordinarily pungent and queer. Then from behind a black swinging curtain came an astonishing sweet smell, wafted in clouds; he stopped, his paws raised, to savour it; he made to follow it inside; he pushed in beneath the curtain. He had one glimpse of a booming light-sprinkled hall, very high and hollow; and then Wilson with a cry of horror, jerked him smartly back. They went on down the street again. The noise of the street was deafening. Everybody seemed to be shouting shrilly at the same moment. Instead of the solid and soporific hum of London there was a rattling and a crying, a jingling and a shouting, a cracking of whips and a jangling of bells. Flush leapt and jumped this way and that, and so did Wilson. They were forced on and off the pavement twenty times, to avoid a cart, a bullock, a troop of soldiers, a drove of goats. He felt younger, spryer than he had done these many years. Dazzled, yet exhilarated, he sank on the reddish tiles and slept more soundly than he had ever slept in the back bedroom at Wimpole Street upon pillows.

But soon Flush became aware of the more profound differences that distinguish Pisa - for it was in Pisa that they were now settled - from London. The dogs were different. In London he could scarcely trot round to the pillar-box without meeting some pug dog, retriever, bulldog, mastiff, collie, Newfoundland, St Bernard, fox terrier or one of the seven famous families of the Spaniel tribe. To each he gave a different name, and to each a different rank. But here in Pisa, though dogs abounded, there were no ranks; all - could it be possible? - were mongrels. As far as he could see, they were dogs merely-grey dogs, yellow dogs, brindled dogs, spotted dogs; but it was impossible to detect a single spaniel, collie, retriever or mastiff among them. Had the Kennel Club, then, no jurisdiction in Italy? Was the Spaniel Club unknown? Was there no law which decreed death to the topknot, which cherished the curled ear, protected the feathered foot, and insisted absolutely that the brow must be domed but not pointed? Apparently not. Flush felt himself like a

prince in exile. He was the sole aristocrat among a crowd of *canaille*. He was the only pure-bred cocker spaniel in the whole of Pisa.

For many years now Flush had been taught to consider himself an aristocrat. The law of the purple jar and of the chain had sunk deep into his soul. It is scarcely surprising that he was thrown off his balance. A Howard or a Caven-dish set down among a swarm of natives in mud huts can hardly be blamed if now and again he remembers Chats-worth and muses regretfully over red carpets and galleries daubed with coronets as the sunset blazes down through painted windows. There was an element, it must be admitted, of the snob in Flush; Miss Mitford had detected it years ago; and the sentiment, subdued in London among equals and superiors, returned to him now that he felt himself unique. He became overbearing and impudent. 'Flush has grown an absolute monarch and barks one distracted when he wants a door opened', Mrs Browning wrote. 'Robert', she continued, 'declares that the said Flush considers him, my husband, to be created for the especial purpose of doing him service, and really it looks rather like it.'

'Robert', 'my husband' - if Flush had changed, so had Miss Barrett. It was not merely that she called herself Mrs Browning now; that she flashed the gold ring on her hand in the sun; she was changed, as much as Flush was changed. Flush heard her say 'Robert', 'my husband', fifty times a day, and always with a ring of pride that made his hackles rise and his heart jump. But it was not her language only that had changed. She was a different person altogether. Now, for instance, instead of sipping a thimbleful of port and complaining of the headache, she tossed off a tumbler of Chianti and slept the sounder. There was a flowering branch of oranges on the dinner-table instead of one denuded, sour, yellow fruit. Then instead of driving in a barouche landau to Regent's Park she pulled on her thick boots and scrambled over rocks. Instead of sitting in a carriage and rumbling along Oxford Street, they rattled off in a ramshackle fly to the borders of a lake and looked at mountains; and when she was tired she did not hail another cab; she sat on a stone and watched the lizards. She delighted in the sun; she delighted in the cold. She threw pine logs from the Duke's forest on to the fire if it froze. They sat together in the crackling blaze and snuffed up the sharp, aromatic scent. She was never tired of praising Italy at the expense of England. '..... our poor English',

she exclaimed, 'want educating into glad-ness. They want refining not in the fire but in the sunshine.' Here in Italy was freedom and life and the joy that the sun breeds. One never saw menfighting, or heard them swear-ing; one never saw the Italians drunk; - 'the faces of those men' in Shoreditch came again before her eyes. She was always comparing Pisa with London and saying how much she preferred Pisa. In the streets of Pisa pretty women could walk alone; great ladies first emptied their own slops and then went to Court 'in a blaze of undeniable glory'. Pisa with all its bells, its mongrels, its camels, its pine woods, was infinitely preferable to Wimpole Street and its mahog-any doors and its shoulders of mutton. So Mrs Browning every day, as she tossed off her Chianti and broke another orange from the branch, praised Italy and lamented poor, dull, damp, sunless, joyless, expensive, conventional England.

Wilson, it is true, for a time maintained her British bal-ance. The memory of butlers and basements, of front doors and curtains, was not obliterated from her mind without an effort. She still had the conscience to walk out of a picture gallery 'struck back by the indecency of the Venus'. And later, when she was allowed, by the kindness of a friend, to peep through a door at the glories of the Grand Ducal Court, she still loyally upheld the superior glory of St James' s. 'It was all very shabby', she reported, 'in com-parison with our English Court.' But even as she gazed, the superb figure of one of the Grand Duke' s bodyguard caught her eye. Her fancy was fired; her judgement reeled; her standards toppled. Lily Wilson fell passionately in love with Signor Righi, the guardsman.

And just as Mrs Browning was exploring her new free-dom and delighting in the discoveries she made, so Flush too was making his discoveries and exploring his freedom. Before they left Pisa - in the spring of 1847 they moved on to Florence - Flush had faced the curious and at first upset-ting truth that the laws of the Kennel Club are not universal. He had brought himself to face the fact that light topknots are not necessarily fatal. He had revised his code accordingly. He had acted, at first with some hesitation, upon his new conception of canine society. He was becoming daily more and more democratic. Even in Pisa, Mrs Browning noticed, ' he goes out every day and speaks Italian to the little dogs'. Now in Florence the last threads of his old fetters fell from him. The moment of liberation came one day in the Cascine. As he raced over

the grass 'like emeralds' with 'the pheasants all alive and flying', Flush suddenly bethought him of Regent's Park and its proclamation: Dogs must be led on chains. Where was 'must' now? Where were chains now? Where were park-keepers and truncheons? Gone, with the dog-stealers and Kennel Clubs and Spaniel Clubs of a corrupt aristocracy! Gone with four-wheelers and hansom cabs! with Whitechapel and Shoreditch! He ran, he raced; his coat flashed; his eyes blazed. He was the friend of all the world now. All dogs were his brothers. He had no need of a chain in this new world; he had no need of protection. If Mr Browning was late in going for his walk - he and Flush were the best of friends now - Flush boldly summoned him. He 'stands up before him and barks in the most imperi-ous manner possible', Mrs Browning observed with some irritation - for her relations with Flush were far less emotional now than in the old days; she no longer needed his red fur and his bright eyes to give her what her own experi-ence lacked; she had found Pan for herself among the vineyards and the olive trees; he was there too beside the pinefire of an evening. So if Mr Browning loitered, Flush stood up and barked; but if Mr Browning preferred to stay at home and write, it did not matter. Flush was independent now. The wistarias and the laburnum were flowering over walls; the judas trees were burning bright in the gardens; the wild tulips were sprinkled in the fields. Why should he wait? Off he ran by himself. He was his own master now. '..... he goes out by himself, and stays hours together', Mrs Browning wrote; '..... knows every street in Florence - will have his own way in everything. I am never frightened at his absence', she added, remembering with a smile those hours of agony in Wimpole Street and the gang waiting to snatch him up under the horses' feet if she forgot his chain in Vere Street. Fear was unknown in Florence; there were no dog-stealers here and, she may have sighed, there were no fathers.

But, to speak candidly, it was not to stare at pictures, to penetrate into dark churches and look up at dim frescoes, that Flush scampered off when the door of Casa Guidi was left open. It was to enjoy something, it was in search of something denied him all these years. Once the hunting horn of Venus had blown its wild music over the Berkshire fields; he had loved Mr Partridge's dog; she had borne him a child. Now he heard the same voice pealing down the narrow streets of Florence, but more imperiously, more

impetuously, after all these years of silence. Now Flush knew what men can never know - love pure, love simple, love entire; love that brings no train of care in its wake; that has no shame; no remorse; that is here, that is gone, as the bee on the flower is here and is gone. To-day the flower is a rose, to-morrow a lily; now it is the wild thistle on the moor, now the pouched and portentous orchid of the conservatory. So variously, so carelessly Flush embraced the spotted spaniel down the alley, and the brindled dog and the yellow dog - it did not matter which. To Flush it was all the same. He followed the horn wherever the horn blew and the wind wafted it. Love was all; love was enough. No one blamed him for his escapades. Mr Browning merely laughed - 'Quite dis-graceful for a respectable dog like him' - when Flush returned very late at night or early the next morning. And 9780

Mrs Browning laughed too, as Flush flung himself down on the bedroom floor and slept soundly upon the arms of the Guidi family inlaid in scagliola.

For at Casa Guidi the rooms were bare. All those draped objects of his cloistered and secluded days had vanished. The bed was a bed; the wash-stand was a wash-stand. Every-thing was itself and not another thing. The drawing-room was large and sprinkled with a few old carved chairs of ebony. Over the fire hung a mirror with two cupids to hold the lights. Mrs Browning herself had discarded her Indian shawls. She wore a cap made of some thin bright silk that her husband liked. Her hair was brushed in a new way. And when the sun had gone down and the shutters had been raised she paced the balcony dressed in thin white muslin. She loved to sit there looking, listening, watching the people in the street.

They had not been long in Florence before one night there was such a shouting and trampling in the street that they ran to the balcony to see what was happening. A vast crowd was surging underneath. They were carrying banners and shouting and singing. All the windows were full of faces; all the balconies were full of figures. The people in the win-dows were tossing flowers and laurel leaves on to the people in the street; and the people in the street - grave men, gay young women - were kissing each other and raising their babies to the people in the balconies. Mr and Mrs Browning leant over the balustrade and clapped and clapped. Banner after banner passed. The torches flashed their light on them. 'Liberty' was

written on one; 'The Union of Italy' on another; and 'The Memory of the Martyrs' and 'Viva Pio Nono' and 'Viva Leopoldo Secondo' - for three and a half hours the banners went by and the people cheered and Mr and Mrs Browning stood with six candles burning on the balcony, waving and waving. For some time Flush too, stretched between them with his paws over the sill, did his best to rejoice. But at last - he could not conceal it - he yawned. 'He confessed at last that he thought they were rather long about it', Mrs Browning observed. A weariness, a doubt, a ribaldry possessed him. What was it all for? he asked himself. Who was this Grand Duke and what had he promised? Why were they all so absurdly excited? - for the ardour of Mrs Browning, waving and waving, as the banners passed, somehow annoyed him. Such enthusiasm for a Grand Duke was somehow exaggerated, he felt. And then, as the Grand Duke passed, he became aware that a little dog had stopped at the door. Seizing his chance when Mrs Browning was more than usually enthusiastic, he slipped down from the balcony and made off. Through the banners and the crowds he followed her. She fled further and further into the heart of Florence. Far away sounded the shouting; the cheers of the people died down into silence. The lights of the torches were extinguished. Only a star or two shone in the ripples of the Arno where Flush lay with the spotted spaniel by his side, couched in the shell of an old basket on the mud. There tranced in love they lay till the sun rose in the sky. Flush did not return until nine next morning, and Mrs Browning greeted him rather ironically - he might at least, she thought, have remembered that it was the first anniversary of her wedding day. But she supposed 'he had been very much amused'. It was true. While she had found an inexplicable satisfaction in the trampling of forty thousand people, in the promises of Grand Dukes and the windy aspirations of banners, Flush in finitely preferred the little dog at the door.

It cannot be doubted that Mrs Browning and Flush were reaching different conclusions in their voyages of discovery - she a Grand Duke, he a spotted spaniel; - and yet the tie which bound them together was undeniably still binding. No sooner had Flush abolished 'must' and raced free through the emerald grass of the Cascine gardens where the pheasants fluttered red and gold, than he felt a check. Once more he was thrown back on his haunches. At first it was nothing - a hint merely - only that Mrs Browning in the

spring of 1849 became busy with her needle. And yet there was something in the sight that gave Flush pause. She was not used to sew. He noted that Wilson moved a bed and that she opened a drawer to put white clothes inside it. Raising his head from the tiled floor, he looked, he listened attentively. Was something once more about to happen? He looked anxiously for signs of trunks and packing. Was there to be another flight, another escape? But an escape to what, from what? There is nothing to be afraid of here, he assured Mrs Browning. They need neither of them worry themselves in Florence about Mr Taylor and dogs' heads wrapped up in brown paper parcels. Yet he was puzzled. The signs of change, as he read them, did not signify escape. They signified, much more mysteriously, expectance. Something, he felt, as he watched Mrs Browning so composedly, yet silently and steadfastly, stitching in her low chair, was coming that was inevitable; yet to be dreaded. As the weeks went on, Mrs Browning scarcely left the house. She seemed, as she sat there, to anticipate some tremendous event. Was she about to encounter somebody, like the ruffian Taylor, and let him rain blows on her alone and unaided? Flush quivered with apprehension at the thought. Certainly she had no intention of running away. No boxes were packed. There was no sign that anybody was about to leave the house - rather there were signs that somebody was coming. In his jealous anxiety Flush scrutinised each new-comer. There were many now - Miss Blagden, Mr Landor, Hattie Hosmer, Mr Lytton - ever so many ladies and gentlemen now came to Casa Guidi. Day after day Mrs Browning sat there in her armchair quietly stitching.

Then one day early in March Mrs Browning did not appear in the sitting-room at all. Other people came in and out; Mr Browning and Wilson came in and out; and they came in and out so distractedly that Flush hid himself under the sofa. People were trampling up and down stairs, running and calling in low whispers and muted unfamiliar voices. They were moving upstairs in the bedroom. He crept further and further under the shadow of the sofa. He knew in every fibre of his body that some change was taking place - some awful event was happening. So he had waited, years ago, for the step of the hooded man on the staircase. And at last the door had opened and Miss Barrett had cried 'Mr Browning!' Who was coming now? What hooded man? As the day wore on, he was left completely alone; nobody came into the drawing-room. He

lay in the drawing-room without food or drink; a thousand spotted spaniels might have sniffed at the door and he would have shrunk away from them. For as the hours passed he had an overwhelming sense that something was thrusting its way into the house from outside. He peeped out from beneath the flounces. The cupids holding the lights, the ebony chests, the French chairs, all looked thrust asunder; he himself felt as if he were being pushed up against the wall to make room for some-thing that he could not see. Once he saw Mr Browning, but he was not the same Mr Browning; once Wilson, but she was changed too - as if they were both seeing the invisible presence that he felt. Their eyes were oddly glazed.

At last Wilson, looking very flushed and untidy but triumphant, took him in her arms and carried him upstairs. They entered the bedroom. There was a faint bleating in the shadowed room - something waved on the pillow. It was a live animal. Independently of them all, without the street door being opened, out of herself in the room, alone, Mrs Browning had become two people. The horrid thing waved and mewed by her side. Torn with rage and jealousy and some deep disgust that he could not hide, Flush struggled himself free and rushed downstairs. Wilson and Mrs Brown-ing called him back; they tempted him with caresses; they offered him titbits; but it was useless. He cowered away from the disgusting sight, the repulsive presence, wherever there was a shadowy sofa or a dark corner. ' for a whole fort-night he fell into deep melancholy and was proof against all attentions lavished on him' - so Mrs Browning, in the midst of all her other distractions, was forced to notice. And when we take, as we must, human minutes and hours and drop them into a dog' s mind and see how the minutes swell into hours and the hours into days, we shall not exaggerate if we conclude that Flush' s 'deep melancholy' lasted six full months by the human clock. Many men and women have forgotten their hates and their loves in less.

But Flush was no longer the unschooled, untrained dog of Wimpole Street days. He had learnt his lesson. Wilson had struck him. He had been forced to swallow cakes that were stale when he might have eaten them fresh; he had sworn to love and not to bite. All this churned in his mind as he lay under the sofa; and at last he issued out. Again he was rewarded. At first, it must be admitted, the reward was insubstantial if not positively disagreeable. The baby

was set on his back and Flush had to trot about with the baby pulling his ears. But he submitted with such grace, only turning round, when his ears were pulled, 'to kiss the little bare, dimpled feet', that, before three months had passed, this helpless, weak, puling, muling lump had somehow come to prefer him, 'on the whole' - so Mrs Browning said - to other people. And then, strangely enough, Flush found that he returned the baby's affection. Did they not share some-thing in common - did not the baby somehow resemble Flush in many ways? Did they not hold the same views, the same tastes? For instance, in the matter of scenery. To Flush all scenery was insipid. He had never, all these years, learnt to focus his eyes upon mountains. When they took him to Vallombrosa all the splendours of its woods had merely bored him. Now again, when the baby was a few months old, they went on another of those long expeditions in a travelling carriage. The baby lay on his nurse's lap; Flush sat on Mrs Browning's knee. The carriage went on and on and on, painfully climbing the heights of the Apennines. Mrs Browning was almost beside herself with delight. She could scarcely tear herself from the window. She could not find words enough in the whole of the English language to express what she felt. '..... the exquisite, almost visionary scenery of the Apennines, the wonderful variety of shape and colour, the sudden transitions and vital individuality of those mountains, the chestnut forests dropping by their own weight into the deep ravines, the rocks cloven and clawed by the living torrents, and the hills, hill above hill, piling up their grand existences as if they did it themselves, chang-ing colour in the effort' - the beauty of the Apennines brought words to birth in such numbers that they positively crushed each other out of existence. But the baby and Flush felt none of this stimulus, none of this inadequacy. Both were silent. Flush drew 'in his head from the window and didn't consider it worth looking at He has a supreme contempt for trees and hills or anything of that kind', Mrs Browning concluded. The carriage rumbled on. Flush slept and the baby slept. Then at last there were lights and houses and men and women passing the windows. They had entered a village. Instantly Flush was all attention. '..... his eyes were starting out of his head with eagerness; he looked east, he looked west, you would conclude that he was taking notes or preparing them.' It was the human scene that stirred him. Beauty, so it seems at least, had to be crystallised into a green or violet powder and

puffed by some celestial syringe down the fringed channels that lay behind his nostrils before it touched Flush' s senses; and then it issued not in words, but in a silent rapture. Where Mrs Browning saw, he smelt; where she wrote, he snuffed.

Here, then, the biographer must perforce come to a pause Where two or three thousand words are insufficient for wha we see - and Mrs Browning had to admit herself beaten by the Apennines: 'Of these things I cannot give you any idea' she admitted - there are no more than two words and one-half for what we smell. The human nose is practically non-existent. The greatest poets in the world have smel nothing but roses on the one hand, and dung on the other. The in finite gradations that lie between are unrecorded. Ye it was in the world of smell that Flush mostly lived. Love was chiefly smell; form and colour were smell; music and architecture, law, politics and science were smell. To him religion itself was smell. To describe his simplest experienc with the daily chop or biscuit is beyond our power. Not even Mr Swinburne could have said what the smell of Wimpol Street meant to Flush on a hot afternoon in June. As fo describing the smell of a spaniel mixed with the smell o torches, laurels, incense, banners, wax candles and a gar land of rose leaves crushed by a satin heel that has been laid up in camphor, perhaps Shakespeare, had he paused in th middle of writing *Antony and Cleopatra* - But Shakespeare did not pause. Confessing our inadequacy, then, we can but note that to Flush Italy, in these the fullest, the freest, the happiest years of his life, meant mainly a succession of smells. Love, it must be supposed, was gradually losing its appeal. Smell remained. Now that they were established in Casa Guidi again, all had their avocations. Mr Browning wrote regularly in one room; Mrs Browning wrote regularly in another. The baby played in the nursery. But Flush wan-dered off into the streets of Florence to enjoy the rapture of smell. He threaded his path through main streets and back streets, through squares and alleys, by smell. He nosed his way from smell to smell; the rough, the smooth, the dark, the golden. He went in and out, up and down, where they beat brass, where they bake bread, where the women sit combing their hair, where the bird-cages are piled high on the causeway, where the wine spills itself in dark red stains on the pavement, where leather smells and harness and gar-lic, where cloth is beaten, where vine leaves tremble, where men sit and drink and spit and dice - he ran in and out, always with

his nose to the ground, drinking in the essence; or with his nose in the air vibrating with the aroma. He slept in this hot patch of sun-how sun made the stone reek! he sought that tunnel of shade - how acid shade made the stone smell! He devoured whole bunches of ripe grapes largely because of their purple smell; he chewed and spat out what-ever tough relic of goat or macaroni the Italian housewife had thrown from the balcony - goat and macaroni were raucous smells, crimson smells. He followed the swoon-ing sweetness of incense into the violet intricacies of dark cathedrals; and, sniffing, tried to lap the gold on the window-stained tomb. Nor was his sense of touch much less acute. He knew Florence in its marmoreal smoothness and in its gritty and cobbled roughness. Hoary folds of drapery, smooth fingers and feet of stone received the lick of his tongue, the quiver of his shivering snout. Upon the infinitely sensitive pads of his feet he took the clear stamp of proud Latin inscriptions. In short, he knew Florence as no human being has ever known it; as Ruskin never knew it or George Eliot either. He knew it as only the dumb know. Not a single one of his myriad sensations ever submitted itself to the deformity of words.

But though it would be pleasant for the biographer to infer that Flush's life in late middle age was an orgy of pleasure transcending all description; to maintain that while the baby day by day picked up a new word and thus removed sensation a little further beyond reach, Flush was fated to remain for ever in a Paradise where essences exist in their utmost purity, and the naked soul of things presses on the naked nerve - it would not be true. Flush lived in no such Paradise. The spirit, ranging from star to star, the bird whose furthest flight over polar snows or tropical forests never brings it within sight of human houses and their curl-ing wood-smoke, may, for anything we know, enjoy such immunity, such integrity of bliss. But Flush had lain upon human knees and heard men's voices. His flesh was veined with human passions; he knew all grades of jealousy, anger and despair. Now in summer he was scourged by fleas. With a cruel irony the sun that ripened the grapes brought also the fleas. '..... Savonarola's martyrdom here in Florence', wrote Mrs Browning, 'is scarcely worse than Flush's in the summer.' Fleas leapt to life in every corner of the Florentine houses; they skipped and hopped out of every cranny of the old stone; out of every fold of old tapestry; out of every cloak, hat and blanket. They nested in Flush's fur. They bit their way into the thickest of his

coat. He scratched and tore. His health suffered; he became morose, thin and feverish. Miss Mitford was appealed to. What remedy was there, Mrs Browning wrote anxiously, for fleas? Miss Mitford, still sitting in her greenhouse at Three Mile Cross, still writing tragedies, put down her pen and looked up her old prescriptions - what May flower had taken, what Rosebud. But the fleas of Reading die at a pinch. The fleas of Florence are red and virile. To them Miss Mitford's powders might well have been snuff. In despair Mr and Mrs Browning went down on their knees beside a pail of water and did their best to exorcise the pest with soap and scrubbing-brush. It was in vain. At last one day Mr Browning, taking Flush for a walk, noticed that people pointed; he heard a man lay a finger to his nose and whisper 'La roгна' (mange). As by this time 'Robert is as fond of Flush as I am', to take his walk of an afternoon with a friend and to hear him thus stigmatised was intolerable. Robert, his wife wrote, 'wouldn't bear it any longer'. Only one remedy remained, but it was a remedy that was almost as drastic as the disease itself. However democratic Flush had become and careless of the signs of rank, he still remained what Philip Sidney had called him, a gentleman by birth. He carried his pedigree on his back. His coat meant to him what a gold watch inscribed with the family arms means to an impoverished squire whose broad acres have shrunk to that single circle. It was the coat that Mr Browning now proposed to sacrifice. He called Flush to him and, 'taking a pair of scissors, clipped him all over into the likeness of a lion'.

As Robert Browning snipped, as the insignia of a cocker spaniel fell to the floor, as the travesty of quite a different animal rose round his neck, Flush felt himself emasculated, diminished, ashamed. What am I now? he thought, gazing into the glass. And the glass replied with the brutal sincerity of glasses, 'You are nothing'. He was nobody. Certainly he was no longer a cocker spaniel. But as he gazed, his ears bald now, and uncurled, seemed to twitch. It was as if the potent spirits of truth and laughter were whispering in them. To be nothing - is that not, after all, the most satisfactory state in the whole world? He looked again. There was his ruff. To caricature the pomposity of those who claim that they are something - was that not in its way a career? Anyhow, settle the matter as he might, there could be no doubt that he was free from fleas. He shook his ruff. He danced on his nude, attenuated legs. His spirits rose. So might a great beauty, rising from a bed of sickness

and find-ing her face eternally disfigured, make a bonfire of clothes and cosmetics, and laugh with joy to think that she need never look in the glass again or dread a lover' s coolness or a rival' s beauty. So might a clergyman, cased for twenty years in starch and broadcloth, cast his collar into the dust-bin and snatch the works of Voltaire from the cupboard. So Flush scampered off clipped all over into the likeness of a lion, but free from fleas. 'Flush', Mrs Browning wrote to her sister, 'is wise.' She was thinking perhaps of the Greeks saying that happiness is only to be reached through suffer-ing. The true philosopher is he who has lost his coat but is free from fleas.

But Flush had not long to wait before his newly won philosophy was put to the test. Again in the summer of 1852 there were signs at Casa Guidi of one of those crises which, gath-ering soundlessly as a drawer opens or as a piece of string is left dangling from a box, are to a dog as menacing as the clouds which foretell lightning to a shepherd or as the rumours which foretell war to a statesman. Another change was indicated, another journey. Well, what of that? Trunks were hauled down and corded. The baby was carried out in his nurse' s arms. Mr and Mrs Browning appeared, dressed for travelling. There was a cab at the door. Flush waited philosophically in the hall. When they were ready he was ready. Now that they were all seated in the carriage, with one bound Flush sprang lightly in after them. To Venice, to Rome, to Paris - where were they going? All countries were equal to him now; all men were his brothers. He had learnt that lesson for himself. But when finally he emerged from obscurity he had need of all his philosophy - he was in London.

Houses spread to right and left in sharp avenues of regu-lar brick. The pavement was cold and hard beneath his feet. And there, issuing from a mahogany door with a brass knocker, was a lady bountifully apparelled in flowing robes of purple plush. A light wreath starred with flowers rested on her hair. Gathering her draperies about her, she glanced disdainfully up and down the street while a footman, stoop-ing, let down the step of the barouche landau. All Welbeck Street - for Welbeck Street it was - was wrapped in a splen-dour of red light - a light not clear and fierce like the Italian light, but tawny and troubled with the dust of a million wheels, with the trampling of a million hooves. The London season was at its height. A pall of sound, a cloud of inter-woven

humming, fell over the city in one confluent growl. By came a majestic deer-hound led on a chain by a page. A policeman, swinging past with rhythmical stride, cast his bull's-eye from side to side. Odours of stew, odours of beef, odours of basting, odours of beef and cabbage rose from a thousand basements. A flunkey in livery dropped a letter into a box.

Overcome by the magnificence of the metropolis, Flush paused for a moment with his foot on the door-step. Wilson paused too. How paltry it seemed now, the civilisation of Italy, its Courts and its revolutions, its Grand Dukes and their bodyguards! She thanked God, as the policeman passed, that she had not married Signor Righi after all. And then a sinister figure issued from the public-house at the corner. A man leered. With one spring Flush bolted indoors.

For some weeks now he was closely confined to a lodging-house sitting-room in Welbeck Street. For confinement was still necessary. The cholera had come, and it is true that the cholera had done something to improve the condition of the Rookeries; but not enough, for still dogs were stolen and the dogs of Wimpole Street had still to be led on chains. Flush went into society, of course. He met dogs at the pillar-box and outside the public-house; they welcomed him back with the inherent good breeding of their kind. Just as an English peer who has lived a lifetime in the East and contracted some of the habits of the natives - rumour hints indeed that he has turned Moslem and had a son by a Chinese washerwoman - finds, when he takes his place at Court, that old friends are ready enough to overlook these aberrations and he is asked to Chatsworth, though no mention is made of his wife and it is taken for granted that he will join the family at prayers - so the pointers and setters of Wimpole Street welcomed Flush among them and over-looked the condition of his coat. But there was a certain morbidity, it seemed to Flush now, among the dogs of London. It was common knowledge that Mrs Carlyle's dog Nero had leapt from a top storey window with the intention of committing suicide. He had found the strain of life in Cheyne Row intolerable, it was said. Indeed Flush could well believe it now that he was back again in Welbeck Street. The confinement, the crowd of little objects, the blackbeetles by night, the bluebottles by day, the lingering odours of mutton, the perpetual presence on the sideboard of bananas - all

this, together with the proximity of several men and women, heavily dressed and not often or indeed completely washed, wrought on his temper and strained his nerves. He lay for hours under the lodging-house chiffoier. It was impossible to run out of doors. The front door was always locked. He had to wait for somebody to lead him on a chain.

Two incidents alone broke the monotony of the weeks he spent in London. One day late that summer the Brownings went to visit the Rev. Charles Kingsley at Farnham. In Italy the earth would have been bare and hard as brick. Fleas would have been rampant. Languidly one would have dragged oneself from shadow to shadow, grateful even for the bar of shade cast by the raised arm of one of Donatello's statues. But here at Farnham there were fields of green grass; there were pools of blue water; there were woods that murmured, and turf so fine that the paws bounced as they touched it. The Brownings and the Kingsleys spent the day together. And once more, as Flush trotted behind them, the old trumpets blew; the old ecstasy returned - was it hare or was it fox? Flush tore over the heaths of Surrey as he had not run since the old days at Three Mile Cross. A pheasant went rocketing up in a spurt of purple and gold. He had almost shut his teeth on the tail feathers when a voice rang out. A whip cracked. Was it the Rev. Charles Kingsley who called him sharply to heel? At any rate he ran no more. The woods of Farnham were strictly preserved.

A few days later he was lying in the sitting-room at Welbeck Street, when Mrs Browning came in dressed for walking and called him from under the chiffoier. She slipped the chain on to his collar and, for the first time since September 1846, they walked up Wimpole Street together. When they came to the door of No.50 they stopped as of old. Just as of old they waited. The butler just as of old was very slow in coming. At length the door opened. Could that be Catiline lying couched on the mat? The old toothless dog yawned and stretched himself and took no notice. Upstairs they crept as stealthily, as silently as once before they had come down. Very quietly, opening the doors as if she were afraid of what she might see there, Mrs Browning went from room to room. A gloom descended upon her as she looked. ' they seemed to me', she wrote, 'smaller and darker, somehow, and the furniture wanted fitness and conveni-ence.' The ivy was still tapping on the back

bedroom window-pane. The painted blind still obscured the houses. Nothing had been changed. Nothing had happened all these years. So she went from room to room, sadly remembering. But long before she had finished her inspection, Flush was in a fever of anxiety. Suppose Mr Barrett were to come in and find them? Suppose that with one frown he turned the key and locked them in the back bedroom for ever? At last Mrs Browning shut the doors and went downstairs again very quietly. Yes, she said, it seemed to her that the house wanted cleaning.

After that, Flush had only one wish left in him - to leave London, to leave England for ever. He was not happy until he found himself on the deck of the Channel steamer crossing to France. It was a rough passage. The crossing took eight hours. As the steamer tossed and wallowed, Flush turned over in his mind a tumult of mixed memories - of ladies in purple plush, of ragged men with bags; of Regent's Park, and Queen Victoria sweeping past with outriders; of the greenness of English grass and the rankness of English pavements - all this passed through his mind as he lay on deck; and, looking up, he caught sight of a stern, tall man leaning over the rail.

'Mr Carlyle!' he heard Mrs Browning exclaim; whereupon - the crossing, it must be remembered, was a bad one - Flush was violently sick. Sailors came running with pails and mops. '..... he was ordered off the deck on purpose, poor dog', said Mrs Browning. For the deck was still English; dogs must not be sick on decks. Such was his last salute to the shores of his native land.

Chapter 6 THE END

Flush was growing an old dog now. The journey to England and all the memories it revived had undoubtedly tired him. It was noticed that he sought the shade rather than the sun on his return, though the shade of Florence was hotter than the sun of Wimpole Street. Stretched beneath a statue, couched under the lip of a fountain for the sake of the few drops that spurted now and again on to his coat, he would lie dozing by the hour. The young dogs would come about him. To them he would tell his stories of Whitechapel and Wimpole Street; he would describe the smell of clover and the smell of Oxford Street; he would rehearse his memories of one revolution and another - how Grand Dukes had come and Grand Dukes had gone; but the spotted spaniel down the alley on the left - she goes on for ever, he would say. Then violent Mr Landor would hurry by and shake his fist at him in mock fury; kind Miss Isa Blagden would pause and take a sugared biscuit from her reticule. The peasant women in the market-place made him a bed of leaves in the shadow of their baskets and tossed him a bunch of grapes now and then. He was known, he was liked by all Florence - gentle and simple, dogs and men.

But he was growing an old dog now, and he tended more and more to lie not even under the fountain - for the cobbles were too hard for his old bones - but in Mrs Browning's bedroom where the arms of the Guidi family made a smooth patch of scagliola on the floor, or in the drawing-room under the shadow of the drawing-room table. One day shortly after his return from London he was stretched there fast asleep. The deep and dreamless sleep of old age was heavy on him. Indeed to-day his sleep was deeper even than usual, for as he slept the darkness seemed to thicken round him. If he dreamt at all, he dreamt that he was sleeping in the heart of a primeval forest, shut from the light of the sun, shut from the voices of mankind, though now and again as he slept he dreamt that he heard the sleepy chirp of a dreaming bird, or, as the wind tossed the branches, the mellow chuckle of a brooding monkey.

Then suddenly the branches parted; the light broke in - here, there, in dazzling shafts. Monkeys chattered; birds rose crying and calling in alarm. He started to his feet wide awake. An astonishing commotion was all round him. He had fallen asleep between the bare legs of an ordinary drawing-room table. Now he was hemmed in by the billowing of skirts and the heaving of trousers. The table itself, moreover, was swaying violently from side to side. He did not know which way to run. What on earth was happening? What in Heaven's name possessed the drawing-room table? He lifted up his voice in a prolonged howl of interrogation.

To Flush's question no satisfactory answer can here be given. A few facts, and those of the baldest, are all that can be supplied. Briefly, then, it would appear that early in the nineteenth century the Countess of Blessington had bought a crystal ball from a magician. Her Ladyship 'never could understand the use of it'; indeed she had never been able to see anything in the ball except crystal. After her death, however, there was a sale of her effects and the ball came into the possession of others who 'looked deeper, or with purer eyes', and saw other things in the ball besides crystal. Whether Lord Stanhope was the purchaser, whether it was he who looked 'with purer eyes', is not stated. But certainly by the year 1852 Lord Stanhope was in possession of a crystal ball and Lord Stanhope had only to look into it to see among other things 'the spirits of the sun'. Obviously this was not a sight that a hospitable nobleman could keep to himself, and Lord Stanhope was in the habit of displaying his ball at luncheon parties and of inviting his friends to see the spirits of the sun also. There was something strangely delightful - except indeed to Mr Chorley - in the spectacle; balls became the rage; and luckily a London optician soon discovered that he could make them, without being either an Egyptian or a magician, though naturally the price of English crystal was high. Thus many people in the early 'fifties became possessed of balls, though 'many persons', Lord Stanhope said, 'use the balls, without the moral courage to confess it'. The prevalence of spirits in London indeed became so marked that some alarm was felt; and Lord Stanley suggested to Sir Edward Lytton 'that the Government should appoint a committee of investigation so as to get as far as possible at the facts'. Whether the rumour of an approaching Government committee alarmed the spirits, or whether spirits, like bodies, tend to multiply in close confinement, there can

be no doubt that the spirits began to show signs of restlessness, and, escaping in vast numbers, took up their residence in the legs of tables. What-ever the motive, the policy was successful. Crystal balls were expensive; almost everybody owns a table. Thus when Mrs Browning returned to Italy in the winter of 1852 she found that the spirits had preceded her; the tables of Florence were almost universally infected. 'From the Legation to the English chemists', she wrote, 'people are "serving tables" everywhere. When people gather round a table it isn't to play whist.' No, it was to decipher messages conveyed by the legs of tables. Thus if asked the age of a child, the table 'expresses itself intelligently by knocking with its legs, responses according to the alphabet'. And if a table could tell you that your own child was four years old, what limit was there to its capacity? Spinning tables were advertised in shops. The walls were placarded with advertisements of wonders '*scoperte a Livorno*'. By the year 1854, so rapidly did the movement spread, 'four hundred thousand families in America had given their names as actually in enjoyment of spiritual intercourse'. And from England the news came that Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton had imported 'several of the American rapping spirits' to Knebworth, with the happy result - so little Arthur Russell was informed when he beheld a 'strange-looking old gentleman in a shabby dressing-gown' staring at him at breakfast - that Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton believed himself invisible.

When Mrs Browning first looked into Lord Stanhope's crystal ball at a luncheon party she saw nothing - except indeed that it was a remarkable sign of the times. The spirit of the sun indeed told her that she was about to go to Rome; but as she was not about to go to Rome, she contradicted the spirits of the sun. 'But', she added, with truth, 'I love the marvellous.' She was nothing if not adventurous. She had gone to Manning Street at the risk of her life. She had discovered a world that she had never dreamt of within half an hour's drive from Wimpole Street. Why should there not be another world only half a moment's flight from Florence - a better world, a more beautiful world, where the dead live, trying in vain to reach us? At any rate she would take the risk. And so she sat herself down at the table too. And Mr Lytton, the brilliant son of an invisible father, came; and Mr Frederick Tennyson, and Mr Powers and M. Villari - they all sat at the table, and then when the table had done kicking, they sat on drinking tea and eating strawberries and cream,

with 'Florence dissolv-ing in the purple of the hills and the stars looking on', talking and talking: ' what stories we told, and what miracles we swore to! Oh, we are believers here, Isa, except Robert ' Then in burst deaf Mr Kirkup with his bleak white beard. He had come round simply to exclaim, 'There is a spiritual world - there is a future state. I confess it. I am convinced at last.' And when Mr Kirkup, whose creed had always been 'the next thing to atheism', was converted merely because, in spite of his deafness, he had heard 'three taps so loud that they made him leap', how could Mrs Browning keep her hands off the table? 'You know I am rather a visionary and inclined to knock round at all the doors of the present world to try to get out', she wrote. So she summoned the faithful to Casa Guidi; and there they sat with their hands on the drawing-room table, trying to get out.

Flush started up in the wildest apprehension. The skirts and the trousers were billowing round him; the table was standing on one leg. But whatever the ladies and gentlemen round the table could hear and see, Flush could hear and see nothing. True, the table was standing on one leg, but so tables will if you lean hard on one side. He had upset tables himself and been well scolded for it. But now there was Mrs Browning with her great eyes wide open staring as if she saw something marvellous outside. Flush rushed to the balcony and looked over. Was there another Grand Duke riding by with banners and torches? Flush could see nothing but an old beggar woman crouched at the corner of the street over her basket of melons. Yet clearly Mrs Browning saw something; clearly she saw something that was very wonderful. So in the old Wimpole Street days she had wept once without any reason that he could see; and again she had laughed, holding up a blotted scrawl. But this was different. There was something in her look now that frightened him. There was something in the room, or in the table, or in the petticoats and trousers, that he disliked exceedingly.

As the weeks passed, this preoccupation of Mrs Brown-ing's with the invisible grew upon her. It might be a fine hot day, but instead of watching the lizards slide in and out of the stones, she would sit at the table; it might be a dark starry night, but instead of reading in her book, or passing her hand over paper, she would call, if Mr Browning were out, for Wilson, and Wilson would come yawning. Then they would sit at the table together until that article

of furniture, whose chief function it was to provide shade, kicked on the floor, and Mrs Browning exclaimed that it was telling Wilson that she would soon be ill. Wilson replied that she was only sleepy. But soon Wilson herself, the implacable, the upright, the British, screamed and went into a faint, and Mrs Browning was rushing hither and thither to find 'the hygienic vinegar'. That, to Flush, was a highly unpleasant way of spending a quiet evening. Better far to sit and read one's book.

Undoubtedly the suspense, the intangible but disagreeable odour, the kicks and the screams and the vinegar, told upon Flush's nerves. It was all very well for the baby, Penini, to pray 'that Flush's hair may grow'; that was an aspiration that Flush could understand. But this form of prayer which required the presence of evil-smelling, seedy-looking men and the antics of a piece of apparently solid mahogany, angered him much as they angered that robust, sensible, well-dressed man, his master. But far worse than any smell to Flush, far worse than any antics, was the look on Mrs Browning's face when she gazed out of the window as if she were seeing something that was wonderful when there was nothing. Flush stood himself in front of her. She looked through him as if he were not there. That was the cruellest look she had ever given him. It was worse than her cold anger when he bit Mr Browning in the leg; worse than her sardonic laughter when the door shut upon his paw in Regent's Park. There were moments indeed when he regretted Wimpole Street and its tables. The tables at No.50 had never tilted upon one leg. The little table with the ring round it that held her precious ornaments had always stood perfectly still. In those far-off days he had only to leap on her sofa and Miss Barrett started wide-awake and looked at him. Now, once more, he leapt on to her sofa. But she did not notice him. She was writing. She paid no attention to him. She went on writing - 'also, at the request of the medium, the spiritual hands took from the table a garland which lay there, and placed it upon my head. The particular hand which did this was of the largest human size, as white as snow, and very beautiful. It was as near to me as this hand I write with, and I saw it as distinctly.' Flush pawed her sharply. She looked through him as if he were invisible. He leapt off the sofa and ran downstairs into the street.

It was a blazing hot afternoon. The old beggar woman at the

corner had fallen asleep over her melons. The sun seemed droning in the sky. Keeping to the shady side of the street, Flush trotted along the well-known ways to the market-place. The whole square was brilliant with awnings and stalls and bright umbrellas. The market women were sitting beside baskets of fruit; pigeons were fluttering, bells were pealing, whips were cracking. The many-coloured mon-grels of Florence were running in and out sniffing and pawing. All was as brisk as a bee-hive and as hot as an oven. Flush sought the shade. He flung himself down beside his friend Catterina, under the shadow of her great basket. A brown jar of red and yellow flowers cast a shadow beside it. Above them a statue, holding his right arm outstretched, deepened the shade to violet. Flush lay there in the cool, watching the young dogs busy with their own affairs. They were snarling and biting, stretching and tumbling, in all the abandonment of youthful joy. They were chasing each other in and out, round and round, as he had once chased the spotted spaniel in the alley. His thoughts turned to Reading for a moment - to Mr Partridge's spaniel, to his first love, to the ecstasies, the innocences of youth. Well, he had had his day. He did not grudge them theirs. He had found the world a pleasant place to live in. He had no quarrel with it now. The market woman scratched him behind the ear. She had often cuffed him for stealing a grape, or for some other misdemeanour; but he was old now; and she was old. He guarded her melons and she scratched his ear. So she knitted and he dozed. The flies buzzed on the great pink melon that had been sliced open to show its flesh.

The sun burnt deliciously through the lily leaves, and through the green and white umbrella. The marble statue tempered its heat to a champagne freshness. Flush lay and let it burn through his fur to the naked skin. And when he was roasted on one side he turned over and let the sun roast the other. All the time the market people were chattering and bargaining; market women were passing; they were stopping and fingering the vegetables and the fruit. There was a perpetual buzz and hum of human voices such as Flush loved to listen to. After a time he drowsed off under the shadow of the lilies. He slept as dogs sleep when they are dreaming. Now his legs twitched - was he dreaming that he hunted rabbits in Spain? Was he coursing up a hot hill-side with dark men shouting 'Span! Span!' as the rabbits darted from the brushwood? Then he lay still again. And now he yelped, quickly, softly, many times in succession. Perhaps

he heard Dr Mitford egging his greyhounds on to the hunt at Reading. Then his tail wagged sheepishly. Did he hear old Miss Mitford cry 'Bad dog! Bad dog!' as he slunk back to her, where she stood among the turnips wav-ing her umbrella? And then he lay for a time snoring, wrapt in the deep sleep of happy old age. Suddenly every muscle in his body twitched. He woke with a violent start. Where did he think he was? In Whitechapel among the ruffians? Was the knife at his throat again?

Whatever it was, he woke from his dream in a state of

terror. He made off as if he were flying to safety, as if he were seeking refuge. The market women laughed and pelted him with rotten grapes and called him back. He took no notice. Cart-wheels almost crushed him as he darted through the streets - the men standing up to drive cursed him and flicked him with their whips. Half-naked children threw pebbles at him and shouted '*Matta! Matta!* ' as he fled past. Their mothers ran to the door and caught them back in alarm. Had he then gone mad? Had the sun turned his brain? Or had he once more heard the hunting horn of Venus? Or had one of the American rapping spirits, one of the spirits that live in table legs, got possession of him at last? Whatever it was, he went in a bee-line up one street and down another until he reached the door of Casa Guidi. He made his way straight upstairs and went straight into the drawing-room.

Mrs Browning was lying, reading, on the sofa. She looked up, startled, as he came in. No, it was not a spirit - it was only Flush. She laughed. Then, as he leapt on to the sofa and thrust his face into hers, the words of her own poem came into her mind:

You see this dog. It was but yesterday
I mused forgetful of his presence here
Till thought on thought drew downward tear on tear,
When from the pillow, where wet-cheeked I lay,
A head as hairy as Faunus, thrust its way
Right sudden against my face, - two golden-clear
Great eyes astonished mine, - a drooping ear
Did flap me on either cheek to dry the spray!

I started first, as some Arcadian,
Amazed by goatly god in twilight grove;
But, as the bearded vision closelier ran
My tears off, I knew Flush, and rose above
Surprise and sadness, - thanking the true Pan,
Who, by low creatures, leads to heights of love.

She had written that poem one day years ago in Wimpole Street when she was very unhappy. Now she was happy. She was growing old now and so was Flush. She bent down over him for a moment. Her face with its wide mouth and its great eyes and its heavy curls was still oddly like his. Broken asunder, yet made in the same mould, each, perhaps, completed what was dormant in the other. But she was woman; he was dog. Mrs Browning went on reading. Then she looked at Flush again. But he did not look at her. An extra-ordinary change had come over him. 'Flush!' she cried. But he was silent. He had been alive; he was now dead. That was all. The drawing-room table, strangely enough, stood perfectly still.

Authorities

It must be admitted that there are very few authorities for the foregoing biography. But the reader who would like to check the facts or to pursue the subject further is referred to:

To Flush, My Dog. } Poems by Elizabeth Barrett
Flush, or Faunus. } Browning.

The Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning .2 vols.

The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, edited by Frederick Kenyon .2 vols.

The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning addressed to Richard Hengist Horne ,edited by S. R.Townshend Mayer.2 vols.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning: letters to her sister 1846-1859 ,edited by Leonard Huxley, LL. D.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning in her Letters ,by Percy Lubbock.

References to Flush are to be found in the*Letters of Mary Russell Mitford* , edited by H. Chorley.2 vols.

For an account of London Rookeries, *The Rookeries of London* , by Thomas Beames,1850,may be consulted.

Notes

P. 13. 'painted fabric'. Miss Barrett says, 'I had a transparent blind put up in my open window'. She adds, 'papa insults me with the analogy of a back window in a confectioner's shop, but is obviously moved when the sunshine lights up the castle, notwithstanding'. Some hold that the castle, etc., was painted on a thin metallic substance; others that it was a muslin blind richly embroidered. There seems no certain way of settling the matter.

P. 26. 'Mr Kenyon mumbled slightly because he had lost two front teeth.' There are elements of exaggeration and conjecture here. Miss Mitford is the authority. She is reported to have said in conversation with Mr Horne, 'Our dear friend, you are aware, never sees anybody but the members of her own family, and one or two others. She has a high opinion of the skill in *reading* as well as the fine taste, of Mr -, and she gets him to read her new poems aloud to her So Mr - stands upon the hearth-rug, and uplifts the MS, and his voice, while our dear friend lies folded up in Indian shawls upon her sofa, with her long black tresses streaming over her bent-down head, all attention. Now, dear Mr - has lost a front tooth - not quite a front one, but a side front one - and this, you see, causes a defective utterance an amiable indistinctness, a vague softening of syllables into each other, so that silence and silence would really sound very like one another ' There can be little doubt that Mr - was Mr Kenyon; the blank was necessitated by the peculiar delicacy of the Victorians with regard to teeth. But more important questions affecting English literature are involved. Miss Barrett has long been accused of a defective ear. Miss Mitford maintains that Mr Kenyon should rather be accused of defective teeth. On the other hand, Miss Barrett herself maintained that her rhymes had nothing to do with his lack of teeth or with her lack of ear. 'A great deal of attention', she wrote, ' - far more than it would have taken to rhyme with complete accuracy - have I given to the subject of rhymes and have determined in cold blood to hazard some experiments.' Hence she rhymed 'angels' with 'candles', 'heaven' with 'unbelieving', and 'islands' with 'silence' - in cold

blood. It is of course for the professors to decide; but anybody who has studied Mrs Browning's character and her actions will be inclined to take the view that she was a wilful breaker of rules whether of art or of love, and so to convict her of some complicity in the development of modern poetry.

P. 35. 'yellow gloves'. It is recorded in Mrs Orr's *Life of Browning* that he wore lemon-coloured gloves. Mrs Bridell-Fox, meeting him in 1835-6, says, 'he was then slim and dark, and very handsome, and may I hint it - just a trifle of a dandy, addicted to lemon-coloured kid gloves and such things'.

P. 48. 'He was stolen.' As a matter of fact, Flush was stolen three times; but the unities seem to require that the three stealings shall be compressed into one. The total sum paid by Miss Barrett to the dog-stealers was £20.

P. 63. 'The faces of those men were to come back to her on a sunny balcony in Italy.' Readers of *Aurora Leigh* - but since such persons are non-existent it must be explained that Mrs Browning wrote a poem of this name, one of the most vivid passages in which (though it suffers from distortion natural to an artist who sees the object once only from a four-wheeler, with Wilson tugging at her skirts) is the description of a London slum. Clearly Mrs Browning possessed a fund of curiosity as to human life which was by no means satisfied by the busts of Homer and Chaucer on the washing-stand in the bedroom.

P. 76. 'Lily Wilson fell in love with Signor Righi, the guardsman.' The life of Lily Wilson is extremely obscure and thus cries aloud for the services of a biographer. No human figure in the Browning letters, save the principals, more excites our curiosity and baffles it. Her Christian name was Lily, her surname Wilson. That is all we know of her birth and upbringing. Whether she was the daughter of a farmer in the neighbourhood of Hope End, and became favourably known to the Barrett cook by the decency of her demeanour and the cleanliness of her apron, so much so that when she came up to the great house on some errand, Mrs Barrett made an excuse to come into the room just then and thought so well of her that she appointed her to be Miss Elizabeth's maid; or whether she was a Cockney; or whether she was from Scotland - it is impossible to say. At any rate she was in service with Miss Barrett

in the year 1846. She was 'an expensive servant' - her wages were £16 a year. Since she spoke almost as seldom as Flush, the outlines of her character are little known; and since Miss Barrett never wrote a poem about her, her appearance is far less familiar than his. Yet it is clear from indications in the letters that she was in the beginning one of those demure, almost inhumanly correct British maids who were at that time the glory of the British basement. It is obvious that Wilson was a stickler for rights and ceremonies. Wilson undoubtedly revered 'the room'; Wilson would have been the first to insist that under servants must eat their pudding in one place, upper servants in another. All this is implicit in the remark she made when she beat Flush with her hand 'because it is right'. Such respect for convention, it need hardly be said, breeds extreme horror of any breach of it; so that when Wilson was confronted with the lower orders in Manning Street she was far more alarmed, and far more certain that the dog-stealers were murderers, than Miss Barrett was. At the same time the heroic way in which she overcame her terror and went with Miss Barrett in the cab shows how deeply the other convention of loyalty to her mistress was ingrained in her. Where Miss Barrett went, Wilson must go too. This principle was triumphantly demonstrated by her conduct at the time of the elopement. Miss Barrett had been doubtful of Wilson's courage; but her doubts were unfounded. 'Wilson', she wrote - and these were the last words she ever wrote to Mr Brown - 'as Miss Barrett - 'has been perfect to me. And I calling her "timid" and afraid of her timidity! I begin to think that none are so bold as the timid, when they are fairly roused.' It is worth, parenthetically, dwelling for a second on the extreme precariousness of a servant's life. If Wilson had not gone with Miss Barrett, she would have been, as Miss Barrett knew, 'turned into the street before sunset', with only a few shillings, presumably, saved from her sixteen pounds a year. And what then would have been her fate? Since English fiction in the 'forties scarcely deals with the lives of ladies' maids, and biography had not then cast its search-light so low, the question must remain a question. But Wilson took the plunge. She declared that she would 'go anywhere in the world with me'. She left the basement, the room, the whole of that world of Wimpole Street, which to Wilson meant all civilisation, all right thinking and decent living, for the wild debauchery and irreligion of a foreign land. Nothing is more curious than to observe the conflict that took

place in Italy between Wilson's English gentility and her natural passions. She derided the Italian Court; she was shocked by Italian pictures. But, though 'she was struck back by the indecency of the Venus', Wilson, greatly to her credit, seems to have bethought her that women are naked when they take their clothes off. Even I myself, she may have thought, am naked for two or three seconds daily. And so 'She thinks she shall try again, and the troublesome modesty may subside, who knows?' That it did subside rapidly is plain. Soon she not merely approved of Italy; she had fallen in love with Signor Righi of the Grand Ducal body-guard- 'all highly respectable and moral men, and some six feet high' -was wearing an engagement ring; was dismissing a London suitor; and was learning to speak Italian. Then the clouds descend again; when they lift they show us Wilson deserted - 'the faithless Righi had backed out of his engagement to Wilson'. Suspicion attaches to his brother, a wholesale haberdasher at Prato. When Righi resigned from the Ducal bodyguard, he became, on his brother's advice, a retail haberdasher at Prato. Whether his position required a knowledge of haberdashery in his wife, whether one of the girls of Prato could supply it, it is certain that he did not write to Wilson as often as he should have done. But what conduct it was on the part of this highly respectable and moral man that led Mrs Browning to exclaim in 1850, '[Wilson]is over it completely, which does the greatest credit to her good sense and rectitude of character. How could she continue to love such a man?' - why Righi had shrunk to 'such a man' in so short a time, it is impossible to say. Deserted by Righi, Wilson became more and more attached to the Browning family. She discharged not only the duties of a lady's maid, but cooked knead cakes, made dresses, and became a devoted nurse to Penini, the baby; so that in time the baby himself exalted her to the rank of the family, where she justly belonged, and refused to call her anything but Lily. In 1855 Wilson married Romagnoli, the Brownings' manservant, 'a good tender-hearted man'; and for some time the two kept house for the Brownings. But in 1859 Robert Browning 'accepted office as Landor's guardian', an office of great delicacy and responsibility, for Landor's habits were difficult; 'of restraint he has not a grain', Mrs Browning wrote, 'and of suspiciousness many grains'. In these circumstances Wilson was appointed 'his duenna' with a salary of twenty-two pounds a year 'besides what is left of his rations'. Later her wages were increased

to thirty pounds, for to act as duenna to 'an old lion' who has 'the impulses of a tiger', throws his plate out of the window or dashes it on the ground if he dislikes his dinner, and suspects servants of opening desks, entailed, as Mrs Browning observed, 'certain risks, and I for one would rather not meet them'. But to Wilson, who had known Mr Barrett and the spirits, a few plates more or less flying out of the window or dashed upon the floor was a matter of little consequence - such risks were all in the day's work.

That day, so far as it is still visible to us, was certainly a strange one. Whether it began or not in some remote English village, it ended in Venice in the Palazzo Rezzonico. There at least she was still living in the year 1897, a widow, in the house of the little boy whom she had nursed and loved - Mr Barrett Browning. A very strange day it had been, she may have thought, as she sat in the red Venetian sunset, an old woman, dreaming. Her friends, married to farm hands, still stumbled up the English lanes to fetch a pint of beer. And she had eloped with Miss Barrett to Italy; she had seen all kinds of queer things - revolutions, guardsmen, spirits; Mr Landor throwing his plate out of the window. Then Mrs Brown-ing had died - there can have been no lack of thoughts in Wilson's old head as she sat at the window of the Palazzo Rezzonico in the evening. But nothing can be more vain than to pretend that we can guess what they were, for she was typical of the great army of her kind - the inscrutable, the all-but-silent, the all-but-invisible servant maids of history. 'A more honest, true and affectionate heart than Wilson's cannot be found' - her mistress's words may serve her for epitaph.

P. 88 'he was scourged by fleas'. It appears that Italy was famous for its fleas in the middle of the nineteenth century. Indeed, they served to break down conventions that were otherwise insurmountable. For example, when Nathaniel Hawthorne went to tea with Miss Bremer in Rome (1858) , 'we spoke of fleas-insects that, in Rome, come home to everybody's business and bosom, and are so common and inevitable, that no delicacy is felt about alluding to the sufferings they inflict. Poor little Miss Bremer was tormented with one while turning out our tea '

P. 93. 'Nero had leapt from a top storey window.' Nero (c .1849-60) was, according to Carlyle, 'A little Cuban (Maltese? and otherwise mongrel) shock, mostly white - a most affectionate, lively

little dog, otherwise of small merit, and little or no training'. Material for a life of him abounds, but this is not the occasion to make use of it. It is enough to say that he was stolen; that he brought Carlyle a cheque to buy a horse with tied round his neck; that 'twice or thrice I flung him into the sea[at Aberdour], which he didn't at all like'; that in 1850 he sprang from the library window, and, clearing the area spikes, fell 'plash' on to the pavement. 'It was after breakfast,' Mrs Carlyle says, 'and he had been standing at the open window, watching the birds Lying in my bed, I heard thro' the deal partition Elizabeth scream: Oh God! oh Nero! and rush downstairs like a strong wind out at the street door then I sprang to meet her in my night-shift Mr C. came down from his bedroom with his chin all over soap and asked, "Has anything happened to Nero?" - "Oh, sir, he *must* have broken all his legs, he leapt out at *your* window!" - "God bless me!" said Mr C. and returned to finish his shaving.' No bones were broken, however, and he survived, to be run over by a butcher's cart, and to die at last from the effects of the accident on 1st February 1860. He is buried at the top of the garden at Cheyne Row under a small stone tablet.

Whether he wished to kill himself, or whether, as Mrs Carlyle insinuates, he was merely jumping after birds, might be the occasion for an extremely interesting treatise on canine psychology. Some hold that Byron's dog went mad in sympathy with Byron; others that Nero was driven to desperate melancholy by associating with Mr Carlyle. The whole question of dogs' relation to the spirit of the age, whether it is possible to call one dog Elizabethan, another Augustan, another Victorian, together with the influence upon dogs of the poetry and philosophy of their masters, deserves a fuller discussion than can here be given it. For the present, Nero's motives must remain obscure.

P. 99. 'Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton believed himself invisible.' Mrs Huth Jackson in *A Victorian Childhood* says: 'Lord Arthur Russell told me, many years later, that when a small boy he was taken to Knebworth by his mother. Next morning he was in the big hall having breakfast when a strange-looking old gentleman in a shabby dressing-gown came in and walked slowly round the table staring at each of the guests in turn. He heard his mother's neighbour whisper to her, "Do not take any notice, he thinks he is invisible" .It was Lord Lytton himself (pp.17-18) .

P. 106. 'he was now dead'. It is certain that Flush died; but the date and manner of his death are unknown. The only reference consists in the statement that 'Flush lived to a good old age and is buried in the vaults of Casa Guidi'. Mrs Browning was buried in the English Cemetery at Florence, Robert Browning in Westminster Abbey. Flush still lies, therefore, beneath the house in which, once upon a time, the Brownings lived.

THE END



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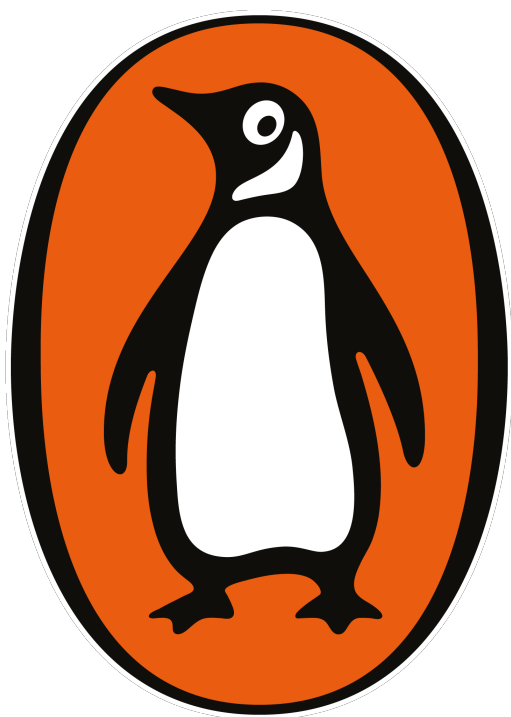
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Conclusion A WORD FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER

序章 德国医生马丁·赫斯利乌斯

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虽然受过医学和外科学的严格训练，但我却从未有过实践经验。尽管如此，我对这两门学科的研究却一直没有中断，对其一直抱有浓厚的兴趣。刚刚进入医生这一光荣的职业却旋即退出，究其原因，既非我懒惰，也不是一时心血来潮。罪魁祸首是一把解剖刀，它造成的轻微划伤却让我付出了两根手指的代价。截肢是立即进行的，更令人痛苦的是，我的健康也毁了。因为从那以后，我总是感觉不舒服，从未在同一个地方待过十二个月以上。

四处闲逛的时候，我认识了马丁·赫斯利乌斯医生。他是一个和我一样的漂泊客。和我一样，他也是一名医生。和我一样，他也热衷于自己的职业。和我不一样的是，他闲逛是出于自愿。按照我们英格兰人对富有的判断，他那个人，如果不能称之为富有的话，那么至少也达到了我们先辈常说的“宽展得很”了。我初次见到他的时候，他年纪已经挺大，差不多比我年长三十有五。

邂逅马丁·赫斯利乌斯医生，让我有一种得遇良主的感觉。他知识渊博，对病情的掌握具有一种直觉。他恰恰是一个能让我这样的年轻发烧友充满敬畏和喜悦的人。我的钦佩之情经受住了时间的考验，甚至生死离别也无法令其动摇。我确信其理由十分充分。

我担任他的医学秘书将近二十年，精心保管着他留下的大量文件，做着整理、索引和装订的工作。其间，我发现他对一些病例的治疗颇为奇怪。他以两种截然不同的文字风格写作。首先，以一个聪明的外行人的口吻，描述自己的所见所闻，按照这种叙事风格，描写那些病人，直至他们要么穿过厅门，重见天日，要么跨过黑暗之门，走向死亡；然后笔锋一转，以高超的技艺，使出浑身解数，运用天才的独创性，开始进行分析、诊断和说明的工作。

时不时会有某个病例引发我的兴趣，那种兴趣与专家的特有兴趣大不相同，是一名外行的读者觉得有趣或者恐怖的地方。我稍许做了一些修改，主要是文字上的，当然也改了名字，于是就有了下面的故事。讲述人是马丁·赫斯利乌斯医生。我是在大量的病情记录中找到这个故事的，那是大约六十四年前，他在一次英格兰之旅中记录下的。

故事与他的一位朋友——莱顿 [1] 的范·洛教授的一系列通信有关。这位教授并不是医生，而是一名化学家，也是一个喜欢历史、玄

学和医学的人，并且还在他年轻的时候写过一出戏剧。

因此，如果这番叙述的价值不如医疗记录那么高的话，那么就必须以一种能让不懂医学的读者感兴趣的方式来写。

附在备忘录里的这些信件，似乎是在范·洛教授去世后的一八一九年寄回给赫斯利乌斯医生的。一些信件是用英语写的，一些是用法语写的，但是大多数用的都是德语。虽然我意识到，自己的翻译远远谈不上优美，但我却是一名忠实的译者。尽管我时不时会省略掉一些段落，缩短一些句子，掩饰掉某些名字，但我绝没有添油加醋。

[1] 莱顿，荷兰西部城市。——译者注

第一章 赫斯利乌斯医生讲述他是如何遇见牧师詹宁斯先生的

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牧师詹宁斯先生又高又瘦。他正值中年，整洁的衣着完全是那种高教会派 [2] 的老旧风格。他生来就带有一丝威严，但是一点儿也不拘谨。他的相貌虽然称不上英俊，长相却很匀称；面色极其和善，也带有几分腼腆。

一天晚上，我在玛丽·海杜克小姐的家里遇见了他。他脸上流露出的谦虚和慈爱的表情非常令人着迷。

我们的聚会是小范围的，他十分惬意地同大家聊着天。相比起发表高见，他似乎更乐于倾听；但是，只要他一开口，总是一语中的，恰如其分。他是玛丽小姐的最爱。玛丽小姐似乎在很多问题上都要向他请教，认为他是世界上最幸福美满的人。但是，她对他其实几乎一无所知。

牧师詹宁斯先生是个单身男人，手头据说有六万英镑的积蓄。他为人仁慈，非常渴望献身于神圣的宗教事业。虽然他在别的地方都还过得去，但是，一回到沃里克郡他自己的教区，真正开始投身那份神圣的职业，从事实际的工作，他的健康状况就让他无以为继，并且情况还十分奇怪。玛丽小姐如是说着。

毫无疑问的是，詹宁斯先生的健康问题，大体上说，是一种突如其来、神秘莫测的行为。有时候，他正在肯利斯那座古老、优美的教堂里主持宗教仪式时，就会突然发病。也许是因为他的心脏，也许是大脑。但是，那样反复发作了三四次，甚至更多回，每次都是当仪式举行了一段时间后，他突然间停了下来，沉默片刻后，显然无法再度开始。他独自陷入了无声的祷告，双手高举，双眼朝天，然后变得面如死灰。在一种奇怪的、夹杂着羞愧和恐惧的不安中，他颤抖着走下讲坛，步入法衣室，没有做出任何解释，就把会众留在了原地。这一切发生的时候，他的助理牧师并不在场。现在，他每次只要去肯利斯，总是会留心安排一位牧师同自己一同工作。这样万一他突然无法履职，有人就可以迅速顶替他。

詹宁斯先生的身体彻底垮了之后，便从教区逃了出来，回到伦敦，待在皮卡迪利大街后一条黑暗的街道里，住进了一间窄屋。玛丽

小姐说，他的身体一直以来都很棒。对此我有着自己的看法。有关好坏的程度当然见仁见智。我们可以拭目以待。

詹宁斯先生是一个十足的绅士。不过人们总是能从他身上察觉到一些奇怪的地方，或是多少对这奇怪的感觉有点儿模棱两可的印象。有一件事儿肯定是对此的有力佐证。我觉得人们要么就彻底忘了那件事儿，要么就肯定清晰地记着。反正我是记着的，仿如昨日一般。詹宁斯先生会斜着眼看地毯，紧盯着不放，似乎那边有某样东西在移动一样。当然，他也并不总是如此，而是时不时发作一番。不过，正如我所说的那样，这总是令他的举止显得颇有一些怪异。他那在地板上漂移的目光中，既带着一丝胆怯，又流露出几分焦虑。

一名医学哲学家，正如你们恭维我的那样，会借助自己挖掘出的病例来阐述各种理论，并花更多的时间，亲自观察，精心审视。因此，相比一般的医生，这样得出的判断无疑要缜密许多。我还会不自觉地养成注意观察的习惯。这种习惯时刻伴随着我，我也随时都会找机会操练一番。有些人会说，甚至连一些毫不相关、毫无价值的事情我也不肯放过。

这场令人愉快的晚间聚会上，我初次相识的这位牧师，瘦削、胆小、和善，但却是一位矜持的绅士。他的身上，可能就具有吸引我的那种特质。当然，我观察到的，要比我在这里写的多得多。但是，有关技术的环节，都被放到一篇严谨的科学论文中去了。

我想说的是，我在此谈到医学，目的是希望有一天，人们能对这门学科有一种更为广义的理解。相比通常的物理治疗所起的作用，那种感受会全面得多。我相信，整个自然世界只是精神世界的最终表现形式，只有在精神世界中，自然世界才拥有生命力。我认为，人在本质上是一种精神，而精神也是一种条理分明的物质，但是在材质特点方面，与我们熟知的物质截然不同，就像光或者电那样。从纯粹字面的意思上来说，肉体只不过是一具躯壳。因此，死亡并不意味着生命的终结，而只是让人脱离了肉体的羁绊——这一过程，始于我们所称的死亡。最迟在几天以后，在复活“奇迹”展现的一刻，终成大道。

持这些立场的人可能会看到这种观点在医学上的实例。然而，这些事实的存在普遍未得到承认。这里也绝不是展示证据、讨论结果的适当场合。

出于习惯，我开始小心翼翼地偷偷观察詹宁斯先生——我想，他也觉察到了这一点——我明显发现，他也同样小心谨慎地观察着我。玛丽小姐在介绍我的时候，碰巧称我为赫斯利乌斯医生。我发现，他扫视我的目光变得更加明显，然后陷入了几分钟的沉思。

之后，我一边在房间的另一头与一位绅士攀谈，一边发现他更沉

着地注视着我，而我当时也确信我很了解他对我的兴趣所在。再之后，我发现他找机会和玛丽小姐聊起天来。一如既往，人们在这种时刻，总是能清晰地觉察到，自己成了远处一问一答的话题。

稍后，这位高个儿牧师朝我走来。没过一会儿，我们就聊了起来。当两个人都喜欢读书，对于书籍和各地的风土人情都略知一二，又有过跋山涉水的经历，同时还乐意交谈一番的时候，要是还找不到话题，简直就是一桩咄咄怪事了。他向我走来，还与我相谈甚欢，原因并不是偶然的。他懂德语，并且读过我写的有关玄医学的论文。相比起字面上所写的，那些论文深层次的含义更值得玩味。

这人彬彬有礼，性格温顺，略带几分羞涩，显然是一个博览群书、颇有想法的人。他在我们中间走来走去，谈天说地，但并不是完全地敞开心扉。我已经开始怀疑，他是那种把所有大事小事都深深藏在心底的人，不仅对全世界都有所保留，甚至对他最亲爱的朋友也是如此。但是，他的内心深处却在小心地权衡，是否要对我网开一面。

他还没有意识到我看透了他的想法。我也尽量只字不提，以免触动他那敏感的神经，怀疑我洞悉了他的观点，或者猜到了他对我的打算。

我们聊了一阵无关紧要的话题，但是最终他说：

“赫斯利乌斯医生，我对您的一些论文很感兴趣，那些您称为玄医学的论文——十到十二年前，我读过德文版的——现在翻译过来了吗？”

“没有，我敢肯定没有——不然我会有所耳闻的。我想，应该是要事先征得我的同意的。”

“几个月前，我拜托了本地的出版商，帮我找找德文原版的，可他们告诉我已经绝版了。”

“确实是，已经绝版好些年了。但是，身为作者，听到您还没有忘记拙作，还是深感荣幸的。”我笑着继续说道，“您在这十到十二年的时间里，没有那本书都过得好好的，但是我猜您一定是在脑子里又想起了那个话题，或者近来发生了什么事，让您对它又产生了兴趣。”

詹宁斯先生听了这番话，旋即露出疑问的眼神，突然感到一阵尴尬，就好像一位年轻的小姐那样脸红起来，看上去傻傻的。他垂下双眼，两手不安地交叉在一起，看起来怪怪的。有那么一刻，甚至可以说有点儿愧疚。

为了尽量让他摆脱这份局促，我表现出若无其事的样子，然后继续说道：“我也总是碰到这种重拾兴趣的事，一本书接着另一本，经

常会徒劳无功地把我带回到二十年前。但是，如果你依旧还有兴趣的话，我会很乐意奉送上一本。我身边还有两三本存货——如果您愿意接受，我将不胜荣幸。”

“您真是太好了，”他说，一时之间又轻松自在起来，“我几乎已经绝望了——真不知道该如何感谢您。”

“千万别那么说。实在是太微不足道了，我简直有点儿羞于启齿。您要是再表示感谢，羞愧之下，我唯有将书付之一炬了。”

詹宁斯先生大笑起来。他问我住在伦敦的什么地方，又海阔天空地聊了一阵后，便起身告辞了。

[2] 高教会派，英国国教的一个派别。——译者注

第二章 医生和玛丽小姐的问与答

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“玛丽小姐，我非常喜欢那位牧师。”他刚一走，我就说道，“他饱读诗书，游历甚广，有自己的想法，还遭遇过磨难，应该是个多才多艺的好伙伴。”

“他当然是，而且更重要的是，他还是一个真正的好人，”她说，“无论是对于我的学校还是我在道尔布里奇的小事业，他的建议都价值连城。要知道，只要他认为自己能帮上忙，总会劳心竭力，克服重重困难施以援手。他脾气真好，还那么地通情达理。”

“听到你说他有乐于助人的美德，真是令人欣慰。我只能证明他是一个和蔼可亲的伙伴。除了你刚刚告诉我的以外，我想，我还能同你说说他的两三件事。”我说。

“真的吗？”

“当然。首先，他未婚。”

“没错，请继续。”

“他一直在写东西。嗯，他过去在写，但是他也许搁笔有两三年了吧。那本书是关于某些比较深奥的话题的——也许是神学。”

“确实如你所说，他之前一直在写一本书。我不太确定是关于什么内容的，但是肯定是些我不太关心的东西，很有可能你是对的。而现在，他确实停了下来。”

“还有，虽然今晚在这里，他只喝了一点点咖啡，但他是喜欢喝茶的，至少在过去极为喜欢。”

“噢，简直太对了。”

“他过去喝的是绿茶，喝很多，对吧？”我继续问道。

“嗯，确实很奇怪。过去，为了绿茶的事情，我们总会差点吵起来。”

“但是，现在他已经完全戒掉了。”我说。

“的确如此。”

“那么，还有一件事。你认识他的父亲或是母亲吗？”

“他的双亲我都认识。他的父亲去世才十年，他们就葬在道尔布里奇附近。我们对他们都很了解。”她回答道。

“那么，要么是他的母亲，要么是他的父亲——我想父亲更有可能，见到过幽灵。”我说。

“噢，赫斯利乌斯，你真的是魔法师吧？”

“魔法师不魔法师的先放一边，我说的对吗？”我开心地问道。

“当然对啦。见到幽灵的是他父亲。他是一个沉默寡语、异想天开的人，常常缠着我父亲讲他做的那些梦。他最后讲过一个关于幽灵的故事。那是一个奇怪的故事，他说那个幽灵是他亲眼所见的，还能和他对答如流。我对这个故事记忆犹新，因为我特别害怕他。他是在去世前很多年说的这个故事，我还很小的时候。他总是默不作声，神情忧郁，常常喜欢在黄昏时分来我们家串门。他来的时候，我常常一个人待在客厅里。过去，我总是幻想，他的周围全是幽灵。”

我笑着点点头。

“好吧，既然你已经认定我是个魔法师，我想该是说晚安的时候了。”我说。

“但是，你究竟是怎么发现的？”

“当然是占星术，就像吉卜赛人那样。”我回答道。于是，我们愉快地互道了晚安。

第二天一早，我给詹宁斯先生寄去了他一直想要的那本小书，还附上了一张便条。晚上回来的时候，我发现他拜访过我的住所，留下了一张卡片。他问我是否在家，还问什么时候最有可能找到我。

他是打算敞开心扉，如同人们说的，咨询我的“专业意见”了吗？我希望如此。我已经构想出了一种关于他的理论。我在告辞前与玛丽小姐的问答，也证实了这一点。而我却更想从他自己的嘴里得到确认。但是，我该做些什么，才能秉持一贯的优雅风度，邀请他吐露心声呢？什么也不做。我倒是认为，他自己会深思熟虑一番的。无论如何，尊敬的范·洛，我是不会令自己难以接近的。我打算明天就回访他。去求见他，完全是一种礼节，是对他的彬彬有礼的一种回应。也许我会有所收获。无论有还是没有，收获或大或小，尊敬的范·洛，我都会告诉你的。

第三章 赫斯利乌斯医生在拉丁文书中找到了一些东西

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好吧，我去布兰克大街拜访过了。

仆人在门口稍一打听，便告诉我，詹宁斯先生和一位绅士正有事忙着呢，那是从他的教区肯利斯来的一位牧师。为了保留自己的一点儿特权，也为了能再次拜访，我只是暗示自己改日还会再来。我转身刚要走，那位仆人就向我表示歉意，问我是不是赫斯利乌斯医生。他十分专注地看着我。作为教养还不错的仆人，通常是不会这么看人的。知道了我的身份后，他说：“那么，先生，请允许我向詹宁斯先生通报一声。我敢肯定他想要见您。”

过了一会儿，仆人回来了，带来了詹宁斯先生的口信。他请我去他的书房，那实际上是他后部的客厅。他答应几分钟后就来见我。

这真的是一间书房——几乎称得上是图书馆了。房间很高，有两扇细长的窗户，配有深黑色的窗帘。房间比我预想的要大得多，书堆得到处都是，从地板一直堆到了天花板。上层的地毯——凭我踩上去的感觉，有两三层——是土耳其地毯。脚步落下去，悄然无声。书架突出在外，使得窗户都显得非常幽深，尤其是那几扇窄窗。房间虽然非常舒适，甚至能用奢华来形容，但是显然有些阴暗，再加上那份寂静，简直可以称得上是令人压抑了。然而，也许是因为我产生了一些联想。在我的头脑中，已经把一些奇怪的想法和詹宁斯先生联系起来了。我带着一种特别的不祥的预感，走进这幢非常安静的屋子，步入这间极其寂静的房间。那份黑暗，以及各类书籍庄重的封皮，更是加深了这份忧郁的感觉。除了墙上两扇窄窄的玻璃以外，书堆得到处都是。

我在等着詹宁斯先生的到来。为了打发时间，我瞄了瞄他书橱里堆放的书。我的目光落到了书橱下面的一堆书上。那些书放在地板上，背面朝上，是斯维登堡的一整套拉丁文原版《属天的奥秘》。那是一套非常精致的对开本，装帧极为考究，深受神学风格的影响，纯羊皮封面上烫印着金色的字母，书边也是胭脂红色的。这套书里插着一些纸质书签。我拾起那些书，一本接一本放到桌上，把书翻到插有书签的地方。我读起了肃穆的拉丁术语，文中用铅笔画出了许多句子。在此我摘录一些，并翻译成了英语。

“当人的内在视觉，即他的灵魂的视觉打开的那一刻，生命的另一种形式就出现了，那是肉眼无从可见的。”

“拥有了内在视觉，我就得以看见另一种形式的生命，要比我看到的这个世界的东西清晰许多。从这个角度考虑，显然外部视觉脱胎于内在视觉，而内在视觉则来源于更加内在的视觉，如此等等。”

“每个人至少都有两种邪灵在侧。”

“恶鬼在旁的人同样也能流利地讲话，但是声音刺耳，听来让人不快。他们有时候也会出现说话不畅的情况，因为那时正有某样东西悄悄潜伏在内，令想法产生了分歧。”

“附身于人的邪灵确实来自地狱，但是附上人身之后，他们就脱离了地狱。这时他们所在的地方，位于天堂和地狱之间，称为灵界——邪灵附在人身上的时候，就处在灵界之中。此时他们免受地狱的一切折磨，而是分享宿主的全部所思所想。因此，该人的一颦一笑，邪灵都能一一体会。但是，他们返回地狱之后，又回归到了以前的状态。”

“邪灵觉察到自己附身于人时，此时他们还只是与人分离的灵。而如果他们可以飘入那人的肉体，他们就会千方百计地摧毁他，因为他们对人抱有无穷的敌意。”

“因此，当他们认识到我是肉身的主人后，就会不断地试图除灭我，不仅要除灭我的肉身，更要除灭掉我的灵魂。因为，对于地狱里的一切生命，消灭人类或灵魂都是他们的乐趣所在。但是，我主一直保护着我。因此，与灵共生的人是何等危险啊，除非他的信仰无比坚定。”

“精心防护，不让附体的灵知道他们已经与人合体实在是太重要了，因为如果他们知道了这一点，就会和他对话，其意图就是为了摧毁他。”

“地狱的乐趣就是对人作恶，让他快速而永远地灭亡。”

页面底部的一长串注释吸引了我的目光，那是詹宁斯先生干净的手笔，是用十分尖细的铅笔写就的。我期望看到他的评价，便读了一两句，但是随即停了下来，因为写的内容完全不是那些，而是以这样的文字开头的，“Deus misereatur mei [3]”。我意识到了这段文字的私密性，于是挪开双眼，合上书，把全套书都放到原先的地方，除了一本之外。那本书吸引了我的注意。我就像一个勤奋好学、惯于独处的人那样，完全沉浸在了书中，浑然不知外物，也不记得自己究竟身处何处。

我读到的那部分，用斯维登堡的术语来说，是有关“代表物”和“对

应物”的内容。正在读的这一段，主要说的是，当邪灵为其地狱伙伴之外的人所见时，他们就以“对应物”的形式出现，呈现出野兽的模样。那是他们可怕、残暴的一面，代表了他们的特殊欲望和生命。这一段很长，特别列举了一些野兽的形式。

[3] Deus misereatur mei, 拉丁文，愿上帝怜悯我。——译者注

第四章 四目同读

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我一边读，一边用铅笔盒的一端沿着文字移动，突然某样东西迫使我抬起了目光。

我的正前方是刚才提到过的一面镜子，我在镜子里看到了我那位朋友高大的身影。詹宁斯先生弓着背，俯身在我的肩膀上，读着我正在埋头苦读的那一页，脸色阴沉而激动，我几乎都认不出他了。

我转身站了起来。他也站直了身子，努力挤出一丝笑容，说道：

“我走进来，向您问好，但是没能把您从书中唤醒。所以我禁不住好奇，就从您肩膀上偷看了，恐怕是有些失礼。您应该不是第一次看那些文章了。毫无疑问，您在很久以前研究过斯维登堡？”

“噢，太对了！我欠斯维登堡的实在是太多了。您一定会记得，《玄医学》那本小书里也能找到他的影子。”

虽然我的朋友装出一副高兴的样子，但是他的脸上闪过一丝红晕，我能觉察到他内心里极大的不安。

“我简直不够资格，我对斯维登堡知之甚少。两周前，我才拿到那些书。”他回答道，“我认为，它们会让一个孤独的人感到神经紧张——嗯，从我读过的一点点来判断——我不是说它们把我也弄得紧张了。”他笑道，“我非常感激这本书。您拿到我的便条了？”

我尽量表示赞同，但也少许保留了一点意见。

“读您的书，我是彻彻底底读进去了，”他接着说道，“我一眼就看出来，那本书的内涵要比写出来的丰富得多。您认识哈利医生吗？”他问道，显得有些突然。

顺便说一下，笔者认为，此处提到的这位医生是英格兰有史以来最杰出的医生之一。

我认识他，和他通过信，并且在我访问英格兰期间，受到他的热情款待，得到了他极大的帮助。

“我觉得，他是我此生遇见过的最大的傻瓜。”詹宁斯先生说道。

这是我第一次听到他说别人的坏话，如此高贵的名字竟会配上这样的字眼，着实让我大吃一惊。

“真的吗？在什么方面？”我问道。

“他的专业上。”他回答道。

我笑了起来。

“我的意思是，”他说，“在我看来，他的决定，有半数都是盲目做出的——我指的是，他看待万物，有一半都是暗淡悲观的——而另一半则无比光明、充满活力。最糟的是，他似乎是故意的。我简直无法理解——我是说，他不应该这样——他行医的时候，我和他打过交道，但是我觉得，在这层意义上，他只不过是个思想上的瘫子，智力上的活死人。也许在某个时候，我会和您详细说说。”他带着一点儿激动说道，“您在英格兰多待几个月吧。如果在您逗留期间我不在城里，能允许我给您写信吗？”

“荣幸之至。”我向他保证道。

“您真是太好了。我对哈利实在是太不满意了。”

“他有点儿倾向于唯物主义学派。”我说。

“一个彻头彻尾的唯物主义者。”他纠正我道，“您无法想象，那种事情会让更了解底细的人多么担心啊。请您不要告诉任何人——任何您认识的我的朋友——我所郁闷的事情。比方说，现在没有人知道——甚至玛丽小姐也不知道——我去找哈利医生，或是任何其他医生看过病。所以请不要提起此事。如果我有任何发作的征兆，请允许我给您写信。如果我在城里的话，还能跟您谈一谈。”

我满脑子都是猜测。不知不觉中，我发现自己正凝重地盯着他，因为他的目光垂下了片刻，然后他说：

“我觉得您大概在想，我还是现在就告诉您吧，不然您会乱猜的，但是您还是放弃吧。就算用尽整个余生，您也永远猜不到。”

他微笑着摇摇头。冬日的阳光下，突然飘过一片乌云。他像是忍受着痛苦一样，咬着牙齿吸了一口气。

“很抱歉，您曾经找机会咨询过我的同行的意见。但是，只要您愿意，我随时随地都听候您的吩咐。不用我提醒您，信心无比重要。”

然后，他又聊了很多其他的事情，氛围要轻松愉快很多。过了一会儿，我就起身告辞了。

第五章 赫斯利乌斯被召唤到了里士满

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我们欢快地告别，但是他高兴不起来，我也是。人脸——这一强大的心灵的器官——一定具有某种表达形式。虽然我经常见到各种各样的脸，并且拥有医生的坚强神经，但是这张脸却深深搅乱了我的心神。看一眼詹宁斯先生就让我焦躁不安。它具有一种凄凉的力量，令我浮想联翩。我不得不改变了晚间的计划，去了歌剧院。我觉得，自己需要换换脑子。

有两三天的时间，我没有听到他的消息，也没有收到他的信息，直到他给我送来了一张便条，读来满心欢喜，充满希望。他说，一段时间以来，他已经好多了——实际上，是很不错——他要做一个小试验，到他的教区去上一个多月，试试看一点点工作是否会让他不舒服。对于他的康复，现在他几乎打算这么称呼了，洋溢着一股强烈的宗教感激之情。

一两天后，我见到了玛丽小姐，她又说了一遍他在便条里告知的事情，告诉我他实际上是在沃里克郡，继续履行他在肯利斯的牧师职责。她还补充说道：“我禁不住认为，他真的是完全健康的，除了神经过敏和胡思乱想，其实什么事也没有。我们都会神经紧张，但是我觉得，对付那种缺点，一点点的辛勤工作就是最好的灵丹妙药，他下定决心去试试看。他要是过了一年多也不回来，我一点儿也不会奇怪的。”

尽管她信心十足，但是仅仅两天之后，我就收到了这张便条，那是从他皮卡迪利大街附近的房子里发出的，还有落款日期：

尊敬的先生，我无比失望地回来了。如果我觉得能够见您，我会写信请您来拜访的。此刻，我的心情太低落了。实际上，甚至连想说的话都说不出来。请不要和朋友们提到我的名字。我无法见任何人。上帝保佑，不久之后，您会听到我的消息的。我打算去什罗浦郡跑一趟，那里有一些我的亲戚。上帝保佑您！愿我回来以后，相比起现在，我们能更加愉快地相见。

此后大约一周，我在玛丽小姐自家的宅邸碰到了她。她说，最后一个留在城里的人，也要动身前往布莱顿了，因为伦敦的好季节马上就要过去了。她告诉我她从詹宁斯先生的侄女玛莎那里听说了他在什

罗浦郡。他侄女的信里没有多说什么，只是提到他情绪低落、神经紧张。那些字眼，健康的人们觉得只不过是轻描淡写，而暗中却隐藏着怎样的痛苦啊！

将近五周过去，我都没有接到詹宁斯先生的任何消息。最终，我收到了他的一张便条。他写道：

我到了乡下，呼吸着不同的空气，看着不同的风景，感受着不同的人，所有的东西都不一样了——所有东西都有了改变——除了我以外。作为地球上最犹豫不决的生物，我已经下定决心，要完全向您坦露我的病情。如果您时间允许，请今天、明天或是后天就来找我。但是请一定要越快越好。您不知道我有多么需要帮助。我在里士满有一幢安静的房子，现在我就在这里。也许您可以赶过来吃晚餐，或是午餐，甚至是喝茶也可以。您会毫不费力地找到我的。只要您方便，带信来的布兰克大街的仆人随时都会把马车停到您的大门口。我也随时恭候您的大驾。您也许会说我不应该一个人独处。我什么都试过了。来看我吧。

我叫来了仆人，决定今晚就去。于是我就真的去了。

我想，他要是待在寄宿处，或者旅馆里，应该会觉得好很多。此时，我乘坐的马车正穿过两排低矮阴郁的榆树林，前往一幢相当老式的砖式房屋。那些树木的叶子遮住了屋子，超过了房顶的高度，几乎把屋子包围了。这是一种不合常理的选择，因为没有什么比这更沉闷和寂静的了。他在城里待了一两天，因为某种无法忍受的原因，搬来了这里。也许是因为这里家具齐全，还是他自己的房子，来这里便能摆脱思绪上的困扰，也不会有选择上的困难。

太阳已经落山了，西边的天空反射出的红光照亮了四周的景色。我们都很熟悉这种景致。大厅显得非常黑暗，但是，走到后面的客厅之后，因为有窗户是朝着西面的，于是我又沐浴在了同样的微光之下。

我坐了下来，望着窗外枝繁叶茂的风景。在壮丽而凄凉的光线中，万物都闪烁着柔和的光芒，而那一丝光芒，也正在一点点地褪去。房间的几个角落已经全黑了，所有的东西都变得昏暗起来。不知不觉中，我的心绪也随着那份阴暗而变动着，做好了面对真正邪恶的准备。我独自等待着他的到来，很快就如愿了。与前厅相通的那扇门打开了，在红彤彤的暮色中，詹宁斯先生高大的身影隐约可见。他迈着隐秘的步骤，不声不响地走进了房间。

我们握了握手，靠窗坐在椅子上。那里还足够亮，能让我们看见彼此的脸庞。他坐在我旁边，把手放在我的手臂上，没有半点儿开场白，直接讲起了自己的故事。

第六章 詹宁斯先生是如何遇到自己的同伴的

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我们身前，是西方的落日余晖，是荒凉的里士满森林壮丽的一面。我们身后，我们身旁，是一点点暗淡下去的房间。那道昏暗、古怪的光辉落在患者石头一样冰冷的脸上——他的脸庞依旧和蔼温柔，但是有点儿不一样了——似乎陷了进去。光辉触碰到的地方，突然间仿佛变幻出了某种光线，尽管十分暗淡。那缕光线还来不及发生一丝变化，就融化在了那片黑暗之中。四周同样无声无息：没有远方马车的车轮滚滚，没有一声狗吠，也没有来历不明的口哨声。有的只是一个生病的单身汉的屋中那份压抑的寂静。

受害人僵硬的脸庞涨得通红，在黑色背景的映衬下，仿佛沙尔肯的肖像画一般。虽然对于细节内幕尚一无所知，但是我从他的那张脸上，很轻易猜到了问题的实质。

“事情开始于，”他说道，“十月十五日，三年十一个星期零两天以前——我对日期记得清清楚楚，因为此后每一天都是煎熬。如果我的讲述中有所遗漏，请您告诉我。”

“大约四年前，我开始着手从事一项工作，耗费了我大量的思绪，也让我阅读了很多东西。那是关于古人的宗教玄学的问题。”

“明白，”我说，“基于一定事实，有着成套思想体系的异教是一种宗教现实，与象征性的崇拜是大不相同的。那是一个非常有趣，范围很广的研究领域。”

“没错，但是对于心智是不利的——我指的是，基督徒的心智。异教在本质上自成一体，总体而言是邪恶的。他们的宗教包括了他们的艺术，还有他们的行为举止。痴迷于这项课题的研究是一件丢脸的事，当然也会带来报应。上帝啊，请宽恕我。”

“我写了大量的东西，夜里很晚还在写。我一直在思考我的研究，走路也想，无论走到什么地方，都在想。我彻底陷了进去。您要记住，所有与此相关的物质概念，或多或少都有美丽的一面，而这门课题本身就非常有趣。而那时的我，则对此毫不担心。”

他重重地叹了一口气。

“我相信，所有认认真真投入写作的人都会对某样东西——用我

朋友的话说——上瘾：茶、咖啡，或是烟草。我猜，从事这种职业的人，每小时都必须补充物质的消耗，不然就会变得心不在焉。思维也一样，会渐渐脱离肉体，除非经常能得到某种真情实感的提醒。无论如何，我觉得有那种需要，我也开始尝试物质上的补充。陪伴我的是茶——一开始是普通的红茶，通常的喝法，不是很浓：但是我喝了很多，并且越喝越浓。我也从未有过不舒服的感觉。我开始尝试喝一点儿绿茶。我发现效果更好，让我耳清目明，思绪敏捷。于是，我渐渐喝得频繁了，但是还没有超出消遣的程度。我在这个地方写了很多东西，就在这间房间里，这里很安静。那时，我会熬夜到很晚。一边工作，一边时不时抿上一口茶——绿茶——于是便习惯成自然。我在桌上放了一把小水壶，就挂在灯上。从夜里十一点到凌晨两三点间，我都要沏上两回茶。那之后，我才上床睡觉。我通常每天都会进城。我并非修道士。虽然我要在图书馆里待上一两个小时，搜寻权威的说法，寻找启发我研究的闪光点，但是我知道自己在精神上并没有处于病态。我还是像往常那样时常与朋友相见，喜欢与他们交往。总体而言，我觉得，生活从未如此快乐。

“我认识了一个人，他有一些不同寻常的旧书，是德意志出版的中世纪拉丁文的版本。得知获准一睹书的真容，我高兴万分。这位好心人的书都在城里，而且是非常偏远的地方。我在那儿待得比预定时间要长。一出来后，看到附近没有出租马车，我就想去乘公共马车，因为这间屋子附近常常有公共马车驶过。马车驶过一幢旧房子的时候，天已经比现在还黑了。我注意到，那幢房子的大门口，两旁各有四棵杨树。除了我之外的最后一名乘客也下了车。马车一路跑得更快了。当时已经是黄昏。我倚靠在车门这边的角落里，愉快地细细回味着。

“公共马车内已经近乎全黑了。我看了看正对面的那个角落。紧挨着马匹后部的地方，有两个小圆点，似乎是一道红色光线的反光。它们大约间隔两英寸 [4]，大概有开游艇人外套上的小铜纽扣那么大。百无聊赖之下，我不禁琢磨起那到底是什么小玩意儿。那道虽然昏暗，但却颜色深红的光线究竟从何而来？到底是什么东西在反射光芒——玻璃珠？纽扣？还是玩具的装饰物？我们一路摇摇晃晃地行驶着，还剩下大约一英里 [5] 的路。我还没有解开这个谜团。接下来，那个东西变得更加奇怪了。因为那两个光点突然猛地一动，距离地板越来越近，但还是保持着彼此的相对距离和水平位置。然后，它们忽然升高到与我的座位相同的高度，我一下子看不见它们了。

“我的好奇心现在是真的被点燃了。我还来不及细想，那两个昏暗的光点又出现了，再一次一同出现在靠近地板的地方。然后又消失了，然后又回到我一开始看到它们的角落里。

“于是，我双眼一边紧紧地盯着它们，一边从我这一侧不动声色地慢慢挪过去。到了那一端后，我看见那些小红点还在。

“公共马车内几乎没有一点儿亮光。天近乎全黑了。我身子向前倾了倾，以便能更好地搞清楚那些小圆点到底是什么。随着我的移动，它们的位置也发生了一些变化。现在，我能察觉到那里有一个黑影了。片刻后，我看见了一只黑色小猴的轮廓，还算比较清楚。它正模仿着我的动作，把脸伸向前。那两个小圆点是它的双眼。我现在还能隐约地看见，它正露出牙齿，咧嘴朝我笑着。

“我往后退了退，不知道它会不会跳过来。我猜，一定是哪位乘客把这难看的宠物忘在车上了。我想试试看它脾气如何，但又不愿意用手指去冒险，便把伞轻轻地朝它戳去。它一动不动——伞戳到它身上了——伞穿了过去。穿过它的身体时，来来回回都没有遇到一丝的阻力。

“我的那种恐惧，无法向您形容半分。当我弄明白那东西是一种幻觉之后，我不禁为自己担心害怕起来。这种惊骇让我魂不守舍，我凝视着那畜生的双眼，甚至片刻也无法脱离。我目不转睛地看着，那东西朝后跳了跳，退回到了角落里。而我在慌乱之间，发现自己已经靠在了车门口，于是探出头去，深深呼吸着外边的空气，眼睛盯着驶过的灯光和树木。重新触到现实的感觉让我高兴不已。

“我叫停马车，走了下去。在付钱的时候，我能察觉到车夫看我的眼神怪怪的。我敢说，自己的表情和举止一定有些不同寻常，因为我以前从未有过如此怪异的感觉。”

[4] 1英寸=2.54厘米。——编者注

[5] 1英里≈1.6千米。——编者注

第七章 历程：第一阶段

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“公共马车继续向前驶去，把我一个人留在了马路上。我仔细地朝四周打量，想搞清楚那只猴子是不是还跟着我，结果一无所获。我不由得如释重负。我无法形容，刚才遭受的打击有多大。而我觉得，重拾自我的欣喜让自己多少摆脱了那种情绪。”

“马车还没驶到这幢房子前，我就提前下了车，现在还有两三百步的距离。人行小路旁有一堵砖墙，墙内是一道紫杉树篱，或是那一类的深色常绿植物。树篱里面还有一排硕大的乔木，你在来的路上应该注意到了。”

“砖墙大约有我肩膀那么高。我抬起双眼，正好看见了那只猴子。它在墙头上，弯着腰，四肢着地，边走边爬，紧紧地跟着我。我停了下来，带着恐惧和憎恨的情绪看着它。我一停，它也停了下来，坐在墙上，长长的双手搁在膝盖上，也看着我。灯光昏暗，只能看见那只猴子的轮廓。可天又黑得不够彻底，无法让它眼中那道怪异的光芒尽情释放。然而，我依旧能清晰地看见那道雾蒙蒙的红光。那只猴子没有露出牙齿，也没有表现出任何愤怒的迹象，它似乎厌烦了，闷闷不乐地一直盯着我看。”

“我退到了马路中间，那是一种无意识的后退，我就站在那里，看着它。它一动不动。”

“我本能地决定试试看别的招数——什么都行。我转过身，迈着轻快的步伐朝镇上走去，同时一直斜眼观察着那只畜生的动向。它飞快地沿着墙头爬着，与我的速度完全一致。”

“马路快转弯的地方，围墙到底了。它跃下墙头，结结实实地蹦上一两下，便来到我的脚边，继续紧跟着我，我加快了脚步也没有用。它在我的左侧，就在我的腿旁，每时每刻我都担心自己会一脚踩到它。”

“马路上空旷无人，安静异常。天在一点点地黑下去。我惊慌失措地停住脚步，向着另外一个方向转身——我指的是，朝着这幢房子的方向，和我刚才行走的方向相反。我站定之后，那只猴子朝后退了一段距离，我估计，大约有五六码 [6] 远，一动不动地看着我。”

“我比刚才说的还要激动。和大家一样，我当然也听说过‘幽灵幻

觉’的说法。那是你们医生用来形容类似这样的情况的。我思考了一下自己的处境，正视自己面对的不幸。

“我读到过，这种病情有时候是暂时的，有时候则很顽固。据说有的病例中，幽灵的外表起初人畜无害。而渐渐地，它变成了可怕的模样，令人无法忍受，最终把受害人折磨得精疲力竭。我孤孤单单地静静站在原地，陪伴我的只有那只野兽。我试图安慰自己，一遍又一遍地向自己保证，‘那个东西纯粹是一种病，一种有名的身体疾病，和天花或是神经痛无疑是一样的。医生们的看法一致，在原理上也得到了证明。我肯定不是傻瓜。我一直熬夜到太晚，而且消化也不正常。上帝助我，一定会没事的。这只不过是神经消化不良的症状’。我相信这些吗？一个字也不信。不过是和其他可怜人的想法一样罢了。他们也曾遭遇过这种恶魔般的境遇，深陷其中，欲罢不能。我只能说自己的学识违背了我的信仰，我只不过是在欺骗自己、徒增勇气而已。

“现在，我朝家的方向走去。离家只有几百码了。我强迫自己听天由命，但是还没有从那种令人作呕的震惊中摆脱出来，还处在初逢厄运的慌乱之中。

“我打定主意，当晚就待在家里。那个畜生靠近了我。我不禁想，是不是因为朝着家的方向前进，它就产生了某种急切的情绪。有时，筋疲力尽的马或狗朝家走去时，也会出现这样的情况。

“我害怕到镇上去，我担心被人看到、认出来。我意识到，自己的一举一动中有一种抑制不住的焦虑。此外，我还害怕生活习惯上出现任何剧烈的变化，例如去到某个娱乐场所，或者为了让自己疲劳一些而离家散步。它一直在大厅门口等着我，直到我迈上台阶。大门一开，它就和我一起走了进去。

“那天夜里，我一口茶也没有喝。我抽了雪茄，喝了一点儿白兰地和水。我的想法是，自己应该尽情进行物质享受，过上一阵随心所欲的生活，就像这样，强迫自己养成一种新的习惯。我来到这间客厅，就坐在这个位置上。然后，那只猴子爬上了一张小桌子，当时是放在那里的。它看上去头昏眼花、无精打采。它动来动去，让我有一股抑制不住的不安，迫使自己一直盯着它。它的眼睛半睁半闭，但是还能看得出双眼的光芒。它不停地看着我。随时随地，一直清醒地看着我，片刻也不停息。

“我就不再详细讲述那一晚的遭遇了。我会接着形容第一年的情况，其实基本一样。我会讲讲这只猴子白天的样子。您刚刚已经听到了，在夜里，它有很多怪异之处。这只猴子不大，全身通黑。它只有一个特点——具有某种恶意——无法名状的恶意。第一年里，它看起来郁郁寡欢，总是病恹恹的。但是，在那份具有敌意的慵懒之下，总

潜伏着一股强烈的恶意和警戒。在那段时间里，它什么也没有做，也没有给我惹一点儿麻烦，仿佛计划好的一般，只是持续不断地看着我。它的眼睛一刻也不曾离开我。自从它出现之后，除了睡梦中以外，我的视线里始终有它，无论白天黑夜，无论天明天暗，除了它每次会无缘由地离开几周之外。

“在完全黑暗的情况下，它也像白天一样清晰可见。我不仅仅指它的双眼。它笼罩在一层光晕之中，让浑身上下都能看得清清楚楚。那道光晕仿佛是一团红色的余烬，它走到哪里，光晕就跟到哪里。

“它暂时离开我的时候，总是在夜里，在黑暗之中，每次都如出一辙。它一开始变得很不自在，然后狂怒不已。之后它会向我扑来，齙着牙，浑身颤抖，爪子攥得紧紧的。与此同时，壁炉里出现了火光。我从来也不生火。在点火的房间里，我睡不着。它离烟囱越来越近，似乎因为愤怒而发抖。当那份怒火累积到最高点的时候，它跳进壁炉里，爬上烟囱，消失不见了。

“这一幕刚刚发生的时候，我有一种如释重负的感觉。现在，我重获新生了。一个白天过去了，一个晚上过去了，它没有回来。然后是一整周……一周……又一周。赫斯利乌斯医生，我跪倒在地，感谢上帝，跪着祈祷。整一个月就这样无忧无虑地过去了，但是突然之间，它又和我在一起了。”

[6] 1码 = 3英尺，约0.9米。——编者注

第八章 第二阶段

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“它伴随着我的左右。阴沉的外表下原来那股懒散的恶意，现在却活跃起来。其他方面则一点儿未变。从它的活动和外观上就能明显感觉出这股新生的力量，这股力量很快也表露出了其他的地方。

“你要知道，在一段时间里，这种变化只是表现为它更加活跃，恐吓的氛围更浓，就仿佛它一直在盘算着某种凶残的计划一样。它的眼睛，和以前一样，从未离开过我。”

“现在它在这里吗？”我问道。

“不在，”他回答道，“确切地说，它离开已有两周零一天了——十五天。有的时候，离开的时间会长达近乎两个月，有一次整整三个月。通常都会超过两周的时间，虽然也有可能只过一天它就回来了。我上次见到它，是十五天以前了。现在，它随时都可能回来。”

“它回来的时候，”我问道，“有什么异象吗？”

“没有，一点儿也没有。”他说，“它只是又来到我的身边。眼神离开书本，或是一转头的工夫，我就看见它了。它同往常一样看着我。然后就和从前一样，只要它在，就一直看着我。此前，我从未向任何人讲过这么多，这么详细。”

我感受到了他的激动，他看起来面无人色，不停地用手帕擦着前额。我表示，他也许是累了，并告诉他，我会很乐意第二天上午再来拜访，但是他说：

“不，如果您不介意现在听完的话，我已经说了这么多了，我愿意再努一把力。我和哈利医生谈的时候，我不愿像现在这样畅所欲言。您是一位哲学医生。您认可幽灵的存在。如果这样东西是真实的——”

他停了下来，带着疑问的神情激动地看着我。

“将来我们可以详细地讨论讨论，非常详细。我会把我的想法原原本本地告诉你。”我顿了一顿，回答道。

“好的，非常好。如果这东西是真实的，我想说，它正在逐步占据上风，一点一点地，把我的心灵拉进地狱。他谈到了视神经的问

题。噢，好吧——还有其他的负责沟通的神经的问题。愿全能的上帝帮助我！您会听到的。

“我告诉过您，它行动的能力增强了。它的恶意，在某种程度上，变得具有攻击性了。大约两年前，我和主教间一直悬而未决的问题终于搞定，我去了自己在沃里克郡的教区，渴望实现自己的职业抱负。对于后来发生的事情，我没有做好准备，尽管自那以后，我一直认为自己可能会理解类似的事。我这么说是因为——”

他的话语开始变得更加吃力，更加勉强，还时常叹气，有时候似乎就要坚持不下去了。但是，此时他的态度并不激动，而更像是一名意志消沉的病人，已经完全自暴自弃了。

“好吧，但是我会首先和您谈谈我的教区，肯利斯。

“我离开此地，前往道尔布里奇的时候，它也在我旁边，是我旅途中无声的同伴。我住进牧师住宅后，它依旧跟着我。当我开始履行职责的时候，另外一个变化发生了。那个东西展现出了可怕的决心，千方百计地想要阻挠我。它和我一起在教堂里，一起在读经台上，一起在布道坛上，一起在领圣餐的围栏之内。最后，它终于发作了。我正在带领会众朗读的时候，它一下跳到书上，蹲坐在那里，令我无法看见书页。这样的事情发生了不止一次。

“我一度离开了道尔布里奇。我把自己交到哈利医生手里，对他言听计从。他很关心我的病情。我想，他很感兴趣。他似乎取得了成功。有将近三个月的时间，那东西都没有回来。我不禁想，自己已经安全了。在完全取得他的同意后，我回到了道尔布里奇。

“我是乘马车去的。一路上精神很好，不只很好，我非常开心，心情也很愉快。我觉得，自己已经从可怕的幻觉中解脱出来，要回归到渴望从事的工作中去了。那是一个阳光明媚的美丽傍晚，万物都显得欢乐、安详，我高兴极了。我记得，自己朝窗外看去，想在树影之间找到肯利斯教堂的尖顶，据说人们最早能在这个地方看见它。区分教区边界的一条小溪，恰好在那个地方从涵洞下穿过马路。它就在路边出现了，路边竖立着一块石头，石头上刻有古老的碑文。经过这个地点之后，我把脑袋缩回来，坐了下来。马车的角落里，坐着那只猴子。

“一时之间，我感到头晕目眩，然后又因为绝望和恐惧而感到愤怒。我叫停马车夫，下了车，坐在路边，默默地向上帝祈祷，请求宽恕。随之而来的是绝望的顺从。我的同伴跟着我再度走进牧师的住宅。它对我的迫害再度发生了。在一段短时间的抗争后，我屈服了，不久就离开了那个地方。

“我和您说过，”他说，“在此之前，那只畜生就已经表现得有些攻

击性了。我再详细解释一下。每当我祈祷，甚至是冥想祈祷的时候，似乎有一股强烈的怒火驱使着它。那股怒火越积越强，直到最终，会以一种可怕的方式打断我。您也许会问，一个无声的非物质幻影是如何做到这点的？就像这样，每当我开始冥想祈祷的时候，它就一直待在我的面前，越来越近，越来越近。

“它常常在桌子上、椅背上、壁炉架上蹦蹦跳跳，一边盯着我不放，一边慢慢地左右摇摆。它的动作具有一种说不清的力量，可以驱散思想，让人把注意力集中在那单调的动作上，直到渐渐忘了刚才的打算，直到所有想法最终都烟消云散——除非我已经开始祈祷，摆脱了那种强迫，而此时我的脑子仿佛已经迷失了一般。它还有其他的方法，”他重重地叹了一口气，“比如像这样，我双眼闭着祈祷的时候，它会越靠越近，越靠越近，于是我便看见它了。我知道这根本无法解释，但是我确实看见它了，虽然我两眼紧闭。它就这样让我的思想出现动摇，可以说，它压倒了我，迫使我放弃跪拜，站起身来。如果曾经亲身经历过，你就会了解绝望是怎么一回事了。”

第九章 第三阶段

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“赫斯利乌斯医生，我发觉，我说的每一个字您都听进去了。我不用请您再特别留意我接下来要说的话。他们谈到了视神经的问题，还有幽灵幻觉的现象，仿佛视觉器官是本人唯一受到影响的地方——我知道远不止如此。我那悲惨的病情，在两年的时间里不断发展。但是，就像食物在唇间温柔地下咽，终究还是会面对牙齿的咀嚼。就像卷进研磨机曲柄里的，一开始只是小拇指的指尖，然后会带进去一只手掌，一条胳膊，最后是整个身体。因此，哪怕可怜的凡人最初被抓住的只是最纤细的神经，也会被地狱的庞大势力一点点吞噬，直到他变得和我一模一样。一点儿没错，医生，和我一模一样。我和您交谈片刻，是为了祈求获得解脱。我觉得，我是在为不可能的事而祈祷，而我的祈求也终将一无所获。”

他显然越来越激动，我试图让他平静下来，告诉他不应该失去希望。

我们交谈的时候，夜幕已经降临了。朦胧的月色洒满了窗外，我说道：

“也许你更愿意点起蜡烛？你看，这种光线，有点儿奇怪。我希望，我在做诊断的时候，你能尽可能地和平时一样。我能说诊断吗——当然换个别的说法我也没有意见。”

“对我来说，所有的光线都是一样的，”他说，“除了在我读书写字的时候。长夜与否，我也不在乎。我还想告诉您，大约一年前发生的事。那东西开始和我说话了。”

“说话！你是什么意思——像人一样说话，是吗？”

“是的。逐字逐句，发音清楚，条理分明，但是有一点很奇怪。和人类的嗓音不一样，声音不是通过耳朵传来的——而是像在我的脑海中唱歌一样。

“这种能力，和我说话的技能，会是毁灭我的根源所在。它不让我祈祷，用可怕的亵渎神灵的话语打断我。我不敢再继续，没法儿再继续。噢！医生，人类的技能、思想和祈祷对我毫无用处！”

“你必须向我保证，尊敬的先生，不要再胡思乱想，而仅仅向我

描述事实。最重要的是，你要记住，就算那个东西让你不堪其扰，似乎觉得它是真实存在的独立生命，具有独立意志，然而它还是没有能力伤害到你，除非上天赋予了它那样的能力：它能否进入你的感官主要取决于你的身体状况——上帝在上，这是你值得信赖和宽慰的地方：我们都是同样的肉体凡躯。在你的病情中，只不过是你的‘外壳’，肉体的屏障，那道屏风，有点儿失修了，光线和声音都能透过来。我们必须开始新的征程，先生——鼓起勇气。今晚，我会详细思考一下你的整个病情。”

“您真是太好了，先生。您觉得我还值得治疗，并没有完全放弃我。但是，先生，您不知道，它对我的影响越来越大：向我发号施令，简直就是一个暴君。我变得越来越无助。愿上帝解救我！”

“它向你发号施令？当然你是指通过语言？”

“是的，是的。它总是怂恿我去犯罪，去伤害别人，或者伤害我自己。要知道，医生，情况非常危急，这是真的。几周以前，我在什罗浦郡的时候，”现在，詹宁斯先生的语速越来越快，声音还有一些颤抖，一只手抓住我的手臂，看着我的脸，“一天，我和一群朋友出去散步——我的迫害者，您知道，当时也在我的身边。我落在了其他人的后面，要知道，迪河附近的乡间风景非常美丽。我们走的小路恰好位于一座煤矿附近，树林边缘有一口垂直的竖井，据说有一百五十英尺 [7] 深。我的侄女还在身后跟着我——当然，对于我痛苦的根源，她一无所知。然而，她知道我病了，行动不快。她就留了下来，以免我落单。我们俩一起慢慢地走走停停，陪伴我的那只畜生不断地怂恿我跳进那口竖井里。现在我可以告诉您——噢，先生，想想有多么可怕吧！——把我从可怕的死亡中拯救出来的唯一原因，是我担心如果那个可怜的女孩亲眼看见这一幕，会对她打击过大。我让她继续朝前走，到她的朋友们那里去。我说我没法儿再向前走了。她找了些借口。我越是催她，她越不肯走。她看上去又惊又怕。我猜想，一定是我的模样或是我的行为让她感到担忧。她坚持不肯离开，这实际上救了我一命。先生，您一定无法理解，一个活人怎么会沦为撒旦的奴隶呢？”他说着，伴随着可怕的呻吟和颤抖。

他讲到这里停顿了下来，于是我说：“不过你还是得救了。这是上帝的意志。我主庇佑着你没有受到任何其他异端的支配：因此，对未来要有信心。”

[7] 1英尺≈0.3米。——编者注

第十章 家

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离开之前，我帮他点亮了蜡烛，让整个房间变得欢快一些，看起来像是有人居住的样子。我告诉他，他必须把自己的病情纯粹当成是与身体有关的原因，尽管是难以察觉的身体原因。我告诉他，他刚才描述的被解救的经过，就是得到上帝关爱的最好证明。而我痛苦地发现，他似乎把那特殊的一幕理解为自己已经走到了为神灵摒弃的地步。我坚持认为，这样的说法是毫无根据的。不仅如此，他在什罗浦郡远足时，神秘地摆脱了自杀的念头，这一事实更是与他的理解大相径庭。首先，尽管他并不打算让侄女一直在自己身旁，但是她却一直陪伴在他的左右。其次，在她面前实施那个可怕的建议，让他在心灵深处产生了无法抗拒的厌恶情绪。

随着我对詹宁斯先生一点一滴地娓娓道来，他不禁流下了眼泪，似乎感到备受安慰。我要求他答应我一件事，任何时候，只要那只猴子一回来，就立即通知我前来。我再三保证，在我彻底搞清楚他的病情前，不会在别的问题上浪费一点儿时间和精力，明天他就会知道结果的。然后，我才告辞。

走进马车车厢之前，我告诉仆人，他主人的状况很不好。他应该特别注意经常去他的房间查看查看。为了完全不受打扰，我自己也做了一番安排。

我只是去了一下住处，就带着一张旅行用的写字台和一个旅行袋，乘坐一辆出租马车，去了一个叫作“号角”的小旅馆，离镇上大约有两英里远。这是一所非常安静舒适的屋子，墙壁十分厚实。我下定决心，要在那舒适的客厅里，不受打扰，专心致志，把晚上几小时的时间都用来处理詹宁斯先生的病情，也许还需要加上第二天上午的不少时光。

（此处赫斯利乌斯医生详细记录了他对本病例的看法，以及他开出的生活习惯、膳食结构和药物方面的系列处方。这十分奇特——有些人也许会说太过神秘。但是，总体而言，我能遇到的那类读者，多半对此是不感兴趣的。因此也就没有必要在此一五一十地如数照抄了。这一整封信都是在他临时藏身的小旅馆里写的。而后一封信的落款地址，是他在镇上的住所。）

我是在前一天晚上九点半离开小镇，前往小旅馆的，直到第二天

下午一点钟，才回到镇上的房间。我在桌上发现了一封詹宁斯先生的亲笔信，并不是通过邮局寄来的。询问之后，我得知那是詹宁斯先生的仆人送来的。当他知道我直到今天才会回来，并且没有人知道我的地址之后，似乎很不自在。他说，自己主人的命令是，没有得到答复前不得回去。

我打开信，读了起来：

尊敬的赫斯利乌斯医生，它来了。您离开还不到一小时，它就回来了。它说话了。对于发生的事情，它了如指掌。它全都知道，也知道您。它发狂了，穷凶极恶地大肆辱骂。我给您寄的这封信，它对每一个字都心知肚明——每一个字。因为我承诺过，所以才写了这封信，但是我担心写得语无伦次、不清不楚。我不停地被打断，心情烦躁不安。

您的永远诚挚的，
罗伯特·林德·詹宁斯

“信是什么时候送来的？”我问道。

“大约昨天夜里十一点。那个人又来了，今天已经来了三次了。上一次大约是一小时以前。”

听到这样的回答后，我几分钟内就跳上了前往里士满的马车去见詹宁斯先生，口袋里装着我写的关于他病情的笔记。

如你所知，对于詹宁斯先生的病情，我丝毫没有丧失希望。我在《玄医学》一书中写下的原则，是适用于所有病例的。他自己记住了那些原则，并采取了一些实践，虽然方法上错误甚多。我打算认真地实践一场。我对此很有兴趣，并渴望在“敌人”真正出现的时候，亲自对他检查一番。

我驱车来到那幢阴暗的房子，跑上台阶，叩响了大门。没过多久，门就开了。开门的是一位身着黑色丝绸的高个儿女子。她看上去一脸病容，似乎一直在哭。她行了个屈膝礼，听到我的问题后，却没有回答。她转过脸去，向两名正在下楼的男子伸出了手。她就这样默默地把我交给了他们，然后她匆忙穿过一扇侧门，并把门关上了。

我立刻和离大厅最近的那名男子搭话，但是走近之后，我震惊地发现，他的两只手上全是鲜血。

我退后了几步。那名正在下楼的男子，只是用低沉的嗓音说道：“仆人来了，先生。”

那名仆人在楼梯上停了下来，一看到我就不知所措、哑口无言。他用一块手绢搓着自己的双手，手绢上浸满了鲜血。

“琼斯，那是什么？发生了什么事？”我问道，疑虑之情涌上心头，不禁毛骨悚然。

那人叫我前去大厅。我立刻走到他的身边。他皱着眉，眯着眼，脸色苍白地和我讲述着我已经猜到一半的可怕遭遇。

他的主人自杀了。

我和他一起走进楼上的房间——那里的一幕令我无法启齿。他用剃刀割开了自己的喉咙。伤口令人不寒而栗。两人已经把他放到床上，整理好了他的四肢。地板上的一大摊血迹表明，悲剧是在床和窗户之间的地方发生的。床铺的四周铺着地毯，梳妆台下面也铺着，但地板上的其他地方却没有，因为他说过他不喜欢在卧室里铺地毯。这间房间本就阴暗，现在又平添了几分可怕的成分。这幢房子原本就被一棵棵大榆树遮住了阳光。现在，一根粗枝的阴影正缓慢地在那可怖的地板上移动着。

我向仆人示意，我们一起下了楼。我关上大厅的门，进入一间老式的镶板房间。站在那里，我听完了仆人讲述的故事。可讲的并不多。

“先生，从您昨晚离开时的言谈和神色来看，我断定您认为我的主人病得很重。我想，也许您是担心他突然发作，或是别的什么事情。所以我完全遵从了您的指示。他熬夜到很晚，一直到三点过后。他并不是在写东西，也没有看书。他一直在自言自语，但那也不是什么稀奇事了。大约在那个时候，我帮他脱了衣服，给他换上了拖鞋和睡袍。大约半小时后，我轻手轻脚地走了回去。他赤身裸体地躺在床上，床边的桌子上点着一对蜡烛。我进去的时候，他正倚着胳膊肘，看着床的另一边。我问他想要些什么，他回答说不用。

“先生，我不知道那是否就是您对我说的，还是他有些不同寻常的地方。但是昨晚，我对他感到不安，非同寻常的不安。

“又过了半小时，也许还要久一点儿，我又一次起身。我没有听见他像刚才那样讲话。我把门打开了一点儿。两支蜡烛都熄灭了，这不同往常。我有一支放在卧室的蜡烛，我让光线稍稍照进去，轻轻地环顾四周。我看见他坐在梳妆台旁边的椅子上，衣服又都穿好了。他转过身来看着我。我觉得奇怪的是，他竟然穿衣服起床，然后灭掉蜡烛，那样坐在黑暗里。但是我只是又问了一遍，有什么我可以做的。他说，不用。听起来相当刺耳。我问他，是否需要点蜡烛，他说，‘随你的便，琼斯’。于是我点亮了蜡烛，在房间里踱来踱去。他说：‘和我说实话，琼斯。你为什么又来了，是听见有人在咒骂吗？’没有，先生。’我说，搞不清楚他是什么意思。

“‘没有，’他跟着我说道，‘当然没有。’我对他说，‘您到床上去不

好吗，先生？现在才五点钟’。他什么也没有回答，只是说，‘很可能会的。晚安，琼斯’。于是我就走了，先生。但是还不到一小时，我又去了。门关得紧紧的。他听见了我的声音，问我想要做什么。我想那声音是从床上传来的。他希望我不要再去打搅他。我躺下睡了一会儿。我再次起来的时候，大约是六点多钟不到七点的样子。门还是关得紧紧的，他没有作声。我想他大概是睡着了，就不想再去打搅他了。九点钟的时候，我才又去看了看。他的习惯是希望叫我来的时候，会打铃。我并没有叫醒他的专门时间。我轻轻地拍了拍门，没有回音。我离开了好一会儿，以为他一定是在休息。直到十一点，我才真的担心起他来——因为在我的印象里，他最迟也没有睡到过十点半以后。没有一点儿回音。我又是敲门，又是叫嚷，但还是没有回音。因为推不开门，我便从马厩叫来了汤姆斯。我们合力打开了门，于是发现了他那副令人震惊的样子。”

琼斯没有什么可说的了。可怜的詹宁斯先生非常和蔼可亲。所有人都很喜欢他。我看得出，那名仆人被深深触动了。

于是，我垂头丧气、焦虑不安地走出那座可怕的房子，也走出了那片黑暗的榆树林树荫。我希望自己今生再也不要看见这里了。我给你写信的时候，仿佛觉得自己还处在一个可怕而单调的梦境中，半梦半醒。因为怀疑和恐惧，我的记忆里容不下那幅画面。然而，我知道那些都是真的。这是一个有关毒药如何发挥作用的故事。那种毒药激发了心灵和神经的相互作用，并使得区分外部和内部感官功能的组织麻痹。就这样，我们发现了奇怪的“同床伴侣”，凡人和不朽者过早地相识了。

结论 致蒙受痛苦者

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尊敬的范·洛，你曾经承受过那种病情的折磨，与我刚刚描述的相仿。你两次抱怨说，那个东西又回来了。

是谁，在上帝的指引下，治好了你？你卑微的仆人，马丁·赫斯利乌斯。请让我引用一位杰出的法国外科老医生在三百年前所说的无比虔诚的话：“治疗的是我，而治愈你的是上帝。”

来吧，朋友，打起精神。我来告诉你一个事实。

正如我在书里揭示的那样，我遇见、治疗过五十七个这类的视觉病例。我毫无差别地称呼它们为“理想化”“早熟性”与“精神性”的问题。

还有另外一类的病情，虽然通常会和我描述的那些相混淆，实际上被称为“幽灵幻觉”。在我看来，后者的治愈方法，并不比鼻炎或者轻微消化不良要复杂。

正是那些位居第一类的疑难杂症考验着我们的思维敏捷程度。我碰到过五十七个这类的病例，不多也不少。而我治疗失败的情况有多少呢？一个也没有。

只要稍有耐心，并对医生抱有合理的信任，任何患者都无须承受死亡的折磨。这简直就是小菜一碟，并且是完全可以做到的。只要具备这些简单的条件，我认为治愈是理所当然的事情。

你要记住，我甚至还没有开始着手治疗詹宁斯先生的病情。我拥有充分的把握，可以在十八个月的时间里，完全治愈他，当然或许会延长到两年。有些病例迅速得以痊愈，而另一些则要费时费力许多。任何一位聪明的医生，只要他用心思考、勤勉努力，就一定能实现完美的治愈。

你知道我写过一篇短文《大脑的基本功能》。在文中，我通过无数的事实证明了，如我所想的那样，动脉和静脉的循环在构造上通过神经的可能性是极高的。如此考虑的话，在这个系统中，大脑就是心脏。因此，液体通过一种类型的神经传播，改变成其他形态通过另一种神经返回。这种液体在本质上是精神性的，虽然并不是无形的，但是如同我之前所说的，最多就像光或电的情况那样。

由于各种滥服滥用，例如习惯性服用绿茶这种药剂，这种液体在质量上可能会受到影响，在平衡方面更是频繁遭到破坏。这种液体的存在，令我们与灵魂有了共处之处。它是在大部分大脑或神经上发现的一种充血，与内部感官相连，毫无必要地形成一个暴露的表面，脱离肉体的灵魂可以在其上运行：于是就或多或少地建立起一种有效的沟通渠道。在这种大脑循环和心脏循环之间存在一种密切的相互作用。外部视觉的核心，或者说重要因素，是眼睛。内部视觉的核心是神经组织和大脑，就位于眉毛的周围和上部。我只是用冰镇古龙水外敷，就驱散了你的幻影。效果有多棒，你还记得吗？然而，病例的治疗可以依样画葫芦的情况是极少的，也不是都能够快速见效的。神经液体对于寒冷具有强烈的排斥作用。持续的时间足够长，它甚至能导致永久性失去知觉的情况，我们称为麻痹。时间再久一点儿，会发生肌肉和感官的瘫痪。

我再说一遍，我毫不怀疑，自己应该首先让詹宁斯先生无意间开启的内在的眼睛变得暗淡，并最终把它完全封闭。因震颤性谵妄打开的相同感官，当大脑以及心脏出现过度活跃症状，并伴随着惊人的神经充血现象时，就会再度完全关闭，并且因为身体状况的明显改变而彻底停止。只要持续在身体上采用一个简单的方法，就能产生这样的结果——必然会出现这样的结果——我从未失败过。

可怜的詹宁斯先生自杀了。但是，这一灾难是另一种完全不同的疾病造成的，可以说，那种疾病将自身投射于另一种已经确认的病痛之上。他的病情明显表现为并发症，真正压垮他的疾病，是遗传性自杀癖。我不能称呼可怜的詹宁斯先生为我的病人，因为我甚至还没有开始对他的治疗。并且我确信，他也没有给予我充分的、毫无保留的信任。只要病人不站在疾病那一边，治愈就是一桩水到渠成的事情。

‘A ghastly
groan and
a shudder. . .’

Prologue MARTIN HESSELIUS, THE GERMAN PHYSICIAN

Though carefully educated in medicine and surgery, I have never practised either. The study of each continues, never-theless, to interest me profoundly. Neither idleness nor caprice caused my secession from the honourable calling which I had just entered. The cause was a very trifling scratch inflicted by a dissecting knife. This trifle cost me the loss of two fingers, amputated promptly, and the more painful loss of my health, for I have never been quite well since, and have seldom been twelve months together in the same place.

In my wanderings I became acquainted with Dr Martin Hesselius, a wanderer like myself, like me a physician, and like me an enthusiast in his profession. Unlike me in this, that his wanderings were voluntary, and he a man, if not of fortune, as we estimate fortune in England, at least in what our forefathers used to term 'easy circumstances.' He was an old man when I first saw him; nearly five-and-thirty years my senior.

In Dr Martin Hesselius, I found my master. His know-ledge was immense, his grasp of a case was an intuition. He was the very man to inspire a young enthusiast, like me, with awe and delight. My admiration has stood the test of time and survived the separation of death. I am sure it was well-founded.

For nearly twenty years I acted as his medical secretary. His immense collection of papers he has left in my care, to be arranged, indexed and bound. His treatment of some of these cases is curious. He writes in two distinct characters. He describes what he saw and heard as an intelligent layman might, and when in this style of narrative he had seen the patient either through his own hall-door, to the light of day, or through the gates of darkness to the caverns of the dead, he returns upon the narrative, and in the terms of his art, and with all the force and originality of genius, proceeds to the work of analysis, diagnosis and illustration.

Here and there a case strikes me as of a kind to amuse or horrify a lay reader with an interest quite different from the peculiar one which it may possess for an expert. With slight modifications, chiefly of language, and of course a change of names, I copy the following. The narrator is Dr Martin Hesselius. I find it among the voluminous notes of cases which he made during a tour in England about sixty-four years ago.

It is related in a series of letters to his friend Professor Van Loo of Leyden. The professor was not a physician, but a chemist, and a man who read history and metaphysics and medicine, and had, in his day, written a play.

The narrative is therefore, if somewhat less valuable as a medical record, necessarily written in a manner more likely to interest an unlearned reader.

These letters, from a memorandum attached, appear to have been returned on the death of the professor, in 1819, to Dr Hesselius. They are written, some in English, some in French, but the greater part in German. I am a faithful, though I am conscious, by no means a graceful translator, and although here and there, I omit some passages, and shorten others and disguise names, I have interpolated nothing.

Chapter I DR HESSELIUS RELATES HOW HE MET THE REV. MR JENNINGS

The Rev. Mr Jennings is tall and thin. He is middle-aged, and dresses with a natty, old-fashioned, high-church precision. He is naturally a little stately, but not at all stiff. His features, without being handsome, are well formed, and their expression extremely kind, but also shy.

I met him one evening at Lady Mary Heyduke's. The modesty and benevolence of his countenance are extremely prepossessing.

We were but a small party, and he joined agreeably enough in the conversation. He seems to enjoy listening very much more than contributing to the talk; but what he says is always to the purpose and well said. He is a great favourite of Lady Mary's, who it seems, consults him upon many things, and thinks him the most happy and blessed person on earth. Little knows she about him.

The Rev. Mr Jennings is a bachelor, and has, they say, sixty thousand pounds in the funds. He is a charitable man. He is most anxious to be actively employed in his sacred profession, and yet though always tolerably well elsewhere, when he goes down to his vicarage in Warwickshire, to engage in the actual duties of his sacred calling his health soon fails him, and in a very strange way. So says Lady Mary.

There is no doubt that Mr Jennings' health does break down in, generally a sudden and mysterious way, sometimes in the very act of officiating in his old and pretty church at Kenlis. It may be his heart, it may be his brain. But so it has happened three or four times, or oftener, that after proceeding a certain way in the service, he has on a sudden stopped short, and after a silence, apparently quite unable to resume, he has fallen into solitary, inaudible prayer, his hands and eyes uplifted, and then pale as death, and in the agitation of a strange shame and horror, descended trembling, and got into the vestry-room, leaving his congregation, without explanation, to themselves. This occurred when his curate was

absent. When he goes down to Kenlis, now, he always takes care to provide a clergyman to share his duty, and to supply his place on the instant should he become thus suddenly incapacitated.

When Mr Jennings breaks down quite, and beats a retreat from the vicarage, and returns to London, where, in a dark street off Piccadilly, he inhabits a very narrow house, Lady Mary says that he is always perfectly well. I have my own opinion about that. There are degrees of course. We shall see.

Mr Jennings is a perfectly gentleman-like man. People, however, remark something odd. There is an impression a little ambiguous. One thing which certainly contributes to it, people I think don't remember; or, perhaps, distinctly remark. But I did, almost immediately. Mr Jennings has a way of looking sidelong upon the carpet, as if his eye followed the movements of something there. Tis, of course, is not always. It occurs only now and then. But often enough to give a certain oddity, as I have said to his manner, and in this glance travelling along the floor there is something both shy and anxious.

A medical philosopher, as you are good enough to call me, elaborating theories by the aid of cases sought out by himself, and by him watched and scrutinized with more time at command, and consequently infinitely more minute-ness than the ordinary practitioner can afford, falls insensibly into habits of observation, which accompany him everywhere, and are exercised, as some people would say, impertinently, upon every subject that presents itself with the least likelihood of rewarding inquiry.

There was a promise of this kind in the slight, timid, kindly, but reserved gentleman, whom I met for the first time at this agreeable little evening gathering. I observed, of course, more than I here set down; but I reserve all that borders on the technical for a strictly scientific paper.

I may remark, that when I here speak of medical science, I do so, as I hope some day to see it more generally understood, in a much more comprehensive sense than its generally material treatment would warrant. I believe the entire natural world is but the ultimate expression of that spiritual world from which, and in which alone, it has its life. I believe that the essential man is a spirit, that the spirit is an organized substance, but as different in

point of material from what we ordinarily understand by matter, as light or electricity is; that the material body is, in the most literal sense, a vesture, and death consequently no interruption of the living man's existence, but simply his extrication from the natural body - a process which commences at the moment of what we term death, and the completion of which, at furthest a few days later, is the resurrection 'in power.'

The person who weighs the consequences of these positions will probably see their practical bearing upon medical science. This is, however, by no means the proper place for displaying the proofs and discussing the consequences of this too generally unrecognized state of facts.

In pursuance of my habit, I was covertly observing Mr Jennings, with all my caution - I think he perceived it - and I saw plainly that he was as cautiously observing me. Lady Mary happening to address me by my name, as Dr Hesse-lius, I saw that he glanced at me more sharply, and then became thoughtful for a few minutes.

After this, as I conversed with a gentleman at the other end of the room, I saw him look at me more steadily, and with an interest which I thought I understood. I then saw him take an opportunity of chatting with Lady Mary, and was, as one always is, perfectly aware of being the subject of a distant inquiry and answer.

This tall clergyman approached me by-and-by: and in a little time we had got into conversation. When two people, who like reading, and know books and places, having travelled, wish to converse, it is very strange if they can't find topics. It was not accident that brought him near me, and led him into conversation. He knew German, and had read my Essays on Metaphysical Medicine which suggest more than they actually say.

This courteous man, gentle, shy, plainly a man of thought and reading, who moving and talking among us, was not altogether of us, and whom I already suspected of leading a life whose transactions and alarms were carefully concealed, with an impenetrable reserve from, not only the world, but his best beloved friends - was cautiously weighing in his own mind the idea of taking a certain step with regard to me.

I penetrated his thoughts without his being aware of it, and was careful to say nothing which could betray to his sensitive vigilance my suspicions respecting his position, or my surmises about his plans respecting myself.

We chatted upon indifferent subjects for a time; but at last he said:

'I was very much interested by some papers of yours, Dr Hesselius, upon what you term Metaphysical Medicine - I read them in German, ten or twelve years ago-have they been translated?'

'No, I'm sure they have not - I should have heard. They would have asked my leave, I think.'

'I asked the publishers here, a few months ago, to get the book for me in the original German; but they tell me it is out of print.'

'So it is, and has been for some years; but it flatters me as an author to find that you have not forgotten my little book, although,' I added, laughing, 'ten or twelve years is a considerable time to have managed without it; but I suppose you have been turning the subject over again in your mind, or something has happened lately to revive your interest in it.'

At this remark, accompanied by a glance of inquiry, a sudden embarrassment disturbed Mr Jennings, analogous to that which makes a young lady blush and look foolish. He dropped his eyes, and folded his hands together uneasily, and looked oddly, and you would have said, guiltily for a moment.

I helped him out of his awkwardness in the best way, by appearing not to observe it, and going straight on, I said: 'Those revivals of interest in a subject happen to me often; one book suggests another, and often sends me back on a wild-goose chase over an interval of twenty years. But if you still care to possess a copy, I shall be only too happy to provide you; I have still got two or three by me - and if you allow me to present one I shall be very much honoured.'

'You are very good indeed,' he said, quite at his ease again, in a moment: 'I almost despaired - I don't know how to thank you.'

'Pray don't say a word; the thing is really so little worth that I am only ashamed of having offered it, and if you thank me any

more I shall throw it into the fire in a fit of modesty.'

Mr Jennings laughed. He inquired where I was staying in London, and after a little more conversation on a variety of subjects, he took his departure.

Chapter II THE DOCTOR QUESTIONS LADY MARY, AND SHE ANSWERS

'I like your vicar so much, Lady Mary,' said I, so soon as he was gone. 'He has read, travelled, and thought, and having also suffered, he ought to be an accomplished companion.'

'So he is, and, better still, he is a really good man,' said she. 'His advice is invaluable about my schools, and all my little undertakings at Dawlbridge, and he's so painstaking, he takes so much trouble - you have no idea - wherever he thinks he can be of use: he's so good-natured and so sensible.'

'It is pleasant to hear so good an account of his neighbourly virtues. I can only testify to his being an agreeable and gentle companion, and in addition to what you have told me, I think I can tell you two or three things about him,' said I.

'Really!'

'Yes, to begin with, he's unmarried.'

'Yes, that's right, - go on.'

'He has been writing, that is he was, but for two or three years perhaps, he has not gone on with his work, and the book was upon some rather abstract subject - perhaps theology.'

'Well, he was writing a book, as you say; I'm not quite sure what it was about, but only that it was nothing that I cared for, very likely you are right, and he certainly did stop - yes.'

'And although he only drank a little coffee here to-night, he likes tea, at least, did like it, extravagantly.'

'Yes, that's *quite* true.'

'He drank green tea, a good deal, didn't he?' I pursued.

'Well, that's very odd! Green tea was a subject on which we used almost to quarrel.'

'But he has quite given that up,' said I.

‘So he has.’

‘And, now, one more fact. His mother or his father, did you know them?’

‘Yes, both; his father is only ten years dead, and their place is near Dawlbridge. We knew them very well,’ she answered.

‘Well, either his mother or his father - I should rather think his father, saw a ghost,’ said I.

‘Well, you really are a conjurer, Dr Hesselius.’

‘Conjurer or no, haven’t I said right?’ I answered merrily.

‘You certainly have, and it was his father: he was a silent, whimsical man, and he used to bore my father about his dreams, and at last he told him a story about a ghost he had seen and talked with, and a very odd story it was. I remember it particularly, because I was so afraid of him. This story was long before he died - when I was quite a child - and his ways were so silent and moping, and he used to drop in, sometimes, in the dusk, when I was alone in the drawing-room, and I used to fancy there were ghosts about him.’

I smiled and nodded.

‘And now having established my character as a conjurer I think I must say good-night,’ said I.

‘But how*did* you find it out?’

‘By the planets of course, as the gipsies do,’ I answered, and so, gaily, we said good-night.

Next morning I sent the little book he had been inquiring after, and a note to Mr Jennings, and on returning late that evening, I found that he had called, at my lodgings, and left his card. He asked whether I was at home, and asked at what hour he would be most likely to find me.

Does he intend opening his case, and consulting me ‘professionally,’ as they say? I hope so. I have already conceived a theory about him. It is supported by Lady Mary’s answers to my parting questions. I should like much to ascertain from his own lips. But what can I do consistently with good breeding to invite a confession? Nothing. I rather think he meditates one. At all events,

my dear Van L. , I shan't make myself difficult of access; I mean to return his visit to-morrow. It will be only civil in return for his politeness, to ask to see him. Perhaps something may come of it. Whether much, little, or nothing, my dear Van L. ,you shall hear.

Chapter III DR HESSELIUS PICKS UP SOMETHING IN LATIN BOOKS

Well, I have called at Blank-street.

On inquiring at the door, the servant told me that Mr Jennings was engaged very particularly with a gentleman, a clergyman from Kenlis, his parish in the country. Intend-ing to reserve my privilege and to call again, I merely intimated that I should try another time, and had turned to go, when the servant begged my pardon, and asked me, looking at me a little more attentively than well-bred persons of his order usually do, whether I was Dr Hesselius; and, on learning that I was, he said, 'Perhaps then, sir, you would allow me to mention it to Mr Jennings, for I am sure he wishes to see you.'

The servant returned in a moment, with a message from Mr Jennings, asking me to go into his study, which was in effect his back drawing-room, promising to be with me in a very few minutes.

This was really a study - almost a library. The room was lofty, with two tall slender windows, and rich dark curtains. It was much larger than I had expected, and stored with books on every side, from the floor to the ceiling. The upper carpet - for to my tread it felt that there were two or three - was a Turkey carpet. My steps fell noiselessly. The book-cases standing out, placed the windows, particularly narrow ones, in deep recesses. The effect of the room was, although extremely comfortable, and even luxurious, decidedly gloomy, and aided by the silence, almost oppres-sive. Perhaps, however, I ought to have allowed something for association. My mind had connected peculiar ideas with Mr Jennings. I stepped into this perfectly silent room, of a very silent house, with a peculiar foreboding; and its dark-ness, and solemn clothing of books, for except where two narrow looking-glasses were set in the wall, they were every-where, helped this sombre feeling.

While awaiting Mr Jennings'arrival, I amused myself by looking into some of the books with which his shelves were laden. Not among these, but immediately under them, with their backs

upward, on the floor, I lighted upon a complete set of Swedenborg's Arcana Cælestia, in the original Latin, a very fine folio set, bound in the natty livery which the-ology affects, pure vellum, namely, gold letters, and carmine edges. There were paper markers in several of these volumes, I raised and placed them, one after the other, upon the table, and opening where these papers were placed, I read in the solemn Latin phraseology, a series of sentences indicated by a pencilled line at the margin. Of these I copy here a few, translating them into English.

'When man's interior sight is opened, which is that of his spirit, then there appear the things of another life, which cannot possibly be made visible to the bodily sight. '.....

'By the internal sight it has been granted me to see the things that are in the other life, more clearly than I see those that are in the world. From these considerations, it is evident that external vision exists from interior vision, and this from a vision still more interior, and so on. '.....

'There are with every man at least two evil spirits. '.....

'With wicked genii there is also a fluent speech, but harsh and grating. There is also among them a speech which is not fluent, wherein the dissent of the thoughts is perceived as something secretly creeping along within it. '.....

'The evil spirits associated with man are, indeed, from the hells, but when with man they are not then in hell, but are taken out thence. The place where they then are is in the midst between heaven and hell, and is called the world of spirits - when the evil spirits who are with man, are in that world, they are not in any infernal torment, but in every thought and affection of the man, and so, in all that the man himself enjoys. But when they are remitted into their hell, they return to their former state. '.....

'If evil spirits could perceive that they were associated with man, and yet that they were spirits separate from him, and if they could flow in into the things of his body, they would attempt by a thousand means to destroy him; for they hate man with a deadly hatred. '.....

'Knowing, therefore, that I was a man in the body, they were continually striving to destroy me, not as to the body only, but

especially as to the soul; for to destroy any man or spirit is the very delight of the life of all who are in hell; but I have been continually protected by the Lord. Hence it appears how dangerous it is for man to be in a living consort with spirits, unless he be in the good of faith. '.....

'Nothing is more carefully guarded from the knowledge of associate spirits than their being thus conjoint with a man, for if they knew it they would speak to him, with the intention to destroy him. '.....

'The delight of hell is to do evil to man, and to hasten his eternal ruin.'

A long note, written with a very sharp and fine pencil, in Mr Jennings' neat hand, at the foot of the page, caught my eye. Expecting his criticism upon the text, I read a word or two, and stopped, for it was something quite different, and began with these words, *Deus misereatur mei* - 'May God compassionate me. 'Thus warned of its private nature, I averted my eyes, and shut the book, replacing all the volumes as I had found them, except one which interested me, and in which, as men studious and solitary in their habits will do, I grew so absorbed as to take no cognizance of the outer world, nor to remember where I was.

I was reading some pages which refer to 'representatives' and 'correspondents,' in the technical language of Sweden-borg, and had arrived at a passage, the substance of which is, that evil spirits, when seen by other eyes than those of their infernal associates, present themselves, by 'correspond-ence,' in the shape of the beast (*fera*) which represents their particular lust and life, in aspect direful and atrocious. This is a long passage, and particularizes a number of those bes-tial forms.

Chapter IV FOUR EYES WERE READING THE PASSAGE

I was running the head of my pencil-case along the line as I read it, and something caused me to raise my eyes.

Directly before me was one of the mirrors I have mentioned, in which I saw reflected the tall shape of my friend Mr Jennings leaning over my shoulder, and reading the page at which I was busy, and with a face so dark and wild that I should hardly have known him.

I turned and rose. He stood erect also, and with an effort laughed a little, saying:

'I came in and asked you how you did, but without succeeding in awaking you from your book; so I could not restrain my curiosity, and very impertinently, I'm afraid, peeped over your shoulder. This is not your first time of looking into those pages. You have looked into Swedenborg, no doubt, long ago?'

'Oh dear, yes! I owe Swedenborg a great deal; you will discover traces of him in the little book on Metaphysical Medicine, which you were so good as to remember.'

Although my friend affected a gaiety of manner, there was a slight flush in his face, and I could perceive that he was inwardly much perturbed.

'I'm scarcely yet qualified, I know so little of Swedenborg. I've only had them a fortnight,' he answered, 'and I think they are rather likely to make a solitary man nervous - that is, judging from the very little I have read - I don't say that they have made me so,' he laughed; 'and I'm so very much obliged for the book. I hope you got my note?'

I made all proper acknowledgments and modest disclaimers.

'I never read a book that I go with, so entirely, as that of yours,' he continued. 'I saw at once there is more in it than is quite unfolded. Do you know Dr Harley?' he asked, rather abruptly.

In passing, the editor remarks that the physician here named was one of the most eminent who had ever practised in England.

I did, having had letters to him, and had experienced from him great courtesy and considerable assistance during my visit to England.

'I think that man one of the very greatest fools I ever met in my life,' said Mr Jennings.

This was the first time I had ever heard him say a sharp thing of anybody, and such a term applied to so high a name a little startled me.

'Really! and in what way?' I asked.

'In his profession,' he answered.

I smiled.

'I mean this,' he said: 'he seems to me, one half, blind - I mean one half of all he looks at is dark - preternaturally bright and vivid all the rest; and the worst of it is, it seems wilful. I can't get him - I mean he won't - I've had some experience of him as a physician, but I look on him as, in that sense, no better than a paralytic mind, an intellect half dead, I'll tell you - I know I shall some time - all about it,' he said, with a little agitation. 'You stay some months longer in England. If I should be out of town during your stay for a little time, would you allow me to trouble you with a letter?'

'I should be only too happy,' I assured him.

'Very good of you. I am so utterly dissatisfied with Harley.'

'A little leaning to the materialistic school,' I said.

'*Amere* materialist,' he corrected me; 'you can't think how that sort of thing worries one who knows better. You won't tell any one - any of my friends you know - that I am hip-pish; now, for instance, no one knows - not even Lady Mary - that I have seen Dr Harley, or any other doctor. So pray don't mention it; and, if I should have any threatening of an attack, you'll kindly let me write, or, should I be in town, have a little talk with you.'

I was full of conjecture, and unconsciously I found I had fixed my eyes gravely on him, for he lowered his for a moment, and he said:

'I see you think I might as well tell you now, or else you are forming a conjecture; but you may as well give it up. If you were guessing all the rest of your life, you will never hit on it.'

He shook his head smiling, and over that wintry sunshine a black cloud suddenly came down, and he drew his breath in, through his teeth as men do in pain.

'Sorry, of course, to learn that you apprehend occasion to consult any of us; but, command me when and how you like, and I need not assure you that your confidence is sacred.'

He then talked of quite other things, and in a comparatively cheerful way and after a little time, I took my leave.

Chapter V DOCTOR HESSELIUS IS SUMMONED TO RICHMOND

We parted cheerfully, but he was not cheerful, nor was I. There are certain expressions of that powerful organ of spirit - the human face - which, although I have seen them often, and possess a doctor's nerve, yet disturb me profoundly. One look of Mr Jennings haunted me. It had seized my imagination with so dismal a power that I changed my plans for the evening, and went to the opera, feeling that I wanted a change of ideas.

I heard nothing of or from him for two or three days, when a note in his hand reached me. It was cheerful, and full of hope. He said that he had been for some little time so much better - quite well, in fact - that he was going to make a little experiment, and run down for a month or so to his parish, to try whether a little work might not quite set him up. There was in it a fervent religious expression of gratitude for his restoration, as he now almost hoped he might call it.

A day or two later I saw Lady Mary, who repeated what his note had announced, and told me that he was actually in Warwickshire, having resumed his clerical duties at Ken-lis; and she added, 'I begin to think that he is really perfectly well, and that there never was anything the matter, more than nerves and fancy; we are all nervous, but I fancy there is nothing like a little hard work for that kind of weakness, and he has made up his mind to try it. I should not be surprised if he did not come back for a year.'

Notwithstanding all this confidence, only two days later I had this note, dated from his house off Piccadilly:

Dear Sir.- I have returned disappointed. If I should feel at all able to see you, I shall write to ask you kindly to call. At present I am too low, and, in fact, simply unable to say all I wish to say. Pray don't mention my name to my friends. I can see no one. By-and-by, please God, you shall hear from me. I mean to take a run into Shropshire, where some of my people are. God bless you! May we,

on my return, meet more happily than I can now write.

About a week after this I saw Lady Mary at her own house, the last person, she said, left in town, and just on the wing for Brighton, for the London season was quite over. She told me that she had heard from Mr Jennings' niece, Martha, in Shropshire. There was nothing to be gathered from her letter, more than that he was low and nervous. In those words, of which healthy people think so lightly, what a world of suffering is sometimes hidden!

Nearly five weeks passed without any further news of Mr Jennings. At the end of that time I received a note from him. He wrote:

I have been in the country, and have had change of air, change of scene, change of faces, change of everything and in everything - but *myself*. I have made up my mind, so far as

the most irresolute creature on earth can do it, to tell my case fully to you. If your engagements will permit, pray come to me to-day, to-morrow, or the next day; but, pray defer as little as possible. You know not how much I need help. I have a quiet house at Richmond, where I now am. Perhaps you can manage to come to dinner, or to luncheon, or even to tea. You shall have no trouble in finding me out. The servant at Blank street, who takes this note, will have a carriage at your door at any hour you please; and I am always to be found. You will say that I ought not to be alone. I have tried everything. Come and see.

I called up the servant, and decided on going out the same evening, which accordingly I did.

He would have been much better in a lodging-house, or hotel, I thought, as I drove up through a short double row of sombre elms to a very old-fashioned brick house, darkened by the foliage of these trees, which over-topped, and nearly surrounded it. It was a perverse choice, for nothing could be imagined more triste and silent. The house, I found, belonged to him. He had stayed for a day or two in town, and, finding it for some cause insupportable, had come out here, probably because being furnished and his own, he was relieved of the thought and delay of selection, by coming here.

The sun had already set, and the red reflected light of the

western sky illuminated the scene with the peculiar effect with which we are all familiar. The hall seemed very dark, but, getting to the back drawing-room, whose windows command the west, I was again in the same dusky light.

I sat down, looking out upon the richly-wooded landscape that glowed in the grand and melancholy light which was every moment fading. The corners of the room were already dark; all was growing dim, and the gloom was insensibly toning my mind, already prepared for what was sinister. I was waiting alone for his arrival, which soon took place. The door communicating with the front room opened, and the tall figure of Mr Jennings, faintly seen in the ruddy twilight, came, with quiet stealthy steps, into the room.

We shook hands, and, taking a chair to the window, where there was still light enough to enable us to see each other's faces, he sat down beside me, and, placing his hand upon my arm, with scarcely a word of preface began his narrative.

Chapter VI HOW MR JENNINGS MET HIS COMPANION

The faint glow of the west, the pomp of the then lonely woods of Richmond, were before us, behind and about us the darkening room, and on the stony face of the sufferer - for the character of his face, though still gentle and sweet, was changed - rested that dim, odd glow which seems to descend and produce, where it touches, lights, sudden though faint, which are lost, almost without gradation, in darkness. The silence, too, was utter; not a distant wheel, or bark, or whistle from without; and within the depressing stillness of an invalid bachelor's house.

I guessed well the nature, though not even vaguely the particulars of the revelations I was about to receive, from that fixed face of suffering that so oddly flushed stood out, like a portrait of Schalken's, before its background of darkness.

'It began,' he said, 'on the 15th of October, three years and eleven weeks ago, and two days - I keep very accurate count, for every day is torment. If I leave anywhere a chasm in my narrative tell me.

'About four years ago I began a work, which had cost me very much thought and reading. It was upon the religious metaphysics of the ancients.'

'I know,' said I; 'the actual religion of educated and think-ing paganism, quite apart from symbolic worship?A wide and very interesting field.'

'Yes; but not good for the mind - the Christian mind, I mean. Paganism is all bound together in essential unity, and, with evil sympathy, their religion involves their art, and both their manners, and the subject is a degrading fas-cination and the nemesis sure. God forgive me!

'I wrote a great deal; I wrote late at night. I was always thinking on the subject, walking about, wherever I was,

everywhere. It thoroughly infected me. You are to remember that all the material ideas connected with it were more or less of the beautiful, the subject itself delightfully interest-ing, and I, then, without a care.'

He sighed heavily.

'I believe that every one who sets about writing in earnest does his work, as a friend of mine phrased it, on something - tea, or coffee, or tobacco. I suppose there is a material waste that must be hourly supplied in such occupations, or that we should grow too abstracted, and the mind, as it were, pass out of the body, unless it were reminded often of the connection by actual sensation. At all events, I felt the want, and I supplied it. Tea was my companion - at first the ordin-ary black tea, made in the usual way, not too strong: but I drank a good deal, and increased its strength as I went on. I never experienced an uncomfortable symptom from it. I began to take a little green tea. I found the effect pleasanter, it cleared and intensified the power of thought so. I had come to take it frequently, but not stronger than one might take it for pleasure. I wrote a great deal out here, it was so quiet, and in this room. I used to sit up very late, and it became a habit with me to sip my tea - green tea - every now and then as my work proceeded. I had a little kettle on my table, that swung over a lamp, and made tea two or three times between eleven o'clock and two or three in the morning, my hours of going to bed. I used to go into town every day. I was not a monk, and, although I spent an hour or two in a library, hunting up authorities and looking out lights upon my theme, I was in no morbid state as far as I can judge. I met my friends pretty much as usual, and enjoyed their society, and, on the whole, existence had never been, I think, so pleasant before.

'I had met with a man who had some odd old books, Ger-man editions in mediæval Latin, and I was only too happy to be permitted access to them. This obliging person's books were in the City, a very out-of-the-way part of it. I had rather out-stayed my intended hour, and, on coming out, seeing no cab near, I was tempted to get into the omnibus which used to drive past this house. It was darker than this by the time the bus had reached an old house, you may have remarked, with four poplars at each side of the door, and there the last passenger but myself got out. We drove along rather faster. It was twilight now. I leaned back in my

corner next the door ruminating pleasantly.

‘The interior of the omnibus was nearly dark. I had observed in the corner opposite to me at the other side, and at the end next the horses, two small circular reflections, as it seemed to me of a reddish light. They were about two inches apart, and about the size of those small brass buttons that yachting men used to put upon their jackets. I began to speculate, as listless men will, upon this trifle, as it seemed. From what centre did that faint but deep red light come, and from what - glass beads, buttons, toy decorations - was it reflected? We were lumbering along gently, having nearly a mile still to go. I had not solved the puzzle, and it became in another minute more odd, for these two luminous points, with a sudden jerk, descended nearer the floor, keeping still their relative distance and horizontal position, and then, as suddenly, they rose to the level of the seat on which I was sitting, and I saw them no more.

‘My curiosity was now really excited, and, before I had time to think, I saw again these two dull lamps, again together near the floor; again they disappeared, and again in their old corner I saw them.

‘So, keeping my eyes upon them, I edged quietly up my own side, towards the end at which I still saw these tiny discs of red.

‘There was very little light in the bus. It was nearly dark. I leaned forward to aid my endeavour to discover what these little circles really were. They shifted their position a little as I did so. I began now to perceive an outline of something black, and I soon saw with tolerable distinctness the outline of a small black monkey, pushing its face forward in mim-icry to meet mine; those were its eyes, and I now dimly saw its teeth grinning at me.

‘I drew back, not knowing whether it might not meditate a spring. I fancied that one of the passengers had forgot this ugly pet, and wishing to ascertain something of its temper, though not caring to trust my fingers to it, I poked my umbrella softly towards it. It remained immovable - up to it - *through* it! For through it, and back and forward, it passed, without the slightest resistance.

‘I can't, in the least, convey to you the kind of horror that I felt. When I had ascertained that the thing was an illusion, as I then

supposed, there came a misgiving about myself and a terror that fascinated me in impotence to remove my gaze from the eyes of the brute for some moments. As I looked, it made a little skip back, quite into the corner, and I, in a panic, found myself at the door, having put my head out, drawing deep breaths of the outer air, and staring at the lights and trees we were passing, too glad to reassure myself of reality.

'I stopped the 'bus and got out. I perceived the man look oddly at me as I paid him. I daresay there was something unusual in my looks and manner, for I had never felt so strangely before.'

Chapter VII THE JOURNEY: FIRST STAGE

‘When the omnibus drove on, and I was alone upon the road, I looked carefully round to ascertain whether the monkey had followed me. To my indescribable relief I saw it nowhere. I can't describe easily what a shock I had received, and my sense of genuine gratitude on finding myself, as I supposed, quite rid of it.

‘I had got out a little before we reached this house, two or three hundred steps. A brick wall runs along the foot-path, and inside the wall is a hedge of yew or some dark evergreen of that kind, and within that again the row of fine trees which you may have remarked as you came.

‘This brick wall is about as high as my shoulder, and happening to raise my eyes I saw the monkey, with that stooping gait, on all fours, walking or creeping, close beside me on top of the wall. I stopped, looking at it with a feeling of loathing and horror. As I stopped so did it. It sat up on the wall with its long hands on its knees looking at me. There was not light enough to see it much more than in outline, nor was it dark enough to bring the peculiar light of its eyes into strong relief. I still saw, however, that red foggy light plainly enough. It did not show its teeth, nor exhibit any sign of irritation, but seemed jaded and sulky, and was observing me steadily.

‘I drew back into the middle of the road. It was an uncon-scious recoil, and there I stood, still looking at it, it did not move.

‘With an instinctive determination to try something - anything, I turned about and walked briskly towards town with a skance look, all the time, watching the movements of the beast. It crept swiftly along the wall, at exactly my pace.

‘Where the wall ends, near the turn of the road, it came down and with a wiry spring or two brought itself close to my feet, and continued to keep up with me, as I quickened my pace. It was at my left side, so close to my leg that I felt every moment as if I should tread upon it.

"The road was quite deserted and silent, and it was darker every moment. I stopped dismayed and bewildered, turning as I did so, the other way - I mean, towards this house, away from which I had been walking. When I stood still, the monkey drew back to a distance of, I suppose, about five or six yards, and remained stationary, watching me.

"I had been more agitated than I have said. I had read, of course, as every one has, something about "spectral illusions," as you physicians term the phenomena of such cases. I considered my situation, and looked my misfortune in the face.

"These affections, I had read, are sometimes transitory and sometimes obstinate. I had read of cases in which the appearance, at first harmless, had, step by step, degenerated into something direful and insupportable, and ended by wearing its victim out. Still as I stood there, but for my bestial companion, quite alone, I tried to comfort myself by repeating again and again the assurance, "the thing is purely disease, a well-known physical affection, as distinctly as small-pox or neuralgia. Doctors are all agreed on that, philosophy demonstrates it. I must not be a fool. I've been sitting up too late, and I daresay my digestion is quite wrong, and with God's help, I shall be all right, and this is but a symptom of nervous dyspepsia." Did I believe all this? Not one word of it, no more than any other miserable being ever did who is once seized and riveted in this satanic captivity. Against my convictions, I might say my knowledge, I was simply bullying myself into a false courage.

"I now walked homeward. I had only a few hundred yards to go. I had forced myself into a sort of resignation, but I had not got over the sickening shock and the flurry of the first certainty of my misfortune.

"I made up my mind to pass the night at home. The brute moved close beside me, and I fancied there was the sort of anxious drawing toward the house, which one sees in tired horses or dogs, sometimes as they come toward home.

"I was afraid to go into town, I was afraid of any one's seeing and recognizing me. I was conscious of an irrepressible agitation in my manner. Also, I was afraid of any violent change in my habits, such as going to a place of amusement, or walking from home in order to fatigue myself. At the hall door it waited till I mounted the

steps, and when the door was opened entered with me.

'I drank no tea that night. I got cigars and some brandy-and-water. My idea was that I should act upon my material system, and by living for a while in sensation apart from thought, send myself forcibly, as it it were, into a new groove. I came up here to this drawing-room. I sat just here. The monkey then got upon a small table that then stood there. It looked dazed and languid. An irrepressible uneasiness as to its movements kept my eyes always upon it. Its eyes were half closed, but I could see them glow. It was looking steadily at me. In all situations, at all hours, it is awake and looking at me. That never changes.

'I shall not continue in detail my narrative of this particular night. I shall describe, rather, the phenomena of the first year, which never varied, essentially. I shall describe the monkey as it appeared in daylight. In the dark, as you shall presently hear, there are peculiarities. It is a small monkey, perfectly black. It had only one peculiarity - a character of malignity - unfathomable malignity. During the first year it looked sullen and sick. But this character of intense malice and vigilance was always underlying that surly languor. During all that time it acted as if on a plan of giving me as little trouble as was consistent with watching me. Its eyes were never off me. I have never lost sight of it, except in my sleep, light or dark, day or night, since it came here, excepting when it withdraws for some weeks at a time, unaccountably.

'In total dark it is visible as in daylight. I do not mean merely its eyes. It is *all* visible distinctly in a halo that resembles a glow of red embers, and which accompanies it in all its movements.

'When it leaves me for a time, it is always at night, in the dark, and in the same way. It grows at first uneasy, and then furious, and then advances towards me, grinning and shaking its paws clenched, and, at the same time, there comes the appearance of fire in the grate. I never have any fire. I can't sleep in the room where there is any, and it draws nearer and nearer to the chimney, quivering, it seems, with rage, and when its fury rises to the highest pitch, it springs into the grate, and up the chimney, and I see it no more.

'When first this happened I thought I was released. I was a new man. A day passed - a night - and no return, and a blessed week - a

week - another week. I was always on my knees, Dr Hesselius, always, thanking God and praying. A whole month passed of liberty, but on a sudden, it was with me again.'

Chapter VIII THE SECOND STAGE

'It was with me, and the malice which before was torpid under a sullen exterior, was now active. It was perfectly unchanged in every other respect. This new energy was apparent in its activity and its looks, and soon in other ways.

'For a time, you will understand, the change was shown only in an increased vivacity, and an air of menace, as if it was always brooding over some atrocious plan. Its eyes, as before, were never off me.'

'Is it here now?' I asked.

'No,' he replied, 'it has been absent exactly a fortnight and a day - fifteen days. It has sometimes been away so long as nearly two months, once for three. Its absence always exceeds a fortnight, although it may be but by a single day. Fifteen days having past since I saw it last, it may return now at any moment.'

'Is its return,' I asked, 'accompanied by any peculiar manifestation?'

'Nothing - no,' he said. 'It is simply with me again. On lifting my eyes from a book, or turning my head, I see it, as usual, looking at me, and then it remains, as before, for its appointed time. I have never told so much and so minutely before to any one.'

I perceived that he was agitated, and looking like death, and he repeatedly applied his handkerchief to his forehead; I suggested that he might be tired, and told him that I would call, with pleasure, in the morning, but he said:

'No, if you don't mind hearing it all now. I have got so far, and I should prefer making one effort of it. When I spoke to Dr Harley, I had nothing like so much to tell. You are a philosophic physician. You give spirit its proper rank. If this thing is real -'

He paused, looking at me with agitated inquiry.

'We can discuss it by-and-by, and very fully. I will give you all I

think,' I answered, after an interval.

'Well - very well. If it is anything real, I say, it is prevail-ing, little by little, and drawing me more interiorly into hell. Optic nerves, he talked of. Ah! well - there are other nerves of communication. May God Almighty help me! You shall hear.

'Its power of action, I tell you, had increased. Its malice became, in a way aggressive. About two years ago, some questions that were pending between me and the bishop having been settled, I went down to my parish in Warwick-shire, anxious to find occupation in my profession. I was not prepared for what happened, although I have since thought I might have apprehended something like it. The reason of my saying so, is this -'

He was beginning to speak with a great deal more effort and reluctance, and sighed often, and seemed at times nearly overcome. But at this time his manner was not agitated. It was more like that of a sinking patient, who has given him-self up.

'Yes, but I will first tell you about Kenlis, my parish.

'It was with me when I left this place for Dawlbridge. It was my silent travelling companion, and it remained with me at the vicarage. When I entered on the discharge of my duties, another change took place. The thing exhibited an atrocious determination to thwart me. It was with me in the church - in the reading-desk - in the pulpit - within the communion rails. At last, it reached this extremity, that while I was reading to the congregation, it would spring upon the open book and squat there, so that I was unable to see the page. This happened more than once.

'I left Dawlbridge for a time. I placed myself in Dr Har-ley's hands. I did everything he told me. He gave my case a great deal of thought. It interested him, I think. He seemed successful. For nearly three months I was perfectly free from a return. I began to think I was safe. With his full assent I returned to Dawlbridge.

'I travelled in a chaise. I was in good spirits. I was more - I was happy and grateful. I was returning, as I thought delivered from a dreadful hallucination, to the scene of duties which I longed to enter upon. It was a beautiful sunny evening, everything looked serene and cheerful, and I was delighted. I remember looking out of the window to see the spire of my church at Kenlis among the trees,

at the point where one has the earliest view of it. It is exactly where the little stream that bounds the parish passes under the road by a culvert, and where it emerges at the road-side, a stone with an old inscription is placed. As we passed this point, I drew my head in and sat down, and in the corner of the chaise was the monkey.

‘For a moment I felt faint, and then quite wild with des-pair and horror. I called to the driver, and got out, and sat down at the road-side, and prayed to God silently for mercy. A despairing resignation supervened. My companion was with me as I re-entered the vicarage. The same persecution followed. After a short struggle I submitted, and soon I left the place.

‘I told you,’ he said, ‘that the beast has before this become in certain ways aggressive. I will explain a little. It seemed to be actuated by intense and increasing fury, whenever I said my prayers, or even meditated prayer. It amounted at last to a dreadful interruption. You will ask, how could a silent immaterial phantom effect that? It was thus, whenever I meditated praying; it was always before me, and nearer and nearer.

‘It used to spring on a table, on the back of a chair, on the chimney-piece, and slowly to swing itself from side to side, looking at me all the time. There is in its motion an indefin-able power to dissipate thought, and to contract one's attention to that monotony, till the ideas shrink, as it were, to a point, and at last to nothing - and unless I had started up, and shook off the catalepsy I have felt as if my mind were on the point of losing itself. There are other ways,’ he sighed heavily; ‘thus, for instance, while I pray with my eyes closed, it comes closer and closer, and I see it. I know it is not to be accounted for physically, but I do actually see it, though my lids are closed, and so it rocks my mind, as it were, and overpowers me, and I am obliged to rise from my knees. If you had ever yourself known this, you would be acquainted with desperation.’

Chapter IX THE THIRD STAGE

'I see, Dr Hesselius, that you don't lose one word of my statement. I need not ask you to listen specially to what I am now going to tell you. They talk of the optic nerves, and of spectral illusions, as if the organ of sight was the only point assailable by the influences that have fastened upon me - I know better. For two years in my direful case that limitation prevailed. But as food is taken in softly at the lips, and then brought under the teeth, as the tip of the little finger caught in a mill crank will draw in the hand, and the arm, and the whole body, so the miserable mortal who has been once caught firmly by the end of the finest fibre of his nerve, is drawn in and in, by the enormous machinery of hell, until he is as I am. Yes, Doctor, as I am, for while I talk to you, and implore relief, I feel that my prayer is for the impossible, and my pleading with the inexorable.'

I endeavoured to calm his visibly increasing agitation, and told him that he must not despair.

While we talked the night had overtaken us. The filmy moonlight was wide over the scene which the window commanded, and I said:

'Perhaps you would prefer having candles. This light, you know, is odd. I should wish you, as much as possible, under your usual conditions while I make my diagnosis, shall I call it - otherwise I don't care.'

'All lights are the same to me,' he said: 'except when I read or write, I care not if night were perpetual. I am going to tell you what happened about a year ago. The thing began to speak to me.'

'Speak! How do you mean - speak as a man does, do you mean?'

'Yes; speak in words and consecutive sentences, with perfect coherence and articulation; but there is a peculiarity. It is not like the tone of a human voice. It is not by my ears it reaches me - it comes like a singing through my head.'

'This faculty, the power of speaking to me, will be my undoing. It won't let me pray, it interrupts me with dreadful blasphemies. I dare not go on, I could not. Oh! Doctor, can the skill, and thought, and prayers of man avail me nothing!'

'You must promise me, my dear sir, not to trouble yourself with unnecessarily exciting thoughts; confine yourself strictly to the narrative of facts; and recollect, above all, that even if the thing that infests you be all you seem to suppose, a reality with an actual independent life and will, yet it can have no power to hurt you, unless it be given from above: its access to your senses depends mainly upon your physical condition - this is, under God, your comfort and reliance: we are all alike environed. It is only that in your case, the "*paries*," the veil of the flesh, the screen, is a little out of repair, and sights and sounds are transmitted. We must enter on a new course, sir - be encouraged. I'll give to-night to the careful consideration of the whole case.'

'You are very good, sir; you think it worth trying, you don't give me quite up; but, sir, you don't know, it is gaining such an influence over me: it orders me about, it is such a tyrant, and I'm growing so helpless. May God deliver me!'

'It orders you about - of course you mean by speech?'

'Yes, yes; it is always urging me to crimes, to injure others, or myself. You see, Doctor, the situation is urgent, it is indeed. When I was in Shropshire, a few weeks ago' (Mr Jennings was speaking rapidly and trembling now, holding my arm with one hand, and looking in my face), 'I went out one day with a party of friends for a walk: my persecutor, I tell you, was with me at the time. I lagged behind the rest: the country near the Dee, you know, is beautiful. Our path happened to lie near a coal mine, and at the verge of the wood is a perpendicular shaft, they say, a hundred and fifty feet deep. My niece had remained behind with me - she knows, of course, nothing of the nature of my sufferings. She knew, however, that I had been ill, and was low, and she remained to prevent my being quite alone. As we loitered slowly on together the brute that accompanied me was urging me to throw myself down the shaft. I tell you now - oh, sir, think of it! - the one consideration that saved me from that hideous death was the fear lest the shock of witnessing the occurrence should be too much for the poor girl. I asked

her to go on and take her walk with her friends, saying that I could go no further. She made excuses, and the more I urged her the firmer she became. She looked doubtful and frightened. I suppose there was something in my looks or manner that alarmed her; but she would not go, and that literally saved me. You had no idea, sir, that a living man could be made so abject a slave of Satan,' he said, with a ghastly groan and a shudder.

Tere was a pause here, and I said, 'You *were* preserved nevertheless. It was the act of God. You are in his hands and in the power of no other being: be therefore confident for the future.'

Chapter X HOME

I made him have candles lighted, and saw the room looking cheery and inhabited before I left him. I told him that he must regard his illness strictly as one dependent on physical, though *subtle* physical, causes. I told him that he had evidence of God's care and love in the deliverance which he had just described, and that I had perceived with pain that he seemed to regard its peculiar features as indicating that he had been delivered over to spiritual reprobation. Than such a conclusion nothing could be, I insisted, less warranted; and not only so, but more contrary to facts, as disclosed in his mysterious deliverance from that murderous influence during his Shropshire excursion. First, his niece had been retained by his side without his intending to keep her near him; and, secondly, there had been infused into his mind an irresistible repugnance to execute the dreadful suggestion in her presence.

As I reasoned this point with him, Mr Jennings wept. He seemed comforted. One promise I exacted, which was that should the monkey at any time return, I should be sent for immediately; and, repeating my assurance that I would give neither time nor thought to any other subject until I had thoroughly investigated his case, and that to-morrow he should hear the result, I took my leave.

Before getting into the carriage I told the servant that his master was far from well, and that he should make a point of frequently looking into his room.

My own arrangements I made with a view to being quite secure from interruption.

I merely called at my lodgings, and with a travelling-desk and carpet-bag, set off in a hackney-carriage for an inn about two miles out of town, called The Horns, a very quiet and comfortable house, with good thick walls. And there I resolved, without the possibility of intrusion or distraction, to devote some hours of the night, in my comfortable sitting-room, to Mr Jennings' case, and so much of the morning as it might require.

(There occurs here a careful note of Dr Hesselius' opinion upon the case and of the habits, dietary, and medicines which he prescribed. It is curious - some persons would say mystical. But on the whole I doubt whether it would sufficiently interest a reader of the kind I am likely to meet with, to warrant its being here reprinted. The whole letter was plainly written at the inn where he had hid himself for the occasion. The next letter is dated from his town lodgings.)

I left town for the inn where I slept last night at half-past nine, and did not arrive at my room in town until one o'clock this afternoon. I found a letter in Mr Jennings' hand upon my table. It had not come by post, and, on inquiry, I learned that Mr Jennings' servant had brought it, and on learning that I was not to return until to-day, and that no one could tell him my address, he seemed very uncomfortable, and said that his orders from his master were that he was not to return without an answer.

I opened the letter, and read:

'Dear Dr Hesselius. It is here. You had not been an hour gone when it returned. It is speaking. It knows all that has happened. It knows everything - it knows you, and is frantic and atrocious. It reviles. I send you this. It knows every word I have written - I write. This I promised, and I therefore write, but I fear very confused, very incoherently. I am so interrupted, disturbed.

'Ever yours, sincerely yours,

'ROBERT LYNDER JENNINGS.'

'When did this come?' I asked.

'About eleven last night: the man was here again, and has been here three times to-day. The last time is about an hour since.'

Thus answered, and with the notes I had made upon his case in my pocket, I was in a few minutes driving towards Richmond, to see Mr Jennings.

I by no means, as you perceive, despaired of Mr Jennings' case. He had himself remembered and applied, though quite in a mistaken way, the principle which I lay down in my Metaphysical Medicine, and which governs all such cases. I was about to apply it in earnest. I was profoundly interested, and very anxious to see and

examine him while the 'enemy' was actually present.

I drove up to the sombre house, and ran up the steps, and knocked. The door, in a little time, was opened by a tall woman in black silk. She looked ill, and as if she had been crying. She curtsied, and heard my question, but she did not answer. She turned her face away, extending her hand towards two men who were coming down-stairs; and thus having, as it were, tacitly made me over to them, she passed through a side-door hastily and shut it.

The man who was nearest the hall, I at once accosted, but being now close to him, I was shocked to see that both his hands were covered with blood.

I drew back a little, and the man passing down-stairs merely said in a low tone, 'Here's the servant, sir.'

The servant had stopped on the stairs, confounded and dumb at seeing me. He was rubbing his hands in a hand-kerchief, and it was steeped in blood.

'Jones, what is it, what has happened?' I asked, while a sickening suspicion overpowered me.

The man asked me to come up to the lobby. I was beside him in a moment, and frowning and pallid, with contracted eyes, he told me the horror which I already half guessed.

His master had made away with himself.

I went upstairs with him to the room - what I saw there I won't tell you. He had cut his throat with his razor. It was a frightful gash. The two men had laid him on the bed and composed his limbs. It had happened, as the immense pool of blood on the floor declared, at some distance between the bed and the window. There was carpet round his bed, and a carpet under his dressing-table, but none on the rest of the floor, for the man said he did not like a carpet on his bedroom. In this sombre, and now terrible room, one of the great elms that darkened the house was slowly moving the shadow of one of its great boughs upon this dreadful floor.

I beckoned to the servant and we went down-stairs together. I turned off the hall into an old-fashioned panelled room, and there standing, I heard all the servant had to tell. It was not a great deal.

'I concluded, sir, from your words, and looks, sir, as you left

last night, that you thought my master seriously ill. I thought it might be that you were afraid of a ft, or some-thing. So I attended very close to your directions. He sat up late, till past three o'clock. He was not writing or reading. He was talking a great deal to himself, but that was nothing unusual. At about that hour I assisted him to undress, and left him in his slippers and dressing-gown. I went back softly in about half an hour. He was in his bed, quite undressed, and a pair of candles lighted on the table beside his bed. He was leaning on his elbow and looking out at the other side of the bed when I came in. I asked him if he wanted any-thing, and he said no.

"I don't know whether it was what you said to me, sir, or something a little unusual about him, but I was uneasy, uncommon uneasy about him last night.

"In another half hour, or it might be a little more, I went up again. I did not hear him talking as before. I opened the door a little. The candles were both out, which was not usual. I had a bedroom candle, and I let the light in, a little bit, looking softly round. I saw him sitting in that chair beside the dressing-table with his clothes on again. He turned round and looked at me. I thought it strange he should get up and dress, and put out the candles to sit in the dark, that way. But I only asked him again if I could do anything for him. He said, no, rather sharp, I thought. I asked if I might light the candles, and he said, "Do as you like, Jones." So I lighted them, and I lingered about the room, and he said, "Tell me truth, Jones, why did you come again - you did not hear any one cursing?" "No, sir," I said, wondering what he could mean.

"No," said he, after me, "of course, no;" and I said to him, "Wouldn't it be well, sir, you went to bed? It's just five o'clock," and he said nothing but, "Very likely; good-night, Jones." So I went, sir, but in less than an hour I came again. The door was fast, and he heard me, and called as I thought from the bed to know what I wanted, and he desired me not to disturb him again. I lay down and slept for a little. It must have been between six and seven when I went up again. The door was still fast, and he made no answer, so I did not like to disturb him, and thinking he was asleep, I left him till nine. It was his custom to ring when he wished me to come, and I had no particular hour for calling him. I tapped very gently, and getting no answer, I stayed away a good while, supposing he was

getting some rest then. It was not till eleven o'clock I grew really uncomfortable about him - for at the latest he was never, that I could remember, later than half-past ten. I got no answer. I knocked and called, and still no answer. So not being able to force the door, I called Thomas from the stables, and together we forced it, and found him in the shocking way you saw.'

Jones had no more to tell. Poor Mr Jennings was very gentle, and very kind. All his people were fond of him. I could see that the servant was very much moved.

So, dejected and agitated, I passed from that terrible house, and its dark canopy of elms, and I hope I shall never see it more. While I write to you I feel like a man who has but half waked from a frightful and monotonous dream. My memory rejects the picture with incredulity and horror. Yet I know it is true. It is the story of the process of a poison, a poison which excites the reciprocal action of spirit and nerve, and paralyses the tissue that separates those cognate functions of the senses, the external and the interior. Thus we find strange bed-fellows, and the mortal and immortal prematurely make acquaintance.

Conclusion A WORD FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER

My dear Van L., you have suffered from an affection similar to that which I have just described. You twice complained of a return of it.

Who, under God, cured you? Your humble servant, Martin Hesselius. Let me rather adopt the more emphasized piety of a certain good old French surgeon of three hundred years ago: 'I treated, and God cured you.'

Come, my friend, you are not to be hippish. Let me tell you a fact.

I have met with, and treated, as my book shows, fifty-seven cases of this kind of vision, which I term indifferently 'sublimated,' 'precocious,' and 'interior.'

There is another class of affections which are truly termed - though commonly confounded with those which I describe - spectral illusions. These latter I look upon as being no less simply curable than a cold in the head or a trifling dyspepsia.

It is those which rank in the first category that test our promptitude of thought. Fifty-seven such cases have I encountered, neither more nor less. And in how many of these have I failed? In no one single instance.

There is no one affliction of mortality more easily and certainly reducible, with a little patience, and a rational confidence in the physician. With these simple conditions, I look upon the cure as absolutely certain.

You are to remember that I had not even commenced to treat Mr Jennings' case. I have not any doubt that I should have cured him perfectly in eighteen months, or possibly it might have extended to two years. Some cases are very rapidly curable, others extremely tedious. Every intelligent physician who will give thought and diligence to the task, will effect a cure.

You know my tract on The Cardinal Functions of the Brain. I there, by the evidence of innumerable facts, prove, as I think, the high probability of a circulation arterial and venous in its mechanism, through the nerves. Of this system, thus considered, the brain is the heart. The fluid, which is propagated hence through one class of nerves, returns in an altered state through another, and the nature of that fluid is spiritual, though not immaterial, any more than, as I before remarked, light or electricity are so.

By various abuses, among which the habitual use of such agents as green tea is one, this fluid may be affected as to its quality, but it is more frequently disturbed as to equilibrium. This fluid being that which we have in common with spirits, a congestion found upon the masses of brain or nerve, connected with the interior sense, forms a surface unduly exposed, on which disembodied spirits may operate: communication is thus more or less effectually established. Between this brain circulation and the heart circulation there is an intimate sympathy. The seat, or rather the instrument of exterior vision, is the eye. The seat of interior vision is the nervous tissue and brain, immediately about and above the eyebrow. You remember how effectually I dissipated your pictures by the simple application of iced eau-de-cologne. Few cases, however, can be treated exactly alike with anything like rapid success. Cold acts powerfully as a repellent of the nervous fluid. Long enough continued it will even produce that permanent insensibility which we call numbness, and a little longer, muscular as well as sensational paralysis.

I have not, I repeat, the slightest doubt that I should have first dimmed and ultimately sealed that inner eye which Mr Jennings had inadvertently opened. The same senses are opened in delirium tremens, and entirely shut up again when the over-action of the cerebral heart, and the prodigious nervous congestions that attend it, are terminated by a decided change in the state of the body. It is by acting steadily upon the body, by a simple process, that this result is produced - and inevitably produced - I have never yet failed.

Poor Mr Jennings made away with himself. But that catastrophe was the result of a totally different malady, which, as it were, projected itself upon that disease which was established. His case was in the distinctive manner a complication, and the

complaint under which he really succumbed, was hereditary suicidal mania. Poor Mr Jennings I cannot call a patient of mine, for I had not even begun to treat his case, and he had not yet given me, I am convinced, his full and unreserved confidence. If the patient do not array himself on the side of the disease, his cure is certain.



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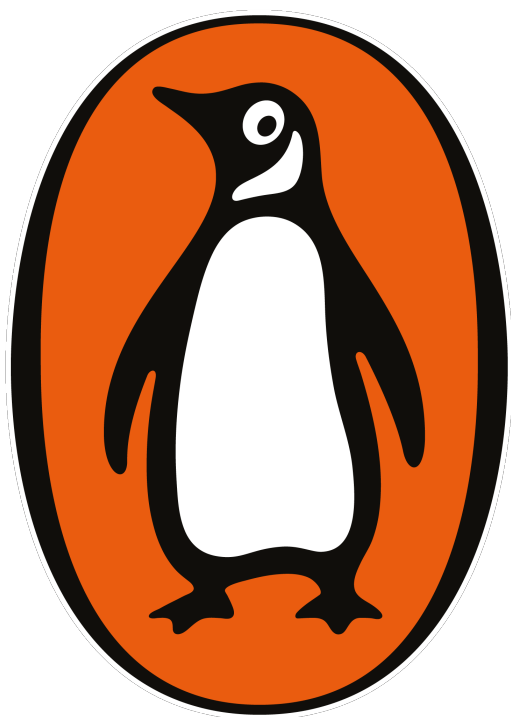
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那是别的什么人附着
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这下好，
我连自己姓甚名谁也
说不出，
我是谁呀！”



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瑞普·凡·温克尔

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迪德里克·尼克博克曾经是纽约的一位老绅士，对该州的荷兰殖民历史及其原住民后裔的风俗掌故很有研究兴趣。但是他做研究不靠书本，书本上也没有多少他感兴趣的东西，倒是发现坊间百姓，特别是那些老太太，知道很多民间逸事，这对真实的历史无疑是无价之宝，所以他就走街串巷，民间采风。每当他在亭亭如盖的梧桐下碰上一家地道的荷兰人，住着矮顶农舍，过着怡然自得、与世隔绝的日子，就喜出望外，仿佛得到一部印着哥特文字的珍稀卷帙，如饥似渴地研究起来。

他研究的是荷兰总督执政该州的那段历史，几年以后，书出版了。对于书中的文学特色，仁者见仁，智者见智，时至今日，依然不敢恭维。它的主要亮点在于严谨和精确，虽然刚开始面世时，受到些质疑，但是现在完全立住脚了，被所有历史馆藏收录，成为公认的史学经典。

这本书出版不久，老绅士就死了。斯人已逝，说句他的一生应该干点更大的事，不至于有失恭敬。然而，人各有志，他还是太由着自己的性子了。即使现在他的书在邻居看来不时会惹是生非，不时令朋友不快（对这些朋友，他很尊重，很热爱），但大家想起他的错误与愚蠢，感到更多的是“悲伤而不是愤怒”，以至于人们开始怀疑他的初衷根本就不是有意伤害或冒犯。现在不管批评家如何评论他，老百姓对他还是好评如潮，特别是一些面点师，为了永远纪念他，一度把他的肖像印在新年蛋糕上，这几乎算得上是与把他的肖像印在滑铁卢奖牌或安妮女王的硬币上同样的荣幸了。

下面的故事就是在迪德里克·尼克博克的遗稿里发现的。

迪德里克·尼克博克的遗作《瑞普·凡·温克尔》

沃登，撒克逊人的上帝，

星期三，以你命名。

永远，我将保持那份至诚

直到沃登之日

悄悄爬进坟墓——

——卡特赖特 [1]

凡是在哈德孙河上航行过的人，一定记得卡茨基尔山脉，那是阿巴拉契亚山系的一支断脉。远远望去，溯河向西，巍峨峻拔，傲视周围的乡村。季节轮转，天气无常，甚至一天中的每一个时辰，山色与山形都会变幻。于是，整个山脉在远近乡村的主妇看来，是完美的晴雨表。天气晴朗，披上紫蓝衣裳的崇山峻岭倒映在璀璨的夜空；有时，万里无云，唯有山顶氤氲弥漫，在残阳余晖中，犹如荣耀的冠冕，光芒四射。

在仙山脚下，可以望见一座村子，炊烟袅袅，掩映在树丛中的木瓦屋顶泛着微光；高地的浅蓝和近处的葱翠交相辉映。这是一个非常古老的小村庄，由该省早期一些荷兰殖民者创建，也就是大约在虔诚的彼得·斯特伊弗桑特（愿他安息！）执政之初。几年前，这里还可以看到一些早期原住民的屋子。这些屋子都是用荷兰运来的小黄砖建的，都装着格子窗，正面是三角墙，顶部有风信鸡。

就在这个村子里，就在其中的一间屋子里（说老实话，这种房子都经年饱受风侵雨蚀，全是破败不堪的样子），许多年来（当时整个乡村还是大不列颠的一个省），一直住着一个单纯而善良的人，名叫瑞普·凡·温克尔。瑞普·凡·温克尔是凡·温克尔斯的后裔。在彼得·斯特伊弗桑特统治下的骑士时代，凡·温克尔斯威武勇猛，还同彼得·斯特伊弗桑特一道参加了围攻克里斯蒂娜堡的战斗。然而，瑞普·凡·温克尔一点儿也没有遗传祖先骁勇善战的性格。我注意到他是一个单纯善良的男人，一个心肠很好的邻居，一个在妻子面前言听计从的丈夫。后一种情况造就他脾气温顺，人缘很好，因为大凡在家里被悍妇管束的丈夫，出门在外，往往都会体贴入微、讨人欢喜，他们的性格，在家庭烈火的熔炉里被打磨得温文尔雅。看来，培养人们忍耐和坚毅的品格，枕边风抵得上世间所有的布道。所以，从某种意义上讲，摊上一个凶悍的妻子还是不幸中的万幸。以此类推，瑞普·凡·温克尔应该算得上是三生有幸了。

事实正是如此，村子里所有贤妻良母都特别喜欢他，通常女人都喜欢好脾气的男人。凡是出现家庭争吵，她们都一边倒站在瑞普·凡·温克尔的一边。晚上扎堆儿闲聊家长里短时，也都一股脑儿地把所有罪过全部推到凡·温克尔夫人身上。就连村里的孩子们在他走过时，都欢呼雀跃。瑞普跟孩子们一起玩耍，帮他们做玩具，教他们放风筝、打弹珠，给他们讲很长很长的幽灵、女巫和印第安人的故事。一见他为了躲避悍妻而在村子里晃荡，孩子们就蜂拥而至，有的扯住

他衣服的下摆，有的爬到他背上，跟他玩着千奇百怪的恶作剧，他却从不生气，就连附近的狗都没有朝他叫的。

可是，瑞普这人有一个大毛病，那就是，他对各种有利可图的劳动都无可救药地厌恶透顶。这完全不是他这个人不够勤奋或者没有恒心。因为他可以带上一根同鞑靼人的长矛一样又长又重的钓鱼竿，坐在一块潮湿的石头上，一钓就是一整天，而不会有丝毫的怨言，即使没有一条鱼儿咬钩，他也不会觉得扫兴。他经常是一连几小时扛着猎枪，步履艰难地穿过森林，穿过沼泽地，爬上山冈，越过山谷，就是为了打几只松鼠或几只野鸽。邻居需要帮忙时，他从来都是二话不说，即使需要付出最艰苦的劳动，诸如给印第安玉米剥皮，或者建石头围墙之类的乡下趣事，他总是冲锋在前的。村里的妇女们也总喜欢找他跑跑腿，让他做一些连她们自己不体贴的丈夫都不干的各种小零活儿。也就是说，瑞普对外人的事情百般殷勤，对自家的事情从不过问。对于如何尽家里的义务，把自家地里的活儿干得利利落落，他觉得比登天还难。

事实上，他跟别人说过，在自家地里干活儿，是白费工夫。他家的那块地，小得可怜，整个村子，就没有哪块地比这还小。那块地怎么种也种不好，他再怎么努力都没用。他家的栅栏一而再再而三地倒塌；他家的牛不是跑得没影儿，就是钻进了卷心菜的菜地里；田里的杂草一定是他家的长得最快；只要他一想外出做点活儿，还没等出门，天就下起雨来。就这样，他的祖传家产在他手上日复一日地缩水。他的田地，今天少一亩，明天少一亩，最后就只剩下一小块土地用来种植印度玉米和土豆了。可是，这块地算得上是附近一带种得最为糟糕的一块地呀。

瑞普的几个孩子同他本人一样，穿得破破烂烂，整天到处撒野，像是没有爹妈的孩子。他儿子小瑞普，跟他就像是一个模子刻出来的捣蛋鬼，穿着他父亲的旧衣服，各种脾气秉性相较他父亲有过之而无不及。经常看到他就像一匹小马驹，屁颠儿地跟在母亲身后，穿着一条他父亲不穿了灯笼裤，费力地用一只手提拎着，就像一位贵妇在雨天提着裙裾走路一样。

可是，瑞普·凡·温克尔整天乐呵呵的，看上去傻傻的，很讨人喜欢。他把日子过得轻轻松松，管它是白面包还是黑面包，怎么省事怎么吃，宁可只有一便士挨饿，也不为了一英镑干活儿。按他的性格，就是开开心心吹着口哨过日子。可他妻子就是没完没了、絮絮不休地在他耳边唠叨着，说他游手好闲；说他缺心少肺；说一家人都要毁在他的身上了。从清晨，到中午，再到夜晚，她的舌头就嚼个不停，无论瑞普说什么或者做什么，都会招来一顿机关枪般的训斥。对付这类训斥，瑞普都准备好了统一的回复，而且因为使用得过于频

繁，已逐渐成了习惯——耸耸肩，摇摇头，抬眼望天，一声不吭。可是，这又会招来妻子新一轮的连珠炮，最后，他只好偃旗息鼓，走到外边去——这是给怕老婆的男人们唯一的退路。

在家里，跟瑞普形影不离的就只有他的那条狼狗——沃尔夫。沃尔夫跟他的主人一样，对凡·温克尔夫人怕得要命，因为凡·温克尔夫人认为她丈夫和狗简直是懒到一块儿了。她甚至双眼充满邪恶地看着它，认为沃尔夫就是把主人引入歧途的祸根。的确是那么回事儿，从符合爱犬要求的精神层面来说，沃尔夫勇敢无比，就像曾经在野外森林中生活过一样——可是，有什么勇气能够经得住一个爱嚼舌头的妇女所带来的喋喋不休、令人困扰的恐惧呢？只要沃尔夫一进到家，它的毛发就耷拉了下去，它的尾巴就垂到地面上或者夹在两腿之间。它在屋子里窜来窜去，活像是要上绞刑架的样子，时不时斜着眼睛，瞅瞅凡·温克尔夫人。只要看到她拿起扫帚柄或者长柄勺做出哪怕是一丁点儿挥舞的动作，沃尔夫就狂叫不止，夺门而逃。

瑞普·凡·温克尔的婚姻车轮滚滚向前，可生活却度日如年。尖酸刻薄的性子，绝不会因为天增岁月而柔软温和。而那尖刻的舌头，是唯一锐利的工具，经过不断使用，不钝反利。有好一阵子，只要被赶出家门，瑞普就到一个由村里的贤达、智者及闲人常年聚集的俱乐部里寻求慰藉。俱乐部在一个小客栈前面的条凳上召开会议，小客栈上挂着乔治三世陛下的那幅脸色红润的画像。大家就坐在树荫底下，度过漫漫、懒散的夏日。他们无精打采，闲扯村子里的事情，要么就讲着无聊乏味的故事，没完没了，让人昏昏欲睡。但是，碰巧有旧报纸从途经此地的旅行者那里落入他们手中时，他们便会围绕报纸内容展开深刻讨论，即便是政治家花钱来听，也很值得。当衣冠楚楚、满腹经纶的小个子德里克·凡·布默尔，这位连词典里最难的词语都难不倒的小学教师，不紧不慢读报的时候，大家便开始侧耳倾听，那是多么庄严的场景哪！他们在对发生在几个月内的公共事件发表真知灼见时，又是多么的贤明呀！

这个小团体的意见完全受尼古拉斯·维德的控制。尼古拉斯既是村长，也是店主。他从早到晚都坐在小客栈门口，只有在为了躲避太阳，且还要保证自己能始终待在那棵大树的树荫底下时，才会稍微移动一下。这样，邻居们完全可以根据他移动的位置来确定每天的具体时间，那准确度可与日晷相媲美。的确，很难听到他开口说什么，他只是一个劲儿地抽烟斗。可是，拥护他的人（因为凡是大人物都有拥护者）都很懂他，也知道怎样去揣摩他的心思。当读给他听或者讲给他听的东西让他不快时，你就会注意到他抱着烟斗吸个不停，并且短促地、频繁地、愤怒地吐着烟雾。但在他感到满意的时候，便会慢条斯理、心平气和地把烟吸进去，再吐出一缕缕轻盈、平和的烟雾。有时，他会从嘴里抽出烟斗，让香气在鼻子周围缭绕升腾。与此同时，

他还会严肃地点点头，表示完全同意。

可即便是如此固若金汤的堡垒，不幸的瑞普最终还是被他那凶悍的妻子寻到了踪迹。她会突然闯进来把整个聚会搅得不得安宁，还把在场的所有人一个个骂得一文不值。就连那个令人敬畏的大人物尼古拉斯·维德，碰到这位使人不寒而栗的悍妇口无遮拦的舌根时，也一样在劫难逃。她公然指控就是他让自己的男人染上了游手好闲的恶习。

可怜的瑞普，最后几乎到了绝望的境地。要逃避农活儿，还有妻子的谩骂，唯一的选择就是手持猎枪，进入森林游荡。在森林里，他有时会坐在树下，与沃尔夫一起分享行囊中的食物。他很同情沃尔夫，把沃尔夫看成同病相怜的伙伴。“可怜的沃尔夫，”他经常会说，“汝之女主人，让汝之生活牛马莫如了。请勿把心伤，伙伴。只要老朽一息尚存，汝将永远有一友人相伴相依。”沃尔夫总会摇摇尾巴，满怀期望地看着主人的脸庞。假如狗能够感受到他人对自己的同情，我深信它会用整个身心来回报这种情感的。

在一个秋高气爽的日子里，在一段长时间的闲逛后，瑞普不知不觉地爬到了卡茨基尔山脉其中一处最高的地方。他到这里是做他最喜欢的事情——打松鼠。在这里，周围一片静谧，猎枪响起时，枪声在孤寂的山谷里回荡来回荡去。傍晚时分，他气喘吁吁，精疲力竭，一屁股坐到一个绿色的小山包上，山包上覆盖着草本植被，这是悬崖边缘的顶端。从树与树之间的空隙处，他可以俯瞰到延绵数英里 [2] 满是葱茏树木的乡村。他还能看到远处高贵的哈德孙河，在他的身下，远远地，远远地，流淌着，平静却庄严。一块紫色的云印在了河面上，间或有零零星星缓缓行驶的小帆船，静静地卧在犹如明镜的河面上，最后隐没于蓝色的高地之间。

在小山的另一边，他俯视着幽深的山谷，那里一片荒凉寂寞，高低不平，谷底到处都是从悬空的悬崖上撒落下来的碎片，夕阳反射的光线是几乎照不到这里的。有一阵子，瑞普趴在地上，看着这里的景色，陷入了沉思。夜幕渐渐降临，卡茨基尔山脉开始把长长的蓝色的阴影投进山谷。他意识到，天就要黑下来了，回到村子还需要走很长很长的路。可是，一想到回家要面对凡·温克尔夫人所带来的恐惧，瑞普长长地叹了一口气。

正要下山的时候，他听到从远处传来的一个声音大喊着：“瑞普·凡·温克尔！瑞普·凡·温克尔！”他环顾四周，但什么也没能看到，只有一只乌鸦形只影单地飞到山的那边去了。他想，一定是他的想象给他带来幻觉了。他转过身去，又开始准备下山。这时，他听到同样的叫声在寂静的夜空里回响：“瑞普·凡·温克尔！瑞普·凡·温克尔！”——与此同时，沃尔夫弓起了脊背，发出低沉的吼

叫，偷偷地躲到主人身边，胆怯地朝山谷望去。瑞普这时感到，一种无可名状的恐惧向他整个身子袭来。他急切地朝着相同的方向望去，察觉到有一个奇怪的人影正在缓慢而吃力地往岩石上爬，他背着的东西太重，把他的背都压弯了。他非常吃惊，居然在这个偏僻且人迹罕至的地方看到有人出现。但他猜想，那很可能是附近的某个人需要他的帮助，于是他加快了脚步，准备下去伸出援手。

在离那个人更近了一些时，这个陌生人奇特的外表让瑞普倍感吃惊。他身材矮小，体形宽阔，年岁老迈，头发浓密，胡子灰白；一身古荷兰式装束，棉布短上衣紧紧勒在腰上，下身套了好几层马裤，最外面的那件马裤有着足够大的容量，马裤上镶着两排扣子，扣子往下一直到两侧和膝盖的隆起处。他肩上扛着装酒的小木桶，里面似乎装满了烈酒。他示意瑞普走过去给他帮帮忙。尽管面对这个刚刚认识的人他还有点儿胆怯，半信半疑，可瑞普还是像平常那样，很乐意地照办了。他们稍事休息了一下，就接着攀上一条狭窄的沟壑，这里显然是山溪干涸后留下的河床。再往上爬时，瑞普不时听见连绵不断的、轰隆隆的声音，就像远处的雷鸣。那声音似乎是从深谷中，或者是从高大的岩石的裂缝里传来。崎岖的山路朝着深谷延伸开去。他停留了片刻，继而猜想，那一定是那些转瞬即逝的雷阵雨发出的轰隆声，在山间这样的海拔高度上，这样的雷阵雨非常常见。他们继续前行，穿过峡谷，二人来到了一个像圆形剧场的山坳里。山坳周围，都是垂直的悬崖。悬崖边缘高悬着枝繁叶茂的树木，只能偶尔从缝隙间看到蔚蓝的天空和闪着光芒的夜云。在整个过程中，瑞普同他的伙伴只是默默地、艰辛前行着。尽管瑞普对于要把一小木桶烈酒扛到这荒山上的做法感到惊奇不已，但在这未知的事物中有一种奇怪和不可理解的东西被激发出来，让人心生敬畏，也倍感陌生。

一走进圆形剧场，让人感到好奇的新事情便出现了。就在中间的一块平地上，一帮看上去模样古怪的人正在玩着九柱地滚球。他们个个穿着稀奇古怪的服装——一些人穿着短短的紧身上衣，另一些人穿着皮带上别着长刀的坎肩，大多数人的马裤都宽大无比，跟那个领路长者穿的式样相似。他们的面容也非同寻常。有一个人脑袋很大，脸很宽，眼睛小小的，像猪一样。另一个人的脸看上去好像就只长了鼻子，他头上戴着白色的锥形帽，上面还插了个公鸡的红尾巴。他们都留着胡须，形状各异，颜色也各异。其中一个人似乎是指挥官，他矮胖胖的，年纪很大，有绅士风度，看上去饱经风霜。他身着花边紧身上衣，皮带和挂剑的饰带都很宽大，帽子上面装饰着羽毛，脚穿红色的长筒袜和饰有玫瑰花的高跟鞋。这一大群人，让瑞普想起了村子牧师多米尼·凡·沙伊克家客厅里挂着的那幅佛拉芒古画中的人物。那幅画是在殖民时期从荷兰带回来的。

让瑞普感觉最为奇怪的是，尽管这些人看起来是在自娱自乐，可

他们始终表情严肃，极尽神秘不语之能事，而且这也是他曾见过的最扫兴的娱乐的人群了。没有什么声音可以打破这里的宁静，有的只是一次次击球的声音。每次滚球的声音都会顺着山脉回响，就像轰隆隆的雷鸣。

当瑞普和他的同伴走近时，所有人突然停止了游戏，并带着雕塑般呆呆的眼神凝视着他，他们面容古怪、粗野，神情呆滞，看得他的心怦怦直跳，双膝像筛糠一样战栗不已。就在这时，他的伙伴把酒桶里的酒倒进了大酒壶里，并示意他招待这些人。他战战兢兢地照办。他们不声不响地把酒一饮而尽，接着又玩起球来。

渐渐地，瑞普的敬畏之情和忧虑之感都消失了。他甚至在没有人盯住自己的时候，大胆地尝了尝那酒。他觉得那酒尝起来有荷兰制杜松子酒的味道。他天生是个好酒之徒，很快就经不住诱惑又过去喝了一口。一种味道激发出另一种新的味道，他一次又一次地走过去，以至于到最后迷失了所有的感官。他的双眼恍惚起来——脑袋慢慢地不听使唤耷拉下来，人也陷入了深度睡眠。

等他一觉醒来时，发现自己躺在一个绿色的小山包上。当初他正是在这里看到那个来自峡谷里的老人。他揉了揉眼睛——这是一个阳光灿烂的早晨。鸟儿在树丛中欢跳啁啾，老鹰在空中盘旋，并迎着纯净的山风翱翔。“毫无疑问，”瑞普想了想说，“我并没有整夜都睡在这里。”他回忆了一下自己睡前发生的事情：那个背着一小木桶酒的怪人，还有山谷——岩石中那个荒凉隐蔽之地，那群愁眉苦脸的玩九柱地滚球的人们，那只酒壶……“啊哈！那只酒壶！那只邪恶的酒壶！”瑞普心里说道，“我该找个什么借口向凡·温克尔夫人道歉呢？”

他环顾四周，想要寻找自己的那支枪，可是，在先前放置那支油光闪亮、光洁猎枪的地方，放着一把旧火枪：枪管锈迹斑斑，枪机已经脱落，枪托已被虫蛀。他此刻满腹狐疑，认为山里的那帮表情冷峻的戏子把他捉弄了一番，并在他喝醉酒之后，把他的枪给劫走了。沃尔夫也不见了踪影，它或许是在追松鼠或鹧鸪时迷路了吧。瑞普一路边吹哨子，边喊着沃尔夫的名字——但一切都枉然。山里的回声重复着他的口哨和喊声，却依旧不见狗的影子。

他决定再次回到昨晚那伙人玩耍的地方，只要碰到其中的任何一个，就向他索要自己的狗和枪。当他起身准备走时，发现身上的关节变得非常僵硬，而且要做一些平常的活动也变得力不从心。“这些山路不适合我走了，”瑞普思忖道，“如果这场闹剧让我落下一身的风湿病，继而使我卧床不起，那凡·温克尔夫人可是得跟我度过一段‘美好时光’了。”他有些吃力地向山下走去，找到了前一天晚上与同伴一起往上爬的那条冲沟，但让他吃惊的是，一条山溪此刻正泛着泡沫沿着冲沟流淌，冲过一块又一块岩石，让整个山谷回荡着潺潺流水声。他

想办法尽量爬到冲沟的侧边，不无艰辛地穿过由白桦树、黄樟树和金缕梅树组成的灌木丛，不时还被那些树间盘绕纠缠的野葡萄藤绊倒或缠住，卷曲的藤条在他前进的路上布下了天罗地网。

终于，他来到了山谷穿过悬崖的地方，到达了圆形剧场——先前的空旷地带已经没有了踪影。无数的岩石形成了一堵高高的、坚不可摧的墙。溪水的急流从墙面上翻腾而下，泛着一片片羽毛状的泡沫，落入又阔又深的水潭，水潭在周围森林阴影的掩映下黯然无光。就是在这儿，可怜的瑞普被迫停了下来。他又唤了一次狗的名字，吹了声口哨——只有一群闲散的乌鸦用呱呱的叫声回应着。它们在悬崖边上向阳的那棵枯树周围盘旋，高高在上，似乎在鄙视和嘲笑这位可怜男子的困惑与烦恼。

这可怎么办呢？上午慢慢地过去了。瑞普对早餐的渴望让他更加饥肠辘辘。他舍不得自己的狗和枪，惧怕见到妻子。可在这群山里头挨饿，也不是个事儿呀！他摇了摇头，扛起了锈迹斑斑的火枪，带着满腹的忧愁和焦虑，踏上了回家的路。

走回村庄的路上，他遇到很多人，可一个也不认识。这让他有点儿吃惊，他原以为自己认识周围乡村里的每一个人。他们的衣着也同他以往所看到的不一样。村里的人也是个都用同样吃惊的目光盯着他瞧。而所有人在与他对视的时候，都会无一例外地摸一下下巴。看到他们一而再再而三地重复这个动作，瑞普也情不自禁地做了起来。让他万分惊讶的是自己的胡须，竟然有一英尺 [3] 长了！

这时，他已经来到村边。一群陌生的孩子跟在他后面跑个不停，一边大声叫嚣，一边指着他那灰白的胡须。还有那些狗，也没有哪一只他所认得的老相识。当他经过时，所有的狗都朝他叫了起来。就连村子本身都变了——比以往更大，人也更多。一排又一排从未见过的房屋，那些他一直很熟悉并经常光顾的房子已经不知去向了。门牌上面贴着的都是陌生的名字，窗边出现的都是陌生的面孔——一切都是陌生的。他心里感到非常不安。他开始怀疑自己周围的世界是不是都着魔了。这确实是他前天才离开的土生土长的村子呀！卡茨基尔山脉就矗立在那里，远处流淌着银色的哈德孙河，每一座小山和每一个山谷都在原处没有动，瑞普充满了困惑，痛苦不堪。“昨晚那个酒壶，”他心里想，“把我可怜的脑袋瓜弄糊涂了！”

费了不少气力，他才找到回家的路。他不敢吭声，非常畏惧地走近自己的家，每一刻都希望听到凡·温克尔夫人那刺耳的叫声。可是他发现，自家的房子已经年久失修了——屋顶已经坍塌，窗户均已破碎，门板也已脱落。一只看上去就像沃尔夫一样，并且饿得半死的狗在房子周围躲躲闪闪。瑞普直呼其名，但那只恶狗却咆哮了起来，龇着牙走开了。这可真是杀人不见血的一招。“我的爱犬呀，”可怜的瑞

普长吁短叹地说，“把我都忘得一干二净了！”

他走进自己的屋子。说实话，以往那屋子总是由凡·温克尔夫人打理得利利落落的，现在空空如也，没有人住，显然是遭人遗弃了。这份苍凉让他所有的惧内情绪荡然无存。他大声呼喊妻子和几个孩子的名字，有那么一会儿，这孤寂的房间回荡着他的声音，但紧接着，一切又归于沉寂。

他疾跑出去，来到以往常去的地方——那个村子里的小客栈，但它也不见了。取而代之的是一座摇摇欲坠的大木屋，开着几扇大窗户，有些已经破裂，用一些旧帽子和旧衬裙修补着，门的上方印着“乔纳森·杜立特尔联合旅店”的字样。昔日的那棵给这个荷兰小客栈带来一片荫蔽的大树已经没有了，现在矗立着一根高大裸露的柱子，顶部挂着个好似红色睡帽的玩意儿。那东西下面飘着一面旗子，旗子上面是奇怪的星星和条纹的组合。这一切都很怪异，也很让人费解。不过，瑞普认出了指示牌上肤色红润的乔治三世的面容，他曾在这张脸的下面平静地抽了那么多的烟斗，但即使是这个，也大大地改变了模样。原本的大衣颜色从红色变成了蓝色和黄色，手上握着的是剑，而不是权杖，头上戴着一顶三角帽，三角帽下面印着大字：GENERAL WASHINGTON（华盛顿将军）。

就像往常一样，门口依旧围着一群人，但这些人瑞普一个也想不起。就连他们的性子似乎也都发生了变化。瞧他们说话的语气，一个个都很急于争个是非曲直，争先恐后地喧闹不已，没有了昔日的那份平和与安宁。他找了找贤明之士尼古拉斯·维德，但没有找到。尼古拉斯·维德有一张大脸和双下巴，他总是叼着长长的烟斗，喷出团团的烟雾，并不跟人闲聊。他也找了找小学老师凡·布默尔，但同样没有找到。凡·布默尔喜欢拿着旧报纸，慢慢品读其中的内容。取代他们的，是一个精瘦的，看上去很有脾气的家伙，他口袋里装满了传单，正在激情满怀地神侃什么公民的权利，选举，议会议员，自由，邦克山战役，七六年的英雄们 [4]，以及那些完全令人摸不着头脑的行话术语，弄得凡·温克尔一头雾水。

蓄着灰白的长须、扛着生锈的猎枪、穿着破烂衣服、身后还跟着一群妇孺的瑞普，很快引起了旅店政治家们的注意。他们满是一副好奇地将他团团围住，从头到脚打量了一番。演讲者急急忙忙地走到瑞普跟前，把他稍稍拉到一边问他到底投哪一边的票。瑞普傻乎乎的，茫然瞪着双眼。另一位忙来忙去的小矮个子拉着他的胳膊，踮起脚，凑近他的耳朵，问他是支持联邦政府还是民主党人。对这个问题瑞普同样听不懂。这时，一位头上戴着尖尖的三角帽，非常世故，也自以为是了不起的年长绅士，从人群那边走了过来。他在经过人群时，用胳膊肘把他们拨到左右两边。直挺挺地站到了凡·温克尔跟前。他一只手叉

着腰，另一只手拄着拐杖。那双锐利的眼睛和尖尖的帽子似乎刺进了瑞普的灵魂。他语气严峻，逼问瑞普为什么扛着枪，身后还带着一群人来选举，是不是要在村子里搞暴动。“呜呼，各位先生，”瑞普带着沮丧，大声说道，“我是个安分守己的穷苦人，土生土长的本地人，是国王的忠实臣民——愿上帝护佑他！”

这时，从围观的人群中爆发出一片呼喊：“是个托利党！是个托利党！是个间谍！是个难民！去他的！让他滚！”那个戴着三角帽，自以为了不得的男人费了好大的劲儿才让一切恢复了秩序。他慎重地紧锁起眉头，再次质问这位不明身份的“罪犯”到这里来是干什么的，来找谁的。可怜的瑞普，他谦卑地向他保证，自己毫无恶意，只是来此寻找曾经的邻居，他们以前常在这客栈附近相聚。

“那好，他们是哪些人？叫什么名字？”

瑞普思考了片刻，然后问：“尼古拉斯·维德在哪里？”

有好一阵子，大家都沉默不语。这时，一位长者用细声细气的声音回答说，“尼古拉斯·维德呀？唉，他过世了呀，过世十八年啦！教堂的墓地上，有一块木制的墓碑，上面写有他的身世，可那块墓碑也腐烂了，不知去向了。”

“布罗姆·达彻在哪儿呢？”

“哦，他在战争一开始就参军啦。有人说，他在进攻哈德孙河西岸的斯托尼波因特时阵亡了，又有人说他在安东尼碧山的山脚下，在一次暴风骤雨中溺亡了——我不知道哪个是真，哪个是假——反正他再也没有回来。”

“那小学老师凡·布默尔在哪里呢？”

“他也去参军了——还当上了国民军的大将，现在在议会当议员呢。”

听到自己的家，自己的朋友们，都发生了这样令他难过的变化，发现自己在这个世界上变得孤孤单单的，瑞普的心都碎了——他得到的每一个答复都让他感到莫名其妙，时间怎么会有那么大的跨度，他们所谈及的一切词汇竟然是那么难以理解——战争呀，国会呀，斯东尼角呀，等等，他都无法理解了。他再也没有勇气打听别的朋友的情况，唯有绝望地大声叫了起来：“难道这儿就没有人认识瑞普·凡·温克尔的吗？”

“噢，你是说瑞普·凡·温克尔吗？”两三个人大声说道，“当然认识啦！那就是瑞普·凡·温克尔——在那边——正靠在那棵树上呢。”

瑞普向那边瞧了瞧，注意到自己上山时，有个人跟他长得一模一样：不用说跟他一样懒散，穿得也跟他一样破破烂烂！这可怜的人儿现在已经完全糊涂。他都怀疑起自己到底是个什么了，怀疑起自己到底是本人呢，还是别的什么人。他正犯迷糊，那个戴着三角帽的人过来询问起他到底是谁——姓甚名谁？

“鬼知道呢，”他不知所措地叫道，“我不是我自己了，我是别的什么人了，那边的那个人是我了吧。不不不，那是别的什么人附着我的身体吧。可昨晚我还是我自己呀，我只不过是在山上睡了一觉而已，他们就把我的枪给换掉了，结果什么都变了，我自己也变了，这下好，我连自己姓甚名谁也说不出，我是谁呀！”

这个时候，旁边看热闹的人开始你看看我，我看看你，点点头，意味深长地使着眼色，用手指头轻轻地敲敲自己的前额。接着他们还相互耳语着要把枪夺下来，免得这老家伙会闹出什么乱子来——听到这话，那个戴三角帽、自认为了不起的家伙便匆匆溜之大吉。就在这千钧一发之际，一位年轻貌美的女子从人群中挤了过来，也想看看这个白胡子老头儿。她怀里抱着一个胖乎乎的孩子，那孩子看到瑞普的那般模样，惊恐万分，开始哭了起来。“嘘，别说话，瑞普，”她叫道，“嘘，别哭，小傻瓜，这老头儿不会把你怎么样的。”这小孩儿的名字，母亲的那副神态和她说话的语气，都在他脑子里唤起了一连串的回忆。“你到底姓甚名谁呀，漂亮的姑娘？”他问道。

“我是裘迪斯·嘉尔顿尼尔呀。”

“令尊姓甚名谁呢？”

“甭提了，那可是可怜的人啦，他叫瑞普·凡·温克尔，可是，自他带着枪离家出走已经二十年了，那之后他就杳无音讯了——他的狗自个儿回家了——可是，他到底是开枪自杀了，还是被印第安人给抓走了，谁也不知道。我那时只是个小姑娘。”

瑞普还想问最后一个问题，但他问的时候已经结结巴巴了——

“那令堂在哪里呢？”

“哦，她也过世了，不过这还是不久以前的事儿——在跟一个新英格兰小贩发火的时候，血管爆裂了。”

听到这个消息，至少让他得到一丝安慰。这个老实人再也无法抑制住自己的心情了，他一把搂住女儿和女儿怀里的孩子。“我就是你的父亲呀！”他大叫道，“那时风华正茂的瑞普·凡·温克尔变成了现在年老体衰的瑞普·凡·温克尔。难道就没有人认识我这个可怜的瑞普·凡·温克尔了吗？”

所有的人都站住了，一个个带着惊愕的表情。这时候，一位年迈

的妇女摇摇晃晃地走出人群。她一手遮住额头，瞅了瞅他的脸，大声叫道，“果真是他！他就是瑞普·凡·温克尔！就是他本人！老邻居你又回来啦！欢迎啊！——哎呀，那么长的二十年，你都到哪儿去了呀？”

瑞普很快又讲了一遍自己的经历，因为那整整二十年，对他来说只是一个晚上的事儿。听到他的经历，邻居们个个都瞪大了眼睛。有几个人相互使眼色，显出挖苦的表情。那个戴着三角帽、自以为了不起的男子在惊恐过后回过身来，嘴唇紧闭，摇了摇头——看到他的这个举动，在场的所有人都摇了摇头。

这个时候，大家看到老彼得·范德尔敦克从大路上慢慢走了过来。因此，大家决定去征求他的意见。他是与他同名的那位历史学家的后裔。那位历史学家曾经记述过本省早期的历史。彼得是村子里年事最高的居民，对附近一带所有的神奇事件和各种传奇都了如指掌。他立刻记起了瑞普，断定他讲的事情完全可信。这下，大家才满意了。彼得确切地告诉大家，那是从他的那位历史学家先辈传下来的事实——也就是说，卡茨基尔山脉总是有各种稀奇古怪的人光顾。他确切地告诉大家，伟大的英国航海家兼探险家亨德里克·哈德孙第一个发现了这条河流和附近这一带地区。于是，每隔二十年，他都要率领他的“半月号”船的全体船员，来这一带守夜一次。这样，他就可以重访他曾冒险过的每个地方，严密守护以他的名字命名的河流和大城市。他确切地告诉大家说，他父亲曾经看到过他们身着旧时的荷兰人服饰，在山中的一个山坳里玩九柱地滚球，还说他自己在一个夏日的午后，也曾听到过他们滚球的声音，就像远处轰隆隆的雷鸣。

长话短说吧——那群人后来散开了，都去忙乎他们更加关心的选举的事情了。瑞普的女儿把他带回去一起生活。她屋子里的家具齐全，居住舒适。她丈夫是个农民，身躯魁梧，整天乐呵呵的。瑞普记起来了，他就是过去曾经爬到他背上的那些调皮捣蛋鬼中的一个。至于瑞普的儿子兼继承人——也就是大家看到的，跟他父亲是一个模子倒出来、正靠着那棵树站着的那一位——在田里给人做农活。但他显现出了从父亲那里继承过来的性情：对别人的事情百般殷勤，对自己的事情从不上心。

现在，瑞普又开始像以前那样过日子了。不久，他又找到了很多以前的老朋友，不过这些人都已经饱经沧桑。瑞普更喜欢同年轻的一代交朋友，很快便得到了年轻人的爱戴。因为在家无事可做，而且也到了可以不受惩罚而到处闲逛逍遥的年纪，他再一次坐在了摆在小客栈门口的那张条凳上。人们把他奉为村子里德高望重的长者之一，把他奉为“大战之前”的那个旧时代的编年史。过了好一阵子，瑞普才能在同大家闲聊时跟得上趟儿，也才弄清楚了在他一觉睡去的二十年间

所发生的奇奇怪怪的事件：如何发生了革命战争，美国如何摆脱了古老的英格兰的奴役，他如何从一个乔治三世陛下的臣民摇身变成了美国自由的公民，等等。事实上，瑞普对政治毫无兴趣。美利坚合众国同大英帝国之间的变迁没有给他留下什么印象。不过，有一种专制统治的重压曾让他长期呻吟，那就是“妇人的专政”。让他开心的是，那样的专政结束了——他已经脱离婚姻的桎梏，开始扬眉吐气了，他可以随着自己的意愿而自由进出，可以不再为凡·温克尔夫人的暴政感到恐惧。不过，只要有人提到凡·温克尔夫人的名字，他还是会摇摇头，耸耸肩，抬抬眼。这样的神态既可以看作是他对自己命运的屈服，也可以表示他对获得解放的欢欣。

后来，瑞普经常把自己的经历讲给每一位到“杜立特尔先生旅店”住宿的新客人。起初，人们注意到，每次在他讲起自己的经历时，总有些细节会有所变化，大抵是因为他才从沉睡中醒来没多久的缘故。最后，他讲的故事才跟我所讲的一模一样，附近一带的男男女女，大人小孩，没有谁对这个故事不是了然于心的。有些人却总假装怀疑这个故事的真实性。他们还坚持认为，瑞普的脑子以前就有毛病，坚信这就是他脑海中众多奇思怪想中的一个。然而，旧时的荷兰居民，几乎全都相信这个故事是真实的。即使到今天，每当他们在夏天午后听到从卡茨基尔山脉传来的雷声时，还是会说，那是亨德里克·哈德孙和他的船员们正在玩九柱地滚球的声音。对于附近一带所有惧内的丈夫们来说，每当日子实在过不下去的时候，都巴望着能从瑞普·凡·温克尔的酒壶里，喝上一口让人一醉不醒的美酒。

附言

读者会怀疑上面这个故事是尼克博克先生从有关腓特烈皇帝和基普霍塞尔山的，一个不起眼的德国迷信故事中得到启发而写成的。可是，这里附在故事后面的注释表明，那是绝对的事实。尼克博克先生一向以忠实著称，下面是他的叙述：

“瑞普·凡·温克尔的故事在许多人看来，似乎难以置信，可我完全相信它的真实性。因为我知道，在我们古老的荷兰殖民地附近，经常发生一些不可思议的事件，出现一些不可思议的现象。的确，我也听说过在沿哈德孙河各个村子里所发生的比这还要稀奇古怪的故事。

所有这些故事都得到充分证实，因而是毋庸置疑的。我甚至亲自同瑞普·凡·温克尔谈过话。我最后一次见到他时，他已是一位德高望重的老人了。在其他每一个问题上，他都极尽理性，并且始终如一。在我看来，凡是本着良心行事的人，没有谁会对这件事情有相左的意见了——还有，我还看到就这件事情还在一位法官面前颁发过一个证

书，上面还有法官亲笔签的‘十’字。因此，这个故事是不容怀疑的。”

D.K.

又及

下面是基于尼克博克先生的备忘录而写的游记：

卡茨基尔山脉一向是个充满神奇传说的区域。印第安人把卡茨基尔山脉看成是精灵的住处。这些精灵影响着天气，让阳光普照或阴云笼罩在这个景观的上空，为人们带来或好或坏的狩猎季节。他们由一个年长的女精灵统管。据说她就是这些精灵的母亲，就住在卡茨基尔山脉的最高峰，把守着白天和黑夜之门，并在恰当的時刻开启和关闭。她把新的月亮挂上天空，把旧的月亮碎成一颗颗星星。干旱时，如果把她关照好，她就会从蜘蛛网和晨露中编织出轻盈的夏日云彩，并从山巅将这云彩送走，一片接着一片，就像一片片弹过的棉花一样，让它们飘浮在空中。直到后来，它们被太阳的热融化，形成柔和细腻的雨水，让草儿生长，让水果成熟，让玉米一小时就长出一英寸。可是，如果她不高兴，她就孕育出墨水一样黑的乌云，坐在乌云中间，就像一只大腹便便的蜘蛛坐在蜘蛛网中间。当这样的乌云发作时——灾难就降临到山谷上了！

旧时，根据印第安人的传说，曾经有一种神灵一直在卡茨基尔山最为荒凉的幽深之处到处游荡。这种神灵喜欢恶作剧，以给红种的印第安人制造各种灾祸和烦恼为乐事。有时，他装扮成一头熊，有时又装扮成一只豹，有时会装扮成一只鹿，弄得那个眼花缭乱的猎人在盘根错节的森林里、在崎岖不平的岩石间疲于奔命地追踪他。然后，他又忽然一跃而起，大喊两声“嗨！嗨！”，让站在悬崖边或汹涌澎湃的河流边的猎人大惊失色。

这位神灵最喜欢的住处今天仍然可见，就是卡茨基尔山脉中最偏僻处的一块大石或一处悬崖。这里被攀附着开了花的葡萄藤挡住，附近遍地都是野花。因此，这里也叫“花园石”。它脚下的不远处是一个小湖。那是孤独的麻鸦经常出没的地方，一条条水蛇爬到睡莲的叶子上晒着太阳。这是最让印第安人充满敬畏的地方，即便是最勇敢的狩猎者也不会在此区域内追杀猎物。然而，从前有一个猎人迷了路，走进花园石，发现树杈上挂着很多葫芦，他抓了其中一个葫芦就走，但在离开时，他匆匆忙忙，竟把葫芦掉进了岩石中。这时候，一股巨大的水流喷涌向前，将他卷走，并冲下悬崖，顷刻间他粉身碎骨。那溪水再次流入哈德孙河，永不停息地流到今天。这条河同人们所知道的卡特斯基尔河是同一条河流。

[1] 威廉·卡特赖特 (1611-1643) , 英国诗人 , 剧作家 , 教士。(说明: 书中脚注均为编者注。)

[2] 1英里约等于1.6千米。

[3] 1英尺约等于30厘米。

[4] 指领导美国独立战争的人。

妻子

/

汪洋大海的珍宝
同锁在女人爱情里的男人
那隐藏的慰藉相比，
完全无法匹敌。
每次走近家门，
我便嗅到祝福的气息。
婚姻散发的芬芳
多么沁人心脾！
即使是紫罗兰的芳香
哪能与它相比！

——米德尔顿 [5]

我常有机会谈论坚忍力。正是运用这种坚忍力，让妇女们完胜了势不可当的命运逆转。那些让一个男人精神崩溃并从此一蹶不振的灾难，似乎最能激发起温柔女性身上所聚集的全部能量，并让她们展现出品格上的无畏和崇高，这种品格有时会到达高尚的境地。当踏在人生的康庄大道上时，一直是孱弱、事事依赖他人、一丁点儿不顺就发脾气她，突然精神力量猛增，给遭遇不幸的丈夫以安慰和支持，并以永不退缩的坚毅，承受着逆境所带来的最为猛烈的打击。看到这样一位温存而娇柔的女子，还有什么比这更令人感动的呢！

正如长时间把橡树周围那优美的叶子盘绕，并被橡树高高地托起面向阳光的蔓藤，当橡树这种耐寒的植物被雷电劈裂时，它仍然会用爱抚的卷须盘绕着它，并将它那碎裂的大树枝紧紧地连在一起。同样，经由上帝的绝妙安排，在丈夫快乐时仅仅是附属物、仅仅是装饰

品的女人，在丈夫遭受突然的灾难打击时，就应成为他的支柱，成为他的安慰，机智地帮他绕过他天性中的崎岖不平，温柔地托起他那低垂的头，用整个身心紧紧地贴近那颗破碎的心。

我曾给一位朋友道贺，他的家庭兴旺发达，家庭成员间被最强有力的爱编织在了一起。“我希望你交上好运，”他说，带着满腔热情，“最好的运气莫过于拥有妻子和孩子了。假如你成功了，他们会在那儿，与你一同分享；假如你失败了，他们还在那儿，给你带来安慰。”的确，我观察到，一个遭到不幸的已婚男子，比起一个单身男子，更容易重新恢复常人的生活。一部分原因是由于那些无助的人，他至爱的人，生活之必需都依靠他，因他才得以生存，他因此而更受刺激，必须加以努力。但主要原因是，他的精神在家人的关爱下得以舒缓、得以缓解，他的自尊就得以维持——因为他发现，尽管外面是无边的黑暗，是无尽的羞辱，可在家里，有一个充满着爱的小天地，而自己就是这小天地里的君主。单身男子则是另一番景象，他们自暴自弃，轻视自己，自觉孤立无助、遭人摒弃，他们的内心世界已成为废墟，犹如无人居住而遭人遗弃的宅邸，期待着住客的到来。

这些感悟让我想起了一则家庭小故事，是我曾亲眼目睹的一件事。我的挚交莱斯利娶了一位中产阶级家庭的才貌双全的女子。这个女孩没有什么财产，但我朋友却很富有。他很高兴，期盼着让女孩尽情追求优雅的生活，期盼着她能培养那些高雅的情趣和爱好，以传递出女性特有的魅力。“她的生活，”他说，“将会过得像童话一般。”

正是他们性格上的差异，使他们的结合非常和谐。他是那种追求浪漫又不失庄重的人，而她则充满活力，是十足的乐天派。我常注意到，有她做伴时，他凝视她的眼神中带着无声的狂喜，她身上那股明快的精气神儿也使她成为大家的开心果。我还发现，当掌声响起时，她的视线会转向他，好像只有在那里，她才寻求到了赞同和认可。倚靠在他的手臂上时，她那苗条的身材同他那伟岸魁梧的体形形成鲜明的对比。她仰望他时，那种亲切而信任的神情，似乎唤起一股强烈的自豪感，还有时刻被珍视的柔情。而他也非常愿意担起这份甜蜜的责任，成为她永久的依靠。没有一对夫妇能像他们这样，从婚姻之初仿佛就踏上了铺满鲜花的大道，无比般配，且幸福的婚姻之路前景乐观。

可是，我的那位朋友非常不幸，他把自己大把的财产都拿去做了投机生意。结婚不到几个月，突如其来的灾难就接踵而至，他的财产被席卷一空，他发现自己几乎沦为穷光蛋了。有一阵子，他对自己的境遇守口如瓶，带着憔悴的面容和一颗破碎的心四处游荡。他的生活不过是无尽的痛苦，让他更难以忍受的是，他还得在妻子面前强装笑脸，因为，他是万万不能够把这个消息告诉妻子，让她崩溃的。然

而，那双温存而敏锐的眼睛，是不会看不出他的境遇不佳。她注意到了他表情的变化，注意到了他克制着的叹息。尽管他强装着开心快乐，可这背后的闷闷不乐和郁郁寡欢，都逃不过她的双眼。她调动起自己所有的精力和温柔的甜言蜜语，一定要让他再次幸福地生活起来。可她这样做，只会像把利剑更深地刺进了他的灵魂——他越发觉得有理由更爱她，便越会为自己即将给她带来的不幸而更受煎熬。他思忖道，要不了多久，笑容就会从那张脸上消失，歌声就会从那唇间慢慢减弱，那双眼睛的光泽会被忧伤浇灭，而此刻在那个胸膛里轻松跳动着的心，也会如同他自己的心一般，因人世间的种种忧虑和苦难而不堪重负。

终于有一天，他找到了我，以一种最深的绝望的语气，把他境遇的来龙去脉告诉了我。听完他的话，我问，“你妻子知道这一切吗？”听到这个问题，他突然痛哭流涕。“看在上帝的份儿上！”他哭丧着脸说，“要是你对我还有一丁点儿怜悯之心，就甭提我妻子了——就是想到她，我才快要发疯的呀！”

“为什么不告诉她呢？”我说，“她迟早会知道的。你是不可能长时间瞒着她的。要是从别人口里得到这个消息，她会更震惊，更受不了的，不如你亲自告诉她。因为，从所爱之人的口中说出来的话，是可以软化最严酷的消息的。另外，你不仅剥夺自己从她的关心中所获得的安慰，你还危及了能够把两颗心联系在一起的唯一纽带，那可是一种对思想和情感都不做任何隐瞒的小团体。她会很快察觉到，有什么东西在暗地里让你魂不守舍，真正的爱情里是容不下有任何隐瞒的；要是知道爱人对自己隐瞒了伤心之事，她会觉得自己受到了轻视和伤害，然后更加生气的。”

“唉，可是老朋友！想想看，我跟她说她丈夫已成乞丐了，那会给她的前途带来多大的打击，会给她的灵魂带来怎样的重创！那样的话，她就要放弃优雅的生活、快乐的社交活动；就要同我一道，陷入贫困的境地，变得默默无闻！如果我告诉她，我已把她从原来的那种有可能一直光鲜亮丽（众目聚焦的对象，众人仰慕的对象）的生活圈子中拉下马，她怎么忍受得了那份贫寒！她在富足优雅的生活环境中长大，她怎么受得了被人忽视的滋味！她一直是人们的偶像。唉，这会让她心碎的！这会让她心碎的呀！”

看到他口若悬河地诉说着自己的痛苦，我只是在一旁默不作声地听着，因为痛苦是可以通过言语的释放得以缓解的。当他激动的情绪慢慢平息，重新陷于忧郁的沉默中时，我温和地重提原来的话题，催促他当即把自己的现状告诉妻子。他痛不欲生，但却很肯定地，摇了摇头。

“可是，那你是怎样隐瞒着不告诉她的呢？她有必要知道这件

事。只有这样，你才能够逐渐采取适当的措施，改变你的境况。你得改变自己的生活方式——而且，”看到他脸上掠过一阵痛苦的神情，“别让这种事儿折磨你了。我相信你不是那种四处炫耀幸福的人。况且，你还有那么多朋友，他们那么热情，不会因为你住得不如以前富丽堂皇就小瞧了你呀。不过当然，跟玛丽一起寻求幸福的生活，也不见得非得有宫殿才可以。”

“我是可以跟她过幸福日子的，”他一个劲儿地抽搐着，“哪怕是住在一间茅屋里！我可以和她一起堕入贫困，甚至一起走向坟墓！我可以的！我可以的！上帝保佑她吧！上帝保佑她吧！”他哭号着，一阵悲伤与柔情涌上心头。

“你就信了我吧，朋友，”我说着，走到他身边，热情地握住他的手，“信了我吧，她会对你一如既往的。哎，还有——对她来说，这将是让她永远感到自豪，永远感到欣慰的事儿呢。那会唤起她天性中潜在的活力与炽热的同情心，因为她会很高兴地证明，她爱的就是你这个人。在每一个真诚女人的内心深处，都有一束天堂之火。这一束火，在有着旺盛生命力的光天化日之下是处在休眠状态的。但在出现逆境的黑夜里，它会燃烧起来，放射出万丈光芒。没有男人知道自己心目中的妻子到底是什么样子——没有男人知道服侍自己的天使到底是什么样子——直到这个男人同他的妻子一道，历经了人世间各种烈火的试炼。”

在说这些时，我的态度非常诚挚，而言语中那些比喻的话引发了莱斯利激动的畅想，他很快陷入遐思之中。我了解身边这位听众。趁我说的话还有效果，我劝他回家，把自己心中的伤心事向妻子一吐为快。

我必须承认，尽管我说了这么多，但对结果还是有些担心的。谁能指望一个一辈子都在享乐的人会坚忍不拔呢？他妻子一直很快乐，当如果突然发现眼前是一条低微、卑贱、黑暗的下坡路时，她很可能会奋起反抗，或许会一直待在让他们如痴如醉的阳光灿烂的地带不愿离去。另外，时尚的生活被摧毁了不说，接下来又是没完没了的，令人烦心的种种屈辱。这对于其他阶层的人来说，是难以理解的。次日早上我见到莱斯利不免担忧。他告诉了我最终的结果。

“她怎么承受这一切的？”

“就像天使那样！一切对她来说，似乎更像是一种宽慰，因为她张开双臂搂住了我的脖子，还问我是不是这一切让我最近郁郁寡欢的。可是，我可怜的人儿，”他接着说，“她并没认识到我们必须经受的变化呀。她对贫穷只有抽象的概念——她只是在诗歌里读到过什么是贫穷，而那里的贫穷都是同爱情联系在一起的。她至今都没尝过穷

困的滋味——她还不知道，如果没有惯常的各种便利，没有惯常的高雅生活，那到底是什么滋味。当我们实实在在地去经受可悲的忧虑，为满足低微的需求，蒙受琐碎的羞辱时，迎来的才是真正的考验。”

“不过，”我说，“既然你已闯过最难的一关，也就是向她摊牌了，那你越早让世人知道这个秘密越好。让他人知道你的秘密，或许会令你难为情，但这只是一次性的痛苦，而且不久就会过去的。如果不这样做的话，你想着想着，白天里的每个时辰都会很痛苦。束缚一个一文不名之人手脚的，与其说是贫穷，不如说是虚伪。这是一场心高气傲同一文不名之间的斗争——维持虚假外表的做法，必须尽快终止。如果你有勇气展露贫穷，你就可以消除贫穷带给你的无以复加的剧痛。”关于这一点，我发现莱斯利已有充分的思想准备。他本人并没有虚荣心，至于他妻子，她只是很急于去顺应他们命运改变之后的生活。

几天后，傍晚时分，他来看我。他卖掉了自己的住宅，在离城几英里的乡下买了一间小屋。在这之前，他整天忙着处理家具。新住处需要的家当不多，而且都是最简单的那种。原先住宅里所有的豪华家具全都卖掉了，只留下了他妻子的竖琴。他说，那架竖琴，与他对妻子的念想紧密联系在一起——那是他们爱情的小插曲——因为他们求爱时最甜蜜的时刻就包括他俯在琴上，聆听她美妙声音的时刻。一个宠溺妻子的丈夫所表现出的浪漫殷勤，让我都忍不住为之一笑。

他现在要回乡下的小屋了，他妻子一整天都在那儿指挥如何布置和安排家当。我对这个家庭故事如何进展有着强烈的兴趣，加之那天晚上天气很好，于是就提出与他一同前往。

劳累了一天，他已十分疲乏。当我们走出城时，他陷入一阵阴郁的沉思。

“我可怜的玛丽！”终于，他脱口而出，深深叹了口气。

“她怎么啦？”我问道，“出了什么事儿吗？”

“怎么了，”他说，飞快地瞥了我一眼，很不耐烦，“落入如此卑微的境地，被囚在简陋的小屋里，被迫几乎像仆人一样为那可怜的住所劳心费力，难道能什么事儿也没有吗？”

“那她埋怨过你们生活的变化吗？”

“埋怨？！她一直就是除了高兴还是高兴，除了快乐就是快乐。说实在的，我认识她那么久了，她的情绪似乎从来没有这样好过——她对我是一往情深，温柔体贴！”

“多让人钦佩的女子呀！”我大声叫道，“老朋友，你还说自己穷呢。你以前有这么富吗？你以前压根儿就没认识到自己所拥有的这个

女人的优秀品质，那可是无尽的珍宝。”

“哎呀，老朋友呀，如果我现在已经结束了与她在小屋子里的第一次会面，我想我确实会感到舒服的。但这是她亲身体验穷苦的第一天，是别人把她送到我们简陋的住处的。一整天，她就一直在忙于安排和布置屋内那些可怜的家当。她第一次体会到了家务事会让人身心疲惫，她第一次环顾了没有高档家居用品，几乎没有任何便利用品的家到底是个什么样子。或许她现在坐下来，精疲力竭、无精打采，正沉思着未来等着她的穷苦生活呢。”

这样的画面，一定程度上确是有可能出现的，对此我无可否认。所以，我们默默地继续前行。

我们从大路转到一条向上去的狭窄小巷，巷子掩映在茂密的林木当中，这里完全是隐秘的。这时，我们看见了他们的小屋。对于多数田园诗人来说，这小屋真是足够简陋的，可是，它有着令人愉快的乡村面貌。一棵野葡萄藤叶子繁茂，把小屋的一端覆盖住了，有好几棵树在小屋上方优雅地伸展着树枝。我注意到门的附近和前面的草地上有几盆花，它们都被打理得很有品位。一扇小边门通往人行道。人行道蜿蜒曲折，穿过灌木丛，一直通到小屋的门。快要走近时，我们听到音乐的声音。莱斯利抓住我的手臂，我们驻足倾听。是玛丽唱歌的声音，那声音纯朴但极为动人，那是她丈夫特别喜欢的一支小曲。

我感觉到，莱斯利的手在我手臂上颤抖。他移步向前，想听得更清楚，他的脚步在铺着砾石的路上发出了声响。一张光鲜而美丽的脸庞在窗前向外张望，接着便消失了，轻盈的脚步声传来了，玛丽轻快地走上前来迎接我们。她穿着乡下人的那种白色连衣裙，十分漂亮。几朵野花盘在她的秀发上；她面目清新、活力四射，面带灿烂的微笑——我还没有看到过她那么可爱的容颜。

“亲爱的乔治，”她大声说，“很高兴你来了。我一直在期盼着你，期盼着你；我一直在沿着小巷跑来跑去，我一直想得到你的消息。我在小屋后面的一棵漂亮的树下摆了一张桌子，我还一直在采摘最好吃的草莓，因为我知道你很喜欢草莓，我们还有那么好的奶油。这儿的一切都那么甜蜜，一切都那么宁静，啊！”她说，一下扑进他的怀里，高兴地仰望着他的脸，“噢，我们就是那么幸福！”

可怜的莱斯利再也无法控制住自己——他把妻子拥抱在怀里，他用双臂抱住她，一遍又一遍地吻她，他说不出话来，泪水充满了他的双眼。他经常肯定地告诉我，尽管他从一开始就非常富足，而且他的确也一直生活得很幸福。然而，他却从来没有体验过如那一刻的精彩与幸福。

[5] 米德尔顿（1570-1627），英国剧作家，代表作有《米迦勒节期》《一个疯狂的世界，我的老爷》等。

伦敦古迹

/

我在漫步

千真万确，
心同圭多·沃克斯，提着黑暗的灯笼，
偷偷给这座城市放火；
跑到乡下，我被认为神出鬼没，
或者是罗宾·古德菲洛 [6]。

——弗莱彻

我有那么点儿热衷于搜寻古物，喜欢跑遍整个伦敦，探寻古时的遗迹。这些遗迹多深藏于伦敦的某个角落，掩埋于乃至消失在由砖块和泥浆构成的一片荒芜之中。不过，从环绕它们的那个司空见惯、平淡无奇的世界里，却可以领略其诗情画意和浪漫情趣。近来夏日，在漫游伦敦的过程中，我对这种情形感触至深，因为只有在夏季去探寻伦敦才最便利。此时的伦敦，没有烟，没有雾，没有冬日的雨水和泥浆。有好一阵子，我一直是在逆行于舰队街的人流中，艰难地行进。暖和的天气早已让我神经紧张，让我对每一次的震动、每一次的碰撞、每一种刺耳的声音，都异常敏感。我的身体疲惫不堪，精神萎靡不振，挣扎着挤过那熙熙攘攘、忙忙碌碌的人群，让我失去了好心情。我感到一阵绝望，便从人群中挤了过去，冲进一条小巷子，穿过几个不起眼的拐角，来到一个古雅而宁静的院子里。院子中央有一片草地，榆树低垂，喷泉喷着水，闪闪发光，让草地始终保持着青翠。一个手上捧着书的学生坐在一块石凳上，一边看书，一边若有所思地望着两三个负责照看婴孩、身材苗条的保姆们的一举一动。

我就像一个在贫瘠得令人窒息的沙漠中突然找到绿洲的阿拉伯人。渐渐地，这个地方的宁静和凉爽让我心绪安宁，精神焕发。我继续前行，来到了附近一座非常古老的教堂。低矮的撒克逊式门额宏伟而富丽。教堂的内部呈圆形，顶部高耸，灯光从高处照下来。教堂四

周，是古时的纪念碑，上面是一个个身穿盔甲大理石武士雕像。有的武士虔诚地把双手交叉在胸前，另一些则紧握剑柄圆头——即使是在墓中，他们也要气势汹汹，满怀敌意！还有几位交叉着双腿，他们看上去是心怀信仰，曾参加过十字军东征，去往圣地的士兵。

我，实际上是在“骑士圣殿”的教堂里，它竟出乎意料地置身于肮脏喧闹的市中心。于我这个精通世故的人来说，突然离开忙碌、追求金钱生活的人生道路，端坐于唯有暮色、尘埃和被人遗忘的阴暗的坟墓之间时，让我坚信，我定能获得更为深刻的教益。

在接下来的考察之旅中，我又遇到另一个被锁于伦敦市中心的，一个“往昔世界”的遗迹。当时，我已在那些单调乏味的街道上闲逛了好一阵子，没有任何东西吸引我的眼球，也没有任何东西激发我的想象。这时，我突然看到前方有一个已成为残壁遗物的哥特式入口。它通向一个宽敞的四合院，与之形成了一座庄严的哥特式建筑的庭院，哥特式建筑的大门矗立在那里，“令人向往地开着”。

这显然是一座公共大厦。因为我就是来探访古迹的，所以尽管迈着迟疑的步子，我还是贸然走了进去。如此闯入，既没人阻止，也没人非难。我继续前行，直至来到一个大厅。大厅那高耸的顶部呈拱形，走廊是橡木制成的，都是清一色的哥特式风格。大厅的一端是一个巨大的壁炉，壁炉的两边都放着高背长椅。大厅的另一端是一个高台，或许是讲坛，那是至尊的席位。高台的上方是一个男子的画像，男子身着古代服饰：一袭长袍，白色的拉夫领，令人肃然起敬的灰白胡须。

整个建筑有一种修道院式的宁静和隐秘感。而令这个建筑有着神秘魅力的另一个地方在于：自我跨过门槛后，还没碰到过一个人。

受到眼前这种寂寥的刺激，我在一个大弓形窗的凹处坐了下来。一大片金色的阳光透过彩色玻璃窗户射进来，被分割成了小方格，投射在地上。柔和的夏日微风从一扇开着的窗户轻拂入内。此时，我把头依靠在手上，把胳膊撑在一张旧橡木桌上，然后就这个问题陷入了沉思：这座大厦在古代最有可能做何种用途呢？很显然，它起初一直是用来做修道院的。也许是从前建起来为了推广学术的一种学院机构。这里的僧侣都很有耐心，在修道院那无垠的孤寂中，他们一页页地，一卷卷地，不断增添内容，精心打造自己的作品，尽量使它有着与自己所居的建筑群相匹敌的魅力。

当我坐着冥思苦想时，大厅上端的拱门内，一个有饰板的小门打开了。一帮头发灰白、身着长长的黑色斗篷的老人逐一走了出来。他们一言不发，穿过大厅，往前行进。在经过时，一个个面色苍白地看了看我，然后穿过大厅下端的另一扇门，消失了。

我对他们的外表感到异常惊奇。他们那黑色的斗篷，他们那古风十足的神态，与这栋庄严而神秘建筑的风格非常相称。他们就像是那些我一直在冥思苦想的古代幽灵，像放电影一样，从我眼前飘过。我本着浪漫主义的精神，用这些幻象来取悦自己，着手去探寻那个我为自己所描绘的，存于黑暗中的国度。这个国度恰巧存在于现实世界的正中心。

我漫步着，穿过了迷宫般的内部庭院、走廊和破旧的修道院。许多大型建筑物都会有各种建于不同时期、风格各异的扩建部分和附属建筑物。在一个开阔地带，有很多显然就住在这座建筑物中的男孩子在玩着游戏。无论我去哪里，都能注意到那些身穿黑色斗篷、头发灰白、异常神秘的老人。他们时而独自漫步，时而凑在一起说说话，看上去俨然成了停留于此，随处可见的鬼魂。这时，我突然回想起自己读过的古时候某些大学的情况。这些大学，给学生教授的是司法占星术、泥土占卜、招魂术和其他被禁止的神奇科学。难道这就是那样的一种机构？难道那些身穿黑色斗篷的老人，真正的身份其实是传授这些黑暗艺术的教授们吗？

当这些猜测正掠过我的脑海时，我的目光刚好瞥过一个房间的內部。房间里挂满了各种奇怪、做工粗糙的物品，有野蛮人的作战工具；奇怪的玩偶和填充的鳄鱼标本；瓶装的蛇和怪物装饰着的壁炉架；还有，在一张老式床的高台上，一个咧嘴笑着的人的头骨，两侧各有一只风干的猫。

我向前走去，更仔细地看了看这个神秘的房间。房间似乎非常适合做巫师的实验室。这时，我看到一双眼睛正从一个阴暗的角落盯着我看，不免大吃一惊。原来是一个个头很小、全身干瘪的老头儿，他的脸颊瘦削，双眼明亮，突出的眉毛灰白、坚硬。我起初还以为是一只神奇的保存良好的木乃伊。结果它开始到处走动，我才注意到“它”是活的。这是另一位身着黑色斗篷的老头儿。在我端详那古怪的面相、过时的装束，还有环绕在他周围的那些可怕而又凶险的各种物品时，我开始说服自己：我这是碰到大法师了——正是他管辖着这个有魔力的男信徒组织。

看到我在门前停了下来，他起身请我进去。我以从未有过的胆量，应邀而入，因为，我怎么能确保，他不会挥一挥法杖，把我变成某种怪物呢？或者把我收进他壁炉台上的某只瓶子里？可是，他的一切都证明了他绝不是个巫师。他很单纯，话很多，这很快消除了我先前认为的，一直笼罩在这栋古老的建筑及同样古老的居民周围的所有魔法和神秘气息。

看上去我是进入了一个古老的，庇护老迈商人和衰落房主的核心，同该中心相连的是一所男孩子数量有限的学校。它建在一座古修

道院上，两个多世纪以来多少还保留了修道院的氛围和特征。先前在大厅里从我面前经过的那些身穿斗篷的，被我视为魔术师的老人其实是靠养老金生活的人。他们刚从礼拜堂做完早礼拜回来。

约翰·哈勒姆，也就是先前那位被我当成大法师的古董收藏家，在这个地方已经生活了六年，还用他一生收集到的圣物和珍品给这个作为他晚年最后归宿的地方做了装饰。根据他自己的说法，他好歹也算得上是个旅游家，曾在法国待过，还差点儿去了荷兰。他很后悔荷兰之旅未曾成行，“要是去成了，他很可能早就聊起去过那儿的事儿了”——可以很明显地看出，他是那种很单纯的游客。

他在观念很有贵族气。据我观察，他跟那些普通的靠养老金生活的人拒不往来。他主要交往的人包括：一位讲拉丁语和希腊语的盲人，而对这两种语言，哈勒姆是一窍不通的；另一位是一个穷困潦倒的绅士，他早就把他父亲遗留的四万英镑挥霍掉了，还把妻子的嫁妆钱一万英镑挥霍光了。个头小小的哈勒姆似乎觉得，能够挥霍掉这么大的两笔巨款，确实是无可辩驳地显示出了崇高的精神和高贵的出身。

附笔：

这个让读者如痴如醉的旧时风景如画的遗迹，就是现在的“查特豪斯慈善机构”，原先叫“加尔都西修道院”。它是于一六六一年由托马斯·萨顿爵士在一个古老的女修道院旧址上建造起来的，是经个人慷慨解囊而着手建造的高贵慈善机构之一。尽管置身于伦敦的现代变革与创新之中，但它一直保持着远古时代的古怪与圣洁。这里八十位身体衰弱的男子，曾过着富裕的日子。如今，他们的晚年却要由他人来提供衣食、燃料，领用年度津贴。他们像昔日的僧侣那样一起在大厅里就餐。大厅曾是早先修道院的食堂。该建筑还有个附属机构，是一所招收了四十四名男生的学校。

斯托——他的著作我在探讨这个问题时参考过——在谈到这些头发灰白、靠养老金生活的人的各种义务时，说：“关涉到医院事务的任何事情，他们是不允许干预的。他们只需专心侍奉上帝，只需对提供给他们的一切心存感激而不要嘀咕，不要私下抱怨，不要嫉恨。任何人都不得携带武器，不得留长发，不得穿彩色的靴子，不得穿骑马时用的靴刺，不得在帽子上装饰羽毛，不得凶神恶煞，不得穿奇装异服，只得穿着像病人一样的衣服。”“说实在话，”斯托补充道，“真正幸福的就是这样一些人，他们从人世间的一切忧愁和烦恼中解脱出来，然后就像这些老人那样，固定地住在一个这么好的地方，毫无后顾之忧之忧，只有宁静的心灵来侍奉上帝，在兄弟般的情谊中生活。”

[6] 罗宾·古德菲洛，英国民间传说中的恶作剧专家，又被称为“好人罗宾”，是个好心肠、爱帮忙的小精灵，在莎士比亚的《仲夏夜之梦》里以浦克的名字出场。

破碎的心

/

我从未听说

有什么真正的爱情

可以不为忧虑所吞食，

忧虑，犹如毛虫

蛀蚀着春天最甜蜜的图书——玫瑰的叶子。

——米德尔顿

从早期情感伤痛中活过来的人，或者在享乐至上、冷漠无情的环境中长大的人，通常的做法便是嘲笑所有的爱情故事，把富于浪漫激情的各种故事仅仅看成是小说家们和诗人们虚构的作品。我对人性的种种考察，让我有了不同的见解。这些考察让我相信，就算性格的表象可能会因人世间的烦恼而变得冷漠，因社交中的圆滑塑造而徒留一张笑脸，但在最冰冷的内心深处，仍然潜伏着随时都有可能爆发的烈火。一旦被触发，烈火就会肆虐，有时还会带来凄惨的后果。真的，我笃信盲神，并充分理解他的教义——我要承认吗？——我相信会有破碎的心，相信会有死于失恋的可能！可我并不认为这对于男性来说，是致命的疾病；但我坚信，这会使许多可爱的女子渐渐枯萎，早早地进入坟墓。

男人是追逐利益、野心勃勃的动物。他们的天性使得他们勇猛地闯入人世间的斗争和喧嚣之中。爱，仅仅是他们早年生活的点缀，抑或是在幕间休息时用管乐器演奏的一首歌。男人追名逐利，试图在世人的思想中占有一席之地，试图统领自己的同胞。可是，女人的一生就是一部感情史，心即是她的世界：就是在那里，她雄心勃勃地要得到绝对控制权；就是在那里，她贪婪地寻觅着深藏的珍宝。她对冒险会不遗余力，并在情感交流中寄托自己的整个灵魂，而一旦触礁，她便无可救药，因为那颗心碎了。

对于男人而言，失恋也许会引起某种刻骨铭心的剧痛：它伤害了脉脉的柔情，它毁灭了幸福的前景。但他是一个有活力的个体，他会

在各种纷繁事务中把各种念想抛到九霄云外，或者一头扎进快乐的洪流中。再或者，如果失恋之地带给他痛苦的回忆，他会随自己意愿迁往另一个住地，他会乘上清晨的翅膀，“飞往海角天涯，寻求那份安宁”。

但相比而言，女人过的是一种固定的、隐蔽的、冥想的生活。更多时候，她往往离不开自己的思想，离不开自己的感情。如果她的思想和感情被转化成悲伤的代言人，她从何处得到慰藉！她命中注定要被男人追求，要被男人俘虏。如果在爱中得不到幸福，她的心就像被攻破的、被洗劫的、被抛弃的堡垒，惨遭劫掠，最后剩下的就只有凄凉和孤寂。

有多少明亮的眼睛最终黯淡无光，有多少柔软的面颊最终没有血色，有多少优美的身段逐渐消失入墓。可是没有谁能说得清到底是什么摧毁了她们的美丽。就像鸽子要把翅膀搭在身体的一侧，遮住和掩盖射中它命脉的飞箭一样，女人天性也是要向世人隐瞒受伤的情感带来的剧痛。细腻的女子，总是爱得羞涩，爱得无声。即便当幸运降临时，她也几乎是只字不提。但当不幸降临时，她便将痛苦埋藏于内心深处。在那里，她让厄运在自己安宁的废墟间萎缩、消退。对她来说，心中的渴望已经远去，生存的巨大魅力已经结束。她无视一切令人欢愉的运动，尽管这些运动使人精神振奋，加快脉搏跳动，使生命潮汐在血管里健康地涌动着。她的那份宁静已被打破——忧郁的梦魇破坏了清新甜蜜的睡眠——“干涸的悲伤吸干了她的鲜血”，直到她那衰弱的躯干在最轻微的外部伤害下垮掉。假如你过一段时间去找她，你就发现朋友因她过早走进坟墓而哭泣。你大惑不解：一个不久前还容光焕发、光鲜美丽的人儿，怎么那么快就坠落到“黑暗与蠕虫”为伍的阴间。有人会告诉你，那是由于冬日严寒，某种不经意的小病，要了她的小命——但是，谁又知晓先前就耗掉了她体力、使她轻易成为掠夺者猎物的心理疾病？

她就像一棵娇嫩的树，代表着小树林的荣耀和美丽；它姿态婀娜，枝繁叶茂，但心里却遭受着蠕虫的叮咬。在它最应该充满活力、繁茂之时，却突然枯萎了。我们看到它的枝头低垂到了地面；看到它一片树叶接着一片树叶地凋零。直到消耗殆尽、慢慢消亡，在寂静的森林中轰然倒下。而当我们重温这美丽的废墟时，我们再怎么努力也无法追忆起究竟是什么狂风暴雨将它摧毁。

我见过许多女人自我轻视，自我毁灭，并渐渐从这世上消失，就好像她们早早地被蒸发到了天国。我不止一次地想，我可以通过对耗掉她们生命的各种衰微症状（如感冒、衰弱、疲倦、忧郁等）的研究，来追踪她们死亡的痕迹，直至我找到她们失恋的首发症状。可是，最近有人给我讲起同样的事例。这件事在事件发生的国度尽人皆

知，我在这里就只讲讲是如何发生的。

大家一定记得爱尔兰爱国人士——年轻的艾某某 [7] 的悲惨故事。他的故事太感人了，让人难以忘记。在爱尔兰动乱期间，他被指控犯有叛国罪，受到了审判和谴责，继而被处以绞刑。他的命运引起公众深深的同情。他是那么年轻、聪明，那么大方、勇敢，一个年轻人受人青睐的种种美德，均在他身上有所体现。在接受审判时，他的表现是那样高尚、无畏。他用崇高而激愤的方式击退了他人对他叛国罪的指控。那是一场维护名誉的雄辩，也是在受到谴责的无望时刻，对下一代人发出的可悲的呼吁。所有这些，都深深扎进每一个慷慨之人的心胸，就连他的敌人也痛恨那条规定处死他的严苛政策。

但是有一颗心，它的痛苦是无法描述的。在先前快乐、幸运的日子里，他赢得了一位美丽可爱的姑娘的芳心。姑娘是已故著名爱尔兰律师的女儿。她爱着他，像所有年轻女孩初恋之时那样无私，充满热情。当他与世俗的行为准则格格不入时，当他遭受厄运，耻辱和危险黑压压地笼罩着他的名声时，她却正因为他所遭受的苦难而爱得更加热烈。倘若此时，他的命运甚至都能够唤起敌人的同情……那个全部灵魂都被他音容笑貌所占据的她，从头到尾又将忍受何种极度的痛苦！请那些人说说，到底是谁让他们突然阴阳两隔？就像一个人坐在坟墓的门槛上，眼看着另一个被关进了寒冷而寂寞的世界，从此，一切可爱的事物，所有亲爱的人儿，都将永远地诀别。

紧接着，看看这是怎样一个恐怖的坟墓！那么可怕，那么不光彩！没有任何回忆可以用来抚慰这样分离的痛苦；也没有温柔而忧郁的环境，使分别稍显亲切；没有任何东西可以把悲伤融化成犹如天堂露水般幸福的泪珠，使人在痛苦的焦灼时刻，恢复往日的心情。

她不幸的恋情还引得父亲的不快，恼怒的父亲早已将她赶出家门，这一切使现在寡居的她更显凄凉。假若朋友们的同情之心和仁慈之举能触动这个被恐怖经历所震惊、被恐惧所裹挟的灵魂的话，她应该也就不再需要什么安慰了，因为爱尔兰人是一个思维敏捷、慷慨大方的民族。很多富有又显赫的家庭都对她关怀备至，她被介绍进社交圈子，他们让她参加各种娱乐活动，以消除她内心的悲痛，让她同先前那悲剧的爱情故事一刀两断。但一切都是徒然。在遭受如此打击之后，她的灵魂已经被灼烧甚至焦化；而她幸福的温床也随之被毁，再也不会发芽或开花。她从来没有拒绝去光顾娱乐的场所，但她还是像原先那样，形单影孤，置身于深深的孤独中。她会四下里走走，却总处于悲伤的遐想之中，很显然，她对周围的世界失去感觉。她内心深处，满满的都是忧伤。她用内心的忧伤嘲笑着朋友给予的所有甜言蜜语，“不听行法术的声音，虽用极灵的咒语、也是不听” [8]。

向我讲述她故事的人曾在一个化装舞会上碰到过她。没有比在这

样的场合遇见她，更能显示出她早先曾有过的痛苦是多么触目惊心、令人心碎。他看到她像幽灵一样，四处游荡，孤独、悲伤，而环绕周围的却是欢乐的景象。他看到她穿着欢乐的服装，脸色是那么苍白，那么愁苦，就好像她曾徒然努力去欺骗那颗可怜的心，让它把伤悲短暂地遗忘。心不在焉地信步穿过一个个富丽堂皇的房间和眼花缭乱的人群后，她就在管弦乐队的台阶上坐了下来。有一阵子，她茫然地四下张望，这说明她对眼前花哨的场面没有了感觉。带着一颗病弱的心，她开始反复无常地哼起了哀伤的小调。她的声音本来很甜美，但在这个场合，它是那么简朴，那么动人。它吐露出了一颗悲戚的灵魂，让周围的人听得鸦雀无声，把周围的每个人软化得眼含热泪。

在一个以热情著称的国度，如此真诚而又温柔的故事，不可能不激起人们浓厚的兴趣。她完全赢得了一位勇敢军官的心。军官向她求爱，并认为一个对死者如此忠贞的人，对生者不可能不一往情深。她谢绝了军官的求婚，她的全部心思不可动摇地专注于昔日情人的记忆里。可是，那位军官却紧追不舍。他所寻求的不是她的柔情，而是她的尊重。她心里清楚，他很富有，也知道自己穷困，且要依赖他人才能生存。现下她要靠好心的朋友接济才能维持生活，这境况帮了他的忙。总之，他同她终于成功牵手，尽管明确地知道：她的心不可改变地属于另一个男人。

那位军官带着她去了意大利的西西里岛，希望换一个环境会让她慢慢忘记昔日的悲痛。她和蔼可亲，是一个模范的妻子，她也在努力成为快乐生活的人。可是，没有什么医治得了那份早已进入她灵魂的，默默地、吞噬着她生命的悲哀。她在缓慢却是无望的消瘦中日渐衰弱，最后走进了坟墓，成了破碎之心的牺牲品。

就是为了她，著名的爱尔兰诗人托马斯·穆尔 [9] 写下了如下诗行：

她远离了那片土地，那个她年轻英雄的长眠之地，

周围爱恋她的人无不哀叹；

但很冷漠地，她避开他们的注视而独自哭泣，

因为她的心留在了躺着那英雄的地底。

她唱着可爱家乡的平原上那豪放的歌曲，

他热爱的每个音符震撼人心——

哎，喜欢听她歌曲的人们，

很少想到这是被怎样撕碎着的歌者的心！

他为了爱人而活；为了祖国献身而死。

这乃是伴随他生命的一切——

他祖国的眼泪不会很快干涸，

他爱的人儿亦不会在他身后久留！

啊！给她造一座阳光永驻的坟墓吧，

因为阳光预示着灿烂一天的开始；

阳光将照耀她的睡姿，那仿佛是来自西方的微笑，

仿佛是来自她至爱的悲伤之岛的微笑！

[7] 此处所指应该是爱尔兰民族主义领袖罗伯特·埃米特（1778-1803）。

[8] 《圣咏集》58：5。

[9] 托马斯·穆尔（1779-1852），爱尔兰杰出爱国主义诗人，代表作《爱尔兰歌曲集》。

‘I’m not myself.—
I’m somebody
else—that’s me
yonder—no—
that’s somebody
else got into my
shoes . . . I can’t
tell what’s my
name, or who
I am!’

Rip Van Winkle

The following Tale was found among the papers of the late Diedrich Knickerbocker, an old gentleman of New York, who was very curious in the Dutch history of the province, and the manners of the descendants from its primitive settlers. His historical researches, however, did not lie so much among books, as among men; for the former are lamentably scanty on his favourite topics; whereas he found the old burghers, and still more, their wives, rich in that legendary lore so invaluable to true history. Whenever, therefore, he happened upon a genuine Dutch family, snugly shut up in its low roofed farm house, under a spreading sycamore, he looked upon it as a little clasped volume of black letter, and studied it with the zeal of a bookworm.

The result of all these researches was a history of the province, during the reign of the Dutch governors, which he published some years since. There have been various opinions as to the literary character of his work and, to tell the truth, it is not a whit better than it should be. Its chief merit is its scrupulous accuracy, which indeed was a little questioned on its first appearance, but has since been completely established; and it is now admitted into all historical collections as a book of unquestionable authority.

The old gentleman died shortly after the publication of his work, and now that he is dead and gone, it cannot do much harm to his memory to say that his time might have been much better employed in weightier labours. He, however, was apt to ride his hobby his own way; and though it did now and then kick up the dust a little in the eyes of his neighbours, and grieve the spirit of some friends for whom he felt the truest deference and affection; yet his errors and follies are remembered 'more in sorrow than in anger,' and it begins to be suspected that he never intended to injure or offend. But however his memory may be appreciated by critics, it is still held dear by many folk whose good opinion is well worth having; particularly by certain biscuit bakers, who have gone so far as to imprint his likeness on their new year cakes, and

have thus given him a chance for immortality, almost equal to being stamped on a Waterloo medal, or a Queen Anne's farthing.

**Rip Van Winkle A POSTHUMOUS WRITING OF DIEDRICH
KNICKERBOCKER**

By Woden, God of Saxons,
From whence comes Wensday, that is Wodensday,
Truth is a thing that ever I will keep
Unto thylke day in which I creep into
My sepulchre -

CARTWRIGHT.

Whoever has made a voyage up the Hudson must remember the Kaatskill mountains. They are a dismembered branch of the great Appalachian family, and are seen away to the west of the river swelling up to noble height and lording it over the surrounding country. Every change of season, every change of weather, indeed every hour of the day, produces some change in the magical hues and shapes of these moun-tains, and they are regarded by all the good wives far and near as perfect barometers. When the weather is fair and settled they are clothed in blue and purple, and print their bold outlines on the clear evening sky; but sometimes, when the rest of the landscape is cloudless, they will gather a hood of grey vapours about their summits, which, in the last rays of the setting sun, will glow and light up like a crown of glory.

At the foot of these fairy mountains the voyager may have descried the light smoke curling up from a village, whose shingle roofs gleam among the trees, just where the blue tints of the upland melt away into the fresh green of the nearer landscape. It is a little village of great antiquity, having been founded by some of the Dutch colonists in the early times of the province, just about the beginning of the government of the good Peter Stuyvesant, (may he rest in peace!) and there were some of the houses of the original settlers standing within a few years; built of small yellow bricks brought from Holland, having latticed windows and gable fronts, surmounted with weathercocks.

In that same village, and in one of these very houses (which to

tell the precise truth was sadly time worn and weather beaten) there lived many years since, while the country was yet a province of Great Britain, a simple good natured fellow of the name of Rip Van Winkle. He was a descendant of the Van Winkles who figured so gallantly in the chivalrous days of Peter Stuyvesant, and accompanied him to the siege of Fort Christina. He inherited, however, but little of the martial character of his ancestors. I have observed that he was a simple good natured man; he was moreover a kind neighbour, and an obedient, henpecked husband. Indeed to the latter circumstance might be owing that meekness of spirit which gained him such universal popularity; for those men are most apt to be obsequious and conciliating abroad, who are under the discipline of shrews at home. Their tempers doubtless are rendered pliant and malleable in the fiery furnace of domestic tribulation, and a curtain lecture is worth all the sermons in the world for teaching the virtues of patience and long suffering. A termagant wife may therefore in some respects be considered a tolerable blessing - and if so, Rip Van Winkle was thrice blessed.

Certain it is that he was a great favourite among all the good wives of the village, who as usual with the amiable sex, took his part in all family squabbles, and never failed, whenever they talked those matters over in their evening gossipings, to lay all the blame on Dame Van Winkle. The children of the village too would shout with joy whenever he approached. He assisted at their sports, made their play things, taught them to fly kites and shoot marbles, and told them long stories of ghosts, witches and Indians. Whenever he went dodging about the village he was surrounded by a troop of them hanging on his skirts, clambering on his back and playing a thousand tricks on him with impunity; and not a dog would bark at him throughout the neighbourhood.

The great error in Rip's composition was an insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labour. It could not be from the want of assiduity or perseverance; for he would sit on a wet rock, with a rod as long and heavy as a Tartar's lance, and fish all day without a murmur, even though he should not be encouraged by a single nibble. He would carry a fowling piece on his shoulder for hours together, trudging through woods, and swamps and up hill and down dale, to shoot a few squirrels or wild pigeons; he would never refuse to assist a neighbour even in the roughest toil, and was

a foremost man at all country frolicks for husking Indian corn, or building stone fences; the women of the village too used to employ him to run their errands and to do such little odd jobs as their less obliging husbands would not do for them - in a word Rip was ready to attend to any body's business but his own; but as to doing family duty, and keeping his farm in order, he found it impossible.

In fact he declared it was of no use to work on his farm; it was the most pestilent little piece of ground in the whole country; every thing about it went wrong and would go wrong in spite of him. His fences were continually falling to pieces; his cow would either go astray or get among the cabbages, weeds were sure to grow quicker in his fields than any where else; the rain always made a point of setting in just as he had some outdoor work to do. So that though his patrimonial estate had dwindled away under his management, acre by acre until there was little more left than a mere patch of Indian corn and potatoes, yet it was the worst conditioned farm in the neighbourhood.

His children too were as ragged and wild as if they belonged to nobody. His son Rip, an urchin begotten in his own likeness, promised to inherit the habits with the old clothes of his father. He was generally seen trooping like a colt at his mother's heels, equipped in a pair of his father's cast off galligaskins, which he had much ado to hold up with one hand, as a fine lady does her train in bad weather.

Rip Van Winkle, however, was one of those happy mortals of foolish, well oiled dispositions, who take the world easy, eat white bread or brown, whichever can be got with least thought or trouble, and would rather starve on a penny than work for a pound. If left to himself, he would have whistled life away in perfect contentment, but his wife kept continually dinning in his ears about his idleness, his carelessness and the ruin he was bringing on his family. Morning noon and night her tongue was incessantly going, and every thing he said or did was sure to produce a torrent of household eloquence. Rip had but one way of replying to all lectures of the kind, and that by frequent use had grown into a habit. He shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, cast up his eyes, but said nothing. This, however, always provoked a fresh volley from his wife, so that he was fain to draw off his forces and take to the outside of the house - the only side which in truth belongs to a

henpecked husband.

Rip's sole domestic adherent was his dog Wolf who was as much henpecked as his master, for Dame Van Winkle regarded them as companions in idleness, and even looked upon Wolf with an evil eye as the cause of his master's going so often astray. True it is, in all points of spirit befitting an honourable dog, he was as courageous an animal as ever scoured the woods - but what courage can withstand the ever during and all besetting terrors of a woman's tongue? The moment Wolf entered the house his crest fell, his tail drooped to the ground or curled between his legs, he sneaked about with a gallows air, casting many a sidelong glance at Dame Van Winkle, and at the least flourish of a broomstick or ladle he would fly to the door with yelping precipitation.

Times grew worse and worse with Rip Van Winkle as years of matrimony rolled on; a tart temper never mellows with age, and a sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use. For a long while he used to console himself when driven from home, by frequenting a kind of perpetual club of the sages, philosophers and other idle personages of the village which held its sessions on a bench before a small inn, designated by a rubicund portrait of his majesty George the Third. Here they used to sit in the shade, through a long lazy summer's day, talking listlessly over village gossip, or telling endless sleepy stories about nothing. But it would have been worth any statesman's money to have heard the profound discussions that some-times took place, when by chance an old newspaper fell into their hands from some passing traveller. How solemnly they would listen to the contents as drawled out by Derrick Van Bummel the schoolmaster, a dapper, learned little man, who was not to be daunted by the most gigantic word in the dictionary; and how sagely they would deliberate upon public events some months after they had taken place.

The opinions of this junto were completely controlled by Nicholas Vedder, a patriarch of the village, and landlord of the inn, at the door of which he took his seat from morning till night, just moving sufficiently to avoid the sun and keep in the shade of a large tree; so that the neighbours could tell the hour by his movements as accurately as by a sun dial. It is true he was rarely heard to speak, but smoked his pipe incessantly. His adherents, however (for every great man has his adherents), perfectly

understood him and knew how to gather his opinions. When any thing that was read or related displeased him, he was observed to smoke his pipe vehemently and to send forth short, frequent and angry puffs; but when pleased he would inhale the smoke slowly and tranquilly and emit it in light and placid clouds, and sometimes taking the pipe from his mouth and letting the fragrant vapour curl about his nose, would gravely nod his head in token of perfect approbation.

From even this strong hold the unlucky Rip was at length routed by his termagant wife who would suddenly break in upon the tranquility of the assemblage and call the members all to naught; nor was that august personage Nicholaus Ved-der himself sacred from the daring tongue of this terrible virago, who charged him outright with encouraging her husband in habits of idleness.

Poor Rip was at last reduced almost to despair; and his only alternative to escape from the labour of the farm and the clamour of his wife, was to take gun in hand and stroll away into the woods. Here he would sometimes seat himself at the foot of a tree and share the contents of his wallet with Wolf, with whom he sympathised as a fellow sufferer in per-secution. 'Poor Wolf,' he would say, 'thy mistress leads thee a dog's life of it, but never mind my lad, whilst I live thou shalt never want a friend to stand by thee!' Wolf would wag his tail, look wistfully in his master's face, and if dogs can feel pity I verily believe he reciprocated the sentiment with all his heart.

In a long ramble of the kind on a fine autumnal day, Rip had unconsciously scrambled to one of the highest parts of the Kaatskill mountains. He was after his favourite sport of squirrel shooting and the still solitudes had echoed and re-echoed with the reports of his gun. Panting and fatigued he threw himself, late in the afternoon, on a green knoll, covered with mountain herbage, that crowned the brow of a precipice. From an opening between the trees he could overlook all the lower country for many a mile of rich wood-land. He saw at a distance the lordly Hudson, far, far below him, moving on its silent but majestic course, with the reflection of a purple cloud, or the sail of a lagging bark here and there sleeping on its glassy bosom, and at last losing itself in the blue highlands.

On the other side he looked down into a deep mountain glen,

wild, lonely and shagged, the bottom filled with fragments from the impending cliffs and scarcely lighted by the reflected rays of the setting sun. For some time Rip lay musing on this scene, evening was gradually advancing, the mountains began to throw their long blue shadows over the valleys, he saw that it would be dark, long before he could reach the village, and he heaved a heavy sigh when he thought of encountering the terrors of Dame Van Winkle.

As he was about to descend he heard a voice from a distance hallooing 'Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!' He looked around, but could see nothing but a crow winging its solitary flight across the mountain. He thought his fancy must have deceived him and turned again to descend, when he heard the same cry ring through the still evening air: 'Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!' - at the same time Wolf bristled up his back and giving a low growl, skulked to his master's side, looking fearfully down into the glen. Rip now felt a vague apprehension stealing over him; he looked anxiously in the same direction and perceived a strange figure slowly toiling up the rocks and bending under the weight of something he carried on his back. He was surprised to see any human being in this lonely and unfrequented place, but supposing it to be some one of the neighbourhood in need of his assistance he hastened down to yield it.

On nearer approach he was still more surprised at the singularity of the stranger's appearance. He was a short, square built old fellow, with thick bushy hair and a grizzled beard. His dress was of the antique Dutch fashion, a cloth jerkin strapped round the waist, several pair of breeches, the outer one of ample volume decorated with rows of buttons down the sides and bunches at the knees. He bore on his shoulder a stout keg that seemed full of liquor, and made signs for Rip to approach and assist him with the load. Though rather shy and distrustful of this new acquaintance Rip complied with his usual alacrity, and mutually relieving each other they clambered up a narrow gully apparently the dry bed of a mountain torrent. As they ascended Rip every now and then heard long rolling peals like distant thunder, that seemed to issue out of a deep ravine or rather cleft between lofty rocks, toward which their rugged path conducted. He paused for an instant, but supposing it to be the muttering of one of those transient thunder showers which often take place in mountain

heights, he proceeded. Passing through the ravine they came to a hollow like a small amphi-theatre, surrounded by perpendicular precipices, over the brinks of which impending trees shot their branches, so that you only caught glimpses of the azure sky and the bright evening cloud. During the whole time Rip and his companion had laboured on in silence, for though the former marvelled greatly what could be the object of carrying a keg of liquor up this wild mountain, yet there was something strange and incomprehensible about the unknown, that inspired awe and checked familiarity.

On entering the amphitheatre new objects of wonder pre-sented themselves. On a level spot in the centre was a company of odd looking personages playing at ninepins. They were dressed in a quaint outlandish fashion - some wore short doublets, others jerkins with long knives in their belts and most of them had enormous breeches of similar style with that of the guide's. Their visages too were peculiar. One had a large head, broad face and small piggish eyes. The face of another seemed to consist entirely of nose, and was surmounted by a white sugarloaf hat, set off with a little red cock's tail. They all had beards of various shapes and colours. There was one who seemed to be the Com-mander. He was a stout old gentleman, with a weatherbeaten countenance. He wore a laced doublet, broad belt and hanger, high crowned hat and feather, red stockings and high heel'd shoes with roses in them. The whole group reminded Rip of the figures in an old Flemish painting, in the parlour of Dominie Van Schaick the village parson, and which had been brought over from Holland at the time of the settlement.

What seemed particularly odd to Rip was, that though these folks were evidently amusing themselves, yet they maintained the gravest faces, the most mysterious silence, and were, withal, the most melancholy party of pleasure he had ever witnessed. Nothing interrupted the stillness of the scene, but the noise of the balls, which, whenever they were rolled, echoed along the mountains like rumbling peals of thunder.

As Rip and his companion approached them they suddenly desisted from their play and stared at him with such fixed statue like gaze, and such strange uncouth, lack lustre countenances, that his heart turned within him, and his knees smote together. His

companion now emptied the contents of the keg into large flagons and made signs to him to wait upon the company. He obeyed with fear and trembling; they quaffed the liquor in profound silence and then returned to their game.

By degree Rip's awe and apprehension subsided. He even ventured, when no eye was fixed upon him, to taste the beverage, which he found had much of the flavour of excellent hollands. He was naturally a thirsty soul and was soon tempted to repeat the draught. One taste provoked another, and he reiterated his visits to the flagon so often that at length his senses were overpowered, his eyes swam in his head - his head gradually declined and he fell into a deep sleep.

On awaking he found himself on the green knoll from whence he had first seen the old man of the glen. He rubbed his eyes - it was a bright, sunny morning. The birds were hopping and twittering among the bushes, and the eagle was wheeling aloft and breasting the pure mountain breeze. 'Surely,' thought Rip, 'I have not slept here all night. He recalled the occurrences before he fell asleep. The strange man with a keg of liquor - the mountain ravine - the wild retreat among the rocks - the woe begone party at ninepins - the flagon - 'ah! that flagon! that wicked flagon!' thought Rip - 'what excuse shall I make to Dame Van Winkle?'

He looked round for his gun, but in place of the clean well oiled fowling piece he found an old firelock lying by him, the barrel encrusted with rust; the lock falling off and the stock worm eaten. He now suspected that the grave roysters of the mountain had put a trick upon him, and having dosed him with liquor, had robbed him of his gun. Wolf too had disappeared, but he might have strayed away after a squirrel or partridge. He whistled after him and shouted his name - but all in vain; the echoes repeated his whistle and shout, but no dog was to be seen.

He determined to revisit the scene of the last evening's gambol, and if he met with any of the party, to demand his dog and gun. As he arose to walk he found himself stiff in the joints and wanting in his usual activity. 'These mountain beds do not agree with me,' thought Rip, 'and if this frolick should lay me up with a fit of the rheumatism, I shall have a blessed time with Dame Van Winkle.' With some difficulty he got down into the glen; he found the gully

up which he and his companion had ascended the preceding evening, but to his astonishment a mountain stream was now foam-ing down it; leaping from rock to rock, and filling the glen with babbling murmurs. He, however, made shift to scam-ble up its sides working his toilsome way through thickets of birch, sassafras and witch hazel, and sometimes tripped up or entangled by the wild grape vines that twisted their coils and tendrils from tree to tree, and spread a kind of net work in his path.

At length he reached to where the ravine had opened through the cliffs, to the amphitheatre - but no traces of such opening remained. The rocks presented a high impene-trable wall over which the torrent came tumbling in a sheet of feathery foam, and fell into a broad deep basin black from the shadows of the surrounding forest. Here then poor Rip was brought to a stand. He again called and whistled after his dog - he was only answered by the cawing of a flock of idle crows, sporting high in air about a dry tree that over-hung a sunny precipice; and who, secure in their elevation seemed to look down and scoff at the poor man's perplexities.

What was to be done?The morning was passing away and Rip felt famished for want of his breakfast. He grieved to give up his dog and gun; he dreaded to meet his wife; but it would not do to starve among the mountains. He shook his head, shouldered the rusty fire lock and with a heart full of trouble and anxiety, turned his steps homeward.

As he approached the village he met a number of people, but none whom he knew, which somewhat surprised him, for he had thought himself acquainted with every one in the country round. Their dress too was of a different fashion from that to which he was accustomed. They all stared at him with equal marks of surprise, and whenever they cast their eyes upon him, invariably stroked their chins. The constant recurrence of this gesture induced Rip involuntar-ily to do the same, when to his astonishment he found his beard had grown a foot long!

He had now entered the skirts of the village. A troop of strange children ran at his heels, hooting after him and pointing at his grey beard. The dogs too, not one of which he recognized for an old acquaintance, barked at him as he passed. The very village was

altered - it was larger and more populous. There were rows of houses which he had never seen before, and those which had been his familiar haunts had disappeared. Strange names were over the doors - strange faces at the windows - every thing was strange. His mind now misgave him; he began to doubt whether both he and the world around him were not bewitched. Surely this was his native village which he had left but the day before. There stood the Kaatskill mountains - there ran the silver Hudson at a distance - there was every hill and dale precisely as it had always been - Rip was sorely perplexed - 'That flagon last night,' thought he, 'has addled my poor head sadly!'

It was with some difficulty that he found the way to his own house, which he approached with silent awe, expecting every moment to hear the shrill voice of Dame Van Winkle. He found the house gone to decay - the roof fallen in, the windows shattered and the doors off the hinges. A half starved dog that looked like Wolf was skulking about it. Rip called him by name but the cur snarled, shewed his teeth and passed on. This was an unkind cut indeed - 'My very dog,' sighed poor Rip, 'has forgotten me!'

He entered the house, which, to tell the truth, Dame Van Winkle had always kept in neat order. It was empty, forlorn and apparently abandoned. This desolateness overcame all his connubial fears - he called loudly for his wife and children - the lonely chambers rung for a moment with his voice, and then all again was silence.

He now hurried forth and hastened to his old resort, the village inn - but it too was gone. A large, rickety wooden building stood in its place, with great gaping windows, some of them broken, and mended with old hats and petticoats, and over the door was printed 'The Union Hotel, by Jonathan Doolittle.' Instead of the great tree, that used to shelter the quiet little Dutch inn of yore, there now was reared a tall naked pole with something on top that looked like a red night cap, and from it was fluttering a flag on which was a singular assemblage of stars and stripes - all this was strange and incomprehensible. He recognized on the sign, however, the ruby face of King George under which he had smoked so many a peaceful pipe, but even this was singularly metamorphosed. The red coat was changed for one of blue and buff; a sword was held in the hand instead of a sceptre; the head was decorated with a cocked hat, and

underneath was printed in large characters GEN-ERAL WASHINGTON.

There was as usual a crowd of folk about the door; but none that Rip recollected. The very character of the people seemed changed. There was a busy, bustling disputatious tone about it, instead of the accustomed phlegm and drowsy tranquility. He looked in vain for the sage Nicholas Vedder with his broad face, double chin and fair long pipe, uttering clouds of tobacco smoke instead of idle speeches. Or Van Bummel the schoolmaster doling forth the contents of an ancient newspaper. In place of these a lean bilious looking fellow with his pockets full of hand bills, was haranguing vehemently about rights of citizens - elections - members of Congress - liberty - Bunker's hill - heroes of seventy six - and other words which were a perfect babylonish jar-gon to the bewildered Van Winkle.

The appearance of Rip with his long grizzled beard, his rusty fowling piece his uncouth dress and an army of women and children at his heels soon attracted the attention of the tavern politicians. They crowded around him eying him from head to foot, with great curiosity. The orator hustled up to him, and drawing him partly aside, enquired 'on which side he voted?' - Rip stared in vacant stupidity. Another short but busy little fellow, pulled him by the arm and rising on tiptoe, enquired in his ear 'whether he was Federal or Democrat?' - Rip was equally at a loss to comprehend the question - when a knowing, self important old gentleman, in a sharp cocked hat, made his way through the crowd, putting them to the right and left with his elbows as he passed, and planting himself before Van Winkle, with one arm akimbo, the other resting on his cane, his keen eyes and sharp hat penetrating as it were into his very soul, demanded in an austere tone - 'what brought him to the election with a gun on his shoulder and a mob at his heels, and whether he meant to breed a riot in the village?' - 'Alas gentlemen,' cried Rip, somewhat dismayed, 'I am a poor quiet man, a native of the place, and a loyal subject of the King - God bless him!'

Here a general shout burst from the bystanders - 'A tory! a tory! a spy! a Refugee! hustle him! away with him!' - It was with great difficulty that the self important man in the cocked hat restored order; and having assumed a ten fold austerity of brow demanded again of the unknown culprit, what he came there for

and whom he was seeking. The poor man humbly assured him that he meant no harm; but merely came there in search of some of his neighbours, who used to keep about the tavern.

'Well - who are they? - name them.'

Rip bethought himself a moment and enquired, 'Where's Nicholaus Vedder?'

There was a silence for a little while, when an old man replied, in a thin, piping voice, 'Nicholaus Vedder? why he is dead and gone these eighteen years! There was a wooden tombstone in the church yard that used to tell all about him, but that's rotted and gone too.'

'Where's Brom Dutcher?'

'Oh he went off to the army in the beginning of the war; some say he was killed at the storming of Stoney Point - others say he was drowned in a squall at the foot of Antony's Nose - I don't know - he never came back again.'

'Where's Van Bummel the schoolmaster?'

'He went off to the wars too - was a great militia general, and is now in Congress.'

Rip's heart died away at hearing of these sad changes in his home and friends, and finding himself thus alone in the world - every answer puzzled him too by treating of such enormous lapses of time and of matters which he could not understand - war - Congress, Stoney Point - he had no courage to ask after any more friends, but cried out in despair, 'Does nobody here know Rip Van Winkle?'

'Oh. Rip Van Winkle?' exclaimed two or three - 'oh to be sure! - that's Rip Van Winkle - yonder - leaning against the tree.'

Rip looked and beheld a precise counterpart of himself, as he went up the mountain: apparently as lazy and certainly as ragged! The poor fellow was now completely confounded. He doubted his own identity, and whether he was himself or another man. In the midst of his bewilderment the man in the cocked hat demanded who he was, - what was his name?

'God knows,' exclaimed he, at his wit's end, 'I'm not myself. - I'm somebody else - that's me yonder - no - that's somebody else got

into my shoes - I was myself last night; but I fell asleep on the mountain - and they've changed my gun - and every thing's changed - and I'm changed - and I can't tell what's my name, or who I am!

The bystanders began now to look at each other, nod, wink significantly and tap their fingers against their fore-heads. There was a whisper also about securing the gun, and keeping the old fellow from doing mischief - at the very suggestion of which, the self important man in the cocked hat retired with some precipitation. At this critical moment a fresh likely looking woman pressed through the throng to get a peep at the greybearded man. She had a chubby child in her arms, which frightened at his looks began to cry. 'Hush Rip,' cried she, 'hush you little fool, the old man won't hurt you. The name of the child, the air of the mother, the tone of her voice all awakened a train of recollections in his mind. 'What is your name my good woman?' asked he.

'Judith Gardenier.'

'And your father's name?'

'Ah, poor man, Rip Van Winkle was his name, but it's twenty years since he went away from home with his gun and never has been heard of since - his dog came home without him - but whether he shot himself, or was carried away by the Indians no body can tell. I was then but a little girl.'

Rip had but one question more to ask, but he put it with a faltering voice -

'Where's your mother?' -

Oh she too had died but a short time since - she broke a blood vessel in a fit of passion at a New England pedlar. -

There was a drop of comfort at least in this intelligence. The honest man could contain himself no longer - he caught his daughter and her child in his arms. - 'I am your father!' cried he - 'Young Rip Van Winkle once - old Rip Van Win-kle now! - does nobody know poor Rip Van Winkle!'

All stood amazed, until an old woman tottering out from among the crowd put her hand to her brow and peering under it in his face for a moment exclaimed - 'Sure enough! - it is Rip Van Winkle - it is himself - welcome home again old neighbour - why,

where have you been these twenty long years?'

Rip's story was soon told, for the whole twenty years had been to him but as one night. The neighbours stared when they heard it; some were seen to wink at each other and put their tongues in their cheeks, and the self important man in the cocked hat, who when the alarm was over had returned to the field, screwed down the corners of his mouth and shook his head - upon which there was a general shak-ing of the head throughout the assemblage.

It was determined, however, to take the opinion of old Peter Vanderdonk, who was seen slowly advancing up the road. He was a descendant of the historian of that name, who wrote one of the earliest accounts of the province. Peter was the most ancient inhabitant of the village and well versed in all the wonderful events and traditions of the neighbourhood. He recollected Rip at once, and corroborated his story in the most satisfactory manner. He assured the company that it was a fact handed down from his ancestor the historian, that the Kaatskill mountains had always been haunted by strange beings. That it was affirmed that the great Hendrick Hudson, the first discoverer of the river and country, kept a kind of vigil there every twenty years, with his crew of the Half Moon - being permitted in this way to revisit the scenes of his enterprize and keep a guard-ian eye upon the river and the great city called by his name. That his father had once seen them in their old Dutch dresses playing at ninepins in a hollow of the mountain; and that he himself had heard one summer afternoon the sound of their balls, like distant peals of thunder.

To make a long story short - the company broke up, and returned to the more important concerns of the election. Rip's daughter took him home to live with her; she had a snug well furnished house, and a stout cheery farmer for a husband whom Rip recollected for one of the urchins that used to climb upon his back. As to Rip's son and heir, who was the ditto of himself seen leaning against the tree; he was employed to work on the farm; but evinced an hereditary disposition to attend to any thing else but his business.

Rip now resumed his old walks and habits; he soon found many of his former cronies, though all rather the worse for the wear and tear of time; and preferred making friends among the rising

generation, with whom he soon grew into great favour. Having nothing to do at home, and being arrived at that happy age when a man can be idle, with impunity, he took his place once more on the bench at the inn door and was revered as one of the patriarchs of the village and a chronicle of the old times 'before the war.' It was some time before he could get into the regular track of gossip, or could be made to comprehend the strange events that had taken place during his torpor. How that there had been a revolutionary war - that the country had thrown off the yoke of Old England and that instead of being a subject of his majesty George the Third, he was now a free citizen of the United States. Rip in fact was no politician; the changes of states and empires made but little impression on him; but there was one species of despotism under which he had long groaned and that was petticoat government. Happily that was at an end - he had got his neck out of the yoke of matrimony, and could go in and out whenever he pleased without dreading the tyranny of Dame Van Winkle. Whenever her name was mentioned, however, he shook his head, shrugged his shoulders and cast up his eyes; which might pass either for an expression of resignation to his fate or joy at his deliverance.

He used to tell his story to every stranger that arrived at Mr Doolittle's Hotel. He was observed at first to vary on some points, every time he told it, which was doubtless owing to his having so recently awaked. It at last settled down precisely to the tale I have related and not a man woman or child in the neighbourhood but knew it by heart. Some always pretended to doubt the reality of it, and insisted that Rip had been out of his head, and that this was one point on which he always remained flighty. The old Dutch inhabitants, however, almost universally gave it full credit - Even to this day they never hear a thunder storm of a summer afternoon about the Kaatskill, but they say Hendrick Hudson and his crew are at their game of nine-pins; and it is a common wish of all henpecked husbands in the neighbourhood, when life hangs heavy on their hands, that they might have a quieting draught out of Rip Van Winkle's flagon.

NOTE

The foregoing tale one would suspect had been suggested to Mr Knickerbocker by a little German superstition about the emperor

Frederick der 【斜体】Rothbart【/斜体】and the Kypphauser Mountain; the subjoined note, however, which he had appended to the tale, shews that it is an absolute fact, nar-rated with his usual fidelity. -

'The story of Rip Van Winkle may seem incredible to many, but nevertheless I give it my full belief, for I know the vicinity of our old Dutch settlements to have been very subject to marvellous events and appearances. Indeed I have heard many stranger stories than this, in the villages along the Hudson; all of which were too well authenti-cated to admit of a doubt. I have even talked with Rip Van Winkle myself, who when last I saw him was a very vener-able old man and so perfectly rational and consistent on every other point, that I think no conscientious per-son could refuse to take this into the bargain - nay I have seen a certificate on the subject taken before a country just-ice and signed with a cross in the justice's own hand writing. The story therefore is beyond the possibility of doubt. D.K.'

POSTSCRIPT

The following are travelling notes from a memorandum book of Mr Knickerbocker.

The Kaatsberg or Catskill mountains have always been a region full of fable. The Indians considered them the abode of spirits who influenced the weather, spreading sunshine or clouds over the landscape and sending good or bad hunt-ing seasons. They were ruled by an old squaw spirit, said to be their mother. She dwelt on the highest peak of the Cats-kills and had charge of the doors of day and night to open and shut them at the proper hour. She hung up the new moons in the skies and cut up the old ones into stars. In times of drought, if properly propitiated, she would spin light summer clouds out of cobwebs and morning dew, and send them off, from the crest of the mountain, flake after flake, like flakes of carded cotton to float in the air: until, dissolved by the heat of the sun, they would fall in gentle showers, causing the grass to spring, the fruits to ripen and the corn to grow an inch an hour. If displeased, however, she would brew up clouds black as ink, sitting in the midst of them like a bottle bellied spider in the midst of its web; and when these clouds broke - woe betide the valleys!

In old times say the Indian traditions, there was a kind of Manitou or Spirit, who kept about the wildest recesses of the Catskill mountains, and took a mischievous pleasure in wreaking all kinds of evils and vexations upon the red men. Sometimes he would assume the form of a bear a panther or a deer, lead the bewildered hunter a weary chase through tangled forests and among rugged rocks; and then spring off with a loud ho! ho! leaving him aghast on the brink of a beetling precipice or raging torrent.

The favorite abode of this Manitou is still shewn. It is a great rock or cliff in the loneliest part of the mountains, and, from the fowering vines which clamber about it, and the wild fowers which abound in its neighborhood, is known by the name of the Garden Rock. Near the foot of it is a small lake the haunt of the solitary bittern, with water snakes basking in the sun on the leaves of the pond lillies which lie on the surface. This place was held in great awe by the Indians, insomuch that the boldest hunter would not pursue his game within its precincts. Once upon a time, however, a hunter who had lost his way, penetrated to the garden rock where he beheld a number of gourds placed in the crotches of trees. One of these he seized and made of with it, but in the hurry of his retreat he let it fall among the rocks, when a great stream gushed forth which washed him away and swept him down precipices where he was dashed to pieces, and the stream made its way to the Hudson and continues to flow to the present day; being the identical stream known by the name of the Kaaters-kill.

Te Wife

The treasures of the deep are not so precious
As are the conceal' d comforts of a man
Lock' d up in woman's love. I scent the air
Of blessings, when I come but near the house.
What a delicious breath marriage sends forth,
The violet bed's not sweeter!

MIDDLETON.

I have often had occasion to remark the fortitude with which women sustain the most overwhelming reverses of fortune. Those disasters which break down the spirits of a man, and prostrate him in the dust, seem to call forth all the energies of the softer sex, and give such intrepidity and elevation to their character, that at times it approaches to sublimity. Nothing can be more touching than to behold a soft and tender female, who had been all weakness and dependence, and alive to every trivial roughness while treading the pros-perous paths of life, suddenly rising in mental force, to be the comforter and supporter of her husband under misfor-tune, and abiding, with unshrinking firmness, the bitterest blasts of adversity.

As the vine which has long twined its graceful foliage about the oak, and been lifted by it into sunshine, will, when the hardy plant is rifted by the thunderbolt, cling round it with its caressing tendrils and bind up its shattered boughs; so is it beautifully ordered by providence, that woman, who is the mere dependent and ornament of man in his happier hours, should be his stay and solace when smitten with sud-den calamity, winding herself into the rugged recesses of his nature; tenderly supporting the drooping head, and binding up the broken heart.

I was once congratulating a friend, who had around him a blooming family knit together in the strongest affection. 'I can wish you no better lot,' said he, with enthusiasm, 'than to have a wife

and children. If you are prosperous, there they are to share your prosperity; and if otherwise, there they are to comfort you. - 'And indeed I have observed that a married man falling into misfortune, is more apt to retrieve his situation in the world than a single one; partly because he is more stimulated to exertion by the necessities of the helpless and beloved beings who depend upon him for sub-sistence; but chiefly because his spirits are soothed and relieved by domestic endearments, and his self respect kept alive by finding, that though all abroad is darkness and humiliation, yet there is still a little world of love at home, of which he is the monarch. Whereas a single man is apt to run to waste and self neglect; to fancy himself lonely and abandoned, and his heart to fall to ruin like some deserted mansion for want of an inhabitant.

These observations call to mind a little domestic story, of which I was once a witness. My intimate friend Leslie had married a beautiful and accomplished girl, who had been brought up in the midst of fashionable life. She had, it is true, no fortune, but that of my friend was ample and he delighted in the anticipation of indulging her in every elegant pursuit; and administering to those delicate tastes and fancies, that spread a kind of witchery about the sex - 'her life,' said he, 'shall be like a fairy tale.'

The very difference in their characters produced an harmonious combination. He was of a romantic and somewhat serious cast; she was all life and gladness. I have often noticed the mute rapture with which he would gaze upon her in company, of which her sprightly powers made her the delight; and how in the midst of applause, her eye would still turn to him, as if there alone she sought favour and acceptance. When leaning on his arm her slender form contrasted finely with his tall, manly person. The fond confiding air with which she looked up to him, seemed to call forth a flush of triumphant pride and cherishing tenderness; as if he doted on his lovely burthen, for its very helplessness. - Never did a couple set forward on the flowery path of early and well suited marriage, with a fairer prospect of felicity.

It was the misfortune of my friend, however, to have embarked his property in large speculations, and he had not been married many months, when, by a succession of sudden disasters, it was swept from him, and he found himself reduced almost to penury. For a time he kept his situation to himself and went about with a

haggard countenance and a breaking heart. His life was but a protracted agony, and what rendered it more insupportable was the necessity of keeping up a smile in the presence of his wife; for he could not bring himself to overwhelm her with the news. She saw, however, with the quick eyes of affection, that all was not well with him. She marked his altered looks and stifled sighs, and was not to be deceived by his sickly and vapid attempts at cheerfulness. She tasked all her sprightly powers and tender blandishments to win him back to happiness; but she only drove the arrow deeper into his soul - the more he saw cause to love her the more torturing was the thought that he was soon to make her wretched. A little while, thought he, and the smile will vanish from that cheek - the song will die away from those lips - the lustre of those eyes will be quenched with sorrow; and the happy heart which now beats lightly in that bosom, will be weighed down like mine by the cares and miseries of the world.

At length he came to me, one day, and related his whole situation in a tone of the deepest despair. When I had heard him through I enquired, 'Does your wife know all this?' - at the question he burst into an agony of tears - 'For God's sake!' cried he, 'if you have any pity on me don't mention my wife - it is the thought of her that drives me almost to madness!'

'And why not?' said I, 'she must know it sooner or later: you cannot keep it long from her, and the intelligence may break upon her in a more startling manner than if imparted by yourself; for the accents of those we love soften the harsh-est tidings. Besides you are depriving yourself of the comforts of her sympathy and not merely that, but also endangering the only bond that can keep hearts together, an unreserved community of thought and feeling. She will soon perceive that something is secretly preying upon your mind, and true love will not brook reserve: it feels under-valued and outraged when even the sorrows of those it loves are concealed from it.'

'Oh but my friend! to think what a blow I am to give to all her future prospects - how I am to strike her very soul to the earth, by telling her that her husband is a beggar! - That she is to forego all the elegancies of life - all the pleasures of society - to shrink with me into indigence and obscurity! - To tell her that I have dragged her down from the sphere in which she might have continued to

move in constant brightness - the light of every eye - the admiration of every heart!—How can she bear poverty! - she has been brought up in all the refinements of opulence. - How can she bear neglect! - she has been the idol of society - oh, it will break her heart! - it will break her heart! -'

I saw his grief was eloquent and I let it have its flow, for sorrow relieves itself by words. When his paroxysm had sub-sided and he had relapsed into moody silence, I resumed the subject gently, and urged him to break his situation at once to his wife. He shook his head mournfully, but positively.

'But how are you to keep it from her? It is necessary she should know it, that you may take the steps proper to the alteration of your circumstances. You must change your style of living - nay,' observing a pang to pass across his countenance- 'don't let that afflict you. I am sure you have never placed your happiness in outward shew - you have yet friends, warm friends, who will not think the worse of you for being less splendidly lodged; - and surely it does not require a palace to be happy with Mary -'

'I could be happy with her,' cried he convulsively, 'in a hovel! - I could go down with her into poverty and the dust! - I could - I could—God bless her! - God bless her! -' cried he, bursting into a transport of grief and tenderness.

'And believe me my friend,' said I stepping up and grasping him warmly by the hand - 'believe me, she can be the same with you. Aye, more - it will be a source of pride and triumph to her - it will call forth all the latent energies and fervent sympathies of her nature; for she will rejoice to prove that she loves you for yourself. There is in every true woman's heart a spark of heavenly fire which lies dormant in the broad daylight of prosperity; but which kindles up, and beams and blazes in the dark hour of adversity. No man knows what the wife of his bosom is - no man knows what a ministering angel she is - until he has gone with her through the fiery trials of this world.'

There was something in the earnestness of my manner, and the figurative style of my language that caught the excited imagination of Leslie. I knew the auditor I had to deal with; and following up the impression I had made, I finished by persuading him to go home and unburthen his sad heart to his wife.

I must confess, notwithstanding all I had said, I felt some little solicitude for the result. Who can calculate on the fortitude of one whose whole life has been a round of pleasures? - Her gay spirits might revolt at the dark down-ward path of low humility suddenly pointed out before her, and might cling to the sunny regions in which they had hitherto revelled. Besides, ruin in fashionable life is accompanied by so many galling mortifications to which in other ranks it is a stranger - in short, I could not meet Leslie the next morning without trepidation. He had made the disclosure.

- 'And how did she bear it?'

'Like an angel! It seemed rather to be a relief to her mind, for she threw her arms round my neck, and asked if this was all that had lately made me unhappy - but, poor girl,' - added he, 'she cannot realize the change we must undergo. She has no idea of poverty but in the abstract - she has only read of it in poetry, where it is allied to love. She feels as yet no privation - she suffers no loss of accustomed conveniences nor elegancies. When we come practically to experience its sordid cares, its paltry wants, its petty humiliations - then will be the real trial.'

'But,' said I, 'now that you have got over the severest task, that of breaking it to her, the sooner you let the world into the secret the better. The disclosure may be mortifying, but then it is a single misery and soon over, whereas you otherwise suffer it in anticipation, every hour in the day. It is not poverty so much as pretence, that harrasses a ruined man. The struggle between a proud mind and an empty purse - the keeping up a hollow shew that must soon come to an end. Have the courage to appear poor and you disarm poverty of its sharpest sting.' - On this point I found Leslie perfectly prepared. He had no false pride himself, and as to his wife she was only anxious to conform to their altered fortunes.

Some days afterwards he called upon me in the evening. He had disposed of his dwelling house and taken a small cottage in the country, a few miles from town. He had been busied all day in sending out furniture. The new establishment required few articles, and those of the simplest kind. All the splendid furniture of his late residence had been sold excepting his wife's Harp. That, he said, was too closely associated with the idea of herself - it belonged to

the little story of their loves - for some of the sweetest moments of their courtship were those when he had leant over that instrument and listened to the melting tones of her voice. - I could not but smile at this instance of romantic gallantry in a doting husband.

He was now going out to the cottage, where his wife had been all day, superintending its arrangement. My feelings had become strongly interested in the progress of this family story and as it was a fine evening I offered to accom-pany him.

He was wearied with the fatigues of the day, and as we walked out, fell into a fit of gloomy musing.

‘Poor Mary!’ at length broke with a heavy sigh from his lips.

‘And what of her,’ asked I, ‘has any thing happened to her?’

‘What,’ said he, darting an impatient glance, ‘is it nothing to be reduced to this paltry situation - to be caged in a miserable cottage - to be obliged to toil almost in the menial concerns of her wretched habitation?’

‘Has she then repined at the change?’

‘Repined! - she has been nothing but sweetness and good humour. Indeed she seems in better spirits than I have ever known her - she has been to me all love and tenderness and comfort!’

‘Admirable girl!’ exclaimed I. ‘You call yourself poor my friend; you never were so rich - you never knew the bound-less treasures of excellence you possessed in that woman.’

‘Oh, but my friend - if this first meeting at the cottage were over - I think I could then be comfortable. But this is her first day of real experience. She has been introduced into our humble dwelling. She has been employed all day in arranging its miserable equipments. She has for the first time known the fatigues of domestic employment - She has for the first time looked around her on a home destitute of every thing elegant, - almost of every thing convenient, and may now be sitting down exhausted and spiritless, brooding over a prospect of future poverty.’

There was a degree of probability in this picture that I could not gainsay - so we walked on in silence.

After turning from the main road up a narrow lane so thickly

shaded by forest trees as to give it a complete air of seclusion, we came in sight of the cottage. It was humble enough in its appearance for the most pastoral poet; and yet it had a pleasing rural look. A wild vine had over run one end with a profusion of foliage - a few trees threw their branches gracefully over it, and I observed several pots of flowers tastefully disposed about the door and on the grass plot in front. A small wicket gate opened upon a foot path that wound through some shrubbery to the door. Just as we approached we heard the sound of music. - Leslie grasped my arm - we paused and listened. It was Mary's voice sing-ing, in a style of the most touching simplicity, a little air of which her husband was peculiarly fond.

I felt Leslie's hand tremble on my arm. He stepped for-ward to hear more distinctly - His step made a noise on the gravel walk - a bright beautiful face glanced out at the window and vanished - a light footstep was heard, and Mary came tripping forth to meet us. She was in a pretty, rural dress of white; a few wild flowers were twisted in her fline hair; a fresh bloom was on her cheek; her whole coun-tenance beamed with smiles - I had never seen her look so lovely.

'My dear George,' cried she, 'I am so glad you are come - I' ve been watching and watching for you; and running down the lane, and looking out for you. I' ve set out a table under a beautiful tree behind the cottage - and I' ve been gathering some of the most delicious strawberries, for I know you are fond of them - and we have such excellent cream - and every thing is so sweet and still here - Oh!' said she, putting her arm within his, and looking up brightly in his face - 'oh, we shall be so happy!'

Poor Leslie was overcome - He caught her to his bosom - he folded his arms round her - he kissed her again and again - he could not speak, but the tears gushed into his eyes - And he has often assured me that though the world has since gone prosperously with him, and his life has, indeed, been a happy one; yet never has he experienced a moment of more exquisite felicity.

London Antiques

- I do walk

Methinks like Guido Vaux, with my dark lanthorn,
Stealing to set the town o' fire; i'th'country
I should be taken for William o' the Wisp,
Or Robin Goodfellow.

FLETCHER.

I am somewhat of an antiquity hunter and am fond of exploring London in quest of the reliques of old times. These are principally to be found in the depths of the city, swallowed up and almost lost in a wilderness of brick and mortar; but deriving poetical and romantic interest from the commonplace prosaic world around them. I was struck with an instance of the kind in the course of a recent sum-mer ramble into the city; for the city is only to be explored to advantage in summer time; when free from the smoke and fog, and rain and mud of winter. I had been buffeting for some time against the current of population setting through Fleet Street. The warm weather had unstrung my nerves and made me sensitive to every jar and jostle and discordant sound. The flesh was weary, the spirit faint and I was getting out of humor with the bustling busy throng through which I had to struggle, when in a fit of desperation I tore my way through the crowd, plunged into a bye lane, and after passing through several obscure nooks and angles emerged into a quaint and quiet court with a grass plot in the centre overhung by elms, and kept perpetually fresh and green by a fountain with its sparkling jet of water. A student with book in hand was seated on a stone bench, partly read-ing, partly meditating on the movements of two or three trim nursery maids with their infant charges.

I was like an Arab who had suddenly come upon an oasis amid the panting sterility of the desert. By degrees the quiet and coolness of the place soothed my nerves and refreshed my spirit. I pursued

my walk and came, hard by, to a very ancient chapel with a low browed saxon portal of massive and rich architecture. The interior was circular and lofty, and lighted from above. Around were monumental tombs of ancient date, on which were extended the marble effigies of warriors in armour. Some had the hands devoutly crossed upon the breast; others grasped the pummel of the sword - menacing hostility even in the tomb! - while the crossed legs of several indicated soldiers of the Faith who had been on crusades to the Holy Land.

I was in fact, in the chapel of the Knights Templars, strangely situated in the very centre of sordid traffic; and I do not know a more impressive lesson for the man of the world than thus suddenly to turn aside from the high way of busy money seeking life, and sit down among these shadowy sepulchres, where all is twilight, dust and forget-fulness.

In a subsequent tour of observation I encountered another of these reliques of a 'foregone world' locked up in the heart of the city. I had been wandering for some time through dull monotonous streets, destitute of any thing to strike the eye or excite the imagination, when I beheld before me a gothic gate way of mouldering antiquity. It opened into a spacious quadrangle forming the court yard of a stately gothic pile the portal of which stood 'invitingly open.'

It was apparently a public edifice, and as I was antiquity hunting I ventured in, though with dubious steps. Meeting no one either to oppose or rebuke my intrusion I continued on until I found myself in a great hall with a lofty arched roof and oaken gallery, all of gothic architecture. At one end of the hall was an enormous fireplace with wooden set-tles on each side; at the other end was a raised platform or dais, the seat of state, above which was the portrait of a man in antique garb, with a long robe, a ruff and a venerable grey beard.

The whole establishment had an air of monastic quiet and seclusion, and what gave it a mysterious charm was, that I had not met with a human being since I had passed the threshold.

Encouraged by this loneliness I seated myself in a recess of a large bow window which admitted a broad flood of yellow sunshine, checquered here and there by tints from panes of colored

glass; while an open casement let in the soft summer air. Here leaning my head on my hand and my arm on an old oaken table I indulged in a sort of reverie about what might have been the ancient uses of this edi-fice. It had evidently been of monastic origin; perhaps one of those collegiate establishments built of yore for the pro-motion of learning, where the patient monk, in the ample solitude of the cloister, added page to page and volume to volume, emulating in the productions of his brain the mag-nitude of the pile he inhabited.

As I was seated in this musing mood a small panneled door in an arch at the upper end of the hall was opened and a number of grey headed old men, clad in long black cloaks, came forth one by one; proceeding in that manner through the hall, without uttering a word, each turning a pale face on me as he passed, and disappearing through a door at the lower end.

I was singularly struck with their appearance; their black cloaks and antiquated air comported with the style of this most venerable and mysterious pile. It was as if the ghosts of the departed years about which I had been musing were passing in review before me. Pleasing myself with such fan-cies, I set out, in the spirit of Romance, to explore what I pictured to myself a realm of shadows, existing in the very centre of substantial realities.

My ramble led me through a labyrinth of interior courts and corridors and delapidated cloisters, for the main edifice had many additions and dependencies, built at various times and in various styles; in one open space a number of boys who evidently belonged to the establishment, were at their sports; but every where I observed those mysterious old grey men in black mantles, sometimes sauntering alone; some-times conversing in groups: they appeared to be the pervading genii of the place. I now called to mind what I had read of certain colleges in old times where judicial astrology, geomancy, necromancy and other forbidden and magical sciences were taught. Was this an establishment of the kind - and were these black cloaked old men really professors of the black art?

These surmises were passing through my mind as my eye glanced into a chamber, hung round with all kinds of strange and uncouth objects: implements of savage warfare; strange idols and stuffed alligators; bottled serpents and monsters decorated the

mantelpiece; while on the high tester of an old fashioned bedstead grinned a human skull, flanked on each side by a dried cat.

I approached to regard more narrowly this mystic chamber, which seemed a fitting laboratory for a necromancer, when I was startled at beholding a human countenance staring at me from a dusky corner. It was that of a small, shrivelled old man, with thin cheeks, bright eyes, and grey wiry projecting eyebrows. I at first doubted whether it were not a mummy curiously preserved, but it moved and I saw that it was alive. It was another of these black cloaked old men, and, as I regarded his quaint physiognomy, his obsolete garb, and the hideous and sinister objects by which he was surrounded, I began to persuade myself that I had come upon the Arch Mago, who ruled over this magical fraternity.

Seeing me pausing before the door he rose and invited me to enter. I obeyed, with singular hardihood, for how did I know whether a wave of his wand might not metamorphose me into some strange monster, or conjure me into one of the bottles on his mantelpiece. He proved, however, to be any thing but a conjuror, and his simple garrulity soon dispelled all the magic and mystery with which I had enveloped this antiquated pile and its no less antiquated inhabitants.

It appeared that I had made my way into the centre of an ancient asylum for superannuated tradesmen and decayed householders, with which was connected a school for a limited number of boys. It was founded upwards of two centuries since on an old monastic establishment, and retained somewhat of the conventual air and character. The shadowy line of old men in black mantles who had passed before me in the hall, and whom I had elevated into magi, turned out to be the pensioners returning from morning service in the chapel.

John Hallum the little collector of curiosities whom I had made the arch magician, had been for six years a resident of the place, and had decorated this final nestling place of his old age with reliques and rarities picked up in the course of his life. According to his own account he had been somewhat of a traveller; having been once in France and very near making a visit to Holland. He regretted not having visited the latter country, 'as then he might have said he had been there.' - He was evidently a traveller of the

simple kind.

He was aristocratical too in his notions; keeping aloof, as I found, from the ordinary run of pensioners. His chief associates were a blind man who spoke Latin and Greek, of both which languages Hallum was profoundly ignorant; and a broken down gentleman who had run through a fortune of forty thousand pounds left him by his father, and ten thousand pounds, the marriage portion of his wife. Little Hallum seemed to consider it an indubitable sign of gentle blood as well as of lofty spirit to be able to squander such enormous sums.

*

P. S. The picturesque remnant of old times into which I have thus beguiled the reader is what is called the Charter House, originally the Chartreuse. It was founded in 1611 on the remains of an ancient convent by Sir Thomas Sutton, being one of those noble charities set on foot by individual munificence, and kept up with the quaintness and sanctity of ancient times amidst the modern changes and innovations of London. Here eighty broken down men, who have seen better days, are provided, in their old age, with food, clothing, fuel and a yearly allowance for private expenses. They dine together as did the monks of old, in the hall which had been the refectory of the original convent. Attached to the establishment is a school for forty four boys.

Stow, whose work I have consulted on the subject; speaking of the obligations of the grey headed pensioners, says, "They are not to intermeddle with any business touching the affairs of the hospital; but to attend only to the service of God, and take thankfully what is provided for them, without muttering, murmuring or grudging. None to wear weapon, long hair, colored boots, spurs or colored shoes; feathers in their hats, or any ruffian like or unseemly apparel, but such as becomes hospital men to wear." 'And in truth,' adds Stow, 'happy are they that are so taken from the cares and sorrows of the world, and fixed in so good a place as these old men are; having nothing to care for, but the good of their souls, to serve God and to live in brotherly love.'

Te Broken Heart

I never heard

Of any true affection but'twas nipt
With care, that, like the caterpillar, eats
The leaves of the spring's sweetest book, the rose.

MIDDLETON.

It is a common practice with those who have outlived the susceptibility of early feeling, or have been brought up in the gay heartlessness of dissipated life, to laugh at all love stories, and to treat the tales of romantic passion as mere fictions of novelists and poets. My observations on human nature have induced me to think otherwise. They have convinced me, that however the surface of the character may be chilled and frozen by the cares of the world, or cultivated into mere smiles by the arts of society, still there are dormant fires lurking in the depths of the coldest bosom, which, when once enkindled, become impetuous and are sometimes desolating in their effects. Indeed, I am a true believer in the blind deity, and go to the - Shall I confess it? - I believe in broken hearts and the possibility of dying of disappointed love! - I do not, however, extend to his doctrines, consider it a malady often fatal to my own sex; but I firmly believe that it withers down many a lovely woman into an early grave.

Man is the creature of interest and ambition. His nature leads him forth into the struggle and bustle of the world. Love is but the embellishment of his early life, or a song piped in the intervals of the acts. He seeks for fame, for fortune, for space in the world's thought, and dominion over his fellow men. But a woman's whole life is a history of the affections. The heart is her world: it is there her ambition strives for empire: it is there her avarice seeks for hidden treasures. She sends forth her sympathies on adventure; she embarks her whole soul in the traffic of affection, and if shipwrecked her case is hopeless, for it is a bankruptcy of the heart.

To a man the disappointment of love may occasion some bitter pangs - it wounds some feelings of tenderness - it blasts some prospects of felicity; but he is an active being - he may dissipate his thoughts in the whirl of varied occupation; or may plunge into the tide of pleasure. Or if the scene of disappointment be too full of painful associations, he can shift his abode at will, and, taking as it were the wings of the morning, can 'fly to the uttermost parts of the earth and be at rest.'

But woman's is comparatively a fixed, a secluded, and a meditative life. She is more the companion of her own thoughts and feelings; and if they are turned to ministers of sorrow, where shall she look for consolation! Her lot is to be wooed and won; and if unhappy in her love, her heart is like some fortress that has been captured, and sacked, and abandoned and left desolate.

How many bright eyes grow dim - how many soft cheeks grow pale - how many lovely forms fade away into the tomb, and none can tell the cause that blighted their loveliness. As the dove will clasp its wings to its side, and cover and conceal the arrow that is preying on its vitals; so is it the nature of woman to hide from the world the pangs of wounded affection. The love of a delicate female is always shy and silent. Even when fortunate, she scarcely breathes it to herself; but when otherwise, she buries it in the recesses of her bosom, and there lets it cower and brood among the ruins of her peace. With her the desire of the heart has failed. The great charm of existence is at an end. She neglects all the cheerful exercises which gladden the spirits, quicken the pulses and send the tide of life in healthful currents through the veins. Her rest is broken - the sweet refreshment of sleep is poisoned by melancholy dreams - 'dry sorrow drinks her blood,' until her enfeebled frame sinks under the slightest external injury. Look for her, after a little while, and you find friendship weeping over her untimely grave, and wondering that one, who but lately glowed with all the radiance of health and beauty, should so speedily be brought down to 'darkness and the worm.' You will be told of some wintry chill, some casual indisposition that laid her low - but no one knows of the mental malady which previously sapped her strength and made her so easy a prey to the spoiler.

She is like some tender tree, the pride and beauty of the grove; graceful in its form; bright in its foliage, but with the worm preying

at its heart. We find it suddenly withering when it should be most fresh and luxuriant. We see it drooping its branches to the earth and shedding leaf by leaf; until wasted and perished away, it falls even in the stillness of the forest; and as we muse over the beautiful ruin, we strive in vain to recollect the blast or thunderbolt that could have smitten it with decay.

I have seen many instances of women running to waste and self neglect, and disappearing gradually from the earth, almost as if they had been exhaled to heaven; and have repeatedly fancied that I could trace their deaths through the various declensions of consumption, cold, debility, languor, melancholy, until I reached the first symptom of disappointed love. But an instance of the kind was lately told to me; the circumstances are well known in the country where they happened, and I shall but give them in the manner in which they were related.

Every one must recollect the tragical story of young E—the Irish patriot; it was too touching to be soon forgotten. During the troubles in Ireland he was tried, condemned and executed on a charge of treason. His fate made a deep impression on public sympathy. He was so young - so intelligent - so generous - so brave - so every thing that we are apt to like in a young man. His conduct under trial too was so lofty and intrepid. The noble indignation with which he repelled the charge of treason against his country - the eloquent vindication of his name, his pathetic appeal to posterity in the hopeless hour of condemnation - all these entered deeply into every generous bosom, and even his enemies lamented the stern policy that dictated his execution.

But there was one heart, whose anguish it would be impossible to describe. In happier days and fairer fortunes he had won the affections of a beautiful and interesting girl, the daughter of a late celebrated Irish Barrister. She loved him with the disinterested fervour of a woman's first and early love. When every worldly maxim arrayed itself against him; when blasted in fortune, and disgrace and danger darkened around his name, she loved him the more ardently for his very sufferings. If then his fate could awaken the sympathy even of his foes, what must have been the agony of her whose whole soul was occupied by his image! Let those tell who have had the portals of the tomb suddenly closed between them, and the being they most loved on earth - who have sat at its

threshold, as one shut out in a cold and lonely world, from whence all that was most lovely and loving had departed.

But then the horrors of such a grave! so frightful - so dishonoured! - There was nothing for memory to dwell on that could soothe the pang of separation - none of those tender though melancholy circumstances which endear the parting scene - nothing to melt sorrow into those blessed tears, sent like the dews of heaven, to revive the heart in the parching hour of anguish.

To render her widowed situation more desolate, she had incurred her father's displeasure by her unfortunate attachment, and was an exile from the paternal roof. But could the sympathy and kind offices of friends have reached a spirit so shocked and driven in by horror, she would have experienced no want of consolation, for the Irish are a people of quick and generous sensibilities. The most delicate and cherishing attentions were paid her by families of wealth and distinction. She was led into society; and they tried by all kinds of occupations and amusements to dissipate her grief and wean her from the tragical story of her loves. But it was all in vain. There are some strokes of calamity which scathe and scorch the soul; which penetrate to the vital seat of happiness, and blast it, never again to put forth bud or blossom. She never objected to frequent the haunts of pleasure, but was as much alone there, as in the depths of solitude; walking about in a sad reverie, apparently unconscious of the world around her. She carried with her an inward woe that mocked at all the blandishments of friendship, and 'heeded not the song of the charmer, charm he never so wisely.'

The person who told me her story had seen her at a masquerade. There can be no exhibition of far gone wretchedness more striking and painful than to meet it in such a scene. To find it wandering like a spectre, lonely and joyless, where all around is gay - To see it dressed out in the trappings of mirth, and looking so wan and woe begone, as if it had tried in vain to cheat the poor heart into a momentary forgetfulness of sorrow. After strolling through the splendid rooms and giddy crowd with an air of utter abstraction, she sat herself down on the steps of an orchestra, and looking about for some time with a vacant air that shewed her insensibility to the garish scene, she began, with the capriciousness of a sickly heart, to warble a little plaintive air. She had an

exquisite voice; but on this occasion it was so simple, so touching, it breathed forth such a soul of wretchedness, that she drew a crowd mute and silent around her, and melted every one into tears.

The story of one so true and tender could not but excite great interest in a country remarkable for enthusiasm. It completely won the heart of a brave officer, who paid his addresses to her, and thought that one so true to the dead, could not but prove affectionate to the living. She declined his attentions, for her thoughts were irrevocably engrossed by the memory of her former lover. He, however, persisted in his suit. He solicited not her tenderness, but her esteem. He was assisted by her conviction of his worth, and her sense of her own destitute and dependent situation, for she was existing on the kindness of friends - In a word he at length succeeded in gaining her hand, though with the solemn assurance that her heart was unalterably another's.

He took her with him to Sicily, hoping that a change of scene might wear out the remembrance of early woes. She was an amiable and exemplary wife, and made an effort to be a happy one; but nothing could cure the silent and devouring melancholy that had entered into her very soul. She wasted away in a slow but hopeless decline, and at length sunk into the grave, the victim of a broken heart.

It was on her that Moore the distinguished Irish poet composed the following lines.

She is far from the land where her young hero sleeps,

And lovers around her are sighing;

But coldly she turns from their gaze and weeps,

For her heart in his grave is lying.

She sings the wild song of her dear native plains,

Every note which he lov'd awaking -

Ah! little they think, who delight in her strains,

How the heart of the minstrel is breaking!

He had liv'd for his love, for his country he died;
Tey were all that to life had entwin'd him -
Nor soon shall the tears of his country be dried,
Nor long will his love stay behind him!
Oh! make her a grave where the sunbeams rest,
Wen they promise a glorious morrow;
Tey'll shine o'er her sleep, like a smile from the west,
From her own lov'd island of sorrow!



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普
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[俄罗斯]普希金/著

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The Queen of Spades

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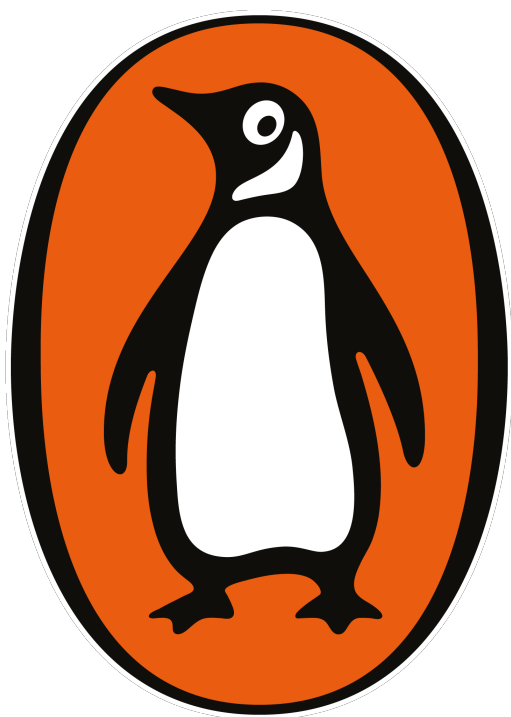
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“赫尔曼浑身绷紧，
抖嗦得像一只等待
猎物的老虎，
焦急地等待着约定
时间的到来。”



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* 此中文译本译自俄语原文

正文目录

黑桃皇后

The Queen of Spades

黑桃皇后

/

黑桃皇后主大祸临头。

——最新详梦书

—

在阴雨连绵的日子，
他们常常聚集
在一起；
押上宝——上帝饶恕！
他们的赌注
从五十到一百卢布，
有人赌赢了，
有人用粉笔
勾去输掉的数字。
在阴雨连绵的日子，
他们聚集在一起，
干的就是这件事。

一天，有些人聚集在近卫军骑兵纳鲁莫夫家里打牌。漫长的冬夜不知不觉过尽了，大家坐下来吃夜宵的时候已经是早上四点多钟。那些赌赢的人都吃得津津有味，另一些人却失魂落魄地坐在空餐具跟前。但香槟酒送来了，谈话又活跃起来，于是大家又在一起聊天。

“你打得怎么样，舒林？”主人问道。

“输了，跟以前一样。只能承认我运气不好：我没有加过赌注，从来不急躁，谁也不能把我搞糊涂，可我总是输！”

“你一次也没有着魔过吗？你一次也没有押过那张总能赢钱的牌吗？……你的倔强真叫我吃惊。”

“可你瞧瞧赫尔曼！”一个客人指着年轻的工兵军官说，“他从来没有摸过牌，从来没有叫过一次加倍，可总是陪我们坐到五点钟，一直瞧着我们打牌！”

“我对打牌很感兴趣，”赫尔曼说，“可是我不能为了非分之财，把少不了要用的钱拿去做赌注。”

“赫尔曼是德国人：他很节俭，就是这么回事！”托木斯基说，“如果说还有什么人使我摸不透，那就是我的祖母安娜·费多托夫娜伯爵夫人了。”

“怎么？你在说什么？”客人们都提高声音问道。

“我搞不懂，”托木斯基继续说，“为什么我祖母不再赌钱了！”

“一个八十岁的老太太不再赌钱，这有什么好奇怪的？”纳鲁莫夫问。

“这么说，您对她一点儿也不了解？”

“不了解！是的，一点儿也不了解！”

“噢，那么您听我说：

“您知道，我祖母六十年前去過巴黎，在那里她可是个风流人物。好多人都跟在她后面跑，想看看这个莫斯科的维纳斯 [1]；黎塞留 [2] 热烈追求过她，祖母肯定地说，由于她心肠太硬，几乎弄得他开枪自杀。

“那时太太们都流行打法拉翁 [3]。有一次，她在宫廷里和奥尔良公爵打赌，输了很多钱。祖母回到家里，从脸上揭下美人斑 [4]，脱下箍骨裙，对祖父说了她输钱的事，要他把钱付掉。

“我记得，祖父本来是祖母的管家。他怕她，就像怕火一样；可是一听到她输掉这么一笔惊人的数目，不禁大怒，他拿来账册，向她证明，半年来他们已经花掉五十万，还说在巴黎他们没有像莫斯科乡下或萨拉托夫乡下那样的财产，因此干脆拒绝替她还钱。祖母打了他一记耳光，单独躺下睡觉，表示不喜欢他。

“第二天，祖母吩咐仆人把祖父叫来，指望这种家庭的处罚能对他起作用，结果发现祖父仍毫不动摇。她有生以来第一次不得不对他讲道理；她想让他感到于心有愧，就好言好语地对他说，债务也有各

种各样，欠公爵的债和欠马车匠的债是不一样的。有什么用！祖父造反了。不行，没什么可说的！祖母简直走投无路。

“她有一个要好的朋友，是个相当有名的人物。你们都听说过圣热尔曼伯爵 [5]，他的奇事是那么多，大家都在纷纷传说。你们都知道，他自称是“终身漂泊的犹太人” [6]、长命水和点金石的发明者，等等。大家都笑他，说他到处招摇撞骗，卡萨诺瓦则在回忆录中说他是个奸细；不过，尽管圣热尔曼是个很神秘的人，却仪表堂堂，在社交界中很讨人喜欢。祖母至今还迷恋着他，要是有人说他坏话，她就会生气。祖母知道圣热尔曼有办法搞到大量金钱。她决定去找他帮忙。她给他写了一张便条，请他立即到她这儿来。

“这个老怪人立刻就来了，正看到祖母愁眉不展、十分痛苦。她用最恶毒的语言描绘了一通丈夫的野蛮，最后对他说，她只能在他的友谊和盛情厚意上面寄托她的全部希望了。

“圣热尔曼沉吟了一会儿。

“我可以为您筹措这笔钱，’他说，‘不过，我知道，在您还清这笔钱之前，您一定不会安心，而我则不想让您愁上加愁。我有一个办法，可以让您去翻本。’可是，亲爱的伯爵，’祖母回答，‘我跟您说，我根本没有钱。’这事不需要用钱，’圣热尔曼说，‘请您听我说完。’这时他向她公开了一个秘密，要是能知道这个秘密，我们当中每一个人都肯付出极昂贵的代价……”

年轻的赌徒们更注意听了。托木斯基吸起烟来，他深深地吸了一口，又说下去。

“当天晚上祖母到凡尔赛去，在皇后那里打牌 [7]。奥尔良公爵坐庄；祖母稍稍对他表示了一下歉意，说没有把欠款带来。为了替自己辩解，她还编造了一个小小的故事，接着便坐在他对面下注。她挑出三张牌，一张接一张下注：三张牌都替她赢了钱，这一来祖母便完全翻了本。”

“这是偶然的！”一个客人说。

“神话！”赫尔曼说。

“这牌大概玩弄了什么手法？”第三个接着说。

“我不认为这样。”托木斯基一本正经地说。

“真是怪事！”纳鲁莫夫说，“你有一个祖母，她能连续猜中三张牌，可你至今还没有向她学到这个秘诀。”

“是啊，有什么办法！”托木斯基回答，“她有四个儿子，我父亲是其中一个：四个人都是不顾死活的赌徒，可是她没有向任何一个公开

过这个秘密；虽然这样做对他们并没有坏处，对我也是这样。我叔父伊凡·伊里奇伯爵曾向我说过一件事，他用人格担保这是真的。已故的恰普利茨基，就是挥霍了万贯家财，死于穷困潦倒的那个，年轻的时候，有一次记得是输给佐里奇近三十万。他完全绝望了。祖母对年轻人的胡闹一向是很严厉的，可这一次她倒有点儿可怜恰普利茨基。她给他三张牌，让他一张一张押，并要他保证以后永远不再赌博。恰普利茨基到赢他钱的人那里去了。他们坐下来赌钱。恰普利茨基在第一张牌上押了五万，一下子就赢了；他押了两次加倍，翻了本，还赢了钱……

“然而该睡觉了，已经六点差一刻。”

其实，天已经大亮。这些年轻人喝完了杯里的酒，便各自回去了。

二

“您好像更喜欢那些使女。”

“有什么办法，太太？她们更鲜艳。”

——社交界的闲谈 [8]

某某老伯爵夫人坐在梳妆室的镜子前面。她身边有三个使女。一个拿着胭脂盒，一个端着发针匣，还有一个捧着一顶饰有红带子的高包发帽。伯爵夫人早已人老色衰，她丝毫不想再打扮自己的姿容，但她还保留着年轻时的习惯，严格模仿七十年代的流行式样，像六十年前一样，煞费苦心地打扮，花那么多时间。靠窗口的地方有一位小姐坐在那儿刺绣，那是她的养女。

“您好，祖母 [9]，”一个青年军官走进来，对她说，“您好，丽莎小姐。祖母，我有一件事要求您。”

“什么事，保罗 [10]？”

“请允许我向您介绍一个朋友，礼拜五我想把他带到舞会上来见您。”

“你把他直接带到舞会上来见我，那时候你就可以向我介绍了。你昨天去过某某人那里吗？”

“那还用说！快活极了，跳舞一直跳到早晨五点钟。叶烈茨卡娅多漂亮啊！”

“咳，我亲爱的！她有什么漂亮啊？她的祖母达丽亚·彼得罗夫娜公爵夫人也像她那样吗？……顺便说一句：我想，达丽亚·彼得罗夫娜

公爵夫人，她也很老了吧？”

“什么很老了？”托木斯基心不在焉地回答，“她过世七年了。”

小姐抬起头，对年轻人暗示了一下。他这才想起来，他们是对老伯爵夫人隐瞒了她这位同年女友的死讯的，于是他咬了咬嘴唇。可是伯爵夫人听到这个新闻却一点儿也不在乎。

“过世啦！”她说，“我一点儿也不知道！我们一起被封为宫中女官，我们一起觐见时，女皇……”

伯爵夫人又对她的孙子讲起自己的趣事，这件事她说过有一百遍了。

“好吧，保罗，”后来她说，“现在你扶我起来。丽桑卡 [11]，我的鼻烟壶在哪儿？”

接着，伯爵夫人带着几个使女到屏风后面去更衣。托木斯基和小姐留在房间里。

“您要介绍的人是谁？”丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜轻声问道。

“纳鲁莫夫。您认识他吗？”

“不！他是不是军人？”

“是军人。”

“是工兵军官吗？”

“不！是骑兵。您为什么以为他是个工兵军官？”

小姐痴痴地笑起来，一个字也没有回答。

“保罗！”伯爵夫人在屏风后面叫道，“给我送一本新的小说来，不过不要现代的。”

“那要什么样的，祖母？”

“要这样的小说，里面的主人公并不掐死父亲或母亲，里面没有淹死的尸体。我最怕溺死的人了！”

“如今可没有这样的小说。您不想要俄国小说吗？”

“有俄国小说吗？……送来吧，亲爱的，请送来吧！”

“再见，祖母，我有事……再见，丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜！您为什么以为纳鲁莫夫是工兵军官？”

托木斯基走出梳妆室。

房间里只剩下丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜一个人，她放下手工，望着窗

外。不一会儿从街对面一个屋角里转出一个年轻军官来。她脸上泛起一片红晕。她又拿起手工，低头伏在绣布上。这时伯爵夫人换好衣服进来了。

“丽桑卡，”她说，“吩咐套上马车，我们出去玩玩。”

丽桑卡从绣架旁站起来，收拾着手工。

“你怎么了，我的孩子！是聋了还是怎么的！”伯爵夫人提高嗓门儿，“吩咐快点套上马车。”

“马上就去！”小姐轻声回答，立即跑到前厅去。

一个仆人走进来，把巴维尔·亚历山大罗维奇公爵送来的几本书交给伯爵夫人。

“很好！很感谢。”伯爵夫人说，“丽桑卡，丽桑卡！你到底跑到哪儿去了？”

“换衣服。”

“你还来得及的，我的孩子。坐在这儿。翻开第一卷，念给我听……”

小姐拿起一本书，读了几行。

“大声点！”伯爵夫人说，“你怎么啦，我的孩子？嗓子哑了还是怎么的？……等一等，把脚凳挪给我，再近点……好！”

丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜又读了两页。伯爵夫人打了个呵欠。

“别读了，”她说，“真是一派胡言！把它送还巴维尔公爵，要谢谢他……可马车怎么啦？”

“马车准备好了。”丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜探头看看街上，说。

“你怎么还不换衣服？”伯爵夫人说，“老是叫人等你！我的孩子，这可叫人受不了。”

丽莎赶紧跑到她的房间去。还不到两分钟，伯爵夫人便死命地打起铃来。三个使女一起从一扇门里冲进来，侍仆则从另一扇门跑进来。

“你们怎么都叫不应呀？”伯爵夫人对他们说，“告诉丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜，说我在等她。”

丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜穿着晨衣、戴着帽子走进来。

“终于来了，我的孩子！”伯爵夫人说，“怎么穿这身衣服？这是干吗？……向谁卖俏？……今天天气怎么样？看样子有风吧。”

“一点儿风也没有，夫人！天气很好！”侍仆回答。

“你们总是瞎说一气！把通风窗打开。一点儿也不错，有风！还很冷呢！卸掉马车吧！丽桑卡，我们不去了，用不着打扮了。”

“我过的就是这种日子！”丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜想。

丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜确实是个极其不幸的人。但丁说过，别人的面包是苦的，别人的台阶是难登的。除了这个显贵老太婆的苦命养女，还有谁了解寄人篱下的生活是多么痛苦呢？某某伯爵夫人的心肠并不坏，这是不消多说的，但她是个养尊处优的女人，因而非常任性，她和那些在自己有生之年既不再谈恋爱又和现时的社会格格不入的老年人一样怪吝，一样养成了冷酷的利己主义的习惯。她参加上流社会的一切娱乐活动，出席舞会。在舞会上，她搽了胭脂，穿着老式服装，坐在角落里，就像舞厅里的一件丑陋而不可缺少的装饰品；来客都走到她跟前，向她深深鞠躬，好像在履行一种明文规定的仪式，此后就没人理她了。她遵守严格的礼节，在家里接待全城的名人，可是认不出任何人的面孔。无数的婢仆在她的前厅和下房里养得肥肥胖胖的，连头发也白了，他们想干什么就干什么，争相盗窃这个行将就木的老太婆的财产。丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜是家里最倒霉的人。她给伯爵夫人倒茶，常常因此而受一顿训斥，说她糖放多了；她为伯爵夫人朗读小说，凡是作者的错误，都要怪她读错；她陪伯爵夫人出去散步，遇到天气不好或道路不平，她也要负责。她有规定的薪资，却从来没有拿到那么多；然而对她的装束却很挑剔，要求她穿得和极少数有钱人一样好。在交际场所里，她是个极可怜的角色。大家都认识她，可谁也不把她放在眼里。在舞会上，只有舞伴 [12] 不够的时候才轮得到她跳；每当太太小姐们需要到梳妆室去理理衣装的时候，都要把她拉去帮忙。她懂得自爱，深深明白自己的处境，总是注意着自己周围的人，迫切希望有人来解救她；但是那些青年人，为了维持浅薄的虚荣心，从不轻举妄动，并不对她表示垂怜，虽然丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜比他们死死缠住不放的那些厚颜无耻而又冷若冰霜的姑娘可爱一百倍。多少次她悄悄离开无聊而豪华的客厅，跑到她那简陋的房间里痛哭一场。她的房间里只有一扇裱着花纸的屏风，一个五斗橱，一面小镜子，和一张油漆过的床。一支脂油蜡烛在铜烛台上幽暗地燃烧着。

有一次——那是在这部小说开头所描写的那个晚上的两天以后，我们刚才谈到的那幕情景之前一个礼拜——丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜坐在窗下刺绣，无意中朝街上看了一眼，看见一个青年工兵军官，一动不动地站在那儿，注视着她的窗口。她低下头，重新做起手中的针线活；过了五分钟，她又朝街上看了看，青年军官仍旧站在那儿。她一向不和过路的军官调情，便不再朝街上看，埋头绣了近两个钟头。吃

中饭了，她站起来收拾绣架，无意中瞧了瞧街上，又看见那个军官。她觉得这事很蹊跷。饭后她怀着有些不安的心情走到窗边，但那个军官已经不在，于是她把他忘记了……

大约过了两天，她和伯爵夫人一起出门，刚登上马车，她又看到他了。他就站在大门口，竖起海龙皮领子，遮着脸，一双黑眼睛在帽檐底下闪闪发亮。丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜不知为什么感到害怕，坐上马车，心还在莫名其妙地怦怦跳着。

回到家里，她走近窗口——那军官站在原来的地方，一双眼睛直盯着她。她从窗口走开，不知道这究竟是怎么回事，心里老想着这个问题，同时，一种从未有过的感情也使她激动不已。

从这个时候起，那青年人每天都在固定时间出现在她的窗下，从不间断。他们之间无形中产生了一种默契。她一坐下来做针线，就感到他在近旁，就抬起头看看他，停留在他身上的目光也一天比一天长久。为此青年人似乎很感激她：她那少女的敏锐目光看到，当他们的目光相遇时，每一次他那苍白的脸颊都会立即红起来。过了一个礼拜，她对他微笑了一下……

当托木斯基请求伯爵夫人允许他把朋友带来拜访她的时候，这可怜姑娘的心便怦怦跳起来了。可是当她得知纳鲁莫夫不是工兵军官，而是近卫军骑兵的时候，她很后悔，因为她不慎提了这么个问题，把自己心头的秘密泄露给轻浮的托木斯基了。

赫尔曼是个俄国化的德国人的儿子，父亲给他留下了一笔小小的资产。赫尔曼坚信一个人必须保持独立，他连父亲遗产的利息也不敢动用，只靠薪俸过活，丝毫不敢放纵自己。不过他是个性格内向而且自尊心很强的人，伙伴们难得有机会嘲笑他的过分节俭。他怀着强烈的欲望和狂热的幻想，但是坚强的意志使他避免了一般青年人常常陷入的迷误。譬如说，他嗜赌如命，却从来不打牌，因为他考虑到他的财产不允许他（正如他所说的）“为了非分之财，把少不了要用的钱拿去做赌注”——然而，他却整夜整夜地坐在牌桌旁边，狂热地注视着变化无常的牌局。

三张牌的奇闻使他强烈地幻想起来，他整夜都在想着这件事。第二天傍晚，他在彼得堡边散步边想：“要是老伯爵夫人肯向我公开这个秘密，或者告诉我这三张必胜的牌，那该有多好啊！为什么不去碰碰运气呢？……到她那里去，做自我介绍，博得她的宠爱，或者做她的情人，但这需要一段时间，而她已经八十七岁了，也许再过一个礼拜，也许再过两天，她就会死去！……可这个奇闻本身呢？……是不是可信？……不！俭省、节制和勤劳，这才是三张可靠的牌，只有这三张牌才能使我的资产增加两倍，增加六倍，才能给我安宁和独

立！”

他这样思忖着，不觉来到彼得堡一条主要大街的一座老式房屋前面。街上车水马龙，马车一辆接一辆向这个灯火辉煌的大门口驶去。从这些马车里时时露出妙龄美女的秀足、铿锵作响的长靴、条纹袜子和外交官的软底鞋。皮大衣和斗篷不时从傲慢的司阍 [13] 身边闪过。赫尔曼停住脚步。

“这是谁家的公馆？”他问一个站在拐角上的岗警。

“是某某伯爵夫人的公馆。”岗警回答。

赫尔曼浑身战栗起来。他脑海里又浮现出那个令人惊异的奇闻。他在公馆旁边踱来踱去，心里想着这座公馆的女主人和她那奇妙的本事。他很晚才回到自己那简陋的房间，久久不能入眠，等到一睡着，便梦见纸牌、绿色桌子、一沓沓钞票和一堆堆金币。他押下一张张纸牌，一次次毫不犹豫地折着牌角，不断地赢钱，不断地把金币搂到自己面前，把钞票装入衣袋。他醒来的时候已经很迟，因失去这虚幻的财富，他长叹了一口气，接着又上街去闲逛，又一次来到某某伯爵夫人的公馆门前。仿佛有一种神秘的力量把他吸引到这个地方。他停住脚步，举目望着这座公馆的窗口。在一个窗口里，他看见一个黑头发的头，低垂着，大概在看书或工作。头稍稍抬起来了。赫尔曼看见了一个艳丽的脸蛋和一对黑眼睛。这一刻决定了他的命运。

三

我的安琪儿，您每次给我写四页信，

比我读起来还快。 [14]

——通信

丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜刚刚脱下大衣和帽子，伯爵夫人就派人来找她，又吩咐准备马车。她们走出去乘车。就在两个仆人把老太太扶上马车送进车门里边的那一刻，丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜发现那个工兵军官就在车轮旁边；他抓住她的手，她惊呆了，还没有回过神来，年轻人已经走掉了，她手里留下一封信。她把信藏在手套里，一路上昏昏沉沉，什么也没听见，什么也没看见。伯爵夫人有个习惯，坐在马车里不时要问点什么：她们碰到的是什么人？这座桥叫什么桥？那边招牌上写的是什麼？这一回丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜总是随口回答，每一次都是牛头不对马嘴，伯爵夫人因此大为生气。

“你怎么啦，我的孩子！你是昏了头还是怎么的？你是没有听见我的话还是没有听懂？……荣耀归于上帝，我话还说得清楚，也没有

老糊涂！”

丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜没听进她的话。一回到家里，她就奔进自己的房间，从手套里取出信来，信没有封口。丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜一口气把它读完。这是一封向她表白爱情的信，写得情意绵绵、彬彬有礼，都是一字不差地从德国小说里抄来的。丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜因为不懂德文，所以非常高兴。

然而，这封信却使她坐立不安。她有生以来第一次和一个年轻男子建立秘密而亲近的关系。他这种大胆的行为使她害怕。她责备自己行为太不谨慎，不知道怎么办好：是不是别再坐在窗口？是不是应该不理睬他，冷淡他，让他以后别再追求下去？要不要给他写封信？要不要冷淡而斩钉截铁地回绝他？她没有人好商量，她既没有小姐妹，也没有人能给予指导。丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜决定给他写一封回信。

她在写字台前面坐下，拿起笔和纸，沉思起来。她开了几次头，又把信撕了：一会儿觉得语气太宽容，一会儿又觉得太生硬。她终于写出几句话，自己觉得还满意。她写道：“我相信您的心意是真诚的，并不想用轻率的举动来侮辱我；但我们的结识不应当采取这种方式。现将来信退回，并希望今后不至于让我怪您对我尊重。”

第二天，丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜看见赫尔曼走过来，便从绣架旁边站起来，走到大厅里，打开气窗，把信扔到街上，希望青年军官能迅速捡去。赫尔曼跑过来，捡起信，走进一家食品店。拆开信封，他看到自己的信和丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜的答复。这是他预料中的事，回家之后，他便一心一意地策划起求爱的事来了。

三天后，一个年纪轻轻、眼睛灵活的女裁缝从时装店里给丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜送来一张纸条。丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜以为是来付债的，忐忑不安地把纸条打开，但立即就认出是赫尔曼的笔迹。

“亲爱的，您搞错了，”她说，“这张条子不是给我的。”

“不，确实是给您的！”那大胆的姑娘并不掩饰神秘的微笑，回答说，“请您看一看！”

丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜把纸条迅速地看了一遍。赫尔曼要求和她约会。

“不可能！”丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜说，赫尔曼竟迫不及待地提出这种要求，并且采用这种办法，这使她大为吃惊。“这张纸条真的不是写给我的！”说着她把信撕成了碎片。

“既然信不是写给您的，那您干吗把它撕掉？”女裁缝说，“我可以把它送还发信的人啊！”

“您请便，亲爱的！”丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜说，由于女裁缝点穿她的秘密，她的脸唰地红了起来。“以后再别给我送纸条来。请您对那个叫您送纸条的人说，他应该感到羞耻……”

可是赫尔曼并不罢休。丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜每天都收到他通过各种办法送来的信。信的内容已经不是从德文翻译过来的了。赫尔曼热情洋溢地给她写了这些信，使用的语言都是他自己所特有的：他在信中表达了他的坚定不移的愿望，倾吐了自己理不清的无法遏制的幻想。丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜已经不想把信退回去了，这些信使她陶醉。她开始给他写回信，她的信也写得越来越长，越来越情意缠绵。有一天，她终于从窗口扔给他如下的一封信：

今天某国公使将举行舞会。伯爵夫人将到那里去。我们在那里要待到两点钟。现在您有机会和我单独见面了。伯爵夫人一走，她的仆人就会走开，门廊里只剩下一个看门人，但他通常也会回自己的房间去。您可以在十一点半来。直接上楼梯。您要是在前厅里遇到人，就问伯爵夫人在不在家。他们会告诉您不在——那就没有办法，您只好回去。但是您大概不会遇到任何人。使女们都一起待在她们的房间里。您穿过前厅往左拐，一直走到伯爵夫人的卧室。在卧室的屏风后面，您会看见两扇小门：右边通书房，伯爵夫人从来不到那里去；左边走廊，那里有一座狭小的螺旋梯，上面就是我的房间。

赫尔曼浑身绷紧，抖嗦得像一只等待猎物的老虎，焦急地等待着约定时间的到来。晚上十点钟，他已经来到伯爵夫人的公馆门前。天气坏极了，风呼呼地吼着，潮湿的雪一大片一大片飘落下来，街灯发出昏黄的光线，街上空荡荡的。驾着由一匹瘦马拉的马车的车夫偶尔伸长脖子看看有没有晚归的乘客。赫尔曼只穿着常礼服站在那儿，既没有感觉到狂风，也没有感觉到暴雪。伯爵夫人的马车终于备好了。赫尔曼看见几个仆人扶出一个裹着貂皮大衣的驼背老太婆，接着，她的养女披着一件单薄的斗篷，头戴鲜花闪现了一下。车门啪的一声关上了。马车吃力地从松软的雪地上驶出去。看门人关上门。窗子里的灯光熄灭了。赫尔曼便在这座空公馆周围走来走去，他走近街灯，看看表——表上指着十一点二十分。他就站在街灯下，注视着表上的指针，等待过完这几分钟。到了十一点半，赫尔曼走上伯爵夫人公馆门前的台阶，走进灯火通明的门廊。看门人不在。赫尔曼登上楼梯，打开通前厅的门，看见一个仆人坐在灯下一把肮脏的老式圈椅上睡觉。赫尔曼轻轻地然而毫不犹豫地从他身旁走过去。大厅和客厅都很昏暗。只有前厅里的灯光微弱地照到这两个厅堂。赫尔曼走进卧室。摆满古老神像的神龛前面点着一盏金色的神灯。几件褪色的缎面圈椅和镀金剥落的带羽绒靠垫沙发对称地靠在裱着中国糊墙纸的墙边，显得凄清冷落。墙上挂着勒布朗夫人 [15] 在巴黎画的两幅肖像。其中一幅

画着一个约莫四十岁的男人，他脸色红润、身体肥胖，穿着浅绿色制服，佩戴着勋章；另一幅画着一个年轻美女，她长着高鼻子，两鬓的头发往后梳，扑粉的头发上戴着一朵玫瑰花。所有的角落里都摆满牧女瓷像、著名的勒鲁瓦 [16] 制造的台钟、小盒子、赌博用的轮盘、扇子和上世纪末与蒙哥利菲哀尔 [17] 气球及梅斯梅尔 [18] 催眠术同时发明的妇女的玩具。赫尔曼走到屏风后面。屏风后面有一张小铁床，右边是一扇通往书房的门，左边另一扇门通往走廊。赫尔曼把左边的门打开，看见一座狭小的螺旋梯，从这里可以通向那苦命的养女的房间……但他转过身来走进漆黑的书房。

时间过得真慢。屋子里静悄悄的。客厅里的钟敲了十二下，所有房间里的钟都先后敲了十二下——过后屋子里又沉寂下来。赫尔曼站着，靠在没生火的炉子上。他一点儿都不焦急，心脏平静地跳动着，像所有为了某种需要而决心去冒险的人一样。时钟相继敲过一点和两点，这时他听到远处马车的辘辘声。他不由得激动起来。马车驶到门口，停下来。他听见放下踏板的声音。公馆里奔忙起来。仆人们奔跑着，喊叫着，屋子里点亮了灯。三个老使女跑进卧室，接着伯爵夫人有气无力地走进来，落坐在高背躺椅上。赫尔曼从隙缝里看到丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜从他身边走过。他听见她登上楼梯的急促脚步声。他似乎感到于心有愧，但一会儿便完全平静了。他的心肠变得像石头一样硬。

伯爵夫人开始对着镜子卸妆。使女们从她头上摘下插玫瑰花的帽子；从她那银白头发剪得极短的头上拿下扑粉的假发，别针一根根像下雨似的落在她的身旁；绣着银线的黄色衣裙落到她浮肿的脚上。赫尔曼亲眼看到了她那副打扮所掩盖的令人恶心的秘密。最后伯爵夫人身上只剩下一件睡衣，头上戴着压发帽——这种打扮还比较适合她那耄耋的年龄，因此看起来就不那么可怕和丑陋了。

就像一般老年人那样，伯爵夫人也患有失眠症。她卸好妆，就坐在靠窗口的高背躺椅上，打发掉使女。蜡烛拿走了，房间里又只剩下一盏灯。伯爵夫人坐在那里，脸色蜡黄，耷拉下来的嘴唇微微抖动着，全身不停地左右摆动。她那混浊的眼睛显得十分呆滞，望着她，真可以认为，这个可怕的老太婆的摆动并不是出于她的意志，而是她身上一种潜在的电流在起作用。

突然，这张死气沉沉的面孔大大变了样。嘴唇停止抖动，眼睛紧张地活动起来。伯爵夫人面前站着一个陌生男人。

“请您不要害怕，看在上帝面上，请不要害怕！”他很清楚地轻声说，“我并不要害您，我只是来请求您的恩典。”

老太婆默默地瞧着他，好像没有听见他在说什么。赫尔曼以为她

耳背，因此弯下腰在她耳边把刚才说的话重说了一遍。老太婆还是不吭声。

“您可以使我获得一生的幸福，”赫尔曼继续说，“这在您是不费吹灰之力的，我知道您能一连猜中三张牌……”

赫尔曼没再说下去。伯爵夫人似乎明白了他的要求，她仿佛在考虑用什么恰当的话来回答他。

“这是个玩笑，”她终于说，“我可以向您发誓！这是个玩笑！”

“这没有什么好开玩笑的，”赫尔曼愤愤地回答道，“您该记得恰普利茨基吧，是您帮助他翻本的。”

伯爵夫人显然很紧张。她的神色反映出内心强烈的激荡，但她很快又陷入先前那种麻木状态。

“您能告诉我这三张必胜的牌吗？”赫尔曼又问。

伯爵夫人沉默不语，赫尔曼又继续说：

“您在替谁保守这个秘密呢？替您的孙子吗？他们就算不掌握这个秘密也够有钱的了。他们根本不知道金钱的价值。您这三张牌帮助不了那些挥金如土的人。那些不会爱惜父辈遗产的人，他们即使像魔鬼那样使尽力气，也不得不死于贫困。我不是一个爱挥霍金钱的人，我懂得金钱的价值。我不会把这三张牌白白糟蹋掉的。告诉我吧！……”

他停住话头，浑身颤抖着等待她的回答。伯爵夫人还是默不作声。赫尔曼跪了下来。

“要是您的心曾经感受过爱的情感，”他说，“要是您还记得爱的欢乐，要是您哪怕只有一次在刚生下的儿子哇哇哭闹的时候微笑了一下，要是您的胸中曾经激荡过人类的感情，那么我就用妻子、情人、母亲，总之，一个人的生命中可能有的一切神圣的感情恳求您，不要拒绝我的请求！——向我公开您的秘密吧！您还要它干什么？……也许，它会造成骇人听闻的罪恶，会使人失去一生的幸福，要和魔鬼订下什么协议……您想想看吧：您已经老了，活不了多久，我愿用我的灵魂承受您的罪孽。您只要向我公开您的秘密。您想想看，一个人的幸福就掌握在您的手心里，不仅是我，还有我的儿子、孙子、曾孙都要感戴您的大恩大德，把您的恩德看成圣物一般……”

老太婆一个字也没有回答。

赫尔曼站起来。

“老妖婆！”他咬咬牙说，“我只好强迫你回答了……”

说着，他从口袋里拔出手枪。

伯爵夫人一看到手枪，情绪又强烈激动起来。她摇摇头，举起一只手，好像要挡住他的射击……接着她便往后倒下去……一动不动了。

“别胡闹，”赫尔曼抓住她的手，说，“我最后问您一次，您想不想把三张牌告诉我？”

伯爵夫人没有回答。赫尔曼发现，她已经死了。

四

一八××年五月七日。

一个没有道德准则和毫无信念的人。 [19]

——通信

丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜坐在房间里，还穿着参加舞会的衣服，深深地沉思着。她一回到家里，便急忙把那个不情愿服侍她的睡意蒙眬的使女打发走。她对使女说，她可以自己脱衣服，便战战兢兢地走进自己的房间，心里既想在那里遇到赫尔曼，又希望见不到他。她一眼就断定他没有来，因此感谢命运为他们的幽会设置了障碍。她坐下来，衣服也不脱，便想起在这么短的时间内就使她如此迷恋的一切情形。自从她第一次在窗口看见这个年轻人以来，还不到三个礼拜，她已经和他通了信，而他也已经得到她的同意，准备在夜间和她幽会！她只是从几封他签过名的信里了解到他的名字；在这个晚上以前，她从来没有和他谈过话，没有听见他的声音，从来也没有听说过他的事……真是怪事！就在这个夜晚的舞会上，托木斯基很生年轻的波利娜公爵小姐的气。因为她一反常态，不和他撒娇调情，他便邀请丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜跳那没完没了的玛祖卡舞，对波利娜表示冷淡，想借此对她进行报复。整个晚上，托木斯基老是和丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜开玩笑，取笑她对那个工兵军官的痴情，对她说，他知道的事比她所能设想的要多得多。他开的玩笑中有几次都击中她的要害，因此丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜有好几次都想到，他一定知道她的秘密。

“这些事情您是听谁说的？”她笑着问他。

“听您的一个熟人的朋友说的，”托木斯基回答，“那是一个很出色的人。”

“这个出色的人到底是谁呀？”

“他叫赫尔曼。”

丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜什么也没有回答，但她的手脚却冷得像冰一样……

“这个赫尔曼，”托木斯基继续说，“有一张典型的小说中人物的面孔：他的侧面像拿破仑，灵魂像摩非斯特 [20]。我认为，至少有三样罪恶他应该于心有愧。您的脸色怎么这样苍白！……”

“我头痛……赫尔曼对您说了些什么？您说他到底是怎样一个人呢？”

“赫尔曼对他那位朋友很不满意。他说，换了他，他一定采取另一种办法……我甚至认为，赫尔曼正在打您的主意，至少他听到朋友心醉神迷的向往时，心里很不平静。”

“他究竟在哪儿看见过我？”

“也许是在教堂里，或者是散步的时候！……天知道！也许是在您的房间里，那时您正在睡觉，他……”

走过来三个淑女，问他“遗忘还是惋惜” [21]，打断了丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜极想继续下去的谈话。

托木斯基选中的小姐就是那位波利娜公爵小姐。她和他多跳了一圈，又在自己座椅前面多转了一转，在这段时间里，她和他又言归于好了。托木斯基回到座位上的时候，已经不再想起赫尔曼和丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜。丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜很想恢复刚才那场中断的谈话，但玛祖卡舞已经结束，接着老伯爵夫人也走了。

托木斯基的话不过是跳玛祖卡舞时随便说说的，却深深印入这个好幻想的年轻姑娘心里。托木斯基随便描绘的肖像正和她心中想象的不谋而合；由于听了一段最新的故事，这张已显得很俗气的面孔不由得使她感到惴惴不安，也使她耽于幻想。她坐着，交叉着两条赤裸的手臂，还插着鲜花的头低垂在袒露的胸前……突然，门打开了，赫尔曼走进房间。她浑身战栗起来……

“您刚才到底在哪里？”她惊惧地轻声问道。

“在老伯爵夫人的卧室里，”赫尔曼回答，“我刚刚从她那里来。伯爵夫人死了。”

“我的天！……您在说什么？……”

“看样子，是我把她吓死的。”赫尔曼继续说。

丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜瞥了他一眼，心里不由得想起托木斯基说过的话：“至少有三样罪恶他应该于心有愧！”赫尔曼坐在她身边的窗台上，把经过情形一一告诉她。

丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜惊恐地听完他的话。原来，这些热情洋溢的信件，这些火焰般炽烈的要求，这种无礼而又纠缠不清的追求，统统都不是出于爱情！金钱——这才是他心中渴望得到的东西！能够满足他的欲望，使他得到幸福的并不是她！这可怜的养女不过是一个杀害她老恩人的凶手和强盗的盲目帮凶！……她后悔莫及，难过得痛哭起来。赫尔曼默默地瞧着她。他也心痛如绞，但无论是这可怜姑娘的眼泪，还是她那痛苦的样子所表现出来的惊人魅力，都不能触动他的铁石心肠。想到老太婆的死，他并没有受到良心的谴责。只有一点使他感到恼恨：那个秘密他再也搞不到手了，本来他是指望靠它发财的。

“您是个魔鬼！”丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜终于对他说。

“我并不想害死她，”赫尔曼回答，“我的手枪没有装子弹。”

他们都默不作声。

早晨来临了。丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜吹灭快燃尽的蜡烛，淡淡的曙光已照临她的房间。她擦干满是泪痕的眼睛，举目望着赫尔曼：他坐在窗台上，抄着手，凶狠地皱着眉头。那样子竟和拿破仑的肖像一模一样。这两个人这样相像，连丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜都感到吃惊。

“您怎么走出这座公馆？”丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜终于说，“我本来想带您从秘密楼梯走出去，但要从伯爵夫人的卧室旁边走过，我害怕。”

“请您告诉我怎么找到这座秘密楼梯，我自己走出去。”

丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜站起来，从柜子里拿出钥匙，交给赫尔曼，并且详细告诉他出门的路径。赫尔曼握了握她那冰冷的、毫无反应的手，吻了吻她低垂着的头，走出去。

他从螺旋梯走下去，又一次走进伯爵夫人的卧室。死去的老太婆仍旧坐着，已经僵硬了；她的脸显得很安详。赫尔曼站在她面前，久久地望着她，似乎想再看看这件可怕的事情是不是属实。最后，他走进书房，摸到糊墙纸后面的暗门，走下漆黑的楼梯。一种奇怪的感觉使他兴奋起来。他想，也许在六十年前，有那么一个年轻的幸运儿，穿着绣花长袍，梳着仙鹤式 [\[22\]](#) 头发，把三角帽拿在手里，紧贴在胸口上，也在这个时刻，同样从这座楼梯偷偷溜进这间卧室，这个年轻人早已在坟墓里腐烂，而这个年过古稀的情妇的心今天才停止跳动……

赫尔曼在楼梯下面找到一扇门，他用那把钥匙开了锁，走进过道，从那儿走到大街上。

这天晚上，已故的冯·V男爵夫人向我显灵。她全身穿着白色衣服，对我说：“您好，顾问先生！”

——斯维登堡 [23]

在那命中注定的夜晚之后的第三天，上午九点钟，赫尔曼动身到某某修道院去，人们将在那里为已故的伯爵夫人举行葬礼。他虽然一点儿不后悔，但也不能完全压下良心的呼声，这声音一再对他说：你是杀害老太太的凶手！他没有多少虔诚的信仰，却有很多迷信。他相信死去的伯爵夫人会给他的一生带来很多危害，因此决定亲自去参加葬礼，以便祈求她的宽恕。

教堂里挤得水泄不通。赫尔曼费了好大力气才从人群中挤过去。灵柩停放在富丽堂皇的灵台上，上面张着天鹅绒的帐幔。死者两手放在胸前，安卧在灵柩里，头上戴着镶花边的帽子，身上穿着白缎衣裙。家属侍立在她的四周。仆人穿着黑袍，肩上佩戴着标有纹章的绶带，手里捧着蜡烛；儿子、孙子、曾孙等亲属都穿着重孝服。谁也没有哭，流泪也许是一种虚情假意 [24] 的表现。伯爵夫人已到耄耋之年，她的死决不会使任何人感到震惊，而且她的亲属早就认为她活得太久了。一个年轻的主教致了悼词。他朴素而又动人地讲到这位年高德劭的女信徒的平静辞世，说她数十年如一日默默地进行了感人至深的修行，如今才能像一个基督徒那样告别人世。“司死亡的天使接纳了她这位通宵怀着美好意愿、等待新郎半夜来临的信徒。” [25] 演讲者说。仪式在充满悲伤气氛的礼节中完成了。亲属们首先向遗体告别。然后是无数的客人向前移步，他们都是专程前来哀悼这位长期参加他们的浮华玩乐的老太太的。接下去是全体婢仆，最后上前行礼的是一个和死者同年的老太太。她由两个年轻的使女搀扶着。她已经无法深深地鞠躬，只是独自掉下几滴老泪，吻了吻夫人冰冷的手。老太太离去之后，赫尔曼决定到灵柩跟前去。他深深地鞠了一躬，在撒满松枝的冰冷的地板上俯伏了几分钟。最后他稍稍抬起身子，脸色白得像那个死者，登上灵台的台阶，俯下身子……这时，他似乎感到死去的伯爵夫人眯起一只眼睛，带着嘲笑看了他一眼。赫尔曼急忙往后退，他踩空了一脚，咕咚一声仰面朝天跌倒在地上。人们把他扶起来。就在这同一时刻，丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜也昏倒了，被人抬到教堂门前的台阶上。这件事把肃穆的丧礼扰乱了几分钟。来客中掀起了一阵低沉的窃窃私语，死者的近亲，一个瘦削的宫中侍从官对站在身旁的英国人咬了咬耳朵，告诉他这个年轻的军官是她的私生子，对此那个英国人只冷冷地回答了一声：噢！ [26]

一整天，赫尔曼的心情都非常懊丧。他在一家僻静的饭馆吃饭，一反平常的习惯，喝了许多酒，想要借此压下内心的烦恼。但是喝了酒，他更加心烦意乱。他回到家里，衣服也不脱，一头扑倒在床上，

立即沉沉睡去。他醒来的时候已是深夜，月光照亮了他的房间。他看了看表，两点三刻。他睡意尽失，坐在床上，想着老伯爵夫人的丧礼。

这时有个人在街上朝他的窗户看了看，立即走开了。赫尔曼一点儿都没注意他。过了一会儿，他听见前房的开门声。赫尔曼以为是他的勤务兵照常在外面喝醉了酒，夜游回来了。但是他听见一阵陌生的脚步声，有个人在走路，鞋子发出轻轻的沙沙声。门打开了，走进一个穿白衣服的妇人。赫尔曼以为是他的老奶妈，对她在这个时刻到他这里来感到奇怪。但穿白衣服的妇人突然飘然来到他面前——赫尔曼定睛一看，竟是伯爵夫人！

“我是违反本意到你这儿来的。”她用坚定的声音说，“我是奉命来满足你的要求的。三、七、王牌A，这三张牌会使你连续赢钱，但是有一个条件：一昼夜之内只能押一张牌，从此一辈子再也不赌博。你吓死我，我可以宽恕你，但是你要和我的养女丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜结婚……”

说完她便轻轻转过身子，向房门走去，随着鞋子的沙沙声隐没了。赫尔曼听到门廊的门砰的一声关上，接着又看见有人朝他的窗口瞧了一眼。

赫尔曼好久都不能回过神来。他走进另一个房间。勤务兵睡在地上，赫尔曼费了好大工夫才把他叫醒。勤务兵像平日那样烂醉如泥，从他那里是问不出什么名堂来的。门廊的门锁得好好的。赫尔曼回到自己的房间里，点起蜡烛，把刚才看到的幻象记了下来。

六

“等一等再分牌！”

“您竟敢对我说等一等？”

“大人，我说了，等一等再分牌！”

两种固执的念头不可能同时存在于一个人的脑子里，正像物理学上两个物体不可能同时占据同一个空间一样。三、七、王牌A——三张牌立即把赫尔曼脑子里的死者太太的影子挤走了。三、七、王牌A——三张牌一直萦绕在他的脑子里，并且一直在他的嘴里默念着。看见年轻姑娘，他就说：“她多么秀丽呀！……像红心三一样。”有人问他：“现在几点钟？”他就回答：“差五分七点。”看见大腹便便的男人，他都觉得像个A。三、七、王牌A——三张牌一起跟着他进入梦境，它们都变成各种各样的形状：三点在他面前像一朵艳丽的石榴

花，七点像一座哥特式建筑的大门，A是一只硕大无朋的蜘蛛。他的思想全部集中到一点——怎样利用他这个极其宝贵的秘密。他想到辞职和旅行。他想到巴黎公开的赌场里去，从诱人的命运女神那里索取一笔财富。一个偶然的机会使他避免了这次远途奔波。

莫斯科组织了一个由有钱的赌徒组成的团体，为首的是名声很大的切卡林斯基，此人一生都在牌桌旁边度过，早就积攒了百万财富，他赢钱时收人家的期票，输钱时给人家现钞。长期的赌博生涯使他取信于众多的牌友，而宽敞的住宅、出色的厨师、亲切和愉快的态度则使他博得公众的尊敬。他来到了彼得堡。青年们蜂拥而来，为了赌牌忘记了舞会，宁可放弃追逐女人的乐趣，也不辜负法拉翁的诱惑。纳鲁莫夫把赫尔曼带到他那里去。

他们走过一长串富丽堂皇的房间，房间里有许多彬彬有礼的仆役。几个将军和三级文官在那里打惠斯特 [27]，青年人斜靠在花缎沙发上，吃着冰激凌，抽着烟斗。客厅里，主人坐在一张周围挤着二十来个赌徒的长桌后面分牌。他是个约莫六十岁的老人，外表极其体面，一头银发，饱满而容光焕发的脸显得十分善良，眼睛灵活有神，常带笑意。纳鲁莫夫向他介绍了赫尔曼。切卡林斯基友好地握了握他的手，请他不必拘礼，说完便继续分牌。

牌局持续了好久。牌桌上摊着三十几张牌。切卡林斯基每分完一次牌都要停一停，让赌家安排一下赌注，他自己也好记下输掉的钱，礼貌周到地听听赌家的要求，更加殷勤地打开赌家心不在焉多折的牌角。一圈牌终于打完了。切卡林斯基洗了牌，准备再次分牌。

“让我押一张牌。”赫尔曼从一个也在那里赌钱的胖绅士背后伸出手来，说。切卡林斯基微微一笑，默默地点头表示遵命。纳鲁莫夫笑着祝贺赫尔曼开了长期的赌戒，并祝愿他旗开得胜。

“就这样！”赫尔曼用粉笔在牌上写下赌注的数目，说。

“请问多少？”庄家眯起眼睛问道，“对不起，先生，我看不清楚。”

“四万七。”赫尔曼回答。

听到这个数目，所有的头一下子都转过来，所有的眼睛都注视着赫尔曼。“他疯了！”纳鲁莫夫心里想。

“请允许我告诉您，”切卡林斯基仍旧笑容满面地说，“您下的注太大了，我们这儿还没有人下过超出二百七十五的注呢。”

“怎么？”赫尔曼不以为然地说，“您不想赢我的牌？”

切卡林斯基仍旧彬彬有礼地点头表示遵命。

“不过我有一事奉告，”他说，“我虽然有幸得到诸位的信任，但没有现钱我不能分牌。我当然相信您的话，但还是请您把钱放在纸牌上，这是赌钱的规矩，同时也是为了计算的方便。”

赫尔曼从口袋里掏出一张支票来交给切卡林斯基，切卡林斯基瞟了瞟手中的支票，把它放在赫尔曼的牌上。

他开始分牌。右边出了九点，左边出了三点。

“赢了！”赫尔曼翻出自己的牌。

赌徒们掀起一阵轻声的议论。切卡林斯基皱了皱眉头，脸上随即恢复了笑容。

“您要现钱吗？”他问赫尔曼。

“费神了。”

切卡林斯基从口袋里掏出几张支票，立即把账结清了。赫尔曼收下钱，离开牌桌。纳鲁莫夫看傻了。赫尔曼喝下一杯柠檬汁，回家了。

第二天晚上，他又到切卡林斯基那里去。主人在发牌。赫尔曼走到牌桌旁，赌徒们立即给他让出一个座位。切卡林斯基亲切地对他点点头。

赫尔曼等到新的一圈开始，押下牌，把四万七千卢布和昨天赢的钱一起放在纸牌上。

切卡林斯基开始分牌。右边出了杰克，左边出了七点。

赫尔曼翻开自己押的七点。

大家惊叫了一声。切卡林斯基显然慌了神。他数了九万四千交给赫尔曼。赫尔曼冷静自若地接过钱，立即走开了。

次日晚上，赫尔曼又来到牌桌旁。大家都在等他。那几个将军和三等文官都放下惠斯特不打，来看这场不同寻常的赌博。年轻的军官们都从沙发上霍地站起来，所有的仆役都集中在客厅里。大家把赫尔曼团团围住。其他赌徒都不押牌，焦急地等着看赫尔曼这场赌博的结果。赫尔曼站在牌桌旁，准备独自和这位脸色煞白但仍微露笑容的切卡林斯基决一胜负。两个人各自拆开一副牌。切卡林斯基洗洗牌。赫尔曼拿出一张牌，押在桌上，把一沓支票放在纸牌上。这简直像一场决斗。赌场上鸦雀无声。

切卡林斯基开始分牌，他的手在颤抖。右边出了皇后。左边出了王牌。

“王牌赢了！”赫尔曼说着，翻开自己的牌。

“您的皇后输了。”切卡林斯基亲切地说。

赫尔曼浑身一震，果然，他押的牌不是A，而是黑桃皇后。他不相信自己的眼睛，不明白自己怎么会拿错牌。

这时他觉得那个黑桃皇后正眯缝着眼睛对他冷笑了一下。这个不同寻常的相似场面使他感到恐怖……

“老太婆！”他惊叫起来。

切卡林斯基把赢得的支票拿过去。赫尔曼呆若木鸡地站着，他从牌桌旁走开的时候，大厅里掀起了一阵闹哄哄的说话声。“赌得真痛快！”赌徒们说。切卡林斯基又洗好了牌，赌博照常进行下去。

结局

赫尔曼疯了。他住进奥布霍夫医院十七号病房，不能回答任何问题，只会非常快地念叨着：“三、七、王牌！三、七、皇后！……”

丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜嫁给一个很可爱的青年，他在某处供职，有一笔可观的财产——他是老伯爵夫人前任管家的儿子。丽莎维塔·伊凡诺夫娜还收养了一个穷亲戚的女儿。

托木斯基升为骑兵上尉，娶了波利娜公爵小姐为妻。

[1] 维纳斯是罗马神话中爱和美的女神。此句原文为法语。（说明：书中脚注除特别标明之外，均为译者注。）

[2] 黎塞留（1696-1788），法国元帅，波旁王朝枢机主教，第一任黎塞留公爵的侄孙。

[3] 一种牌戏。

[4] 或称美人膏，用药膏或小黑布片贴在脸上，妇女以此做装饰品。

[5] 18世纪50年代出现在巴黎上流社会的冒险家。

[6] 指阿加斯菲尔，传说中古代一个终身漂泊的犹太人。

[7] 原文为法语。

[8] 对话原文为法语。

[9] 原文为法语，后面托木斯基在称呼祖母时，均使用了法语，不再特别标注。——编者注

[10] 保罗是巴维尔的法语名字，巴维尔是托木斯基的名字。原文为法语。以下凡称保罗，均同此。

[11] 丽桑卡是丽莎（即丽莎维塔）的爱称。

[12] 原文为法语。

[13] 指看门的人。——编者注

[14] 原文为法语。

[15] 勒布朗夫人（1755-1842），法国画家。原文为法语。

[16] 勒鲁瓦（1686-1759），法国著名钟表匠。原文为法语。

[17] 18世纪末发明气球的法国人。

[18] 梅斯梅尔（1733-1815），奥地利医生，发明催眠术。

[19] 原文为法语。

[20] 歌德长诗《浮士德》中的魔鬼。

[21] 让对方选择舞伴的代号。原文为法语。

[22] 原文为法语。

[23] 斯维登堡（1688-1772），瑞典哲学家，神秘主义神智学家。

[24] 原文为英语。

[25] 典出《圣经》故事，见《马太福音》第二十五章第一至十三节。

[26] 原文为英语。

[27] 一种牌戏。

‘Hermann waited
for the appointed
hour like a tiger
trembling for
its prey.’

The Queen of Spades

THE QUEEN OF SPADES BETOKENS THE EVIL EYE *Modern Guide to Fortune-Telling*

1

When bleak was the weather

They would meet together

For cards-God forgive them!

Some would win, others lost,

And they chalked up the cost

In bleak autumn weather

When they met together.

There was a card party in the rooms of Narumov, an officer of the Horse Guards. The long winter night had passed unnoticed and it was after four in the morning when the company sat down to supper. Those who had won enjoyed their food; the others sat absent-mindedly in front of empty plates. But when the champagne appeared conversation became more lively and general.

‘How did you fare, Surin?’ Narumov asked.

‘Oh I lost, as usual. I must confess, I have no luck: I stick to *mirandole*, never get excited, never lose my head, and yet I never win.’

‘Do you mean to tell me you were not once tempted to back the red the whole evening? Your self-control amazes me.’

‘But look at Hermann,’ exclaimed one of the party, pointing to a young officer of the Engineers. ‘Never held a card in his hands, never made a bet in his life, and yet he sits up till five in the

morning watching us play.

'Cards interest me very much,' said Hermann, 'but I am not in a position to risk the necessary in the hope of acquiring the superfluous.'

'Hermann is a German: he's careful, that's what that is!' remarked Tomsy. 'But if there is one person I can't understand it is my grandmother, Countess Anna Fedotovna.'

'Why is that?' the guests cried.

'I cannot conceive how it is that my grandmother does not play.'

'But surely there is nothing surprising in an old lady in the eighties not wanting to gamble?' said Narumov.

'Then you don't know about her?'

'No, nothing, absolutely nothing!'

'Well, listen then. I must tell you that some sixty years ago my grandmother went to Paris and was quite the rage there. People would run after her to catch a glimpse of la *Vénus moscovite* ; Richelieu was at her beck and call, and grandmamma maintains that he very nearly blew his brains out because of her cruelty to him. In those days ladies used to play faro. One evening at the Court she lost a very considerable sum to the Duke of Orleans. When she got home she told my grandfather of her loss while removing the beauty spots from her face and untying her farthingale, and commanded him to pay her debt. My grandfather, so far as I remember, acted as a sort of major-domo to my grandmother. He feared her like fire; however, when he heard of such a frightful gambling loss he almost went out of his mind, fetched the bills they owed and pointed out to her that in six months they had spent half a million roubles and that in Paris they had neither their Moscow nor their Saratov estates upon which to draw, and flatly refused to pay. Grandmamma gave him a box on the ear and retired to bed without him as a sign of her displeasure. The following morning she sent for her husband, hoping that the simple punishment had had its effect, but she found him as obdurate as ever. For the first time in her life she went so far as to reason with him and explain, thinking to rouse his conscience and arguing with condescension, that there were debts and debts, and

that a prince was different from a coach-builder. But it was not a bit of good - grandfather just would not hear of it. "Once and for all, no!" Grandmamma did not know what to do. Among her close acquaintances was a very remarkable man. You have heard of Count Saint- Germain, about whom so many marvellous stories are told. You know that he posed as the Wandering Jew and claimed to have discovered the elixir of life and the philosopher's stone, and so on. People laughed at him as a charlatan, and Casanova in his *Memoirs* says that he was a spy. Be that as it may, Saint- Germain, in spite of the mystery that surrounded him, had a most dignified appearance and was a very amiable person in society. Grandmamma is still to this day quite devoted to his memory and gets angry if anyone speaks of him with disrespect. Grandmamma knew that Saint- Germain had plenty of money at his disposal. She decided to appeal to him, and wrote a note asking him to come and see her immediately. The eccentric old man came at once and found her in terrible distress. She described in the blackest colours her husband's inhumanity, and ended by declaring that she laid all her hopes on his friendship and kindness. Saint- Germain pondered. "I could oblige you with the sum you want," he said, "but I know that you would not be easy until you had repaid me, and I should not like to involve you in fresh trouble. There is another way out - you could win it back."

‘ "But, my dear count," answered grandmamma, "I tell you I have no money at all."

‘ "That does not matter," Saint- Germain replied. "Listen now to what I am going to tell you."

‘And he revealed to her a secret which all of us would give a great deal to know ...'

The young gamblers redoubled their attention. Tomsy lit his pipe, puffed away for a moment and continued:

‘That very evening grandmamma appeared at Versailles, at the *jeu de la reine* . The Duke of Orleans kept the bank. Grandmamma lightly excused herself for not having brought the money to pay off her debt, inventing some little story by way of explanation, and began to play against him. She selected three cards and played them one after the other: all three won, and grandmamma retrieved her loss completely.'

'Luck!' said one of the party.

'A fairy tale!' remarked Hermann.

'Marked cards, perhaps,' put in a third.

'I don't think so,' replied Tomsy impressively.

'What!' said Narumov. 'You have a grandmother who knows how to hit upon three lucky cards in succession, and you haven't learnt her secret yet?'

'That's the deuce of it!' Tomsy replied. 'She had four sons, one of whom was my father; all four were desperate gamblers, and yet she did not reveal her secret to a single one of them, though it would not have been a bad thing for them, or for me either. But listen to what my uncle, Count Ivan Ilyich, used to say, assuring me on his word of honour that it was true. Tchaplitsky - you know him, he died a pauper after squandering millions - as a young man once lost three hundred thousand roubles, to Zorich, if I remember rightly. He was in despair. Grandmamma was always very severe on the follies of young men, but somehow she took pity on Tchaplitsky. She gave him three cards, which he was to play one after the other, at the same time exacting from him a promise that he would never afterwards touch a card so long as he lived. Tchaplitsky went to Zorich's; they sat down to play. Tchaplitsky staked fifty thousand on his first card and won; doubled his stake and won; did the same again, won back his loss and ended up in pocket ...

'But, I say, it's time to go to bed: it is a quarter to six already.'

And indeed dawn was breaking. The young men emptied their glasses and went home.

2

'Il paraît que monsieur est décidément pour les suivantes.'

'Que voulez- vous, madame? Elles sont plus fraîches.'

From a society conversation

The old Countess X was seated before the lookingglass in her dressing- room. Three maids were standing round her. One held a pot of rouge, another a box of hairpins, and the third a tall cap with

flame- coloured ribbons. The countess had not the slightest pretensions to beauty - it had faded long ago - but she still preserved all the habits of her youth, followed strictly the fashion of the seventies, and gave as much time and care to her toilette as she had sixty years before. A young girl whom she had brought up sat at an embroidery-frame by the window.

'Good morning, grand'maman!' said a young officer, coming into the room. '*Bonjour, Mademoiselle Lise. Grand'maman* , I have a favour to ask of you.'

'What is it, Paul?'

'I want you to let me introduce to you a friend of mine and bring him to your ball on Friday.'

'Bring him straight to the ball and introduce him to me then. Were you at the princess's last night?'

'Of course I was! It was most enjoyable: we danced until five in the morning. Mademoiselle Yeletsky looked enchanting!'

'Come, my dear! What is there enchanting about her? She isn't a patch on her grandmother, Princess Daria Petrovna. By the way, I expect PrinPrincess Daria Petrovna must have aged considerably?'

'How do you mean, aged?' Tomsky replied absentmindedly. 'She's been dead for the last seven years.'

The girl at the window raised her head and made a sign to the young man. He remembered that they concealed the deaths of her contemporaries from the old countess, and bit his lip. But the countess heard the news with the utmost indifference.

'Dead! I didn't know,' she said. 'We were maids of honour together, and as we were being presented to the Empress ...'

And for the hundredth time the countess repeated the story to her grandson.

'Well, Paul,' she said at the end; 'now help me to my feet. *Lise* , where is my snuff- box?'

And the countess went with her maids behind the screen to finish dressing. Tomsky was left à *deux* with the young girl.

'Who is it you want to introduce?' Lizaveta Ivanovna asked softly.

'Narumov. Do you know him?'

'No. Is he in the army?'

'Yes.'

'In the Engineers?'

'No, Horse Guards. What made you think he was in the Engineers?'

The girl laughed and made no answer. 'Paul!' the countess called from behind the screen. 'Send me a new novel to read, only pray not one of

those modern ones.'

'How do you mean, *grand'maman* ? '

'I want a book in which the hero does not strangle either his father or his mother, and where there are no drowned corpses. I have a horror of drowned persons.'

'There aren't any novels of that sort nowadays. Wouldn't you like something in Russian?'

'Are there any Russian novels? ... Send me something, my dear fellow, please send me something!'

'Excuse me, *grand'maman* : I must hurry ... Good- bye, Lizaveta Ivanovna! I wonder, what made you think Narumov was in the Engineers?'

And Tomsy departed from the dressing- room.

Lizaveta Ivanovna was left alone. She abandoned her work and began to look out of the window. Soon, round the corner of a house on the other side of the street, a young officer appeared. Colour flooded her cheeks; she took up her work again, bending her head over her embroidery- frame. At that moment the countess came in, having finished dressing.

'Order the carriage, Lise,' she said, 'and let us go for a drive.'

Lizaveta Ivanovna rose from her embroidery- frame and began putting away her work.

'What is the matter with you, my child, are you deaf?' the countess cried. 'Be quick and order the carriage.'

'I will go at once,' the young girl answered quietly, and ran into the ante- room.

A servant came in and handed the countess a parcel of books from Prince Paul Alexandrovich.

'Good! Tell him I am much obliged,' said the countess. '*Lise, Lise* , where are you off to?'

'To dress.'

'There is plenty of time, my dear. Sit down here. Open the first volume and read to me.'

The girl took the book and read a few lines.

'Louder!' said the countess. 'What is the matter with you, my dear? Have you lost your voice, or what? Wait a minute ... Give me that footstool. A little closer. That will do!'

Lizaveta Ivanovna read two more pages. The countess yawned.

'Throw that book away,' she said. 'What nonsense it is! Send it back to Prince Paul with my thanks ... What about the carriage?'

'The carriage is ready,' said Lizaveta Ivanovna, glancing out into the street.

'How is it you are not dressed?' the countess said. 'You always keep people waiting. It really is intolerable!'

Liza ran to her room. Hardly two minutes passed before the countess started ringing with all her might. Three maids rushed in at one door and a footman at the other.

'Why is it you don't come when you are called?' the countess said to them. 'Tell Lizaveta Ivanovna I am waiting.'

Lizaveta Ivanovna returned, wearing a hat and a pelisse.

'At last, my dear!' said the countess. 'Why the finery? What is it for? ... For whose benefit? ... And what is the weather like? Windy, isn't it?'

'No, your ladyship,' the footman answered, 'there is no wind at all.'

'You say anything that comes into your head! Open the window. Just as I thought: there is a wind, and a very cold one too!

Dismiss the carriage . Lise, my child, we won't go out - you need not have dressed up after all.'

'And this is my life!' Lizaveta Ivanovna thought to herself.

Indeed, Lizaveta Ivanovna was a most unfortunate creature. 'Another's bread is bitter to the taste,' says Dante, 'and his staircase hard to climb'; and who should know the bitterness of dependence better than a poor orphan brought up by an old lady of quality? The countess was certainly not bad- hearted but she had all the caprices of a woman spoiled by society, she was stingy and coldly selfish, like all old people who have done with love and are out of touch with life around them. She took part in all the vanities of the fashionable world, dragged herself to balls, where she sat in a corner, rouged and attired after some bygone mode, like a misshapen but indispensable ornament of the ball- room. On their arrival the guests all went up to her and bowed low, as though in accordance with an old- established rite, and after that no one took any more notice of her. She received the whole town at her house, observing the strictest etiquette and not recognizing the faces of any of her guests. Her numerous servants, grown fat and grey in her entrance hall and the maids' quarters, did what they liked and vied with each other in robbing the decrepit old woman. Lizaveta Ivanovna was the household martyr. She poured out tea and was reprimanded for using too much sugar; she read novels aloud to the countess and was blamed for all the author's mistakes; she accompanied the countess on her drives and was answerable for the weather and the state of the roads. She was supposed to receive a salary, which was never paid in full and yet she was expected to be as well dressed as every one else - that is, as very few indeed. In society she played the most pitiable role. Everybody knew her and nobody gave her any thought. At balls she danced only when someone was short of a partner, and the ladies would take her by the arm each time they wanted to go to the cloak- room to rearrange some detail of their toilette. She was sensitive and felt her position keenly, and looked about impatiently for a deliverer to come; but the young men, calculating in their empty- headed frivolity, honoured her with scant attention though Lizaveta Ivanovna was a hundred times more charming than the cold, brazen- faced heiresses they ran after. Many a time she crept away from the tedious, glittering drawing- room to go and weep in her

humble little attic with its wall- paper screen, chest of drawers, small looking- glass and painted wooden bedstead, and where a tallow- candle burned dimly in a brass candle stick.

One morning, two days after the card party described at the beginning of this story and a week before the scene we have just witnessed - one morning Lizaveta Ivanovna, sitting at her embroidery- frame by the window, happened to glance out into the street and see a young Engineers officer standing stock- still gazing at her window. She lowered her head and went on with her work. Five minutes afterwards she looked out again - the young officer was still on the same spot. Not being in the habit of coquetting with passing officers, she looked out no more and went on sewing for a couple of hours without raising her head. Luncheon was announced. She got up to put away her embroidery- frame and, glancing casually into the street, saw the officer again. This seemed to her somewhat strange. After luncheon she went to the window with a certain feeling of uneasiness, but the officer was no longer there, and she forgot about him ...

A day or so later, just as she was stepping into the carriage with the countess, she saw him again. He was standing right by the front door, his face hidden by his beaver collar; his dark eyes sparkled beneath his fur cap. Lizaveta Ivanovna felt alarmed, though she did not know why, and seated herself in the carriage, inexplicably agitated.

On returning home she ran to the window - the officer was standing in his accustomed place, his eyes fixed on her. She drew back, consumed with curiosity and excited by a feeling quite new to her.

Since then not a day had passed without the young man appearing at a certain hour beneath the windows of their house, and between him and her a sort of mute acquaintance was established. Sitting at her work she would sense his approach, and lifting her head she looked at him longer and longer every day. The young man seemed to be grateful to her for looking out: with the keen eyes of youth she saw the quick flush of his pale cheeks every time their glances met. By the end of a week she had smiled at him

...

When Tomsy asked the countess's permission to introduce a

friend of his the poor girl's heart beat violently. But hearing that Narumov was in the Horse Guards, not the Engineers, she regretted the indiscreet question by which she had betrayed her secret to the irresponsible Tomskey.

*

Hermann was the son of a German who had settled in Russia and who left him some small capital sum. Being firmly convinced that it was essential for him to make certain of his independence, Hermann did not touch even the interest on his income but lived on his pay, denying himself the slightest extravagance. But since he was reserved and ambitious his companions rarely had any opportunity for making fun of his extreme parsimony. He had strong passions and an ardent imagination, but strength of character preserved him from the customary mistakes of youth. Thus, for instance, though a gambler at heart he never touched cards, having decided that his means did not allow him (as he put it) 'to risk the necessary in the hope of acquiring the superfluous'. And yet he spent night after night at the card tables, watching with feverish anxiety the vicissitudes of the game.

The story of the three cards had made a powerful impression upon his imagination and it haunted his mind all night. 'Supposing,' he thought to himself the following evening as he wandered about Petersburg, 'supposing the old countess were to reveal her secret to me? Or tell me the three winning cards! Why shouldn't I try my luck? ... Get introduced to her, win her favour - become her lover, perhaps. But all that would take time, and she is eighty- seven. She might be dead next week, or the day after tomorrow even! ... And the story itself? Is it likely? No, economy, moderation and hard work are my three winning cards. With them I can treble my capital - increase it sevenfold and obtain for myself leisure and independence!' Musing thus, he found himself in one of the main streets of Petersburg, in front of a house of old- fashioned architecture. The street was lined with carriages which followed one another up to the lighted porch. Out of the carriages stepped now the shapely little foot of a young beauty, now a military boot with clinking spur, or a diplomat's striped stockings and buckled shoes. Fur coats and cloaks passed in rapid procession before the majestic- looking concierge. Hermann stopped.

'Whose house is that?' he asked a watchman in his box at the corner.

'The Countess X's,' the man told him. It was Tomsy's grandmother.

Hermann started. The strange story of the three cards came into his mind again. He began walking up and down past the house, thinking of its owner and her wonderful secret. It was late when he returned to his humble lodgings; he could not get to sleep for a long time, and when sleep did come he dreamed of cards, a green baize table, stacks of bank- notes and piles of gold. He played card after card, resolutely turning down the corners, winning all the time. He raked in the gold and stuffed his pockets with bank- notes. Waking late in the morning, he sighed over the loss of his fantastic wealth, and then, sallying forth to wander about the town again, once more found himself outside the countess's house. It was as though some supernatural force drew him there. He stopped and looked up at the windows. In one of them he saw a dark head bent over a book or some needlework. The head was raised. Hermann caught sight of a rosy face and a pair of black eyes. That moment decided his fate.

3

Vous m'écrivez, mon ange, des lettres de quatre pages plus vite que je ne puis les lire.

From a correspondence

Lizaveta Ivanovna had scarcely taken off her hat and mantle before the countess sent for her and again ordered the carriage. They went out to take their seats. Just as the two footmen were lifting the old lady and helping her through the carriage door Lizaveta Ivanovna saw her Engineers officer standing by the wheel. He seized her hand; before she had recovered from her alarm the young man had disappeared, leaving a letter between her fingers. She hid it in her glove, and for the rest of the drive neither saw nor heard anything. It was the countess's habit when they were out in the carriage to ask a constant stream of questions: 'Who was that we met?' - 'What bridge is this?' - 'What does that signboard say?' This time Lizaveta Ivanovna returned such random and irrelevant answers that the countess grew angry with her.

'What is the matter with you, my dear? Have you taken leave of your senses? Don't you hear me or understand what I say? ... I speak distinctly enough, thank heaven, and am not in my dotage yet!'

Lizaveta Ivanovna paid no attention to her. When they returned home she ran up to her room and drew the letter out of her glove: it was unsealed. She read it. The letter contained a declaration of love: it was tender, respectful and had been copied word for word from a German novel. But Lizaveta Ivanovna did not know any German and she was delighted with it.

For all that, the letter troubled her greatly. For the first time in her life she was embarking upon secret and intimate relations with a young man. His boldness appalled her. She reproached herself for her imprudent behaviour, and did not know what to do: ought she to give up sitting at the window and by a show of indifference damp the young man's inclination to pursue her further? Should she return his letter to him? Or answer it coldly and firmly? There was nobody to whom she could turn for advice: she had neither female friend nor preceptor. Lizaveta Ivanovna decided to reply to the letter.

She sat down at her little writing- table, took pen and paper - and began to ponder. Several times she made a start and then tore the paper across: what she had written seemed to her either too indulgent or too harsh. At last she succeeded in composing a few lines with which she felt satisfied. 'I am sure', she wrote, 'that your intentions are honourable and that you had no wish to hurt me by any thoughtless conduct; but our acquaintance ought not to have begun in this manner. I return you your letter, and hope that in future I shall have no cause to complain of being shown a lack of respect which is undeserved.'

Next day, as soon as she saw Hermann approaching, Lizaveta Ivanovna got up from her embroideryframe, went into the drawing-room, opened the little ventilating window and threw the letter into the street, trusting to the young officer's alertness. Hermann ran forward, picked the letter up and went into a confectioner's shop. Breaking the seal, he found his own letter and Lizaveta Ivanovna's reply. It was just what he had expected and he returned home engrossed in his plot.

Three days after this a sharp-eyed young person brought Lizaveta Ivanovna a note from a milliner's establishment. Lizaveta Ivanovna opened it uneasily, fearing it was a demand for money, and suddenly recognized Hermann's handwriting.

'You have made a mistake, my dear,' she said. 'This note is not for me.'

'Oh yes it is for you!' retorted the girl boldly, not troubling to conceal a knowing smile. 'Please read it.'

Lizaveta Ivanovna glanced at the letter. In it Hermann wanted her to meet him.

'Impossible!' she cried, alarmed at the request, at its coming so soon, and at the means employed to transmit it. 'I am sure this was not addressed to me.' And she tore the letter into fragments.

'If the letter was not for you, why did you tear it up?' said the girl. 'I would have returned it to the sender.'

'Be good enough, my dear,' said Lizaveta Ivanovna, flushing crimson at her remark, 'not to bring me any more letters. And tell the person who sent you that he ought to be ashamed ...'

But Hermann did not give in. Every day Lizaveta Ivanovna received a letter from him by one means or another. They were no longer translated from the German. Hermann wrote them inspired by passion and in a style which was his own: they reflected both his inexorable desire and the disorder of an unbridled imagination. Lizaveta Ivanovna no longer thought of returning them: she drank them in eagerly and took to answering - and the notes she sent grew longer and more affectionate every hour. At last she threw out of the window to him the following letter:

There is a ball tonight at the Embassy. The countess will be there. We shall stay until about two o'clock. Here is an opportunity for you to see me alone. As soon as the countess is away the servants are sure to go to their quarters, leaving the concierge in the hall but he usually retires to his lodge. Come at half past eleven. Walk straight up the stairs. If you meet anyone in the ante-room, ask if the countess is at home. They will say 'No', but there will be no help for it - you will have to go away. But probably you will not meet anyone. The maids all sit together in the one room. Turn to the left out of the ante-room and keep straight on until you reach the countess's bedroom. In the bedroom, behind a screen, you

will find two small doors: the one on the right leads into the study where the countess never goes; and the other on the left opens into a passage with a narrow winding staircase up to my room.

Hermann waited for the appointed hour like a tiger trembling for its prey. By ten o'clock in the evening he was already standing outside the countess's house. It was a frightful night: the wind howled, wet snow fell in big flakes; the street-lamps burned dimly; the streets were deserted. From time to time a sledge drawn by a sorry-looking hack passed by, the driver on the watch for a belated fare. Hermann stood there without his great-coat, feeling neither the wind nor the snow. At last the countess's carriage was brought round. Hermann saw the old woman wrapped in sables being lifted into the vehicle by two footmen; then Liza in a light cloak, with natural flowers in her hair, flitted by. The carriage doors banged. The vehicle rolled heavily over the wet snow. The concierge closed the street-door. The lights in the windows went out. Hermann started to walk to and fro outside the deserted house; he went up to a street-lamp and glanced at his watch: it was twenty minutes past eleven. He stood still by the lamp-post, his eyes fixed on the hand of the watch. Precisely at half past eleven Hermann walked up the steps of the house and entered the brightly lit vestibule. The concierge was not there. Hermann ran up the stairs, opened the door of the ante-room and saw a footman asleep in a soiled, old-fashioned arm-chair by the side of a lamp. With a light, firm tread Hermann passed quickly by him. The ball-room and drawing-room were in darkness but the lamp in the ante-room shed a dim light into them. Hermann entered the bedroom. Ancient icons filled the icon-stand before which burned a golden lamp. Arm-chairs upholstered in faded damask and sofas with down cushions, the tassels of which had lost their gilt, were ranged with depressing symmetry round the walls hung with Chinese wall-paper. On one of the walls were two portraits painted in Paris by Madame Lebrun: the first of a stout, red-faced man of some forty years of age, in a light-green uniform with a star on his breast; the other - a beautiful young woman with an aquiline nose and a rose in the powdered hair drawn back over her temples. Every corner was crowded with porcelain shepherdesses, clocks made by the celebrated Leroy, little boxes, roulettes, fans and all the thousand and one playthings invented for ladies of fashion at the end of the last century together with Montgolfier's balloon and Mesmer's magnetism. Hermann

stepped behind the screen. A small iron bedstead stood there; to the right was the door into the study - to the left, the other door into the passage. Hermann opened it and saw the narrow winding staircase leading to poor little Liza's room. But he turned about and went into the dark study.

The time passed slowly. Everything was quiet. The drawing-room clock struck twelve; the clocks in the other rooms chimed twelve, one after the other, and all was still again. Hermann stood leaning against the cold stove. He was quite calm: his heart beat evenly, like that of a man resolved upon a dangerous but inevitable undertaking. The clocks struck one, and then two, and he heard the distant rumble of a carriage. In spite of himself he was overcome with agitation. The carriage drove up to the house and stopped. He heard the clatter of the carriage- steps being lowered. In the house all was commotion. Servants ran to and fro, there was a confusion of voices, and lights appeared everywhere. Three ancient lady's maids bustled into the bedroom, followed by the countess who, half dead with fatigue, sank into a Voltaire arm- chair. Hermann watched through a crack in the door. Lizaveta Ivanovna passed close by him and he heard her footsteps hurrying up the stairs to her room. For a moment something akin to remorse assailed him but he quickly hardened his heart again.

The countess began undressing before the looking- glass. Her maids took off the cap trimmed with roses and lifted the powdered wig from her grey, closely cropped head. Pins showered about her. The silver- trimmed yellow dress fell at her puffy feet. Hermann witnessed the hideous mysteries of her toilette; at last the countess put on bed jacket and night- cap, and in this attire, more suited to her age, she seemed less horrible and ugly.

Like most old people the countess suffered from sleeplessness. Having undressed, she sat down in a big arm- chair by the window and dismissed her maids. They took away the candles, leaving only the lamp before the icons to light the room. The countess sat there, her skin sallow with age, her flabby lips twitching, her body swaying to and fro. Her dim eyes were completely vacant and looking at her one might have imagined that the dreadful old woman was rocking her body not from choice but owing to some secret galvanic mechanism.

Suddenly an inexplicable change came over the death-like face. The lips ceased to move, the eyes brightened: before the countess stood a strange young man.

'Do not be alarmed, for heaven's sake, do not be alarmed!' he said in a low, clear voice. 'I have no intention of doing you any harm, I have come to beg a favour of you.'

The old woman stared at him in silence, as if she had not heard. Hermann thought she must be deaf and bending down to her ear he repeated what he had just said. The old woman remained silent as before.

'You can ensure the happiness of my whole life,' Hermann went on, 'and at no cost to yourself. I know that you can name three cards in succession ...'

Hermann stopped. The countess appeared to have grasped what he wanted and to be seeking words to frame her answer.

'It was a joke,' she said at last. 'I swear to you it was a joke.'

'No, madam,' Hermann retorted angrily. 'Remember Tchaplitsky, and how you enabled him to win back his loss.'

The countess was plainly perturbed. Her face expressed profound agitation; but soon she relapsed into her former impassivity.

'Can you not tell me those three winning cards?' Hermann went on.

The countess said nothing. Hermann continued:

'For whom would you keep your secret? For your grandsons? They are rich enough already: they don't appreciate the value of money. Your three cards would not help a spendthrift. A man who does not take care of his inheritance will die a beggar though all the demons of the world were at his command. I am not a spendthrift: I know the value of money. Your three cards would not be wasted on me. Well? ...'

He paused, feverishly waiting for her reply. She was silent. Hermann fell on his knees.

'If your heart has ever known what it is to love, if you can remember the ecstasies of love, if you have ever smiled tenderly at

the cry of your new-born son, if any human feeling has ever stirred in your breast, I appeal to you as wife, beloved one, mother - I implore you by all that is holy in life not to reject my prayer: tell me your secret. Of what use is it to you? Perhaps it is bound up with some terrible sin, with the loss of eternal salvation, with some bargain with the devil ... Reflect - you are old: you have not much longer to live, and I am ready to take your sin upon my soul. Only tell me your secret. Remember that a man's happiness is in your hands; that not only I, but my children and my children's children will bless your memory and hold it sacred ...'

The old woman answered not a word.

Hermann rose to his feet.

'You old hag!' he said, grinding his teeth. 'Then I will make you speak ...'

With these words he drew a pistol from his pocket. At the sight of the pistol the countess for the second time showed signs of agitation. Her head shook and she raised a hand as though to protect herself from the shot ... Then she fell back ... and was still.

'Come, an end to this childish nonsense!' said Hermann, seizing her by the arm. 'I ask you for the last time - will you tell me those three cards? Yes or no?'

The countess made no answer. Hermann saw that she was dead.

4

7 mai 18-

Homme sans mœurs et sans religion!

From a correspondence

Lizaveta Ivanovna was sitting in her room, still in her ball dress, lost in thought. On returning home she had made haste to dismiss the sleepy maid who reluctantly offered to help her, saying that she would undress herself, and with trembling heart had gone to her own room, expecting to find Hermann and hoping that she would not find him. A glance convinced her he was not there, and she thanked fate for having prevented their meeting. She sat down

without undressing and began to recall the circumstances that had led her so far in so short a time. It was not three weeks since she had first caught sight of the young man from the window - and yet she was carrying on a correspondence with him, and he had already succeeded in inducing her to agree to a nocturnal tryst! She knew his name only because he had signed some of his letters; she had never spoken to him, did not know the sound of his voice, had never heard him mentioned ... until that evening. Strange to say, that very evening at the ball, Tomsy, piqued with the young Princess Pauline for flirting with somebody else instead of with him as she usually did, decided to revenge himself by a show of indifference. He asked Lizaveta Ivanovna to be his partner and danced the interminable mazurka with her. And all the time he kept teasing her about her partiality for officers of the Engineers, assuring her that he knew far more than she could suppose, and some of his sallies so found their mark that several times Lizaveta Ivanovna thought he must know her secret.

'Who told you all this?' she asked, laughing.

'A friend of someone you know,' Tomsy answered, 'a very remarkable person.'

'And who is this remarkable man?'

'His name is Hermann.'

Lizaveta Ivanovna said nothing; but her hands and feet turned to ice.

'This Hermann', continued Tomsy, 'is a truly romantic figure: he has the profile of a Napoleon and the soul of a Mephistopheles. I think there must be at least three crimes on his conscience. How pale you look!'

'I have a bad headache ... Well, and what did this Hermann - or whatever his name is - tell you?'

'Hermann is very annoyed with his friend: he says that in his place he would act quite differently ... I suspect in fact that Hermann has designs upon you himself; at any rate he listens to his friend's ecstatic exclamations with anything but indifference.'

'But where has he seen me?'

'In church, perhaps, or when you were out walking ... heaven

only knows! - in your own room maybe, while you were asleep, for there is nothing he -'

Three ladies coming up to invite Tomsy to choose between '*oubli ou regret ?*' interrupted the conversation which had become so painfully interesting to Lizaveta Ivanovna.

The lady chosen by Tomsy was the Princess Pauline herself. She succeeded in effecting a reconciliation with him while they danced an extra turn and spun round once more before she was conducted to her chair. When he returned to his place neither Hermann nor Lizaveta Ivanovna was in Tomsy's thoughts. Lizaveta Ivanovna longed to resume the interrupted conversation but the mazurka came to an end and shortly afterwards the old countess took her departure.

Tomsy's words were nothing more than the usual small- talk of the ball- room; but they sank deep into the girl's romantic heart. The portrait sketched by Tomsy resembled the picture she had herself drawn, and thanks to the novels of the day the commonplace figure both terrified and fascinated her. She sat there with her bare arms crossed and with her head, still adorned with flowers, sunk upon her naked bosom ... Suddenly the door opened and Hermann came in ... She shuddered.

'Where were you?' she asked in a frightened 'In the old countess's bedroom,' Hermann answered. 'I have just left her. The countess is dead.' 'Merciful heavens! ... what are you saying?' whisper.

'And I think', added Hermann, 'that I am the cause of her death.'

Lizaveta darted a glance at him, and heard Tomsy's words echo in her soul: '... there must be at least three crimes on his conscience'. Hermann sat down in the window beside her and related all that had happened.

Lizaveta Ivanovna listened to him aghast. So all those passionate letters, those ardent pleas, the bold, determined pursuit had not been inspired by love! Money! - that was what his soul craved! It was not she who could satisfy his desires and make him happy! Poor child, she had been nothing but the blind tool of a thief, of the murderer of her aged benefactress! ... She wept bitterly

in a vain agony of repentance. Hermann watched in silence: he too was suffering torment; but neither the poor girl's tears nor her indescribable charm in her grief touched his hardened soul. He felt no pricking of conscience at the thought of the dead old woman. One thing only horrified him: the irreparable loss of the secret which was to have brought him wealth.

'You are a monster!' said Lizaveta Ivanovna at last.

'I did not mean her to die,' Hermann answered. 'My pistol was not loaded.'

Both were silent.

Morning came. Lizaveta Ivanovna blew out the candle which had burned down. A pale light illumined the room. She wiped her tear- stained eyes and looked up at Hermann: he was sitting on the window- sill with his arms folded, a menacing frown on his face. In this attitude he bore a remarkable likeness to the portrait of Napoleon. The likeness struck even Lizaveta Ivanovna.

'How shall I get you out of the house?' she said at last. 'I had thought of taking you down the secret staircase but that means going through the bedroom, and I am afraid.'

'Tell me how to find this secret staircase - I will go alone.'

Lizaveta rose, took a key from the chest of drawers and gave it to Hermann with precise instructions. Hermann pressed her cold, unresponsive hand, kissed her bowed head and left her.

He walked down the winding stairway and entered the countess's bedroom again. The dead woman sat as though turned to stone. Her face wore a look of profound tranquillity. Hermann stood in front of her and gazed long and earnestly at her, as though trying to convince himself of the terrible truth. Then he went into the study, felt behind the tapestry for the door and began to descend the dark stairway, excited by strange emotions. 'Maybe some sixty years ago, at this very hour,' he thought, 'some happy youth - long since turned to dust - was stealing up this staircase into that very bedroom, in an embroidered tunic, his hair dressed *à l'oiseau royal*, pressing his three- cornered hat to his breast; and today the heart of his aged mistress has ceased to beat ...'

At the bottom of the stairs Hermann saw a door which he

opened with the same key, and found himself in a passage leading to the street.

5

That night the dead Baroness von W. appeared before me. She was all in white and said: 'How do you do, Mr Coun cillor?'

Swedenborg

Three days after that fatal night, at nine o'clock in the morning, Hermann repaired to the Convent of * * * *, where the last respects were to be paid to the mortal remains of the dead countess. Though he felt no remorse he could not altogether stifle the voice of conscience which kept repeating to him: 'You are the old woman's murderer!' Having very little religious faith, he was exceedingly superstitious. Believing that the dead countess might exercise a malignant influence on his life, he decided to go to her funeral to beg and obtain her forgiveness.

The church was full. Hermann had difficulty in making his way through the crowd. The coffin rested on a rich catafalque beneath a canopy of velvet. The dead woman lay with her hands crossed on her breast, in a lace cap and a white satin robe. Around the bier stood the members of her household: servants in black clothes, with armorial ribbons on their shoulders and lighted candles in their hands; relatives in deep mourning - children, grandchildren and great- grandchildren. No one wept: tears would have been *une affectation*. The countess was so old that her death could not have taken anybody by surprise, and her family had long ceased to think of her as one of the living. A famous preacher delivered the funeral oration. In simple and touching phrases he described the peaceful passing of the saintly woman whose long life had been a quiet, touching preparation for a Christian end. 'The angel of death', he declared, 'found her vigilant in devout meditation, awaiting the midnight coming of the bridegroom.' The service was concluded in melancholy decorum. First the relations went forward to bid farewell of the corpse. They were followed by a long procession of all those who had come to render their last homage to one who had for so many years been a participator in their frivolous amusements. After them came the members of the countess's household. The last of these was an old woman- retainer the same age as the deceased.

Two young girls supported her by the arms. She had not strength to prostrate herself - and she was the only one to shed tears as she kissed her mistress's cold hand. Hermann decided to approach the coffin after her. He knelt down on the cold stone strewn with branches of spruce- fir, and remained in that position for some minutes; at last he rose to his feet and, pale as the deceased herself, walked up the steps of the catafalque and bent over the corpse ... At that moment it seemed to him that the dead woman darted a mocking look at him and winked her eye. Hermann drew back, missed his footing and crashed headlong to the floor. They picked him up. At the same time Lizaveta Ivanovna was carried out of the church in a swoon. This incident momentarily upset the solemnity of the mournful rite. There was a dull murmur among the congregation, and a tall thin man in the uniform of a court-chamberlain, a close relative of the deceased, whispered in the ear of an Englishman who was standing near him that the young officer was the natural son of the countess, to which the Englishman coldly replied, 'Oh?'

The whole of that day Hermann was strangely troubled. Repairing to a quiet little tavern to dine, he drank a great deal of wine, contrary to his habit, in the hope of stifling his inner agitation. But the wine only served to excite his imagination. Returning home, he threw himself on his bed without undressing, and fell heavily asleep.

It was night when he woke and the moon was shining into his room. He glanced at the time: it was a quarter to three. Sleep had left him; he sat on the bed and began thinking of the old countess's funeral.

Just then someone in the street looked in at him through the window and immediately walked on. Hermann paid no attention. A moment later he heard the door of his ante- room open. Hermann thought it was his orderly, drunk as usual, returning from some nocturnal excursion, but presently he heard an unfamiliar footstep: someone was softly shuffling along the floor in slippers. The door opened and a woman in white came in. Hermann mistook her for his old nurse and wondered what could have brought her at such an hour. But the woman in white glided across the room and stood before him - and Hermann recognized the countess!

'I have come to you against my will,' she said in a firm voice: 'but I am commanded to grant your request. The three, the seven and the ace will win for you if you play them in succession, provided that you do not stake more than one card in twenty- four hours and never play again as long as you live. I forgive you my death, on condition that you marry my ward, Lizaveta Ivanovna.'

With these words she turned softly, rustled to the door in her slippers, and disappeared. Hermann heard the street- door click and again saw someone peeping in at him through the window.

It was a long time before he could pull himself together and go into the next room. His orderly was asleep on the floor: Hermann had difficulty in waking him. The man was drunk as usual: there was no getting any sense out of him. The street- door was locked. Hermann returned to his room and, lighting a candle, wrote down all the details of his vision.

6

'Attendez!'

'How dare you say "Attendez!" to me?'

'Your Excellency , I said "Attendez", sir.'

Two *idées fixes* cannot co- exist in the moral world any more than two physical bodies can occupy one and the same space. 'The three, the seven, the ace' soon drove all thought of the dead woman from Hermann's mind. 'Three, seven, ace' were perpetually in his head and on his lips. If he saw a young girl he would say, 'How graceful she is! A regular three of hearts!' Asked the time, he would reply, 'Five minutes to seven.' Every stout man reminded him of the ace. 'Three, seven, ace' haunted his dreams, assuming all sorts of shapes. The three blossomed before him like a luxuriant flower, the seven took the form of a Gothic portal, and aces became gigantic spiders. His whole attention was focused on one thought: how to make use of the secret which had cost him so dear. He began to consider resigning his commission in order to go and travel abroad. In the public gambling- houses in Paris he would compel fortune to give him his magical treasure. Chance spared him the trouble.

A circle of wealthy gamblers existed in Moscow, presided over by the celebrated Tchekalinsky, who had spent his life at the card-

table and amassed millions, accepting promissory notes when he won and paying his losses in ready money. His long experience inspired the confidence of his fellow- players, while his open house, his famous chef and his gay and friendly manner secured for him the general respect of the public. He came to Petersburg. The young men of the capital flocked to his rooms, forsaking balls for cards and preferring the excitement of gambling to the seductions of flirting. Narumov brought Hermann to him.

They passed through a succession of magnificent rooms full of attentive servants. The place was crowded. Several generals and privy councillors were playing whist; young men smoking long pipes lounged about on sofas upholstered in damask. In the drawing- room some twenty gamblers jostled round a long table at which the master of the house was keeping bank. Tchekalinsky was a man of about sixty years of age and most dignified appearance; he had silvery- grey hair, a full, florid face with a kindly expression, and sparkling eyes which were always smiling. Narumov introduced Hermann. Shaking hands cordially, Tchekalinsky requested him not to stand on ceremony, and went on dealing.

The game continued for some while. On the table lay more than thirty cards. Tchekalinsky paused after each round to give the players time to arrange their cards and note their losses, listened courteously to their observations and more courteously still straightened the corner of a card that some careless hand had turned down. At last the game finished. Tchekalinsky shuffled the cards and prepared to deal again.

'Will you allow me to take a card?' said Hermann, stretching out his hand from behind a stout gentleman who was punting.

Tchekalinsky smiled and bowed graciously, in silent token of consent. Narumov laughingly congratulated Hermann on breaking his long abstention from cards and wished him a lucky start.

'There!' said Hermann, chalking some figures on the back of his card.

'How much?' asked the banker, screwing up his eyes. 'Excuse me, I cannot see.'

'Forty- seven thousand,' Hermann answered.

At these words every head was turned in a flash, and all eyes

were fixed on Hermann.

'He has taken leave of his senses!' thought Narumov.

'Allow me to point out to you', said Tchekalinsky with his unflinching smile, 'that you are playing rather high: nobody here has ever staked more than two hundred and seventy- five at a time.'

'Well?' returned Hermann. 'Do you accept my card or not?'

Tchekalinsky bowed with the same air of humble acquiescence.

'I only wanted to observe', he said 'that, being honoured with the confidence of my friends, I can only play against ready money. For my own part, of course, I am perfectly sure that your word is sufficient but for the sake of the rules of the game and our accounts I must request you to place the money on your card.'

Hermann took a bank- note from his pocket and handed it to Tchekalinsky, who after a cursory glance placed it on Hermann's card. He began to deal. On the right a nine turned up, and on the left a three.

'I win!' said Hermann, pointing to his card.

There was a murmur of astonishment among the company. Tchekalinsky frowned, but the smile quickly reappeared on his face.

'Would you like me to settle now?' he asked Hermann.

'If you please.'

Tchekalinsky took a number of bank- notes out of his pocket and paid there and then. Hermann picked up his money and left the table. Narumov could not believe his eyes. Hermann drank a glass of lemonade and departed home.

The following evening he appeared at Tchekalinsky's again. The host was dealing. Hermann walked up to the table; the players immediately made room for him. Tchekalinsky bowed graciously. Hermann waited for the next deal, took a card and placed on it his original forty- seven thousand together with his winnings of the day before. Tchekalinsky began to deal. A knave turned up on the right, a seven on the left.

Hermann showed his seven.

There was a general exclamation. Tchekalinsky was obviously

disconcerted. He counted out ninetyfour thousand and handed them to Hermann, who pocketed them in the coolest manner and instantly withdrew.

The next evening Hermann again made his appearance at the table. Every one was expecting him; the generals and privy councillors left their whist to watch such extraordinary play. The young officers leaped up from their sofas and all the waiters collected in the drawing- room. Every one pressed round Hermann. The other players left off punting, impatient to see what would happen. Hermann stood at the table, prepared to play alone against Tchekalinsky, who was pale but still smiling. Each broke the seal of a pack of cards. Tchekalinsky shuffled. Hermann took a card and covered it with a pile of bank- notes. It was like a duel. Deep silence reigned in the room.

Tchekalinsky began dealing; his hands trembled. A queen fell on the right, an ace on the left.

'Ace wins!' said Hermann, and showed his card.

'Your queen has lost,' said Tchekalinsky gently.

Hermann started: indeed, instead of an ace there lay before him the queen of spades. He could not believe his eyes or think how he could have made such a mistake.

At that moment it seemed to him that the queen of spades opened and closed her eye, and mocked him with a smile. He was struck by the extraordinary resemblance ...

'The old woman!' he cried in terror.

Tchekalinsky gathered up his winnings. Hermann stood rooted to the spot. When he left the table every one began talking at once.

'A fine game, that!' said the players.

Tchekalinsky shuffled the cards afresh and the game resumed as usual.

CONCLUSION

Hermann went out of his mind. He is now in room number 17 of the Obuhov Hospital. He returns no answer to questions put to him but mutters over and over again, with incredible rapidity:

‘Three, seven, ace! Three, seven, queen!’

Lizaveta Ivanovna has married a very pleasant young man; he is in the civil service somewhere and has a good income. He is the son of the old countess's former steward. Lizaveta Ivanovna in her turn is bringing up a poor relative.

And Tomsy, who has been promoted to the rank of captain, has married the Princess Pauline.

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The Sandman

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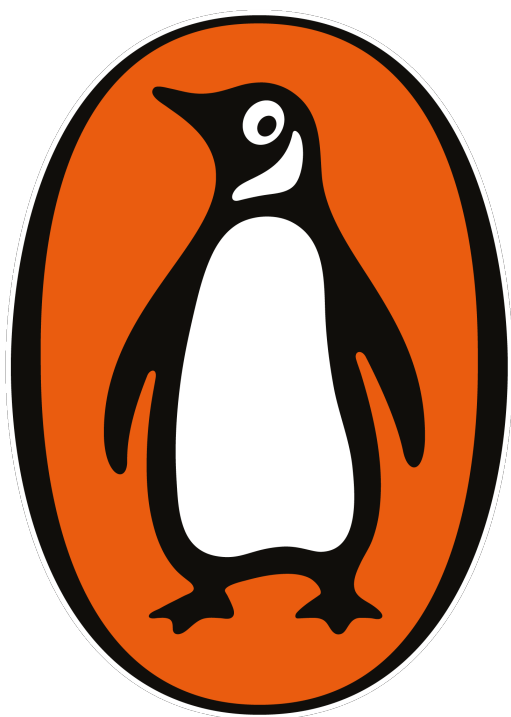
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“你这疯子，
你怎么还卖眼睛？……
眼睛……眼睛？！”



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纳塔内尔致洛塔尔

我这么久，这么久没有写信，你们大家一定满怀不安。母亲或许很气愤，克拉拉则可能以为我在这儿生活得穷奢极欲，把她那铭肌镂骨的、天使般的可爱形象给忘得一干二净。但事情并非如此。我每一日、每一刻都念着你们；我可爱的克莱辛 [1]，她那亲切的模样不时出现在我甜蜜的梦中，并朝我柔美地微笑，明眸善睐，每当我回到你们身边时，她都那样笑。唉，我多么想给你们写信，但精神上撕裂般的情绪一直使我心烦意乱！有什么可怕的不祥之物闯进了我的生活！令人毛骨悚然的厄运威胁着我，对它的不祥预感如阴云般笼罩在我的头顶，阻隔了每一束宜人美好的阳光。

我应该告诉你，我都遭遇了什么。我很清楚我必须这么做，然而只要我一琢磨这事，我就会禁不住发疯似的大笑。唉，我心爱的洛塔尔！我究竟该如何讲述，才让你多少能够感同身受：几日之前发生在我身上的事情，当真会像敌人一般摧毁我的生活！要是你在这儿，你就能亲眼目睹，但现在你肯定把我当作一个发了疯、见了鬼的人。简而言之，发生在我身上的怪事——我竭力摆脱它所带来的致命影响，但只是徒劳——并非别的，而是这么一回事：几天前，也就是十月三十日的中午十二点，一个卖天气瓶 [2] 的小贩走进我的房间，朝我兜售他的商品。我什么也没买，还威胁要把他从楼梯上扔下去，但他倒自己走下去了。

你或许会猜，我之所以认为这倒霉小贩会与我作对，是因为这出事件与我的一些个人经历有关，它们曾深深地影响了我的生活。事实也的确如此。我得尽全力使自己镇定下来，才能心平气和、耐心地向你讲述我的许多童年经历，这样就能使一切都化作清楚明晰的画面，浮现在你活跃的脑海中了。在我想要开口的这当儿，我听见你笑了，而克拉拉则说：“这实在太幼稚了！”笑吧，我请求你们，发自内心地取笑我吧！我恳求你们！但是天主作证！我在令人发狂的绝望中毛骨悚然，正像弗朗茨·摩尔乞求丹尼尔 [3] 那样乞求你们取笑我。现在说正事吧！

由于父亲工作繁忙，除了午餐时间外，我和我的兄弟姐妹们整日都不太能见到他。按老规矩，晚饭一般在七点端上餐桌，饭后我们所有人——母亲与我们——便到父亲的书房里去，围坐在一张圆桌旁。父亲一边抽着烟，一边喝着一大杯啤酒。他常常给我们讲一些奇妙的

故事，讲得那样起劲，以至他的烟斗老是熄灭，我便把引火纸递给他，将烟斗重新点燃，这曾是我的一大乐趣。然而很多时候他只会丢给我们一些绘本，自己沉默而僵直地坐在沙发椅上吞云吐雾，于是我们所有人都会陷进烟雾中。在那样的夜里，母亲总是很悲伤；时钟刚敲过九点，她便说：“好了，孩子们！上床去吧！上床去吧！沙人来了，我已经察觉到了。”而我每一次都真的听见有谁迈着沉重的步伐缓缓爬上楼梯，发出沉闷的嗒嗒声，那想必就是沙人了。有一次我感觉那沉闷的脚步声格外恐怖，便在母亲带我们离开时问她：“哎，妈妈！那总是把我们父亲身边赶走的可恶沙人究竟是谁呀？他到底长什么样？”“没有什么沙人，我亲爱的孩子，”母亲回答道，“我说沙人来了，只是想说你们困到连眼睛都睁不开，就好像眼里被人撒了沙子一样。”

母亲的回答并未使我满意，我稚气的心里清晰地浮现出这样一个想法：母亲只是担心我们被沙人吓着，才否定他的存在。我可是一直能听见他走上楼梯的。我满怀好奇，想更进一步了解沙人，还有他与这些小孩子的关系。终于我去询问了那个照料我小妹妹的老婆子：“沙人究竟是什么人呢？”

“哎，小纳塔内尔，”她回答，“你还不知道吗，那是一个邪恶的家伙，如果有孩子不肯上床睡觉，他就找到他们，往他们眼里撒一把沙子，让充血的眼睛从脑袋上掉出来。他把这些眼睛扔进袋子，在夜半时像喂鸟那样喂给他自己的小孩儿，沙人的小孩儿们坐在巢里，有猫头鹰嘴一般尖尖的喙，这样他们就能叼走不听话的孩子们的眼睛。”

我于是在脑海里为残暴的沙人描绘出阴森的肖像。而每当沉闷的脚步声在夜里传来时，恐怖与惊惧总是令我浑身哆嗦。对此，母亲能从我口中问出的，除了一句抽噎的“是沙人！是沙人！”外，再无其他。然后我便奔进卧室，整晚都因沙人的可怕模样而备受煎熬。

后来我长得足够大了，也看透老婆子所告诉我的——沙人，以及夜半时分他那些待在巢里的孩子——大概并不完全属实。尽管如此，沙人于我而言仍然是可怕的鬼怪。每当听见他不光爬上楼梯，还猛地闯入我父亲的房间时，恐惧便会攫住我。有时沙人很久不来，之后他又一次次来得更加频繁。这样持续了好些年，我却仍然无法对这阴森的怪物习以为常，沙人的骇人形象在我心中从未淡化。

我花越来越多的时间与精力去想象沙人与父亲的关系，无法战胜的胆怯使我不敢开口询问父亲，于是我打算自己去探寻那秘密，去见传说中的沙人。几年来，对沙人的兴趣在我心中变得愈加强烈。沙人使我的一切奇妙探险之事都格外着迷，这些东西本来就容易引发孩子

的兴趣。我最爱听或读有关科博尔特 [4]、女巫与拇指人 [5] 的惊悚故事；但在这些惊悚故事中，沙人永远是我的最爱，我在桌上、柜子上与墙面上用粉笔和煤块画满了他那最为古怪、最为可恶的模样。

我满十岁的时候，母亲让我从孩子们的卧房搬到另一间小室，它与父亲的房间在同一条走廊上，并且相距不远。每当钟声敲响九下，屋里传出那个陌生人的声音时，我们还是不得不尽快离开。我在自己的小室里听见沙人走进父亲的房间，不久后便觉得有一股香气在整个家里弥散开来，它闻着奇怪却又美妙。随着好奇心的累积，我的勇气也不断增加了——不管通过什么方式，我都要认识沙人。我常在母亲经过房门后悄悄溜出房间，来到走廊上，但我从没偷听到一丝一毫，因为每当我赶到自认为可以窥见沙人的位置上时，他都早已进门去了。无法克制的渴望驱使着我，我终于下定决心要藏在父亲的房间里，并在那儿等候沙人。

一个晚上，父亲的沉默与母亲的忧伤使我意识到沙人即将到来，我便借口自己太过困倦，在九点之前就离开了房间，并躲在紧挨房门的一个藏身之处。家里的大门嘎吱作响，缓慢而沉重的脚步声隆隆地穿过走廊，靠近了楼梯。母亲带着我的兄弟姐妹们急匆匆地从我躲藏的地方经过。悄悄地——悄悄地，我打开了父亲的房门。他背对着门，像往常一样沉默而僵直地坐在那儿。他没有发现我，我便迅速溜了进去，躲在窗帘后；窗帘掩着一个刚好挨着门的衣柜，它敞开着，里面挂着父亲的衣物。

近了，隆隆的脚步声愈加近了，他在房门外发出奇怪的呼哧声、擦刮声与嗡嗡声。恐惧与期待让我心若擂鼓，紧挨房门的地方传来尖锐的脚步声，门把被粗暴地扭动，门嘎吱一声猛地弹开了！我竭力鼓起勇气，小心翼翼地向外窥去。房间中央，沙人立在父亲面前，明亮的灯光在他脸上燃烧！沙人，那可怕的沙人，是那个有时会与我们共进午餐的老律师科佩留斯！

正因那阴森、恐怖至极的形象是这个科佩留斯，我心中的恐惧更深了。试想一个高个儿、宽肩的男人，有一个奇形怪状的胖脑袋，一张黄蜡石般的脸庞与一双浓密的灰眉毛，眉毛下面一对绿色猫眼尖锐地闪烁着，嘴唇之上则是一只硕大而牢固的鼻子。他那歪斜的嘴常常露出阴险扭曲的笑容，接着脸上的暗红色斑点便清晰可见，他咬紧的齿间也传出奇怪的嘶嘶声。

科佩留斯总是穿着一件裁剪过时的暗灰色外套，还有同样款式的背心和裤子，脚上搭配的却是黑色长袜和带有小搭扣的鞋子。他的小假发几乎遮不住头盖骨，卷发高高地贴在又大又红的耳朵上面，宽大

密实的发髻从脖颈处伸出来，露出了用来固定衬衫领子的银色扣子。他的整个模样既令人生厌，又叫人恐惧；但最惹我们孩子厌恶的，还是他那一双指节凸出、毛茸茸的手，只要是他用这双手碰过的东西，我们就都不要了。他发觉了这点，便以这样或那样的借口去碰这一小块糕点，或那一个香甜的水果。它们本是母亲悄悄替我们放在盘子上的。这些甜食本应使我们快乐，他却弄得我们泪盈满眶，出于恶心与厌恶而不愿再享用它们。在假期里，当我们从父亲那儿得到一小杯甜酒后，他也这么做。他会迅速伸手过来，或者直接把玻璃杯送到他青紫的唇边，我们只能抽噎着敢怒不敢言，这种时候他便会发出魔鬼般的笑声。他习惯称我们为小混蛋。但凡有他在场，我们都一声也不能吭，只在心里诅咒这个丑陋的男人，因为他是我们的敌人，而且存心要糟蹋我们微小的快乐。母亲似乎和我们一样憎恨这个可恶的科佩留斯，因为每当他现身后，她欢欣愉悦的心情就变得悲伤阴郁，原本无拘无束的性格也变得严肃。面对科佩留斯，父亲则自欺欺人，就仿佛科佩留斯是更加高贵的存在，必须容忍他的无礼，而且无论如何，人们都得以良好的心情接纳他。对此父亲从未明说，只通过准备其最喜欢的菜肴，并配以稀罕的好酒来稍作暗示。

而此刻，当我看见那个科佩留斯时，心中油然而生出一个惊悚可怕的想法：除了他以外，其他任何人不可能是沙人。对我来说，沙人从此不再只是吓人的睡魔——那个会把孩子们的眼珠作为饲料，在夜半时分带去猫头鹰巢里的怪物——并且不只会出现在逗弄小孩儿的无稽之谈中。不！他是一个丑陋的、鬼怪般的恶棍，给所到之处带去悲痛与绝望，带去短暂或永恒的厄运。

我着了魔似的一动不动。我清楚地知道自己会受到严厉的惩罚，但仍冒着被发现的危险站在那儿，把头伸出窗帘偷听。我的父亲郑重接待了科佩留斯。“起来！去干活！”科佩留斯声音嘶哑，呼噜噜地说着，扔开了外套。父亲面色阴沉，默默地脱去睡袍。两人都穿上了黑色长罩衫。我没看见他们是从哪儿拿来这些罩衫的。父亲打开了壁橱的侧门；我却发现，那并非如我一直以为的是个壁橱，而更像个黑色的洞。洞里有一只小炉子，旁边围着各式各样奇异的小工具。哦，上帝啊！当我的父亲朝那炉火弯下腰时，他看上去完全变了样。他柔和正直的面孔仿佛在一阵可怕的、痉挛般的痛楚中扭曲，变成一张丑陋又令人作呕的魔鬼的面庞。他看上去很像那科佩留斯了。而这家伙挥舞着烧红了的钳子，用它从浓烟里取出一些亮闪闪的物质，接着不知疲倦地锻打它们。我觉得似乎能在那四周瞧见人的面孔，但他们却没有眼睛——取而代之的，是丑恶的、深深的黑窟窿。

“眼睛快出来，眼睛快出来！”科佩留斯用沉闷的隆隆声低喊道。

惊恐疯狂地捕获了我，我尖叫起来，从躲藏处跌了出来，摔在地板上。这时科佩留斯一把抓住我：“小浑蛋！小浑蛋！”他龇牙咧嘴地咯咯笑了起来！他用力揪着我，把我往炉子上扔。炉火烧焦了我的头发。“现在我们有眼睛了——眼睛——一对漂亮的孩童眼睛。”科佩留斯悄声说着，从火里抓来一把烧红了的晶粒，打算扔进我的眼睛里。

这时我父亲恳求地抬高了双手，喊道：“大师！大师！放过我的纳塔内尔的眼睛吧！放过他的眼睛吧！”科佩留斯发出刺耳的笑声，喊道：“那就让这少年保住他的眼睛吧，他会得到教训，他痛哭的声音要传遍全世界。但现在我们得好好观察手与脚的运动机制。”这么说着，他粗暴地抓着我，以至关节都咔咔作响；并拧过我的手足，将它们一会儿这么摆，一会儿那么摆。“它们怎么放都不对！还是以前那样好！上年纪的人懂这个！”科佩留斯嘶嘶地轻声说道。我身边的一切都变得黑暗阴森，一阵突如其来的痉挛掠过神经与四肢百骸——我什么也感受不到了。

柔和、温暖的气息拂过我的脸庞，我从死一般的沉睡中惊醒，见母亲朝我俯下身来。“沙人还在吗？”我结结巴巴地问。“不，我亲爱的孩子，他老早老早就走了，他不会再伤害你了！”母亲这么说着，亲昵地拥吻她失而复得的宝贝。

我何必要使你厌烦呢，我心爱的洛塔尔！我何必这样事无巨细地叙述，何况还有那么多没讲？够了！我在偷听的时候被发现了，还被科佩留斯残忍地对待。恐惧与惊吓使我发起高烧，我在床上躺了好几周。“沙人还在吗？”这是我说的第一句神智清醒的话，也象征着我的康复与救赎。我要向你讲述的，只剩下我少年时期最骇人的时刻；然后你就会相信，并非因为我的眼睛出了毛病，才使得一切在我眼里都暗淡无光，而是阴暗的厄运在我人生的天空中投下了一片晦暗不清的阴翳，我或许只能以死将其粉碎。

科佩留斯不再出现了，据说他离开了这座城市。

那之后过去了约莫一年，一天晚上我们仍按老规矩围坐在圆桌旁，父亲兴致勃勃地讲述了他年轻时旅途中的许多趣事。当时钟敲响九点的时候，我们听见门的枢轴突然嘎吱作响，铁一般沉重的脚步声隆隆地穿过门廊，走上楼梯。“是科佩留斯。”母亲面色惨白地说。“对！……是科佩留斯。”父亲用虚弱的、断断续续的声音重复道。“但是孩子他爸，孩子他爸！”母亲的泪涌出了眼眶，她叫道，“非得这样不可吗？”“最后一次了！”父亲回答，“这是他最后一次来找我，我向你保证。走吧，带着孩子们走！……走吧……上床去！晚安！”

我仿佛被压进了坚硬冰冷的岩石里——我的呼吸停滞了！我站着一动不动，这时母亲抓过我的胳膊：“来吧，纳塔内尔，快过来！”我被她带走了，带进自己的小室。“放心，放心，躺上床去！睡吧，睡吧。”母亲离开时说道。但不可名状的恐惧与不安在心里折磨着我，让我根本无法合上眼睑。那可恨又可怕的科佩留斯就站在我跟前，他目光如炬，恶毒地嘲笑我，我竭力想摆脱他的幻影，但只是徒劳。

那或许已是午夜时分，忽然一声骇人的巨响传来，就跟一颗炮弹发射了似的。整座房子都轰隆作响，我的门前掠过一阵嘎吱声与沙沙声，紧跟着房屋大门嘭的一声关上了。“那是科佩留斯！”我惊恐地喊道，从床上一跃而起。此时传来刺耳又绝望的惨叫，我横冲直撞地奔向父亲的房间。门敞开着，令人窒息的浓烟迎面席卷而来，女佣的尖叫声传来：“唉呀，先生他……先生他！”

在蒸汽滚滚的炉子前，我的父亲倒在地板上。他已经死了，一张脸被烧得焦黑变形，很是丑陋。我的姐妹们围在他身旁哀号痛哭，而母亲晕倒在一旁！“科佩留斯，该死的撒旦，是你杀害了父亲！”我大喊一声，便失去了意识。

两天过后，父亲入了棺。那时他的面目又重新变得温柔和蔼了，就像活着时那样。我在心中欣慰地想，这说明他与科佩留斯那个魔鬼签订的契约没有使他陷入永恒的堕落。

爆炸惊醒了邻居，这起事故惹得谣言四起，还引得当局介入——他们要传唤科佩留斯并追究他的责任，但他却消失得无影无踪。

若我现在告诉你——我心爱的朋友——那个卖天气瓶的小贩正是可恶的科佩留斯，那么你便不会奇怪，为什么我认为这个敌人的出现将招致大难了。他的穿着打扮虽变了样，但科佩留斯的身形与面貌都深深地烙在了我的心中，绝无可能出错。此外，科佩留斯甚至未曾改过名字。就我所知，他在这儿假装成一个皮埃蒙特 [6] 来的机械师，并自称吉塞普·科波拉。

我决意与他抗争，无论发生什么，我都要为父亲之死复仇。

请千万别告诉母亲这丑陋的恶魔出现了。替我向亲爱的、可爱的克拉拉问好，我心绪平静些后再给她写信。祝好。

[1] 克拉拉的昵称。（说明：书中脚注均为译者注。）

[2] 天气瓶（wetterglas），又称风暴瓶，是欧洲18世纪至19世

纪用于天气预报的工具。密闭的玻璃容器中，装入含数种化学物质的透明溶液。根据外界温度、天气的改变，瓶内会展现出不同形态的结晶，预报天气的变化。近代天气瓶已不用作天气预报的工具，而转变为一种趣味性的科学装饰。

[3] 弗朗茨·摩尔（Franz Moor）与丹尼尔（Daniel）两个人物源自席勒《强盗》。弗朗茨是主人公卡尔的弟弟，为了篡夺遗产而设计陷害其兄，使卡尔被逐出家门。卡尔成为强盗后，某次乔装打扮混入了弗朗茨的城堡，却被弗朗茨识破。因害怕卡尔带来不利，惊恐万分的弗朗茨恳求仆人丹尼尔杀害卡尔，但后者并未照做。

[4] 科博尔特，德语区神话传说中的一种精灵，它寄居于人类家中并守护这个家，偶尔也会对主人做些无伤大雅的恶作剧。

[5] 拇指人，源自德语区童话，即身量不超过拇指大小的人，著名童话《拇指姑娘》便是其衍生作品。

[6] 意大利西北部的一个区，首府为都灵。

克拉拉致纳塔内尔

你确实很久不曾写信给我了，但即便如此我也相信，你仍然想着我念着我。你明明打算把上一封信寄给我的兄弟洛塔尔，却在信封上写了我的名字，而不是他的，那么你想必是热切地惦记着我了。我愉快地拆了信，直到读到“唉，我心爱的洛塔尔”时才意识到这个错误。我本不该再接着读下去，而应当把信交给我的兄弟。

就像你以前时不时孩子气地打趣我、指责我的那样，我具备女性所特有的好沉思的宁静心性。哪怕房屋有坍塌的危险，在急忙逃离之前，我也会迅速抚平窗帘上那一道难看的褶皱——我就是这样的女人。正因如此，我不能不承认，你这封信的开头是那样深深震撼了我，我差点儿喘不过气，眼前金星直冒。

唉，我心爱的纳塔内尔！怎么会有这样的骇人之物闯入你的生活！一想到要与你分开，再也见不到你，我的胸膛就仿佛被一把烧红的匕首刺穿了。我把信读了又读！那可恶的科佩留斯，你对他的描述真叫人毛骨悚然。直到现在我才知晓，你那位年迈的好父亲竟以这般骇人而暴力的方式死去了。在我把本属于兄弟洛塔尔的信交给他后，他竭力使我恢复平静，然而收效甚微。那个致命的天气瓶小贩吉塞普·科波拉阴魂不散地紧跟着我，我甚至羞于承认，他以各种古怪的模样出现在我的梦中，摧毁了我平时健康安稳的睡眠。但是很快，在第二天时我的感受就截然不同了。我亲爱的，尽管知道你出奇地预感到科佩留斯会对你作恶，我却仍一如既往地欢欣愉悦、无拘无束——如果洛塔尔告诉你这些，你可别生我的气。

我得向你坦承，我认为你所讲述的所有恐怖之事都只发生在你的想象中，它们与真实的外部世界恐怕少有关联。那老科佩留斯确实很令人讨厌，但只是因为他憎恨小孩儿，你们这些孩子才发自内心地怕他。

在你稚气的脑海里，当然会把童话里可怕的沙人同老科佩留斯联系起来，因为就算你不相信沙人，科佩留斯在你眼中也是一个鬼怪般的坏蛋，对小孩子尤其危险。你父亲在夜里所做的骇人勾当或许不过是暗地里进行的炼金实验，你的母亲当然会心怀不满，因为炼金会挥霍掉许多钱财。此外，父亲的心智完全被那骗人的渴望蒙蔽了，一心以为自己能得到更高的智慧，却因此疏远了家人——这也是那种炼金

作坊里常会出现的情况。你父亲的死亡很可能归咎于他自己的不小心，而科佩留斯对此并无责任。你相信吗，我昨天甚至询问了隔壁那位经验颇丰的药剂师：“进行化学实验时，这种致命的爆炸是否可能在一眨眼间就发生？”他答道：“哎，当然了。”他还以特有的风格向我详尽又拖沓地描述它如何发生，其间提到了好些听起来稀奇古怪的名字，我一个也没记住。

现在你可能对你的克拉拉心存不满了。你会说：“实际上，奥秘常常伸出隐形的双臂拥抱世人，但没有任何一丝奥秘的光芒能穿透这般冷漠的想法；世人仅仅看见缤纷多彩的表象世界就觉得开心，就像幼稚的儿童会为了镀金的水果而开心，却浑然不知其中暗藏致命的毒药。”

唉，我心爱的纳塔内尔！你难道不相信，就算是开朗快活、无拘无束又无忧无虑的人，也会对那黑暗力量心中有数，也知道它是我们的敌人，并能导致我们自我毁灭？但请原谅，我这样一个头脑简单的小姑娘，也要斗胆试着告诉你我对这场内心之战的看法。也许直到最后我也做不到措辞得当，但就算你会取笑我，那也不是因为我的想法愚蠢，而是因为我表达得如此笨拙。

假设存在这样的黑暗力量，它就像我们的敌人，阴险狡诈地在我们心中埋下一根线，用它来紧紧束缚我们，操纵我们走上一条危险堕落的道路，而这样的道路我们原本是绝不会踏上的。如果真的存在这样的力量，那么它必然会在我们心中把自己塑造成与我们相仿的模样。也就是说，它会成为我们自身。因为唯有如此，我们才会相信它，并如它所愿在心里为它腾出一块地方，使它能够进行那些隐秘的勾当。但假使我们始终拥有足够坚强的意志，能够认清那外来的邪恶影响，并通过积极地生活来加强这种意志，同时遵循我们的个人偏好与职业所指引的道路，坚定不移地笃定前行，那么这阴森可怖的力量便只能徒劳地追逐我们的虚假镜像，直至消亡。

洛塔尔补充说，这黑暗的精神力量常会化装为我们在外部世界里所遇到的阻碍，一旦我们在自己心中臣服于它，那么它必然会以这副模样侵入我们的内心。这样一来，我们会精神错乱，在玄之又玄的错觉中误以为那黑暗力量的声音是我们自己的声音。它是我们自身的鬼影，它与我们的自我相仿，并深刻地影响我们的内心，使我们或堕入深渊或飘飘欲仙。

我心爱的纳塔内尔！你想必察觉到，我与我的兄弟洛塔尔确实讨论过那黑暗的强大力量，在我费尽心思写下这些重要内容后，它们在我心中变得更深刻且条理清晰了。洛塔尔最后的话我并没有完全

理解，我只能猜测他的意思，但尽管如此，我仍认为这些看法都十分正确。我请求你，别再揣测那个丑陋的律师科佩留斯，或是兜售天气瓶的吉塞普·科波拉了，他们都是那黑暗力量的化装，你要坚信它们无法对你做什么；只有当你相信它们那满怀敌意的强大力量时，它们才会真正危害到你。别再让信中的每一行都诉说你心底的混乱，别再让我从灵魂最深处为你的处境感到痛心。真的，我可能会拿那个是沙人的律师与天气瓶小贩科佩留斯来寻开心。你要开朗些，开朗些！我已决定前往你身旁，就像你的守护精灵一样。如果丑恶的科波拉企图扰人清梦，我就要开怀大笑，将他驱赶。我毫不畏惧他和他那粗暴讨厌的拳头，无论他是律师还是沙人，他都糟蹋不了我的甜食，更伤不了我的眼睛。

永远永远，我心爱的纳塔内尔。

纳塔内尔致洛塔尔

由于我的马虎大意，克拉拉前阵子收到了本应给你的信，还把它读完了，这让我很不愉快。她写来一封内涵深刻的哲学信件，在其中详尽地证明了科佩留斯与科波拉只存在于我的内心，是我自身的鬼影；只要我认清这点，它即刻就会化为齏粉。说实话，她那含笑又明亮的双眼常常如孩童眸子一般甜美梦幻，这样一双眼中却闪烁出如此理智杰出的思想之光，像个文科硕士一样，真令人难以置信。你们谈到了我，她还引用了你的话，或许你给她读了些逻辑学的学术著作，好让她明察明辨吧。算了！

另外，或许那天气瓶小贩吉塞普·科波拉确实不是老律师科佩留斯。我是从一位最近才来到这里的物理学教授那儿听说的，这个教授同那个出名的自然研究者一样，名叫斯帕兰扎尼 [7]，来自意大利，并且是学术圈的一分子。他认识那个科波拉已经好几年了。另外，从科波拉的口音也能听出，他确实来自皮埃蒙特。科佩留斯倒是个德国人，不过我认为他对此撒了谎。我心中的大石仍未落地。你和克拉拉，你们到底还是把我当成了一个阴郁的幻想家，可是科佩留斯那张该死的脸实在给我留下了太深的印象，我无法摆脱它。斯帕兰扎尼说科波拉已经离开了这座城市，这让我挺开心的。

这位教授也是个怪人。他是个矮小的、圆滚滚的男人，颧骨突出的脸上，有着精致的鼻子、噘起来的厚嘴唇和一对目光刺人的小眼睛。或许这么形容更好：要是你在任意一个柏林口袋日历上见到乔多维茨基 [8] 画的卡廖斯特罗 [9]，你就是见到了斯帕兰扎尼——他看上去就是那副模样。

不久前有一次，我上楼梯的时候发现平日里都严严实实合着的窗帘被拉到了一旁，缝隙中露出了挡在窗帘后的一扇玻璃门。就连我自己也不知道，我怎么就好奇地瞥了过去。那房间里，一名女郎坐在一张小桌前，她出落得高挑纤瘦，但身材却相当匀称，且衣着华贵。她的手臂搭在桌上，双手交叠。她面对着门，因此她那天使般美丽的面庞尽收眼底。她看上去并没有察觉到我，而且目光有点儿呆滞——我几乎可以这么说：就好像根本没有视力一样。在我看来，她仿佛在睁着眼睛睡觉。我有点儿毛骨悚然，所以快速地悄悄溜进了一旁的大堂里。后来我听说，我所见到的那个人是斯帕兰扎尼的女儿奥林匹娅。他用特殊而又过分的方式把她关了起来，以至没有任何人能靠近她。

正因如此，她最终变得似乎痴呆，或者有了其他毛病。

但是，我干吗要告诉你这些呢？我原本可以对你口述得更好、更详细，你要知道，十四天后我就会回到你们身边了。我必须再次见到我亲爱的、可爱的天使——我的克拉拉，然后我的恶劣情绪就会烟消云散。在读过那封理智得过分的信后，我险些被这些恶劣情绪（我必须承认）淹没。因此我今天也不给她写信了。

千万次祝福。

再也找不到比这更离奇、更奇妙的见闻了。这便是发生在我可怜的朋友——年轻的大学生纳塔内尔——身上的故事，这故事才刚开头，而我要接着为你讲述。好意的读者！最富同情心的人啊，你可曾有过这般体验：有什么占据了你的胸腔、心灵与脑海，把其他一切思绪都排挤了出去？它们在你的心里翻滚蒸煮，直到那份炽热触及沸点，于是你体内热血奔涌，双颊变得绯红。你的目光是那么古怪，就仿佛它在空荡荡的房间内捕捉到了一个人影，而其他所有人却都对其视而不见；你的话语最终消融于一声晦暗的喟叹。这时你的朋友则询问你：“您怎么了，尊敬的人？您遇上什么事了，亲爱的朋友？”

你渴望吐露你脑海中的画面，运用所有炽烈的色彩与光影去描绘它，然而光是为开头找到合适的词句就已经使你精疲力竭。但你感到必须把那奇妙壮丽的、骇人听闻的、引人入胜的、惊悚恐怖的——把要诉说的一切都浓缩于你吐出的第一个词中，就像闪电那样在一瞬击中万物。然而任何能说出口的词在你眼里都黯然失色，如死一般冰冷僵硬。你找啊找啊，说得断断续续、吞吞吐吐；你的朋友们又提出许多理智的问题，它们就如同凛冽的寒风直吹进你的心房，冷却了那滚烫的热流。或者，你可以像个不拘一格的画家，仅凭大胆奔放的寥寥几笔便描绘出心中画面的轮廓，接着轻轻松松地为其增添愈加鲜艳的色彩，用栩栩如生的各式形象来吸引你的朋友们。于是他们便能目睹，你——你自己正是这画面的中心——如何呈现出了自己的心中所想！

而我，好意的读者！我必须向你坦白，从未有人向我询问过年轻的纳塔内尔的故事。你或许知道，我也属于作家这一类古怪的人。正如我之前所描述的那样，这些人心里藏着故事，只要有谁——不管是他们身边的人，还是来自世界各地的人——来到他们身边，并且问：“这到底是怎么回事？您给我讲讲吧，亲爱的？”他们就会兴高采烈。这份强烈的倾诉欲也驱使我对您讲述纳塔内尔那不幸的一生。它那么奇妙又古怪，占据了您的整颗心灵。但正因如此，也因为我必须使您——我的读者——能够承受这并非微不足道的奇妙故事，我才绞尽脑汁，要给纳塔内尔的故事一个意味深长、与众不同且动人的开

头：“从前”——这是所有小说最漂亮的开头，不过太生硬了！“在一座名为S的偏远小城里住着……”——好些了，至少在一点点向着高潮推进。或者直接从故事中间切入：“‘让他见鬼去吧！’大学生纳塔内尔喊道，疯狂的眼神中写着暴怒与惊恐，当那卖天气瓶的吉塞普·科波拉……”说实话，这些句子我都已经写下来了，却又觉得能从“大学生纳塔内尔那疯狂的眼神”里嗅出几分滑稽，但这绝不是一个滑稽的故事。我的脑海中压根没有浮现出什么词句能多多少少反映我心中的画面，并重现其光彩与色泽。我决定索性不开这个头了。

拿去，好意的读者！拿走这三封信，它们是朋友洛塔尔友好地分享与我的。有了这些信，你便能窥见那画面——我竭力想通过叙述来为其增添色彩——的轮廓。或许我能像一位优秀的肖像画家那样去呈现画面中的形象，使它们贴近原型，这样就算你未曾见过真人，也会觉得这个人物鲜活得仿佛就在眼前。哦，我的读者！也许你就会相信，没有什么会比真实的生活更加神奇美妙，而诗人们只能利用一面打磨得暗淡无光的镜子，照出生活的影子罢了。

为了让读者们深入了解故事前情，除了这些信件外，还有一些内容需要补充：纳塔内尔的父亲死后不久，克拉拉与洛塔尔——他们本是纳塔内尔一位远亲的孩子，后来这位远亲也亡故了，他们就成了孤儿——便被纳塔内尔的母亲收留在了家中。克拉拉与纳塔内尔互相怀有强烈的好感，这世上没人能够反对这份感情，因此在纳塔内尔离开家乡前往G市念大学时，他们便订婚了。写最后一封信时，他仍在G市，是著名的物理学教授斯帕兰扎尼的学生。

现在我能放心地继续讲述这个故事了。然而眼下，克拉拉的形象又那么活灵活现地出现在我眼前，叫我没法移开目光。当她亲切又满含笑意地瞧着我时，这种情况便总是发生。从主流审美观来看，克拉拉绝不漂亮。然而，建筑师们会称赞她那匀称曼妙的身段；画家们则会认为她颈部、肩膀与胸脯的线条都那么天真纯洁，会爱上她那不逊于抹大拉的玛利亚 [10] 的秀美金发，并就巴托尼 [11] 的色彩大侃特侃。他们其中一位，一个真正的幻想家，又别出心裁地把克拉拉那双眼睛比作雷斯达尔 [12] 画中的大海，倒映着如洗的湛蓝碧空，以及森林与鲜花盛放的原野，映照着自然景观之丰美与明艳多彩的勃勃生机。诗人与大师们则更进一步，感叹道：“这是怎样的汪洋，这是怎样的明镜啊！只要我们端详这名少女，看见她的目光向我们闪烁，天堂般美妙的音乐与歌声便会笼罩我们。这乐音涌入我们的心房，使一切复苏并活跃起来。我们也斗胆在克拉拉面前像鸟儿那般啁啾歌唱，以为自己唱的是首真正的歌谣，然而实则不过是由单调无聊的声响胡乱组成的产物。但克拉拉唇角露出的美好微笑却告诉我们，就算我们无法咏唱出什么高明的内容，也并非我们的过错。”

正是如此。克拉拉如同无忧无虑、无拘无束的孩子，有着天马行空的想象力，同时也有着女性深切柔和的心性，以及明晰敏锐的睿智。任何神秘的把戏都无法糊弄她；尽管她天性沉默且从不健谈，但无论是她那明亮的目光，还是那略带嘲讽的柔和微笑，都无不在诉说：“亲爱的朋友啊！你们怎么会以为，我会觉得你们口中那稍纵即逝的幻影都活灵活现，甚至把它信以为真？”许多人因此责备她冷漠无情，平淡乏味；但另外一些人则能更清楚深刻地认识生活——其中最甚者莫过于纳塔内尔，他总是快活有力地徜徉于科学与艺术之中——从而热烈地爱上这样一位感情丰富、通情达理、如孩子般天真的少女。

克拉拉全身心地依赖着自己的爱人，与后者的分别是她人生中出现的第一道阴霾。而正如纳塔内尔在信中告诉洛塔尔的那样，当他真正回到家乡，踏入母亲的房间时，她是怀着怎样的惊喜飞奔着投入了他的怀抱啊！如他所料，在重新见到克拉拉的那一瞬间，无论是律师科佩留斯，抑或是克拉拉那封过于理性的信件给他带来的不快，都统统在他的脑海中烟消云散了。

但纳塔内尔对朋友洛塔尔说的并没有错：可恶的天气瓶小贩科波拉的出现确实危及了他的生活。所有人都察觉到了这一点，因为纳塔内尔在回来的第一天就仿佛完全变了一个人。他沉浸在阴郁的幻想中，行为举止都古怪得令人无法适应。一切的一切，甚至就连生活本身，于他而言都成了华胥一梦。他越来越频繁地提到，每个人都误以为自己是自由的，实际上却陷入了残酷的游戏，不过是那黑暗力量手中的一枚棋子罢了；人们徒劳地反抗，终究也只能屈服于命运的安排。对此他谈得非常深入，并声称如果以为艺术与科学创作皆是个人发挥主观能动性的结果，那么就太愚蠢了，因为唯有灵感能使人创作，而这灵感并非源自我们的内心，而是来自我们身外的更高法则。

理智的克拉拉极其反感这些神秘的白日梦，然而她的反驳似乎也只是徒劳。纳塔内尔力图证明科佩留斯确实是那邪恶势力，早在他躲在窗帘后偷听时，它便伸出自己的魔爪攫住了他，而且这可恶的魔鬼还将用恐怖的手段摧毁他的爱情，他的幸福。每当这时，克拉拉都会十分严肃地回应：“是啊，纳塔内尔！你是对的，科佩留斯是那邪恶势力，是一股魔鬼般的力量。显而易见，它侵入生活并造成了可怕的后果，但这也只是因为你没有把他逐出脑海与内心。只要你仍对他深信不疑，那么他就是真的，还会对你施加影响；只有你的相信才是他的力量。”

纳塔内尔被彻底激怒了，因为克拉拉认定魔鬼只存在于他的内心。他想搬出自己那一整套关于魔鬼与黑暗力量的神秘学说，克拉拉却不悦地打断他，并插嘴说些鸡毛蒜皮、无关紧要的事情。纳塔内尔

因此更加愤怒了。他明白冷漠保守的人无法领会如此艰深的奥秘，却没清楚地意识到自己其实也把克拉拉归为了这一类人，因此仍锲而不舍地试图向她透露这些奥秘。

清晨克拉拉正忙着准备早餐的时候，他便站在她身旁，为她朗读各式各样的神秘学书籍，直到克拉拉恳求道：“但是亲爱的纳塔内尔，如果我说你是那个糟蹋我咖啡的邪恶势力呢？因为倘若如你所愿，我放下手头的所有事情，在你朗读的时候注视着你的眼睛，那么我的咖啡便会烧糊，你们可就都没有早饭吃了！”

纳塔内尔把书啪地一合，闷闷不乐地跑回他的房间去了。从前他尤其善于撰写生动优美的故事，而克拉拉则会津津有味地聆听。然而现在他的文章却变得阴沉了，内容莫名其妙、乱七八糟。尽管克拉拉体贴地缄口不言，他还是能察觉到，她很难对这些作品做出积极的评价。对克拉拉来说，没有什么比沉闷无聊更致命了，她的每一句话和每个眼神都诉说着精神上无法抵挡的睡意——纳塔内尔的文章其实无聊透顶。克拉拉那冷漠平淡的思维使纳塔内尔愈感不悦。至于他那黑暗晦涩、沉闷无聊的神秘学，克拉拉也无法克制自己对它们的厌烦。久而久之，尽管他们自己尚未察觉，但他们的两颗心已然渐行渐远。

纳塔内尔必须承认，科佩留斯的模样已在他的幻想中渐渐苍白。他想让科佩留斯这骇人的睡魔在自己的作品中登场，但常常要煞费苦心才能将其渲染得栩栩如生。后来他决定作一首诗，主题便是他那不祥的预感：科佩留斯会摧毁他的爱情与幸福。诗中他与克拉拉原本在忠贞的爱情中紧密结合。但之后某天，仿佛一只黑暗的拳头猛地砸进了他们的生活，把他们全部的幸福都彻底捣毁了。最后他们终于站上了婚礼的圣坛，那可怕的科佩留斯却突然出现，挖走了克拉拉那双可爱的眼睛。鲜血淋漓的眼睛掉在纳塔内尔的胸膛上，如同灼热的血红色火星一样燃烧起来。科佩留斯抓住他，把他抛进一个熊熊燃烧的火轮。它如旋涡般快速旋转，翻滚呼号着吞噬了他，并发出一声惊天动地的咆哮。那情形就仿佛飓风狂怒地拍击浪花四起的海面，海浪在暴怒的抗争中涌起，形成白首黑身的庞然大物。在一片隆隆巨响中，他却听见克拉拉的声音传来：“你难道不能看看我吗？科佩留斯骗了你，在你胸口燃烧的并非我的眼睛，而是你自己那几滴炽热的心头血——我的双眼还在，你快看看我啊！”纳塔内尔想：这是克拉拉的声音，我永远属于她。这一想法强劲地穿透了他置身的火轮，漆黑深渊中的巨响变得沉闷，终于渐渐消失。

纳塔内尔看向克拉拉的双眼。然而此时用克拉拉的双眼友好地瞧着他的，却是死神。

纳塔内尔作诗时十分平静，他深陷沉思，对每一行都孜孜不倦地精雕细琢，而且重视韵律规则，不使所有诗行都和谐动听、斐然成

章，他便决不罢休。然而当他终于完成诗作并高声朗读时，强烈的恐怖与惊惧却又攫住了他，他大喊起来：“这阴森恐怖的声音是谁的？”但不久后，整首诗在他眼中又成了佳作，他感觉它必能在克拉拉那冷漠的思维中点燃火星，尽管他并不清楚自己究竟为什么要刺激克拉拉，也不清楚用那阴森可怖的内容——它预言了可怕的厄运，这厄运会摧毁他们的爱情——去吓唬她的后果会是什么。

此刻纳塔内尔与克拉拉坐在母亲那小巧的花园中。克拉拉心情十分愉悦，因为纳塔内尔在写诗的三天里都没有再用自己的幻梦或不祥的预感去折磨她，他甚至像从前一样兴致勃勃、绘声绘色地讲起了许多趣事。于是克拉拉说：“现在我熟悉的那个你总算完完全全地回来了，看来你已经见识到，我们怎样驱赶了那丑恶的科佩留斯。”而直到这时，纳塔内尔才想起自己揣在衣兜里的诗，他原本打算朗读它的。于是他立刻抽出那些纸页，并开始诵读。克拉拉以为它一如既往地无聊，想着由他去吧，自己便安安静静地一心做起了手头的针线活儿。然而那诗作所带来的阴霾变得愈渐黑暗，终于她丢下针线，定定地看进纳塔内尔的眼里。他仍一刻不停地念着，心中炽热的感情染红了脸颊，泪珠从他的眼眶中簌簌滚落。他终于念完了，疲惫地沉沉悲叹起来，并握住克拉拉的手，就好像他在绝望的痛苦中崩溃了一般。他呻吟道：“唉！克拉拉……克拉拉！”克拉拉温柔地把他拥入怀中，轻轻地，却缓慢又严肃地说道：“纳塔内尔，我心爱的纳塔内尔！把那愚蠢的……胡言乱语的……疯狂的无稽之谈扔进火里吧。”纳塔内尔这时却愤怒地跳了起来，一把推开克拉拉，喊道：“你这了无生趣的、该死的机器人！”他飞奔着离开了。深受伤害的克拉拉在痛苦中泪如泉涌，大声抽噎起来：“唉，看来他从未爱过我，因为他根本不理解我。”

这时洛塔尔走进凉亭，克拉拉向他诉说了发生的一切。洛塔尔全心全意地爱着自己的妹妹，她的每一句控诉都如火星一般烧进他心中；他对纳塔内尔的胡思乱想早已心怀不满，这份不满被那火星点燃了，终于形成了熊熊燃烧的愤怒。洛塔尔冲向纳塔内尔，严词指责他竟那样荒唐地对待自己心爱的妹妹。怒火中烧的纳塔内尔则同样用狠话回击。他们一个是耽于幻想的愚蠢傻瓜，另一个则是痛苦而平凡的普通人，两人的决斗在所难免。他们决定按当地的传统规矩，在第二天早晨以花剑为武器进行决斗。他们阴沉地、静悄悄地走来走去。克拉拉听说了这场激烈的争吵，也在黎明时分看见击剑师傅带来剑，便猜到将会发什么。在决斗场上，洛塔尔与纳塔内尔面色阴沉，默默脱去外套，眼中燃烧着嗜血好战的光芒，都想把对方击倒在地。这时克拉拉冲进花园，抽泣着大声喊道：“你们这两个可怕的疯子！你们与其互相攻击，倒不如把我击倒好了！倘若我的爱人谋杀了我的哥哥，或是我的哥哥谋杀了我的爱人，我又怎么能继续活在这世上！”

洛塔尔丢下了武器，垂眼沉默地看向地面。而爱情又在纳塔内尔的心中再度掀起撕裂般的痛楚，他想起自己那美好的少年时代，在那些快乐的日子从可爱的克拉拉那儿获得过怎样的爱意啊。谋杀的武器从他手中落下，他扑倒在克拉拉脚边：“你能原谅我吗，我唯一的、我心爱的克拉拉！……你能原谅我吗，我心爱的哥哥洛塔尔！”洛塔尔被朋友这份沉重的苦痛触动了，他们三人彼此宽恕，不禁潸然泪下、互相拥抱，发誓永远忠诚相爱、绝不分离。

纳塔内尔感到肩上那快要压垮他的重担已然卸下，他似乎已经成功地反抗了笼罩自己的黑暗力量，也彻底挽救了濒临毁灭的自己。他在爱人身边又度过了三天幸福时光，随后便返回G市。他还得在那儿待上一年，但等学成之后，他便能永远留在自己的故乡了。

在纳塔内尔的母亲面前，所有人都绝口不提有关科佩留斯的一切。他们知道，勾起对他的回忆势必会使她陷入惊恐，因为同纳塔内尔一样，她也认为丈夫的死应归罪于科佩留斯。

纳塔内尔返回了自己在G市的住所，却惊愕万分地见它着了火。整幢房子在大火中坍塌了，从堆砌的瓦砾上望去，只剩下隔火墙光秃秃地立着。房屋底层住着一名药剂师，大火毫无疑问是在他的实验室里爆发的，并迅速往楼上蔓延，把整幢房子都点燃了。尽管火势凶猛，纳塔内尔那些强壮勇敢的朋友仍冲进他楼上的房间，把书、手稿与各式仪器及时抢救了出来，又将这些东西都完好无损地转移到另外一幢房内。他们在那儿另寻了一间屋子，纳塔内尔之后便搬了进去。

纳塔内尔自然注意到，如今他正好住在斯帕兰扎尼教授的对面；当他发现自己透过窗子正好能看进奥林匹娅所在的房间时，也没特别惊讶。奥林匹娅一如既往孤零零地坐在那儿。他能清楚地看见她的身形，但那张面庞显得朦胧不清。久而久之，他终于发觉奥林匹娅总保持着同样的姿势，什么也不干，在桌旁一坐就是好几个小时，就像他之前在玻璃门外发现她时那样。但她显然正目不转睛地朝他凝望，而他也不得不承认自己从未见过谁出落得如此美丽。但他心中念着的仍是克拉拉，对生硬呆板的奥林匹娅没什么兴趣；偶尔他会透过窗帘草草地瞥一眼那貌美的雕塑，但也仅此而已。

房门发出一声轻响时，他正给克拉拉写着信。门随即打开了，他发出一声惊呼——科波拉从门后露出那张可恶的脸，正往里看。纳塔内尔内心深处感到一阵地动山摇。但他又想到，斯帕兰扎尼曾告诉他说自己与科波拉是同乡，而且他也对爱人庄重宣誓过，不会再相信沙人科佩留斯，于是他又为自己害臊了，觉得自己简直像个害怕鬼怪的孩子一样。他竭力镇定下来，并尽量平静放松地说道：“我不买天气瓶，亲爱的朋友！您走吧！”

这时，科波拉却整个人踏入房间，宽大的嘴咧出一个丑陋的笑容，一双小眼睛在长长的灰色睫毛下闪烁，目光刺人。他声音沙哑地说：“哎，不要天气瓶，不要天气瓶！……那还有好看的眼镜，好看的眼镜！”纳塔内尔听后惊恐地叫起来：“你这疯子，你怎么还卖眼睛？……眼睛……眼睛？”但与此同时，科波拉把他所有的天气瓶推到一旁，在宽大的上衣口袋中翻来找出，掏出长柄眼镜与一般样式的眼镜，放在桌上。“喏，喏……这，这架在鼻子上的，这就是我卖的眼镜！好看的眼镜！”说着，他不断地掏出眼镜来，直到它们堆满整个桌面，在桌上奇异地闪闪发光。千百双眼睛眨巴着，拼命地闪烁着，凝望着纳塔内尔。他无法把目光从桌面上移开，而科波拉仍一刻不停地往桌上堆眼镜。无数道冒着火光的目光交织在一起，显得愈加疯狂，它们血红的视线直穿纳塔内尔的胸膛。剧烈的惊恐席卷了他，他叫喊起来：“停下！停下，可怕的家伙！”

他一把抓住科波拉的胳膊，而科波拉依然不停地掏着口袋，往桌上堆眼镜，压根不管整个桌面早已被覆满了。科波拉轻笑起来，嘶哑地说道：“哎呀！您啥也不要……那这儿还有好看的望远镜。”他把所有眼镜拢成一摞收回包内，又从大衣的边袋里掏出一堆大大小小的望远镜。眼镜被收走后，纳塔内尔完全平静了下来。他想起克拉拉，意识到恐怖的鬼魂只会在他的心中出现；而科波拉想必是个非常诚实的机械师和光学器具制造者，不可能是那该死的科佩留斯或鬼魂。此外，科波拉放在桌上的望远镜也没什么特别的，不似眼镜那般诡异，而且总体上来说，它们制作得相当精良。

为了让一切回到正轨，纳塔内尔真的决定向科波拉买些什么了。他拿起一副打造得十分干净透明的口袋望远镜放到眼前，试着望向窗外。他这一生中还从未见过这样的镜片，它能使一切都清晰纯粹地近距离呈现于眼前。不经意间，他望进了斯帕兰扎尼的房间：奥林匹娅坐在那儿，像往常一样挨着小桌，胳膊搭在桌面上，双手交叠。直到现在，纳塔内尔才终于看清她那张美得惊人的脸庞，只是那双眼睛有些古怪，显得呆滞又死气沉沉。奥林匹娅的模样在镜片后变得越来越清晰，与此同时，她的眼中似乎也升起了湿漉漉的月光，就好像她的视觉在这一刻被点燃了似的，那如火的目光逐渐绽放出生机。纳塔内尔完全着了迷，他倚在窗旁，身体越来越往前倾，端详着美若天仙的奥林匹娅。一阵咳嗽声与窸窣声把他从梦中惊醒，科波拉站在他身后，说：“三……三个杜卡特 [13]。”

纳塔内尔把他忘得一干二净，他迅速付了钱。“对吧？……好看的镜片，好看的镜片！”科波拉用他那讨厌而嘶哑的声音问道，露出一个阴森的微笑。“对，对，对！”纳塔内尔不耐烦地回答道。“再见 [14]，亲爱的朋友！”科波拉说着，又古怪地斜乜了纳塔内尔几眼，这才离开房间。纳塔内尔听见他大笑着走下楼梯。“好吧，”他说，“这

家伙嘲笑我，因为我为这副小望远镜付了太高的价钱，太高的价钱！”他这么低声说着，心中蓦地感到一阵恐惧袭来，房间里响起一声沉重的、死一般的叹息，他的呼吸凝滞了——他发觉，那声叹息是他自己发出的。“克拉拉，”他自言自语道，“她把我视作一个乏味无聊的、见了鬼的人，或许她是对的。但这太滑稽了——不，也许比滑稽更甚。我为那望远镜向科波拉支付了太高的价钱，这愚蠢的想法竟会使我这么害怕，而我全然不知为何。”

这会儿他坐下来，想写完给克拉拉的信，但投向窗外的一瞥又让他坚信奥林匹娅仍坐在那儿。就在那一瞬间，他不能自己地一跃而起，抓起科波拉的望远镜望向奥林匹娅。他无法从她那诱人的外表上移开视线，直到他的朋友兼兄弟齐格蒙德叫他去斯帕兰扎尼教授那儿开会。

之后的两天里，那间令人窒息的房间都窗帘紧闭。尽管他几乎从未离开过窗边，而且一刻不停地透过科波拉的望远镜瞧着，却没怎么见到房间里的奥林匹娅。到第三天，连整扇窗户都被遮挡了。如火的爱欲与渴望驱使他绝望地冲出大门——奥林匹娅的模样在他眼前游荡，一会儿出现在半空中，一会儿又从灌木丛里走出来，或伫立于明亮的溪流，用闪闪熠熠的大眼睛瞧着他。

克拉拉在他心中被抹得一千二净，除了奥林匹娅，他什么都不去想了。他带着哭腔高声控诉道：“唉！你，我高高在上的、美若天仙的爱人。既然你向我显身，为何又转瞬即逝，留我一人度过这幽暗绝望的漫漫长夜？”

在他打算回到自己的住处时，斯帕兰扎尼家中的嘈杂吸引了他的注意。所有的门都敞着，各式各样的器具被搬进屋内；一楼的窗户也开着，女佣们举着鸡毛掸子忙里忙外，造桌的木匠与糊裱匠们在室内弄出叮铃咣啷的敲击声。纳塔内尔惊讶地伫立在街上。这时齐格蒙德笑着朝他走来，问他：“哎，你怎么看我们的老斯帕兰扎尼？”

纳塔内尔断言他没有任何可说的，因为他对教授几乎一无所知。只是这座静谧阴森的房子里竟传来如此巨大的动静，进行着这样不同寻常的活动，着实令他吃惊。齐格蒙德于是告诉他，斯帕兰扎尼计划于明日举行一场盛宴，包括音乐会与舞会，几乎半个大学的人都受到了邀请。大家都在传，斯帕兰扎尼那平时不敢让任何人见到的女儿奥林匹娅，也会在舞会上首次亮相。

当晚许多马车驶至教授宅邸门前，灯光把精心布置过的大厅照得亮堂堂的。纳塔内尔设法弄到一封邀请函，揣着一颗怦怦直跳的心准时出席了教授的晚会。受邀者人数众多，都打扮得光鲜靓丽。奥林匹娅也登场了，她衣着华丽且十分有品位，那漂亮的面容与身段都令人

惊叹。她的背脊弯曲得有些不同寻常，苗条的身形如蜂一般，看着像是束腰的结果。她的姿势与步伐有些僵硬，像是精心设计好的，这让一些人感到很不舒服，但大家只把这归咎于在人前抛头露面所带来的压力。

音乐会开始了。奥林匹娅娴熟地弹起钢琴，并通过一曲咏叹调展示了自己高超的唱功。她歌声嘹亮，几乎如敲击玻璃一般尖锐。纳塔内尔听得心醉神迷。他站在最后一排，在炫目的烛光下没法完全看清奥林匹娅的面容。于是他悄悄把科波拉的望远镜举到眼前，透过它望向美丽的奥林匹娅。哎！——他发现她正多么渴望地盯着他。在爱的目光中，她的歌声变得愈发高昂，燃烧着涌入他的内心。在纳塔内尔听来，那巧妙的颤音一如天国传来的欢呼，是爱情使得这声音的主人容光焕发；终于，拖长的颤音在华彩乐段过后，尖锐地穿透并震颤了整个大厅。纳塔内尔就像被一双火热的手臂紧紧抓住了，他既痛苦又陶醉，不能自己地放声大喊起来：“奥林匹娅！”所有人都看向他，其中一些笑了笑。那位管风琴演奏者却摆出比之前更难看的脸色，只说道：“行吧，行吧！”

音乐会结束了，舞会随之开始。“同她跳舞！同她！”这便是纳塔内尔唯一的目的，是他的追求与企盼。但究竟如何才能鼓起勇气，去邀请这场盛宴的女王？然而——就连他自己也不知道这是如何发生的——在舞曲开始的时候，他已站在奥林匹娅身旁，而她尚未受到邀请。他握住她的手，甚至连一句结巴的话也吐不出来。奥林匹娅的手是冰凉的，这阴森的、死一般的冰冷使他浑身颤抖。他凝望奥林匹娅的双眼，它们朝他闪烁着，满含爱意与渴望。就在那一瞬间，他感到那冰凉的手上出现了脉搏的震颤，生命的血液也开始温暖地流动。

纳塔内尔心中的爱欲滚烫地涌了上来，他环抱住美丽的奥林匹娅，与她穿过人群。他本以为自己跳舞时很擅长踩节拍，但奥林匹娅那规律准确的舞步总使他步伐出错，然后他才意识到自己是多么不会踩拍子。他再也不想同别的女人跳舞了；而要是有人靠近奥林匹娅并向她邀舞，他就会想立刻杀了那人。然而这样的情况只发生了两次。他惊讶地发现奥林匹娅在每场舞之间都坐着，他便不厌其烦地一次又一次把她拉起来。若非纳塔内尔眼里只有奥林匹娅，那么各式各样灾难般的口角与争吵都将在所难免，因为年轻人中响起了此起彼伏的窃笑，它们被刻意压低了，但显然针对美丽的奥林匹娅；他们全都好奇地盯着她，却没人知道究竟为什么。

舞蹈与大量的美酒使纳塔内尔心绪高涨，让他克服了平时的腼腆。他坐在奥林匹娅身旁，紧握着她的手。爱情激发了他的表达欲，他热情似火地滔滔不绝，虽然无论他自己还是奥林匹娅都不明白他究竟在说些什么。不过奥林匹娅可能听懂了，因为她坚定地望进他的眼

中，一遍又一遍地轻叹：“唉，唉，唉！”纳塔内尔于是说道：“噢，美丽的、天使般的女子！你便是爱之光芒，闪耀在那应许的彼岸……你的心深不可测，如明镜映出我的整个倒影。”他还继续说了些其他诸如此类的话，但奥林匹娅只一味叹道：“唉，唉！”

斯帕兰扎尼教授在此间曾几次经过这对幸福的人，并奇怪地微笑起来，显得很满意。尽管纳塔内尔的精神还徜徉在另一个世界，但他仍一下子就发现斯帕兰扎尼的屋里明显变得昏暗了；他朝四周望去，惊恐地发现大厅已然变得空空荡荡，剩下的最后两盏灯也逐渐暗淡，即将熄灭。音乐与舞蹈早已结束了。

“分别，分别。”绝望中他发疯似的叫了起来，亲吻起奥林匹娅的手，又凑向她的唇，用他火热的嘴唇去吻她那冰冷的嘴！就像他碰到她那冷冰冰的手时那样，心中一阵恐怖攫住了他，他猛地想起传说中的亡灵新娘。但他仍紧紧拥着奥林匹娅。而在亲吻中，她的嘴唇似乎也像活过来一般变得温暖了。

斯帕兰扎尼教授缓缓穿过空荡荡的大厅。他的脚步声在厅中空洞地回响，跳动的光影环绕着他，使他看上去就像一个阴森可怖的幽灵。

“你爱我吗……你爱我吗，奥林匹娅？就一句话！——你爱我吗？”纳塔内尔悄声问道。但奥林匹娅却站起身来，叹息道：“唉，唉！”

“是的，你，我美丽动人的最爱，”纳塔内尔说道，“你在我的心间升起，如星辰那般璀璨，永远驱散了我心中的阴霾！”

“唉，唉！”奥林匹娅一边往前走去，一边答道。纳塔内尔跟着她，一起来到了教授面前。“您与我的女儿聊得尤其火热，”教授笑着说，“嗯，嗯，亲爱的纳塔内尔先生，既然您乐意接近这笨丫头，那么我们非常欢迎您前来拜访。”

晚宴结束后，纳塔内尔便离开了他心中那光芒四射的天堂。之后的几天里，斯帕兰扎尼举办的宴会一直是人们的谈资。尽管教授把一切都安排得井井有条，但聪明狡黠的家伙们仍会挑出各种各样奇怪又不得体的事情来说。首先浮现在人们脑海中的，便是那死一般僵硬又沉默的奥林匹娅。尽管她面容姣好，但人们仍说她完全是个呆头呆脑的傻小姐，并想探明斯帕兰扎尼隐藏她这么久的原因。纳塔内尔也听见了这些流言，心中不无怒火，却保持沉默。他心想，就算向这群家伙证明愚蠢的其实是他们自己，是他们认识不到奥林匹娅的美好与深沉，又有什么用呢？

有一天，齐格蒙德对他说：“帮我个忙，兄弟。请告诉我，你这个腼腆害羞的小子怎么可能会爱上那座蜡像，那个木偶娃娃？”纳塔

内尔险些暴跳如雷，但他很快冷静下来，回答道：“你倒是告诉我，齐格蒙德，平时你头脑灵光、目光明晰，能捕捉到一切美的事物，为何竟会忽视奥林匹娅那迷人的魅力？不过我也得因此感谢命运没有让你成为我的情敌，否则我们二人之一必将倒在血泊中。”

齐格蒙德察觉到自己朋友的心理状况，便迅速让步了，表示他并非要针对纳塔内尔的恋爱对象，然后又补充道：“但这确实奇怪。我们许多人对奥林匹娅的评价几乎都是一样的，在我们看来——请别对我生气，兄弟！——她僵硬得有些古怪，看着像没有灵魂。她的身材平平无奇，她的脸也一样，这是真的！要是她的目光并非那么缺乏生机——或者说像个盲人——的话，她可能还算得上漂亮。她的步伐奇怪得仿佛是设计好的，她的一举一动都让她像个上了发条的齿轮机。她的演奏与演唱都如机器般节奏准确，却显得毫无灵魂，令人不适。她跳舞时亦是如此。我们觉得这个奥林匹娅非常吓人，也不想与她扯上关系；在我们看来，她只是表现得像个活物而已，她和真正的活物间一定有什么特别的联系。”

齐格蒙德的一席话使纳塔内尔十分不悦。他深陷在恶劣的情绪中，但终于还是克制住它，十分严肃地回应道：“对你们这些冷漠又乏味的人来说，奥林匹娅或许是可怕的。充满诗意的性情中人只会在同类面前展现自我，她妩媚的目光只会投在我身上，照亮我的身心。只有在奥林匹娅的爱里我才能找回自己。你们不喜欢她，是因为她不像其他庸人一样，会同你们无聊地瞎扯淡。确实，她并不健谈，但她的寥寥数语都来自那充满爱的内心世界，它们如同神秘的象形文字，象征了对精神生活的超验认识。不过你们对这一切毫无概念，我的话对你们而言也没有意义。”

“上帝保佑你，我的兄弟，”齐格蒙德轻轻地，几乎痛苦地说道，“我觉得你走上了邪路。你可以相信我，如果……不，我不想再说下去了！”

纳塔内尔突然感到，那冷漠且乏味的齐格蒙德对自己其实非常真诚，因此他也真挚地握住了齐格蒙德朝他伸来的手。

纳塔内尔完全忘记了世上还有克拉拉，这个他曾经深爱的人；母亲和洛塔尔也都在他的记忆中消失了，他只为奥林匹娅活着。他每天花好几个小时坐在她身旁，幻想着他的爱情，幻想着他们间炽热鲜活的共情与精神上的契合，而奥林匹娅则聚精会神地听着这一切。纳塔内尔从自己的桌肚深处找出他写过的所有东西：诗歌，长篇与短篇小说，虚构的幻想作品。他又新创作了各式各样玄幻空洞的十四行诗、八行诗与抒情诗，他的作品数量日益增加。他会花上好几个小时，不知疲倦地为奥林匹娅一首接一首地朗读。他还不曾拥有过一位如此美好的聆听者，她不会在倾听的时候做针线活儿，也不会望向窗外；她

不喂鸟，不同袖珍犬或可爱的猫咪玩耍；她不摆弄碎纸片或手里的其他任何东西；她也不会刻意轻咳，来防止自己打呵欠。简而言之，几小时里她都眼神呆滞，目不转睛地看进爱人的双眼，而且一动不动；她的目光也变得越来越炽热，越来越鲜活。只有当纳塔内尔终于站起身来，亲吻她的手或嘴唇时，她才说：“唉，唉！”接着却道：“晚安，我的爱人！”

“噢，你这美丽的，深沉的人儿！”纳塔内尔在他的房间中喊道，“只有你，只有你一个人才能完全理解我！”只要一想到他与奥林匹娅之间存在怎样奇妙的共鸣，而这份共鸣又日益显著时，他的身躯便因心中的狂喜而震颤。在他眼里，奥林匹娅能对他的小说与诗歌做出真正深刻的评价，就好像她说出了他的心声一般。想必事实也确实如此，因为除了上文中提过的那些话外，奥林匹娅连一句别的话也没说过。在纳塔内尔还理智清醒的时候——比如说，早晨刚醒来时——他自己也会想起，奥林匹娅整个人都那么被动又沉默寡言，但他却这么说：“话语究竟算得了什么——话语！她那双美丽的眼睛和她的目光，能比任何语言表达出更多的内容。难道一个天使会屈尊挤进凡人那逼仄的圈子，去迎合可悲的世俗需求？”

斯帕兰扎尼教授似乎对纳塔内尔与自己女儿的关系相当满意，他毫不含糊地向纳塔内尔表达了自己的好意。在纳塔内尔终于鼓起勇气，委婉地暗示他想与奥林匹娅结合时，斯帕兰扎尼的整张脸布满了笑容，并表示他完全尊重女儿的选择。

这些话给了纳塔内尔勇气，心中燃烧的渴望也促使他决定第二天就立刻去看望奥林匹娅。之前她用妩媚且满含爱意的眼神倾诉了许久内心的情愫，而他却要敦促她直截了当、清楚明白地把它们都说出口，并且宣布她愿永远属于他。他找起了母亲在分别时给他的戒指，打算送给奥林匹娅，它象征着他的献身，也象征他们那萌芽抽条、灿烂绽放的生活。他收到了克拉拉与洛塔尔写来的信件，却漠不关心地将它们搁在一旁。

他找到了那枚戒指，把它揣在身上后就往奥林匹娅那儿奔去。还在楼梯和走廊上时，他就听见一阵奇怪的咆哮，它似乎是从斯帕兰扎尼的研究室中传来的。有谁跺脚——链条嘎啦作响——一声碰撞——什么东西撞上了门，其间夹杂着咒骂：放开我，放开我……你这卑鄙的家伙，可耻的东西！……为它费尽心血？哈哈哈哈！我们可不是这样约定的！是我，是我造了眼睛，我造了那齿轮机……让你的齿轮机见鬼去吧，制表匠的愚蠢走狗……滚开，撒旦！……停下……人偶的发条……见鬼的浑蛋！……停下……滚开……放开我！

那是斯帕兰扎尼和可怕的科佩留斯的声音，他们的吼叫声嘈杂而此起彼伏。纳塔内尔在不可名状的恐惧中冲进房间。教授紧紧抓着一

个女人身形的人偶的肩膀，意大利人科波拉则抓着她的脚，两人把她拉过来扯过去，在盛怒中争夺她。纳塔内尔认出了奥林匹娅，深深的惊恐使他猛地向后倒去。他的怒火疯狂地燃烧起来，盛怒中他想从那两个暴徒手中夺回自己的爱人。然而就在下一刻，科波拉用上九牛二虎之力，把人偶从教授的手中扭出来，并用它给了教授狠狠一记重击。教授因此向后撞上了桌子，摇摇晃晃，最后倒下了。桌上的梨状瓶、曲颈瓶等瓶子与玻璃圆柱体都摔下来，碎成了千万片。这时，科波拉把那人偶扛在肩上，在骇人的尖笑中猛冲下楼梯。人偶丑陋的双脚耷拉下来，硬邦邦地磕在一级级台阶上，发出恼人的声响。

纳塔内尔僵在原地。他看得清清楚楚——奥林匹娅死一样惨白的脸上没有眼睛，只有两个黢黑的窟窿。她是个没有生命的人偶。斯帕兰扎尼在地上打着滚，玻璃碴割伤了他的脑袋、胸膛与胳膊，血液像泉水那般汨汨涌出。他鼓足力气喊起来：“追他，追他！你愣着干什么？科佩留斯，科佩留斯，他抢走了我最好的机器人！我造了它二十年，我为它费尽心血……这个齿轮机……能说话，也能行走……我的……眼睛，被偷走了眼睛！该死的，该诅咒的家伙……追上他，把奥林匹娅还给我……她的眼睛就在那儿！”

这时，纳塔内尔见一对眼睛正躺在地板上，血淋淋地朝他凝望。斯帕兰扎尼伸出那只无恙的手抓走眼睛，朝纳塔内尔掷去。眼睛砸中他的胸膛。那一瞬间，疯癫伸出炽热的爪子攫住了他，把他的身心、理智与情感统统撕了个粉碎：“嚯！嚯！嚯！火轮——火轮！转起来，火轮——好玩儿，好玩儿！木偶娃娃，嚯，漂亮的木偶！木偶娃娃，转起来！”

他嚷嚷着扑倒在教授身上，一把掐住他的咽喉，差点儿把教授掐死。然而喧闹声引来了很多人，他们冲进屋子，扯开暴怒的纳塔内尔，救出教授并立即给他包扎伤口。就连身强体壮的齐格蒙德也无法制服这癫狂的疯子。纳塔内尔用恐怖的声音不断叫喊着：“木偶娃娃，转起来！”并用攥紧的拳头朝周围的人砸去。最后，好几个人一起上阵把他按在地上绑起来，才总算制服了他。他的吼叫渐渐减弱，变成野兽般骇人的咆哮。就在这发狂的咆哮声中，他被送入了疯人院。

不幸的纳塔内尔后来又遭遇了什么？在我接着为你讲述之前，好意的读者，我可以先放心地告诉你——要是你有些同情那技艺精湛的机械师与机器人制造家斯帕兰扎尼的话——他的伤都痊愈了。后来他不得不离开大学，因为纳塔内尔的事件引起了轰动。人们普遍认为斯帕兰扎尼触犯了法律，因为他把一个木偶人带入理智的社交圈中，并让它装作真人，这是不能容忍的欺骗行径。法学者甚至称之为场精妙的骗局，并要加以严厉的惩罚，因为它愚弄公众，而且狡猾地成功

了，几乎没有人（除了一些非常机敏的大学生）察觉到真相。

所有人都做起了事后诸葛亮，想通过各式各样的事实来证明自己在当时就感到可疑，然而这些所谓的“证据”却并不高明。比如受邀参加宴会的某个有修养的人就说：奥林匹娅打喷嚏比打呵欠更频繁，而这违反常理——有任何人会因此感到可疑吗？这位有修养的人认为，这驱动装置实际上在自动上发条，因此它会发出明显的咔啦声，诸如此类的。而文学与修辞学教授则取了一撮鼻烟，啪的一声合上烟盒，清了清嗓子，然后庄重地宣布：“尊敬的先生们、女士们！你们难道未曾发觉，问题的症结究竟在哪里？这一切是一个比喻——一个贯穿始终的隐喻！你们明白我的意思就够了，无须多余的解释 [15]！”

但许多尊敬的先生并不满足于此。机器人的故事烙在了他们的灵魂深处，对人偶的惧怕与不信任在公众间悄然而生。仅仅为了证明自己所爱的并非人偶，许多人便要求自己的爱人不着调地唱歌或毫无节奏地跳舞，要求她们在倾听时做针线活儿，或与狮子狗玩耍之类的。最重要的是，她们不能只是倾听，而且说出的话中要包含真正的思想感情。一些恋爱关系因此而变得更加亲密动人，而另一些情侣却因此渐渐疏远，他们都这么说：“这世上，很难有谁值得信任。”聚会中人们打呵欠的频率高到难以置信，但却绝不打喷嚏，以免遭人怀疑。而正如之前所说，为了躲避用机器人欺骗大众而招致的刑事调查，斯帕兰扎尼溜走了，科波拉也消失得无影无踪。

纳塔内尔仿佛从沉重可怕的梦境中醒来，他抬起眼皮，感到难以名状的幸福宛若暖流一般，柔和美妙地流经他的全身。他在父亲的那座房子里，正躺在自己房间里的床上，克拉拉朝他俯下身来，洛塔尔与他的母亲则站在不远处。

“终于，终于！哦我亲爱的纳塔内尔，你的重病终于痊愈了！你又属于我了！”克拉拉从灵魂深处发出一声感叹，紧紧抱住纳塔内尔。纳塔内尔则在痛苦与惊惧中泪如泉涌，落下晶莹滚烫的泪水，沉沉喟叹一声：“我的……我的克拉拉！”齐格蒙德这时走了进来，他在这场大难中仍忠诚地对自己的朋友不离不弃。纳塔内尔对他伸出手，道：“我忠实的兄弟，你没有丢下我！”

疯癫的症状已然无迹可寻了，在母亲、爱人与朋友的照料下，纳塔内尔很快强壮了起来。幸福重新回到了这个家庭中，因为一位年迈而贫穷的叔叔过世了，人们原本对他一无所求，却没料到他留下了颇丰的遗产，还有一座小农场，坐落于离城不远的一处宜人地带。他们——母亲，纳塔内尔与他的克拉拉，还有洛塔尔——想搬去那里，纳塔内尔也打算与克拉拉结婚。

纳塔内尔变得像从前那样温柔纯真的了，并终于清楚地认识到克拉

拉的纯洁可爱与美丽动人。任何人都不曾使他想起过去的一丝一毫，只是在齐格蒙德与他道别时，纳塔内尔说：“上帝保佑你，我的兄弟！我曾步入绝境，但有天使及时带领我走上光明的小道！唉，她便是我的克拉拉！”齐格蒙德不让他接着说下去了，因为他担心纳塔内尔那沉痛的回忆又会强烈而清晰地浮现。

这四个幸福的人搬往农场的日子到了。中午时分他们走在城里的街道上，购置了一些物品。市政府所在的高塔在集市上投下了一片阴影。“哎！”克拉拉提议说，“我们不如上塔楼去，看看远处的山峦！”说到做到，纳塔内尔与克拉拉上了塔，母亲与女佣回家去了，而洛塔尔不愿爬那么多楼梯，便在塔下等候。这对恋人挽着彼此的胳膊，来到塔顶的回廊，俯瞰笼着薄雾的森林，眺望远方黛色的山峦——它们耸立着，如同一座大都会。

“你看见那一片昏暗又奇怪的小树林了吗？”克拉拉问道，“它们简直像在朝着我们缓步行进。”纳塔内尔闻言后机械地翻起了外套兜，他找到科波拉的望远镜，透过它朝一旁看去——克拉拉正站在镜前！顿时他浑身的血管都痉挛般抽搐起来，他盯着克拉拉，面色死一般惨白。但很快，一阵滚烫的热流汹涌地流经他转动的眼珠，他眼里射出火星，像被追猎的野兽那样骇人地狂吼起来。他猛地一跃，发出令人毛骨悚然的尖声大笑，一边吼道“木偶娃娃转起来……木偶娃娃转起来”，一边暴力地抓住克拉拉，要把她抛下塔去。但克拉拉在绝望与死的恐惧中紧紧抓住了塔沿。

洛塔尔听见了疯子的咆哮声，也听见了克拉拉惊恐的尖叫，不祥的预感在他心中油然而生。他冲上塔去，通往第二道楼梯的门却紧锁着。克拉拉痛苦的尖叫声更加响亮了。盛怒与恐惧使洛塔尔疯了一样朝门撞去，这才终于弹开。而克拉拉的声音则变得越来越虚弱：“帮帮我……救命……救命……”最后渐渐消散在空气中。

“她死了——她被那疯子谋杀了！”洛塔尔大喊起来。通往回廊的门也是紧锁的。绝望使他爆发出洪荒之力，把门从枢轴上撞了下来。上帝啊！克拉拉被那发了疯的纳塔内尔揪着，悬在回廊外的半空，只剩一只手还紧紧抓着铁栏杆。洛塔尔闪电般地抓住自己的妹妹，把她拉回来，紧接着用握紧的拳头狠狠揍向疯子的脸。纳塔内尔踉跄着倒退几步，松开自己的猎物。

洛塔尔抱着昏迷的妹妹冲下塔。她得救了。而这时纳塔内尔却爬上塔沿，高高跃起至半空中，大喊道：“火轮转起来……火轮转起来！”

这疯狂的喊声使人们纷纷奔至塔下，身材高大的科佩留斯在他们中格外显眼——他也来到了这座城市，正好在往集市这边走。人们想

冲上塔去制服那疯子，这时科佩留斯却笑道：“哈，哈！等着吧，他马上就会自己下来的。”说罢，便像其他人一样抬起头来望向塔顶。

纳塔内尔突然浑身僵住了。他站在原地，弯下腰去，发现了科佩留斯。随即他尖声吼道：“哈！好看的眼睛……好看的眼睛！”说着，他朝塔下纵身一跃。

纳塔内尔摔碎了脑袋，躺在石砌路面上。在那之后，科佩留斯便消失在了混乱的人群中。

许多年过后，或许人们能在一个遥远的地方瞧见克拉拉，她与一个快乐的男人手挽着手，坐在一座漂亮的小房子门前，两个活泼的小男孩儿在他们面前玩耍。可以得出结论，克拉拉还是找到了那份安宁的家庭幸福，这也符合她那开朗且热爱生活的心性；而这份幸福，是那内心撕裂的纳塔内尔绝无可能给予她的。

[7] 拉扎罗·斯帕兰扎尼（1729-1799），意大利生物学家、生理学家。

[8] 乔多维茨基（1726-1801），波兰人，后加入德国籍，18世纪著名画家。

[9] 卡廖斯特罗（1743-1795），意大利神秘学家、炼金术士、冒险家。

[10] 抹大拉的玛利亚，《圣经·新约》中耶稣的女追随者。

[11] 巴托尼（Pompeo Girolamo Batoni，1708-1787），意大利著名画家，尤善肖像画。曾绘有《抹大拉的玛利亚》，画中的女性有着一头美丽的金色长发。

[12] 雷斯达尔（Jakob van Ruisdael，1629-1682），荷兰著名画家，尤善风景画，是荷兰古典主义风景画的先驱之一。

[13] 杜卡特，旧时神圣罗马帝国的货币。

[14] 原文为法语。

[15] 原句为拉丁文。

‘ “Strange man,
how can you
have eyes for
sale? Eyes?
Eyes?” ’

NathaNiel to lothar

You must surely all be worried sick not to have had word from me in such a long, long time. Mother is, no doubt, upset with me, and Clara may well believe that I am liv-ing the high life here, and have forgotten the face of my beloved angel so deeply and indelibly graven in my heart and mind. But it isn't so; every day of the week and every hour of the day I think of you all and my lovely little Clärchen's friendly figure floats past me in my dreams, smiling so sweetly at me with her bright eyes as she is wont to do whenever I walk in. Oh how could I put pen to paper in this wretched state that till now distracted my every thought! Something awful came into my life! Dark premonitions of a terrible impending fate cast their pall over me like the shadows of black storm clouds impermeable to any friendly rays of sunlight. Let me tell you then what happened to me. I have to tell you, that much I know; but just to think about it makes it spill out like a mad burst of laughter. Oh my dearest Lothar! How should I begin to make you fathom that what befell me just a few days ago could have such a devastating effect on my life! If only you were here, you could see for your-self; but by now you must surely take me for a crack-brained spook seer. In short, the terrible thing that happened to me, whose fatal impression I have tried in vain to erase from my consciousness, consists in nothing else than that a few days ago, namely on 30 October, at twelve noon, a barometer salesman stepped into my room and offered me his wares. I bought nothing and threat-ened to throw him down the stairs, whereupon, however, he promptly left of his own accord.

You suspect, I imagine, that only the most extraordin-ary life-altering relations could have lent this occurrence such signi ficance, indeed that it was the very person of that miserable pedlar that surely had such a poisonous effect on me. And that is just what happened. I will pull myself together, with all the strength of my will-power, quietly and patiently to recount the circumstances of my early youth as plainly and precisely as possible so that you, with your alert mind, may take everything in and paint as clear as possible a picture of my condition. But even now as I begin, I can

hear you laughing and Clara remarking: 'What childish notions!' Laugh, if you like, have yourself a right hearty laugh at my expense! Be my guest! But God in heaven, my hair stands on end, and it seems to me as if I were begging you in my mad desperation to make me sound ridiculous, like Franz Moor did Daniel. But it's time to begin!

Except for at lunchtime, we, my siblings and myself, saw little of my father during the day. He must have been very busy. After supper, which, according to long-standing custom, was served at seven o'clock, all of us, my mother and us, gathered in my father's study, and each took our place at a round table. Father smoked and drank a tall glass of beer. Often he told us many wondrous tales and would get so involved in the telling that his pipe went out, and it was my duty to fetch a burning wad of paper for him to relight it, a task that gave me the greatest pleasure. But many times he would just give us picture books to look at and sit there in silence propped up in his easy chair, blowing dense clouds of smoke, so that we all hovered as though in a fog. On such evenings mother was very sad and no sooner did the clock strike nine than she would declare: 'Now children, to bed! To bed with you! The Sandman's coming, I can sense it!' And every time she said it I really did hear the sound of slow, heavy steps lumbering up the stairs; it must have been the Sandman.

One time the muffled thump and lumbering step sounded particularly grim to me; so I asked mother as she led us away: 'Mama, who is that evil Sandman who always chases us away from Papa? What does he look like?'

'There is no Sandman, my dear child,' replied mother; 'when I say the Sandman is coming, all it means is that you children are sleepy and can't keep your eyes open, as if somebody had scattered sand in them.'

Mother's answer didn't satisfy me - indeed the notion took firm hold of my childish imagination that mother only denied the existence of the Sandman so that we wouldn't be afraid, didn't I hear him with my own two ears coming up the steps? With a burning desire to know more about this Sandman and his connection to us children, I finally asked the old woman who took care of my youngest sister: 'What kind of man is that, the

Sandman?'

'Oh, Thanelchen,' she replied, 'don't you know yet? He's a bad man who comes to visit children when they won't go to sleep and fiings a handful of sand in their eyes, so they scratch themselves bloody, then he fiings them in his bag and carries them off to the half-moon to feed his children; they sit up there in their nest and have crooked beaks like owls with which they pick out the eyes of naughty human brats.'

So in my mind I painted a grim picture of that awful Sandman; as soon as I heard that lumbering step on the stairs I trembled with fear and horror. My mother could get nothing out of me but that one word stuttered amidst tears: 'Sandman! Sandman!' Then I bounded up to my bedroom and all night long I was tormented by the ter-rible presence of the Sandman.

By the time I was old enough to know that all that business about the Sandman and his children's nest on the half-moon the nanny had told me couldn't possibly be true, the Sandman had become entrenched in my mind as a hair-raising spook, and I was gripped by dread and terror when I heard him not only come clambering up the steps but tearing open the door to my father's study and barging in. Sometimes he stayed away a long time, but then he came more often, night after night. This went on for years, but I was never able to get used to that ghastly spook, nor did the grisly image of the Sandman ever fade from my mind.

I got ever more worked up about his dealings with my father; while some unbridgeable reserve kept me from asking him about it, the desire grew stronger from year to year to find out the secret for myself - to see the fabled Sandman with my own two eyes. The Sandman lured me down the path of wonder, the craving for adventure, that longing that had already taken seed in my childish mind. I liked nothing better than to hear or read fear-tingling tales of goblins, witches, sprites and suchlike; but the Sandman remained at the head of my list of the grisly figures I scribbled with chalk and charcoal on table tops, cupboards and walls.

When I turned ten, my mother moved me from the nursery into a little room off the corridor not far from my father's study. We still had to make ourselves scarce at the strike of nine, when that unseen presence was heard in the house. From my little room I distinctly

heard him enter my father's chamber and soon thereafter it seemed to me as if the entire house filled with a strange-smelling vapour. My ever-mounting curiosity stirred my pluck to try and find a way to make the Sand-man's acquaintance. Many times I slipped out into the corridor as soon as mother had passed, but I was too late, since by the time I reached the spot from which I might catch a glimpse of him, the Sandman had invariably already entered. Finally, driven by an overpowering urge, I decided to hide in my father's room and await the Sand-man's appearance.

One evening, by my father's silence and my mother's sadness I surmised that the Sandman was coming; and so, pretending to be very tired, I excused myself before nine o'clock and hid in a nook beside my father's door. The front door creaked, the slow, heavy thud of steps advanced through the vestibule towards the stairs. Mother hastened by me with my brothers and sisters. Quietly then I opened my father's door. He was seated in silence, as usual, with his back to the door; he did not notice me slip in behind the curtain drawn over a closet where he hung his clothes.

Closer, ever closer came the thud of the steps; there was a curious cough and a scraping and a grumbling outside. My heart beat double-time in terror and expectation. Right there at the door came a powerful kick, a hefty blow on the latch, the door sprung open with a crash! Gathering all my pluck, I peeked out with great trepidation. The Sandman was standing there in the middle of the room in front of my father, the bright glow of the lamps lighting up his face. So the Sandman, the terrible Sandman, was the old barrister Coppelius who sometimes dined with us for lunch.

But the most hideous figure could not have instilled a deeper sense of horror in me than this Coppelius. Imagine a big, broad-shouldered man with a misshapen clumpish head, an ochre-coloured face and grey, bushy eyebrows, beneath which a pair of piercing, greenish cat's eyes peered forth, a big nose bent down over the upper lip. His crooked mouth often twisted into a crafty snigger, at which dark red spots appeared on his cheeks and a curious hissing tone issued from between his clenched teeth.

Coppelius always dressed in an old-fashioned ash-grey coat, a waistcoat and pants of the same colour, with black socks and shoes affixed with tiny buckles. His minuscule toupee hardly covered his

skull, his ear-locks hung out over his big red ears and a big, half-hidden tuft of hair poked out from the scruff of his neck so as to reveal the silver clasp of his collar.

His entire appearance was altogether repulsive and disgusting; but what disgusted us children the most was his big, knotty, hairy fists, so much so that we were repelled by anything he'd touched. He noticed this and consequently took great pleasure in finding this or that excuse to graze a piece of cake or some sweet fruit that our dear mother surreptitiously dropped on our plates, so that, with tears in our eyes, repulsion kept us from enjoying a sweet titbit that we would otherwise have savoured. He did the same thing when, on holidays, our father poured us a little glass of sweet wine. He would then pass his fist quickly over it, even bring the glass to his blue lips and laugh a devilish laugh when we quietly vented a sniffie of anger. He always called us the little beasts; we were not permitted to make a sound in his presence and cursed the hideous and hostile man who intentionally and maliciously spoilt our little pleasures. Our mother seemed to hate that disgusting man as much as we did; for as soon as he appeared her high spirits and easy-going, cheerful manner faded into a sad and dour solemnity. Father behaved in his presence as if he were a higher being whose incivility one had to tolerate and whom one had to humour in every way possible. He only dared make timid suggestions in his presence and was sure to serve his favourite dishes and the finest wines.

So when I set eyes on this Coppelius I felt a grisly shudder in my soul at the sudden realization that no one but he could be the Sandman, but now the Sandman was no longer the fairy-tale bogeyman who dragged children off to feed to his young in the owl's nest on the moon - no! He was a hideous, ghastly fiend who brought misery and want, temporal and eternal rack and ruin wherever he appeared.

Positively paralysed with fear at the thought of being caught and severely punished, I just stood there with my head outstretched, listening through the curtain. My father received Coppelius respectfully.

'Up now! To work!' the latter cried with a hoarse snarl and threw off his coat. In grim-faced silence father flung off his dressing gown and both pulled on long black smocks. I saw from where they

took them. Father opened the folding door of a wall closet; but then I noticed that what I had long taken for a wall closet was not one at all, but rather a dark, hidden space fitted with a small hearth. Coppelius stepped forward and a blue flame flickered forth. All kinds of curious instruments were scattered about. Dear God! When my old father bent down towards the fire he looked altogether different. A ghastly convulsive pain seemed to have twisted the gentle, honest features of his face into a devilish grimace. He looked just like Coppelius. The latter swung the red-hot tongs and fetched a bright, flickering mass of ore out of the thick vapour, which he then assiduously hammered. It seemed to me as if human faces became visible all about, but without eyes - dreadful, deep, black hollows where the eyes ought to be.

'Eyes out, eyes out!' Coppelius cried with a muffled, roaring voice. Gripped by wild terror, I let out a scream and burst out of my hiding place onto the floor. Whereupon Coppelius grabbed hold of me and, baring his teeth, grumbled, 'Little beast! Little beast!' Picking me up, he hurled me at the hearth, so that the flames singed my hair. 'Now we've got eyes - eyes - a lovely pair of children's eyes,' Coppelius whispered, and with his fists grabbed glowing cinders from the flames which he intended to strew in my eyes.

But then my father pleaded with hands folded in prayer: 'Master! Master! Let my Nathaniel keep his eyes! Let him keep them, I beg you!'

Whereupon Coppelius gave off a shrill laugh and cried out: 'Let the boy keep his eyes and whimper his lesson through life; but let us take a close look at the mechanism of the hands and feet.' Whereupon he grasped me so hard that my joints snapped, and twisted off my hands and feet and reinserted them here and there. Coppelius sputtered and lisped: 'Tis not right this way! 'Twas good the way it was! The old man got it right!' and everything around me went dark, a sharp cramp flitted through my nerves and limbs - and then I felt nothing.

A warm and gentle breath wafted over my face, and I awakened, as if out of a deathlike sleep, with my mother bent over me. 'Is the Sandman still here?' I stammered.

'No, my dear child, he's been gone a long, long time, he won't hurt you!' my mother said and kissed and cuddled her recuperated

little darling.

Why should I try your patience, my dearest Lothar! Why should I keep babbling in minute detail when there's still so much to be told? Enough! Suffice to say that I was caught eavesdropping and mishandled by Coppelius. Fear and trembling had afflicted me with a high fever, with which I lay sick for several weeks. 'Is the Sandman still here?' Those were the first clear words to issue from my lips and the sign of my recovery, my salvation. Let me just still tell you the most terrible moment of my youth; then you'll be convinced that it's not the failing of my eyes that makes everything appear colourless, but rather that a dark destiny has draped a veil of clouds over my life, which perhaps I may only rip through in death.

Coppelius stopped coming by; we were told that he'd left town.

It was about a year later, as we sat in the evening, true to our old family custom, at the round table. Father was very chipper and entertained us with delightful stories from the travels of his youth. Then at the stroke of nine, we suddenly heard the front door hinges creak and slow, leaden steps thumped through the hallway and up the steps. 'It's Coppelius,' said mother, going pale in the face.

'Yes! It is Coppelius,' father confirmed with a weak and broken voice. Tears streamed from mother's eyes.

'But father, father!' she cried, 'must it be so?'

'This one last time,' he replied, 'it's the last time he comes here, I promise you. Just go, go with the children! Go! Go to bed! Goodnight!'

I felt as if I'd been pressed into cold, heavy stone - my breath stood still! Mother grabbed hold of my arm when I remained standing there: 'Come, Nathaniel, come along, please!' I let her lead me, I went into my room. 'Be quiet, be quiet, just go to bed! - sleep - sleep,' mother cried after me; but, torn as I was by my inner fear and turmoil, I could not close an eye. The picture of that hated, repulsive Coppelius stood there sniggering at me with his sparkling eyes; in vain did I try to erase the image from my mind.

It might already have been midnight when a terrible boom went off, as if a cannon had been fired. The whole house rumbled, it rattled and roared past my door, the front door was slammed shut

with a mighty clatter. 'That's Coppelius!' I cried out in terror and leapt from my bed.

Then came a piercing shriek and a wretched wail, and I rushed to my father's room. The door stood open, a suffocating steam hit me in the face, the chambermaid cried out: 'Oh, the master! The master!'

In front of the steaming hearth my father lay dead on the floor with his terribly contorted face burnt black. My sisters howled and whined around him, my mother lay unconscious at his side. 'Coppelius, you cursed Satan, you killed my father!' I cried out, whereupon I lost consciousness. Two days later, when they laid my father in his coffin, his expression was once again mild and gentle as it had been in life. It was at least comforting to think that his pact with that devilish Coppelius could not have condemned him to eternal damnation.

The explosion had awakened the neighbours; the incident seemed suspicious to them and they informed the authorities, who issued a warrant for Coppelius' arrest. But he had disappeared without a trace.

If I tell you, dearest friend, that that barometer salesman was none other than the accursed Coppelius, you will not, I trust, think ill of me for taking his inimical reappearance as a sign of bad things to come. He was dressed differently, but Coppelius' physique and facial features are too deeply engraved in my memory for me to mistake him for another. Moreover, Coppelius did not even change his name. He now pretends to be a Piedmontese mechanic and calls himself Giuseppe Coppola.

I have resolved to confront him and to avenge my father's death, come what will.

Don't tell mother a thing about that terrible creature. Give a hug to my dear sweet Clara, I'll write to her when I've calmed down a bit. Be well, etc. etc.

Clar a to Nathaniel

It is true that you haven't written to me in quite a while, but I still believe that you think of me and hold me dear. I was surely very much on your mind, for though you intended to send your last letter to my brother Lothar, you unwittingly addressed it to me, not him. I tore open the envelope with joy and only realized the error upon reading the words: 'Oh, my dearest Lothar' - I know I ought not to have gone on reading after that, but rather to have handed the letter to my brother. But seeing as you sometimes reproached me in a childish, teasing way that I had such a calm, ladylike, sensible disposition that, before fleeing a house about to collapse, I would be inclined quickly to smooth out a wrinkle in the curtain, I dare hardly admit that the first lines of your letter upset me profoundly. I could hardly breathe, my eyes went blank. Oh, my dearly beloved Nathaniel! What terrible thing could have burst into your life! Being separated from you, the possibility of never seeing you again, that thought pierced my breast like the sharp blade of a dagger. I read and read! Your description of that disgusting Coppelius is really horrible.

Only now did I fathom that your dear old father died such a terrible, violent death. My brother Lothar, to whom I passed the letter, tried in vain to calm me down. The image of that despicable barometer pedlar Giuseppe Coppola pursued me wherever I went, and I am almost ashamed to admit that he even managed to trouble my ordinarily unruffled and restful sleep with all sorts of nightmarish phantasms. But soon thereafter, in fact by the very next day, my mood calmed down. Don't be upset with me, my dearest one, if Lothar tells you, despite your strange premonition that Coppelius would harm you, that I am once again my old cheerful, carefree self.

Let me confess here and now my firm conviction that all the awful and frightening things you speak of only happened in your imagination, and that the real outside world played little part in it. That old Coppelius may well have been repulsive enough, but the

fact that he hated children made you and your siblings develop a real aversion to him.

Your childish imagination naturally associated your nanny's nursery account of the terrible Sandman with old Coppelius, who for you, even though you didn't believe in the Sandman, remained a fantastic monster of the kind children fear so intensely. The weird goings-on with your father at night were surely nothing other than alchemical experiments the two conducted together in secret, with which your mother may not have been pleased, since a lot of money was no doubt uselessly squandered in the process - on top of which, as is always the case with such laboratory assistants, your father became so consumed by the elusive craving for higher wisdom that he forgot about the family. Your father probably brought about his own death by a careless mistake, and Coppelius is not to blame. Can you believe that yesterday I asked the pharmacist next door if such a sudden deadly explosion ever occurred during chemical experiments? He said: 'Yes, indeed,' and described for me in his typical long-winded and minute manner how such a thing could happen, in the process citing all kinds of curious-sounding substances I cannot now recall. Now you'll get angry with your Clara. You'll say: 'Not a ray of the mysterious that embraces us with its invisible arms could break into that cold nature of yours; it only fastens on the colourful surface of things and takes a childish delight in the glittering golden fruit whose flesh contains a deadly poison hidden within.'

Oh my dearly beloved Nathaniel! Don't you think that even a cheerful - unaffected - carefree nature like mine could harbour an inkling of a dark force that insidiously strives to corrupt the sanctum of our inner self? But forgive me if, innocent girl that I am, I dare imply what I really think of that inner battle. I can't find the right words to say it and you're probably laughing at me, not because I mean to say something foolish, but because I am having such a hard time saying it.

If there is a dark force that can insidiously slip a perfidious filament into our innermost self, wherewith it then grabs hold of us and drags us along on a dangerously destructive path that we would not otherwise have taken - if there is such a force then it must refigure itself in our image, indeed it must become us; for only in this way will we be inclined to believe in it and give it the space it

needs to realize its shadowy end. If we have enough good sense, fortified by healthy living, to recognize strange inimical influences as such, and steadfastly to hold to the path our nature and calling prescribe, then that sinister force will fail in the futile attempt to fashion itself in our image. It is also certain, Lothar adds, that that dark physical force to which we surrender ourselves of our own free will often make us internalize strange figures that life flings into our path, so that we merely rouse the spirit which our vivid delusion makes us believe emanates from that figure. It is the phantom of our own self whose deep affinity and profound influence on our state of mind either damns us to hell or uplifts us into heaven. You see, my best beloved Nathaniel, that we, my brother Lothar and I, discussed at length the subject of dark forces and compulsions, which, seeing as I have taken great pains to formulate the essential, now seems to me to be very deep indeed. I don't quite grasp Lothar's last point, though I have a sense of what he means and firmly believe it to be true. I beg you, erase the image of that ugly barrister Coppelius and the barometer pedlar Giuseppe Coppola from your mind. Be assured that these strange figures have no power over you; only your belief in their malevolent power can, in fact, make them malevolent to you. If the deep upset of your soul did not cry out in every line of your letter, if your state of mind did not shake me as profoundly as it does, in truth I could make light of your Mr Sandman, Esq. and that barometer pedlar Coppelius. Be cheerful - cheerful! I have decided to come to you and act as your guardian angel, and should that repulsive Coppelius dare reappear and trouble you again in your dreams, I will exorcize him with loud laughter. I am not in the least bit afraid of him and his loathsome fists; he will not spoil a tender titbit with his barrister's touch or steal my eyes as the Sandman.

Forever, my dearly beloved Nathaniel, etc. etc. etc.

NathaNiel to lothar

I am very sorry that, granted, on account of my own absent-minded mistake, Clara recently tore open and read the letter I wrote to you. She wrote me a very profound philosophical response in which she took great pains to prove that Coppelius and Coppola only existed in my imagination and were phantoms of my own troubled self, phantoms that would be instantaneously reduced to dust if only I recognized them as such. It is indeed hard to believe that the spirit that emanates from such a brightly smiling, sweet child's eyes could display such brilliant insight. She cites you. So you talked about me. You instruct her in logical disputation so that she may learn to sort and filter out the chaff from the grain. Better leave it alone!

By the way, it's certain that the barometer pedlar Giuseppe Coppola is not the old lawyer Coppelius. I've just begun attending the lectures of the recently arrived Professor of Physics who, like the illustrious naturalist, is also named Spalanzani, and is of Italian descent. He has known Coppola for a good many years and, moreover, you can tell from the pedlar accent that he really is Piedmontese. Coppelius was a German, but no true blue one, I think. I'm still not altogether calmed down. Even if you and Clara take me for a dark dreamer, I cannot erase the terrible impression of Coppelius'accursed face. I'm glad, as Spalanzani claims, that Coppelius has flown the coop. This Professor is a wondrous sort, a round, little man with high cheekbones, a finely chiselled nose, pout-ing lips and small piercing eyes. But you can get a clearer picture of him if you look at Chodowiecki's [16] portrait of Cagliostro [17] in any Berlin pocket calendar. That's just what Spalanzani looks like.

I recently discovered while climbing the steps to the lecture hall that the glass door ordinarily covered with a curtain left a visible crack open at the side. A tall, very slender and well-proportioned, splendidly dressed lady sat in a room at a little table on which she rested both her arms, with her hands folded before

her. She was seated just opposite the door, so I got a good look at her angelically lovely face. She did not seem to notice me and, in fact, her eyes had something glassy about them - I'd almost be inclined to say they could not see; it seemed to me as if she slept with open eyes. I felt the strangest rush of feeling and, therefore, slipped quietly off to the auditorium next door.

Later I learnt that the lovely figure I spotted was Spalanzani's daughter Olympia, whom for some strange reason he keeps locked up so that no one can come near her. I've begun to think there is something peculiar about her, that perhaps she's simple-minded. But why do I write to you about all this? I could have told it to you more clearly and in greater detail in person. I might as well admit that I'll be visiting you in two weeks'time. I simply had to see my sweet angel-faced Clara again. By then the ill humour brought on (I must admit) by that annoyingly understand-ing letter of hers that sought to sound my depths will have blown over. Which is why I'm not writing to her today.

A thousand greetings, etc. etc. etc.

It would be impossible to imagine anything more incred-ible and strange than what happened to my poor friend, the young student Nathaniel, and which, dear reader, I have undertaken to tell you. Have you, gentle reader, ever experienced anything that so completely permeated your heart, your mind and your thoughts that it supplanted all other notions? Something that simmered and seethed in you, that made your blood boil and flow like lava through your veins and made your cheeks turn a fiery red. A thing that turned your gaze so eerie, as if it sought to grasp the presence of figures imperceptible to all other eyes in an empty room, as your words melted into dark moans. And your intimates asked you: 'What is it, friend? What on earth is the matter with you?' And then you wanted to describe your state of mind in all the glowing colours and shadows and lights, and strained to find the words, and didn't know where to begin. But it seemed to you as if with your very first word you felt compelled to evoke all the wondrous, beautiful, horrible, laughable, frightening things that happened, so that your account would strike your listeners like an electric shock. But every word that came to mind, anything that language could conjure up, seemed colourless, frigid and dead. You searched and searched, and stuttered and stammered, and the sensible questions of friends

struck like icy gusts of wind that soon dissipated in the emotional cauldron within. But had you, like a bold painter, begun with a few audacious brush strokes to set down the rough outline of your state, you would have been able to apply with great ease ever brighter dabs of colour, and so to dazzle your friends with the living swirl of multifarious figures, and they would see themselves, as you see yourself, in the middle of the picture that issued from your imagination.

No one, I must admit, gentle reader, ever actually asked after the story of young Nathaniel; but as you well know, I am one of those rum writers to whom, if burdened with impressions of the kind I've just described, it seems as if anyone who happens to cross their path, indeed the whole world, were dying to know: 'What's bothering you? Pray tell us if you please!' So I felt a pressing need to speak to you of Nathaniel's fateful path. The very wondrousness and strangeness of it consumed my consciousness, but for that very reason - and because I needed to make you, dear reader, likewise inclined and, therefore, able to bear the things I am about to tell, which is no small feat - I tormented myself as to how to begin my account in a significant, original, gripping fashion.

'Once upon a time' - the nicest start to any tale - seemed too rapid! 'In the small provincial town of S. there lived

'sounded a bit better, at least informative enough to pave the way for the climax. Or to begin right off in medias res: "'The devil take you!" the young student Nathaniel cried out with a wild-eyed look of anger and dread at the sight of the barometer pedlar Giuseppe Coppola' - this I had, in fact, already written down when I was suddenly struck by something droll in the wild-eyed look of the young student Nathaniel; but the story is not in the least bit comical. I could find no words to reflect even the faintest glimmer of the burning heart of the matter. So I decided to dispense with the beginning.

Just take the three letters, gentle reader, that my friend Lothar was kind enough to pass on to me, as the outline of the picture, to which I will take pains to add more and more colour in the telling. Maybe I will manage, like a good portrait painter, to conjure up a character such that you will find a convincing resemblance without knowing the original; indeed that it will seem to you as if you had seen that person many times with your own two eyes. Maybe then, dear reader, you will believe that there is nothing more wondrous

and strange than life itself, and that all that the poet can do is convey a dark reflection of it in a lightly buffed mirror.

So as to clarify what the reader needs to know from the start, I must add to the aforementioned letters that shortly after the death of Nathaniel's father, Clara and Lothar, the children of a distant relative who likewise died and left them orphaned, were taken in by Nathan-iel's mother. Clara and Nathaniel took a great liking to each other, to which no person on earth objected; they were therefore betrothed when Nathaniel left home to pursue his studies in G. , which is where we find him in his last letter, attending lectures by the famous professor of physics Spalanzani.

Now I could confidently press on with the tale; but at the moment I have such a vivid image of Clara's face before my eyes that I cannot look away, which is what always happened when she looked my way with her lovely smile. Clara could by no means have been considered beautiful; such was the opinion of all those who claimed to know a thing or two about beauty. And yet the architects of beauty praised the sleekness and symmetry of her stature, the painters found her neck, shoulders and bust almost too maidenly, but were all enamoured of her Magdalene hair and raved about her luminous colouring. But one of them, a real fantast, strangely enough compared Clara's eyes to a Ruisdael lake in which the azure blue fundament of a cloudless sky and the forest and flowering flora of the lush landscape of life were mirrored. But the poets and thinkers were even more ebullient and said: 'What lake - what mirror! Can one gaze at this girl without perceiving heavenly songs and notes come streaming from her eyes, music that reaches deep into our innermost selves, awakening and bestirring all our dormant passions?' If we ourselves try to sing her praises and the song falls flat, a crude croon masquerading as a serenade with haphazard tones carelessly warbled, the fault is ours and Clara's lips say it all in their delicately elastic smile. That's the way it was.

Clara had the healthy imagination of a cheerful, unaffected child, a deep womanly gentle disposition, and a downright sparkling, sharp-sighted intelligence. The mystics and conjurors failed to impress her; for without saying much - idle chatter was anathema to her quiet nature - her bright gaze and that hint of irony in her smile said: dear friends, do you really expect me to take your ephemeral shadow figures for real live people with impulses

and emotions? For that reason, Clara was scorned by many as cold, emotionless, prosaic; but others with a sober grasp of all the twists and turns of life had a powerful affection for that tender, understanding, child-ish girl, none more so than Nathaniel, a young man seriously and passionately committed to the study of science and the arts. Clara was attached to her beloved with all her heart and soul; the first storm clouds troubled their life when he went away to study. With what rapture, then, you can well imagine, did she fly into his arms, when, as he let slip in his last letter to Lothar, he actually showed up in his home town at his mother's doorstep. It was just as Nathaniel expected; for as soon as he saw Clara again he forgot all about the lawyer Coppelius and Clara's letter, and his upset disappeared.

But Nathaniel was indeed right when he wrote to his friend Lothar that the appearance of that odious barometer pedlar Coppola had had a detrimental effect on his life. Everyone felt within days of his arrival that Nathaniel was a changed man. He fell into dark brooding spells and began to behave so strangely, in ways that one would never have expected of him. Everything, his entire life, had become the stuff of dream and premonition; he kept saying that everyone who gave free rein to his fancies merely served as a plaything in the terrible game of dark forces, that all resistance was in vain, and all one could do was meekly to submit to the will of fate. He went so far as to maintain that it was foolish to believe that spontaneity could affect the arbitrary outcome of artistic and scientific investigations; for the passion needed to pursue such work does not come from our innermost selves, but rather derives from the external influence of a higher principle independent of our own free will.

Such mystical musings were altogether repugnant to the sensible Clara, yet it seemed futile to attempt to prove him wrong. But it was only when Nathaniel insisted that Coppelius was the incarnation of the evil principle that had taken hold of him, pulling the strings from behind an invisible curtain, that Clara suddenly fathomed that this disgusting demon threatened to disrupt their happy love, grew very serious and said: 'Yes, Nathaniel, you're right, Coppelius is an evil inimical principle, a devilish force that infiltrated your life able to do dreadful things, but only if you refuse to banish him from your thoughts and feelings. As long as you

believe in him he does indeed exist and affect you, only your belief gives him power over you.'

Furious that Clara only accepted the existence of demons as a function of his state of mind, Nathaniel wanted to counter with a disquisition on the entire mystical teachings of devils and uncanny forces; but, vexed in turn, Clara cut him short by suddenly bringing up some altogether irrelevant matter, which made Nathaniel all the more angry.

Cold, unreceptive spirits do not open their hearts to such deep secrets, Nathaniel thought, without fully fathoming that he counted Clara among those lesser natures, which is why he did not stop trying to initiate her into those esoteric teachings. Early in the morning when Clara helped prepare breakfast, he stood by her and read to her from all sorts of mystical texts, whereupon Clara protested: 'But my dear Nathaniel, what if I were to blame you for the evil principle that's keeping my coffee from brewing? For if, as you wish, I were to drop everything and look you in the eyes as you read to me, then my coffee will boil over and burn and you won't get your breakfast!'

Nathaniel slammed the book shut and ran in a rage to his room. In the past he had had a charming, lively talent for reading aloud the stories that he jotted down, to which Clara listened with the greatest pleasure; but now his writings were dark, incomprehensible, shapeless, so that even though, not wanting to hurt him, Clara said nothing, he nevertheless sensed how unreceptive she was. Nothing was more deadly for Clara than this boring stuff; in every look and word she revealed her insurmountable intellectual ennui. Nathaniel's writings were indeed a crashing bore. His chagrin at Clara's cold prosaic spirit grew; she simply could not shake off her displeasure at Nathaniel's dark, morbid, boring mysticism, and so the two drifted inwardly further and further apart without noticing it.

The figure of that repulsive Coppelius faded in his imagination, as Nathaniel himself had to admit, so that he had to take great pains to paint a vivid picture of him in his writings, in which he appeared as the bogeyman. Finally one day he felt impelled to express that dark pre-monition that Coppelius would disrupt his happy love as the subject of a poem. In the poem he represented

himself and Clara as bound by true love, but every now and then it was as if a dark fist reached into their life and ripped out any seed of joy that sprouted in the garden of their hearts. Finally, when they were already standing together at the marriage altar, that terrible Coppeliuss appears and touches Clara's sweet smiling eyes; they burst open against his breast, searing and burning like bloody sparks, where-upon Coppeliuss seizes Nathaniel and flings him into a flaming circle of fire that spins at the speed of lightning and hurls him about in a blue blaze. Then comes a roar, as if the angry tempest whipped up the foaming waves of the sea that rear up in battle like white-hooded black giants. But through this wild roar he hears Clara's voice: 'Can you not see me? Coppeliuss deceived you, those were not my eyes that burned in your breast, they were the glowing drops of your own heart's blood - I still have my eyes, just look at me!' And Nathaniel thinks: it is Clara, and I am hers for ever. Then it is as if the thought reaches into the circle of fire, stops suddenly, and the roar fades into a dull thud in the black abyss. Nathaniel peers into Clara's eyes; but it is the face of death that smiles back at him with Clara's eyes.

While engaged in the composition of this poem Nathaniel remained very quiet and collected; he polished and tinkered with every line, and since he chose to follow the rule of metre, he did not rest until everything fitted together and sounded just right. When he was nevertheless finally done with it and read the poem out loud to himself he was totally appalled and, gripped by a wild sense of horror, cried out: 'Whose terrible voice is this?' But soon the whole thing just seemed to him to be a very successful poetic text, and he was convinced that it would excite Clara's cold heart, although he failed to consider just where her excitement might lead and to what end he wished to frighten her with such gruesome images, fore-shadowing a terrible fate that would tear their love apart.

They, Nathaniel and Clara, sat together in his mother's little garden, Clara as cheerful as could be because Nathaniel had not tormented her with his dreams and dark premonitions for the last three days, which he'd spent tinkering with the poem. Even Nathaniel spoke in a lively and spirited manner of funny things, like before, so that Clara said: 'Now at last I have you all to myself again, you see how we drove out that repulsive Coppe-liuss?' That

reminded Nathaniel of the poem in his pocket, which he'd intended to read aloud. He promptly pulled out the pages and started reading.

Expecting the same tedious stuffas before, and pre-pared to endure it, Clara started quietly knitting. But as the storm cloud of his verse grew ever darker and darker around them she let the knitted stocking sink into her lap and looked Nathaniel hard in the eye. Swept along by the fire of his poetry, his cheeks tinted bright red by the cauldron of turbulent emotions, tears welled up in his eyes. Having finally reached the conclusion, he heaved a heavy sigh of exhaustion, gripped Clara's hand and sobbed, as though dissolving in inconsolable sadness: 'Oh, Clara!.....Clara!'

She pressed him gently to her breast and said quietly, but very slowly and succinctly: 'Nathaniel - my dearly beloved Nathaniel! Throw that raving - senseless - insane fairy tale into the fire.'

Whereupon, shoving Clara away from him, Nathaniel leapt up in a fury and cried out: 'You lifeless, accursed automaton!' He ran off, leaving Clara completely morti-fied, weeping bitter tears.

'He never loved me, he doesn't understand me!' she wailed at the top of her lungs. Lothar came striding into the arbour. Clara felt compelled to tell him what had happened. Lothar loved his sister with all his heart; every word of her accusation struck him like a spark, so that the ill will he'd long felt for that muddle-headed Nathaniel now flared up into wild anger. He ran to find him, reproached him with harsh words for his inexplicable treatment of his beloved sister, and the irascible Nathaniel replied in kind. A wild and crazy fop faced off with a miserable, mundane man of the people. A duel was inev-itable. They decided, according to the local academic custom, to meet behind the garden and draw sharp-bladed rapiers.

Silently and stealthily they slipped by; Clara had heard and seen the heated argument, and spotted the duelling master bringing the rapiers at dusk. She guessed what was about to happen. Lothar and Nathaniel had just reached the duelling ground and flung off their coats in brooding silence, a bloodthirsty fury pouring from their burning eyes, when Clara came bounding through the garden gate. Sobbing she cried out: 'Oh you barbaric beastly men! Cut me down right this moment before going at it with each other; for how

am I supposed to go on living in this world if my beloved murders my brother, or my brother my beloved!"

Lothar let his sword sink and peered at the ground in silence, and all the heart-rending love Nathaniel had felt in the sweet days of youth for his precious Clara once again flared up in him. The deadly weapon fell from his hand and he flung himself at Clara's feet. 'Can you ever forgive me, my only, my ever so dearly beloved Clara! Can you forgive me, my dearest brother Lothar!' Lothar was stirred by the profound pain of his friend; the three young people, now reconciled, embraced in a flood of tears and swore henceforth faithfully to hold by their love.

Nathaniel felt as though a heavy weight that had pressed him to the ground had been lifted from his shoulders - indeed as though in resisting the dark force that had held him in its sway he had saved his entire being from the threat of annihilation. He spent three more blissful days with his loved ones and then rode back to G. , where he had to complete another year of study, after which he planned to return for good to his native town.

Everything having to do with Coppelius was kept from his mother; since the three friends knew all too well that she could not think of him without trembling, for, like Nathaniel, she too blamed him for the death of her husband.

Imagine how stunned Nathaniel was when, intending to return to his apartment, he found the entire house burnt to the ground, so that only the charred walls still rose from the rubble heap. Braving the fire that had started in the laboratory of the apothecary on the first floor and engulfed the house in flames from the bottom up, a few resolute friends had nevertheless managed in the nick of time to dash up to Nathaniel's room and save his books, manuscripts and instruments. They succeeded in carrying everything intact to another house, where they rented a room for him, into which Nathaniel promptly moved.

He was not particularly surprised to discover that he lived directly opposite Professor Spalanzani, nor did it seem strange to him when he realized that from his window he could peer directly into the room in which Olympia often sat alone, positioned in such a way that he could clearly recognize her figure, while her facial features remained blurred and vague. But after a while it did indeed

strike him as strange that Olympia often sat for hours on end in the same stance she had assumed when he once glimpsed her through the glass door, perched before a small table, apparently engaged in no activity, and that she clearly cast a fixed gaze in his direction. He likewise had to admit to himself that he had never set eyes on a lovelier female figure; but, holding true to Clara in his heart, he remained largely oblivious to Olympia's stiff, stone-cold allures, and only every now and then did he cast furtive looks over his open compendium at the comely statue - that was all.

He was just writing to Clara when he heard a light knock; upon his invitation to enter, the door swung open a crack and Coppola's repulsive face peered in. Nathaniel felt a shudder of terror run through him; mindful, how-ever, of what Spalanzani had told him about his compatriot Coppola, and that he had given his sacred word to his beloved to lend no more credence to the Sandman Coppelius, he himself was ashamed of his childish fears. With a great effort he pulled himself together and spoke as calmly as possible: 'I'm not going to buy a barometer, my dear friend, so you might as well be going!'

At which, however, Coppola stepped squarely into the room and spoke with a hoarse voice, his broad mouth twisted into an ugly laughter, his sparkling little eyes casting a piercing look beneath the wink of his long grey lashes: 'Forget barometer, bah! I bring pair o'lovely peepers!'

Horried, Nathaniel cried out: 'Strange man, how can you have eyes for sale? Eyes? Eyes?'

But then and there Coppola shoved aside his barom-eters, reached into his deep coat pocket and pulled out spectacles and eyeglasses which he laid out on the table. 'Look - glass - glass - what you put on you nose, eyes a pretty - eyes a pretty!' Whereupon he pulled out more and more eyeglasses, so that the entire table was soon flickering and sparkling.

A thousand eyes peeped and twitched and stared at Nathaniel; but he was unable to turn away from the table, and Coppola kept laying out more and more eyeglasses, and ever wilder and wilder did those glaring gazes land, helter-skelter, shooting their blood-red rays at Nathaniel's breast. Overcome by frantic horror, he cried out: 'Stop it! Stop it, you wretched creature!' He grabbed Coppola by the

arm as the latter, oblivious, reached yet again into his pocket to fetch more glasses to add to the heap that covered the table.

But Coppola shook himself free, and with a hoarse, repulsive laugh, muttered: 'Oh! This not for you! But look here, lovely glass!' - wherewith he swept up all the eyeglasses, shoved them back into his coat pocket, and from another pocket pulled out a number of big and little telescopes and field glasses.

As soon as the eyeglasses were out of sight Nathaniel grew calm again and, mindful of Clara's words, had to admit to himself that the terrible spook was a figment of his own imagination, and that Coppola was an altogether honest craftsman and lens grinder and could not possibly be Coppelius' cursed doppelgänger and shadow figure. He realized, furthermore, that there was nothing strange about all the lenses that Coppola now laid out on the table, nothing ghastly like the eyeglasses, and to make amends Nathaniel now decided actually to buy something from him. He reached for a small, very finely crafted pocket looking-glass and, to test it, peered out of the window.

Never in his life had he come upon a looking-glass that so clearly and sharply brought distant objects before his eyes in such clear focus. He unintentionally peered into Spalanzani's room; Olympia sat there, as usual, at the little table, with her arms resting on it and her hands folded. Now for the first time Nathaniel espied Olympia's exquisitely lovely face. Only the eyes appeared strange, blank and dead. But as he brought her face into greater and greater focus in the looking-glass, it seemed to him as if Olympia's eyes flashed open in moist moonbeams. It was as if she had only now acquired the power of sight; her glances grew livelier and livelier. Nathaniel lingered at the window, transfixed, unable to take his eyes off the stunningly lovely Olympia. He was awakened, as if out of a deep dream, by the sound of throat-clearing and scraping.

Coppola stood behind him: 'Tre zecchini - three ducats!' Nathaniel, who had completely forgotten the optician, quickly counted out the asking price. 'Fine glass - fine glass - is it not?' asked Coppola with his repulsive hoarse voice and his crafty smile.

'Yes, yes, indeed!' Nathaniel replied, greatly vexed. 'Adieu, dear friend!'

But Coppola cast several strange sidelong looks at Nathaniel and his room before taking his leave. The young man could still hear him laughing out loud on the staircase. 'All right,' Nathaniel muttered to himself, 'he's laughing at me because I no doubt paid far too much for the little looking-glass - paid far too much!' As he quietly whispered these words, a deep and terrible deathly groan resounded in the room. Nathaniel was so frightened he stopped breathing. But the groan had emanated from his own throat, he fathomed after the fact. 'Clara's quite right,' he said to himself, 'to take me for a ridiculous ghost-haunted idiot; it's perfectly insane - completely ridiculous of me to let the thought that I paid Coppola too much for the looking-glass unnerve me to such a degree; and for no reason at all.' Now he sat himself down to finish writing the letter to Clara, but a fleeting glance out of the window confirmed that Olympia was still seated there; and then and there, driven by an irresistible urge, he jumped up, grabbed Coppola's looking-glass and remained glued to the window, riveted by Olympia's alluring visage, until a friend and fellow student, Siegmund, called out to remind him that it was time to come along to Professor Spalanzani's lecture.

But the next day the curtain was pulled shut in that fateful room across the way, and he could not catch sight of Olympia on that day or on the following two days, despite the fact that he seldom left his own window and constantly kept peering over with Coppola's looking-glass. On the third day even the blinds were pulled. Desperately pining and driven by a burning desire, he ran out to her front door. Impressions of Olympia's lovely figure hung in the air everywhere he looked; she stepped out from behind the bushes and the reflection of her big, sparkling eyes beamed out at him from the clear brook. Clara's image had been totally erased from his heart, he thought of nothing but Olympia and wailed and complained at the top of his voice: 'Oh you, my shining star of love, did you appear before me only to vanish again and leave me in the dark and desperate night?'

As he was about to return to his room, he became aware of noisy goings-on in Spalanzani's house. The doors were open, all kinds of devices were being carried in, the windows on the first floor were open wide, busy housemaids swept and dusted the window boxes with big brooms; inside, meanwhile, carpenters and

decorators banged and hammered. Stunned, Nathaniel remained standing there in the street; then Siegmund came over to him and said, laughing: 'So what do you say about our old Spalanzani?' Nathaniel assured him that he had nothing to say since he knew absolutely nothing about the Professor, but that he was rather surprised to discover such a wild to-do and housekeeping frenzy in that ordinarily dark and silent house; whereupon Siegmund informed him that Spalanzani was going to throw a big party the next day, including a concert and ball, and that half the university was invited. The word was that Spalanzani was going to let his daughter Olympia, whom he'd fearfully kept sheltered from view, appear for the first time in public.

Nathaniel received an invitation and presented himself at the Professor's at the appointed hour with a fast-beating heart, as carriages rolled up to the door and lights shimmered in the elegantly decorated rooms. The company was numerous and glamorous. Olympia appeared richly and tastefully attired. Everyone had to admire her finely chiselled face and graceful figure. The strange stoop of her back and her bone-thin waist appeared to be the consequence of a girdle tied too tight. There was a measured stiffness in her stance and step that some found displeasing; but that was ascribed to the stress of appearing in society. The concert began. Olympia played the grand piano with great skill and likewise brought off a bravura aria with a clear, almost bell-glass-like, pitch-perfect voice. Nathaniel was completely captivated; he stood in the last row and could not clearly make out Olympia's features in the candlelight. Without attracting notice, he therefore pulled out Coppola's looking-glass and gazed through its lens at the lovely Olympia. Oh God! He now fathomed how ardently she peered in his direction, how every note only seemed to sound enveloped in a loving look that surged through his burning heart. The artful trills rang out in Nathaniel's ear like the heavenly Hosannas of the spirit trans figured by love; and when at last, following the cadenza, the long trill pierced the air all around him, feeling as though suddenly enveloped by her warm embrace, and no longer able to control himself, he cried out in rapture and pain: 'Olympia!' All heads turned to look at him, some laughing.

But the cathedral organist's face twisted into an even dourer grimace than before and he merely remarked: 'Well, well!' The

concert came to an end, the ball began. Only to dance with her - with *her* ! That was now the object of Nathaniel's deepest desire, all that he strove for; but how would he get up the courage to ask her, the queen of the evening, for a dance? Nevertheless - he himself had no idea how it happened - finding himself all of a sudden standing right there beside Olympia, once the music had already started up, and she not yet having been invited to dance, hardly able to stammer a few words, he reached for her hand. Olympia's hand was ice-cold; he felt a terrible deathly frost surge through him; he looked into her eyes, which greeted his gaze with love and longing, and at that very moment it was as if the pulse began to beat in her cold hand and the lifeblood began to glow warm within. And love's longing welled up, glowing hotter and hotter in Nathaniel's breast; he wrapped his arm around lovely Olympia and led her down the rows of dancers. He had always thought himself to be a good dancer, able to hold to the beat; but from the precise rhythmic steadiness of Olympia's step, which often caused him to falter, he soon fathomed the failing of his sense of beat. And yet he no longer wanted to dance with any other woman in the world, and felt as if he would have killed on the spot anyone else who dared approach her to ask for a dance. But this happened only twice, and thereafter, to his amazement, Olympia always remained seated between dances and he did not hesitate to reach for her hand and pull her up again and again.

Had Nathaniel had eyes for anything but the lovely Olympia, countless tussles and tangles would have been unavoidable; for clearly the quiet, painstakingly muffled laughter that emanated here and there among the groups of young people was directed at the lovely Olympia, whom they followed with the strangest looks - it was hard to say why. Fired up by the dance and by the wine of which he'd pleasantly partaken, Nathaniel shed his innate shyness. He sat beside Olympia, his hand in hers, and spoke fervently of his love for her in words that nei-ther he nor she understood.

But she perhaps grasped their meaning; for she peered without flinching right into his eyes and sighed again and again: 'Oh - Oh - Oh!'

Whereupon Nathaniel replied: 'Oh you beautiful, heavenly woman! You ray of hope from the Promised Land of love - you deep spirit in which my entire being is mirrored,' and more of the same.

In response to which Olympia kept sighing the same 'Oh, Oh!'

Professor Spalanzani walked several times past the blissful pair and smiled with a strange look of satisfaction. And though Nathaniel's spirit hovered elsewhere in another world, all of a sudden it seemed to him as if it grew curiously dark down here below in Professor Spalanzani's house; he looked around and fathomed with a start that the last two lights in the empty hall were burning down to the wick and threatened at any moment to go out. Music and dance had stopped long ago. 'Time to part, time to part,' he cried out in a wild and desperate voice, kissed Olympia's hand and leant forward to kiss her on the mouth with his burning lips, but her lips were ice-cold! And, just as when he'd first touched Olympia's cold hand, he felt a shudder run through him, the legend of the dead bride suddenly flashing through his mind; but Olympia pressed him tightly to her, and in that kiss her lips seemed to come alive with warmth. Professor Spalanzani paced slowly through the empty hall; his steps sounded muffled and, ringed by dancing shadows, his figure appeared terrifying and ghostlike. 'Do you love me - do you love me, Olympia? Just that one word! Do you love me?' whispered Nathaniel.

But, standing up, Olympia only sighed: 'Oh! Oh!'

'Oh yes, my precious, my beautiful star of love,' said Nathaniel, 'you rose in the firmament of my heart and will evermore light up and transfigure the darkness within!'

'Oh, Oh!' Olympia responded, walking away.

Nathaniel followed her; they stood before the Professor. 'You sweet-talked my daughter in a right sprightly manner,' he said with a smile. 'Well then, my dear Mr Nathaniel, if conversing with the simple-minded girl gives you pleasure, you're welcome to visit whenever you like.'

Nathaniel staggered off starry-eyed, with all of heaven's splendour bursting from his breast. Spalanzani's party was the talk of the town in the days that followed. Notwithstanding the Professor's great pains to make it a splendid occasion, the chatterboxes nevertheless dwelt on all sorts of unseemly and strange goings-on, saving their sharpest barbs for the stiff and silent Olympia, who, despite her lovely exterior, was saddled by the

wagging tongues with a lot of completely nonsensical notions as to her sanity - the reason, it was said, that Spalanzani kept her hidden for so long. Needless to say, Nathaniel was not pleased to learn of this, and he said nothing; what was the point, he reasoned, in proving to these dullards that it was their own nonsense that kept them from recognizing Olympia's profound and beautiful spirit!

'I beg you, my friend,' Siegmund said to him one day, 'tell me how in heaven's name an intelligent man like you ever fell for the wax face of that wooden doll?'

Nathaniel was about to explode in anger, but then he pulled himself together and calmly responded: 'Why don't you tell me, brother Siegmund, how a fellow with an eye for beauty could be blind to Olympia's heavenly charms? But then again, it's just as well fate didn't make you a rival; for one of us would have to fall in blood.'

Fathoming how things stood with his friend, Siegmund backed off and, after observing that in matters of beauty and love all is in the eye of the beholder, he added: 'Still it's funny that so many of us feel pretty much the same way about Olympia. She seemed to us - don't take it badly, my friend! - strangely stiff and soulless. Her figure's regular, just like her face, it's true! She might well be considered beautiful, if her gaze were not so devoid of life, so totally lacking, you might say, the power of sight. Her step is strangely measured, every movement seems prescribed by clockwork gears and cogs. Her play-ing and singing have the unpleasantly precise soulless rhythm of a machine, which is true of her dance step too. This Olympia seemed completely odd to us, we didn't know how to take her; it was as if she were only acting like a living being, and yet she unquestionably has her own way about her.'

Nathaniel refused to give in to the bitter feelings that welled up in his heart at Siegmund's words. He checked his mood and simply replied, deadly serious: 'Olympia may indeed seem odd to you cold, prosaic types. The poetic temperament only reveals itself to like-minded souls! Her loving look fell on me alone, lighting up my senses and thoughts; only in Olympia's love can I find myself again. You all think ill of her because she doesn't babble banalities like all the other shallow souls. It's true, she speaks little; but those few

words seem like true hiero-glyphs revealing an inner world replete with love and a profound intellectual grasp of the eternal beyond. But you just don't understand, all these words are lost on you.'

'Beware, my brother,' said Siegmund very softly, almost sadly, 'it seems to me you're heading in a dangerous direction. You can count on me, if all else - no, I dare not say any more!' Nathaniel suddenly fathomed that the cold, prosaic Siegmund was being very sincere with him, and so he took and shook the proffered hand with all his heart.

Nathaniel had completely forgotten that there was a Clara in this world whom he once loved; his mother, Lothar, everyone had slipped from his consciousness, he only lived for Olympia, beside whom he sat for hours every day, and to whom he held forth on his love, on a life flushed with sympathy, on their psychic affinity - to all of which Olympia listened with deep devotion. From the depths of his desk drawers Nathaniel fetched out everything he had ever written. Poems, fantasies, visions, novels, stories, to which were added daily all sorts of high-flown sonnets, stanzas, *canzone* - all of it he tirelessly read to Olympia for hours on end.

But he had never had such a lovely listener. She did not embroider and knit, she did not peer out of the window, she fed no birds, she played with no lapdogs or cuddly cats, she practised no paper-cutting or did anything else with her hands, she held back no furtive yawns with a quiet, forced cough - in short, for hours and hours she peered with a fixed and steady gaze into the eye of her beloved without fidgeting or budging, and her gaze grew ever livelier and more intense. Only when Nathaniel finally stood up and kissed her on the hand, and even on the mouth, did she respond: 'Oh, oh!' Followed with: 'Good night, my dear!'

'Oh you beautiful, oh you profound spirit,' Nathaniel cried out when he reached his room, 'only you, you alone completely understand me.' He experienced an inner bliss when he pondered what a wondrous harmony manifested itself ever more each day between his and Olympia's spirits; for it seemed to him as if Olympia had grasped his works, his poetic gift, from the depths of her soul, indeed that her voice came from the bottom of her innermost self. That must be true, he thought; for Olympia never uttered any more words than those already noted above. But when,

at his most lucid moments, for instance in the morning upon waking, Nathaniel really pondered Olym-pia's total passivity and laconic manner, he shrugged it off: 'What are words - words! Her heavenly gaze says more than any hollow language. Can any child of heaven fit herself into the narrow compass of a pitiful earthly need?'

Professor Spalanzani seemed to be absolutely delighted by the relationship between his daughter and Nathaniel; he gave them all sorts of unequivocal signs of his approval and when Nathaniel finally dared to allude to a future bond with Olympia, a smile spread over Spalanzani's face and he replied that he would leave it to his daughter to decide of her own free will. Emboldened by these words, with burning desire in his heart, Nathaniel decided to implore Olympia the very next day to declare clearly in plain words what her dear loving look had long since told him, that she wished to be his for evermore. He searched for the ring that his mother had given him when he left home to give to Olympia as a symbol of his commitment to their budding, blossoming life together. While looking for it he happened on Clara's and Lothar's letters; indifferent, he flung them aside, found the ring, stuffed it in his pocket and ran over to see Olympia.

Even from the doorstep, and from the vestibule, he heard a strange din; it appeared to emanate from Spalan-zani's study. A stamping of feet - a clatter - a shoving - a pounding on the door, interspersed with coarse words and hurled imprecations. 'Let go! Let me go! You wretch! You cursed creature! Did I put my life and limb on the line for that?' - 'Ha ha ha ha! - that was not our arrangement - it was me, me who made the eyes!' - 'And I the mechanical clockwork!' - 'Poor devil with your clockwork-you filthy cur of a simple-minded clockmaker!' - 'Get out! - Satan! - Stop!' - 'Organ grinder!' - 'Devilish beast! - Stop - Get out - Let go!' It was the voices of Spalanzani and that disgusting Coppelius that screeched and raged.

Nathaniel burst in, gripped by an unspeakable terror. The Professor held a female figure by the shoulders, the Italian Coppola held her by the feet; they tugged and tore her here and there, furiously fighting for possession. Nathaniel recoiled in profound horror when he recog-nized the figure as Olympia; flaring up in a wild fit of anger, he was about to tear his beloved out of their strug

- gling grip - but at that very moment, with a mighty burst of strength, Coppola managed to yank the figure free of the Professor's hands and, with a pivot, swinging her in his direction, managed to land Nathaniel such a stunning blow that it made him tumble backwards over the work table, toppling and knocking down the phials, retorts, bottles and measuring glasses. All the equipment smashed in a thousand pieces on the floor. Then Coppola flung the figure over his shoulder and raced with a repulsive, shrill laugh down the steps, so that the ugly dangling feet of the figure banged with a wooden thud and thump on the steps. Stunned, Nathaniel stood up - he had seen all too clearly that Olympia's deathly pallid wax face had no eyes, but black hollows in their stead; she was a lifeless doll.

Spalanzani thrashed around on the floor; glass shards had cut his head, chest and arms, blood spurted as though from a fountain. But he pulled himself together. 'After him - after him - why do you waver? Coppelius - Coppelius has robbed me of my finest automaton-twenty years'work - life and limb invested - the clockwork - speech - step - all mine - the eyes - the eyes robbed from you. Cursed hellhound! After him-fetch me back Olympia-there are her eyes!'

Then Nathaniel spotted a pair of bloody eyes peering at him from the floor. Spalanzani grasped them with his uninjured hand and flung them at him so that they struck him on the breast. Then madness grabbed him with its burning claws and bored its way into his heart of hearts, tearing his thinking and feeling to shreds. 'Hopla - hopla - hopla! - ring of fire - ring of fire! Spin around, ring of fire - merrily - merrily! - wooden doll, hopla, lovely little wooden doll - turn turn!' - whereupon he flung himself at the Professor and pressed his fingers to his throat. He would have strangled him, but, roused by the racket, many people stormed in, tore the raging Nathaniel from the Professor's neck, managed to revive the old man and thereby saved his life. As strong as he was, Siegmund was not able to restrain the madman, who kept on screaming in a terrifying voice: 'Wooden doll, turn, turn!' and lashed about him with balled fists. Finally, it took the combined strength of many men to overpower him, fling him to the floor and tie him up. His words dissolved in a terrible beastly bellowing. In this pitiful state, still raving in a ghastly frenzy, he was taken to the madhouse.

But before I continue, gracious reader, with my account of the fate of that poor unfortunate, Nathaniel, those of you who took an interest in the masterful mechanic and maker of automaton, Spalanzani, can rest assured that he completely recuperated from his wounds. He was forced to leave the university, as Nathaniel's story had stirred up a public uproar and it was commonly held to be an altogether fraudulent swindle to try to pass off a wooden doll for a living person in proper society (for Olympia had effectively pulled the wool over their eyes). Jurists went so far as to call it a refined, and, therefore, all the harder to punish, swindle, which he succeeded in pulling off so skilfully that everyone (except for a few sharp-eyed students) was taken in, although they now put on a smart façade and pointed out all sorts of things that seemed suspicious to them at the time. But such smart-alecs ultimately brought no hard and fast evidence to the case. For instance, could it possibly have aroused anyone's suspicion that, according to the testimony of one elegant invitee, Olympia more often sneezed than yawned? This, maintained said elegant invitee, was the automaton's hidden rewind mechanism that noticeably creaked in the process, etc.

A professor of poetry and rhetoric took a pinch of snuff, snapped the tin shut, cleared his throat and launched into his erudite discourse: 'Most honoured ladies and gentlemen, can't you see where the shoe pinches? The whole thing is an allegory - a long-drawn-out metaphor! You catch my drift! *Sapienti sat* !'

But many honoured gentlemen derived little consolation from this view; the story of the automaton had taken root and a dreadful distrust of human figures seeped into their souls. In order to be completely convinced that they were not in love with a wooden doll, quite a few lovers demanded that their beloved sing something off-key and dance out of step, that they embroider and knit while being read to, play with Bowser, etc. , and above all that they not just listen, but also occasionally say something in such a way as to demonstrate that their words necessarily derive from actual thought and feeling. Consequently the loving bond of many couples grew stronger and all the more attractive, but others quietly drifted apart. 'One can hardly be held accountable for this,' was the common excuse. Yawning was all the rage at social teas, but people refrained from sneezing, so as to dispel any suspicions. Spalanzani

was obliged to leave the town, as has already been said, to escape the criminal investigation into his fraudulent introduction of an automaton into human society. Coppola also vanished.

When Nathaniel awakened, as though from an oppressive and terrible dream, he batted his eyes open and felt himself infused with an indescribable sense of well-being and heavenly warmth. He lay in his bed in his room in his father's house; Clara was bent over him and his mother and Lothar stood close by.

'At last, at last, oh my dearly beloved Nathaniel, you've pulled through at last, and now you're mine again!' Clara spoke the words with all her heart and took Nathaniel in her arms.

But bright, burning tears of sadness and rapture poured from his eyes and he moaned deeply: 'My Clara, my Clara!' Siegmund, who had faithfully stood by his friend in dire moments, entered the room. Nathaniel held out his hand: 'You, my faithful brother in need, you never abandoned me.'

Every last trace of madness was gone, and soon Nathaniel got better in the painstaking care of his mother, his beloved and his friends. Fortune had in the meantime returned to the house; for a miserly old uncle, from whom no one hoped to inherit a penny, had died and left Nathaniel's mother, in addition to a considerable fortune, a small estate in a pleasant district not far from the city. There they intended to move together, mother, Nathaniel with his Clara, whom he now planned to marry, and Lothar. Nathaniel had become more gentle and childlike than ever and only now really recognized Clara's heavenly pure, radiant spirit. No one reminded him, not even breathing the slightest hint, of the recent past.

It was only when Siegmund prepared to leave that Nathaniel spoke up: 'By God, my brother, I was heading down the path of no return, but in the nick of time an angel made me find the right way! It was my Clara, after all!' Siegmund cut him off, fearing that bitter memories might once again make him start raving.

The time approached when the four happy people planned to move out to the small country estate. At mid-day they went walking through the streets of the city, having bought some things. The tall town hall tower cast a long shadow over the market place. 'Oh!' said Clara, 'let's climb it one last time and gaze out at the distant

mountains!' No sooner said than done! Nathaniel and Clara both climbed the steps, mother went home with the maid, and Lothar, who was disinclined to mount the many steps, stayed down below. Now the two lovers stood arm in arm at the tower's highest lookout gallery and peered at the sweet-scented ring of woods, beyond which the blue mountains loomed like a giant city.

'Will you look at that strange little grey bush that seems to be slowly drawing near?' asked Clara.

Nathaniel mechanically reached into his coat pocket; he found Coppola's looking-glass and turned it sideways. There was Clara standing in the eye of the lens. A spas-modic quiver started up in his veins and arteries - turning deathly pale, he peered at Clara, but soon sparks of fire flashed from his rolling eyes; he let out a horrible cry like a hunted animal, jumped high in the air and with a curious cackle proceeded to scream out shrilly: 'Turn, little wooden doll, turn!' - and with a great burst of strength he grabbed hold of Clara and tried to hurl her off the balcony, but Clara clung for dear life to the metal railing.

Hearing the madman raving and Clara's terrified screams, and gripped by a terrible foreboding, Lothar clambered up the stairs, but the door to the second flight of steps was locked. Clara's piteous screams sounded louder and louder. Consumed with anger and fear, Lothar hurled himself against the door, which finally gave way.

Clara's cries grew fainter and fainter: 'Help! Save me! Save me!' till her voice went silent.

'She's done for - murdered by that madman!' Lothar screamed. The door to the lookout gallery was also locked. Desperation turned him into a lion; he broke down the door. God in heaven! Clara dangled in Nathaniel's mad grip over the edge of the railing, only holding on to the cast-iron railing by one hand. Quick as lightning, Lothar grabbed his sister, pulled her to safety and at the very same moment heaved a balled fist into the madman's face so that he tumbled backwards and let go of his prey.

Lothar raced back down the steps, his unconscious sister in his arms. She was saved. Meanwhile, Nathaniel kept flailing about on the lookout gallery and jumped high in the air and cried: 'Ring of fire, turn! Ring of fire, turn!'

Aroused by the screams, a throng gathered below, including the lawyer Coppelius, who had just come to town and made straight for the market place. Some people wanted to climb the tower to capture the madman, whereupon Coppelius laughed and said: 'Ha ha, just be patient, he'll be down shortly on his own initiative!' and looked on as the others raced up the steps.

Nathaniel suddenly stopped dead in his tracks. He leant down, spotted Coppelius below and with a shrill shriek - 'Ha! Eyes a pretty! Eyes a pretty!' - he leapt over the parapet. As Nathaniel landed, his skull smashed on the cobblestones, while Coppelius disappeared in the crowd.

Some years later Clara was said to have been spotted in some distant town seated, hand in hand, with a friendly man on a bench before the door of a lovely little country house, two bouncing boys playing at her feet. It might, therefore, be fair to suppose that Clara finally found the quiet domestic bliss that suited her cheerful, life-loving spirit and that Nathaniel in his torn and troubled state could never have given her.

[16] Daniel Niklaus Chodowiecki (1726-1801), Polish-German painter and printmaker.

[17] Count Alessandro di Cagliostro, aka Giuseppe Balsamo (1743-95), Italian occultist, forger and adventurer.



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Sketchy, Doubtful, Incomplete Jottings

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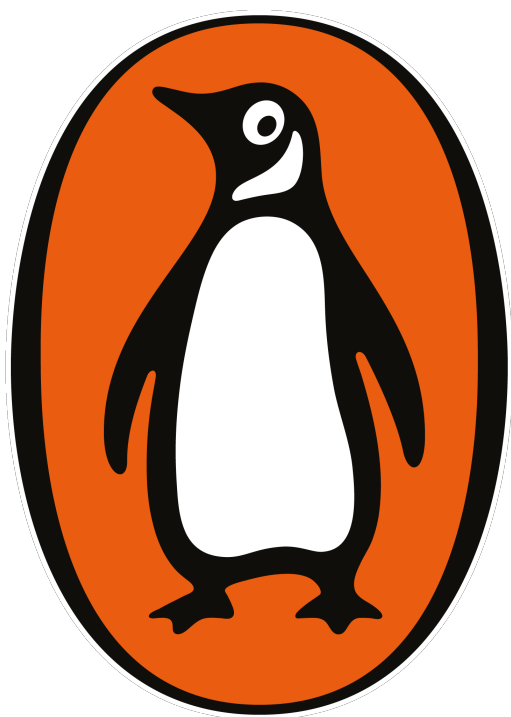
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正文目录

断篇残句，略记迷思

Sketchy, Doubtful, Incomplete Jottings

断篇残句，略记迷思

*

错误比真理更易被发现。前者流于表面，因而更易掌控；后者扎根深处，并非人人都可探知。

*

我们都以过去为生，又因过去而亡。

*

当我们需要学习某个伟大的事物时，便会立刻用我们与生俱来的可怜与不足来逃避学习。尽管如此，我们总还能学到些东西。

*

德国人根本不在乎与人共处，而是重视独处。无论是谁，都有一种专属自己的独处方式，不愿被他人剥夺。

*

经验的道德世界大部分都只由恶意和嫉妒构成。

*

迷信是生活的诗学，所以诗人迷信不是坏事。

*

信任是一个神奇的东西。仅听信一人之言，此人有可能出错或自欺欺人；而听信众人之言，众人也会发生同样的事情。所以人们往往不能发现真相。

*

我们不该心怀恶念，希望他人遭遇不快的生活。然而对于那些偶然陷入其中的人而言，这恰恰是他们性格的试金石，也考验着他们生而为人最核心品质。

*

一个见识有限的老实人往往能看穿最精明的骗子。

*

一个人如果感受不到爱意，那么就必须学会阿谀奉承，否则他将无法应付生活。

*

面对批评，人们既不能自卫，也无法反抗。必须蔑然视之，这样就能渐渐接受批评的存在。

*

群体离不开能干的人，却又总是感受到来自能者的压力。

*

不管是谁，哪怕是我的仆人，只要指出了我的错误，那么他就是我的主人。

*

自上而下或自下而上的往事，最终总会彼此相遇。

*

如果要求人们履行义务，却不赋予其任何权利，那么就必须开出丰厚的报酬。

*

一个地方的所谓浪漫，是一种宁静的崇高之感，这种感觉以历史的形式呈现，或者与之等同地，表现为孤独、疏离、避世。

*

辉煌雄壮的教堂圣歌《降临吧，造物之神》实际上完全是对天才的召唤，正因如此，它在精神强大的人们之中引起了强烈共鸣。

*

美体现了自然法则的奥秘，如果没有美这样具象化的呈现，我们将永远无从知晓自然法则的内涵。

*

我能保证直白坦率，却无法承诺不偏不倚。

*

不念恩义始终是一种弱点。我从未见过心无感激的能干之人。

*

我们是如此的目光短浅，总以为自己很有道理。于是可以想象，一个思维超群的人不但会犯错误，甚至还会为之欣喜。

*

我们很少看到仅凭温和的方式能够达到美好而正确的目的。相反，实际情况往往是迂腐导致迟滞不前，狂妄导致仓促行事。

*

文字和图像是相关联的，它们总在找寻彼此，就像我们在比喻与寓言中充分了解到的那样。一直以来，耳朵听到的话语或音乐，同样也会浮现在眼前。所以当我们还是小孩子时，在法典和上帝的施恩书中、在《圣经》和插图课本中，总能看到文字和图片均衡分布。说出无法用图像描绘的事物，或者画出无法用语言阐明的东西，这是完全合理的。然而人们经常错误地认识两者的关系，明明该使用图像，却要用语言表述，从而诞生了象征意义上加倍邪恶的神秘怪物。

*

任何投身于科学研究的人，都会先后受困于外界的阻挠与关注。人们一开始不愿承认我们研究成果的价值，而后又装模作样，好像已经知晓我们将会研究出什么成果。

*

一本逸事和格言汇编对于老于世故的人们来说价值连城，前提是他知道如何恰当地在对话中穿插前者，在合适的情景下想起后者。

*

人们说：“艺术家们，研究自然吧！”然而从平凡中提炼高贵、用畸形锻造美丽，并非小事。

*

失去判断，也就失去了记忆。

*

世界是一座有裂缝的钟，只会吱嘎作响，不能鸣声报时。

*

人们一定要善意地容忍青年业余爱好者的鲁莽冒失，因为待到日后年岁稍长，他们会成为艺术和大师们最忠实的拥趸。

*

对于坏到骨子里的恶人而言，幸灾乐祸是他们唯一的乐趣。

*

聪慧之人永远是最好的百科全书。

*

有些人从不犯错，因为他们从不做理性的事。

*

当我认识到我与自身、我与外部世界的关系时，我就称其为真理。如此一来，人人都有一个属于自己的真理，而且它永远不会改变。

*

特殊总会被普遍打败，而普遍总要让自己适应特殊。

*

没有人能主宰真正的创造力，只能任由它天马行空，自由发挥。

*

无论是谁，只要大自然开始向他揭示其公开的奥秘，他就会不可抗拒地向往自然最高贵的诠释者——艺术。

*

时间本身就是一种元素。

*

一个人永远无法知道，自己被赋予了多少人性。

*

对于理解毫无助益的差别，就不是差别。

*

显花植物 [1] 中仍然保留着许多隐花植物 [2] 的性状，即使用数百年的时间也不足以破解其中的奥秘。

*

混淆两个辅音，可能是因为发音器官不够灵活；而混淆单元音和双元音，则是因为自负而头脑发热。

*

一个人如果打算学习全部的法律，那么就根本不会有时间去触犯法律。

*

人不能为所有人而活，尤其不能为那些自己不愿与之相处的人而活。

*

对于后世的召唤来源于一种纯粹的生动感受，即确有永恒不朽的存在，即便不能立时得到认可，但必将为小众所喜爱，最终受到大众的追捧。

*

秘密还不是奇迹。

*

演员们俘获观众的心，却不会付出真情，他们是优雅的骗子。

*

草率而狂热地追捧有问题的天才，是我早年犯过的错误，而我永远也无法彻底摆脱它。

*

我愿与你坦诚相待，不想一拍两散，然而却无法做到。你行为不端，脚踩两只船，不仅没有吸引来追求者，还失去了自己的朋友。这该如何收场啊！

*

无论身居高位，还是出身卑微，人人都始终要为自己的人性买单。

*

自由作家如今炙手可热，全体公众都拜倒在他们脚下。

*

每当我听到人们谈论自由的创意想法时，都惊讶于人们竟如此热衷那些空洞无物的言论：一个想法是不可能自由的！它是强劲有力、自成一体的，如此便完成了上帝交付与它的神圣使命——富有创造力。相比而言，一个概念就更加不自由，因为它被赋予了另一个完全不同的使命。

*

然而，若要找寻自由的踪迹，那么就必须观察人们的态度，态度是有生命力的情绪。

*

但是态度很少是自由的，因为它直接来源于人本身，来源于人身边最亲近的关系和他的需求。

*

我们就此搁笔。我们应该以此为标准，衡量每天所听到的言论！

*

（面对自然，）我们一直以来只能利用自己的眼睛和想象事物的方式来加以探索。而自然本身就知道它现在想要什么，它曾经想要什么。

告诉我，你所在的地方！——阿基米德

去开发，你所在的地方！——诺泽 [3]

去说明，你所在的地方！——歌德

*

事物的旁观者总在竭力找寻普适的因果关系，并把所有类似的现象都归结于某一个共同的诱因，却很少考虑最直接的缘由。

*

聪明之人不会遭遇微小的蠢事。

*

任何一件艺术品，无论大小，及至最微小的细节，都全部取决于创作理念。

*

不存在没有比喻的诗，因为诗本身就是个比喻。

*

一位好脾气的老考官对一名学生耳语道：“你还什么都没学到呢。 [4] ”然后让他通过了考试。

*

卓越的事物往往深不可测，你可以用自己喜欢的方式开始接触它。

*

最平庸的小说也总好过平庸的读者，最差的小说也会对这一体裁做出些许贡献，使其整体精彩绝伦。

*

我在普遍的事物上花费了大量时间，直至我意识到优秀的人们在特殊领域取得的成就。

*

其实，只有当人们所知甚少时，才会以为自己了解某个事物。随着知识的积累，怀疑也会逐渐加深。

*

实际上，一个人的可爱之处在于他所犯下的错误。

*

德国人知道如何修正他人，却不知道如何施以援手。

*

有些人爱着自己的同类并在人群中找寻他们；有些人则爱着并追求与自己完全相反的人。

*

长期厌世之人必将变得凄惨可悲，比如视我们为敌的那些人就是这种情况。

*

妒忌与憎恶将观察者的视野限制在事物表面，哪怕他们已经具备了洞察力也无法深入。而如果借助善良与爱心的力量，就可以看穿世界和人心，如此他便可以期望达到至高境界了。

*

一位英国批评家称赞我拥有“全面的能力”，对此我必须致以最诚挚的感谢。

*

对于每一个友好的德国人而言，些许诗学天赋是有可取之处的，有了它就可以通过正确的方式，利用一定程度的尊重和不满来掩盖自己内心的真实想法，不管这是一种怎样的想法。

*

物质本身呈现在所有人的眼前，其内涵只有行家里手才能发掘，而其组成形式对于大多数人来说，就是一个谜。

*

人们偏爱生机与活力，青春又通过一颗不老的心得以实现。

*

我们以自己选择的方式认知世界，它总有黑白两面。

*

在实际生活中，人们总是一错再错，因此我们必须不厌其烦地重复说教正确的做法。

*

在罗马，除了全体罗马人之外，还有一群由雕像组成的民众。类似地，在我们所处的真实世界之外，还有一个几乎更加强大的幻想世界，那里居住着大多数的人。

*

人类就像红海：一条界线无法将他们彻底隔绝，就在界线的末端处，他们又会彼此交融。

*

辨别真实与虚假，区分确定与模糊，判定某件事应该受到怀疑还是谴责，这是历史学家的职责所在。

*

只有重视当下的人才会写出编年史。

*

思想一再重现，信念传播蔓延，形势一去不回。

*

在所有民族中，希腊人对生活的幻想最为美妙。

*

译者好比忙碌的皮条客，极力向我们推荐一位半遮半掩的美女，这是因为他们激起了我们对原著无法抗拒的向往。

*

我们乐于推崇先人，却不愿夸奖后代。只有父亲才不会嫉妒儿子的才能。

*

自谦不是什么难事，然而在虎落平阳的下坡路上，当你已经落后，还能承认不如你的人实则在你之上，就十分难得了。

*

我们的所有成就，都是舍弃自身，以求存在。

*

我们的所作所为都会令人倦怠，那些不知疲倦的人是幸福的！

*

希望是不幸之人的第二灵魂。

*

那些快乐地做事，并欣喜于自我成就的人，是幸福的。

*

人们心中同样存在着一种臣服于人的渴望，因此法国人的骑士制度实为一种“奴役” [5] 。

*

剧院里的视觉和听觉快感极大地限制了人们的反思。

*

经验可以无限延伸，而理论则不能在相同意义上净化并完善。对于前者，整个宇宙向着各个方向展开；而后者则封闭在人类能力的边界之内。因此，所有构建理论的模式都必定重现，这也解释了为什么会出现那样奇怪的现象：在丰富广博的经验中，一个狭隘的理论却能重新赢得人们青睐。

*

摆在我们眼前的永远是同一个世界，我们一直观察它或者猜度它。而生活在真实或虚假之中的也永远是同一批人，置身于后者的人们感到更加舒适。

*

真理与我们的天性相悖，谬误则不然，原因很简单：真理要求我们意识到自己的狭隘，而谬误却讨好我们，仿佛我们以某种方式脱离了局限。

*

自德国人“崛起” [6] 已有将近二十年的时间。一旦他们注意到了这点，他们就一定能意识到自己有多奇怪了。

*

相信自己可以做到曾经能够做到的事，是很自然的；而有些人相信自己可以做到自己从未做到过的事，这可能很奇怪，但并不罕见。

*

古往今来，对科学进步做出贡献的都是个人，而非时代自身。毒死苏格拉底也好，烧死扬·胡斯 [7] 也罢，都是时代的所作所为，它是一成不变的。

*

真正的象征主义，用特殊表现一般，并非把普通事物演绎为梦境或幻影，而是在片刻之间生动地揭示玄妙莫测的东西。

*

所有理想的事物，一旦现实对其提出要求，就会将现实事物与其自身一并吞没。信贷（纸币）与白银的关系、信贷与自身的关系就是这样。

*

技艺精湛常被视为利己主义。

*

一旦优秀的作品和它们值得颂扬的美德宣告终结，新教徒的多愁善感就立马取而代之。

*

如果人们能够挑选出好的建议，那么仿佛他自己就已经具备完成这件事的能力了。

*

所有智慧之事都已经被思考过了，人们只需将它们再思考一遍。

*

人如何认识自我呢？思考永远不会有用，而应该通过行动认知。

着手尝试履行你的义务，很快你就会发现自己是什么样的人。

*

不过你的义务是什么呢？是时代对你的要求。

*

理性世界可以被看作一个巨大的永生个体，他不停地造就必要的事物，甚至通过这种方式主宰了偶然的事物。

*

随着年龄增长，我愈发讨厌一些了不起的人，他们本应该约束自己的本性，从而把自己和身边人从专横的必要性中解放出来。我愈发讨厌他们出于某一个先入为主的错误概念，做着与自己愿望完全矛盾的事。最终，由于整体构想坍塌了，他只能在细节之处兀自烦恼，浪费时间。

*

精明能干之人，期待着吧！你有资格：

从伟人身上——获得仁慈

从当权者身上——获得优待

从务实和善良的人身上——获得帮助

从群体中——获得青睐

从个体中——获得爱！

*

那些业余爱好者习惯在他们竭尽所能之后找借口，说作品还没完成。不言而喻，他们永远也无法完成，因为他们从未真正地开始创作。大师只需寥寥数笔，就大功告成；无论细致与否，作品都已经完成了。最聪明的门外汉在不确定中摸索，越做越怀疑自己最初的设计。直到最后，无法弥补的错误才暴露出来，这样自然无法完成作品。

*

真正的艺术领域中不存在预备学校，只有事先准备。最好的准备

其实是让资质平庸的学生参与大师的创作。许多研磨颜料的助手最终成为伟大的画家。

*

另一种准备的方式是模仿，通过模仿一位化繁为简的大师，不经意地激发人们与生俱来的能力。

*

我们坚信艺术家研究自然的必要性和价值，然而也不否认，当意识到这种值得表扬的努力被滥用时，我们有多心痛。

*

我们深信，如果年轻的艺术家在研究自然的同时，不会思考如何打磨每一处细节，使其融为一体，从而转变为一幅美丽的图画，最后用画框装裱，那么他们就应该少接触甚至完全放弃对自然的研究，心甘情愿地把这份工作交给爱好者或者专家。

*

世界上的许多美是遗世独立的，但灵魂需要发现它们彼此之间的关联并以此创作出艺术品。花朵的魅力来源于停在它身旁的昆虫，来源于滋润它的露水，来源于为它提供养分的容器。每一丛灌木、每一棵树，都是因为周围的岩石和小溪而获得意义，都是因为一个适度的距离而增强了魅力。对于人类和所有动物而言，也是如此。

*

通过这种方法，年轻艺术家获得的好处是多样的。他学会了将彼此相关的事物组合在一起的最佳方式，而当他按照这种方式聪明地构思时，一定会贡献不少发明创造，一定会具备利用单一个体创造丰富整体的能力。

*

除了满足艺术教育的应有之义，他还取得了一个巨大的、不容忽视的优势：他学会了如何创作畅销的、在艺术爱好者看来优美而生动的画作。

*

这种类型的作品不必精雕细琢、尽善尽美，只要构思精巧、结构完整，它就能赢得艺术爱好者的青睐，效果甚至超过了那些更加大气

磅礴、内容更为详尽的作品。

*

让每一个年轻艺术家都去翻看他素描本和画夹里的草稿，想想运用上面的方法，能从中创作出多少赏心悦目、备受欢迎的作品吧！

*

我们这里探讨的不是更高层次的艺术，当然也可以对其进行讨论。我们不过是给艺术家一个警示，让他们迷途知返，为他们指明通往高级艺术的道路。

*

让艺术家们实践半年，不用炭笔，不用画刷，除非他有描绘眼前自然事物或风景的强烈愿望。如果他有天赋，那么我们所暗示的目的，很快就会显现出来。

*

告诉我你与谁交往，那么我就能说出你是什么样的人；如果我了解你正在做什么，我就能知道你会成为什么样的人。

*

每个人都必须按照自己的方式思考，因为他总能依据自己的思路发现某一个或者某一类真理，令他一生受益。但他不可以放任自己的思想恣意妄为，而应该时时自我监督，赤裸裸的本能并不适合人类。

*

无限制的行为，无论属于哪种类型，都会让人堕落。

*

人造和自然的作品中，最值得注意的是创作它的目的。

*

人们会迷失自我，也会在与他人相处时犯错，因为他们把手段当成了目的，而后徒劳无功，甚至令人讨厌。

*

我们的所思、所做，都是如此完美的纯粹和美好，外界的干预只

会破坏它。于是我们可以保持优势，接下来只需要把错放的东西归位，将毁掉的东西复原。

*

甄别不同程度的错误，并将正确的内容替换在相应的部分，是一件困难而辛苦的工作。

*

真理不必总以具象出现，它只要作为一种精神四处游荡，在所到之处促成和谐，那就足够了，就像钟声庄严而友善地回响在空中一样。

*

当我询问一些年轻的德国画家，甚至包括那些曾经旅居意大利的画家，为什么他们总要使用那样令人生厌的艳俗色调（尤其是在风景画中），为什么在画中丝毫不见和谐之美的踪迹，他们就以傲慢无礼的口吻振振有词地回答说，自己就是这样看待自然的。

*

康德为我们指出，存在一种理性批判，它是人类所具备的最高能力，也是人类自我反省的原因。康德的言论为我们带来了多大好处，人人都可自行查看。而我在此意义上也要提出一个观点，即一种感性批判也是必需的，如果艺术——尤其是德国艺术——还想以某种方式复苏并且以一种令人愉快的活泼步调向前进步的话。

*

为理性而生的人们需要接受大量的教育，这种教育会通过父母和老师的悉心照顾、通过温和的示范和严格的训练渐渐显现。同样地，还有正在逐渐成长的艺术家的，但不是天生完美，他们可能天生具有清晰的观察力，向形状、比例、动作投去欣喜的目光，但对于更高级的组合、姿态、光线、阴影、颜色缺乏天生的洞察力，而自己却不会意识到这一点。

*

如果他不愿向技艺更为高超的前辈和当代艺术家学习，弥补自己的不足，以求成为真正的艺术家，那么他就会误入歧途，抱残守缺，还以为这是在保护自己的原创性。因为我们所拥有的不仅仅是与生俱来的禀赋，还有后天能够习得的技能，这两者共同造就了我们。

*

普遍概念和狂妄傲慢总有可能酿成恐怖的悲剧。

*

光凭吹气是不能演奏笛子的，你们还必须让手指动起来。

*

植物学家们有一个植物种类库，他们称其为“不完全的 [8] ”。人们也可以说，存在不完整的、不全面的人，这些人的渴望及追求与他们的行动及成果不成比例。

*

资质最差的人可能是完满的，前提是他们要在自己的能力范围内活动。然而如果缺失了最重要的恰当比例，即便是最优秀的长处也会暗淡、失效和破碎。这种灾难性的缺失现在愈发常见，因为又有谁能跟得上这个日益膨胀、发展极度迅猛的当下，满足它提出的所有要求呢？

*

有些人既聪明又主动，还能了解并恰当而巧妙地利用自己的能力，只有他们才能了解世界的真实面目。

*

大错特错：高估自己的能力，低估自己的价值。

*

我时不时会遇到这样一种年轻人，在他身上我不期望看到任何改变和提升。然而让我担心的是，我看到一些十分优秀的人在时代的浪潮中随波逐流，我一直想要提醒他们的是：正因为一个人的舢板易碎，他的手上才会拿着船桨。这样他就不会被暴虐的风浪裹挟，而可以按照自己的想法行动。

*

但是一个年轻人如何才能看清，那些人人追求、赞同、支持的东西，实则有害而应该受到谴责的？为什么他不该放任自我以及自己的天性一起跟随潮流？

*

我们这个时代等不及任何事物的成熟，最大的悲哀是下一秒会将上一秒吞噬，虚度光阴的人们总是生活拮据，勉强糊口，无所作为。用来填满报纸版面的新闻已经足够多了！一个聪明的人或许还能够插入一两条。这样一来，一个人所做之事、所付出的努力、所写的文字，包括他计划中的创作，都会被公之于众。没有人被允许快乐或忧伤，除非作为他人的消遣，于是新闻就这样在街头巷尾传播，进而在城市之间、国家之间扩散，最终在各个大洲之间流行开来。这一切都基于速度至上的原则。

*

就像蒸汽机很难被压制一样，人们的行为也很难被规范：商贸蓬勃繁荣，纸币迅速流通，人们债台高筑，为的却是偿还之前的欠款。这一切对于现在的年轻人而言，都是可怕的东西。如果他天生性情沉静，既不会向世界索取无度，也不会任由外界定义自己，那么他将无比幸福！

*

然而当下的主流观念在方方面面威胁着他，所以最为重要的是及早让他看清自己的本心，明确自己的方向。

*

随着人年岁渐长，天真无邪的话语和行为变得愈发珍贵。我一直试图向身边人说明真诚、直白和轻率之间的区别，以及与其说三者之间有什么不同，莫不如说是一种从最无害到最有害的过渡，对其必须加以观察或者更多地去感受。

*

于是我们必须训练自己为人处世的技巧，否则我们就有可能在无意间失去从别人那里获得的好意。人们或许能在生活中自己逐渐意识到这一点，不过事先一定会付出巨大的代价。可惜的是，我们不能为后人省下这笔学费。

*

艺术和科学之于生活，是一种多变的关系，受到艺术和科学所处的层次、时代的特性以及其他众多偶然因素的影响。因此，要说明这一切并非易事。

诗学往往在各种情况的最初阶段发挥作用，无论这里所说的情况是完全原始的，还是半开化的，抑或是指某一文化通过认知外来文化而正在转变。在这些情况下，人们可以说，新事物的作用完全得以发挥。

*

而音乐领域的上佳之作则并不需要多少创新，实际上，一个音乐作品越是经典，人们就越熟悉它，因而它能发挥的作用也就越大。

*

或许，音乐将艺术的价值体现得最为淋漓尽致，因为它的创作不需要用量精准的原材料，它是纯粹的形式和内容，使表达的一切东西变得高级而尊贵。

*

音乐要么是神圣的，要么是世俗的。音乐的神圣完全与音乐的价值相称，它也实现了音乐对生活影响的最大化，这种影响历经漫长的岁月却始终如一。世俗的音乐则应该完全是令人愉悦的。

*

杂糅了神圣和世俗特质的音乐是亵渎上帝的、粗制滥造的，它喜欢宣泄脆弱、可怜和悲哀的情绪，听上去乏味无聊。因为一方面，它不够庄重肃穆，称不上神圣；另一方面，它又缺乏世俗音乐的主要特征——令人愉悦。

*

教堂音乐的神圣庄严与世俗音乐的活泼欢快是两个核心，真正的音乐都围绕在它们周围。在这两点核心上，音乐总会不可避免地催生出虔诚或舞蹈。将两者混合会导致错误，将两者削弱会导致乏味，而如果音乐寻求与教育性的、描写性的以及其他类似的诗歌结合起来，那么就会变得冰冷。

*

事实上，雕塑艺术中，只有那些顶级的作品才能发挥作用。诚然，出于一两个原因，中等水平的作品会给我们留下深刻印象，但是它们导致的困惑多于它们带来的快乐。

因此，雕塑艺术必须寻找对于素材的兴趣，这种兴趣往往出现在名人画像中。然而如果雕塑艺术打算同时兼顾真实和高贵的话，那么

在此方面它也要达到一定的高度。

*

绘画是所有艺术中最自由、最闲适的一种。说它最自由，是因为虽然从原料和创作对象的角度出发，有些作品只能算作手工艺品，几乎称不上艺术，但是也会有许多人宽容它，喜欢它。还有一部分原因在于，不管一个人是否接受过教育，都会对一个工于技法而空洞无物的作品赞叹不已。只需要稍稍接近一些艺术，便可以更受欢迎。真实的颜色、外表和可见对象彼此之间的关系已经令人赏心悦目，而既然人眼已经对任何事物见怪不怪，那么一个错误形象或者画面对于视觉的冲击，就不如杂音对听觉的冲击大。人们可以容忍最糟糕的图画，因为人们对那些外表更加丑陋的东西都已经司空见惯了。一个画家只要和艺术家稍稍沾边，就已经可以比同样层次的音乐家更受欢迎了；此外，一个资质平庸的画家至少可以按照自己的意愿单干，而一个资质平庸的音乐家必须通过与人合作来寻求一些共鸣。

*

当我们探讨艺术作品时，是否应该比较它们孰高孰低？我的回答是：艺术鉴赏家应该比较，因为他们的脑海中存在这样的概念，知道艺术可以并应该创作出什么样的作品。对于还在接受艺术教育的业余爱好者们来说，如果想收获最多，那么就不应比较，而应该单独鉴赏每一个作品：这样一来，他会渐渐形成对于普遍事物的直觉和观念。外行之人对于艺术品的比较，实则只会方便他们骄傲自负地妄下论断。

*

对于真理的热爱表现为到处发现并珍惜美好的事物。

*

历史学的人情味表现为歌颂当代的美德与成就时，也不忘考虑前人的功德。

*

历史给我们的最好的东西，就是它所激起的热情。

*

特质唤醒特质。

*

人们必须想到，许多人也想表达一些有意义的东西，即便内容不多，但依旧为世界带来了一些特别的东西。

*

深入而认真思考的人们与大众关系不佳。

*

如果要我倾听别人的观点，那这一观点一定是以一种积极的方式表达的。那些麻烦的想法在我自己的脑子里已经够多了。

*

迷信是人类本性的一部分，当我们想要将其彻底驱逐时，它会逃到最奇怪的角落里，等它以为安全了一些时，又在那里突然冒出来。

*

如果我们不追求过于细致地了解事物，那么我们会掌握更多知识。只有当一个物体以四十五度角的姿态呈现时，我们才能理解它。

*

显微镜和望远镜实则扰乱了人类天生的感官。

*

我对很多事情保持沉默，因为我不想误导人们。如果惹我生气的事情让他们感到高兴，我就会心满意足。

*

任何解放我们的思想却没有让我们主宰自我的东西，都会使人堕落。

*

一件艺术品的内容比它的创作方式更令人感兴趣。人们可以详细了解前者，却无法完整地掌握后者。所以人们在欣赏作品时会找出重点，最终当人们仔细观察这些地方，就会发现整体的效果并没有缺失，只是无人知晓而已。

*

“诗人是从哪里想出这一句的？”这一问题也仅仅是对内容的提问，没有人能从中读出有关方式的东西。

*

想象力只有通过艺术，尤其是诗歌，才能得以规范。最可怕的是没有品位的想象力。

*

矫揉造作是一种畸形的理想主义，一种主观的意识，因此它往往并不缺乏智慧的成分。

*

文献学家依赖传世文本的一致性。比如有一份手稿，它存在真实的漏洞和笔误，导致文义中断，以及其他可能被人指责的不足之处。而后又出现了一份抄本，接着冒出来了第三个，比较这些版本对于理解和理性看待原作的意义越来越大。他进一步深入研究，要求自己在不借助外界工具的情况下，更多地掌握并描述所讨论问题的一致性。因为这需要一种特殊技巧，要求对已故作者格外深入的了解和一定程度的创造力。所以人们不该责备文献学家对于鉴赏品位品头论足，即使他们在这方面并非每次都成功。

*

诗人依赖描写。描写的最高境界是可以与真实媲美，这意味着诗人的描写如此活灵活现，以至于人人都以为那与真实情况一般无二。最高水平的诗歌是表现外在的，它越是想回归内在，质量就越是下降。有些诗歌只描绘内在世界而不通过外在使其具象化，或者没有让读者透过内在而感受到外在，这两种诗歌都是诗学堕落于平庸的最后一步。

*

雄辩术依赖于诗歌的所有优势和权利，它抢占了诗歌的地位，还滥用诗歌，以求获得市民生活中某些眼前的、合乎或违背道德的外在优势。

*

文学是断篇的碎片。在发生的事情和人们说出的话中，只有最小的部分会被书面记录下来。而在人们所记录的内容中，只有极为微小的部分会留存下来。

*

尽管拜伦勋爵的天赋是狂野奔放的、不讨人喜欢的，但几乎没有人能比得上他与生俱来的真实与大气。

*

所谓民歌的真正可贵之处在于，它们的创作主题直接取材于自然。受过良好教育的诗人如果方法得当，也能利用这一优势。

*

但是民歌的优点总有一个前提，即相比于受过教育的人们，普通人能更好地理解简洁的事物。

*

尚未成熟的天才阅读莎士比亚是危险的，莎翁的读者会不由自主地去模仿他，并且误认为自己是独立创作。

*

只有历史的亲历者才有资格评判历史。这是放诸四海皆准的道理。德国人只有先拥有了自己的文学，才有资格评判文学。

*

一个人只有在享受他人善意的时候，才是真正有生命力的。

*

虔敬不是目的，而是手段，凭借精神最为纯洁的宁静抵达最高级的文化。

*

正因如此，我们发现那些把虔敬当成目的和终点的人们，大多变成了伪君子。

*

当一个人老去时，他需要做的事情比年轻时更多。

*

已经履行义务的人们总感觉自己依然背负着债务，那是因为人们

永远无法满足对自我的期待。

*

只有冷酷无情的人才会感受到人性的缺陷，所以为了认清这些缺陷，人们必须变得冷酷，但仅仅是出于这个目的，不能过头。

*

终极的幸福是，我们的不足得到改进，我们的错误得到修正。

*

有三种人只有在特定的时机才能看清：

战争中见真英雄，
愤怒中见真智者，
患难中见真朋友。

*

三种愚人：

傲慢的男人，
恋爱的少女，
嫉妒的妇人。

*

疯子是：

教育蠢材的人，
反驳智者的人，
被空话感染而热血沸腾的人，
相信妓女的人，
与不靠谱之人分享秘密的人。

*

人们只能与自己的同类生活，然而又不能，因为时间一长，他便不能忍受有人与他相同。

*

无论从哪一个角度观察自然，它都能孕育出无限。

*

如果有人想要知道一个东西的位置，那么他此前必定已经找到过它。

[1] 显花植物：多指被子植物，花是其特有的生殖器官。

[2] 隐花植物：又称孢子植物，在繁殖阶段不形成显著花，通过孢子进行繁殖。

[3] 卡尔·威廉·诺泽（Karl Wilhelm Nose, 1753—1835），德国医生、矿物学家。

[4] 原文为拉丁语。

[5] 原文为法语servage。

[6] 指1813年莱比锡民族大会战中，俄罗斯、普鲁士、奥地利及其他各国联军在莱比锡击败拿破仑。

[7] 扬·胡斯（约1369—1415），捷克基督教思想家、哲学家、改革家，宗教改革先驱。他认为一切应该以《圣经》为唯一的依归，否定教皇的权威性，反对赎罪券，因此被天主教会视为异端，处以火刑。

[8] 原文为意大利语。

‘I can promise to
be candid, not,
however, to be
impartial.’

Sketchy, Doubtful, Incomplete Jottings

It is much easier to recognize error than to find truth; the former lies on the surface, this is quite manage-able; the latter resides in depth, and this quest is not everyone's business.

*

We all live on the past and perish by the past.

*

When we are called to learn something great, we at once take refuge in our native poverty and yet have still learnt something.

*

The Germans are indifferent about staying together, yet they do want to be on their own. Each person, never mind who he may be, has his own way of being alone and is unwilling to be deprived of this.

*

The empirical-moral world consists largely of bad will and envy.

*

Superstition is the poetry of life; so it does the poet no harm to be superstitious.

*

Trust is a curious matter. Listen only to one person: he may be wrong or deceiving himself; listen to many: they are in the same case, and as a rule you don't really discover the truth.

*

One should not wish anyone disagreeable conditions of life; but

for him who is involved in them by chance, they are touchstones of character and of the most decisive value to man.

*

A limited, honest man often sees right through the knavery of the sharpest tricksters.

*

One who feels no love must learn to flatter, otherwise he won't make out.

*

You can neither protect nor defend yourself against criticism; you have to act in defiance of it and this is gradually accepted.

*

The crowd cannot do without efficient people and always finds efficiency burdensome.

*

Anyone who tells on my faults is my master, even if it happens to be my servant.

*

Memoirs from above downwards, or from below upwards: they are always bound to meet.

*

If you demand duties from people and will not con-cede them rights, you have to pay them well.

*

When a landscape is described as romantic, this means that there is a tranquil sense of the sublime in the form of the past, or, what amounts to the same, of solitude, remoteness, seclusion.

*

The splendid liturgical song '*Veni Creator Spiritus*' is in actual fact a call addressed to genius; and this is also why it appeals powerfully to people who are spirited and strong.

*

Beauty is a manifestation of secret natural laws which without this appearance would have remained eternally hidden from us.

*

I can promise to be candid, not, however, to be impartial.

*

Ingratitude is always a kind of weakness. I have never known competent people to be ungrateful.

*

We are all so blinkered that we always imagine we are right; and so we can imagine an extraordinary spirit, a person who not only makes a mistake but even enjoys being wrong.

*

Completely moderate action to achieve what is good and right is very rare; what we usually see is pedantry seeking to retard, impertinence seeking to precipitate.

*

Word and image are correlatives which are always in quest of one another as metaphors and comparisons show us clearly enough. Thus, from of old, what is inwardly said or sung for the ear is at the same time intended for the eye. And so in ages which seem to us childlike, we see in codes of law and salvational doctrine, in bible and in primer, a continual balance of word and image. If they put into words what did not go into images, or formed an image of what could not be put into words, that was quite proper; but people often went wrong about this and used the spoken word instead of the pictorial image, which was the origin of those doubly wicked symbolically mystical monsters.

*

Anyone who devotes himself to the sciences suffers, firstly through retardations and then through preoccupations. To begin with, people are reluctant to admit the value of what we are providing; later on they act as though they already knew what we might be able to provide.

*

A collection of anecdotes and maxims is the greatest treasure for a man of the world-as long as he knows how to weave the former into apposite points of the course of conversation, and to recall the latter on fitting occasions.

*

People say, 'Artist, study nature!' But it is no small matter to develop what is noble out of what is common, beauty out of what lacks form.

*

Where concern is lost, memory fares likewise.

*

The world is a bell that is cracked: it clatters, but does not ring out clearly.

*

One must put up kindly with the pressing overtures of young dilettantes: with age they become the truest votaries of art and of the master.

*

When people really deteriorate, their only contribution is malicious joy in the misfortune of others.

*

Intelligent people are always the best encyclopaedia.

*

There are people who never make mistakes because they never have sensible projects.

*

Knowing my attitude to myself and to the world outside me is what I call truth. And so everyone can have his own truth and yet it remains the self-same truth.

*

What is particular is eternally defeated by what is general; the general has eternally to fit in with the particular.

*

No one can control what is really creative, and every-body just has to let it go its own way.

*

Anyone to whom nature begins to unveil its open mystery feels an irresistible yearning for nature's noblest interpreter, for art.

*

Time is itself an element.

*

Man never understands how anthropomorphic he is.

*

A difference which gives reason nothing to register is not a difference.

*

In phanerogamy there is still so much of what is cryptogamic that centuries will not suffice to unriddle it.

*

Exchanging one consonant for another might perhaps be due to some organ deficiency, transforming a vowel into a diphthong the result of conceited pathos.

*

If one had to study all laws, one would have no time at all to transgress them.

*

One can't live for everyone, more especially not for those with whom one wouldn't care to live.

*

A call to posterity originates in the clear vital feeling that there is such a thing as permanence and that even if this is not immediately acknowledged it will, in the end, win the recognition of a minority and finally of a majority. bear the thought that anyone is like him.

*

Mysteries do not as yet amount to miracles.

*

Actors win hearts and don't give away their own; they cheat, but do it with charm.

*

Reckless, passionate favouritism of problematic men of talent was a failing of my younger years of which I could never completely rid myself.

*

I would like to be honest with you without us parting company; but this isn't possible. You are acting wrongly and trying to sit between two stools, not getting any followers and losing your friends. What's to come of this!

*

No matter whether you're of high rank or low, you can't avoid paying the price of your common humanity.

*

Writers of a liberal persuasion are now on to a good game; they have the whole public at their feet.

*

When I hear talk about liberal ideas, I'm always amazed how people like to delude themselves with the sound of empty words: an idea is not allowed to be liberal! Let it be forceful, doughty, self-enclosed, so as to fulfil its God-given mission of being product-ive. Still less is a concept allowed to be liberal; for its commission is completely different.

*

But where we have to look for liberality is in people's attitudes and these are their feelings come to life.

*

Attitudes, however, are seldom liberal because an attitude springs directly from the person, his immediate context and his needs.

*

We'll leave it at that; by this yardstick we should measure what we hear day after day!

*

It's always only our eyes, the way we imagine things; nature quite alone knows what it wills, what it intended.

‘Give me where I stand!’

Archimedes.

‘Take where you stand!’

Nose.

Declare where you stand!

G.

It is general causal relationships which the observer will explore, and he will attribute similar phenomena to a general cause; rarely will he think of the immediate cause.

*

No intelligent man experiences a minor stupidity.

*

In every work of art, great or small, and down to the smallest detail, everything depends on the initial conception.

*

There is no such thing as poetry without tropes as poetry is a single trope writ large.

*

A kindly old examiner whispers into a schoolboy's ear: 'Etiam nihil didicisti' [you haven't learnt anything as yet] and gives him a pass-mark.

*

Excellence is unfathomable; tackle it in what way you will.

*

The most mediocre novel is still better than mediocre readers, indeed the worst novel still participates in some way in the excellence of the genre as a whole.

*

I was intent on pursuing what is general until such time as I came to comprehend the achievement of outstanding people in what is particular.

*

You really only know when you know little; doubt grows with knowledge.

*

It's really a person's mistakes that make him endearing.

*

The Germans know how to correct, but not how to give supportive help.

*

There are people who love and seek out those like themselves, and, then again, those who love and pursue their opposites.

*

Anyone who had always allowed himself to take so poor a view of the world as our adversaries make out would have turned into a rotten subject.

*

Envy and hatred limit the observer's view to the surface even if this is also associated with acumen; if this, however, goes hand in hand with kindness and love, the observer can see right through the world and mankind; indeed, he can hope to reach the Allhighest.

*

An English critic credits me with 'panoramic ability', for which I must tender my most cordial thanks.

*

A certain measure of poetical talent is desirable for every German as the right way to cloak his condition, of whatever kind it may be, with a certain degree of worth and charm.

*

The subject-matter is visible to everyone, content is only discovered by him who has something to contribute, and form is a mystery to most.

*

People's inclinations favour what is vitally alive. And youth again forms itself by youth.

*

We may get to know the world however we choose, it will always keep a day and a night aspect.

*

Error is continually repeated in action, and that is why we must not tire of repeating in words what is true.

*

Just as in Rome, besides the Romans, there was also a people of statues, so, too, apart from this real world, there is also an illusory world, mightier almost, where the majority live.

*

People are like the Red Sea: the staff has hardly kept them apart, immediately afterwards they flow together again.

*

The historian's duty: to distinguish truth from falsehood, certainty from uncertainty, doubtful matters from those which are to be rejected.

*

Only someone to whom the present is important writes a chronicle.

*

Thoughts recur, convictions perpetuate themselves; circumstances pass by irretrievably.

*

Among all peoples, the Greeks have dreamt life's dream most beautifully.

*

Translators are to be regarded as busy matchmak-ers who exalt the great loveliness of a half-veiled beauty: they kindle an irresistible longing for the original.

*

We like to rate Antiquity higher than ourselves, but not posterity. It's only a father who doesn't envy a son's talent.

*

It's not at all hard to subordinate yourself; but when you are set on a declining course, in the descendant, how hard it is to admit that what is, in fact, below you is above you!

*

Our whole achievement is to give up our existence in order to exist.

*

All we devise and do is exhausting; happy the man who doesn't get weary.

*

'Hope is the second soul of those who are unfortunate.'

*

He who acts as though he's glad, and is glad about what he has done, is happy.

*

There is, too, in man a desire to serve; hence French chivalry is a form of service, '*servage*'.

*

'In the theatre visual and aural entertainment greatly limit reflection.'

*

Experience can be extended into infinity; in not quite the same sense theory can be purified and perfected. To the former the universe is open in all directions; the latter remains locked within the confines of human capacity. This is why all modes of conceptual thinking are bound to reappear, and that is why, strangely enough, a theory of limited value can regain favour in spite of wider experience.

*

It is always the same world which lies open to our view, is always contemplated or surmised, and it is always the same people who live in truth or wrong-headedly, more comfortably in the latter way than in the former.

*

Truth is contrary to our nature, not so error, and this for a very simple reason: truth demands that we should recognize ourselves as limited, error flatters us that, in one way or another, we are unlimited.

*

It is now nearly twenty years since all Germans 'tran-scend'. Once they notice this, they are bound to realize how odd they are.

*

It is natural enough that people should imagine they can still do what they were once able to do; that others imagine themselves capable of doing what they never could do is perhaps strange but not infrequent.

*

At all times only individuals have had an effect on scientific

knowledge, not the epoch. It was the epoch that did Socrates to death by poison, the epoch that burnt Huss: epochs have always remained true to type.

*

This is true symbolism, where the particular represents the general, not as dream and shadow, but as a live and immediate revelation of the unfathomable.

*

As soon as the ideal makes a demand on the real, it in the end consumes it and also itself. Thus credit (paper money) consumes silver and its own self.

*

Mastery is often seen as egoism.

*

As soon as good works and their merit cease, sentimentality immediately takes over in the case of Protestants.

*

If you can seek out good advice, it's as though you yourself have the capacity for action.

*

There's nothing clever that hasn't been thought of before - you've just got to try to think it all over again.

*

How can we learn self-knowledge? Never by taking thought but rather by action. Try to do your duty and you'll soon discover what you're like.

*

But what is your duty? The demands of the day.

*

The reasonable world is to be seen as a great individual not subject to mortality and forever bringing about what is needed, in this way even mastering chance events.

*

The longer I live, the more depressing I find the spectacle of a man, whose optimal function is to be a lord over nature so as to free himself and his fellow men from tyrannical necessity, doing the exact opposite of what he really wants to do, and all because of some preconceived false notion; and in the end, because the structure of the project as a whole has been ruined, he just muddles on miserably with odd details.

*

Man of ability and action, be worthy of, and expect:

grace -from those who are great

favour -from the powerful

a helping hand -from those who are active and good

affection -from the crowd

love -from an individual

*

When a dilettante has done what lies within his capacity to complete a work, he usually makes the excuse that of course it's as yet unfinished. Clearly, it never can be finished because it was never properly started. The master of his art, by means of a few strokes, produces a finished work; fully worked out or not, it is already completed. The cleverest kind of dilettante gropes about in uncertainties and, as the work proceeds, the dubiousness of the initial structure becomes more and more apparent. Right at the end the faulty nature of the work, impossible to correct, shows up clearly and so, of course, the work can never be finished.

*

For true art there is no such thing as preparatory schooling, but

there are certainly preparations; the best, however, is when the least pupil takes a share in the master's work. Colour-grinders have turned into very good artists.

*

Copycat work, casually stimulating people's natural activity in imitating an important artist who achieves with ease what is difficult, is quite a different matter.

*

We are quite convinced that it is essential for the artist to make studies from nature; we won't however deny that it often grieves us to perceive the misuse of such praiseworthy endeavours.

*

We are convinced that the young artist should rarely, if at all, set out to do studies from nature without at the same time considering how he might round off every sheet and make a whole of it, transforming this unit into a pleasing picture set within a frame, and offer it courteously to the amateur and the expert.

*

Much that is beautiful stands as an isolated entity in the world, but the spirit has to discover connections and thus to create works of art. The flower unfolds its full beauty only through the insect that clings to it, through the dewdrop that makes it glisten, through the calix from out of which it may be drawing its last sustenance. No bush, no tree whose charm may not be enhanced by a neighbouring rock or brook, by a simple prospect in the distance. And so it is with human figures and so with animals of every kind.

*

The advantages accruing to a young artist in this way are indeed manifold. He learns to think out the best way of fitting together related things and, when he thus composes intelligently, he will, in the end, assuredly not lack what is termed invention, the capacity to develop a manifold whole out of single units.

*

And, as well as conforming to the tenets of art pedagogy, he gains the great advantage, by no means to be despised, of learning to create saleable pictures that are a pleasure and delight to the art lover.

*

A work of this kind need not be complete down to the last detail; if it is well envisaged, thought out and finished, it is often more appealing to the art lover than a larger, more fully completed picture.

*

Let every young artist take a look at the studies in his sketch book and portfolio and consider how many of these sheets he might have been able to make enjoyable and desirable in this way.

*

We are not talking about the higher regions of art which might of course also be discussed; this is no more than a warning to recall the artist from a devious path and point the way to higher regions.

*

Let the artist put this to a practical test, if only for half a year, and not make use of either charcoal or brush unless he has the firm intention of actually structuring a picture out of the natural object or scene confronting him. If he has inborn talent, what we intended by our comments will soon be revealed.

*

Tell me with whom you consort and I will tell you who you are; if I know how you spend your time, then I know what might become of you.

*

Every individual must think in his own personal way; for on his way he always finds a truth or a kind of truth which helps him get

through life. But he mustn't let himself go, he has got to keep a check on himself; purely naked instinct is unseemly.

*

Absolute activity, of whatever kind, ultimately leads to bankruptcy.

*

In the works of man as in those of nature, what most deserves notice is his intention.

*

People are at a loss with regard to themselves and one another because they use means as ends, and then, because of sheer busyness, nothing whatever happens or perhaps, even worse, something which is disagreeable.

*

What we think out, what we undertake, should have achieved such perfect clarity and beauty that any-thing the world could do to it could only spoil it; this would leave us with the advantage of only having to adjust what has been misplaced and refashion what has been destroyed.

*

Whole, half-and quarter-errors are most difficult and wearisome to put right, to sort out.

*

Truth need not always take corporeal form; enough for it to be around in spiritual form, bringing about harmony as it floats on the breeze as a spiritual presence like the solemn-friendly sound of bells.

*

When I ask young German artists, even those who have spent some time in Italy, why they use such crudely bright colours, especially in their landscapes, and seem to shun anything like

harmony, they are apt to answer boldly and cheerfully that this is pre-cisely how they see nature.

*

Kant has drawn our attention to the fact that there is such a thing as a Critique of Reason, and that this, the highest faculty possessed by man, has cause to keep watch over itself. Let everyone judge for himself what great advantages the voice of Kant has brought him. I, for my part, would similarly like to urge that a Critique of the Senses should be worked out, if art, especially German art, is in any way to recover and to proceed and progress at a pleasing and lively pace.

*

Man, born to be a creature of reason, nevertheless needs much education, whether this comes gradually by way of careful parents and tutors, by peaceful example or by stern experience. Similarly, there is such a thing as a born potential artist, but no one is born perfect. He may have an inborn clarity of vision, a happy eye for shape, proportion, movement: but without becoming aware of this lack, he may be with-out a natural instinct for composition in its higher aspects, for correct tonal proportion, for light, shade and colouring.

*

Now if he is not inclined to learn from more highly skilled contemporary or earlier artists what he himself lacks in order to be a true artist, he will lag behind his own potential because of a wrong-headed idea that he is safeguarding his own originality; for we own not just what we are born with, but also what we can acquire, and this is what we are.

*

General notions and great conceit are always poten-tial creators of shocking misfortune.

*

‘You don't play the flute just by blowing - you've got to move

your fingers.'

*

Botanists have a plant-category which they call 'Incompletae'; similarly one can say that there are incomplete and uncompleted people. These are the ones whose longings and strivings are out of proportion with what they actually do and what they achieve.

*

The least gifted man can be complete if he keeps within the limits of his capacities and skills, but real excellence is obscured, cancelled out and destroyed if there is not that absolutely essential sense of proportion. This disastrous lack is bound to crop up frequently in our own day; for who can possibly keep up with the demands of an exorbitant present, and that at maximum speed?

*

Only those people who are both clever and active, who are clear about their own capacities and can use them with moderation and common sense, will really get on in the world as it is.

*

A great failing: to see yourself as more than you are and to value yourself at less than your true worth.

*

From time to time I meet a young man whom I wouldn't wish different or improved in any way; but what worries me is that some of these people seem to me just the kind who let themselves drift along with the current of the stream of time, and this is where I keep wanting to point out that man is put at the helm of his own fragile craft precisely so that he may not follow the whim of the waves, the determination of his own insight.

*

But how is a young man independently to reach the insight that what everyone else pursues, approves and furthers may be reprehensible and damaging? Why shouldn't he let himself and his

own natural disposition go the same way?

*

The greatest evil of our time - which lets nothing come to fruition - is, I think, that one moment consumes the next, wastes the day within that same day and so is always living from hand to mouth without achieving anything of substance. Don't we already have news-sheets for every point of the day! A clever man might well be able to slip in one or two more. In this way everything that anyone does, is working at or writing, indeed plans to write, is dragged out into the open. No one is allowed to be happy or miserable except as a pastime for the rest of the world, and so news rushes from house to house, from town to town, from one country to another, and, in the end, from one continent to the next, and all on the principle of speed and velocity.

*

As little as steam engines can be quelled, so little is this possible in the behavioural realm: the lively pace of trade, the rapid rush of paper-money, the inflated increase of debts made in order to pay off other debts, these are the monstrous elements to which a young man is now exposed. How good for him if nature has endowed him with a moderate and calm attitude so that he makes no disproportionate claims on the world nor yet allows it to determine his course!

*

But the spirit of the day threatens him in every sphere and nothing is more important than to make him realize early enough the direction in which his will should steer.

*

As one grows older, the most innocent talk and action grow in significance, and to those I see around me for any length of time I always try to point out the shades of difference between sincerity, frankness and indiscretion, and that there is really no difference between them, but just an intangible transition from the most harmless comment to the most damaging, and that this subtle transition has to be observed or indeed felt.

*

In this matter we have to use tact, else we run the risk of losing people's favour without being in the least aware of this and precisely in the way we came by it. This we probably come to understand in the course of life, but only after we have paid a high price for our experience, and from this we cannot, alas, spare those who come after us.

*

The relationship of the arts and the sciences to life is very varied according to the way their temporal stages are related to the nature of their epoch and a thousand other chance contingencies; which is why it isn't easy to make sense of all this.

Poetry is most effective at the start of any set of circumstances, irrespective of whether these are quite crude, half-cultured, or when a culture is in the process of change as it begins to become aware of a foreign culture; in such cases one can claim the effect of the new is definitely to be felt.

*

Music at its best hardly needs to be new; indeed, the older it is, the more familiar to us, the more effective it can be.

*

The dignity of art perhaps appears most eminent in music because it has no material of a kind for which detailed accounting might be needed. It is all form and content and it heightens and ennobles all it expresses.

*

Music is either sacred or profane. What is sacred accords completely with its nobility, and this is where music most immediately influences life; such influence remains unchanged at all times and in every epoch. Profane music should be altogether cheerful.

*

Music of a kind that mixes the sacred with the pro-fane is godless and shoddy music which goes in for expressing feeble, wretched, deplorable feelings, and is just insipid. For it is not serious enough to be sacred and it lacks the chief quality of the opposite kind: cheerfulness.

*

The numinous nature of church music, the cheerful-ness and playfulness of folk melodies are the two pivots of true music. At these two focal points music always and inevitably leads either towards reverence or else to dance. Any mixture of the two is confusing, dilution is boring, and if music consorts with didactic or descriptive poems and texts of that kind, the result is coldness.

*

Plastic art is really only effective at its highest level; it is true that the middle zone can perhaps impress us for more reasons than one, but all middle-range art of this kind is more confusing than gladdening. Sculpture therefore has to discover subject-matter of interest and this is to be found in the portraits of people of some significance. But here, too, it has to reach a high degree of excellence if it is to be at the same time true and dignified.

*

Painting is the slackest and most easy-going of all the arts. The slackest because, on account of the material and subject-matter, we condone and enjoy much that is no more than skilled craftsmanship and can hardly be called art. In part it is also because a good technical performance, even though it may be dull, can be admired by the cultured as well as the uneducated, and need only remotely resemble art in order to be highly acceptable. True colours, surfaces and a true relationship of visible objects - all this is in itself pleasing; and, since the eye is in any case used to seeing everything, it does not find misshapen or mistaken form as objectionable as a jarring note is for the listening ear. We tolerate the worst portrayal because we are used to seeing even worse originals. So the painter need only be remotely artistic so as to find a bigger public than a musician of equal merit; the minor painter can at least always operate on his own, whereas the minor musician has to associate

with others in order to achieve some sort of resonance by means of a combined musical effort.

*

The question 'Are we to compare or not to compare when considering works of art' is one we would like to answer as follows: the trained connoisseur should make comparisons, for he has a general idea, a pre-conceived notion of what could be and should be achieved; the amateur, still involved in the process of being educated, can make the best progress if he does not compare but judges each achievement on its individual merit: this gradually forms an instinct and idea for the general situation. Comparison by the unknowing is really only a lazy and conceited way of avoiding judgement.

*

To find and to appreciate goodness everywhere is the sign of a love of truth.

*

The sign of a historical feeling for humanity is that, at the same time as we appreciate the merits and attainments of the present, we also take into account the merits of the past.

*

The best we get from history is that it rouses our enthusiasm.

*

Idiosyncrasy calls forth idiosyncrasy.

*

One has to remember that there are quite a lot of people who would like to say something significant without being productive, and then the most peculiar things see the light of day.

*

People who think deeply and seriously are on bad terms with the public.

*

If I'm to listen to someone else's opinion, it must be put in a positive way; I have enough problematic speculations in my own head.

*

Superstition is innate in the human make-up, and when you think you have completely ousted it, it takes refuge in the strangest nooks and crannies and then suddenly emerges when one thinks one is toler-ably safe.

*

We would know much more about things if we weren't intent on discerning them too precisely. For, surely, an object can only be comprehensible to us when viewed at an angle of forty-five degrees.

*

Microscopes and telescopes really only serve to con-fuse the unaided human senses.

*

I hold my peace about many things; for I don't like to confuse people and am quite content if they are happy while I am cross.

*

Everything that liberates our mind without at the same time imparting self-control is pernicious.

*

The 'what' of a work of art interests people more than the 'how'; they can grasp the subject-matter in detail but not the method as a whole. That is why they pick out individual passages, in which, if you observe closely, the total effect is not actually lost but remains unconscious to all.

*

And the question, too, 'Where has the poet got it from?' gets no

further than the 'what'; it helps no one to understand the 'how'.

*

Imagination is only ordered and structured by poetry. There is nothing more awful than imagination devoid of taste.

*

Mannerism is an ideology gone wrong, a subjective ideology; that's why, as a rule, it isn't without wit.

*

The philologist is dependent on the congruence of what has been handed down in written form. There is a basic manuscript and this has real gaps, errors of transcription which lead to a break in the meaning and to other difficulties common to manuscript tradition. Then a second copy is found, a third one; collating these leads to growing perception of what makes sense and meaning in the transmitted material. Indeed, the philologist goes further and requires that it should increasingly reveal and structure its inner meaning and the congruence of its subject-matter without dependence on philological aides. This calls for a special degree of sensitive judgement, a special absorption in an author long dead and a certain amount of inventive power; one cannot, therefore, take it amiss if the phil-ologist allows himself to make a judgement in matters of taste even if this doesn't always succeed.

*

The poet is dependent on representation, the cli-max of which is reached when it vies with reality, that is, when the descriptions are so full of living power that everyone can see them as being actually present. At the summit of its excellence poetry appears as something completely external; the more it withdraws into the inner realm, the more it is on its way towards sinking. The kind of poetry which concentrates on the inner realm without giving it outward substance or without allowing the out-ward to be perceived through the inward - both are the last steps from which poetry steps down into ordinary life.

*

Oratory is dependent on all the advantages of poetry, on all its rights. It takes possession of these and mis-uses them in order to get hold of certain outer momentary advantages, whether moral or immoral, in civic life.

*

Literature is the fragment of fragments; only the least amount of what has happened and has been spoken was written down, the least of what has been recorded in writing has survived.

*

Although Lord Byron's talent is wild and uncomfortable in its structure, hardly anyone can compare with him in natural truth and grandeur.

*

The really important value of folksong, so called, is that its themes are taken directly from nature. But the educated poet too might well avail himself of this advantage if only he knew how to set about it.

*

But the advantage inherent in folksong is that natural people, as distinct from the educated, are on better terms with what is laconic.

*

Shakespeare is dangerous reading for talents in the process of formation: he forces them to reproduce him, and they imagine they are producing themselves.

*

Nobody can make judgements about history except those who have experienced history as a part of their own development. This applies to whole nations. The Germans have only been able to judge literature since the point they themselves have had literature.

*

One is really only alive when one enjoys the good will of others.

*

Piety is not an end but a means to attain by the great-est peace of mind the highest degree of culture.

*

This is why we may say that those who parade piety as a purpose and an aim mostly turn into hypocrites.

*

'When one is old one has to do more than when one was young.'

*

A duty absolved still feels like an unpaid debt, because one can never quite live up to one's expectations.

*

Human failings are only descried by an unloving person; that is why, in order to realize them, one has to become unloving oneself, but not more than is strictly to the purpose.

*

It is our greatest good fortune to have our failings corrected and our faults adjusted.

*

Three things are not recognized except in the due course of time:

a hero in wartime,

a wise man in a rage,

a friend in need.

*

Three classes of fools:

men because of pride,

girls by love,

women by jealousy.

*

The following are mad:

he who tries to teach simpletons,

contradicts the wise,

is moved by empty speeches,

believes whores,

entrusts secrets to the garrulous.

*

Man can only live together with his own kind and not with them either; for in the long run he cannot bear the thought that anyone is like him.

*

Whichever way you look at nature, it is the source of what is infinite.

*

You have to have actually found a thing if you want to know where it is situated.



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Lips too chilled

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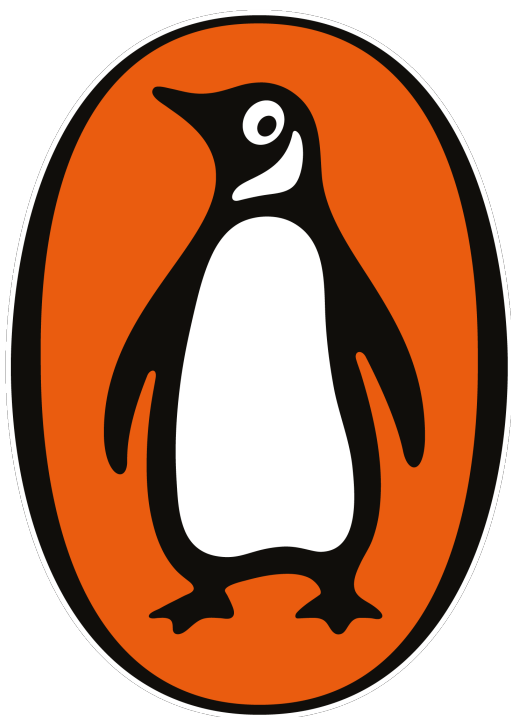
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春宵不眠夜
樱花盛开香满庭
不觉天已明
春の夜は
桜に明けて
しまひけり
身着丐服人
怀才不遇难辨认
花开又一春
薦を着て

誰人います
花の春
伴春踏旅程
鸟泣鱼咽路难行
满眼泪朦胧
行春や
鳥啼魚の
目は泪
耕田劳作声
万物复苏春意浓
櫻麻郁葱葱
畑打つ
音や嵐の
桜麻
春雨纷纷落
涓涓如丝树下流
清泉贵如油
春雨の
こしたにつたふ
清水哉
汲水净心灵
庙堂冰冷苦行僧
寒夜脚步声
水とりや
氷の僧の
沓の音
明月当空照
高朋满座美人笑

无人更妖娆
名月や
座に美しき
顔もなし
大梦不觉晓
不知谁人来嬉闹
春雨落潇潇
不精さや
搔き起されし
春の雨
青柳岸边立
枝繁叶茂扎入泥
潮涨潮落去
青柳の
泥にしだるる
潮干かな
雏雀吱吱叫
一窝幼鼠在旁闹
各自乐逍遥
雀子と
声鳴きかはす
鼠の巢
漫漫寒夜中
一羽白鸽风中鸣
归巢难寻踪
闇の夜や
巢をまどはして
鳴く衛

云雀闹枝头
击掌和歌待开口
雉鸡叫声高
雲雀鳴く
中の拍子や
雉子の声
雉鸡欲食蛇
老鼠怕猫是传说
凶狠叫咯咯
蛇食ふと
聞けばおそろし
雉子の声
山高有险峰
云雀飞舞半空中
平步青云梦
雲雀より
空にやすらふ
峠哉
黄莺宿房檐
不知年糕晒下边
一坨鸟粪添
鶯や
餅に糞する
縁の先
花猫有糟糠
围着灶台来回忙
温柔又善良
猫の妻

竈の崩れより
通ひけり
猫儿不再闹
寂静夜色春来到
朦胧月光照
猫の恋
やむとき閨の
朧月
洒泪送君归
勿忘草中一剪梅
盼君早日回
忘るなよ
藪の中なる
梅の花
冬去春已归
明月高悬照寒梅
窗外夜色美
春もやや
気色ととのふ
月と梅
梅花香满山
忽见旭日已高悬
曲径路盘桓
梅が香に
のつと日の出る
山路哉
吾辈已老去
青春不再强作句

初櫻何处觅
顔に似ぬ
発句も出でよ
初桜
黄莺落枝头
忽如一梦去神游
矫柳荡悠悠
鶯を
魂にねむるか
矯柳
伊势有神宫
一株老梅立院中
花开亦孤伶
御子良子の
一もとゆかし
梅の花
桃花烂漫开
一簇初櫻丛中来
争奇斗艳哉
咲き乱す
桃の中より
初桜
红梅满庭芳
玉帘低垂在闺房
美人可无恙
紅梅や
見ぬ恋作る
玉簾

舞扇饮酒乐
一瓣樱花杯中落
如诗又如歌
扇にて
酒くむかげや
ちる櫻
如有好嗓音
举杯开怀歌一曲
櫻花散落去
声よくば
謡はうものを
桜散る
早春去赏櫻
五里六里更远行
一路踏歌声
櫻狩り
きどくや日々に
五里六里
赏櫻树下坐
似云似霞动心魄
花雨纷纷落
木のもとに
汁も膾も
桜かな
赏櫻着奇装
身穿羽织佩刀郎
细看是女将
花に酔へり

羽織着て刀
さす女
朱门花锦绣
吾有糙米与浊酒
君有几多愁
花にうき世
我が酒白く
飯黒し
蝙蝠飞出巢
早春时节任游翱
世间浮华鸟
蝙蝠も
出でよ浮世の
華に鳥
对饮溪流边
千杯不醉语绵绵
急瀑浪花溅
酒のみに
語らんかゝる
瀧の花
病雁寒夜落
长夜难眠辗转侧
旅途知寂寞
病雁の
夜寒に落ちて
旅寝哉
早春二月里
伏见桃花露欲滴

可曾沾我衣
わがきぬに
ふしみの桃の
零せよ
菜田花如海
燕雀成群飞舞来
赏花笑开怀
菜畠に
花見顔なる
雀哉
尼僧居草庵
遁入佛门无杂念
空守白杜鹃
独り尼
藁屋すげなし
白躑躅
美酒有两升
一醉方休全喝净
酒樽作花瓶
吞み明けて
花生にせん
二升樽
花儿已落地
叶落归根香已去
默默悼别离
地に倒れ
根に寄り花の
別れかな

早春田未耕
采集荠菜有男丁
乡间更闲情
古畑や
なづな摘みゆく
男ども
定睛细观察
墙边一簇荠菜花
洁白又无瑕
よく見れば
薺花咲く
垣根かな
人老牙齿松
一颗沙粒海苔中
默默度余生
衰ひや
齒に喰ひ当てし
海苔の砂
繁花开满天
又到櫻花吐新艳
思绪更万千
さまざまの
こと思ひ出す
櫻哉
屋漏逢夜雨
风吹芭蕉声声急
水滴落盥里
芭蕉野分

盥に雨を
聞く夜かな
枯木落昏鸦
悠然自得叫嘎嘎
深秋满天霞
枯朵に
烏のとまりけり
秋の暮
清泷波浪涌
滔滔不绝有回声
松叶浮水中
清滝や
波に散り込む
青松葉
麦穗沉甸甸
用力紧握在手间
离别难上难
麦の穂を
力につかむ
別れかな
棣棠花落去
纷纷扬扬如烟雨
瀑布水声急
ほろほろと
山吹ちるか
瀧の音
石山白石白
秋风更比白石白

风吹石更白
石山の
石より白し
秋の風
牛虻在采蜜
一群麻雀欲偷袭
相煎何太急
花に遊ぶ
虻な喰ひそ
友雀
发须蓬乱长
蜗居草庵容颜苍
五月雨茫茫
髪はえて
容颜蒼し
五月雨
奈良多古寺
风曳重阳菊飘香
幽然入佛堂
菊の香や
奈良には古き
仏たち
海上暮色降
野鸭声声叫哀伤
一片白茫茫
海暮れて
鴨のこゑ
ほのかに白し

立志去远行
曝尸荒野何足惧
一路顶秋风
野ざらしを
心に風の
しむ身哉
杜鹃去远游
极目渐逝天尽头
海岛空幽幽
ほととぎす
消え行く方や
嶋一ツ
初冬遇阵雨
猿猴亦欲穿蓑衣
寒风阵阵里
初時雨
猿も小蓑を
欲しげなり
六月艳阳天
峰峦叠翠水潺潺
白云罩岚山
六月や
峰に雲置く
嵐山
白芥子花开
蝴蝶飞舞翩翩来
不辨花蝶白
白芥子に

羽もぐ蝶の
形見かな
转瞬已春天
去年夏衣置一边
虱虫未摘完
夏衣
いまだ虱を
とりつくさず
称我旅人好
徒有虚名添烦恼
初冬雨潇潇
旅人と
我名よばれん
初しぐれ
山中古寺静
万籁俱寂悄无声
蝉鸣入岩中
閑さや
岩にしみ入る
蝉の声
木槿开道旁
信马由缰细端详
马儿偷吃忙
道の辺の
木槿は馬に
喰はれけり
文蛤掰两瓣
骨肉分离难割断

离别在秋天
蛤の
ふたみにわかれ
行秋ぞ
乘舟观萤火
船夫醉酒强摇桨
忐忑心里慌
蚩見や
船頭酔うて
おぼつかな
纸衣披肩头
寒冬已过冷飕飕
何时把衣收
かげろふの
我が肩に立つ
紙子かな
哀猿在哭泣
生离死别弃子啼
怎奈秋风急
猿を聞く
人捨子に秋の
風いかに
农家子弟强
终日劳作碾稻忙
举头明月光
賤の子や
いねすりかけて
月をみる

醒来去起舞！
吾欲与君以沫濡
蝴蝶睡花中
起きよ起きよ
我が友にせん
寝る胡蝶
山路错盘旋
忽见一簇紫罗兰
优雅立路边
山路来て
何やらゆかし
すみれ草
初夏五月雨
汇聚成河入海去
最上川流急
五月雨を
集めて早し
最上川
初秋望大海
沧海桑田醉心间
绿连天海间
初秋や
海も青田も
一みどり
明月映池中
如醉如痴观美景
不觉天已明
名月や

池をめぐりて
夜もすがら
花瓣水中落
四方八面风吹过
湖面起清波
四方より
花吹き入れて
鳩の波
杜鹃声声鸣
夜色沉沉竹林盛
月光透竹影
ほとゝぎす
大竹藪を
もる月夜
客乡扫墓回
白发苍苍拐杖拄
只有情如故
家はみな
杖に白髪の
墓参り
天高地无边
云雀翻飞任盘旋
啼鸣声连连
原中や
ものにもつかず
啼く雲雀
圓月云里藏
时隐时现醉心房

赏月到天亮
雲をりをり
人をやすめる
月見かな
风流哪里来
劳动歌声最精彩
插秧更欢快
風流の
初めや奥の
田植歌
寻常人不见
一方圆镜春色艳
梅花藏背面
人も見ぬ
春や鏡の
裏の梅
僧侶有背箱
五月鲤鱼旗飘扬
长刀显锋芒
笈も太刀も
五月に飾れ
紙幟
鸬鹚捕鱼忙
观者欢笑在一旁
鵞船添惆怅
おもしろうて
やがてかなしき
鵞舟哉

天长洗碧空
云雀声声叫不停
日久更传情
永き日も
轉り足らぬ
ひばり哉
年老已迟暮
头戴斗笠难敌暑
脚踏草鞋酷
年暮ぬ
笠きて草鞋
はきながら
梅花香飘漫
春风料峭二月天
怎奈刺骨寒
梅が香に
追ひもどさるる
寒さかな
令人生厌鸟
寒冬清晨嘎嘎叫
雪映乌鸦俏
ひごろ憎き
烏も雪の
朝哉
草枕且垫头
虚无奢华欲何求
无虑又无忧
草枕

まことの華見
しても来よ
牽牛花落去
昔日故友薄情谊
孤苦伶仃泣
薜や
是も又我
友ならず
日行千里路
疲惫难捱寻憩处
紫藤香如故
草卧て
宿かる比や
藤の花
雪后初晴天
如痴如癡更尽欢
哪怕跌路边
いざ行む
雪見にころぶ
所まで
清晨寺院静
僧侶幽幽在品茗
菊花香满庭
朝茶飲む
僧静かなり
菊の花
久别故乡鸦
旧巢春来梅开花

何时能回家

旅烏

古巢は梅に

なりにけり

晨露润万物

清凉微风扫酷暑

玫瑰瓜上土

朝露や

撫でて涼しき

瓜の土

天寒地又冻

骑马赶路急匆匆

斜阳映人影

冬の日や

馬上に凍る

影法師

击掌拜神灵

明月高悬夏夜晴

流水有回声

手を打てば

木魂に明くる

夏の月

任凭雨沾身

别有风情赏花人

胡枝子情深

濡れて行くや

人もをかしき

雨の萩

電打桧木笠
声声震耳风来急
仲夏及时雨
いかめしき
音や霞の
檜木笠
欲抒胸中意
怎奈唇寒口难开
秋风阵阵来
物いへば
唇寒し
穉の風
一路静无人
寂寥秋色草木深
知音何处寻
この道を
行く人なしに
秋の暮
枯草风中揺
漫漫荒野艳阳照
一二寸不倒
枯芝や
やゝかげろふの
一二寸
腥臭阵阵舞
鸭舌草上鱼已腐
掩鼻快行步
なまぐさし

小菜葱が上の
鮓の腸
葵花向日垂
不见日光亦追随
五月雨霏霏
日の道や
葵傾く
五月雨
人生苦里度
向死而生不停步
转瞬秋已暮
しにもせぬ
旅寝の果よ
秋の暮
洗葱到河边
水寒葱白更鲜艳
严冬赋诗赞
葱白く
洗ひたてたる
寒さ哉

译后记

承蒙企鹅兰登之托，本人翻译了松尾芭蕉俳句集《怎奈唇寒口难开》一书。虽然有三十余载的日语从业经历和十几年的长期驻日工作、生活积累，但翻译俳句，本人还是初出茅庐，也不失为有益的尝试。

首先这本书因版权原因，原译本[由卢西恩·斯特雷克（Lucien Stryk）译于1985年]为英语，书名为Lips too chilled，出版社的编辑按英语去翻查了日语原著（岩波书店1962年版的《芭蕉句集》），我再由日语原文翻译成中文。在此过程中发现英译本可能因为语言体系的差别，很难准确表达出原意，大多是直译过来的，所以给查找原文带来了一定难度。

第二，由于俳句用日语诵读时，会表现为575的自然韵律，即一首由17个假名 [1] 组成的正常俳句，分别会在5、7、5的假名处自然断句（受措辞或语法结构的影响，部分俳句会出现增字或减字的情况）。且日语中的单词可以一词多义、一字多音，所以一首俳句也可能只有三个词汇，但意蕴较深，这也是俳句的魅力所在。如同中国的写意画虽草草几笔，但会给人带来无限遐想。而松尾芭蕉在日本被奉为俳圣，他的“古池や蛙飛び込む水の音”（见本书第4页）更是成为俳句之冠。由于中日文化的差异，如果简单直译则读者很难悟出其中意境，而完全意译又会脱离575的格式，失去俳句的原本特色，且目前在国内出版的俳句集大多不是575的格式。

在试译过程中我与编辑反复沟通、斟酌，决定仍以575的格式译出。这样，不但给翻译工作带来一定难度，还要尽可能如诗歌般押韵，需要一定的创作性。为此我参考了大量有关松尾芭蕉的俳句注释、创作背景，并结合在日本的生活经历尝试进行再创作，逐步适应后有了渐入佳境之感，感觉这样译既不破坏原结构，又能将原作中的意境转达给读者，还有译者的发挥空间，不失为俳句汉译的一种积极探索。

第三，由于英译本的问题，经查有个别句子不是芭蕉的原作，我们进行了调换。同时为更便于读者理解正确的原意，我们将日文原文一并刊出，请读者参考、指正。

另外，在这里我还要特别感谢责任编辑和译审给予的非常有价值的意见和建议，本书同样包含了她们的心血和汗水。

[1] 日文所用的字母。有平假名、片假名两种字体。—译者注

‘Wake,
butterfly —’

Lips too chilled

In my new robe
this morning -
someone else.

Fields, mountains
of Hubaku, in
nine days - spring.

Year by year ,
the monkey's mask
reveals the monkey.

New Year - the Basho - Tosei
hermitage
a - buzz with haiku.

New Year -
feeling broody
from late autumn.

Spring come - New Year's
gourd stuffed , five quarts
of last year's rice.

Old pond
leap - splash -
a frog.

Spring night ,
cherry -
blossom dawn.

Wearing straw cloaks ,
with spring
saints greet each other.

Spring's exodus -
birds shriek ,
fish eyes blink tears.

Ploughing the field
for cherry - hemp -
storm echoes.

Spring rain -
under trees
a crystal stream.

Monks'feet clomping
through icy dark ,
drawing sweet water.

Spring moon -
flower face
in mist.

Spring rain -
they rouse me ,
old sluggard.

Ebb tide -
willows
dip to mud.

Sparrows in eaves ,
mice in ceiling -
celestial music.

Dark night -

plover crying
for its nest.
Over skylark's song
Noh cry
of pheasant.
How terrible
the pheasant's call -
snake - eater.
Hozo mountain - pass
soars
higher than the skylark.
Bush - warbler dots
the rice - ball
drying on the porch.
Bucking the oven
gap - cat
yowls in heat.
Now cat's done
mewing, bedroom's
touched by moonlight.
Do not forget the plum ,
blooming
in the thicket.
Spring air -
woven moon
and plum scent.
Mountain path -
sun rising

through plum scent.

Another haiku?

Yet more cherry blossoms -

not my face.

Sleeping willow -

soul of

the nightingale.

Behind the virgins'

quarters ,

one blossoming plum.

First cherry

budding

by peach blossoms.

Red plum blossoms :

where behind the

bead - screen's love?

Pretending to drink

sake from my fan ,

sprinkled with cherry petals.

If I'd the knack

I'd sing like

cherry flakes falling.

Striding ten, twelve

miles in search of

cherry wreaths - how glorious.

Under the cherry -

blossom soup ,

blossom salad.

Reeling with*sake*
and cherry blossoms ,
a sworded woman in*haori* .

Boozy on blossoms -
dark rice ,
whitesake .

Come out, bat -
birds, earth itself
hauled off by flowers.

Waterfall garlands -
tell
that to revellers.

Traveller sleeps -
a sick wild duck reels
through cold night.

Be careful where
you aim ,
peaches of Fushimi.

Sparrows
in rape - field ,
blossom - viewing.

Cold white azalea -
lone nun
under thatched roof.

Draining the*sake*
cask - behold ,
a gallon flower - vase.
On my knees, hugging

roots, I grieve
for Priest Tando.
Taros sprouting
at the gate ,
young creepers.
Wen I bend low
enough, pursesweed
beneath my fence.
Aged - eating
laver, my teeth
grind sand.
Cherry blossoms -
lights
of years past.
Squalls shake the Basho
tree - all
night my basin echoes rain.
On the dead limb
squats a crow -
autumn night.
Kiyotaki river -
pine needles wildfire
on the crest.
Parting ,
straw - clutching
for support.
Yellow rose petals
thunder -

a waterfall.

Witer than stones
of Stone Mountain -
autumn wind.

Sparrow, spare
the horsefly
dallying in flowers.

Drizzly June -
long hair, face
sickly white.

Nara's Buddhas ,
one by one -
essence of asters.

Darkening waves -
cry of wild ducks ,
faintly white.

Faceless - bones
scattered in the field ,
wind cuts my flesh.

Were cuckoo
vanishes -
an island.

Winter downpour -
even the monkey
needs a raincoat.

June clouds ,
at ease on
Arashiyama peak.

Butterfly -

wings curve into

white poppy.

Summer wraps -

is there no end

to lice?

First winter rain -

I plod on ,

Traveller, my name.

How quiet -

locust - shrill

pierces rock.

Wild mallow fringing

the wood ,

plucked by my horse.

Futami friends, farewell -

clam torn from shell ,

I follow autumn.

Firefly - viewing -

drunken steersman ,

drunken boat.

Dewy shoulders

of my partner robe -

heat - waves.

Poet grieving over shivering

monkeys, what of this child

cast out in autumn wind?

Poor boy - leaves

moon - viewing
for rice - grinding.
Wake, butterfly -
it's late, we've miles
to go together.

Violets -
how precious on
a mountain path.
Gulping June
rains, swollen
Mogami river.

Early autumn -
rice field, ocean ,
one green.

Bright moon : I
stroll around the pond -
hey, dawn has come.

Storming over
Lake Nio, whirlwinds
of cherry blossoms.

From moon - wreathed
bamboo grove ,
cuckoo song.

Visiting tombs ,
white - hairs bow
over canes.

Skylark on moor -
sweet song

of non - attachment.

Clouds -

a chance to dodge

moon - viewing.

Birth of art -

song of rice planters ,

chorus from nowhere.

Unknown spring -

plum blossom

behind the mirror.

Over Benkei's temple ,

flashing Yoshitune's

sword - May carp.

Cormorant fishing :

how stirring ,

how saddening.

Skylark sings all

day, and day

not long enough.

Year's end -

still in straw hat

and sandals.

Moonlit plum tree -

wait ,

spring will come.

Snowy morning -

one crow

after another.

Come, see real
flowers
of this painful world.
Morning - glory -
it, too ,
turns from me.
Travel - weary ,
I seek lodging -
ah, wisteria.
Come, let's go
snow - viewing
till we're buried.
Chrysanthemum
silence - monk
sips his morning tea.
Crow's
abandoned nest ,
a plum tree.
Melon
in morning dew ,
mud - fresh.
Wintry day ,
on my horse
a frozen shadow.
Summer moon -
clapping hands ,
I herald dawn.
Drenched bush - clover ,

passers - by -
both beautiful.
Harsh sound -
hail spattering
my traveller's hat.
Lips too chilled
for prattle -
autumn wind.
Not one traveller
braves this road -
autumn night.
Withered grass ,
under piling
heat - waves.
Phew -
dace - guts scent
waterweed.
June rain ,
hollyhocks turning
where sun should be.
Journey's end -
still alive, this
autumn evening.
How cold -
leek tips
washed white.



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My Dearest Father

This selection of letters between Mozart and his father was written between October

1777 and July 1778. This selection published in Penguin Classics 2015.

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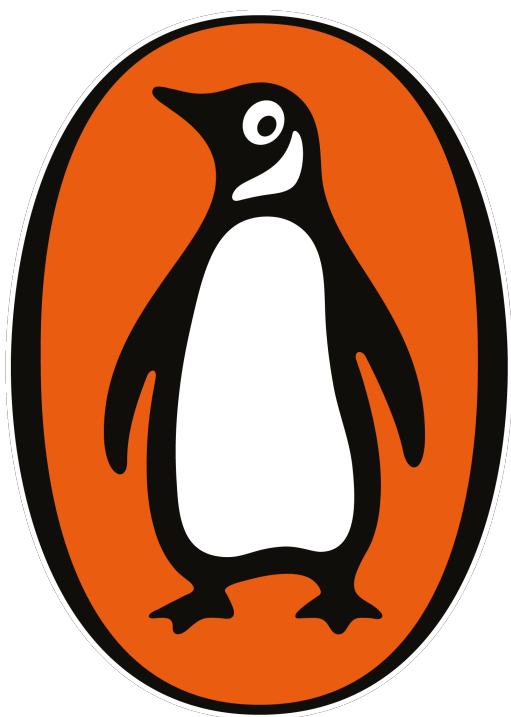
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“他们希望我能
举办一场音乐会，
我希望他们求我，
然后他们这么做了，
我便办了音乐会。”



PENGUIN
LITTLE BLACK
CLASSICS

* 此中文译本译自德语原文

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Mozart to his father, 17 October 1777, Augsburg

Leopold Mozart to his son, 23 October 1777, Salzburg

Leopold Mozart to his son, 24 November 1777, Salzburg

Mozart to his father, 29 November 1777, Mannheim

Leopold Mozart to his wife and son, 4 December 1777, Salzburg

Leopold Mozart to his son, 5 February 1778, Salzburg

Mozart to his father, 3 July 1778, Paris

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Leopold Mozart to his wife and son, 13 July 1778, Salzburg

沃尔夫冈·阿马德乌斯·莫扎特 致父亲利奥波德·莫扎特（萨尔茨堡）

奥格斯堡，1777年10月17日 [1]

我亲爱的父亲！

现在我得开始跟您说说施泰因 [2] 的钢琴了。在看到它们之前，施佩特 [3] 的钢琴是我的最爱；但现在我更喜欢施泰因钢琴，因为它的制音效果比雷根斯堡钢琴（即施佩特钢琴）还要好得多。在我用力弹奏时，不管我把手指放在琴键上还是抬起，声音都会在我敲响它们的那一瞬间立刻消失。随便以哪种方式触键，音质都很稳定-不会发出杂音，不会变强或是变弱，或者完全不出声。总之，所有乐音都十分均衡。毫无疑问，这样一台钢琴施泰因至少要卖300弗罗林。但他投入的努力和勤奋是无法用金钱来衡量的。他的钢琴有一个独一无二的优点，就是安装了擒纵器 [4]（Auslösung）。这样的制琴师真的是百里挑一。但如果没有擒纵机件，一架钢琴根本就不可能没有杂音或回声；触键时，琴槌会落下，但一敲过琴弦，不管你这时把手指放在琴键上还是移开，都会立刻向上跳起。施泰因告诉我，只有在他完成了这样一架钢琴的时候，才会坐下来尝试弹奏各种走句 [5]，流动的、跳跃的，一直调试到这架钢琴什么都能演奏。因为他的工作纯粹是为了提高音乐品质，而不仅仅为了赚钱，不然他立刻就能完工。

他经常说：“如果我自己不是这样狂热的音乐爱好者，不能在钢琴上弹点什么的话，我早就对我的工作失去耐心了。但我本身就喜欢不会让演奏者失望并且经久耐用的乐器。”他的钢琴确实非常耐用。他保证他的音板不会破损或者断裂；每当他完成了一个钢琴音板，他就放到室外，让它日晒夜露，风吹雨打，以致破裂。然后他就在裂缝里嵌进楔子，黏合起来，这样音板就会变得非常坚实牢固。他喜欢看到音板开裂，因为这之后就能确保不会再发生这种情况了。为了让音板更加坚固，他甚至经常亲手切割它，再将它黏合起来。现在他一共制作完成了三架这样的钢琴。直到今天我才又弹奏了其中一架。

今天是17号，我们和年轻的加斯纳先生一起吃饭，他是一位年轻英俊的鳏夫，亡妻也年轻美丽，他们才结婚两年。这个年轻人非常正派而有礼貌，盛情款待了我们。一同吃饭的还有阿贝·亨利·布林格先生和维斯霍费尔先生的一个同事，他是一位前耶稣会会士，目前担任这儿的大教堂乐长 [6]。他和沙赫特纳先生（萨尔茨堡的宫廷小号

手)很熟,因为他曾是沙赫特纳先生在因戈尔斯塔特 [7] 时的唱诗班指挥。他叫帕特尔·格布尔。我会写信向沙赫特纳先生转达他的问候。加斯纳先生和他的一个小姨子,妈妈,我,还有我们的堂妹 [8], 吃完饭后就去了施泰因先生那里。4点钟的时候,乐长先生和施米德鲍尔先生也来了。施米德鲍尔先生是圣乌尔里希修道院的资助者,一位非常好的老先生,说话很文雅;我在那儿视奏 [9] 了一首贝克 [10] 的奏鸣曲,一如既往地艰难,令人痛苦。简直无法形容这让乐长先生和修道院资助者多么震惊,以至于得在胸前画十字呼唤主。在这儿和在慕尼黑,我经常凭记忆演奏我的全部六首奏鸣曲 [11]。在之前的农舍音乐会 [12] 上,我已经演奏过那首G大调第五号。最后一首D大调在施泰因的钢琴上产生了无与伦比的效果。那个需要由膝盖压住的踏板机械,施泰因也做得比其他人都好。我几乎不需要怎么碰它,就能让它起作用;稍稍把膝盖移开一点点,就听不见一点儿回声了。明天我可能会去演奏他的管风琴,也就是说,我明天看了之后会跟您说说这件事;至于他的小女儿我打算最后再谈。当我对施泰因先生说,我很想演奏他的管风琴,因为管风琴是我的挚爱。他惊讶不已:“什么?您这样一位出色的钢琴家,想要演奏管风琴这种乐器?它既缺乏柔美和表现力,也弹不出弱音和强音变化,听起来老是一个样子。”“这些都说明不了什么,在我看来、听来,管风琴就是所有乐器之王。”“好吧,那我没意见。”于是我们就一起去了。我从他的话里察觉到,他认为我在他的管风琴上弹不出什么名堂,比方说,只能完全像弹钢琴那样来弹弹。他告诉我,他也曾应舒巴特 [13] 的要求,把他带来演奏管风琴。“我当时很害怕,”他说,“因为舒巴特告诉了所有人,教堂里坐得满满当当。我认为他接下来会精神饱满、激情洋溢,弹奏速度很快,而這些都不适合管风琴。但在他开始的那一刻,我的想法就完全变了。”我只说了一句:“施泰因先生,您觉得,我会在管风琴上狂奔是吗?”“啊,瞧您说的!这压根不是一回事。”然后我们就去了管风琴演奏台。我开始即兴弹奏,这时他已经笑了,随后我又弹了一个赋格。“现在我相信您喜欢演奏管风琴了,”他说,“如果您能以这种方式演奏的话。”起初,踏板对我来说有点儿陌生,因为它没有被划分开。它从c小调开始,然后d小调、e小调,它们都在同一排。在我们的钢琴上,上面一排应该是D大调和E大调,在这里却是降E大调和升F大调。但我很快掌握了这些。

我还去看了圣乌尔里希圣殿古老的管风琴,通往它的楼梯简直是噩梦。我请求其他人为我演奏管风琴,因为我想下楼去听,管风琴在楼上的空间里根本产生不了效果。但是我的期待落空了。那位年轻的唱诗班指挥,一位牧师,只在管风琴上演奏不知所谓的琶音 [14]。而当他想演奏和声时,产生的只有不和,因为音全不准。那之后我们不得不去接待室,因为妈妈、堂妹和施泰因先生也在那里,还有一位神父埃米利安,一头自负的驴子,头脑简单的卖弄聪明者,人倒也挺不

错的。他一直想和堂妹开玩笑，但她却拿他开心。最后，他喝醉了（这件事很快就发生了），他开始谈论音乐。他唱了一首卡农，我说：“我这辈子没听过比这更美的歌曲。”我接着说：“很遗憾我不能和你一起唱，因为我天生发不出乐音。”“这没关系。”他说。于是他开始唱了。我第三个唱，但是我编了完全不同的内容，压低声音唱给堂妹听：“埃米利安神父，哦！你这个笨蛋！舔舔我的屁股吧！”[15]”然后我们又笑了半个小时。埃米利安神父对我说：“如果我们能一起待得久一点儿该多好，我还想和你们谈谈音乐作曲艺术。”“那样的话，我们的谈话很快就会结束。”我说，“吃你自己的拇指去吧！”[16]”就先写到这里吧，下次再聊。

沃·阿·莫扎特

[1] 1777年8月，莫扎特辞去了萨尔茨堡的宫廷乐师职务，在母亲的陪同下，于9月23日踏上寻找工作机会的旅途，先后访问了慕尼黑、奥格斯堡、曼海姆、巴黎，其中奥格斯堡乃其父利奥波德·莫扎特的出生地。莫扎特和母亲在慕尼黑遭到选帝侯婉拒后，于1777年10月11日到达奥格斯堡，暂居在叔叔弗朗茨·阿洛伊斯·莫扎特家中。（说明：书中脚注除特别标明之外，均为译者注。）

[2] 约翰·安德烈亚斯·施泰因（1728-1792），著名德国钢琴制造师。他师从德国管风琴制作大师戈特弗里德·西尔伯曼，是钢琴制造史上的关键人物，设计制造了维也纳式击弦机钢琴。

[3] 弗兰兹·雅各布·施佩特（Franz Jakob Späth，1714-1786），管风琴、钢琴制造师，生活在雷根斯堡，故下文以雷根斯堡钢琴指代其所制作的钢琴。

[4] 或称擒纵结构，即钢琴击弦装置。在琴槌击打钢琴琴弦使其振动后，擒纵器立即使其停止振动，恢复到原来的位置，准备再次受击振动，而演奏者的手指仍可按在键上。

[5] 指流畅连续的连奏。

[6] 德语原文Kapellmeister，又译为乐团指挥，作为德国宫廷乐团的领导者，乐长起初不仅担任指挥，也负责作曲、编曲、组织管理等。因Meister有“师傅”之意，将Kapellmeister译为“乐长”更贴近德文原意。

[7] 德国巴伐利亚州的一座城市，位于多瑙河沿岸。

[8] 即莫扎特叔叔之女玛丽亚·安娜·泰克拉·莫扎特（1758-1841）。莫扎特常亲昵地以Bäse（施瓦本方言，意为小堂

妹) 唤她, 两人关系十分亲密。

[9] 指在没有排练的情况下直接看着乐谱演奏。

[10] 弗朗茨·伊格纳茨·冯·贝克 (1733-1803), 德国古典音乐作曲家。

[11] 即莫扎特在这次旅行中的全部演奏曲目: C大调第一号钢琴奏鸣曲K.279/189d, F大调第二号钢琴奏鸣曲K.280/189e, 降B大调第三号钢琴奏鸣曲K.281/189f, 降E大调第四号钢琴奏鸣曲K.282/189g, G大调第五号钢琴奏鸣曲K.283/189h, D大调第六号钢琴奏鸣曲K.284/205b。

[12] 前一天 (1777年10月16日), 莫扎特参加了由奥格斯堡城市贵族在农舍举办的音乐会, 他们认为这个地点与莫扎特相配, 可以给他“带来荣耀”, 暗示了将其视为农民。

[13] 克里斯蒂安·弗里德里希·丹尼尔·舒巴特 (1739-1791), 德国音乐家、诗人、作家, 自1774年起在奥格斯堡出版反对教会的杂志《德国编年史》(*Deutsche Chronik*), 1775年被驱逐出奥格斯堡, 1777年被捕入狱。

[14] 琶音指一串和弦音从低到高或从高到低依次连续奏出, 可视为分解和弦的一种。通常作为一种专门的技巧训练用于练习曲中, 有时作为短小的连接句或经过句出现在乐曲旋律声部中。

[15] 莫扎特有一首卡农就叫《舔舔我的屁股吧》(*Leck mich im Arsch* , K.231/382c)。

[16] 巴伐利亚俚语, 表示没兴趣再继续对话或提供信息, 用来摆脱纠缠而好奇的人。

利奥波德·莫扎特 致儿子沃尔夫冈·阿马德乌斯·莫扎特（曼海姆）

萨尔茨堡，1777年10月23日

我亲爱的儿子！

祝你命名日 [17] 快乐！但是我今天能祝福你什么呢？有哪些祝福是我平时不曾给予你的呢？我愿天主的恩典时刻伴你左右，只要你像一位真正的天主教基督徒那样热忱地履行义务，天恩就永远不会远离你。

你是知道我的。我不是学究，不是狂热教徒，更不是一位伪善者。我只是你的父亲。你不会拒绝你父亲的请求吧？我想请你关心自己的灵魂福祉，不要让你的父亲在死后还忧虑不安。只有这样，在艰难的时刻，我才不必责备自己对你的灵魂救赎关切得不够。再见！要幸福地活着，理智地活着！一定要尊敬、爱护你的母亲，她这么大了还如此辛苦。像我爱你一样爱我吧。

真心牵挂你的父亲

利奥波德·莫扎特

[17] 命名日是和本人同名的圣徒纪念日，对命名日的庆祝是基督教国家从中世纪就有的一项传统。-编者注

利奥波德·莫扎特 致儿子沃尔夫冈·阿马德乌斯·莫扎特（曼海姆）

萨尔茨堡，1777年11月24日

我亲爱的儿子！

我实在不知道该说些什么，你16号的那封信太让我震惊了。你用最轻率的语气告诉我，施马尔茨先生，可能是施马尔茨先生在慕尼黑皮革厂的父亲、兄弟或者朋友，或者干脆就是他本人，向你道歉说他没有得到把钱给你的指令。这我相信。他说得对，你应该去恳求赫尔佐克先生或者诺克与希德尔银行，继续借你一小笔贷款，就像我一贯做的那样。因为哈格瑙尔先生没给他们异地使用这笔贷款的指令 [18]，生意人只按字面指令办事。但在你的恳求下，他可以为你这么做。只是你那么自然、那么无所谓地跟我说了这件意外的事，就好像我有成箱成箱的钱，仿佛这件事能让我觉得即使眼下拿不到钱也没那么可怕。我就不浪费时间跟你细讲我们现在的处境了，你心知肚明，妈妈也一样。在我20号的信里，我已经把所有主要债款列出来了，尽管还是忘了有一批东西的钱我们还没付给哈格瑙尔，但目前我们没有欠他钱。你上一封信最让我惊讶的是，你冷不丁地跟我说起这件事，之前却丝毫未提。之前的信里只是说，比起奉承，钱才是旅行中更必要的好东西，因为你们那时就知道你们的经济状况很糟糕。可你们没有透露一点点消息，我那时也没有料到这一切。我本打算硬着头皮去解决异地使用贷款指令这件事，如果施马尔茨先生一直这么好说话的话。如果是这样该有多好！我请你从我的角度好好想一想，从奥格斯堡你写信告诉我，你们最多花了27弗罗林。现在我来算笔账，如果你们花了30弗罗林，那么就还剩170弗罗林。如果途经瓦勒斯基泰因去曼海姆的傻旅行花了70弗罗林，那么你们手里应该还剩下100弗罗林。如果这段旅途花费了更多，剩下的钱是不是就应该不够旅行去美因茨了？但等到了曼海姆，你们离法兰克福就近了，必要的时候可以用你第二封贷款信用证从法兰克福的博隆加罗先生那里取点钱。你们只要随便去问一个跟博隆加罗有来往的美因茨生意人，他就会负责把信用证寄给博隆加罗先生，然后拿到你们要的钱。

这难道不比待在曼海姆毫无好处地挥霍你们的钱更明智吗，因为这些钱可能够你们做一次花费15或者16弗罗林的旅行。到沃尔姆斯只要1.25站，到奥彭海姆要2站，到美因茨只要1站。因此总共只有4.25站。如果你们到了美因茨，钱已经剩得不多或者没钱了，那里也有熟

人可以帮助你们。没有绅士会为口袋里没有一分钱但可以出示贷款信用证而感到羞愧。即使在最富有最重要的人物身上也可能发生这种事。旅行的一大原则就是，只要情况允许，就只随身携带必要的钱财。我一直盲目谈论着美因茨，只是出于想当然的猜测，因为从你们之前的信中，我没能有荣幸得知你们打算去哪里旅行，直到最后一刻你才从奥格斯堡给我写了信：明天我们要去瓦勒斯泰因。斯坦因先生写信告诉我，他们星期天七点半动身去了瓦勒斯泰因和曼海姆。这种事情应该提前写信告诉我，因为我有时候能做些有用的准备，给你一些提醒。就像我之前那么煞费苦心地给法兰克福的奥托先生和普法伊尔先生写信一样。当然，你们的旅行跟我没关系！不是吗？你们当然还可以从曼海姆走一条完全不一样的路，你们可以先去维尔茨堡，再从那儿经过马克伽芬去达姆斯塔特，最后到法兰克福-美因茨。但我怎么能猜中你们的想法呢，怎么能给你们建议呢，因为你们从来也没征求过我的建议。根据你的来信，我也不知道曼海姆的事情如何了，你在信上写了有机会和选帝侯 [19] 亲密交谈，我忍不住猜想你是否打算在那里留一段时间。此外，你的意见、态度、打算等，所有这一切都应该及时且如实地向我报告，因为即使在最顺利的情况下，收到并回复一封信也要12天。即便是这一点你也没有动脑子想想，竟然在16号的那封信里告诉我，我可以继续往曼海姆给你写信，而你最快也要12天以后，也就是28号才能收到。这期间赫尔佐克先生早就回复了我的信，告诉我你将动身去旅行。但直到21号也就是星期五，我才收到你的来信，作为我和你母亲结婚纪念日当天的礼物，因此我24号之前都不能回复你。要到12月1号或2号，你才会读到这封信，天知道你那时在哪里。你们两个知道我很清楚旅行中有多少额外开销，尤其当人们太慷慨或者太友善的时候，花钱会怎样快得如流水。我亲爱的妻子还很自豪地说她会早起，不磨磨蹭蹭，麻利又省钱地安排一切。在慕尼黑黑待了16天，在奥格斯堡待了14天，按照你16号信里说的，接下来将要在曼海姆待17天，再加上等待奥格斯堡回复的时间，也就是3周。这简直就像巫术。你们已经走了8周，也就是2个月了，现在已经到曼海姆了？这真是难以理解的飞速！我们当时去英国的时候，在慕尼黑黑待了9天，拜访了选帝侯和克莱门特公爵，因为我们必须等待恩赐的礼物。之后我们在奥格斯堡待了15天，在那里演了3场音乐会，也就是6月28号、6月30号和7月4号。6月9号我们从萨尔茨堡动身，由于必须在因河畔瓦瑟堡做马车的新轮子，所以12号才到慕尼黑。尽管我们也在乌尔姆、路德维希堡和布鲁萨尔逗留了些许，但13号也就到了施韦青根。所以你们看到了，你们那些又长又没有必要的各处逗留把一切都搞砸了，公认的金秋就这么过去了，而直到现在你们还在做散心之旅，把时间都花在了娱乐消遣上面。现在好了，糟糕的暴风雨，短暂的白天，最冷的时候已经来了，还有更多更糟糕的天气在后面。你们的目的地现在看起来既昂贵又遥远。

你不能一整个冬天都在旅行，你的逗留地必须是一个大城市，人多，有赚钱的希望和机会。像这样的地方上哪儿去找呢？只有巴黎。但在巴黎就完全是另一种生活方式，另一种思考方式了-你必须保持注意力高度集中，每天琢磨赚钱的途径，练就各种繁文缛节以讨好上层阶级。关于这些我会在下一封信中细说。为了让你更快到达巴黎，下次我会说说我关于另一条旅行路线的想法，它和之前说的完全不一样，但值得一试-也就是从科布伦茨到特里尔、卢森堡、色当，曾经和瓦勒尔先生一起拜访过我们的齐根哈根先生在色当有个手绢厂，他人可能现在就在那里。然后是勒泰勒、兰斯、苏瓦松，再到巴黎。请你注意，从巴黎到勒泰勒一共有22个法国站点。从勒泰勒到色当很近，到卢森堡也不远，而特里尔就在卢森堡边上。卢森堡是一个气势恢宏的要塞，那里会有很多军官。兰斯和苏瓦松都是大城市。在这些地方赚回一些旅行费用还是比较容易的，因为艺术大师很少造访这些地方。相比之下，从布鲁塞尔到巴黎要经过34站，将花费我们6匹马20路易斯，而且赚不到一分钱。因为从科布伦茨到布鲁塞尔没什么可做的，除了或许能拜访柯尼赛格选帝侯。也许这也不错？布鲁塞尔有什么呢？

在此期间，无论你选择哪条路线，都要拿到一些去巴黎的推荐信，谁写的不重要，商人、官员等都可以。你是否知道还有没有法国大使或者法国人在美因茨或科布伦茨？我觉得是没有。你现在连一封推荐信都还没有，而我有很多封。为了能立刻获得庇护，建立起关系网，你绝对需要这些推荐信。这样的旅行一点儿乐趣都谈不上，你还没有经历过。一个人脑子里必须想着其他更重要的事情，而不是只会玩愚蠢的把戏。你必须一直考虑上百件事情，不然就会突然陷入困境，一分钱都没有。没有了钱，你也就不再有朋友，即使你免费教了上百节课，即使你写奏鸣曲，即使每晚10点到12点跟朋友鬼混，而不去做重要的事情。再去问问贷款的事！所有的消遣都可以停止了，所有的嬉皮笑脸眼下也都可以收起来了。我绝不是责怪你通过友善的举动和坎纳比希一家建立关系，这做得很好。但是你应该把晚上的一些闲散时间献给如此牵挂你的父亲，不要只给他一封匆忙写就的大杂烩，而是写一份有条有理的可信的报告，比如写写你们的旅行花费，你们还剩下多少钱，未来的旅程计划以及你在曼海姆的打算，等等。这些都应该事无巨细地写下来，并且征求我的建议。我希望你能够明智地看到这一点，如果不是你可怜的老父亲，谁会来最终承担这一切呢？正如前面所说，我21号收到了你的信，在今天之前都没时间回复。昨天23号，我向三位一体的上帝忏悔，满含泪水地为你们祈祷全能天主的庇佑。下午有一场卡耶坦·安特雷特举办的射击练习，我得了一等奖。布林格先生向你们问好，你的信也让他有点儿惊讶。我觉得，在目前这个严肃的情况下，他不大高兴你关于公共债务的玩笑。五点半我还去了哈格瑙尔先生那里，请求他今天就给奥格斯堡那边写

信，如果诺克与希德尔银行没通知他已向你汇款的话。今天早晨我再次去了店里跟哈格瑙尔的儿子约瑟夫先生聊天。我发现他们虽然从诺克与希德尔银行那里收到了信，但没看到上面有关于你的消息。他承诺我今天写信去问问。现在我已经把我能做的都做了，只希望你在此期间已收到了一些钱。直到诺克与希德尔银行知道你已拿到了多少钱，他们才会通知我。请注意，拿钱的时候最好不要接受弗罗林而是接受当地货币，比如金路易或者卡罗林等。现在我已经把压在心头的事情都说完了，这些都是来自上帝的真理。你会知道的，像这样依靠不稳定的经济收入去旅行毫无乐趣可言。但无论如何，你一定要虔诚地向天主祈求健康，请求他在坏人面前庇护你。此外要通过所有你知道的方式挣钱，同时省吃俭用。对于以后再也不会见到的旅伴，我总是倾向于少给点钱，宁愿他在背后说我小气，也不愿给了他很多钱，他还在背后为此嘲笑我。纸已经写不下了，而且我眼睛也累了。

我和南妮儿 [20] 希望你们身体健康，真心吻你们一百万次，我是你们的老丈夫，老父亲，注意——不是你们的儿子

莫扎特

希望你们收到了我20号的信，我在上面写了你可以给巴黎的格林男爵写信，也应该给慕尼黑的基姆湖侯爵写信。下一封信我会把去巴黎的所有沿途站点和我的意见都写下来，再附上一份我们在巴黎的旧友名单。再见。

[18] 这件事的前因如下：哈格瑙尔在奥格斯堡的诺克与希德尔银行贷给莫扎特一笔钱，但是没授权这家银行异地使用这笔钱。因此赫尔佐克的银行，即诺克与希德尔银行，只给了莫扎特一封致施马尔茨先生（曼海姆）的推荐信，而非可贷出钱款的贷款信用证。

[19] 选帝侯是德国历史上一种特殊现象，指代那些拥有选举“罗马人的皇帝”权利的诸侯。此制度严重削弱了皇权，加深了政治分裂。-编者注

[20] 即莫扎特的姐姐，玛利亚·安娜·沃布尔嘉·伊格娜提亚·莫扎特（1751-1829），昵称南妮儿，钢琴家，天赋过人，早年同年幼的莫扎特一同旅行演出。

沃尔夫冈·阿马德乌斯·莫扎特 致父亲利奥波德·莫扎特（萨尔茨堡）

曼海姆，1777年11月29日

我亲爱的父亲！

今天上午我收到了您24号的来信，依我看来，面对突如其来的好运或歹运，您没能做到处之泰然。到目前为止，事实证明我们一家四口从来没有特别幸运但也没有特别不幸，为此我感谢天主。但您对我妈妈如此一番责备，实在不公平。我们没有任何不必要的花销，至于旅途中的必要开支，您知道得很清楚，比我们都清楚。我们在慕尼黑待了那么久，除了我自己不能怪任何人。如果我是一个人出来的话，我一定干脆就留在那里了。至于说我们为什么在奥格斯堡待了14天？我不禁怀疑，您大概没收到我从奥格斯堡寄出的信？我本来想举办一场音乐会。但他们让我失望了，这时就已经过去了8天。我决定无论如何得动身离开了，他们却不让我走，他们希望我能举办一场音乐会，我希望他们求我，然后他们这么做了，我便办了音乐会。这就是您说的14天。为什么我们直接就去了曼海姆？这个问题我在上一封信里已经回答了。至于我们为什么还在这里？您真的认为我没有任何正当理由留在这里吗？但是我可以告诉您，我的父亲……好，您的确应该知道原因和整件事情的来龙去脉。但是上帝做证，我现在并不想说这件事，因为我今天没法说出一丁点儿细节，只能告诉您一些不确定的消息。以我对您的了解，这只会让您徒增担心、忧虑，而这正是我一直以来努力避免的。但是如果您把这归结于我的疏忽、轻率和懒惰，那我只能谢谢您对我的评价。我打心里感到遗憾，因为您根本不了解我，不了解您的儿子。

我并不是无忧无虑，我只是准备好承受一切情况。因此，只要无损于我的荣誉和莫扎特这个好名声，我就可以耐心等待并忍受一切。因为如果必须如此，那也只好顺其自然了。但我现在就请您不要总是过早地高兴或苦恼，因为无论发生什么事，只要我们身体健康，就一切都好。因为幸福只存在于我们的想象之中。上个星期四即18号，也就是圣伊丽莎白瞻礼日 [21] 的前一天上午，我去拜访了萨维奥利伯爵，问他选帝侯泰奥多尔是否可以让我今年冬天留在曼海姆，因为我想给小王子上课。他回答道：“好，我会向选帝侯提议的，如果这件事取决于我的话，那一定没问题。”下午我去了坎纳比希那儿，因为拜访伯爵是他向我建议的，所以他立刻就问我是否去过了。我就把情

况都跟他说了。他说：“我非常希望您能留下来和我们一起过这个冬天，但我更希望您能在这里有份适合您的长久职位。”我回答说：“没什么能比在您这里安顿下来更好了，但我真的不知道有没有可能长留下来。您已经有两个乐长了。我不知道我能做些什么，我不想地位还不如福格勒 [22] ！”“这是不会的，”他说，“这里没有一个乐手在乐长之下，更不会在乐团负责人之下。选帝侯可以任命您为室内乐作曲家。您再等等，我会和萨维奥利伯爵谈谈这件事。”星期四举行了一场盛大的音乐会。伯爵一看到我就请我见谅，他还没和选帝侯说那件事，因为现在仍在选帝侯命名日庆典期间。等庆典一结束，也就是下周一，他一定和选帝侯说这件事。然后我又等了3天，什么消息也没等到。当我去找他询问时，他说：“我的好莫扎特先生，昨天是星期五，今天是狩猎日，所以我不可能问选帝侯这件事，但明天这个时候我肯定会给您一个答复。”我请求他不要忘记了。说实话，我离开的时候相当生气，于是决定把我最简单的6首关于J.C.费舍尔小步舞曲的变奏曲 [23] 呈现给年轻伯爵（我就是为了这个目的才把谱子重新誊抄了1份），以便有机会亲自与选帝侯交谈。您无法想象那位家庭女教师见到我来访有多高兴，礼数周全地接待了我。当我拿出变奏曲乐谱，并告诉她这是为伯爵而创作的曲子时，她说：“啊！您太好了。不过您是否也为伯爵夫人写点什么了？”“还没有，”我说，“但如果我在这里待得够久，有时间写点什么的话，我自然会的。”“顺便跟您道贺一句，”她说，“我非常高兴您能留在这里过冬。”“我？我还不知道这件事！”“真令人吃惊。太奇怪了！选帝侯最近这么亲口跟我说的。‘顺便一提，’他说，‘莫扎特整个冬天都留在这里。’”好了，如果他真的这么亲口说了，那就是说唯一可以说这句话的人已经同意了，如果没有选帝侯的许可，我当然不能留在这里。然后我就把整件事情都告诉了那位家庭女教师。我们商量好第二天（也就是今天）我4点钟过去，给伯爵夫人带点乐谱。她会在我来之前和选帝侯说话，这样我就一定能见到他。我今天去了，但他没来。明天我会再去一次。我为伯爵夫人写了一个回旋曲。现在您说说看，我没有正当理由留在这里等待结果吗？我应该现在就动身离开这个有重大进展的地方吗？我现在可是有机会能与选帝侯本人交谈。我想这个冬天我很可能会在这里度过了，因为选帝侯喜欢我，欣赏我，并且知道我能做些什么。我希望下一封信能给您带来好消息。我再次请您不要过早高兴或是苦恼，并且不要向任何人透露这件事，除了布林格先生和姐姐。这里我寄给姐姐我为坎纳比希夫人写的奏鸣曲 [24] 快板和行板乐谱。回旋曲下回再寄，不然这次的信就太厚了。您必须保留原件。您可以以每张6分钱的价钱让别人誊抄这些乐谱，而我在这儿得花每张24分。您不觉得这很贵吗？再见了！吻您的双手十万次，真心拥抱我的姐姐。

我是您听话的儿子

沃尔夫冈·阿马德乌斯·莫扎特

您可能已经听过这首奏鸣曲的一些片段了。因为这首曲子在坎纳比希那里每天至少被吹拉弹唱演奏三遍！不过当然都是低声演奏的。

玛丽亚·安娜·莫扎特补充：

我亲爱的丈夫，我吻你和南妮儿一千次，请你向所有朋友转达我们的祝福。我下次再多写一点儿，现在已经是夜里12点了，再见。

我依旧是你忠实的妻子

玛丽亚·安娜·莫扎特

[21] 圣人瞻礼日起源于非常早期的基督教传统，即每年在殉道者逝世的日子或者在天堂出生的日子纪念殉道者。伊丽莎白是匈牙利的安德鲁二世国王和米拉尼亚的格特鲁德的女儿，因“玫瑰奇迹”而闻名。

[22] 乔治·约瑟夫·福格勒（1749-1814），德国作曲家、管风琴师、音乐教育家、理论家。

[23] 选自J.C.费舍尔所作的小步舞曲的变奏曲12首，K.179/189a。

[24] C大调第七号钢琴奏鸣曲，K.309/284b。

利奥波德·莫扎特 致儿子沃尔夫冈·阿马德乌斯·莫扎特（曼海姆）

萨尔茨堡，1777年12月4日

我亲爱的妻子，亲爱的儿子！

关于上封信里你们所说的必须等待的事情，我没有任何反对意见。至于你们旅行中那些违背我的意见，给我们带来不利甚至造成明显损害的事情，也没什么好说的了，因为这些都过去了，没法改变了。只是你，我的儿子，竟然写信跟我说，一切打算都是多余的，没有任何用，因为我们不知道究竟会发生什么。这种话绝对是不经思考，轻率写下的。没有一个基督徒，不，我应该说没有一个理智的人会否认，一切都必将遵循天主的意志发生。但这样就能得出结论说，我们应该闭着眼睛行动，无忧无虑地活着，不为未来做打算，只等着事情降临头顶吗？难道天主和这个理性的世界不曾要求过我们，不管做什么，都应该用人类的理智尽量全面地考虑后果，并且尽力为未来做准备吗？如果这些对我们的一切行为来说都是必要的，那考虑到我们目前的处境，对于一场旅行来说，周全考虑难道不是更有必要吗？或者你还没经历过这种后果？光是采取行动让选帝侯这个冬天把你留在那里，对你来说就已经够了吗？难道你不必……难道你不该早点考虑可以采取的计划，以防事情进展不顺利吗？难道你不该早点告诉我这件事，听听我的意见吗？现在好了，现在你终于写信了。可你写了什么？“如果我们无论如何要动身离开这里，那我们就直接去魏尔堡找拿骚-魏尔堡公主（你为她在荷兰写了奏鸣曲 [25] 等）。”还有“只要那里官员的饭菜合我们口味，我们就留下来。”这是何等的趣闻！这种语言，和你之前的那些信一样，只有一个绝望的人才会这么说话，用以安慰自己和我。不过你还有希望得到6个金路易，这些钱会让一切都好转起来。现在我的问题是，你是否真的确定公主在那里？她不会无缘无故地去那里，因为她丈夫在管理军队，目前在海牙。你难道不应该早点告诉我这件事吗？另一个问题是，你不觉得先去美因茨，再从那里经过法兰克福去魏尔堡更好吗？毕竟，从曼海姆去魏尔堡的路线会经过法兰克福，而且因为你不会一直在魏尔堡待着，去美因茨的路又会再次经过法兰克福。但是如果你先去美因茨再去魏尔堡，那你也许可以抄一条经过拿骚的近路从魏尔堡到科布伦茨。或者你想绕开美因茨吗？我们在那里有那么多好朋友。那时候即使我们没有去拜访生病的选帝侯，也演了3场音乐会，赚了200弗罗林。告诉我

吧，我亲爱的儿子，现在这些都是没必要的打算吗？你亲爱的好妈妈告诉我，她之后会为你们的开支勤快地记账。很好！详细的账单我不要求，也从没想过要这么一份。但是你们在到达奥格斯堡的时候就应该写信给我，告诉我你们在慕尼黑的阿尔贝特那里花了多少钱，在路途上花了多少钱，现在还剩下多少多少钱。你从奥格斯堡写信告诉我，加上音乐会的收入之后，你们总计大概花了20弗罗林。在你从曼海姆寄来的第二封信里，你至少应该告诉我，这段路途花了你们多少多少数目，你们现在还剩下……这样我就能及时做好准备。我为你准备一份贷款信用证寄到奥格斯堡也是没必要的打算吗？如果你不给我的故交赫尔佐克先生一份信用证，你真的认为他会因为你从曼海姆寄去的那些信给你汇钱吗？想都不要想！他最有可能做的事情是先来问我的意见。为什么只有当你们陷入困境里，我才能知道你们需要钱？你想等等看选帝侯会给你什么不是吗？也许你是为了不给我添堵，但事实上只有当你向我及时如实地报告一切，才能给我少添点堵，因为我比你们俩都清楚，在这样的旅行中，一个人必须怎样为一切可能的状况做好准备，才不至于哪天就陷入意想不到的可怕窘境。在这种时刻，所有的朋友都会消失！一个人必须快乐，必须享受生活！但是一个人也必须花时间去慎重考虑，这一点必须是你旅行过程中的头等大事，哪一天都不能让自己处于不利境地。日子一天天过去了，不过无论如何现在旅行的时间还很短，但这些在旅馆里度过的日子都花费不菲。公正的上帝啊！你让我现在不要为未来打算，哪怕我已经因为你们欠了450弗罗林的债。你也许觉得跟我说上百个愚蠢的笑话，就能给我带来好心情。我很高兴你心态很好，但是如果你能用理性写下你去魏尔堡的原因，你现在的处境，以及你接下来怎么打算的，最重要的是如果你能在任何情况下都听取我的意见，而不是写下按字母排序的问候语 [26]，我会更加开心。这些都能在邮寄日之前做完，因为你不可能现在才有了这个主意，也不可能自己就知道了公主在那里，如果没人给你提个醒的话。总之一句话！这些都不是多余的打算，因为只有当一个人脑子里同时有两三个计划，并事先做出必要的准备，才能保证如果一个计划失败了，还可以毫不耽搁地采取另一个。不这么做的人，就是一个不理性的人，一个轻率的人。在今天这个世界，这样的人不管有多聪明，也总是会落于人后，甚至会变得很不幸，因为他总是被谄媚者、小人或嫉妒者所愚弄。注意到这一点吧，我的儿子，如果能在1000人中发现一个人可以不图私利跟你做真正的朋友，那就是这个世界最大的奇迹。好好研究一下那些自称是你朋友，或者炫耀他是你朋友的人，你就会知道他们为什么跟你交往。如果他们在你身上没有任何好处可捞，那他们就会去找下一个对他们有用的人当朋友。或者还有一种情况，他们跟你做朋友，是为了通过抬举你来惹恼第三个人。如果在曼海姆最后毫无结果，你们就要计划去美因茨，法兰克福，魏尔堡，科布伦茨等地。你们必须始终尽量寻找彼此相邻

的地方，这样的话，可能的情况下，做个短途旅行，就可以很快再到一个有收入来源的地方。如果这封信寄到曼海姆的时候，你们已经去了魏尔堡，那我也无能为力了。但如果你们还在曼海姆，并且必须动身离开，妈妈会在地图上发现你们的最佳路线是先去美因茨，不然你们就会错过美因茨或者折回去一段路。在魏尔堡你们得记住，那里找不到一个天主教教堂，因为那里所有人都是新教徒或者加尔文教徒。我希望你们在那里不要逗留太久。

谁告诉你们从维尔茨堡到曼海姆必须穿过施佩萨尔特森林，就因为在这个森林在富尔达和法兰克福之间的阿沙芬堡？这估计又是贝克先生骗你们的。阿沙芬堡和维尔茨堡之间相距10里路。可能去曼海姆的时候，人们得花几个小时从右边穿过森林。但是维尔茨堡附近什么都没有，无论你们是否去过。

注意：关于从魏尔堡到科布伦茨的旅程，我还有一个新发现，就是，这条路穿过乡间，会比从美因茨去科布伦茨的路要安全，那条路太靠近莱茵河了。我现在想听听你们接下来的打算，我从来没有想到，我亲爱的妻子竟然没有及时地向我报告旅行的精确花销，因为我已经要过两次阿尔贝特那里的账单了，并且你们也应该告诉我在拉姆旅馆那里花费了多少。但是你们的所有开销我目前都一无所知。我请妈妈一定要就这一点给我写一封机密信，我不要啰里啰唆的解释，但是我得看到房东的账单，看看他们是怎么招待你们的，所有钱都花在了哪里。现在我们必须认真严肃考虑一下怎么让你们摆脱眼下的处境，怎样尽可能经济地旅行，并且做出合理准备，但是所有的坏消息和好消息你们都必须立刻让我知道。你们一定不能卖了马车。

愿天主保佑你们和我，南妮儿和我吻你们一亿次，我是你们的丈夫和老父亲

莫扎特

切尔宁伯爵让我转达他对你们的问候。有传言说大主教不仅要送海登去意大利 [27]，而且还想送他和特林德尔去博尔扎诺。但是特林德尔先生婉拒了。我的好沃尔夫冈，我请你考虑周全一切，不要总是只给我写已经过去了的事情。不然我们两个都不开心。

[25] 即小提琴奏鸣曲K.26-31。

[26] 在莫扎特和妈妈1777年11月26日致利奥波德信的末尾，他们请父亲向萨尔茨堡的亲朋好友转达问候，并将所有人的名字按首字母顺序排列写下。

[27] 大主教想送米夏埃尔·海登去意大利找一位乐长和可靠的管风琴师、钢琴师。

利奥波德·莫扎特 致儿子沃尔夫冈·阿马德乌斯·莫扎特（曼海姆）

萨尔茨堡，1778年2月5日

我亲爱的儿子！

按我的推测，这应该是你在曼海姆能收到的最后一封信了，所以这封信是单独写给你的。尽管你可能会想到，要和你分离得更远这件事对我来说多么难以接受，但是你还是不可能对我心头的沉重感同身受。如果你愿意花时间回忆一下，在你们娇嫩的少年时代，我带着你们两个孩子一起做了些什么，你就不会指责我胆怯，而是会像其他人一样，承认我是个男人，并且是一个一直敢于冒险的男人。只是我做事总是尽量地三思而后行，因为人不能阻止意外发生，只有上帝能预见未来。当然，直到现在我们既算不上幸福也算不上悲哀，感谢天主，让我们走了一条平平安安的中间道路。我们尽自己所能来让你幸福，也希望通过你让我们更幸福，至少让你的人生有一个坚实的根基。但是我们的命运事与愿违。正如你所知，我们的最后一步让我深陷泥潭，你知道，现在我大概欠了700弗罗林的债款，以我微薄的月俸，我不知道现在该怎么养活自己、妈妈和你姐姐。因为我活到现在都没指望过从大主教那里拿到更多的钱。现在你一定一清二楚了，你年迈的双亲，打心里爱着你的姐姐，我们未来的命运都在你一个人手里。从你们出生起，或者说更早，打从我结婚起，我就无比艰难地靠着20弗罗林的固定月俸度日，一点一点供养妻子和7个孩子，2个仆人还有外婆，此外还要支付分娩、葬礼和看病费用。如果你考虑到了这些，你就会相信，我不仅从来没有花过一分钱让自己有一点点享受，而且因为没有得到天主的特别眷顾，尽管我如此周全打算，如此拼命，还是从未摆脱掉负债的生活。但即便如此，我也从未像现在这样债台高筑。我把我所有的时间都献给了你们两个，只希望确保你们能够养活自己，让我拥有一个安宁的晚年，能够对你们的教育问心无愧，不用操太远的心，只需关心我自己的灵魂救赎，平静地迎接死亡。但是命数和天主的意志让我现在再次接受这份讨厌的上课工作，并且是在这样一个地方-付出那么艰辛的努力，收入却如此微薄，以至于每个月都挣不够足以养活自己和家庭的钱。尽管如此，我还是会保持心情愉快，自我宽慰，为了至少能获得一点儿微薄的收入。我亲爱的沃尔夫冈，我现在不但不会不信任你，一点儿也不，相反，我完全信赖你并且希望你能孝顺。这一切都取决于你必然具备的理智，只要

你愿意倾听它，即使在幸福的时刻也要倾听它。最后这点不能强求。但你一定要用理智考虑一切，我希望也请求你这么做。

你现在要进入一个完全不一样的世界了：你千万不要认为我说巴黎很危险是出于偏见，相反，根据我个人的经验，我没有任何理由认为巴黎危险。但我那时的处境和你现在的处境天差地别。我们当时住在一位使臣家里，第二次是在一个独立的房子里。我那时人到中年，你们还是孩子，我避免一切社交，尤其避免和我们这个行业的人熟识。你记得我在意大利也是这么做的。我只和上层阶级结识、交往，其中都是中年人，我不和年轻人结识，即使他们也属于顶级阶层。我不常邀请任何人来家里做客，以便保持自己的自由，我一直认为在我方便的时候去拜访别人是更加明智的做法。如果我不喜欢那个人，或者我有工作和别的安排，我就可以直接离开。但如果别人来拜访我，并且举止粗鲁，我就不知道该怎么摆脱他们了。即使是一个并不讨厌的人，也总是会影响我去做重要的工作。你还是个22岁的年轻人，没有老年人的那种严肃态度，无法阻止别人来结识你，好把你带入他的社交圈，慢慢利用你。这样的人可以来自任何阶层，可能是冒险家、吹牛大王或者骗子，可能是个年轻人也可能是个年纪大的。一个人会不知不觉地进入这样的圈套，然后就无法抽身了。至于女人的问题，我其实一点儿也不想去谈，因为这需要极度的克制和理智，天性本身就是我们的敌人。一个人如果没有运用他的全部理智去进行必要的克制，之后就算再怎么努力想走出这个迷宫也是徒劳。这种悲剧常常会以死亡收场。我们经常多么愚蠢地被起初并不起眼的笑料、阿谀者和小丑蒙骗，一旦后来理智察觉到了，我们就会对此十分难为情。你可能已经尝到了一些苦头。我不想责备你。我知道你不仅把我当作父亲来爱，也把我当作一位最值得信赖的朋友来爱。现在你看到了，我们的幸与不幸，我的后半生甚至是我将来临的死亡，都放在了你的手里，就像放在上帝手里一样。如果我了解你的话，我当然只希望你快乐，你不在的日子里，这个心愿就能宽慰我，因为我已经被剥夺了属于父亲的幸福，无法听你说话、看到你，也不能拥抱你。像一个虔诚的天主教徒那样生活吧！爱并敬畏天主，热忱且虔诚地向他祈祷，过基督徒应该过的生活。这样就算我再也见不到你了，我临死之时也不会忧惧不安。

真心给你来自父亲的祝福，我至死都是你忠实的父亲和最可靠的朋友

利奥波德·莫扎特

这里是我们在巴黎的熟人名单。他们都会很期待见到你。

给妻子（补写在信封上）

我亲爱的妻子！

因为你们会在11号或者12号收到这封信，我不得不怀疑沃尔夫冈在曼海姆是否还能再收到一封信。通过这段附记，我向他道别！我满含泪水写下这些话。南妮儿亲吻她亲爱的兄弟沃尔夫冈一百万次。她本来要在我的信上再写点什么来道别，但信已经写得太满了，而且我不能让她读这封信。我们请沃尔夫冈照顾好自己的身体，保持家里的饮食习惯，不然他一到巴黎就会脸色苍白。所有的辛辣食物对他的健康都有害。我希望他带上那本大拉丁语祈祷书，上面找得到圣母小日课的所有赞美诗。如果他想在曼海姆买德语版的圣母小日课，以便能用德语读，那他必须找遍所有版本。因为拉丁语的赞美诗很难理解，如果有德语版的在手边会好一点儿。宗教音乐会也会演出模仿对位法赞美诗 [28]，他可以通过这种方式来获得巨大声誉。也许他还能在那里演出他的《主之仁慈》 [29]。歌剧歌手不来萨尔茨堡了，他们要去施特劳宾取悦奥地利官员。大主教再次要求长官举行9场舞会，昨天是第1场，有30个人出席。舞会一直开到1点半，但9点半前都没有人来，直到10点钟才有人开始跳舞。我们吃了只阉鸡，喝了6大杯葡萄酒。我希望你们收到了誊抄好的两首四手联弹奏鸣曲 [30]，费舍尔变奏曲和回旋曲 [31]，都打包在了一个信封里。阿德加瑟先生的灵魂在死后再也找不到好的风箱师傅了。因为教堂的老风箱师，80岁的托马斯也随他而去了。最近最大的新闻是，巴利桑尼夫人为她可敬的老丈夫不可思议地争风吃醋，就因为他和儿子凯科好几个晚上都去了英俊的弗赖绍夫先生家里演出，而他有一个比她更漂亮但头脑简单的妻子。这真是难以置信的小题大做。再见。我们吻你们千百万次。

莫扎特

所有人都向你们致以最美好的祝福，尤其是布林格先生，警官中士克萊斯先生和韦伯·莫克的妻子等人。

[28] 对位法采用的方法有两种，即模仿与对比，赋格曲是用模仿方法创作的最高级形式。

[29] 宗教音乐《主之仁慈》，K.222/205a。

[30] 降B大调四手联弹钢琴奏鸣曲，K.358/186c；D大调四手联弹钢琴奏鸣曲，K.381/123a。

[31] 指的是《C大调第七号钢琴奏鸣曲》最后一个乐章，K.309/284b。

沃尔夫冈·阿马德乌斯·莫扎特 致父亲利奥波德·莫扎特（萨尔茨堡）

曼海姆，1778年7月3日

先生

我亲爱的父亲！

我有一个非常悲伤痛苦的消息要告诉您，这也是我直到现在才回复您上个月11号那封信的原因。

亲爱的妈妈病得很厉害，她像以往那样放过血了，这确实很有必要，这之后她状态很不错。但几天后她就开始抱怨打寒战，同时还发烧，然后腹泻、头痛也来了。起初我们只使用我们的家庭药方-抗痉挛药粉。我们本来也想用黑色药粉，但手边没有，这里也买不到，连抗癫痫药粉这个名字都没人知道。但妈妈的情况越来越糟，几乎说不了话，也失去了听力，以至于我们不得不对她大喊大叫，因此格林男爵派他的医生来看她。她非常虚弱，仍然发着烧，神志不清。医生让我对她抱有希望，但我实在无法太乐观。这么多天以来，我日夜徘徊在恐惧和希望之间，但我已完全皈依天主的意志，并希望您和亲爱的姐姐也能如此。不然还有什么别的方法能让我们保持平静呢？我是说，相对平静一点儿，因为我们不可能完全保持平静。这样一来，无论结果如何，我心里都会感到安慰，因为我知道天主会为我们做出最好的安排，即使是那些违背我们意愿的事情，也一样是为了我们好。因为我相信（我不会改变这个想法），没有哪个医生、个人，也没有什么不幸、意外真的可以给予或夺走一个人的生命。只有上帝可以做到。那些只是他最常使用的工具，但并不是全部。毕竟我们有时会看到有的人昏厥、倒下，一会儿就死了。当我们的时辰来临时，一切手段都是徒劳的，这些手段与其说阻止死亡不如说是加快了死亡。我们的亡友黑夫纳已经印证了这一点！我说这些并不意味着妈妈已经没希望了，马上或者一定会死。她可以重新恢复健康，但只有当主也这么希望之时才能如此。在尽力为亲爱的妈妈向主祈求健康和生命之后，我喜欢这样想想来自我安慰，因为这真的会让我感到更加开朗、平静和宽慰。您很容易能想到我多么需要这些！但现在说说别的吧。让我们抛开这些悲伤的想法，我们仍然要抱有希望，但不要太多；我们要信赖上帝，自我宽慰-如果这是全能之主的意志，那一切安排都是好的，因为他最了解什么有利于我们暂时的福分，什么有助于我们永恒的福

祉和救赎。

我为宗教音乐会的开幕写了一部交响曲 [32]，它在基督圣体节 [33] 上演时受到了热烈欢迎。我还听说在《欧洲信使报》(*Courrier de l'Europe*) 上有一篇相关报道，可见人们多么喜欢它。排演的时候我非常害怕，因为我这辈子还没听到过比这更糟糕的演奏。您无法想象他们如何接连两次敷衍、拉锯似的演奏这首曲子。我当时真的害怕极了。我很想再排演一次，但是因为要排演的曲目那么多，最后就没有时间了。所以我只好惴惴不安，怀着不满和气愤的心情上床睡觉。第二天我决定不去音乐会演出了。但是傍晚时天气很好，我最终还是下定决心过去，并打定主意，如果一切还像排演时那么糟糕，我就走到乐团里，把小提琴从首席小提琴手拉乌斯先生的手里夺过来，自己亲自来指挥。我向上帝祈祷一切可以顺利进行，因为这一切都是为了他的荣耀光辉。看吧，交响曲开始了，拉夫 [34] 站在我旁边。在第一乐章快板的中间，有一段我知道一定会取悦听众的段落。他们果然都为之痴狂，掌声雷动。因为我写的时候就知道会产生什么样的效果，所以我在结尾处又弹了一遍这一段落。这时观众们开始齐喊“从头再奏”。他们也喜欢行板，但更喜欢最后的快板。我注意到这里演出的作品，所有的终曲快板都像开场快板一样，总是让所有乐器齐奏 [35]。于是我决定别出机杼，在开始的前八小节只让两把小提琴和钢琴弱奏，紧接着立刻是一段强音响奏。不出所料，听众们在钢琴弱奏部分发出嘘声要求安静，然后强音一响起来，他们就开始齐刷刷地鼓掌。我非常高兴，所以交响曲一演奏完毕，我就去皇宫里要了一份精美的冰激凌。然后如我所承诺的那样做了念珠祷告，之后就回家了，因为我总是在家时最开心，也最愿意待在家里。或者待在一个善良又可靠的德国人家里也行，只要他未婚时过着典范的基督徒生活，结婚后挚爱妻子并好好教育孩子。

现在我要说一条您可能已经知道的新闻。那个不信天主的头号流氓伏尔泰像狗一样，像一头畜生那样翘辫子了。这就是他的报应！您说得对，我们已经欠了特蕾泽5个季度的工资。您很早就看出来我不喜欢这里，原因很多，但是因为我现在人已经在这里，再去细说它们也没什么用。但这错不在我，永远都不会是我的过错，因为我愿意倾尽全力做到最好。好吧，上帝会安排好一切的！目前我脑子里盘算着一些事情，为此我每天都向天主祈祷，如果这也符合他的意志，那事情就会如愿发生的，如果不符合，我也不会不满意，因为至少我做了自己能做的。但如果一切如我所愿进展顺利，那您也必须尽您那份力，不然整件事情就无法圆满办成。凭您对我的爱，我相信您一定会尽力而为的。只是关于这件事，您现在不要做无谓的猜想。我早就求您给我这份恩典-在时机成熟前，不要催我说清楚一切想法。

至于歌剧，现在的情况是这样的，目前很难找到优秀的歌词。那

些老歌词是一流的，但不适合现代风格，新歌词又都没什么价值。歌词本来是法国人唯一能引以为傲的东西，现在却每况愈下，但在这里，歌词正是唯一必须出色的东西，因为法国人不理解音乐。现在我有两部咏叹调歌剧可以写，一个两幕剧，一个三幕剧。两幕剧是《亚历山德拉和罗克珊》（*Alexandra et Roxane*），但剧本作者目前还在乡下。三幕剧是从梅塔斯塔齐奥 [36] 《得摩丰》（*Demofonte*）翻译过来的，其中穿插着合唱和舞蹈，整体风格很适合法国舞台，但是这个剧本我至今还没能看到。

写信告诉我您在萨尔茨堡是否已买到施罗特的协奏曲，或者是胡尔曼德尔的奏鸣曲？我想买下它们寄给您。这两部作品都非常美。至于凡尔赛宫，它决不在我的考虑范围内。为此我也征求了格林男爵和其他好朋友的意见，他们都和我想得一样。薪水不多，但你却必须在那个地方煎熬6个月，什么额外收入都没有，最终白白埋没自己的才华。谁在巴黎为王室服务，谁就会被遗忘。但我想当一位管风琴师！我非常想要一个体面的工作，但只能是乐长，并且收入丰厚。

那么再见了！保重您的身体，信赖上帝，您就能得到安慰。我亲爱的妈妈现在在全能之主的手中。如果他仍要把她送还我们，如我们所愿，我们自然感恩不尽，但如果他要把她带去他身边，任凭我们怎样恐惧、担心或者绝望，都是无济于事的。还是让我们坚定地皈依上帝那神性的意志吧，相信这一切都是为了我们好，因为他不会无缘无故地做出安排。再见，最亲爱的爸爸！为了我，您要好好保重身体。我亲吻您的双手一千次，全心拥抱我的姐姐。

我是您听话的儿子

沃尔夫冈·阿马德乌斯·莫扎特

[32] D大调第三十一（巴黎）交响曲，K.297/300a。

[33] 基督圣体节（5月底或6月初）圣灵降临节（复活节后第50天）后的第二个星期四。

[34] 安东·拉夫（1714-1797），德国男高音。

[35] 指所有乐器或人声按同度或相隔八度演奏。

[36] 皮特罗·梅塔斯塔齐奥（Pietro Metastasio），原名皮特罗·安东尼奥·多梅尼科·特拉帕西（Pietro Antonio Domenico Trapassi，1698-1782），意大利著名正歌剧作家。

沃尔夫冈·阿马德乌斯·莫扎特 致父亲利奥波德·莫扎特（萨尔茨堡）

曼海姆，1778年7月9日

我希望您已经准备好坚强地接受这个最悲痛的消息。我上一封3号的信就让您做好心理准备，不要期待听到好消息。因为就在那一天，3号晚上的10点21分，妈妈安息主怀了。事实上，在我给您写信的时候，她已经在享受天堂之福了。一切都结束了。我是在那天夜里给您写信的，希望您和亲爱的姐姐能原谅我这小小的但十分必要的欺骗。因为想到你们定会和我一样伤心痛苦，我实在不忍心立刻告诉你们这个可怕的消息。但是我希望你们两个已经准备好了接受最坏的消息，愿你们在所有自然而适度的痛苦和哭泣过后，终能皈依天主的意志，尊崇他那不可探究、深不可测的全知神意。您不难想象我经受了些什么，需要多少勇气和坚强才能镇定地忍受一天天每况愈下的这一切。然而仁慈的上帝赐予了我这个恩典-痛苦我体尝够了，也哭够了，但是这些有什么用呢？我必须试着自我宽慰。亲爱的父亲，亲爱的姐姐，你们也要这样做！哭吧，尽情地痛哭，但最后你们要安慰好自己。不要忘记，全能的上帝已经决定了这件事，我们能做什么来反抗他呢？还是向主祈祷并感谢他的仁慈安排吧，因为妈妈是非常幸福地死去的。在那些伤心的时刻，我有三个聊以自慰的想法。一是完全信赖上帝并且皈依他的意志。二是妈妈那从容、美丽的死亡让我不禁想到她在那一瞬间变得多么幸福，也让我想到她现在不知道比我们幸福多少倍。那一瞬间我甚至希望可以和她一起走。这个愿望、这个渴望反过来成了我的第三个慰藉之源-我们不是永远失去了她，我们会再次见到她，并且会比在人世间更加幸福快乐地相聚在一起。只是我们不知道我们的时辰什么时候会到，但我一点都不为此焦虑。当天主决定了，我就服从他的安排。现在，他最神圣、圣洁的意志已经实现了。让我们为妈妈的灵魂虔诚祷告吧，然后就让我们继续前行，去面对其他事情。每件事情都有它自己的时辰。现在我在德皮奈夫人和格林先生家里写这封信，我目前住在这里，有一个漂亮的房间，窗外风景宜人。就眼下这个状况而言，我在这里称得上愉快了。如果能听到我亲爱的父亲和姐姐镇定而坚强地完全皈依上帝的意志，全心全意地信赖他，坚信他为我们做出了最好的安排，这对我来说将是莫大的帮助和安慰。我最亲爱的父亲，要保重身体！最亲爱的姐姐，你也要保重！你还不曾体尝过你弟弟的好心肠，因为他还没有机会展现这一

点。我的亲人，照顾好自己的身体，要记住你们还有一个儿子，一个兄弟，他会竭尽全力让你们幸福。同时他也知道，有一天你们将不再否定他那些必将带来荣耀的心愿和快乐 [37]，你们也会同样竭尽所能地使他幸福。噢！然后我们就尽可能地在人世间的平静、快乐地生活在一起。当天主最终决定了时辰，我们就在彼岸再次相聚，正是为了这个目的我们才被选中和创造出来。

您上一封6月29号的信我已经收到，知道你们两个都身体健康，我很高兴，感谢赞美主。读到您写的海登醉酒那段 [38]，我忍不住哈哈大笑。如果我在场的话，我一定会立刻在他耳边低语：“阿德加瑟。”这实在是个耻辱，这么能干的一个人竟然由于个人过错而无法履行职责，在这样一个为荣耀天主而设立的职位上犯下过错，而且是当着大主教和整个宫廷官员的面，教堂里都是人。这真的太可怕了。这也是我厌恶萨尔茨堡的主要原因之一。那些粗俗、无礼、放荡的宫廷乐师，没有一个诚实有教养的人可以和我们一起生活。真的，没人能接受与他们为伍，都会为他们感到羞耻。可能正是出于这个原因，音乐家在我们那儿既不受欢迎，也不受人尊重。如果他们能像曼海姆管弦乐团那样被组织起来该多好！那是一支被纪律主宰的乐团！指挥坎纳比希先生很有权威，所以一切事情都能被认真执行。坎纳比希是我见过的最棒的指挥，下属对他又爱又怕。他在整座城市都享有盛名，他的小兵们名声也很好。他们的行为举止自然十分不同，他们很有教养，衣着得体，不去酒馆，也不酗酒。但这些都与萨尔茨堡永远也做不到，除非大主教信任您或我，将管弦乐团交给我们全权掌管，这非常必要，不然一切都是徒劳。因为在萨尔茨堡，每个人都——或者不如说没有人——关心管弦乐团。如果要我接受这个职位，那就要让我在行动上完全的自由，宫廷音乐负责人不能在管弦乐团以及所有与乐团有关的事情上对我指手画脚。因为一位朝臣不能当乐长，但一位乐长可以是朝臣。顺便告诉您，选帝侯泰奥多尔现在又回到曼海姆了。坎纳比希夫人和坎纳比希本人都和我保持着通信。我担心管弦乐团要大大缩编，如果真是这样，那将是永远的遗憾，但如果不致如此，我就仍然会抱有希望。您知道，我不再要别的什么了，除了一个体面的工作、良好的声誉和可观的收入，无论在哪里，只要是在一个天主教国家里。您在整个事件中与施塔耳亨贝格伯爵巧妙周旋，简直就像尤利西斯一样 [39]。您只管按照您的打算进行下去吧，注意别让自己被蒙骗了。尤其是当您要与那只傲慢的蠢鹅谈话时，要更加警惕。我是知道她的，相信我，她绝对是个口蜜腹剑的人。这很正常，毕竟整件事情还处在悬而未决的状态。在我真正能够下定决心之前，还有许多条件要被许可。但即使一切都进展顺利，我也宁愿待在萨尔茨堡以外的任何地方。不过我也不太为之发愁，因为他们不大可能会准许我的所有要求，我要得太多了。但也不是完全不可能。如果一切都进展顺利，安排妥当，我会毫不犹豫地答应下来，哪怕只是为了享受和您一

起生活的快乐。但是如果萨尔茨堡人想要我，他们就必须满足我的一切心愿，不然他们决计得不到我。巴姆堡格修道院院长像一位修士那样死去了！[40]但我没听说圣十字修道院院长也死了。我很遗憾，他是那么正派可敬的一个人。您之前没有想过奥格斯堡教区主教策辛格会当上修道院院长吗？我以我的名誉担保，我从未想过他之外的任何人选，我不知道除了他还有谁能担任修道院院长。而且他对管弦乐团来说自然是一个好院长！年轻的施托克哈默小姐与她忠实的施塔尔亨贝格伯爵之前的每日散步终究开花结果了！他们真的很勤奋，一点儿也不懒。懒惰是一切恶习的开端。这个业余戏团最后竟然真的上台演出了！但是他们能演多久呢？我想，洛德龙女伯爵再也不想开这样一场音乐会了。切尔宁是一个过于欢快的年轻人，布鲁内蒂则很粗俗。

我的朋友拉夫明天就离开了，但是他要途经布鲁塞尔去亚琛和水疗中心，然后再从那儿去曼海姆，等他一到就会立刻告诉我，因为我们想保持通信。他向您和姐姐致以问候，虽然他不认识您。您说您很久没听我谈及跟我学作曲的女学生了，的确如此，但我能对您说些什么呢？她永远不会成为作曲家；我所有的努力都是徒劳的，因为首先她愚蠢透顶，其次她懒惰透顶。关于歌剧的情况，我上封信回答过您。至于诺韦尔 [41] 的芭蕾舞，我只说过他可能会写一个新的舞剧，其中只有半场以芭蕾舞形式上演，我正是为这部分舞蹈写乐曲 [42]。也就是说，这部剧有六段是其他人写的，充满了可怕的法国陈腐气息，而交响曲和行列舞，大约有12段由我来创作。这个芭蕾舞剧目前已经上演了四次，大受欢迎。但我现在绝对什么都不写了，除非我事先知道我能得到什么。这个芭蕾舞剧音乐只是作为朋友送给诺韦尔的礼物。5月的最后一天，文德林先生离开了这里。如果我要见巴格男爵，那我必须有千里眼，因为他目前在伦敦，不在这儿。我是不是没有告诉您这些？您等着看吧，我以后一定会尽快回复您所有的信件。不过据说巴格男爵很快就会回来，我很高兴，原因很多，最重要的是在他家里总有机会认真排练。巴赫乐长很快也会来到这里，我觉得他会写一部歌剧。法国人就是蠢驴，永远都是。他们什么都不会，必须依靠外国人。我在宗教音乐会与皮钦尼 [43] 交谈过。无论我们什么时候偶然相遇，他对我都很有礼貌，我对他也是。除此之外我没有结交朋友，不管是和他，还是和其他作曲家。我明白我在做什么，他们也明白，这就够了。我的交响曲在宗教音乐会上获得了无与伦比的反响，这我也已经告诉您了。如果我受到委托要写一部歌剧，无疑会让我十分烦闷，但是我也不那么在意了，因为我已经习惯了，要是这该死的法语对音乐来说不那么可爱该多好！这很令人遗憾。相比之下，德国人则是神圣的。其次这些歌手-他们不配这个名字，因为他们不是在唱歌，而是用他们整个嗓子、鼻子和喉咙乱吼乱叫。为了下一个四句节，我要给宗教音乐会写一部法国清唱剧。指挥勒格罗先生 [44] 对我有很深的偏见。您必须知道，复活节以来我再没有去见过他（尽管

我之前每天都拜访他），因为他没有上演我的交响协奏曲 [45] 这件事让我很生气。我经常去拜访和他同住一宅的拉夫先生，每次都要经过他的房间。他的仆人和女仆每次都会看到我，我也每次都让他们代为致敬。他没有上演那部交响曲真的很让人遗憾，它本来会大受欢迎的。而现在他已经没这个机会了，他到哪儿找齐能够演奏这部交响曲的四个人呢？

有一天我去拜访拉夫，却被告知他出去了，不过很快就会回家，所以我打算等他回来。这时勒格罗先生走进房间说：“能再次有幸见到您真是个奇迹。”

“是的，我一直有很多事要做。”“您今天能留下来一起用餐吗？”“很抱歉，我已经有安排了。”“莫扎特先生，我们必须再次一块儿聚聚。”“我也很乐意。”长时间的沉默之后，他说：“顺便问您一句，您愿意为我给基督圣体日写一部大型交响乐吗？”

“为什么不呢？”“一言为定吗？”“哦，当然了！只要我确信它可以上演，不会经受那首交响协奏曲同样的命运就行。”然后话匣子就被打开了。他诚心诚意地道歉，但也知道没太多可说的。简单来说，交响曲得到了他的高度认可。勒格罗对此非常满意，他说这是他演出过的最好的交响曲。然而，行板却没有令他赏识的好运气。他说它转调太多，而且太长了。但他这么说是因为听众忘记了热烈鼓掌和喝彩，像在第一乐章和终曲乐章里一样。可是这里的行板确实受到了我自己、所有行家、音乐爱好者以及大多数听众的高度认可。与勒格罗所说的刚好完全相反，这段行板既自然又简短。但是为了让他（以及他所认为的不少人）满意，我已经重新写了一段新的行板。两段行板就其各自的形式而言都很出色，因为两者具有不同的特点，但我更喜欢新的行板。等我找到合适的机会，就把这个交响曲给您寄去，连同《小提琴演奏指导》、一些钢琴曲、福格勒的《声音科学》和《声音艺术》一起。然后我想听听您的意见，这个交响曲会以新的行板，在8月15号，也就是圣母升天节那天第二次上演。交响曲是re音，行板是sol音，这里的人们不说D大调或g小调。现在勒格罗已经很认可我了。该结尾了。如果您要写信给我，我觉得等您收到格林男爵的信之后再写会更好。格林先生很快就会给您写信。他和夫人都问候您并向您致以最真挚的哀悼。但他们希望您能够在无法改变的事情面前保持冷静。节哀顺变，热诚祈祷，这是我们唯一还能做的事了。我希望您能去马利亚平原朝圣教堂和洛雷托教堂那里做弥撒。我在这里也做了弥撒。至于给贝尔先生的推荐信，我认为这个没有必要寄给我，我从来没见过他。我只知道他是个不错的单簧管演奏者，但是很放荡。我不喜欢和这类人打交道。这得不到什么好名声。我一封推荐信都不想给他。这么做真的会让我很羞愧，即使他可以为我做什么！他在这里的名声并不好，许多人甚至没听说过他。两个施塔米茨现在只有弟

弟 [46] 在巴黎，大一点儿的那个 [47]（真正的作曲家）目前在伦敦。他们是两个可怜的三流角色，赌博、酗酒、嫖妓，不是我会与之打交道的那类人，那个年轻的施塔米茨几乎都没有体面的衣服。顺便一说，如果布鲁内蒂那里的事情落空了，我很愿意推荐我的一个好朋友给大主教做首席小提琴手，他是一个体面、可敬又正派的人，非常可靠。我推测他大约四十岁，是一个鳏夫。他的名字叫罗特费舍尔，现在是拿骚-魏尔堡两个公主在基希海姆博兰登的首席演奏者，但他不太满意（我们私下偷偷说），因为他的选帝侯不喜欢他，或者说不喜欢他的音乐。他向我毛遂自荐，我很乐意帮帮他，因为他是我见过最棒的人。再见。我吻您的双手十万次，全心拥抱我的姐姐。

我是您听话的儿子

沃尔夫冈·阿马德乌斯·莫扎特

[37] 可能暗指莫扎特的结婚打算。

[38] 利奥波德在1778年6月29日的信里写道：在圣三一主日庆典上，海登演奏管风琴时手脑无法协作，演奏得十分糟糕，大家都以为他已被故管风琴师阿德加瑟（Adlgasser）的亡灵附体了，因为阿德加瑟正是在晚祷演奏时中风以致演奏失常，但海登的表现其实是醉酒所致。

[39] 利奥波德在1778年6月29日的信里谈到自己如何巧妙地使得伯爵主动提出让莫扎特重返任职的想法；尤利西斯，又译俄底修斯，是罗马神话中的英雄，对应希腊神话中的奥德修斯（奥德赛），献木马计里应外合攻破特洛伊。

[40] 以下为莫扎特回应父亲上一封信里所提及的家乡新闻。

[41] 让-乔治·诺韦尔（Jean-Georges Noverre，1727-1810），法国舞蹈家、舞蹈理论家、芭蕾舞剧编导。

[42] 芭蕾音乐《小玩物》。

[43] 尼古拉·皮钦尼（Niccolò Piccinni，1728-1800），意大利多产作曲家，代表作《伊菲格涅亚在陶罗人里》。

[44] 约瑟夫·勒格罗（Joseph Legros），1777-1791年担任宗教音乐会导演。

[45] 即降E大调交响协奏曲，K.297b/Anh.C 14.01。

[46] 指安东·塔达乌斯·约翰·尼波默克·施塔米茨（Anton Thadäus Johann Nepomuk Stamitz，1750或1754年至1798或1809年），捷

克裔德国作曲家、小提琴家。早年从父约翰·施塔米茨（Johann Wenzel Anton Stamitz）学习，1770年随其兄卡尔·施塔米茨访问巴黎，1782-1789年在凡尔赛任职，1798年后不知所终。作品风格与卡尔·施塔米茨类似。

[47] 指卡尔·菲利普·施塔米茨（Karl Philipp Stamitz，1745-1801），捷克裔德国作曲家、小提琴家。早年从父学习，1762年进入曼海姆管弦乐团，1770年移居巴黎。其作品为典型的古典主义风格。作有五十余首交响曲，十余首单簧管协奏曲，大量各种体裁的室内乐。

利奥波德·莫扎特 致儿子沃尔夫冈·阿马德乌斯·莫扎特（曼海姆）

萨尔茨堡，1778年7月13日

我亲爱的妻子，亲爱的儿子！

亲爱的妻子，为了不错过你的命名日，我今天就给你写信，这样信一定能在命名日之前到你手里。祝你命名日快乐，岁岁有今朝，希望万能的主保佑你这一天和未来都平安健康，保佑你在这个变幻莫测的人世间尽可能地幸福。我百分百确信，你如果要真正感到幸福，绝对不能少了你的丈夫和女儿。不过上帝会以他深不可测的决定和神意为我们做出最好的安排。你一年之前想过会在巴黎度过下一个命名日吗？这在当时对有些人来说多么难以置信，虽然我们并不这么觉得。因此，在上帝的帮助下，我们很有可能要比我们所预计的更早团聚。现在唯一压在我心头的事情，就是和你们分居两地，相隔千山万水。但是感谢上帝，我们都很健康！我们两个亲吻你和沃尔夫冈一百万次，主要想请你们保重好身体。战争剧如今终于要开始了！^[48] 你在巴黎应该已经知道了，这个月5号，普鲁士国王^[49] 入侵波希米亚，他从克沃兹科开始，经过纳霍德，一直进犯到克尼格雷茨。可以确定的是，战争一定会爆发，因为双方都无法不损颜面地撤兵。这几周以来，奥地利利用行军和反向行军，在好几个地方为普鲁士国王创造了实施突袭和发动进攻的位置和时机。但是普鲁士国王认为采取这样的进攻不明智。最近奥地利皇帝^[50] 在纳霍德建立起一个强大的假军火库，促使普鲁士国王采取进攻。但这个军火库是假的，里面除了一些样子货之外什么都没有。他们必须冒这个险，不管结果如何，因为奥地利既没有能力也不愿意成为进攻方。但克罗地亚人作为先头部队（事实上，这是他们唯一可以被用到的地方）几乎已经管不住了，因为这些人总是希望获得战利品，也因此热衷于打仗。萨克森军队与普鲁士结盟了，他们可能真的加入了亨利亲王的势力，接下来很可能会攻打埃格尔和上普法尔茨。下一个邮车肯定会带来更多的新消息。这条消息是奥地利邮车11号带来的。这场战争无疑会成为最血腥的战争之一，因为普鲁士国王想光荣地死去，而奥地利皇帝想光荣地开启他的沙场人生。

前面这些话是昨天12号写下的。今天13号，上午10点之前我收到了你7月3号那封悲伤的信。你完全可以想象到，我们现在心里是什么感觉。我们一起痛哭，几乎无法读完那封信。你姐姐啊！仁慈的上

帝啊！希望你最神圣的意志可以实现！我亲爱的儿子！我一直尽可能地皈依上帝的意志，你知道的，我因为哭泣几乎无法写下去是人性使然。我最后该写些什么来结束这封信呢？没有别的了，除了我想到在我写信的这一刻，她可能已经去世了，或者她已经好转了，因为你是3号写下那封信的，而今天已经13号了。你说在放血之后她有所好转，但是几天之后她开始抱怨打寒战和发烧。你们俩的最后一封信是6月12号写的，她当时写道，我昨天给自己放血了。那也就是11号的事，为什么会在星期天斋戒日做这件事？我猜想她可能吃了点肉。放血这件事她耽搁太久了。我很了解她，我知道她喜欢把所有事情从今天拖到明天，尤其是到了一个陌生地方以后，她必须先去找外科医生咨询一下。事已至此，无法改变了，因为我完全相信你的孝心，知道你已尽心尽力地照料你的好妈妈了。如果上帝还会把她送给我们，你之后还会一直这么照顾她。对于你的好妈妈来说，你是她眼里的珍宝，她非同寻常地爱着你，深深地以你为傲，这些我比你更清楚，她活着就是为了你。但是如果我们的全部希望都落空了！如果我们真的失去了她！天哪！你需要朋友，可靠的朋友！不然你会失去一切，比如在葬礼费用这一项上！我的上帝！有许多你不了解的花销，如果没有可靠的朋友，一个生人会在这些花费上面被欺骗、包办、糊弄，花上许多不必要的钱，还要被讹诈。你可以不理解这些。如果这个不幸真的降临到你头上，你就去请求格林先生让你把母亲的东西放在他家，这样你就不必看管那么多东西，或者你也可以把一切家当都好好锁起来。因为如果你经常一整天不在家，很可能会遭遇入室盗窃。上帝保佑我的一切担忧都是多余的。但在这些事情上你会承认你父亲是对的。我亲爱的妻子！我亲爱的儿子！如果她在放血几天之后开始病重，那她一定从6月16号或者17号起就开始抱恙了。但是你们等得太久了。她以为她可以通过卧床休息，通过节食，通过她自己的方法好转。我知道这是怎么一回事，你们抱着情况会好转的希望，把事情从今天拖到明天。但是，我亲爱的沃尔夫冈，高烧时如果腹泻需要立刻咨询医生，以便知道应该退烧还是必须顺其自然，因为用来退烧的药会加剧腹泻。而如果在不恰当的時刻腹泻，病情会如同火上浇油。上帝啊！我们都在你的手里。

祝贺你的交响曲在宗教音乐会上取得的成功。我能想象你当时有多紧张。但如果排练不顺利，你就决定闯进管弦乐团实在是一个头脑发热的想法。上帝保佑，你必须将这一类的突发奇想统统排出脑海。它们都是欠考虑的，这样的一步会让你付出沉重代价，没有一个理智的人会为了一部交响曲如此冒险。这样的冒犯，并且是公开的冒犯，不仅肯定会被法国人报复，而且会被所有重视荣誉的人狠狠报复。意大利人会什么都不说，在街角等着，然后一枪毙了你。我从慕尼黑得到了可靠的消息，泽奥伯爵被确立为慕尼黑和曼海姆地区的宫廷音乐负责人。两个管弦乐团的乐手名单已经被送去了曼海姆。这两个乐团

会被合并，最差的乐手会被剔除。沃茨卡先生和其他宫廷侍从一起，已经以400弗罗林的退休金被辞退了，这让我很惊讶。桑夫特医生厚颜无耻地为他的治疗要价3000弗罗林，为此他的头衔和薪水都被剥夺了。现在终于有望在8月10号，再次在慕尼黑见到选帝侯泰奥尔多、选帝侯夫人及整个宫廷人员。

这封信是以我的祝福展开的，南妮儿想以她的祝福来收尾，只是你完全想得到，她一个字都没法写，尽管她必须要写点什么了……每个打算写下的字都让她的眼里再次溢满了泪水。你，她亲爱的弟弟，如果你还能做到的话，就如我们所愿，代表她祝福妈妈吧！

哦不！你已经不能再这么做了……她已经去了！你拼命安慰我，一个人如果不是完全失去了希望或者被可怕的处境刺激，是不会这样激动的。现在我要去吃午饭了，但我没有任何胃口。

现在是下午3点半，我开始写下面这些话。我知道我亲爱的妻子现在已经在天国了。我满含泪水地写下这些，但是完全皈依上帝的意志！昨天是圣三一主日的教堂庆典，所以我们平时的射击练习推迟到了今天。我不能也不想因为你那悲伤的信，那么晚才取消活动。我们吃得很少，但南妮儿必须吃点东西，因为她在餐桌上哭得太厉害，吐了，而且头痛欲裂，已经去床上休息了。布林格先生和其他人都发现了我们极度悲伤。我一句话都没说，让他读你的信。他把自己的情绪掩饰得很好，只是问我认为现在情况如何。我告诉他，我确信我亲爱的妻子已经死了。他说，其实他也几乎这么认为。然后他安慰了我，像一个真正的朋友那样，而那些话我已经都对自己说过了。我努力振作起来，让自己皈依于最神圣的神意。结束射击之后，所有人都情绪低落离开了。布林格先生留了下来，假装不经心地问我，觉得病情目前是否还有转机。我回答他，我认为她已经死了，而且在你写信的当天就死了。但我皈依上帝的意志，必须记得我仍然有两个孩子，我希望他们会继续爱我，就如同我活着是为了他们一样。我已经写信告诉你我确信她已经过世了，还提醒你看管好她的遗物等。对此他说，是的，她已经死了。这件突发意外像是在我眼前蒙上了一层面纱，阻碍了我的判断力，不然我一读你的信就会立刻猜到你已经写信告诉了布林格先生真相。但你的信真的让我愣住了，看到信的那一刻我就被彻底击倒，无法思考。即使是现在，我仍然不知道能写什么！我这边你可以放心，我会像个男人一样面对这件事。但是想想你母亲对你温柔的爱，你就会意识到她有多在乎你。就像当你成熟了，当我死了，你会更加爱我一样。你爱我，这一点我毫不怀疑。那么你要保重身体。我的人生全靠你了，你姐姐未来的生活也依仗你，她全心全意地爱着你。眼睁睁看着自己幸福的婚姻被死亡撕裂，这种痛苦真的令人心碎。但只有真正经历了才能了解。要写信告诉我所有的细节。她是不是放血放得不够？可以确定的是，她太相信自己，请医生请得太迟

了。这时她的肠道炎已经病入膏肓了。你要保重身体！不要让我们都不幸福！南妮儿还不知道布林格先生的信。但我准备让她相信她的好妈妈已经过世了。尽快给我写信，告诉我一切。告诉我她何时下葬，葬在哪里。上帝啊！我一定要去巴黎寻找我亲爱的妻子的墓穴！我们发自内心地吻你，我必须说再见了，邮车要走了。

你诚实而极度悲伤的父亲

莫扎特

确保你们的東西不要丢了。

[48] 指的是普魯士與奧地利之間的巴伐利亞王位繼承戰爭（1778-1779年）。

[49] 腓特烈二世（Friedrich II，1712-1786），史稱腓特烈大帝。普魯士國王（1740年5月31日-1786年8月17日在位），軍事家、政治家、作家及作曲家。

[50] 約瑟夫二世（Josef II，1741-1790），哈布斯堡-洛林王朝的奧地利大公，羅馬人民的國王（1764-1790年在位），1765年加冕為神聖羅馬帝國皇帝（1765-1790年在位），後又為匈牙利國王和波希米亞國王（1780-1790年）。

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‘They wanted me
to give a concert;
I wanted them to
beg me. And so
they did. I gave
a concert.’

Mozart to his father, 17 October 1777, Augsburg

Mon très cher Père ,

I must start with Stein's pianofortes. Before I saw any of Stein's work, I'd always preferred Späth's pianos; but now I prefer Stein's, as they damp so much better than the Regensburg instruments. If I strike hard, it doesn't matter whether I keep my finger down or raise it, the sound ceases the moment I produce it. However I attack the keys, the tone is always even. It doesn't produce a clattering sound, it doesn't get louder or softer or fail to sound at all; in a word, it's always even. It's true, he won't part with a pianoforte like this for under 300 florins, but the effort and labour that he expends on it can't be paid for. A particular feature of his instruments is their escape action. Not one maker in a hundred bothers with this. But without escape action it's impossible for a pianoforte not to produce a clattering sound or to go on sounding after the note has been struck; when you strike the keys, his hammers fall back again the moment they hit the strings, whether you hold down the keys or release them. He told me that only when he's finished making a piano like this does he sit down and try out all the passagework, runs and leaps, and, using a shave, works away at the instrument until it can do everything. For he works only to serve the music, not just for his own profit, otherwise he'd be finished at once.

He often says that if he weren't such a great music lover and didn't have some slight skill on the instrument, he'd long since have run out of patience with his work; but he loves an instrument that never lets the player down and that will last. His pianos will really last. He guarantees that the sounding board won't break or crack. Once he's finished making a sounding board for a piano he puts it outside, exposing it to the air, rain, snow, heat of the sun and all the devils in order for it to crack, and then he inserts wedges, which he glues in, so that it's very strong and firm. He's perfectly happy for it to crack as he's then assured that nothing more can happen to it. Indeed, he often cuts into it himself and then glues it back

together again and makes it really strong. He has completed three such pianofortes. Not until today did I play on one of them again. Today - the 17th - we had lunch with young Herr Gasser, a young and handsome widower who's lost his young and beautiful wife. They'd been married for only 2 years. He's a most excellent and polite young man. We were splendidly entertained. Also there was a col-league of Abbé Henri, Bullinger and Wieshofer, an ex-Jesuit who's now Kapellmeister at the cathedral here. He knows Herr *Schachtner* very well, he was his choirmaster in Ingolstadt. He's called Pater Gerbl. I'm to give his best wishes to Herr Schachtner. After lunch Herr Gasser and I went to Herr Stein's, where we were accompanied by one of his sisters-in-law as well as Mama and our cousin. At 4 o'clock we were joined by the Kapellmeister and Herr Schmidbaur, the organist at St Ulrich's, a fine old gentleman who's very well-spoken; and I then sight-read a sonata by Beecke that was quite hard and *miserable al solito* ; I can't begin to tell you how the Kapellmeister and organist crossed themselves. Both here and in Munich I've played my 6 sonatas many times from memory. I played the fifth one in G at the aristocrats'concert in the Bauernstube. The last one, in D, sounds amazing on Stein's pianoforte. The device that you depress with your knee is also better made on his instrument than on others. I scarcely need to touch it and it works; and as soon as you remove your knee even a little, you no longer hear the slightest reverberation. Tomorrow I may get round to his organs - - I mean, to write about them; I'm saving up his little daughter till the end. When I told Herr Stein that I'd like to play on his organ as the organ was my passion, he was very surprised and said:What, a man like you, so great a keyboard player wants to play on an instrument that has no *douceur*, no expression, no piano or forte but always sounds the same? - - None of that matters. In my eyes and ears the organ is the king of instruments. Well, as you like. We went off together. I could already tell from what he said that he didn't think I'd do much on his organ and that - for example - I'd play in a way more suited to a piano. He told me that Schubart had asked to be shown his organ, and I was afraid - he said - as Schubart had told everyone, and the church was quite full; for I thought he'd be all spirit, fire and speed, none of which works on the organ; but as soon as he started I changed my mind. I said only this:What do you think, Herr Stein? Do you think I'll run all over the organ? - - Oh, you, that's quite different. We

reached the choir. I began to improvise, by which point he was already laughing, and then a fugue. I can well believe - he said - that you enjoy playing the organ if you play like that - - at first the pedal was a little strange as it wasn't divided. It began with C, then D, E in the same row. But with us D and E are above, as E flat and F sharp are here. But I soon got used to it. I also played on the old organ at St Ulrich's. The steps up to it are a nightmare. I asked if someone could play on it for me as I wanted to go down and listen. From up there the organ is totally ineffectual. But I could make nothing of it, as the young choirmaster, a priest, played only scales, so it was impossible to form any impression. And when he tried to play some chords, he produced only discords as it was out of tune. After that we had to go to a coffee-room as my mother and cousin and Herr Stein were with us. A certain Pater Aemilian, an arrogant ass and a simpleton of his profession, was in an especially hearty mood. He kept wanting to joke with my cousin, but she just made fun of him - - finally, when he was drunk (which didn't take long), he started to talk about music. He sang a canon and I said I'd never in my whole life heard a finer one. I said I'm sorry, I can't join in as I've no natural gift for intoning. That doesn't matter, he said. He started. I was the third voice, but I made up some very different words, for example, O you prick, lick my arse. Sotto voce to my cousin. We laughed about it for half an hour. He said to me: if only we could have spent longer together. I'd like to discuss the art of composition with you. Then the discussion would soon be over, I said. *Get lost* . To be continued.

W. A. Mozart

Leopold Mozart to his son, 23 October 1777, Salzburg

Mon très cher Fils ,

I must congratulate you on your name day! But what can I wish you today that I don't always wish you? - - I wish you the grace of God, that it may accompany you everywhere and never abandon you, as indeed it will never do if you strive to fulfil the obligations of a true Catholic Christian.

You know me. - I'm no pedant, I'm not holier than thou, and I'm certainly no hypocrite:but you surely won't refuse a request from your father? - It is this:that you should be concerned for your soul's welfare and not cause your father any anxiety in his hour of death, so that at that difficult time he won't have to reproach himself for neglecting your soul's salvation. Farewell! Be happy! Lead a sensible life! Honour and esteem your mother, who has much toil in her old age, love me as I love you. Your truly solicitous father

Leop. Mozart

Leopold Mozart to his son, 24 November 1777, Salzburg

Mon très cher Fils ,

I really don't know what to say, I was so stunned by your last letter of the 16th. In it you announced with a display of the *greatest nonchalance* that Herr *Schmalz* - presumably the father, brother or relation of Herr Schmalz of the leather factory in Munich or possibly even Herr Schmalz himself - had apologized for the fact that he had no instructions to give you any money. I can well believe that; and he was right: you should have asked Herr Herzog or the firm of Nocker&Schiedl to provide you with a little extra credit, *as I used to do* :for they had no orders from Hagenauer's house to extend this credit elsewhere, and no businessman exceeds his literal orders:but it would have been done if you'd asked them. But this incident was described in such matter-of-fact and indif-ferent terms as though I'd whole chests full of money and should have been terribly annoyed that you'd not been paid at once. I won't waste time with a long-winded account of our circumstances, you know them yourself, as does Mama, and in my letter of *the 20th* I listed the main items, although I forgot a sizeable sum that we owe to Hagenauer *for goods* but with whom we're not *writing up a single farthing more on credit* . But what amazed me most of all on receiving your letter was that you suddenly came out with this story without telling me about it in your previous letter, in which you simply said that money would have been more useful and appropriate for your journey than a trinket, as you knew even then that you were low on funds. If Herr Schmalz had been willing, I would have been lumbered with instructions for payment *without having received the slightest advance notice* and at a time *when I suspected nothing* . That's a pretty state of affairs indeed! - I leave you to think it over, in the light of my present circumstances. You wrote to me from Augsb. that you'd lost only 27 florins. - According to my own calcula-tions, you must still have 170 florins even if you'd lost 30 florins. Even if that stupid trip to Mannheim via

Wallerstein cost you 70 florins, you should still be left with 100 florins. Even if it cost you more, *can you really not have enough left* to be able to make the journey to Mainz? You'd then be near Frankfurt and if absolutely necessary would be able to draw a little with your second letter of credit from Herr Bolongaro in Frankfurt. Then you'd only have to ask some businessman in Mainz who's in contact with Herr Bolongaro; he would have under-taken to send the letter of credit to Herr Bolong. and to draw what you require.

Wouldn't this have been more sensible than to settle down in Mannheim and squander your money to no avail, as this money would presumably have enabled you to make the journey, which would have cost perhaps 15 or 16 florins. It's only $1\frac{1}{4}$ stages to Worms, 2 to Oppenheim and 1 to Mainz, so only $3\frac{3}{4}$ in all. And even if you'd had little or no money on your arrival, we have acquaintance there who would help you, and no gentleman need be ashamed if he hasn't a farthing in his pocket but can produce a letter of credit: this can happen to the wealthies and most distinguished people, indeed it's a maxim when travelling that, if possible, you should carry only as much money as you need. I'm still in the dark and if I speak of Mainz it's pure supposition as you haven't done me the honour in any of your letters of telling me where you are intending to go, only at the very last moment did you write to me from Augsburg and say you were going to Wallerstein; and Herr Stein wrote to say that you left for Wallerstein and Mannheim at half past 7 on Sunday. But such things should be announced some time in advance as I can sometimes make useful preparations and send reminders, just as I was at pains to do by writing to Herr Otto and Herr Pfeil in Frankfurt. - - Of course, your journey is no concern of mine! Isn't that so? - - You could, of course, have taken a very different route from Mannheim: namely, Würzburg and from there to the Mar grave of Darmstadt, then Frankfurt and Mainz. But how can I guess what you're thinking or make suggestions as I'm never consulted and didn't know how things stood in Mannheim, indeed to judge by your letter in which you had an opportunity to speak so familiarly with the elector I was bound to assume that you had very different plans and were intending to stay there for some time; all of which - whatever your opinions, inclinations, aims etc. may be - you should have reported honestly and in good time as it takes 12 days to receive and reply to a letter even if all goes smoothly. But

you didn't bother to consider this either as in your last letter of the 16th you wrote that *I could continue to write to you in Mannheim* , although it would be 12 days at the quickest before you received this letter, in other words, not until the 28th, by which time Herr Herzog will long since have replied and you will have left. But I did not receive your letter until Friday the 21st, as a present on our *wedding day* , and was unable therefore to reply until the 24th; you'll have read this letter - God knows where - on 1 or 2 December. Neither of you must think that I don't know how many incidental expenses are incurred on a journey and how money van-ishes into thin air, especially when one's overgenerous or too kind. My dear wife prided herself on getting up early, on not lingering and on doing everything quickly and economically. *16 days in Munich* , *14 days in Augsburg* and now, according to your letter of *16 Nov .* , *17 days in Mann -heim* , which, including the time spent waiting for a reply from Augsb., will turn out to be 3 weeks. That's sorcery indeed; you've been away 8 weeks, in other words, 2 months, and you're already in Mannheim? - - That's incredibly quick! When we travelled to England, we spent *9 days* in Munich, called on the *elector* and Duke *Clemens* , and had to wait for our present. - We were *15 days* in Augsb., but we gave *3 concerts* there, namely, on 28 and 30 June and 4 July. - We left Salzburg on *9 June* and did not arrive in Munich until the 12th as new wheels had to be made in Wasserburg, yet in spite of this we were in Schwetzingen by *13 July* , although we broke our journey in Ulm, Ludwigsburg and Bruchsal. So you see that your long and unnecessary stay has ruined everything, the most beautiful autumn in living memory has come and gone, and so far you've regarded your journey as no more than a pleasure trip and spent the time enjoying your-selves:now the bad weather, shorter days and cold are here, with more of the same to come, while your prospects and goals are now correspondingly expensive and distant.

You can't spend the whole winter travelling; and if you plan to stay anywhere, it should be in a large town with lots of people where there are hopes and opportunities of earning some money:and where is such a place to be found in the whole of this region? - Apart from Paris: - - but life in Paris requires a completely different attitude to life, a different way of thinking, you have to be atten-tive and every day think of ways of earning money and exercise extreme politeness in order to ingratiate yourself with

people of standing:I'll write more on this in my next letter, in which I shall also set out my ideas on a quite different route that may be worth taking and which, I believe, will get you to Paris more quickly, namely, from *Koblenz* to *Trier* , *Luxembourg* , *Sedan* , where Herr *Ziegen -hagen* , who visited us with Herr Wahler, has a textile factory. Perhaps he'll be there now. Then Rethel, Rheims, Soissons and Paris. Note that from Paris to Rethel there are 22 French post stages. From Rethel it's only a stone's throw to Sedan - Luxembourg, too, isn't far, and Trier is close to Luxembourg. Luxembourg is an imposing fort-ress and there'll be lots of officers there.*Rheims* and Soissons are large towns. In all these places it will be relatively easy to earn some money in order to recover your travelling expenses as virtuosos rarely visit such places. By contrast, it's 34 post stages from Brussels to Paris, and these cost us *20 louis d'or* for 6 horses, without our receiving a farthing in return. And between Koblenz and Brussels there's nothing that can be done, except perhaps with the elector of Cologne. Perhaps? - And what about Brussels? - - - -

Meanwhile, whichever route you take, make sure that you obtain some letters of recommendation to take with you to Paris, it doesn't matter who writes them - businessmen, courtiers etc. etc. And is there no French ambassador or resident in Mainz or Koblenz? I don't think there is. You haven't got any letters of recommendation, whereas I had a lot; they're vital in providing you with both patronage and contacts. A journey like this is no joke, you've no experience of this sort of thing, you need to have other, more important thoughts on your mind than foolish games, you have to try to anticipate a hundred different things, otherwise you'll suddenly find yourself in the shit without any money, - - and where you've no money you'll have no friends either, even if you give a hundred lessons for nothing, and even if you write sonatas and spend every night fooling around from 10 till 12 instead of devoting yourself to more important matters. Then try asking for credit! - That'll wipe the smile off your face. I'm not blaming you for a moment for placing the Cannabichs under an obligation to you by your acts of kindness, that was well done:but you should have devoted a few of your otherwise idle hours each evening to your father, who is so concerned about you, and sent him not simply a mishmash tossed off in a hurry but a proper, confidential and detailed account of the expenses incurred on your journey, of the

money you still have left, of the journey you plan to take in future and of your intentions in Mannheim etc. etc. In short, you should have sought my advice; I hope you'll be sensible enough to see this, for who has to shoulder this whole burden if not your poor old father? As I've already said, I didn't receive your letter until the 21st and was unable to reply until today. Yesterday, the 23rd, I confessed my sins at Holy Trinity and with tears in my eyes commended you both to the protection of Almighty God. In the afternoon we had target practice. The prize was offered by Cajetan Antretter and I won. *Herr Bullinger*, who sends his best; wishes, was also somewhat taken aback by your letter and it struck me that, in the present serious situation, he didn't appreciate your joke about a public debt. At half past 5 I then went to see Herr Hagenauer to ask

him *that if Messrs Nocker & Schiedl had not informed him by post that they had transferred some money to you, he might care to write to Augsb. by today's post*. I returned to the shop this morning and spoke to Herr Joseph. I discovered that although they'd received

letters from *Nocker & Schiedl*, there'd been no word about you. He promised to write today. I've now done all I can and hope that in the meantime you'll have received some money, *Nocker & Schiedl* won't send me a report until they know how much you've been given. NB: It's always better when drawing money to accept not *florins* but the local currency, e. g., 6, 7 etc. *louis d'or*, *carolins* or whatever. I've now told you what was weighing on my mind, it is God's own truth. You'll have to learn for your-self that it is no joke to undertake a journey like this and to have to live on random income: above all you must pray most earnestly to God for good health, be on your guard against wicked people, earn money by every means that is known and available to you, and then spend it with the greatest care. I prefer to give too little to someone who is travelling with me and whom I may never see again and risk being called a skinflint, rather than have him laugh at me behind my back for giving him too much. I've no more paper, and I'm tired, especially my eyes.

Nannerl and I wish you the best of health and with all our hearts kiss you a million times. I am your old husband and father but NB not your son.

Mozart

I hope you'll have received my letter of the 20th in which I told you to write to *Monsieur Grimm* in Paris, also what you should write to the Prince of Chiemsee in Munich. By the next post I'll send you a list of all the stages to Paris and my opinion etc., also a list of all our former acquaintances in Paris. *Addio* .

Mozart to his father, 29 November 1777, Mannheim

Mon très cher Père ,

I received your letter of the 24th this morning and see from it that you're unable to reconcile yourself to fate, be it good or bad, when it takes us by surprise; until now, and as things stand, the four of us have never been happy or unhappy, and for that I thank God. You reproach us both for many things, without our deserving it. We are not incurring any expenses that are not necessary; and what is necessary when travelling you know as well as we do, if not better. That we stayed so long in Munich was the fault of no one but *myself* ; and if I'd been alone, I'd certainly have stayed in Munich. Why did we spend 2 weeks in Augsburg? - - I'm tempted to think that you didn't receive my letters from Augsburg. - - I wanted to give a concert - I was let down; meanwhile a whole week went by. I was absolutely determined to leave. They wouldn't let me. They wanted me to give a concert; I wanted them to beg me. And so they did. I gave a concert. There are your 2 weeks. Why did we go straight to Mannheim? - - I answered this question in my last letter. Why are we still here? - - Yes - - can you really think that I'd remain somewhere for no reason? - - But I could have told my father - - all right, you shall know the reason and indeed the whole course of events. But God knows that I had no wish to speak about it because I was unable to go into detail - any more than I can today - and I know you well enough to appreciate that a *vague* account would have caused you worry and distress, something I've always tried to avoid; but if you ascribe the cause to my negligence, thoughtlessness and indolence, I can only thank you for your high opinion of me and sincerely regret that you don't know your own son.

I'm not thoughtless but am prepared for anything and as a result can wait patiently for whatever the future holds in store, and I'll be able to endure it - as long as my hon-our and the good name of Mozart don't suffer in consequence. Well, if it must be so, then let

it be so. But I must ask you at the outset not to rejoice or grieve pre-maturely; for whatever happens, all is well as long as we remain healthy; for happiness consists - - simply in our imagination. Last Tuesday week, the 18th, the day before St Elisabeth's Day, I saw Count Savioli in the morning and asked him if there was any chance that the elector would keep me here this winter? - - I wanted to teach the young princes. He said yes, I'll suggest it to the elector; and if it's up to me, it will certainly happen. That after-noon I saw Cannabich and as it was at his suggestion that I'd been to see the count, he asked me at once if I'd been there. - I told him all that had happened, he said to me I'd very much like you to spend the winter here with us, but I'd like it even more if you had a proper, permanent appointment. I said that there was nothing I'd like more than to be always near them but that I really didn't know how it would be possible for me to stay permanently. You've already got two Kapellmeisters, so I don't know what I could do, as I wouldn't like to be under *Vogler* ! Nor shall you, he said. None of the members of the orchestra here is under the Kapellmeister or even under the intendant. The elector could make you his chamber composer. Wait, I'll speak to the count about it. There was a big concert on Thursday. When the count saw me, he apologized for not having said anything, but the galas were still going on; but as soon as the galas were over, namely, on Monday, he would certainly speak to the elector. I left it for 3 days, and as I'd heard nothing, I went to see him in order to make enquiries. He said: My dear Monsieur Mozart (this was Friday, namely, yester-day), there was a hunt today so I've been unable to ask the elector; but by this time tomorrow I shall certainly be able to give you an answer: I begged him not to forget. To tell the truth, I was rather angry when I left him and decided to take the young count my six easiest variations on Fischer's minuet - which I'd already had copied out here for this very purpose - in order to have an opportunity to speak to the elector in person. When I arrived, you can't imagine how pleased the governess was to see me. I received a most courteous welcome. When I took out the variations and said that they were for the count, she said Oh, that's good of you; but have you also got something for the countess? - - Not yet, I said, but if I were to stay here long enough to write something, I'll - - By the way, she said, I'm glad that you'll be staying here all winter. Me? - - I didn't know that! - - That surprises me. It's curious. The elector himself told me

so recently. By the way, he said, Mozart is staying here this winter. Well, if he did indeed say that, then he's the one person who *can* say it, for without the elector I certainly can't remain here. I told her the whole story. We agreed that I'd return the next day - namely, *today* - after 4 o'clock and bring something for the countess. You'll speak to the elector - before I arrive - and he'll still be with you when I get there. I went back there today, but he didn't come. But I'll go again tomorrow. I've written a rondeau for the countess. Don't I have reason enough to remain here and await the outcome? - - Should I leave now that the great-est step has been taken? - - I now have a chance to speak to the elector himself. I think I shall probably remain here all winter as the elector is fond of me, he thinks highly of me and knows what I can do. I hope to be able to give you some good news in my next letter. I beg you once again not to rejoice or worry too soon and to confide this story in no one except Herr Bullinger and my sister. I'm sending my sister the allegro and andante from the sonata for Mlle Cannabich. The rondeau will follow shortly. It would have been too much to send them all together. You'll have to make do with the original; you can have it copied more easily at 6 kreuzers a page than I can at 24 kreuzers. Don't you find that expensive? - - Adieu. I kiss your hands 100, 000 times and embrace my sister with all my heart. I am your obedient son.

Wolfgang Amadé Mozart

You'll probably already have heard a little of the sonata, as it's sung, banged out, fiddled and whistled at least 3 times a day at Cannabich's. - Only *sotto voce* , of course.

[*Maria Anna Mozart's postscript*]

My dear husband, I kiss you and Nannerl many 1000 times and ask you to give our best wishes to all our acquaint-ances, I'll write more next time, but it's turned midnight, addio, I remain your faithful wife

Maria Anna Mozart

Leopold Mozart to his wife and son, 4 December 1777, Salzburg

My Dear Wife and Dear Son,

I've no objection to your having to wait for what you told me about in your last letter, and there's nothing more that can be said about all that has happened on your journey and that has turned out differently from what I'd expected and worked out to our disadvantage and even caused us obvious harm, as it is all over and done with and can no longer be changed. - But the fact that you, my son, write *that all speculation is superfluous and of no avail as we cannot know what is to happen* - this is indeed ill considered and was undoubtedly written unthinkingly. No sensible person - I shall not say no Christian - will deny that *everything will and must happen according to God's will*. But does it follow from this that we should act blindly, live carefree lives, make no provisions for the future and simply wait for things to befall us of their own accord? - Does God himself and, indeed, do all rational people not demand that in all our actions we consider their consequences and outcome, at least as far as our human powers of reason enable us to, and that we make every effort to see as far ahead as we can? - - If this is necessary in all our actions, how much more so is it in the present circumstances, on a journey? Or have you not already suffered the consequences of this? - - Is it enough for you to have taken the step *with the elector in order to remain there throughout the winter* ? - - Should you not - shouldn't you long ago have thought of a plan that can be implemented if things don't work out: and shouldn't you have told me about it long ago and learnt my views on it? - - And now you write - what? If we were after all to leave here we'll go straight to Weilburg to the Princess of Nassau-Weilburg - for whom you wrote the sonatas in Holland - etc. - There we'll stay as long as *the officers' table* is to our liking - what sort of a tale is that? Like everything else you wrote, this is the language of a desperate man who is trying to console both himself and me. - - But there's still a *hope* that you'll receive 6 louis d'or, and that will make everything

all right. - But my question to you now is whether you're certain that the princess is there:she won't be there without good reason as her husband is based in The Hague on account of his military office. Shouldn't you have told me about this long ago? - Another question:wouldn't you do better to go to Mainz - and from there to Weilburg via Frankfurt? After all, if you go from Mannheim to Weilburg, you'll cross the Frankfurt road:and as you're not staying in Weilburg for ever, the Mainz road will take you back through Frankfurt. If you first go to Mainz and then to Weilburg, you'll have only a short distance from Weilburg to Koblenz, which will presumably take you via Nassau. Or do you intend to avoid Mainz, where we've so many good friends and where we earned 200*florins from 3 concerts* , even without playing for the elector, who was ill. Tell me, my dear son, are these useless speculations? - - Your dear good Mama told me she'd keep a careful note of your expenses. Good! I've never asked for a detailed account and never thought of demanding one:but when you arrived in Augsburg you should have written to say:We paid such and such at Albert's in Munich, and such and such was spent on travelling expenses, so that we still have such and such a sum. From Augsburg you wrote to say that after taking account of the concert receipts you were about 20 florins out of pocket. In your 2nd letter from Mannheim you should at least have said that the journey cost us such and such an amount and we're *now* left with - - , so that I could have made arrangements in good time - - was my arrangement to send you a letter of credit in Augsburg a useless speculation? - - Do you really think that Herr Herzog - *who's a good old friend of mine* - would have provided you with money in response to all your letters from Mannheim if you'd not already given him a letter of credit? - - Certainly not! The most that he would have done would have been to make enquiries with me first. - - Why did I have to discover that you needed money only when you were in trouble?*You wanted to wait to see what the elector gave you* . Isn't that so? Perhaps in order to spare me the worry - - but it would have caused me less worry if I'd been told everything honestly and in good time, as I know better than either of you how one must be prepared for all eventualities on such a journey in order not to be placed in some terrible predicament at the very moment when one least expects it. - At such times all your friends disappear! *One must be cheerful ; one must enjoy oneself !* But one must also find time *to give serious thought to these matters* , and this

must be your main concern when travelling and when not a single day should be allowed to pass to your disadvantage - - the days slip past - days which are in any case very short at present and which all cost money at an inn. Merciful heavens! You ask me not to speculate now that *I'm 450 florins in debt entirely thanks to you two* . - And you think that you may be able to put me in a good mood by telling me a hun-dred foolish jokes. I'm pleased that you're in good spirits:but instead of the good wishes set out in the form of the alphabet, I'd have felt happier if you'd told me the reasons for, and the circumstances of, your journey to *Weilburg* and what you planned to do afterwards and, most of all, if you'd listened to my opinion; and this could have been done before a post day, as you can't only just have hit on the idea, nor can you know independently that the prin-cess is there, unless someone had already suggested the idea to you. In a word, it is no idle speculation when one has something in mind and formulates 2 or 3 plans and makes all the necessary arrangements in advance so that if one plan doesn't work out, one can easily turn to another. Anyone who acts otherwise is an unintelligent or thoughtless person who, especially *in today's world* , will always be left behind, no matter how clever he is, and who will even be unhappy as he will always be duped by flatterers, false friends and those who envy him. My son, to find one man in a 1000 who is your true friend for rea-sons other than self-interest *is one of the greatest wonders of this world* . Examine all who call themselves your friends or who make a show of friendship and you'll find the reason why this is so. If they're not motivated by self-interest on their own account, then they'll be acting in the interests of some other friend whom they need; or they are your friends so that by singling you out they can annoy some third party. If nothing comes of *Mannheim* , you still have your plan to go to *Mainz* , *Frankfurt* , *Weil-burg* , *Koblenz* etc.; one should always look for places as close to each other as possible so that, if you can, the journeys should be kept short and you can soon get to a place where you'll find a source of income. If this letter doesn't reach you in *Mannheim* and you're already in *Weil-burg* , I can't help you. But if you're still in *Mannheim* and have to leave, then Mama will see from the map that your best plan is to go to *Mainz* first, otherwise you'll either have to forgo *Mainz* or retrace your steps a little. In *Weil-burg* you need to bear in mind that you'll not find a *Catholic church* there as everyone is *Lutheran* or *Calvinist* . So I'd

prefer you *not to spend too long* there.

And who told you that you'd have to go through the forest of Spessart to get from *Würzburg to Mannheim* as the *Spessart* is near *Aschaffenburg* , between Fulda and Frank-furt? - - This is no doubt some other trick that Herr Beecke has played on you. *Aschaffenburg* and *Würzburg* are 10 miles apart. - It may be that one drives past the forest on the right-hand side for some hours as one approaches Mannheim. But there's nothing near Würzburg, whether you've been there or not.

NB:I've another observation to make about any jour-ney that you may choose to make from *Weilburg to Koblenz* , namely, that the road is across country and will be safer than the one from *Mainz to Koblenz* , which is too near the Rhine. I now want to know all your other plans, *I'd never have suspected that my own dear wife wouldn't have given me the occasional accurate account of your travelling expense* , as I've twice asked about Albert's bill and should also have been told about the bill from the landlord of the Lamb etc. etc. But I'm not allowed to know about all your expenses. *And so I must ask Mama to write me a confidential letter on this point -I don't want a wordy explanation but would just like to see from the landlord's bill how people have been treating you and where all the money has gone* . We must now give serious thought to the ways and means of getting you out of the present situation, of travelling as economically as possible and of making sensible arrangements, but at all events you must let me know at once what may be to our detri-ment or advantage. *On no account must you sell the chaise*. May God keep both you and me well. Nannerl and I kiss you many 100, 000, 000 times. I am your own husband and father.

Mzt

Count Czernin has asked me to give you his best wishes. There was a rumour not only that the archbishop will be sending Haydn to Italy but that he had already wanted to send him to Bozen with Triendl. But Herr Triendl excused himself. I beg you, my dear Wolfg., consider everything and don't always write about things when they're already over and done with. Otherwise we'll all be unhappy.

Leopold Mozart to his son, 5 February 1778, Salzburg

My Dear Son,

In all probability this will be the last letter that you can be certain of receiving from me in Mannheim, and so it is addressed to you alone. How hard it is for me to accept that you're moving even further away from me is something you may perhaps be able to imagine, but you cannot feel as acutely as I do the weight that lies on my mind. If you take the trouble to recall what I did with you two children during your tender youth, you'll not accuse me of timidity but, like everyone else, will concede that I am a man and have always had the courage to risk everything. But I did everything with the greatest caution and consideration that were humanly possible: - one can't prevent accidents, for God alone can foretell the future. Until now, of course, we've been neither happy nor unhappy, but, thanks be to God, we've trodden a middle course. We've tried everything to make you happy and, through you, to make ourselves happier and at least to place your destiny on a firmer footing; but fate was against us. As you know, our last step has left me in very deep waters, and you also know that I'm now around 700 florins *in debt* and don't know how I shall *support myself* , *your mother and your sister* on my *monthly income* , for as long as I live I cannot *hope to receive another farthing from the prince* . So it must be clear as day to you that the future fate of your old parents and of your sister, who undoubtedly loves you with all her heart, lies solely in your hands. Ever since you were born and, indeed, before that - in other words, ever since I was married - there is no doubt that I've had a difficult time *providing a livelihood* for a wife and 7 children, 2 servants and Mama's mother, all on a fixed monthly income of only a little more than 20 florins, and to *pay for* accouchements, deaths and illnesses, expenses which, if you think them over, will convince you not only that I have never spent a farthing on the least pleasure for myself, but that, without God's special mercy, I'd never have managed to *keep out of debt* in spite of

all my hopes and bitter efforts: yet this is *the first time I've been in debt* . I gave up every hour of my life to you 2 in the hope of ensuring not only that in due course you'd both be able to count on being able to provide for yourselves but that I too would be able to enjoy a peaceful old age and be accountable to God for my children's education, with no more cares but being able to live solely for my soul's salvation and calmly awaiting my end. But God has willed and ordained that I must once again take on the *undoubtedly wearisome task* of giving lessons and of doing so, moreover, in a town where these strenuous efforts are so badly paid that it is not possible every month *to earn enough to support oneself and one's family* . Yet one must be glad and talk oneself hoarse in order to *earn at least something* . Not only do I not distrust you, my dear Wolfgang, no, not in the very least, but I place all my trust and hope in your filial love: all depends on your good sense, which you certainly have - if only you will listen to it - and on fortunate circumstances. This latter cannot be coerced; but you will always consult your good sense - at least I hope so and beg of you to do so.

You're now entering a completely different world: and you mustn't think that it is simply prejudice that makes me see Paris as such a dangerous place, au contraire - from my own experience I've no reason at all to regard Paris as so very dangerous. But my situation then could not be more different from yours now. We stayed with an ambassador, and on the second occasion in a self-contained apartment; I was a man of mature years and you were children; I avoided all contact with others and in particular *preferred not to become over-familiar with people of our own profession* ; remember that I did the same in Italy. I made the acquaintance and sought out the friendship only of people of a higher social class - and among these only mature people, not young lads, not even if they were of the foremost rank. I never invited anyone to visit me regularly in my rooms in order to be able to maintain my freedom, and I always considered it more sensible to visit others at my convenience. If I don't like a person or if I'm working or have business to attend to, I can then stay away. - Conversely, if people come to me and behave badly, I don't know how to get rid of them, and even a person who is otherwise not unwelcome may prevent me from getting on with some important work. You're a young man of 22; and so you don't have that earnestness of old age that could deter a young lad of whatever social class, be he an adventurer,

joker or fraud and be he young or old, from seeking out your acquaintance and friend-ship and drawing you into his company and then gradually into his plans. One is drawn imperceptibly into this and cannot then escape. I shan't even mention women, for here one needs the greatest restraint and rea-son, as nature herself is our enemy, and the man who does not apply his whole reason and show the necessary restraint will later do so in vain in his attempt to escape from the labyrinth, *a misfortune that mostly ends only in death* . You yourself may perhaps already have learnt from your limited experience how blindly we may often be taken in by jests, flatteries and jokes that initially seem unimportant but at which reason, when she awakes later on, is ashamed; I don't want to reproach you. I know that you love me not just as your father but also as your staunchest and surest friend; and that you know and realize that our happiness and misfortune and, indeed, my very life - whether I live to a ripe old age or die suddenly - are in your hands as much as God's. If I know you, I can hope for nothing but contentment, and this alone must console me during your absence, when I am deprived of a father's delight in hearing, seeing and embracing you. Live like a good Catholic, live and fear God, pray most fervently to Him in reverence and trust, and lead so Christian a life that, even if I am never to see you again, the hour of my death may be free from care. With all my heart I give you a father's blessing and remain until death your faithful father and surest friend.

Leopold Mozart

Here are our Paris acquaintances, all of whom will be delighted to see you.[.....]

[*Leopold's postscript to his wife on the envelope*]

My Dear Wife,

As you'll receive this letter on the 11th or 12th and as I doubt whether a further letter will reach Wolfg. in Mann-heim, I'll take my leave of him with this enclosure! I'm writing this with tears in my eyes. Nannerl kisses her dear brother Wolfg. a million times. She would have added a note to my letter and said goodbye, but the letter was already full and in any case I didn't let her read it. We ask Wolfg. *to take care of his health and to stick to the diet that he got used to at home* ; otherwise he'll have to be bled as soon as he arrives in

Paris, *everything spicy* is bad for him. I expect he'll take with him the big *Latin prayer book* that contains *all the psalms* for the full office of Our Lady. If he wants to have the *German* text of the office of Our Lady in Mannheim in order to have it in German too, he'll have to try to obtain the very smallest format as the Latin psalms are difficult to understand. It would be better if he also had them in German. Learned contrapuntal set-tings of the psalms are also performed at the Concert Spirituel; it's possible to gain a great reputation in this way. Perhaps he could also have his *Misericordias* performed there. The opera singers aren't coming but have gone instead to Straubing to entertain the Austrian officers. The prince has again forced the magistrature to hold 9 balls, the first one was yesterday and was attended by 30 persons; it lasted till half past one, but not a soul had arrived by half past 9 and it wasn't till 10 that they started dancing; 1 capon and 6 mugs of wine were consumed. I hope you received the 2 sonatas for 4 hands, the Fischer variations and the rondo, which were all parcelled up in the same letter. - - The late Herr Adlgasser hasn't found a decent bellows blower in the afterlife; the cathedral's old bellows blower, the 80-year-old Thomas, has followed him into the next world. The main news is that Mme Barisani has become incredibly jealous of her old and respectable husband as he and Checco have on a handful of occasions been to perform at the home of handsome Herr Freysauff, who has a relatively pretty but witless wife. There was an incredible fuss. Farewell. We kiss you millions of times.

Mzt

Everyone sends their best wishes, especially Herr Bull-inger and the wife of the sergeant of the bodyguards, Herr *Clessin* , Waberl MÖlk etc.

Mozart to his father, 3 July 1778, Paris

Monsieur

mon très cher Père !

I have some very disagreeable and sad news for you, which is also the reason why I have been unable until now to reply to your last letter of the 11th. -

My dear mother is very ill - she was bled, as usual, and very necessary it was, too; she felt very well afterwards - but a few days later she complained of shivering and feverishness - she had diarrhoea and a headache - at first we just used our home remedies, antispasmodic powder, we'd like to have used the black one too, but we didn't have any and couldn't get any here, it's not known here even under the name of *Pulvis epilepticus* . - But when things started to get worse - she could hardly speak and lost her hearing so we had to shout - Baron *Grimm* sent his doctor - she's very weak and is still feverish and delirious - I'm told to be hopeful, but I'm not - for long days and nights I've been hovering between fear and hope - but I've resigned myself to God's will - and I hope that you and my dear sister will do the same; what other means is there to remain calm? - or, rather, calmer, as we can't be entirely calm; - come what may, I feel comforted - because I know that God, who orders every-thing for the best, however contrary it may seem to us, wills it so; for I believe - and I won't be persuaded otherwise - that no doctor, no individual, no misfortune and no accident can give a man his life or take it away, God alone can do that - these are only the instruments that He generally uses, although not always - after all, we can see people fainting, collapsing and dying - once our time comes, all remedies are useless, they hasten death rather than prevent it - we saw this in the case of our late friend Herr Heffner! - I'm not saying by this that my mother will and must die and that all hope is lost - she may yet be hale and hearty again, but only if God so wills it - after praying to my God with all my strength for health and life for my dear mother, I like to think this and derive comfort from such thoughts, as I then feel heartened, calmer and consoled -

and you'll easily imagine that I need this! - Now for something different; let's banish these sad thoughts. Let us hope, but not too much; let us put our trust in God and console ourselves with the thought that all is well if it accords with the will of the Almighty as He knows best what is most advantageous and beneficial to our temporal and eternal happiness and salvation -

I've had to write a symphony to open the Concert Spirituel. It was performed to general acclaim on Corpus Christi; I also hear that there was a report on it in the *Courrier de l'Europe*. - Without exception, people liked it. I was very afraid at the rehearsal as I've never in all my life heard anything worse; you can't imagine how twice in succession they bungled and scraped their way through it. - I was really very afraid - I'd have liked to rehearse it again, but there are always so many things to rehearse and so there was no more time; and so I had to go to bed with a fearful heart and in a discontented and angry frame of mind. The next day I decided not to go to the concert at all; but in the evening the weather was fine and so I decided to go, determined that if it went as badly as it had done during the rehearsal, I'd go into the orchestra, take the fiddle from the hands of the first violin, Herr Lahoussaye, and conduct myself. I prayed to God that it would go well because everything is to His greater glory and honour; and behold, the symphony started, Raaff was standing next to me, and in the middle of the opening allegro there was a passage that I knew very well people were bound to like, the whole audience was carried away by it - and there was loud applause - but as I knew when I wrote it what effect it would produce, I introduced it again at the end - now people wanted to have it encoored. They liked the andante, too, but especially the final allegro - I'd heard that all the final allegros and opening ones too begin here with all the instruments playing together and generally in unison, and so I began mine with 2 violins only, playing piano for 8 whole bars, followed at once by a forte - the audience, as I expected, went 'shush' at the piano - then came the forte - and as soon as they heard it, they started to clap - I was so happy that as soon as the symphony was over I went to the Palais Royal - had a large ice - said the rosary, as I'd promised - and went home - just as I'm always happiest at home and always will be - or with some good, true, honest German who, if he's single, lives on his own as a good Christian or, if married, loves his wife and brings up his children well -

You probably already know that that godless arch - rogue Voltaire has died like a dog, like a beast - that's his reward! - As you say, we owe Tresel her wages for 5 quarters - you'll have realized long ago that I don't like it here - there are many reasons for this, but as I'm here, it would serve no useful purpose to go into them. It's not my fault and never will be, I'll do my very best - well, God will make all things right! - I've something in mind for which I pray to God every day - if it's His divine will, it will happen, if not, then I'm also content - at least I'll have done my part - when all is sorted out and if things work out as I want, you too must do your part or the whole business will be incomplete - I trust in your kind-ness to do so - but for the present you mustn't waste time thinking about it, the only favour I wanted to beg of you now is not to ask me to reveal my thoughts until it's time to do so.

As for the opera, it's now like this. It's very difficult to find a good libretto. The old ones are the best but they're not suited to the modern style, and the new ones are all useless; poetry was the one thing of which the French could be proud but this is now getting worse by the day - and yet poetry is the one thing that must be good here as they don't understand music - there are now 2 aria-based operas that I could write, one *en deux actes*, the other *en trois*. The one *en deux* is *Alexandre et Roxane* - but the poet who's writing it is still out of town - the one *en trois* is a translation of *Demofonte* by Metastasio, com-bined with choruses and dances and in general arranged for the French theatre. Of this I've not yet been able to see anything -

Let me know if you've got Schroeter's concertos in Salzburg. And Hüllmandel's sonatas. - I was thinking of buying them and sending them to you. Both sets of pieces are very fine - I never thought of going to Versailles - I asked Baron Grimm and some other good friends for their advice - they all thought like me.

It's not much money, you have to spend 6 months languishing in a place where you can't earn anything else and your talent lies buried. Anyone in the king's service is forgotten in Paris. And then, to be an organist! - I'd like a decent appointment, but only as a Kapellmeister, and well paid.

Farewell for now - take care of your health, put your trust in God - it's there that you must find consolation; my dear mother is in

the hands of the Almighty - if He returns her to us, as I hope, we shall thank Him for this mercy, but if it is His will to take her to Him, our fears and cares and despair will be of no avail - let us rather resign ourselves steadfastly to His divine will, fully con-vinced that it will be for our own good, for He does nothing without good cause - farewell, dearest Papa, keep well for my sake; I kiss your hands 1000 times and embrace my sister with all my heart. I am your most obedient son.

Wolfgang Amadè Mozart

Mozart to his father, 9 July 1778, Paris

Monsieur

mon très cher Père !

I hope that you are prepared to hear with fortitude a piece of news that could not be sadder or more painful - my last letter of the 3rd will have placed you in the position of knowing that the news, when it came, would not be good - that same day, the 3rd, at 10. 21 in the evening, my mother passed away peacefully; - when I wrote to you, she was already enjoying the delights of heaven - by then it was all over - I wrote to you during the night - I hope that you and my dear sister will forgive me this slight but very necessary deception - concluding from my own grief and sadness what yours must be, I couldn't possibly bring myself to spring such a terrible piece of news on you - but I hope that you're both now ready to hear the worst and that, after giving way to natural and only too justified grief and tears, you will eventually resign yourselves to God's will and worship His inscrutable, unfathomable and all-wise providence - you'll easily be able to imagine what I have had to bear - what courage and fortitude I needed to endure it all calmly as things grew progressively worse - and yet God in His goodness granted me this mercy - I have suffered enough anguish and wept enough tears - but what use was it all? - and so I had to console myself; you, my dear father and sister, must do the same! - Weep, weep your fill - but ultimately you must take comfort, - remember that Almighty God willed it so - and what can we do against Him? - We should rather pray and thank Him that it all turned out for the best - for she died a very happy death; - in these sad circumstances, I consoled myself with three things, namely, my entire trust and sub-mission in God's will - then the fact that I was present at so easy and beautiful a death, as I imagined how happy she had become in a single moment - how much happier she is now than we are - so much so that at that moment I wanted to take the same journey as she had just done - in turn this wish and desire gave rise to my third source of consolation, namely, that she is not lost to us for ever - we

shall see her again - we shall be happier and more contented to be with her than we have been in this world; we do not know when our time may come - but this is no cause for anxiety - when God wills it, then I too shall will it - well, God's most hallowed will has been done - let us therefore say a devout prayer for her soul and proceed to other matters, there is a time for everything - I'm writing this at the home of Madame d'Épinay and Monsieur Grimm, where I'm now lodging, a pretty little room with a very pleasant view and, so far as my state allows, I'm happy here - it will help me to regain my contentment to hear that my dear father and sister have accepted God's will with composure and fortitude and that they trust in Him with all their hearts in the firm conviction that He orders all things for the best - dearest father! Look after yourself! - Dearest sister - look after yourself - you've not yet enjoyed your brother's kind heart as he's not yet been able to demonstrate it - dearest father and sister - look after your health - remember that you have a son and a brother who is doing everything in his power to make you happy - knowing full well that one day you'll not refuse to grant him his desire and his happiness - which certainly does him honour - and that you'll do everything possible to make him happy - Oh, then we'll live together as peacefully, honourably and contentedly as is possible in this world - and finally, when God wills it, we shall meet again there - for this we are destined and created -

Your last letter of 29 June has arrived safely and I'm pleased to learn that you are both well, all praise and thanks be to God, I couldn't help laughing at your account of Haydn's drunkenness, - if I'd been there, I'd certainly have whispered in his ear: Adlgasser. But it's a disgrace that such an able man should be rendered incapable of performing his duties and have only himself to blame for it - in a post that's in God's honour - when the archbishop and the whole court are there - and the whole church is full of people - it's appalling - this is also one of the main reasons why I detest Salzburg - the coarse, ill-mannered and dissolute court musicians - no honest man of good breeding could live with them; - instead of taking an interest in them, he should be ashamed of them! - also - and this is probably the reason - the musicians aren't very popular with us and are simply not respected - if only the orchestra were organized as it is in Mannheim! - the discipline that obtains in that orchestra! - the authority that Cannabich wields - there everything

is taken seriously; Cannabich, who's the best music director I've ever seen, is loved and feared by his subordinates. - He's also respected by the whole town, as are his troops - but they certainly behave very differently - they're well-mannered, dress well, don't frequent taverns and don't get drunk - but this can never be the case with you, unless, that is, the prince trusts you or me and gives us full authority, *at least as far as the orchestra is concerned* - otherwise it's no good; in *Salzburg* everyone - or rather no one - bothers about the orchestra - if I were to take it on, I'd have to have a completely free hand - the chief steward should have nothing to say to me on orchestral matters and, indeed, on anything bound up with the orchestra. A courtier can't stand in for a Kapellmeister, though a Kapellmeister could no doubt stand in for a courtier - by the way, the elector is now back in Mannheim - Madame Cannabich and her husband are in correspondence with me. I'm afraid that the orchestra will be much reduced in size, which would be an eternal shame, but if this doesn't happen, I may still remain hopeful - you know that there's nothing I want more than a good position, good in character and good in terms of the money - it doesn't matter where it is - as long as it's in a Catholic area. - You acted in a masterly way, just like Ulysses, throughout the whole affair with Count Starhemberg - only continue as before and don't allow yourself to be taken in - and in particular you should be on your guard if conversation turns to that arrogant goose - I know her, and you can be assured that she has sugar and honey on her lips but pepper in her head and heart - it's entirely natural that the whole business is still open to discussion and that many points must be conceded before I could make up my mind and that even if everything were all right I'd still prefer to be anywhere else but Salzburg - but I don't need to worry, as it's unlikely that everything will be granted to me as I'm asking for so much-. But it's not impossible - I'd not hesitate for a moment if everything were properly organized - if only to have the pleasure of being with you - but if the Salzburgers want me, they must satisfy me and all my wishes - otherwise they'll certainly not get me. - So the abbot of Baumberg has died the usual abbot's death! - I didn't know that the abbot of the Holy Cross had died too - I'm very sorry - he was a good, honest, decent man; so you didn't think that Dean Zöschinger would be made abbot? - Upon my honour, I never imagined it otherwise; I really don't know who else it could have been! - Of course, he's a good abbot for the

orchestra! - So the *young lady's* daily walk with her faith-ful lackey bore fruit after all! - They were certainly busy and haven't been idle - the devil makes work for idle hands: - so the amateur theatricals have finally started up? - But how long will they last? - I don't suppose Countess Lodron will be wanting any more concerts like the last one - Czernin is a young whippersnapper and Brunetti a foul-mouthed oaf.

My friend Raaff is leaving tomorrow; but he's going via Brussels to Aix-la-Chapelle and Spa - and from there to Mannheim; he'll let me know as soon as he gets there, for we intend to stay in touch - he sends you and my sister his good wishes, even though he doesn't know you. You say in your letter that you've heard no more about my composition pupil for a long time - that's true, but what shall I tell you about her? - She's not the sort of person who will ever become a composer - all my efforts are in vain - in the first place, she's thoroughly stupid and also thoroughly lazy - I told you about the opera in my last letter - as for Noverre's ballet, all I've ever said is that he may write a new one - he needed just half a ballet and so I wrote the music for it - in other words, 6 numbers are by others and consist entirely of dreadful old French airs, whereas I've written the symphony and contredanses, making 12 pieces in all - the ballet has already been given 4 times to great acclaim - but I'm now absolutely determined not to write anything else unless I know in advance what I'm going to get for it - I did this just as a favour for Noverre. - Monsieur Wendling left on the last day of May - if I wanted to see Baron Bagge, I'd have to have very good eyes as he's not here but in London - is it possible that I've not already told you this? - You'll see that in future I'll answer all your letters accurately - it's said that Baron Bagge will be returning soon, which I should like very much - for many reasons - but especially because there's always an opportunity at his house to hold proper rehearsals - Kapellmeister Bach will also be here soon - I think he'll be writing an opera - the French are asses and will always remain so, they can do nothing themselves - they have to rely on foreigners. I spoke to Piccinni at the Concert Spirituel - he's very polite to me and I to him - whenever we happen to meet - otherwise I've not made any new acquaintances - either with him or with other composers - I know what I'm doing - and so do they - and that's enough: - I've already told you that my symphony was a great success at the Concert Spirituel. - If I'm asked to write an opera, it'll no doubt be a source

of considerable annoyance, but I don't mind too much as I'm used to it - if only the confounded French language weren't such a dastardly enemy of music! - It's pitiful - German is divine in comparison. - And then there are the singers - - they simply don't deserve the name as they don't sing but scream and howl at the tops of their voices, a nasal, throaty sound - I'll have to write a French oratorio for the Concert Spirituel next Lent - the director Legros is amazingly taken with me; I should add that although I used to see him every day, I've not seen him since Easter, I was so annoyed that he'd not performed my *sinfonia concertante*; I often visited his house in order to see Mon-sieur Raaff and each time had to pass his rooms - on each occasion the servants and maids saw me and on each occasion I asked them to give him my best wishes. - I think it's a shame that he didn't perform it, people would have liked it - but he no longer has any opportunity to do so. Where could he find 4 such people for it? One day, when I was planning to visit Raaff, he wasn't at home but I was assured that he'd soon be back. And so I waited - Monsieur Legros came into the room - it's a miracle that I've finally had the pleasure of seeing you again - yes, I've got so much to do - are you staying for lunch? - I'm sorry, but I've a prior engagement. - Monsieur Mozart, we must spend more time together; - it'll be a pleasure. - Long silence - finally:by the way, won't you write a grand symphony for me for Corpus Christi? - Why not? - But can I rely on it? - Oh yes, as long as I can rely on its being performed - and that it doesn't suffer the same fate as the *sinfonia concertante* - then the dance began - he apolo-gized as best he could - but there wasn't much he could say - in a word, the symphony was universally liked - and Legros is so pleased that he says it's his best symphony - only the *andante* hasn't had the good fortune to win his approval - he says it contains too many modulations and that it's too long - but this is because the audience forgot to clap as loudly and make as much noise as they did for the first and final movements - but the *andante* won the greatest approval from me and from all the connoisseurs and music lovers and most other listeners - it's exactly the opposite of what Legros says - it's entirely natural - and short. - But in order to satisfy him - and, as he claims, several others - I've written another one - each is fitting in its own way - for each has a different character - but I like the last one even more - when I have a moment, I'll send you the symphony, together with the violin tutor, some keyboard pieces and Vogler's

Tonwissenschaft und Tonsezkunst - and I shall then want to know what you think about them - the symphony will be performed for the second time - with the new andante - on 15 August - the Feast of the Assumption - the symphony is in re and the andante in sol - you're not supposed to say D or G here. - Well, Legros is now right behind me. - It's time to start thinking about ending this letter - if you write to me, I think it would be better if you were to do so *chez Monsieur Le Baron de Grimm*, *Chaus-sée d'Antin près le Boulevard* - Monsieur Grimm will be writing to you himself very shortly. He and Madame d'Épinay both ask to be remembered to you and send you their heartfelt condolences - but they hope that you will be able to remain composed in the face of a matter that can't be changed - take comfort - and pray fervently, this is the only expedient that is left to us - I was going to ask you to have Holy Masses said at Maria Plain and Loreto - I've also done so here. As for the letter of rec-ommendation for Herr Beer, I don't think it'll be necessary to send it to me - I still haven't met him; I know only that he's a good clarinettist but a dissolute companion - I don't like associating with such people - it does one no credit; and I've no wish to give him a letter of recommendation - I'd be truly ashamed to do so - even if he could do something for me! - But he's by no means respected - many people haven't even heard of him - Of the 2 Stamitzes, only the younger one is here - the older (the real composer *à la* Hafeneder) is in London - they're 2 wretched scribblers - and gamblers - drunkards - and whoremongers - not the kind of people for me - the one who's here has scarcely a decent coat to his back - by the way, if things don't work out with Brunetti, I'd very much like to recommend a good friend of mine to the arch-bishop as first violin, a decent, honest, upstanding man - a stolid individual; - I'd put him at around 40 - a widower - he's called Rothfischer - he's concert master to the princess of Nassau-Weilburg at Kirchheimbolanden - between ourselves, he's dissatisfied as the prince doesn't like him - or rather he doesn't like *his music* - he's com-mended himself to me and it would give me real pleasure to help him - he's the best of men. - Adieu. I kiss your hands 100, 000 times and embrace my sister with all my heart. I am your most obedient son.

Wolfgang Amadè Mozart

Leopold Mozart to his wife and son, 13 July 1778, Salzburg

My Dear Wife and Son,

In order not to miss your name day, my dear wife, I'm writing to you today, even though the letter will no doubt arrive a few days early. I wish you a million joys in being able to celebrate it once more and ask Almighty God to keep you well on this day and for many years to come and allow you to live as contented a life as is possible in this inconstant world theatre. I'm absolutely convinced that for you to be truly happy you need your husband and daughter. God in His unfathomable decree and most holy providence will do what is best for us. Would you have thought a year ago that you'd be spending your next name day in Paris? - - However incredible this would have seemed to many people then, although not to our-selves, it is possible that with God's help we may be reunited even before we expect it: for my one concern is that I am separated from you and *living so far away , so very far away from you* ; otherwise we're well, God be praised! We both kiss you and Wolfgang a million times and beg you above all to take great care of your health. - *The theatre of war has finally opened* ! In Paris you'll already know that on the 5th of this month the king of Prussia entered Bohemia from Glatz and that he's passed through Nachod and penetrated as far as Königgrätz. War was bound to break out as neither power could withdraw its armies without losing face. For several weeks Austria, with its marches and countermarches, has provided the king with occasional opportunities to make an incursion and launch an attack: but the king didn't think it advisable to undertake such an attack; now the emperor has established a very powerful *false arsenal* at Nachod, and this persuaded the king to attack. But the arsenal was a *feint* and contained only a semblance of the real thing. They had to take this risk, whatever the outcome, as Austria was neither able nor willing to be the aggressor, while the Croats were merely an advance guard (the only position in which they can really be used)

and could barely be restrained any longer, as these people always hope to win booty, which is why they're so keen to go to war. The Saxon troops have formed an alliance with Prussia, and it's presumably true that they've joined forces with Prince Heinrich and will no doubt attack *Eger* and the *Upper Palatinate*. More news will no doubt arrive with the next post: this came with the Austrian post on the 11th. This war will be one of the bloodiest, the king wants to die a glorious death, and the emperor wants to start his army life on an equally glorious note.

I wrote the foregoing yesterday , the 12th . This morning, the 13th, shortly before 10 o'clock, I received your distressing letter of 3 July. You can well imagine how we are both feeling. We wept so much that we could scarcely read your letter. - And your sister! - Great God in your mercy! May your most hallowed will be done! My dear son! For all that I am resigned as far as possible to God's will, you'll none the less find it entirely human and natural that I'm almost unable to write for weeping. What am I to conclude from all this? Only that even as I write these lines, she is presumably already dead - or that she has recovered, for you wrote on the 3rd and today is already the 13th. You say that after being bled she felt well, but that a few days later she complained of shivering and feverishness. The last letter from the two of you was dated 12 June, and in it she wrote *I was bled yesterday* :so that was the 11th - and why was it done on a Saturday - a fast day? - - I expect she ate some meat. She waited too long to be bled. Knowing her very well, I remember that she likes to put things off, especially in a foreign place, where she'd first have to enquire after a surgeon. Well, so the matter stands - it can't be helped any longer - I have complete confidence in your filial love and know that you have taken all possible care of your mother, who is undoubtedly good, and that if God restores her to us, you will always continue to do so - your good mother, who always saw you as *the apple of her eye* and whose love for you was exceptional, who was exceedingly proud of you and who - I know this better than you - lived for you alone. But if all our hopes are in vain! Could we really have lost her! - Good God! *You need friends , honest friends !* Other-wise you'll lose everything, what with the funeral expenses etc. My God! There are many expenses about which you know nothing and where strangers are cheated - taken for a ride - tricked - put to unnecessary expense and exploited if they don't have honest friends: you can have no

conception of this. If this misfortune has befallen you, ask Baron Grimm if you can store your mother's effects at his house, so that you don't have to keep an eye on so many things: or lock everything up, because if you're often away for whole days at a time, people could break into your room and rob you. God grant that all my pre-cautions are unnecessary: but you will recognize your father in this. My dear wife! My dear son! - as she fell ill a few days after being bled, she must have been ill since 16 or 17 June. But you waited too long - she thought she'd get better through bed rest - by dieting - by her own devices, I know how it is, one hopes for the best and puts things off: but, my dear Wolfgang, diarrhoea when one has a fever requires a doctor to know if the fever should be reduced or allowed to run its course as medicines designed to reduce the temperature cause an increase in diarrhoea: and if the diarrhoea is stopped at the wrong time, the *materia peccans* leads to gangrene. - God! We are in your hands.

Congratulations on the success of your symphony at the Concert Spirituel. I can imagine how anxious you must have been. - Your determination to rush out into the orchestra if things hadn't gone well was presumably just a wild idea. God forbid! You must put this and all such notions out of your head; they're ill considered, such a step would cost you your life, which no man in his right senses risks for a symphony. - Such an affront - and a public affront to boot - would inevitably be avenged by the sword not just by a *Frenchman* but by all who value their honour. An Italian would say nothing but would lie in wait at a street corner and shoot you dead. - From Munich I've received reliable reports that Count Seeau has been confirmed as intendant of music for Munich and Mannheim; that a list of all the orchestral players has been sent to Mannheim; that the two orchestras will be combined and the worst players weeded out; Herr Wotschitka and the other *valets de chambre* have been pensioned off on a pension of 400 florins, *which surprises me*; Dr *Sänfftel* had the effrontery to demand 3000 florins for his treatment, whereupon he was stripped of his title and salary; finally, it is hoped in Munich that the elector and his wife, the electress, will be back in Munich with their entire court by 10 August. - I began this letter with my congratulations, - and Nannerl was planning to end it with her own. But, as you can imagine, she's incapable of writing a single word, now that she has to write - each letter that she's supposed to write down brings a flood of tears to

her eyes. You, her dear brother, must take her place, if - as we hope and desire - you can still do so.

But no! You can no longer do so - she has passed away - you are trying too hard to console me, no one is as eager as that unless driven to it quite naturally by the loss of all human hope or by the event itself. I'm now going to have some lunch, though I don't suppose I'll have much of an appetite.

I'm writing this at half past 3 in the afternoon. I now know that my dear wife is in heaven. I'm writing this with tears in my eyes but in total submission to God's will! Yesterday was the annual celebration of the dedication of the Holy Trinity, so our usual target practice was post-poned till today. I was unable to cancel it at such a late hour and didn't want to either, in spite of your sad letter. We ate little, but Nannerl, who had cried a lot before lunch, was violently sick and had a terrible headache, so she went to lie down on her bed. Herr Bullinger and the rest of them found us in this deeply distressing situation. Without saying a word, I gave him your letter to read, and he acted his part very well and asked me what I thought of it. I told him that I was firmly convinced that my dear wife was already dead: he said that he was indeed inclined to suspect as much himself; and he then comforted me and as a true friend told me all that I had *already told myself*. I made an effort to cheer up and to remain so, while submitting to God's most holy will, we finished our target practice and everyone left, feeling very saddened, Herr Bullinger remained with me and, without appearing to do so, asked me if I thought that there was any hope in the condition that had been described to us. I replied that I thought that not only was she now dead but that she was already dead on the day you wrote your letter; that I had submitted to the will of God and had to remember *that I still had 2 children who I hoped would continue to love me inasmuch as I lived only for them*; that I was so firmly convinced that she was dead that I'd even written to you, reminding you to take care of her succession etc. To this he said, *yes, she's dead*. At that moment the scales fell from my eyes, scales that had been put in place by this sudden and unexpected turn of events, preventing me from seeing what had happened, for otherwise I'd have quickly suspected that you'd secretly written the truth to Herr Bullinger as soon as I'd read your letter. But your letter had really stunned me - at first I was too dumbfounded to be

able to think properly. Even now I still don't know what to write! You don't need to worry about me; I shall play the man. But just think of your mother's tender love for you and you'll realize how much she cared for you - just as when you reach maturity you'll love me more and more after my death - if you love me-*as I do not doubt* - you should take care of your health, *-my life depends on yours* , as does the future support of your sister, who honestly loves you with all her heart. It is unbelievably difficult when death severs a good and happy marriage, but you have to experience that for your-self to know it. - *Write and tell me all the details* ; perhaps she wasn't bled enough? - - The only thing that's certain is that she trusted too much in herself and called in the doctor too late; meanwhile the inflammation of her intestines gained the upper hand.*Take good care of your health* ! Don't make us all unhappy! Nannerl doesn't yet know about Bullinger's letter, but I've already prepared her to believe that her dear mother is dead. - Write to me soon - tell me everything - when she was buried - and where. - - Good God! To think that I'll have to go to Paris in search of my dear wife's grave! - We kiss you both with all our heart. I must close as the post is leaving. Your honest and utterly distraught father

Mozart

Make sure that none of your things are lost.



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威廉·

朱生豪

在我面前摇晃着的，不是一把刀子 吗？

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[英]威廉·莎士比亚/著

朱生豪 刘漪/译



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Is this a dagger which I see before me?

This selection of Shakespeare's soliloquies has been edited by Michael Kerrigan.

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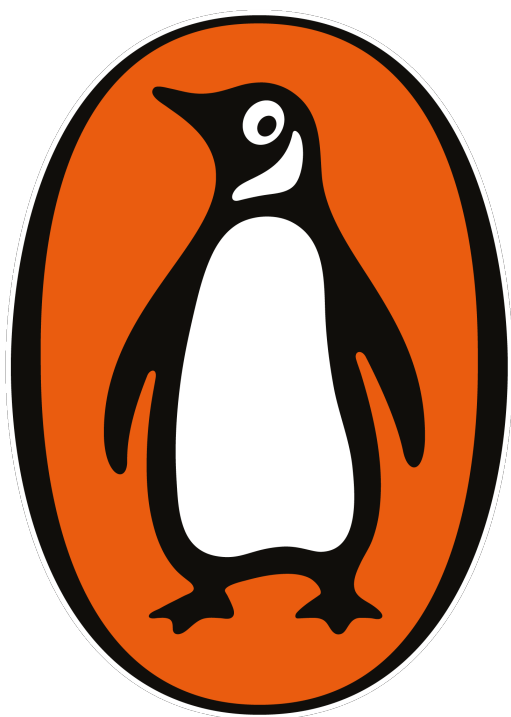
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“等他死了以后，
你再把带他去，
分散成无数的星星……” *

* 本书英文部分选自英国企鹅出版社于 1976 年出版的《莎士比亚全集》。这一版本中，此句首为“when I shall die（等我死了以后）”。而朱生豪翻译所用英文版本此处为“when he shall die（等他死了以后）”，但因更合乎语境，所以很多中文版本也采用了这个译法。特此说明。——编者注



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维洛那二士

[II,iii, 1-30] [1] 跟随其主人普洛丢斯外出旅行之前，小男仆朗斯向他的家人告别，所有人对他的离开都表达了足够多的悲伤和不舍，除了“人类最好的朋友”。

哎哟，我到现在才哭好呢，咱们朗斯一族里的人都有这个心肠太软的毛病。我像《圣经》上的浪子一样，派到了我的一份家产，现在要跟着普洛丢斯少爷上京城里去。我想我的狗克来勃是最狠心的一条狗。我的妈眼泪直流，我的爸涕泗横流，我的妹妹放声大哭，我家的丫头也号啕喊叫，就是我们养的猫儿也悲伤得乱搓两手，整个家弄得七零八乱，可是这条狠心的恶狗却不流一点儿泪。他是一块石头，像一条狗一样没有心肝；就是犹太人，看见我们分别的情形，也会禁不住流泪的；看我的老祖母吧，她眼睛早已盲了，可是因为我要离家远行，也把她的眼睛都哭瞎了呢。我可以把我们分别的情形扮给你们看。这只鞋子算是我的父亲；不，这只左脚的鞋子是我的父亲；不，不，这只左脚的鞋子是我的母亲；不，那也不对。-哦，不错，对了，这只鞋子底已经破了，它已经穿了一个洞，它就算是我的母亲；这一只是我的父亲。他妈的！就是这样。这一根棒是我的妹妹，因为她就像百合花一样的白，像一根棒那样的瘦小。这一顶帽子是我家的丫头阿南。我就算是狗；不，狗是他自己，我是狗-哦，狗是我，我是我自己。对了，就是这样。现在我走到我父亲跟前：“爸爸，请你祝福我。”现在这只鞋子就要哭得说不出一句话来；然后我就要吻我的父亲，他还是哭个不停。现在我再走到我的母亲跟前；唉！我希望她现在能够像一个木头人一样开起口来！我就是这么吻了她，她的一口气这么喘上喘下的。现在我要到我妹妹跟前，你瞧她哭得多么伤心！可是这条狗站在旁边瞧着我一把一把眼泪挥在地上，却始终不流一点儿泪也不说一句话。

[II,iv, 190-212] 普洛丢斯本来爱的是裘丽亚，但现在又被他密友的恋人雪尔薇亚迷得神魂颠倒。他既无法理解自己的感情为何如此易变，也不知如何为之辩护。

正像一阵更大的热焰压盖住原来的热焰，一枚大钉敲落了小钉，我的旧日的恋情，也因为一个新的对象而完全冷却了。是我的眼睛在作祟吗？还是因为伐伦泰因把她说得天花乱坠？还是她的真正的完美使我心醉？或者是我的见异思迁的罪恶，使我全然失去了理智？她是

美丽的，我所爱的裘丽亚也是美丽的；可是我对于裘丽亚的爱已经成为过去了，那一段恋情就像投入火中的蜡像，已经全然熔解，不留一点儿原来的痕迹。好像我对于伐伦泰因的友谊已经突然冷淡，我不再像从前那样喜爱他了；啊，这是因为 I 太过于爱他的爱人了，所以我才对他毫无好感。我这样不假思索地爱上了她，如果跟她相知渐深之后，更将怎样为她倾倒？我现在看见的只是她的外相，可是那已经使我的理智的灵光晕眩不定，那么当 I 在看到她内心的美好时，我一定要变成盲目了。我要尽力克制我的罪恶的恋情；否则就得设计赢取她的芳心。

[II,vi, 1-38]随着他的爱情越发炽烈，困境也变得越深。普洛丢斯试图平衡爱意和对友人的忠诚两方面的要求，却发现自己早已被种种繁复纠缠的情感束缚住了。

舍弃我的裘丽亚，我就要违背了盟誓；恋爱美丽的雪尔薇亚，我也要违背了盟誓；中伤我的朋友，尤其违背了盟誓。爱情的力量当初使我信誓旦旦，现在却又诱令我干犯三重的寒盟大罪。动人灵机的爱情啊！你已经引诱我犯罪，现在教我怎样为自己辩解吧。我最初爱慕的是一颗闪烁的星星，如今崇拜的是一个中天的太阳；无心中许可的誓愿，可以有意把它毁弃不顾；只有没有智慧的人，才会迟疑于善恶二者间的选择。呸，呸，不敬的唇舌！她是你从前用两万遍以灵魂做证的盟言，甘心供她驱使的，现在怎么好把她加上恶名！我不能朝三暮四转爱他人，可是 I 已经变了心了；可是 I 现在所爱的，才是真正值得 I 爱的。I 失去了裘丽亚，失去了伐伦泰因；要是 I 继续对他们忠实，I 必须失去我自己。I 失去了伐伦泰因，换来了我自己；失去了裘丽亚换来了雪尔薇亚：爱情永远是自私的，我自己当然比一个朋友更为宝贵，裘丽亚在天生丽质的雪尔薇亚相形之下，不过是一个黝黑的丑妇。我要忘记裘丽亚尚在人间，记着 I 对她的爱情已经死去；我要把伐伦泰因当作敌人，努力取得雪尔薇亚更甜蜜的友情。要是 I 不用些诡计破坏伐伦泰因，I 就无法贯彻自己的心愿。

[V,iv, 1-12]以为自己情场失意的伐伦泰因，在孤独中找到了慰藉。

习惯是多么能够变化人的生活！在这座浓荫密布人迹罕至的荒林里，我觉得要比人烟繁杂的市镇里舒服得多。I 可以在这里一人独坐，和着夜莺的悲歌调子，泄吐我的怨恨忧伤。唉，我那心坎儿里的人儿呀，不要长久抛弃你的殿堂吧，否则它会荒芜而颓圯，不留下一点儿可以供人凭吊的痕迹的！我这破碎的心，是要等着你来修补呢，雪尔薇亚！你这温柔的女神，快来安慰你的寂寞孤零的恋人呀！

[1] 此处标识为原书节选篇目所在章节和位置。（后同）-编者注

驯悍记

[IV,i, 174-97]披特鲁乔开始告诉观众他打算如何驯服桀骜不驯的凯萨琳娜，让她屈从于自己的意志——他要用猎手驯服一只猎鹰或鹞子的方式制服她。

我已经巧妙地开始把她驾驭起来，希望能够得到美满的成功。我这头悍鹰现在非常饥饿，在她没有俯首听命以前，不能让她吃饱；我必须一眼不放松地注意着她，就像她是头乱扑翅膀的倔强的鹞子一样。今天她没有吃过肉，明天我也不给她吃；昨夜她不曾睡觉，今夜我也不让她睡觉，我要故意嫌被褥铺得不好，把枕头枕垫被单线毯满房乱丢。还说都是为了爱惜她才这样做的；总之她将要整夜不能合眼，倘然她昏昏思睡，我就骂人吵闹，吵得她睡不着。这是用体贴为名惩治妻子的法子，我就这样克制她的狂暴倔强的脾气；要是有人知道还有比这更好的驯悍妙法，那么我倒要请教请教。

血海歼仇记

（原名：泰脱斯·安特洛尼格斯）

[II,i, 1-24]哥特族皇后坦摩拉的摩尔情人亚伦在坦摩拉与罗马皇帝撒脱尼纳斯的婚姻中看到了自己的机会，决定从此不做卑贱的奴隶，而要成为主人。

现在坦摩拉已经登上了奥林帕斯的峰巅，命运的箭镞再也不会伤害她；她高踞宝座，不受震雷闪电的袭击，脸色惨白的妒忌不能用威胁加到她的身上。正像金色的太阳向清晨敬礼，用他的光芒镀染海洋，驾着耀目的云车从黄道上飞驰疾过，高耸霄汉的山峰都在他的俯瞰之下；坦摩拉也正是这样，人世的尊荣听候着她的智慧的使唤，正义在她的颀蹙之下屈躬战栗。那么，亚伦鼓起你的勇气，现在正是你攀龙附凤的机会。你的主后已经长久成为你的俘虏，用色欲的锁链镣铐她自己，被亚伦的迷人的目光紧紧捆束，比缚在高加索山上的普洛密修斯 [2] 更难脱身；你只要抱着向上的决心，就可以升到和她同样高的位置。脱下奴隶的服装，摈弃卑贱的思想！我要大放光辉，满身插戴起耀目的金珠来，伺候这位新膺恩命的皇后。

[2] 普洛密修斯，现通常译作“普罗米修斯”，希腊神话中半神性之巨人，因盗窃神火，为宙斯锁系于高加索山上。（说明：书中脚注除特别标明之外，均为译者注。）

爱的徒劳

[III,i, 170-202]裴朗是个妙语连珠的才子，自知的愤世嫉俗者，此前总是对“恋爱”的念头不屑一顾。然而他却发现自己也被邱必特大人的神箭射中，陷入爱恋，不能自拔。

而我，-确确实实，我是在恋爱了！我曾经鞭责爱情；我是捉拿相思的捕快；我把刻毒的讥刺加在那个比一切人类更伟大的孩子的身上，像一个守夜的警吏一般监视他的行动，像一个尊严的塾师一般呵斥他的错误！这个盲目的，哭笑无常的，淘气的孩子，这个少年的前辈，矮小的巨人，邱必特先生；统治着一切恋爱的诗句，交叉的手臂，叹息，呻吟，一切无聊的踟躅和欲望的悲愤的无上的君主，总辖天下痴男怨女的唯一的主宰和伟大的元帅；啊，我的小小的心！我却要高举他的旗帜，在他的战场上充当一名士卒！什么，我！我恋爱！我追求！我要找寻一个妻子！一个像一座永远需要修理的时钟般的女人，你不去留心她就会出了毛病！嘿，最不该的是叛弃了誓约；而且在三个之中，我偏偏爱上了最坏的一个：一个伶俐风骚的姑娘，她的眼睛像两颗乌黑的弹丸；凭着上天起誓，即使百眼的巨人阿格斯把她终日监视，她也什么都干得出来。我却要为她叹息！为她整夜不睡！为她祷告神明！罢了，这是邱必特给我的惩罚，因为我藐视了他的全能的小小的威力。好，我要恋爱、写诗、叹息、祷告、追求和呻吟；谁都有他心爱的姑娘，我的爱人也该有个痴心的情郎。

仲夏夜之梦

[I,i, 226-45]海冷娜发现曾一度恋慕自己美貌的情郎，如今却移情于其密友黑美霞。她不由得感慨起爱情的善变、横暴与不义。

有些人比起其他的人来是多么幸福！在全雅典大家都以为我跟她一样美；但那有什么相干呢？第米屈律斯是不以为如此的；除了他一个人之外大家都知道的事情，他不会知道。正如他那样错误地迷恋着黑美霞的秋波一样，我也是只知道爱慕他的才智；一切卑劣的弱点，在恋爱中都无足重轻，而变成美满和庄严。爱情是不用眼睛，而用心灵看着的，因此生着翼膀的邱必特常被描成盲目；而且爱情的判断全然没有理性，是翼膀不是眼睛表示出鲁莽的迅速，因此爱神便据说是一个孩儿，因为在选择方面他常会弄错。正如顽皮的孩子惯爱发假誓一样，司爱情的小儿也到处赌着口不应心的咒。第米屈律斯在没有看见黑美霞之前，他也曾像雨雹一样发着誓，说他是完全属于我的；但这阵冰雹一感到一丝黑美霞身上的热力，他便融解了，无数的盟言都化为乌有。

罗密欧与朱丽叶

[II,ii, 2-25]罗密欧望见他眼中的明星在夜空中出现，于是开始滔滔不绝地发表天文学感想——对于冷冰冰的月神黛安娜，处女童贞的卫护者，他说了些很是不客气的话。

轻声！那边窗子里亮起来的是什么光？那就是东方，朱丽叶就是太阳！起来吧，美丽的太阳！赶走那妒忌的月亮，她因为她的女弟子比她美得多，已经气得面色惨白了。既然她这样妒忌着你，你不要皈依她吧；脱下她给你的这一身惨绿色的贞女的道服，它是只配给愚人穿着的。那是我的意中人，啊，那是我的爱！唉，但愿她知道我在爱着她！她欲言又止，可是她的眼睛已经道出了她的心事。待我去回答她吧；不，我不要太鲁莽，她不是对我说话。天上两颗最灿烂的星，因为有事离去，请求她的眼睛替代它们在空中闪耀。要是她的眼睛变成了天上的星，天上的星变成了她的眼睛，那便怎样呢？她脸上的光辉会掩盖了星星的明亮，正像灯光在朝阳下黯然失色一样；在天上的她的眼睛，会在太空中大放光明，使鸟儿们误认为黑夜已经过去而展开它们的歌声。瞧！她用纤手托住了脸庞，那姿态是多么美妙！啊，但愿我是那一只手的手套，好让我亲一亲她脸上的香泽！

[II,ii, 33-49]完全没意识到有人在偷听自己讲话，朱丽叶对着夜空倾吐羡慕心意，自以为只是在独白。但她的话却已经被自己所钟情的对象听去了。

罗密欧啊，罗密欧！为什么你偏偏是罗密欧呢？否认你的父亲，抛弃你的姓名吧；也许你不愿意这样做，那么只要你宣誓做我的爱人，我也不愿再姓凯普莱脱了。

罗 （旁白）我是继续听下去呢，还是现在就对她说话？

朱 只有你的名字才是我的仇敌，你即使不姓蒙太玖，仍然是这样的一个人。姓不姓蒙太玖又有什么关系呢？它又不是手，又不是脚，又不是手臂，又不是脸孔，又不是身体上任何其他的部分。啊！换一个姓名吧！姓名本来是没有意义的；我们叫作玫瑰的这一种花，要是换了个名字，它的香味还是同样的芬芳；罗密欧要是换了别的名，他的可爱的完美也绝不会有丝毫改变。罗密欧，抛弃了你的名字吧；我愿意把我整个的心魂，赔偿你这一个身外的空名。

[III,ii, 1-31]等待情郎前来约会的朱丽叶一心只盼夜晚快点来

临，催促为太阳神驾车穿越天穹的骏马快点奔跑。

朱 快快跑过去吧，踏着火云的骏马，把太阳拖回到它的安息的所在；但愿驾车的腓通 [3] 鞭策你们飞驰到西方，让阴沉的暮夜赶快降临。展开你密密的帷幕吧，成全恋爱的黑夜！遮住夜行人的眼睛，让罗密欧悄悄地投入我的怀里，不被人看见也不被人谈论！恋人们可以在他们自身美貌的光辉里互相缱绻；即使恋爱是盲目的，那也正好和黑夜相称。来吧，温文的夜，你朴素的黑衣妇人，教会我怎样在一场全胜的赌博中失败，把各人纯洁的童贞互为赌注。用你黑色的罩巾遮住我脸上羞怯的红潮，等我深藏内心的爱情慢慢儿胆大起来，不再因为在行动上流露真情而惭愧，来吧，黑夜！来吧，罗密欧！来吧，你黑夜中的白昼！因为你将要睡在黑夜的翼上，比乌鸦背上的新雪还要皎白。来吧，柔和的黑夜！来吧，可爱的黑颜的夜，把我的罗密欧给我，等他死了以后，你再把带他去，分散成无数的星星，把天空装饰得如此美丽，使全世界都恋爱着黑夜，不再崇拜炫目的太阳。啊！我已经买下了一所恋爱的华厦，可是它还不曾属我所有；虽然我已经把自己出卖，可是还没有被买主领去。这日子长得真叫人厌烦，正像一个做好了新衣服的小孩，在节日的前夜焦躁地等着天明一样。

[3] 腓通是希腊日神赫里俄斯儿子，与其父驾驭日车。

无事烦恼

[II,iii, 8-33]裴尼狄克自己以嘲弄作为铠甲抵御邱必特的箭矢，同时感叹爱情可以制造何等奇迹，即使聪慧明理如他的朋友克劳第奥也难以幸免。

我真不懂一个人明明知道沉迷在恋爱里是一件多么愚蠢的事，可是在讥笑他人的浅薄无聊以后，偏偏会自己打自己的耳光，照样跟人家闹起恋爱来；克劳第奥就是这种人。从前我认识他的时候，战鼓和军笛是他的唯一的音乐；现在他却宁愿听小鼓和洞箫了。从前他会跑十里路去看一身好甲冑；现在他却会接连十个晚上不睡觉，为了设计一身新的紧身衣的式样。从前他说起话来，总是直截爽快，像个老老实实的军人；现在他却变成了个秀才先生，满嘴都是些稀奇古怪的话儿。我会不会也变得像他一样呢？我不知道；我想不至于。我不敢说爱情不会叫我变成一只牡蛎；可是我可以发誓，在它没有把我变成牡蛎以前，它一定不能叫我变成这样一个傻瓜。好看的女人，聪明的女人，贤惠的女人，我都碰见过，可是我还是原来的我；除非在一个女人身上能够集合一切女人的优点，否则没有一个女人会中我的意的。她一定要有钱，这是不用说的；她必须聪明，不然我就不要；她必须贤惠，不然我也不敢领教；她必须美貌，不然我看也不要看她；她必须温柔，否则不要叫她走近我的身旁；她必须有很好的人品，否则我不愿花十先令把她买下来；她必须会讲话，精音乐，而且她的头发必须是天然的颜色。

该撒遇弑记

[II,i, 10-34]因其情怀高绝、目标宏大而变得不择手段的勃鲁脱斯说，该撒必须要死。无论该撒的个人品质如何，只要他活着，就是对自由的威胁。

勃 只有叫他死这一个办法；我自己对他并没有私怨，只是为了大众的利益。他将要戴上王冠；那会不会改变他的性格是一个问题；蝮蛇是在光天化日之下出现的，所以步行的人必须刻刻提防。让他戴上王冠？-不！那等于我们把一个毒刺给了他，使他可以随意加害于人。把不忍之心和威权分开，那威权就会被人误用；讲到该撒这个人，说一句公平话，我还不知道他什么时候曾经受他的感情的支配甚于他的理智。可是微贱往往是少年的野心的阶梯，凭借着它一步步爬上了高处；当他一旦登上了最高的一级之后，他便不再回顾那梯子，他的眼光仰望着云霄，瞧不起他从前所恃为凭借的低下的阶段。该撒何尝不会这样？所以，为了恐怕他有这一天，必须早一点儿防备。既然我们反对他的理由，不是因为他现在有什么可以指责的地方，所以就得这样说：他在现在的地位之上，要是再扩大了他的权力，一定会引起这样这样的后患；我们应当把它当作一颗蛇蛋，与其让它孵出以后害人，不如趁它还在壳里的时候就把它杀死。

[II,i, 61-9]勃鲁脱斯称，凯歇斯暗中怂恿的话语，在他自己心中掀起了一场战争。

自从凯歇斯怂恿我反对该撒那一刻起，我一直没有睡过。在计划一件危险的行动和开始行动之间的一段时间里，一个人就好像置身于一场可怖的噩梦之中，遍历种种的幻象；他的精神和身体上的各部分正在彼此磋商；整个的身心像一个小小的国家，临到了叛变突发的前夕。

[II,i, 77-85]心情忐忑的勃鲁脱斯问道，如果我们的事业是正义的，为什么谋划时如此见不得人？

阴谋啊！你在百鬼横行的夜里，还觉得不好意思显露你的险恶的容貌吗？啊！那么你在白天什么地方可以找到一处幽暗的巢窟，遮掩你的奇丑的脸相呢？不要找寻吧，阴谋，还是把它隐藏在和颜悦色的后面；因为要是您用本来面目招摇过市，即使幽冥的地府也不能把你遮掩过人家的眼睛的。

[III,i, 254-75]在声言要与该撒的谋杀者和解后，玛格斯·安东尼话锋一转，开始用全然不同的语言形容他被害的朋友的尸身。

啊！你这一块流血的泥土，有史以来一个最高贵的英雄的遗体，恕我跟这些屠夫们曲意周旋。愿灾祸降于溅泼这样宝贵的血的凶手！你的一处处伤口，好像许多无言的嘴，张开了它们殷红的嘴唇，要求我的舌头替它们向世人申诉；我现在就在这些伤口上预言：一个咒诅将要降临在人们的肢体上，残暴惨酷的内乱将要使意大利到处陷于混乱；流血和破坏将要成为一时的风尚，恐怖的景象将要每天被人们亲眼所见，以至于做母亲的人看见她们的婴孩被战争的魔手所肢解，也会毫不在乎地付之一笑；人们因为习惯于残杀，一切怜悯之心将要完全灭绝；该撒的冤魂借着从地狱的烈火中出来的哀提 [4] 的协助，将要用一个君王的口气，向罗马的全境发出屠杀的号令，让战争的猛犬四处蹂躏，为了这一个万恶的罪行，大地上将要弥漫着呻吟求葬的肉体的腐臭。

[4] 哀提（Ate），现通常译作阿忒，是希腊神话中诱人或神失去理智而发狂的女神。-编者注

皆大欢喜

[III, ii, 1-10] 鄂兰陀受了爱情的鼓舞，决心在森林里的每棵树上刻写和悬挂他所爱之人的芳名。

悬在这里吧，我的诗，证明我的爱情；
你三重王冠的夜间的女王，请临视 [5]，
从苍白的昊天，用你那贞洁的眼睛，
那支配我生命的，你那猎伴的名字 [6]。
啊，罗瑟琳！这些树林将是我的书册，
我要在一片片树皮上镂刻下相思，
好让每一个来到此间的林中游客，
随处见得到颂赞她美德的言辞。
走，走，鄂兰陀；去在每株树上刻着伊，
那美好的，幽娴的无可比拟的人儿。

[5] 三重王冠的女王指黛安娜女神，因为她在天上为月神，在地上为狩猎女神，在幽冥为死亡女神。

[6] 黛安娜又为司狩猎的女神，又为处女的保护神，故鄂兰陀以罗瑟琳为她的猎伴。

汉姆莱脱 [7]

[I,ii, 129-59]发现自己的父亲被害，而且母亲没出几星期就改嫁他人，汉姆莱脱王子对生命感到无助的狂怒，对他而言，生命中除了绝望已经一无所有。

啊，但愿这一个太坚实的肉体会融解，消散，化成一堆露水！或者那永生的真神不会制定禁止自杀的律法！上帝啊！上帝啊！人世间的一切在我看来是多么可厌陈腐，乏味而无聊！哼！哼！那是一个荒芜不治的花园，长满了恶毒的莠草。想不到居然会有这种事情！刚死了两个月！不，两个月还不满！这样好的一个国王，比起这一个来，简直是天神和丑怪；这样爱我的母亲，甚至于不愿让天风吹痛了她的脸庞。天上和地下！我必须记着吗？嘿，她会偎依在他的身旁，好像吃了美味的食物，格外促进了食欲一般；可是，只有一个月的时间，我不能再想下去了！脆弱啊，你的名字就是女人！短短的一个月以前她哭得像个泪人儿似的，送我那可怜的父亲下葬；她在送葬的时候所穿的那双鞋子现在还没有破旧，她就，她就，-上帝啊！一头没有理性的畜生也要悲伤得长久一些，-她就嫁给我的叔父，我的父亲的弟弟。可是他一点儿不像我的父亲，正像我一点儿不像赫邱利斯一样。只有一个月的时间，她那流着虚伪之泪的眼睛还没有消去它们的红肿，她就嫁了人了。啊，罪恶的匆促，这样迫不及待地钻进了乱伦的衾被！那不是好事，也不会有好结果；可是碎了吧，我的心，因为我必须噤住我的嘴！

[I,v, 92-112]得到父亲的鬼魂“记着我”的命令后，汉姆莱脱向所有的神灵和魔鬼发誓永远不忘。

天上的神明啊！地啊！再有什么呢？我还要向地狱呼喊吗？啊，呸！忍着吧，忍着吧，我的心！我的全身的筋骨，不要一下子就变得衰老，支持着我的身体呀！记着你！是的，你可怜的亡魂，当记忆不曾从我这混乱的头脑里消失的时候，我会记着你的。记着你！是的，我要从我的记忆的碑板上，拭去一切琐碎愚蠢的记录，一切书本上的格言，一切陈言套语，一切过去的印象，我的少年的阅历所留下的痕迹，只让你的命令留在我的脑筋的书卷里，不掺杂一丝下贱的废料；是的，上天为我做证！啊，最恶毒的妇人！啊，奸贼，奸贼，脸上堆着笑的万恶的奸贼！我的写字板呢？我必须把它记下来：一个人尽管满面都是笑，骨子里却是杀人的奸贼；至少我相信在丹麦是这样的。

(写字)好,叔父,我把你写下来了。现在我要记下我的话,那是,“再会,再会!记着我”。我已经发过誓了。

[II,ii, 547-603]伶人投入的表演让汉姆莱脱为自己无法在现实中采取行动,为父亲报仇而深感羞惭,但同时他也看到了一个机会,可以让戏剧表演为自己的计谋服务。

啊,我是一个多么不中用的蠢材!这一个伶人不过在一本虚构的故事、一场激昂的幻梦之中,却能够使他的灵魂融化在他的意象里,在它的影响之下,他的整个的脸色变得惨白,他的眼中洋溢着热泪,他的神情流露着仓皇,他的声音是这么呜咽凄凉,他的全部动作都表现得和他的意象一致,这不是很不可思议的吗?而且一点儿也不为了什么!为了赫邱琶!赫邱琶对他有什么相干,他对赫邱琶又有什么相干,他却要为她流泪?要是他也有了像我所有的那样使人痛心的理由,他将要怎样呢?他一定会让眼泪淹没了舞台,用可怖的字句震裂了听众的耳朵,使有罪的人发狂,使无罪的人骇愕,使愚昧无知的人惊慌失措,使所有的耳目迷乱了它们的功能。可是我,一个糊涂颠倒的家伙,垂头丧气,一天到晚像在做梦似的,忘记了杀父的大仇;虽然一个国王给人家用万恶的手段掠夺了他的权位,杀害了他的最宝贵的生命,我却始终哼不出一句话来。我是一个懦夫吗?谁骂我恶人?谁敲破我的脑壳?谁拔去我的胡子,把它吹在我的脸上?谁扭我的鼻子?谁当面指斥我胡说?谁对我做这种事?吓!我应该忍受这样的侮辱,因为我是一个没有心肝,逆来顺受的怯汉,否则我早已用这奴才的尸肉,喂肥了四境之内的乌鸢了。嗜血的,荒淫的恶贼!狠心的,奸诈的,淫邪的,悖逆的恶贼!啊!复仇!-嗨,我真是蠢材!我的亲爱的父亲被人谋杀了,鬼神都在鞭策我复仇,我这做儿子的却像一个下流女人似的,只会用空言发发牢骚,学起泼妇骂街的样子来,真是了不得的勇敢!呸!呸!活动起来吧,我的脑筋!我听人家说,犯罪的人在看戏的时候,因为台上表演的巧妙,有时会激动天良,当场供认他们的罪恶;因为暗杀的事情无论干得怎样秘密,总会借着神奇的喉舌泄露出来。我要叫这班伶人在我的叔父面前表演一本跟我的父亲的惨死情节相仿的戏剧,我就在一旁窥察他的神色;我要窥视到他的灵魂的深处,要是他稍露惊骇不安之态,我就知道我应该怎么办。我所看见的幽灵也许是魔鬼的化身,借着一个美好的形状出现,魔鬼是有这一种本领的;对于柔弱忧郁的灵魂,他最容易发挥他的力量;也许他看准了我的柔弱和忧郁,才来向我作祟,要把我引诱到沉沦的路上。我要先得到一些比这更切实的证据;凭着这一本戏,我可以发掘国王内心的隐秘。

[III,i, 56-88]汉姆莱脱思考自杀。

生存还是毁灭，这是一个值得考虑的问题；默然忍受命运的暴虐的毒箭，或是挺身反抗人世的无涯的苦难，在奋斗中结束了一切，这两种行为，哪一种是最勇敢的？死了，睡去了-什么都完了-要是在这一种睡眠之中，我们心头的创痛，以及其他无数血肉之躯所不能避免的打击，都可以从此消失，那正是我们求之不得的结局。死了，睡去了；睡去了也许还会做梦。嗯，阻碍就在这儿：因为当我们摆脱了这一具朽腐的皮囊以后，在那死的睡眠里，究竟将要做些什么梦，那不能不使我们踌躇顾虑。人们甘心久困于患难之中，也就是为了这一个缘故；谁愿意忍受人世的鞭挞和讥嘲，压迫者的凌辱，傲慢者的冷眼，被轻蔑的爱情的惨痛，法律的迁延，官吏的横暴和微贱者费尽辛勤所换来的鄙视，要是他只要用一柄小小的刀子，就可以清算他自己的一生？谁愿意负着这样的重担，在烦劳的生命的迫压下呻吟流汗，倘不是因为惧怕不可知的死后，那从来不曾有一个旅人回来过的神秘之国，是它迷惑了我们的意志，使我们宁愿忍受目前的磨折，不敢向我们所不知道的痛苦飞去？这样理智使我们全变成了懦夫，决心的炽热的光彩，被审慎的思维盖上了一层灰色，伟大的事业在这一种考虑之下，也会逆流而退，失去了行动的意义。

[III,ii, 395-406]为了让自己进入利于行动的心理状态，汉姆莱脱准备先去正面申斥他母亲对父亲犯下的罪行。

现在是一夜之中最阴森的时候，鬼魂都在此刻从坟墓里出来，地狱也要向人世吐放戾气；现在我可以痛饮热腾腾的鲜血，干那白昼所不敢正视的残忍的行为。且慢！我还要到我的母亲那儿去一趟。心啊！不要失去你的天性之情，永远不要让尼罗 [8] 的灵魂潜入我这样坚定的胸怀；让我做一个凶徒，可是不要做一个逆子。我要用利剑一样的话刺痛她的心，可是绝不伤害她身体上一根毛发；我的舌头和灵魂要在这一次学学伪善者的样子，无论在言语上给她多么严厉的谴责，在行动上却要做得丝毫不让人家指摘。

[III,iii, 36-72]篡位者（同时也是汉姆莱脱的继父）克劳狄斯在祈祷时承认了自己可怖的罪行，同时也承认自己无法为之忏悔。

我的罪恶的戾气已经上达于天；我的灵魂上负着一个元始以来最初的咒诅，杀害兄弟的暴行！我不能祈祷，虽然我的愿望像决心一样强烈；我的更坚强的罪恶击败了我的坚强的意愿。像一个人同时要两件事情，我因为不知道应该先从什么地方下手而徘徊歧途，结果反弄得一事无成。要是这一只可咒诅的手上染满了一层比它本身还厚的兄弟的血，难道天上所有的甘霖，都不能把它洗涤得像雪一样洁白吗？慈悲的使命，不就是宽宥罪恶吗？祈祷的目的，不是一方面预防我们的堕落，一方面救拔我们于已堕落之后吗？那么我要仰望上天；

我的过失已经消灭了。可是唉！哪一种祈祷才是我所适用的呢？“求上帝赦免我的杀人重罪”吗？那不能，因为我现在还占有着那些引起我的犯罪动机的目的物，我的王冠，我的野心，我的王后。非分攫取的利益还在手里，就可以幸邀宽恕吗？在这贪污的人世，罪恶的镀金的手也许可以把公道推开不顾，暴徒的赃物往往就是枉法的贿赂；可是天上却不是这样的，在那边一切都无可遁避，任何行动都要显现它的真相，我们必须当面为我们自己的罪恶做证。那么怎么办呢？还有什么法子好想呢？试一试忏悔的力量吧。什么事情是忏悔所不能做到的？可是对于一个不能忏悔的人，它又有什么用呢？啊，不幸的处境！啊，像死亡一样黑暗的心胸！越是挣扎，越是不能脱身的胶住了的灵魂！救救我，天使们！试一试吧：弯下来，顽强的膝盖；钢丝一样的心弦，变得像新生之婴的筋肉一样柔嫩吧！但愿一切转祸为福！

[III,iii, 73-95]汉姆莱脱遇见独自祈祷，无人在旁保护的克劳迪斯，意识到这是个刺杀他的绝好时机。但他停下了，害怕他会因此将一个本该下地狱受罚的灵魂送进天堂。

他现在正在祈祷，我正好动手；我决定现在就干，让他上天堂去，我也算报了仇了。不，那还要考虑一下：一个恶人杀死我的父亲；我，他的独生子，却把这个恶人送上天堂。啊，这简直是以恩报怨了。他用卑鄙的手段，在我父亲罪孽深重的时候乘其不备地把他杀死；虽然谁也不知道在上帝面前，他的生前的善恶如何相抵，可是照我们一般的推想，他的业债多半是很重的。现在他正在洗涤他的灵魂，要是我在这时候结果了他的性命，那么天国的路是为他开放着，这样还算是复仇吗？不，收起来，我的剑，等候一个更惨酷的机会吧；当他在酒醉以后，在愤怒之中，或是在荒淫纵欲的时候，在赌博，咒骂，或是其他邪恶的行为的中间，我就要叫他颠踬在我的脚下，让他幽深黑暗不见天日的灵魂永堕地狱。

[IV,iv, 32-66]听闻别人为了争夺一块小小的土地要发动战争，汉姆莱脱又为自己连最重的欺辱都无法为之复仇而感到羞惭不安。

我所见到听到的一切，都好像在对我谴责，鞭策我赶快进行我的蹉跎未就的复仇大愿！一个人要是在他生命的盛年，只知道吃吃睡睡，他还算是个什么东西？简直不过是一头畜生！上帝造下我们来，使我们能够这样高谈阔论，瞻前顾后，当然要我们利用他所赋予我们的这一种能力和灵明的理智，不让它们白白废掉。现在我明明有理由，有决心，有力量，有方法，可以动手干我所要干的事，可是我还是在说一些空话，“我要怎么怎么干”，而始终不曾在行动上表现出来；我不知道这是为了鹿豕一般的健忘呢，还是为了三分懦怯一分智慧的过于审慎顾虑。像大地一样显明的榜样都在鼓励我；瞧这一支勇

猛的大军，领队的是一个娇养的少年王子，勃勃的雄心振起了他的精神，使他蔑视不可知的结果，为了区区弹丸大小的一块不毛之地，拼着血肉之躯，去向命运、死亡和危险挑战。真正的伟大不是轻举妄动，而是在荣誉遭遇危险的时候，即使为了一根稻秆之微，也要慷慨力争。可是我的父亲给人惨杀，我的母亲给人污辱，我的理智和感情都被这种不共戴天的大仇所激动，我却因循隐忍，一切听其自然，看着这两万人为了博取一个空虚的名声，视死如归地走下他们的坟墓里去，目的只是争夺一方还不够作为他们埋骨之所的土地，相形之下，我将何地自容呢？从这一刻起，让我摒除一切的疑虑妄念，把流血的思想充满在我的脑际！

[7] 汉姆莱脱，现多译作“哈姆雷特”，与《奥赛罗》（本书译作《奥瑟罗》）、《李尔王》、《麦克白》（本书译作《麦克佩斯》）并称为莎士比亚“四大悲剧”。-编者注

[8] 尼罗（Nero），现通常译作尼禄，古罗马暴君。

第十二夜

[II,ii, 17-41]假扮成少年男子的薇娥拉收到美丽的奥丽薇霞送来的爱情赠礼——奥丽薇霞谎称自己只是把它“还给”对方——并惊叹于英俊潇洒的外形对女人竟然会有这么大的魅力。

我没有留下戒指呀；这位小姐是什么意思？但愿她不要迷恋了我的外貌才好！她把我打量得那么仔细；真的，我觉得她看得我那么出神，连自己讲的什么话儿也顾不到了，那么没头没脑颠颠倒倒的。一定的，她爱了我啦；情急智生，才差这个无礼的使者来邀请我。不要我主人的戒指！嘿，他并没有把什么戒指送给她呀！我才是她意中的人；真是这样的话，-事实上确是这样，-那么可怜的小姐，她真是做梦了！我现在才明白假扮的确不是一回好事情，魔鬼会乘机大显他的身手。一个又漂亮又靠不住的男人，多么容易占据了女人家柔弱的心！唉！这都是我们生性脆弱的缘故，不是我们自身的错处；因为上天造下我们是哪样的人，我们就是哪样的人。这种事情怎么了结呢？我的主人深深地爱着她；我呢，可怜的小鬼，也是那样恋着他；我呢，认错了人，似乎在恋着我。这怎么了呢？因为我是个男人，我绝不能叫我的主人爱上我；因为我是个女人，唉！可怜的奥丽薇霞也要白费无数的叹息了。

这纠纷要让时间来理清；

叫我打开这结儿怎么成！

特洛埃围城记

（原名：特洛埃勒斯与克蕾雪达）

[I,i, 91-106] 尽管他的城邦正在与希腊人交战，特洛埃王子特洛埃勒斯认为，一切纷争都无法将他的注意力从爱人克蕾雪达身上引开——他的怒气只会留给为他传情达意的难对付的信使潘达勒斯。

别闹，你们这些聒耳的喧哗！别闹，粗暴的声音！两方面都是些傻瓜！无怪海伦是美丽的，因为你们每天用鲜血涂着她的红颜。我不能为了这一个理由去和人家作战；它对于我的剑是一个太贫乏的题目。可是潘达勒斯-天啊！你是多么作弄着我！我要向克蕾雪达传达我的情愫，只有靠着潘达勒斯的力量；可是央他去说情，他自己就是这么难说话，克蕾雪达又是那么凛若冰霜，把一切哀求置之不闻。爱坡罗 [9]，为了你的达芬 [10] 的爱，告诉我，克蕾雪达是什么，潘达勒斯是什么，我们都是些什么？她的眠床就是印度；她睡在上面，是一颗无价的明珠；一道汹涌的波涛隔开在我们的中间；我是个采宝的商人，这个潘达勒斯便是我的不可靠的希望，我的载登彼岸的渡航。

[I,ii, 281-95] 克蕾雪达也觉得必须要通过一个中间人来传达情意不太方便，但她足够精明，不会屈服于特洛埃勒斯的追求，轻易委身于他。她发觉，爱情和任何战争一样，是一场力量的博弈。

言语，盟誓，礼物，眼泪，以及恋爱的全部祭礼，他都借着别人的手向我呈献过了；然而我从特洛埃勒斯本身所看到的，比之从潘达勒斯的谰辞的镜子里所看到的，还要清楚千倍。可是我却还不能就答应他。女人在被人追求的时候是个天使；无论什么东西，一到了人家手里，便一切都完了；无论什么事情，也只有在正在进行的时候兴趣最为浓厚。一个被人恋着的女子，要是不知道男人重视未获得的事物，甚于既得的事物，她就等于一无所知；一个女人要是以为恋爱在达到目的以后，还是像热情未获满足以前一样的甜蜜，那么她一定从来不曾有过恋爱的经验。所以我从恋爱中间归纳出这一句箴言：既得之后是命令，未得之前是请求。虽然我的心里装满了爱情，我却不让我的眼睛泄露我的秘密。

[III,ii, 16-27] 特洛埃勒斯已然被预期中将要到来的爱情冲昏了头脑，他确信自己在爱情真的来临时一定会经受不住它的强烈冲击——实际上，他会被快乐摧毁，就像死在战场上一样。

我觉得眼前迷迷糊糊的，期望使我的头脑打着回旋。想象中的美味是这样甘芳，它迷醉了我的神经。要是我的生津的齿颊果然尝到了

经过三次提炼的爱情的旨酒，那就该怎样呢？我怕我会死去，昏昏沉沉地倒下去不再醒来；我怕那种太微妙渊深的快乐，调和在太芳冽的甘美里，不是我的粗俗的感官所能经受；我怕，我更怕在无边的幸福之中，我会失去一切的知觉，正像大军冲锋，敌人披靡的时候，每个人都忘记了自己一样。

[9] 爱坡罗（Apollo），现通常译作阿波罗，光明与预言之神，因被邱必特之箭射中，疯狂爱着达芙尼。-编者注

[10] 达芬（Daphne），现通常译作达芙尼，河神拉冬的女儿，为躲避阿波罗的追求，变成了一棵月桂树，成为月桂女神。-编者注

量罪记

[II,ii, 162-87]所有官员中最虔信，最道貌岸然的安哲鲁声称自己抗拒了所有女性的诱惑，但唯独不可抗拒地被贞洁的依莎贝拉吸引。

什么？这是哪里说起？是她的错处？还是我的错处？诱惑的人和受诱惑的人，哪一个更有罪？嘿！她没有错，她也没有引诱我。像芝兰旁边的一块臭肉，在阳光下蒸发腐烂的是我，芝兰却不曾因为枯萎而失去了芬芳，难道一个贞淑的女子，比那些狂花浪柳更能引动我们的情欲吗？难道我们因为缺少荒芜的旷地，必须把圣殿拆毁，种植我们的罪恶吗？呸！呸！呸！安哲鲁，你在干些什么？你是个什么人？你因为她的纯洁而对她爱慕，因为爱慕她而必须玷污她的纯洁？啊，让她的弟弟活命吧！要是法官自己也偷窃人家的东西，那么盗贼是可以振振有词的。啊！我竟是这样爱她，所以才想再听见她说话，饱餐她的美色吗？我在做些什么梦？狡恶的魔鬼为了引诱圣徒，会把圣徒做他钩上的美饵；因为爱慕纯洁的事物而驱令我们犯罪的诱惑，才是最危险的。娼妓用尽她天生的魅力，人工的狐媚，都不能使我的心中略起微波，可是这位贞淑的女郎却把我完全征服了。我从前看见人家为了女人发痴，总是讥笑他们，想不到我自己也会有这么一天！

[II,iv, 1-17]安哲鲁惧怕，自己对依莎贝拉不被准许的感情，会使他的宗教信仰顷刻间成为笑柄。

我每次要祈祷沉思的时候，我的心思总是纷乱无主：上天所听到的只是我的口不应心的空言，我的精神却贯注在依莎贝拉身上；上帝的名字挂在我的嘴边咀嚼，心头的欲念，兀自在那里奔腾。我已经厌倦于我所矜持的尊严，正像一篇大好的文章一样，在久读之后也会使人掩耳；现在我宁愿把我这岸然道貌，去换一根因风飘荡的羽毛。什么地位！什么面子！多少愚人为了你还虚伪的外表而凜然生畏，多少聪明人为了它而俯首帖服！可是人孰无情，不一定出角的才是魔鬼呢。

奥瑟罗

[III,iii, 255-74]奥瑟罗被埃古包藏祸心的欺骗性暗示与自己的嫉妒心蒙蔽了双眼，他此时已经在信里准备将他的爱人苔丝德梦娜视为背叛了自己的人——不是真正忠诚的猎鹰，而是一只“没有被驯服的野鹰”。

这是一个非常诚实的家伙，对于人情世故实在是熟悉不过的了。要是我能证明她是一只没有被驯服的野鹰，虽然我用自己的心弦把她系住，我也要放她随风远去，追寻她自己的命运。也许因为我生得黑丑，缺少绅士们温柔风雅的谈吐，也许因为我年纪老了点儿-虽然还不算顶老-所以她才会背叛我，我已经自取其辱，只好割断对她这一段痴情。啊，结婚的烦恼！我们可以在名义上把这些可爱的人儿称为我们所有，却不能支配她们的爱憎喜恶。我宁愿做一只虾蟆，呼吸牢室中的浊气，也不愿占住了自己心爱之物的一角，让别人把它享用。可是就算是权贵也不能幸免灾祸，他们并不比贫贱者享有更多的特权。那是像死一样不可逃避的命运，我们一生下来就已经冥冥中注定了的。

[V,ii, 1-22]只因着自己疯狂的嫉妒心，在没有确凿证据的情况下，奥瑟罗就确信自己的妻子不忠。于是他决心要杀死苔丝德梦娜。

只是为了这一个原因，只是为了这一个原因，我的灵魂！纯洁的星星啊，让我不要向你们说出它的名字！只是为了这一个原因……可是不愿溅她的血，也不愿毁伤她那比白云更皎洁、比石膏更腻滑的肌肤。可是她不能不死，否则她将要陷害更多的男子。让我熄灭了这一盏灯，然后我就熄灭你的生命的火焰。融融的灯光啊，我把你吹熄以后，要是我心生后悔，仍旧可以把你重新点亮；可是你，造化最精美的粉本啊，你的火焰一旦熄灭，我不知道什么地方有那天上的神火，能够燃起你的原来的光彩！我摘下了蔷薇，就不能再给它已失的生机，只好让它枯萎凋谢；当它还在枝头的时候，我要嗅一嗅它的芳香。（吻苔）啊，甘美的气息！你几乎诱动公道的心。使她折断她的利剑了！再一个吻，再一个吻。愿你到死都是这样；我要杀死你，然后再爱你。再一个吻，这是最后的一吻了；这样销魂，却又是这样无比的惨痛！我必须哭泣，然而这些是无情的眼泪。她醒来了。

终成眷属

[I,i, 78-97]海伦那知道自己应该将悲伤的泪水留给自己刚刚去世的父亲，然而她发现，自己心中对贝特兰的汹涌爱意已经压倒了对父亲的哀悼之情。

唉！要是真不过如此就好了。我没有想到我的父亲；我这些滔滔的眼泪，虽然好像是一片孺慕的哀忱，却不是为他而流。他的容貌怎样，我也早就忘记了，在我的想象之中，除了贝特兰以外没有别人的影子。我现在一切都完了！要是贝特兰离我而去，我还有什么生趣？我正像爱上了一颗灿烂的明星，痴心地希望着有一天能够和他结婚，他是这样高不可攀；我不能逾越我的名分和他亲近，只好在他的耀目的光华下，沾取他的几分余辉，安慰安慰我的饥渴。我的爱情的野心使我备受痛苦，希望和狮子匹配的驯鹿，必须为爱而死。每时每刻看见他，是愉快也是苦痛；我默坐在他的旁边，在心板上深深地刻画着他的秀曲的眉毛，他的敏锐的眼睛，他的迷人的鬃发。他那可爱的脸庞上的每一根线条，每一处微细的特点都会清清楚楚地摄在我的心里。可是现在他去了，我的爱慕的私衷，只好以眷怀旧日的陈迹为满足。

黄金梦

[IV,i, 1-41]在将一笔巨大的财富全部花在款待宾客和赠送礼物上之后，因慷慨而变得一贫如洗的泰门发现昔日所谓的“朋友”们全都离弃了自己。他对人类的世界彻底失望了，跑到城外郊野的树林里生活。在他进入林中之前，最后望了一眼家乡雅典，并对那里的人们发出这样的咒诅。

让我回头瞧瞧你。城啊，你包藏着如许的豺狼，快快陆沉吧，不要再替雅典做藩篱！已婚的妇人们，淫荡起来吧！子女们不要听父母的话！奴才们和傻瓜们，把那些年高德劭的元老们拉下来，你们自己坐上他们的位置吧！娇嫩的处女变成人尽可夫的娼妓，在你们父母的跟前跟别人奸通吧！破产的人，不要偿还你们的欠款，用刀子割破你们债主的咽喉吧！仆人们，放手偷窃吧！你们庄严的主人都是借着法律的名义杀人越货的大盗。婢女们，睡到你们主人的床上去吧；你们的主妇已经做卖淫妇去了！十六岁的儿子，夺下你步履龙钟的老父手里的拐杖，把他的脑浆敲了出来吧！孝亲敬神的美德，和平公义的正道，齐家睦邻的要义，教育，礼仪，百工的技巧，尊卑的品秩，风俗，习惯，一起陷于混乱吧！加害于人身各种瘟疫，向雅典伸展你们的毒手，播散你们猖獗传染的热病！让风湿钻进我们那些元老的骨髓，使他们手脚瘫痪！让淫欲放荡占领我们那些少年人的心，使他们反抗道德，沉溺在狂乱之中！在每一个雅典人身上播下疥癣疮毒的种子，让他们一个个害起了癩病！让他们的呼吸中都含着毒素，谁和他们来往做朋友的都会中毒而死！除了我这赤裸裸的一身以外，我什么也不要带走，你这可憎的城市！我给你的只有无穷的咒诅！泰门要到树林里去，和最凶恶的野兽做伴侣，比起无情的人类来，它们是要善良得多了。天上一切神明听着我，把那城墙内外的雅典人一起毁灭了吧！求你们让泰门把他的仇恨扩展到全体人类，不分贵贱高低！阿门。

[IV,iii, 1-45]在人类的世界中，决定地位高低的是财富而非真正的价值。泰门一边抨击着世界的丑恶不公，一边挖取地里的树根来填饱肚子，却意外地挖出了金子。此时，他对这“最卑下的金属”“人尽可夫的娼妇”充满了怨恨和冷嘲。

神圣的化育万物的太阳啊！把地上的瘴雾吸起，让天空中弥漫着毒气吧！同生同长，同居同宿的孪生兄弟，也让他们各人去接受不同

的命运，让那贫贱的被富贵的所轻蔑吧。重视伦常天性的，必须遍受各种颠沛困苦的凌虐，灭伦悖义的才会安享荣华。让乞儿跃登高位，大臣退处贱职吧；元老必须世代受人贱视，乞儿必须享受世袭的光荣。有了丰美的牧草，牛儿自然肥胖；缺少了饲料它就会瘦瘠下来。谁敢秉着光明磊落的胸襟挺身而出，说，“这人是一个谄媚之徒”？要是有一个人是谄媚之徒，那么谁都是谄媚之徒；因为每一个按照财产多寡区分的阶级，都要被次一阶级所奉承；博学的才人必须向多金的愚夫鞠躬致敬。在我们万恶的天性之中，一切都是歪曲偏斜的，一切都是奸邪淫恶。所以，让我永远厌弃人类的社会吧！泰门憎恨形状像人一样的东西，他也憎恨他自己；愿毁灭吞噬了整个人类！泥土，给我一些树根充饥吧！（掘地）谁要是希望你给他一些更好的东西，你就用你最猛烈的毒物满足他的口味吧！噢，这是什么？金子！黄黄的，发光的，宝贵的金子！不，天神们啊，我不是一个游手好闲的信徒；我只要你们给我一些树根！这东西，只这点点儿，就可以使黑的变成白的，丑的变成美的，错的变成对的，卑贱变成尊贵，老人变成少年，懦夫变成勇士。吓！你们这些天神们啊，为什么要给我这东西呢？嘿，这东西会把你们的祭司和仆从从你们的身旁拉走，把健汉头颅底下的枕垫抽去；这黄色的奴隶可以使异教联盟，同宗分裂；它可以使受咒诅的人得福，使害着灰白色癩病的人为众人所敬爱；它可以使窃贼得到高爵显位，和元老们分庭抗礼；它可以使鸡皮黄脸的寡妇重做新娘，即使她的尊容可以使身染恶疮的人见了呕吐，有了这东西也会恢复三春的娇艳。来，该死的土块，你这人尽可夫的娼妇，你惯会在乱七八糟的列国之间挑起纷争，我倒要让你去施展一下你的神通。

李尔王

[I,ii, 1-22]私生子凭什么比合法的儿子卑贱？葛罗斯脱的私生子爱特门决定，自己在行为上绝不会尊重合法嫡子埃特加先天优越的权利。

大自然，你是我的女神，我愿意在你的法律之前俯首听命。为什么我要受世俗的排挤，让世人的歧视剥夺我的应享的权利，只因为我比一个哥哥迟生了一年或是十四个月？为什么他们要叫我私生子？为什么我比人家卑贱？我的壮健的体格，我的慷慨的精神，我的端正的容貌，哪一点比不上正夫人的公子？为什么他们要给我加上庶出，贱种，私生子的恶名？贱种，贱种；贱种？难道在热烈兴奋的奸情里生下的孩子，倒不及拥着一个毫无欢趣的老婆，在半睡半醒之间制造出来的那一批蠢货？好，合法的埃特加，我一定要得到你的土地；我们的父亲欢喜他的私生子爱特门，正像他欢喜他的合法的嫡子一样。好听的名词，“合法”好；我的合法的哥哥，要是这封信发生效力，我的计策能够成功，瞧着吧，庶出的爱特门将要把合法的嫡子盖罩在他的下面-那时候我可要扬眉吐气啦，帮助帮助私生子吧！

[II,iii, 1-21]父亲因受了私生子弟爱特门的欺骗，下令逮捕埃特加，于是埃特加被迫伪装逃命。他觉得自己身边发生的一切如此疯狂，以至于他想不到什么伪装能比一个四处流浪的疯乞丐更合适的了。

听说他们已经发出告示捉我，幸亏我躲在一株空心的树干里，没有给他们找到。没有一处城门可以出入无阻：没有一个地方不是警卫森严，准备把我捉住！为了保全自己的生命起见，我想还不如改扮作一个最卑贱穷苦，最为世人所轻视，和禽兽相去无几的家伙；我要把污泥涂在脸上。一块毡布裹住我的腰，把满头的头发打了许多乱结，赤身裸体抵抗着风雨的侵没。这地方本来有许多疯乞丐，他们高声叫喊，用针哪，木槌哪，钉子哪，迷迭香的树枝哪，刺在他们麻木而僵硬的手臂上，用这种可怕的形状，到那些穷苦的农场，乡村，羊棚和磨坊里去，有时候发出一些疯狂的咒诅，有时候向人哀求祈祷，乞讨一些布施。我现在学着他们的样子一定不会引起人家的疑心。可怜的疯叫花！可怜的汤姆！倒有几分像；我现在不再是埃特加了。

[IV,i, 1-9]仍然处于疯乞丐伪装下的埃特加，对自己稳居社会底层地位这个事实感到欣慰。

与其被人在表面上恭维而背地里鄙弃，那么还是像这样自己知道为举世所不容的好。一个最困苦最微贱最为命运所屈辱的人，可以永远抱着希冀而无所恐惧；从最高的地位上跌落下来，那变化是可悲的，对于穷困的人，命运的转机却能使他欢笑！

[III,iv, 28-36]因着自己的落难，李尔开始思考他的国家里穷人的悲惨境遇。

衣不蔽体的不幸的人们，无论你们在什么地方忍受着这样无情的暴风雨的袭击，你们的头上没有片瓦遮身，你们的腹中饥肠雷鸣，你们的衣服千疮百孔，怎么抵挡得了这样的气候呢？啊！我一向太不关心这种事情了。安享荣华的人们啊，睁开你们的眼睛来，替这些不幸的人们设身处地想一想，分一些你们享用不了的福泽给他们，让上天知道你们不是全无心肝的人吧！

麦克佩斯

[I,v, 36-52]麦克佩斯夫人意识到，只需一场谋杀就能让自己的丈夫坐上苏格兰的王位——而刚好国王邓根今晚要来他们的城堡做客。

报告邓根走进我这堡门来送死的乌鸦，它的叫声是嘶哑的。来，注视着人类恶念的魔鬼们！解除我的女性的柔弱，用最凶恶的残忍自顶至踵贯注在我的全身；凝结我的血液，不要让悔恨通过我的心头，不要让天性中的恻隐摇动我的狠毒的决意！来，你们这些杀人的助手，你们无形的躯体散满在空间，到处找寻为非作恶的机会，进入我的妇人的胸中，把我的乳水当作胆汁吧！来，阴沉的黑夜，用最昏暗的地狱中的浓烟罩住你自己，让我的锐利的刀瞧不见它自己切下的伤口，让青天不能从黑暗的重衾里探出头来，高喊着：“住手，住手！”

[I,vii, 1-28]在妻子将谋杀邓根的念头放进他的脑海中之后，麦克佩斯思考自己将要犯下的罪行，并为其之巨大和不可饶恕而感到惊骇。

要是干了以后就完了，那么还是快一点儿干；要是凭着暗杀的手段，可以攫取美满的结果；要是这一刀砍下去，就可以完成一切，终结一切；要是我们就可以在这里跳过时间的浅滩，展开生命的新页……可是在这种事情上，我们往往可以看见冥冥中的裁判；教唆杀人的人，结果反而自己被人所杀；把毒药投入酒杯里的人，结果也会自己饮鸩而死。他到这儿来是有两重的信任：第一，我是他的亲戚，又是他的臣子，按照名分绝对不能干这样的事；第二，我是他的主人，应当保障他的身体的安全，怎么可以自己持刀行刺？而且这个邓根秉性仁慈，处理国政，从来没有过失，要是把他杀死了，他的生前的美德将要像天使一般发出喇叭一样清澈的声音，向世人昭告我的弑君重罪；怜悯像一个御气而行的天婴，将要把这可憎的行为揭露在每一个人的眼中，使眼泪淹没了天风。没有一种力量可以鞭策我前进，可是我的跃跃欲试的野心，却不顾一切地驱着我去冒颠蹶的危险。

[II,i, 33-64]麦克佩斯试图坚定自己杀邓根的决心时几近谵妄，谋杀想象和实际谋杀行为之间的区别在他的头脑里渐渐模糊。

在我面前摇晃着，它的柄对着我的手的，不是一把刀子吗？来，让我抓住你。我抓不到你，可是仍旧看见你。不祥的幻象，你只是一

件可视不可触的东西吗？或者你不过是一把想象中的刀子，从谄热的脑筋里发出来的虚妄的意匠？我仍旧看见你，你的形状正像我现在拔出的这一把刀子一样明显。你指示着我所要去的方向，告诉我应当用什么利器。我的眼睛倘不是受了其他知觉的愚弄，就是兼领了一切感官的机能。我仍旧看见你；你的刃上和柄上还流着一滴一滴刚才所没有的血。没有这样的事；杀人的恶念使我看见这种异象。现在在半个世界上，大自然似乎已经死去，罪恶的梦景扰乱着平和的睡眠，作法的巫覡在向惨白的赫凯梯献祭；形容枯瘦的杀人犯，听到了替他巡风的豺狼的噪声，像一个鬼似的向他的目的地蹑足跨步前进。坚固结实的大地啊，不要听见我的脚步声音，知道它们是到什么地方去的，我怕路上的砖石会泄露了我的行踪。我正在这儿威胁他的生命，他却在那儿活得好好的；在紧张的行动中间，言语是多么软弱无力。（钟声）我去，就是这么干；钟声在招引我。不要听见它，邓根，这是召唤你上天堂或者下地狱的丧钟。

[V,v, 17-28]听闻妻子的死讯，麦克佩斯缩进了自己的内心世界中，悲叹自己为之战斗和杀戮过的一切终究都是徒劳，毫无意义。

她应该迟一点儿再死；现在不是应该让我听见这个消息的时候。明天，明天，再一个明天，一天接着一天地蹑步前进，直到最后一秒钟的时间；我们所有的昨天，不过替傻子们照亮了到死亡的土壤中去的路。熄灭了吧，熄灭了吧，短促的烛光！人生不过是一个行走的影子，一个在舞台上指手画脚的拙劣的伶人，登场了片刻，就在无声无息中悄然退下；它是一个愚人所讲的故事，充满着喧哗和骚动，找不到一点儿意义。

女王殉爱记

（原名：安东尼与克莉奥佩屈拉）

[IV,xiv, 44-54]在与他的埃及情人争吵并分开之后，安东尼听到她死去的消息，精神一下子被击垮了（尽管后来这死讯被证明不是真的）。他自己也打算寻死。他决定，两人将会在来生重会，就像迦太基女王黛陀和特洛埃英雄依尼阿斯一样。

我要追上你，克莉奥佩屈拉，流泪请求你的宽恕。在生命的长途上，现在只留下了痛苦；火炬既然已经熄灭，还是静静地躺下来，不要深入迷途了。一切的辛勤徒然毁坏了自己所成就的事业；纵然有盖世的威力，免不了英雄失路的悲哀；从此一切撒手，也可以省下多少麻烦。埃洛斯！-我来了，我的女王！-埃洛斯！等一等我。在灵魂们偃息在花朵里的乐园之内，我们将要携手相亲，用我们活泼的神情引起幽灵们的注目；黛陀和她的依尼阿斯将要失去追随的一群，到处都是我们遨游的地方。

沉珠记

(原名：泰尔亲王配力克斯)

[I,i, 122-43]配力克斯惊骇而恐惧地意识到他的求婚对象与其父亲——伟大的安替奥克斯国王有着乱伦关系。

殷勤的礼貌把罪恶掩盖得多么巧妙！正像一个伪君子一样，除了一副仁义的假面具以外，便没有一毫可取的地方。要是我果然理解错了，那么你当然不会是那样的坏人，因为淫邪的欲望而出卖你的灵魂；可是现在你是父亲又是儿子，因为你非礼拥抱了你的女儿，那种快乐是应该让一个丈夫享受，不应该让一个父亲享受的；她是吃她母亲血肉的人，因为她玷污了她母亲的枕席；两人都像毒蛇一样，虽然吃的是芬芳的花草，它们的身体内却藏着毒液。安替奥克斯，再会吧！因为智慧告诉我，凡是能够动手干那些比黑夜更幽暗的行为而不知惭愧的人，一定会不惜采取任何的手段，把它竭力遮掩。一件罪恶往往引起第二件，奸淫和杀人正像火焰和烟气一样互相联系。毒药和阴谋是罪恶的双手，犯罪者遮羞的武器；为了免得我的生命遭人暗算，我要赶快逃出这危险的陷阱。

[II,i, 1-11]配力克斯痛斥毁坏其船只的风暴，风暴已经充分展示了威力，现在他只希望它可以给自己一个安静的死亡。

天上的星辰啊，停止你们的愤怒吧！风雨雷电的神灵，请你们记着，尘世的凡民在你们的神威之下是无能为力的，我这脆弱的身心唯有对你们俯首降服。唉！海水曾经把我冲在岩石上，从一处海岸卷到另一处海岸，留下我这仅余残喘的一身，除了一死而外，再没有其他的想望。你们已经使一个君王失去他所有的一切，这就足够表现你们力量的伟大了；你们既然不让他葬身鱼腹，他的唯一的要求，只是让他在这儿得到一个安静的死。

英雄叛国记

（原名：科利奥兰纳斯）

[IV,iv, 12-26]科利奥兰纳斯作为“人民之敌”被放逐出罗马城后，发现自己到了罗马的“仇敌”城邦安息。他苦涩地回忆起自己曾如何“使安息的妇女成为寡妇”，并立即出发去拜访旧日宿敌奥菲迪斯。

啊，变化无常的世事，刚才还是誓同生死的朋友，两个人的腔子里好像只有一颗心，睡眠、饮食、工作、游戏，都是彼此相共，亲爱得分不开来，一转瞬之间，为了些微的争执，就会变成不共戴天的仇人。同样切齿痛恨的仇敌，他们在梦寐之中也念念不忘地钩心斗角，互谋倾陷，为了一个偶然的机，一些不足道的琐事，也会变成亲密的友人，彼此携手合作。我现在也正是这样，我痛恨我自己生长的地方，我的爱心已经移向了这个仇敌的城市。我要进去：要是他把我杀死，那也并不是有悖公道的行为，要是他对我曲予优容，那么我愿意为他的国家尽力。

冬天的故事

[III,iii, 58-76]西西里亚国王里昂提斯产生了自己的王后赫米奥妮对其不忠的念头，于是下令将他们刚出生的婴儿——他相信这是王后与别人的私生子——带到荒野里抛弃。幸运的是，一位口中抱怨着青春的麻烦的年老牧羊人撞见了婴儿，将她捡回了家。

我希望十六岁和二十三岁之间并没有别的年龄，否则这整段时间里就让青春在睡梦中度了过去吧；因为在这中间所发生的事，不过是叫姑娘们养起孩子来，对长辈任意侮辱，偷东西，打架。你听！除了十六岁和二十三岁之间的那种火辣辣的年轻人，谁还会在这种天气出来打猎？他们已经吓走了我的两头顶好的羊；我担心在它们的东家没有找到它们之前，狼已经先把它找到了。它们多半是在海边啃着常春藤。好运气保佑着我吧！咦，这儿是什么？（抱起小儿）哎呀，一个孩子，一个怪体面的孩子！不知道是个男的还是个女的。好一个孩子；真是一个可爱的孩子。一定是什么私情事儿；虽然我读过的书不多，可是我也还读过那些大户人家的侍女怎样跟人结识私情的笑话儿：扶梯放好，箱笼收拾好，两口子打后门儿一溜；爹娘睡在暖暖的被窝里好快活，可怜的孩子却丢在这儿受冻。我要行个好事把她抱起来；可是我还是等我的儿子来了再说吧。他已经在叫我了。喂！喂！

还璧记

（原名：辛白林）

[II,ii, 12-51]埃契摩吹嘘自己能够引诱任何他想引诱的女人，于是普修默斯就与他打赌自己贞洁的妻子伊慕琴一定品行端正无瑕。伊慕琴抵御住了埃契摩的进攻。发现自己作为风流浪子的名声和财富都即将毁于一旦，埃契摩只好铤而走险，偷偷躲在箱子里潜入伊慕琴的卧房，这样他就能得到足够的信息来向普修默斯证明自己已经得手。他在黑夜中现身，开始记录伊慕琴房间里的陈设和她本人的身体细节：虽然他不会动她的身体，但要强暴她的好名声。

蟋蟀们在歌唱，人们都在休息之中恢复他们疲劳的精神。我们的达昆正是像这样蹑手蹑脚地，轻轻走到那被他毁坏了贞操的女郎的床前。赛西莉霞，你睡在床上的姿态是多么优美！鲜嫩的百合花，比你的被褥更洁白！要是我能够接触一下她的肌肤！但是一个吻，仅仅一个吻！无比美艳的红玉，它们被安放得多么可爱！散布在室内的异香，是她樱唇中透露出来的气息。蜡烛的火焰向她的脸上低俯，想要从她紧闭的眼睫之下，窥视那收藏了的光辉，虽然它们现在被窗户所遮掩，还可以依稀想见那净澈的纯白和空虚的蔚蓝，那正是太空本身的颜色。可是我的计划是要记录这室内的陈设；我要把一切写下来：这样这样的图画；那边是窗子；她的床上有这样的装饰；织锦的褂帏，上面织着这样这样的人物和故事。啊！可是关于她肉体上的一些活生生的记录，才是比一万种琐屑的家具更有力的证明，更可以充实我此行的收获。睡眠啊！你死亡的模仿者，沉重地压在她的身上，让她的知觉像教堂里的墓碑一般漠无所感吧。下来，下来；（自伊慕琴臂上取下手镯）一点儿不费力地，它就滑落下来了！它是我的；有了这样外表上的证据，一定可以格外加强内心的扰乱，把她的丈夫激怒得发起疯来。在她的左胸还有一颗梅花形的痣，就像莲香花花心里的红点一般：这是一个确证，比任何法律所能造成的证据更有力；这一个秘密将使他不能不相信我已经打开链锁，把她宝贵的贞操偷走了。够了。我好傻！为什么我要把这也记了下来，它不是已经牢牢地钉住在我的记忆里了吗？她读了一个晚上的书，原来看的是替吕厄斯的故事；这儿折下的一页，正是菲萝美儿被迫失身的地方。够了；回到箱子里去，把弹簧关上了。黑夜的巨龙，走快一些吧，让黎明拨开乌鸦的眼睛！恐惧包围着我的全身；虽然这是一位天上的神仙，我却像置身在地狱之中。（钟鸣）一，二，三；赶快，赶快！

[II,v, 1-35]听到埃契摩的胜利故事后，普修默斯的世界和信念完

全崩塌了，进入了一种极度厌女的情绪状态之中。

难道男人们生到这世上来，一定要靠女人的合作的吗？我们都是私生子，全都是。被我称为父亲的那位最可尊敬的人，当我的母亲怀我的时候，谁也不知道他在什么地方；不知道哪一个人造下了我这冒牌的贗品；可是我的母亲在当时却是像黛安娜一般圣洁的，正像现在在我的妻子担着无双美誉一样。啊，报复！报复！她不让我享受我的合法的欢娱，常常劝诫我忍耐自制，她的神情是那样的贞静幽娴，带着满脸的羞涩，那楚楚可怜的样子，便是铁石心肠的人，也不能不见了心软；我以为她是像没有被太阳照临的白雪一般皎洁的。啊，一切的魔鬼们！这卑鄙的埃契摩在一小时之内-也许还不到一小时的工夫？-也许他没有说什么话，只是像一头日耳曼的野猪似的，一声叫喊，一头就扑了上去，除了照例的半推半就以外，并没有遭遇任何的反抗。但愿我能够在我自己的一身之内找到哪一部分是女人给我的！因为我断定男人的罪恶的行动，全都是女人遗留给他的性质所造成的：说诳是女人的天性；谄媚也是她的；欺骗也是她的；淫邪和猥亵的思想，都是她的，她的；报复也是她的本能；野心，贪欲，好胜，傲慢，虚荣，诽谤，反复，凡是一切男人所能列举，地狱中所知道的罪恶，或者一部分或者全部分，都是属于她的；不，简直是全部分；因为她们即使对于罪恶也没有恒心，每一分钟都要更换一种新的花样。我要写文章痛骂她们，厌恶她们，咒诅她们。可是这还不是表示真正的痛恨的最好的办法，我应该祈祷她们如愿以偿，因为她们自己招来的痛苦，是远胜于魔鬼所能给予她们的灾祸的。

[III,vi, 1-27]伊慕琴满怀欣喜地去见丈夫，却发现他在计划着杀掉自己——因为她所谓的“不贞”而嫉妒到发狂了。现在，身穿男子服色的伊慕琴坚持前往密尔福特港，希望在那里找到丈夫，并让他相信自己的忠诚不变。

我现在明白了做一个男人是很麻烦的；我已经筋疲力尽，连续两夜把大地当作我的眠床；倘不是我的决心支持着我，我早就病倒了。密尔福特啊，当毕散尼奥在山顶上把你指点给我看的时候，你仿佛就在我的眼底。天哪！难道一个不幸的人，连一块安身之地都不能得到吗？我想他所到之处，就是地面也会从他的脚下逃走的。两个乞丐告诉我我不会迷失我的路径；难道这些可怜的苦人儿，他们自己受着痛苦，明知这是上天对他们的惩罚和磨难，还会向人扯诳吗？是的，富人们也难得讲半句真话，怎么怪得他们？被锦衣玉食汨没了本性，是比困穷困而扯诳更坏的；国王们的詐欺，是比乞丐的假话更可鄙的。我的亲爱的夫啊！你也是一个欺心之辈。现在我一想到你，我的饥饿也忘了，可是就在片刻之前，我已经饿得快要站不起来。噢！这是什么？这儿还有一条路通到洞口；它大概是野人的巢窟。我还是不要叫

喊，我不敢叫喊；可是饥饿在没有使人完全失去知觉以前是会提起人的勇气的。升平富足的盛世徒然养成一批懦夫，困苦永远是坚强之母。喂！有人吗？要是里面住着文明的人类，回答我吧；假如是野人的话，我也要向他们夺取或是告借一些食物。喂！没有回答吗？那么我就进去。最好还是拔出我的剑；万一我的敌人也像我一样见了剑就害怕，他会瞧都不敢瞧它的。好天啊，但愿我所遇到的是这样一个敌人！

[IV,ii, 293-334]此时她仍然在向西方走的路上。悲伤得快要疯掉的伊慕琴从不安的睡眠中醒来，竟发现身边躺着的似乎是自己丈夫的无头尸体。

是的，先生，到密尔福特港是怎么走的？谢谢您啦。打那边的林子里过去吗？请问还有多少路？哎哟！还有六里吗？我已经走了整整一夜了。真的，我要躺下来睡一会儿。（见克尸 [11]）可是且慢！我可不要跟人家睡在一起！天上的男女神明啊！这些花就像是人世的欢乐，这个流血的汉子是忧愁烦恼的象征。我希望我在做梦；因为我自己仿佛是一个看守山洞的人，替一些诚实的人们煮煮食物。可是不会有这样的事，这不过是脑筋里虚构出来的无中生有的幻象；我们的眼睛有时也像我们的判断一般靠不住。真的，我还是在害怕得发抖。要是天上还剩留着仅仅像麻雀眼睛一般大小的一点点儿的慈悲，敬畏的神明啊，求你们赐给我一部分吧！这梦仍然在这儿；虽然在我醒来的时候，它还是围绕在我的周遭，盘踞在我的心头；并不是想象却是有实感的。一个没有头的男子！普修默斯的衣服！我知道他的两腿的肥瘦，这是他的手他的迈邱利一般敏捷的脚，他的马斯一般威武的股肉，赫邱利斯一般雄壮的筋骨，可是他的乔武一般神圣的脸呢？天上也有谋杀案了吗？怎么！

[V,iv, 1-26]监狱中的普修默斯回想起自己对挚爱的妻子伊慕琴犯下的多重罪恶，感到监狱正是他最该在的地方。

欢迎，囚囚的生活！因为我想你是到自由去的路。可是我还比一个害痛风病的人好一些，因为他宁愿永远生活在痛苦呻吟之中，不愿让死亡这一个手到病除的良药治愈他的疾病；只有死才是打开这些铁锁的钥匙。我的良心上负着比我的足胫和手腕上更重的镣铐；仁慈的神明啊，赐给我忏悔的利剑，让我劈开这黑暗的牢门，得到永久的自由吧！我已经衷心悔恨，这还不够吗？儿女们是这样使他们尘世的父亲回嗔作喜；天上的神明是更充满了慈悲的。我必须忏悔吗？还有什么比拖镣戴铐更好的方式，出于自愿而不是被迫的？为了被除我的罪孽，我愿意呈献我整个的生命。我知道你们比万恶的世人仁慈得多，他们从破产的负责人手里拿去三分之一，六分之一，或是十分之一的

财产，让这些债户留着有余不尽的残资，供他们继续地剥削：那却不是我的愿望。把我的生命拿去，抵偿伊慕琴的宝贵的生命吧；虽然它们的价值并不相等，可是那总是一条生命，为你们所亲手铸下的。在人与人之间，他们并不戥量着每一枚货币，即使略有轻重，也瞧着上面的花纹而收受下来；你们应该把我收受，因为我是你们的。伟大的神明啊，要是你们愿意做这一次清算，就请拿去我的生命，勾销这些无情的债务。啊，伊慕琴！我要在沉默中向你抒陈我的心曲。（睡）

[11] 此处指克洛登。-编者注

暴风雨

[II,ii, 1-17]野人卡列班诅咒普洛士丕罗，因为他觉得对方篡夺了自己在岛上王国的合法统治，并设各种各样的酷刑来折磨自己，以让自己顺服于他。

愿太阳从一切沼泽平原上吸起来的瘴气都降在普洛士丕罗身上，让他的全身没有一处不生恶病！他的精灵会听见我的话，但我非把他咒一下不可。他们要是没有他的吩咐是不会擒掬我，显出各种的怪相吓我，把我推到烂泥里或是在黑暗中化作一团磷火诱我迷失了路的；但是他们要想出种种的恶作剧来摆布我：有时变成猴子，向我咧着牙齿扮嘴脸，然后再咬我；一下子又变成刺猬在路上滚作一团，我的赤脚一踏上去便把针刺竖了起来；有时我的四面围绕着毒蛇，吐出分叉的舌头来，那咝咝的声音吓得我发了狂。

（屈林鸠罗上。）

卡 瞧！瞧！又有一个他的精灵来了！因为我柴捡得慢，要来给我吃苦头。让我把身体横躺下来；也许他会注意不到我。

[18-40]屈林鸠罗不是轻盈的精灵，而只是一个被暴风雨吹到岸边的水手。当他遇到卡列班时，不知该如何看待这个形状奇异的卧姿生物。

这儿没有丛林也没有灌木可以抵御任何风雨。又有一阵大雷雨要起来啦，我听见风在呼啸，那边那堆大的乌云像是一只臭水袋，就要把水倒下来的样子。要是这回再像不久以前响着那么大的雷，我不晓得我该把我的头藏到什么地方去好；那块云准要整桶整桶地倒下水来。咦！这是什么东西？是一个人还是一条鱼？死的还是活的？一定是一条鱼；他的气味像一条鱼，有些隔宿的发霉了的鱼腥气，不是新腌的鱼。奇怪的鱼！我从前曾经到过英国；要是我现在还在英国，只要把这条鱼染上一些颜色，包管那边无论哪一个假期里没事做的傻瓜都会掏出整块的银洋来：在那边很可以靠这条鱼发一笔财；随便什么稀奇古怪的畜生在那边都可以做成一桩好生意。他们不愿意丢一个铜子给跛脚的叫花子，却愿意拿出一角钱来看一个死了的印第安红人。嘿，他像人一样生着腿呢！他的翼鳍多么像是一对臂膀！他的身体还是暖的！我说我弄错了，这不是鱼，是一个岛上的土人，才刚被天雷轰的那样子。（雷声）唉！雷雨又来了；我只得躲到他的衫子底下去，别的再没有躲避的地方了：一个人倒运起来就要跟妖怪一起睡

觉。让我躲在这儿直到云消雨散。

[V,i, 33-57] 岛屿的主宰普洛士丕罗成功报复了曾经错待他的人，他所有的工作即告结束。于是他念出了最后一个咒语，意在让魔法力量从这个世界上消失。

你们山河林沼的小妖们；踏沙无痕，追逐着退潮时的海神，而他一转身来，便又倏然逃去的精灵们；在月下的草地上留下了环舞的圈迹，使羊群不敢走近的小神仙们；以及在半夜中以制造菌蕈为乐事，一听见肃穆的晚钟便雀跃起来的你们：虽然你们不过是些弱小的孩儿，但我借着你们的帮助，才能遮暗了中天的太阳，唤起了作乱的狂风，在青天碧海之间激起了浩荡的战争；我把火给予震雷，用乔武大神的霹雳劈碎了他自己那株粗干的橡树；我使稳固的海岬震动，连根拔起了松树和杉柏；因着我的法力无边的命令，坟墓中的长眠者也被惊醒，打开了墓门而出来。但现在我要捐弃这种狂暴的魔术，仅仅再要求一些微妙的天乐化导他们的心性，使我能得到我所希望的结果；以后我便将折断我的魔杖，把它埋在幽深的地底，把我的书投向深不可测的海心。

‘And when I
shall die,
Take him and
cut him out
in little stars.’

Two Gentlemen of Verona

[II, iii, 1– 30] *Off on his travels with his master Proteus, Launce the servant- boy has had to say his fond farewells: all have been gratifyingly sad to see him go except for 'man's best friend':*

Nay, 'twill be this hour ere I have done weeping; all the kind of the Launces have this very fault. I have received my proportion, like the prodigious son, and am going with Sir Proteus to the Imperial's court. I think Crab my dog be the sourest- natured dog that lives. My mother weeping, my father wailing, my sister crying, our maid howling, our cat wringing her hands, and all our house in a great perplexity; yet did not this cruelhearted cur shed one tear. He is a stone, a very pebblestone, and has no more pity in him than a dog. A Jew would have wept to have seen our parting. Why, my grandam, having no eyes, look you, wept herself blind at my parting. Nay, I'll show you the manner of it. This shoe is my father. No, this left shoe is my father. No, no, left shoe is my mother. Nay, that cannot be so neither. Yes, it is so, it is so, it hath the worser sole. This shoe with the hole in it is my mother, and this my father. A vengeance on't, there 'tis. Now, sir, this staff is my sister; for, look you, she is as white as a lily and as small as a wand. This hat is Nan our maid. I am the dog. No, the dog is himself, and I am the dog. O, the dog is me, and I am myself. Ay, so, so. Now come I to my father: 'Father, your blessing.' Now should not the shoe speak a word for weeping. Now should I kiss my father; well, he weeps on. Now come I to my mother. O, that she could speak now like an old woman! Well, I kiss her. Why, there 'tis; here's my mother's breath up and down. Now come I to my sister. Mark the moan she makes. Now the dog all this while sheds not a tear, nor speaks a word; but see how I lay the dust with my tears.

[II, iv, 190– 212] *Previously in love with Julia, but now newly smitten with Silvia, his best friend's girl, Proteus finds it as hard to comprehend his fickle feelings as he does to justify them:*

Even as one heat another heat expels,

Or as one nail by strength drives out another,
So the remembrance of my former love
Is by a newer object quite forgotten.
Is it my mind, or Valentine's praise,
Her true perfection, or my false transgression,
That makes me reasonless to reason thus?
She is fair; and so is Julia that I love –
That I did love, for now my love is thawed;
Which, like a waxen image 'gainst a fire,
Bears no impression of the thing it was.
Methinks my zeal to Valentine is cold,
And that I love him not as I was wont.
O, but I love his lady too too much,
And that's the reason I love him so little.
How shall I dote on her with more advice
That thus without advice begin to love her!
'Tis but her picture I have yet beheld,
And that hath dazzlèd my reason's light;
But when I look on her perfections,
There is no reason but I shall be blind.
If I can check my erring love, I will;
If not, to compass her I'll use my skill.

[II, vi, 1– 38] *His dilemma deepening with his passion, Proteus ties himself up into emotional knots, as he seeks to square the demands of love and loyalty:*

To leave my Julia, shall I be forsworn;
To love fair Silvia, shall I be forsworn;
To wrong my friend, I shall be much forsworn.
And e'en that power which gave me first my oath

Provokes me to this threefold perjury:
Love bade me swear, and Love bids me forswear.
O sweet- suggesting Love, if thou hast sinn'd,
Teach me, thy tempted subject, to excuse it!
At first I did adore a twinkling star,
But now I worship a celestial sun.
Unheedful vows may heedfully be broken;
And he wants wit that wants resolvèd will
To learn his wit t'exchange the bad for better.
Fie, fie, unreverend tongue, to call her bad
Whose sovereignty so oft thou hast preferred
With twenty thousand soul- confirming oaths!
I cannot leave to love, and yet I do;
But there I leave to love where I should love.
Julia I lose, and Valentine I lose;
If I keep them, I needs must lose myself;
If I lose them, thus find I by their loss:
For Valentine, myself; for Julia, Silvia.
I to myself am dearer than a friend,
For love is still most precious in itself;
And Silvia – witness heaven, that made her fair! –
Shows Julia but a swarthy Ethiope.
I will forget that Julia is alive,
Remembering that my love to her is dead;
And Valentine I'll hold an enemy,
Aiming at Silvia as a sweeter friend.
I cannot now prove constant to myself
Without some treachery used to Valentine.

[V, iv, 1– 12] A loser, it seems, in love, Valentine finds solace in solitude:

How use doth breed a habit in a man!
This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods,
I better brook than flourishing peopled towns.
Here can I sit alone, unseen of any,
And to the nightingale's complaining notes
Tune my distresses, and record my woes.
O thou that dost inhabit in my breast,
Leave not the mansion so long tenantless,
Lest, growing ruinous, the building fall
And leave no memory of what it was!
Repair me with thy presence, Silvia:
Thou gentle nymph, cherish thy forlorn swain.

The Taming of the Shrew

[IV, i, 174– 97] *Petruchio unfolds his masterplan for breaking the ungovernable Katherine to his will – he'll treat the 'shrew' as a haggard or hawk and tame her that way:*

Thus have I politicly begun my reign,
And 'tis my hope to end successfully.
My falcon now is sharp and passing empty,
And till she stoop she must not be full- gorged,
For then she never looks upon her lure.
Another way I have to man my haggard,
To make her come, and know her keeper's call,
That is, to watch her, as we watch these kites
That bate and beat and will not be obedient.
She eat no meat to- day, nor none shall eat.
Last night she slept not, nor tonight she shall not.
As with the meat, some undeservèd fault
I'll find about the making of the bed,
And here I'll fling the pillow, there the bolster,
This way the coverlet, another way the sheets.
Ay, and amid this hurly I intend
That all is done in reverend care of her.
And, in conclusion, she shall watch all night,
And if she chance to nod I'll rail and brawl,
And with the clamour keep her still awake.
This is a way to kill a wife with kindness,
And thus I'll curb her mad and headstrong humour.

He that knows better how to tame a shrew,
Now let him speak –'tis charity to show.

Titus Andronicus

[II, i, 1– 24] *The servant shall be master, resolves Aaron, Moorish lover of Tamora, the Gothic Queen, seeing opportunities for himself in her marriage to Saturninus, Emperor of Rome :*

Now climbeth Tamora Olympus' top,
Safe out of fortune's shot, and sits aloft,
Secure of thunder's crack or lightning flash,
Advanc'd above pale envy's threat'ning reach.
As when the golden sun salutes the morn
And, having gilt the ocean with his beams,
Gallops the zodiac in his glistening coach
And overlooks the highest- peering hills,
So Tamora.
Upon her wit doth earthly honour wait,
And virtue stoops and trembles at her frown.
Then, Aaron, arm thy heart and fit thy thoughts
To mount aloft with thy imperial mistress,
And mount her pitch, whom thou in triumph long
Hast prisoner held, fettered in amorous chains,
And faster bound to Aaron's charming eyes
Than is Prometheus tied to Caucasus.
Away with slavish weeds and servile thoughts!
I will be bright and shine in pearl and gold,
To wait upon this new- made Emperess.
'To wait' said I? – to wanton with this queen,
This goddess, this Semiramis, this nymph,

This siren that will charm Rome's Saturnine,
And see his shipwreck and his commonweal's.

Love's Labour's Lost

[III, i, 170– 202] *A wit and self- conscious cynic, Berowne has always scoffed at the idea of love, yet now he finds he too has been struck by an arrow from the bow of Dan (Lord) Cupid :*

And I, forsooth, in love!

I, that have been love's whip,

A very beadle to a humorous sigh;

A critic, nay, a night- watch constable,

A domineering pedant o'er the boy,

Than whom no mortal so magnificent!

This wimpled, whining, purblind, wayward boy,

This Signor Junior, giant- dwarf, Dan Cupid,

Regent of love- rhymes, lord of folded arms,

Th' anointed sovereign of sighs and groans,

Liege of all loiterers and malcontents,

Dread prince of plackets, king of codpieces,

Sole emperor and great general

Of trotting paritors – O my little heart!

And I to be a corporal of his field,

And wear his colours like a tumbler's hoop!

What? I love? I sue? I seek a wife?

A woman, that is like a German clock,

Still a- repairing, ever out of frame,

And never going aright, being a watch,

But being watched that it may still go right!

Nay, to be perjured, which is worst of all;

And, among three, to love the worst of all –
A whitely wanton with a velvet brow,
With two pitch- balls stuck in her face for eyes;
Ay, and, by heaven, one that will do the deed,
Though Argus were her eunuch and her guard!
And I to sigh for her, to watch for her,
To pray for her! Go to, it is a plague
That Cupid will impose for my neglect
Of his almighty dreadful little might.
Well, I will love, write, sigh, pray, sue, and groan;
Some men must love my lady, and some Joan.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

[I, i, 226– 45] *Her own beauties once adored, but now despised by a sweetheart who has transferred his affections to her best friend Hermia, Helena is forced to reflect upon the utter, unjust arbitrariness of love :*

How happy some o'er other some can be!
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
He will not know what all but he do know.
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
So I, admiring of his qualities.
Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity.
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,
And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.
Nor hath love's mind of any judgement taste;
Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste.
And therefore is love said to be a child
Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,
So the boy love is perjured everywhere;
For ere Demetrius looked on Hermia's eyne,
He hailed down oaths that he was only mine,
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.

Romeo and Juliet

[II, ii, 2– 25] *Romeo waxes astronomical as his star appears in the night sky – with some withering words for moon- goddess Diana, cold patroness of female chastity :*

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?

It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,

Who is already sick and pale with grief

That thou her maid art far more fair than she.

Be not her maid, since she is envious.

Her vestal livery is but sick and green,

And none but fools do wear it. Cast it off.

It is my lady. O, it is my love!

O that she knew she were!

She speaks. Yet she says nothing. What of that?

Her eye discourses. I will answer it.

I am too bold. 'Tis not to me she speaks.

Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,

Having some business, do entreat her eyes

To twinkle in their spheres till they return.

What if her eyes were there, they in her head?

The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars

As daylight doth a lamp. Her eyes in heaven

Would through the airy region stream so bright

That birds would sing and think it were not night

See how she leans her cheek upon her hand!

O that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!

[II, ii, 33– 49] *Unaware that she is not alone, Juliet speaks in what should be soliloquy, though her speech is heard by the very man to whom it is nominally addressed :*

O Romeo, Romeo! – wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name.
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO (*aside*)

Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

JULIET

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy.
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet.
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name;
And for that name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

[III, ii, 1– 31] *Night cannot come soon enough for Juliet, as she awaits the arrival of her lover, urging on the horses that draw the sun's chariot across the sky :*

Gallop apace, you fiery- footed steeds,
Towards Phoebus' lodging! Such a waggoner
As Phaëton would whip you to the West

And bring in cloudy night immediately.
Spread thy close curtain, love- performing night,
That runaway's eyes may wink, and Romeo
Leap to these arms untalked of and unseen.
Lovers can see to do their amorous rites
By their own beauties; or, if love be blind,
It best agrees with night. Come, civil night,
Thou sober- suited matron, all in black,
And learn me how to lose a winning match,
Played for a pair of stainless maidenhoods.
Hood my unmanned blood, bating in my cheeks,
With thy black mantle till strange love, grown bold,
Think true love acted simple modesty.
Come, night. Come, Romeo. Come, thou day in night;
For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night
Whiter than new snow upon a raven's back.
Come, gentle night. Come, loving, black- browed night.
Give me my Romeo. And when I shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night
And pay no worship to the garish sun.
O I have bought the mansion of a love,
Gallop apace, you fiery- footed steeds,
Towards Phoebus' lodging! Such a waggoner
As Phaëton would whip you to the West
And bring in cloudy night immediately.
Spread thy close curtain, love- performing night,

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Give me my Romeo. And when I shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night
And pay no worship to the garish sun.
O I have bought the mansion of a love,
But not possessed it; and though I am sold,
Not yet enjoyed. So tedious is this day
As is the night before some festival
To an impatient child that hath new robes
And may not wear them.

Much Ado About Nothing

[II, iii, 8– 33] *His own armour of scorn so far proof against Cupid's arrows, Benedick muses on the mysterious miracles worked by love, even on those who, like his friend Claudio, should know better :*

I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn by falling in love; and such a man is Claudio. I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife, and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe. I have known when he would have walked ten mile afoot to see a good armour, and now will he lie ten nights awake carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier, and now is he turned orthography; his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes. May I be so converted and see with these eyes? I cannot tell; I think not. I will not be sworn but love may transform me to an oyster; but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair, yet I am well; another is wise, yet I am well; another virtuous, yet I am well; but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain; wise, or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her; fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me; noble, or not I for an angel; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God.

Julius Caesar

[II, i, 10– 34] *Ruthless in his high- mindedness, Brutus says that Caesar simply has to die. Alive, he is a threat to freedom, whatever his personal qualities may be :*

It must be by his death; and, for my part,
I know no personal cause to spurn at him,
But for the general. – He would be crowned.
How that might change his nature, there's the question.
It is the bright day that brings forth the adder,
And that craves wary walking. Crown him! – that!
And then, I grant, we put a sting in him
That at his will he may do danger with.
Th'abuse of greatness is when it disjoins
Remorse from power; and, to speak truth of Caesar,
I have not known when his affections swayed
More than his reason. But 'tis a common proof
That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
Whereto the climber- upward turns his face;
But when he once attains the upmost round,
He then unto the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend: so Caesar may;
Then, lest he may, prevent. And, since the quarrel
Will bear no colour for the thing he is,
Fashion it thus: that what he is, augmented,
Would run to these and these extremities;

And therefore think him as a serpent's egg
Which, hatched, would as his kind grow mischievous,
And kill him in the shell.

[II, i, 61– 9] *Cassius' whisperings, says Brutus, have set off acivil war in his very nature :*

Since Cassius first did whet me against Caesar

I have not slept.

Between the acting of a dreadful thing

And the first motion, all the interim is

Like a phantasma or a hideous dream:

The genius and the mortal instruments

Are then in council; and the state of man,

Like to a little kingdom, suffers then

The nature of an insurrection.

[II, i, 77– 85] *If our cause is so just, says an uneasy Brutus, why such need for secrecy ?*

O conspiracy,

Sham'st thou to show thy dangerous brow by night,

When evils are most free? O then, by day

Where wilt thou find a cavern dark enough

To mask thy monstrous visage? Seek none, conspiracy;

Hide it in smiles and affability;

For if thou path, thy native semblance on,

Not Erebus itself were dim enough

To hide thee from prevention.

[III, i, 254– 75] *After conciliatory words with Caesar's killers, Mark Antony uses very different language over the body of his murdered friend :*

O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,

That I am meek and gentle with these butchers!
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man
That ever livèd in the tide of times.
Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!
Over thy wounds now do I prophesy –
Which like dumb mouths do ope their ruby lips
To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue –
A curse shall light upon the limbs of men;
Domestic fury and fierce civil strife
Shall cumber all the parts of Italy;
Blood and destruction shall be so in use,
And dreadful objects so familiar,
That mothers shall but smile when they behold
Their infants quartered with the hands of war,
All pity choked with custom of fell deeds;
And Caesar's spirit, ranging for revenge,
With Ate by his side come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice
Cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war,
That this foul deed shall smell above the earth
With carrion men, groaning for burial.

As You Like It

[III, ii, 1– 10] *Orlando, inspired by love, determines to deck every tree in the forest with his beloved's name :*

Hang there, my verse, in witness of my love,
And thou, thrice- crownèd queen of night, survey
With thy chaste eye, from thy pale sphere above,
Thy huntress' name that my full life doth sway.
O Rosalind, these trees shall be my books
And in their barks my thoughts I'll character
That every eye which in this forest looks
Shall see thy virtue witnessed everywhere.
Run, run, Orlando; carve on every tree
The fair, the chaste, and unexpressive she.

Hamlet

[I, ii, 129– 59] *His father murdered, his mother remarried within weeks, Prince Hamlet rages helplessly against a life which for him holds nothing but disappointment :*

O that this too too sullied flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew;
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
His canon 'gainst self- slaughter. O God, God,
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't! ah, fie, 'tis an unweeded garden
That grows to seed. Things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this –
But two months dead, nay, not so much, not two!
So excellent a king, that was to this
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth,
Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on. And yet, within a month –
Let me not think on't. Frailty, thy name is woman.
A little month, or e'er those shoes were old
With which she followed my poor father's body
Like Niobe, all tears, why she, even she –
O God! a beast that wants discourse of reason

Would have mourned longer – married with my uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules. Within a month,
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her gallèd eyes,
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not, nor it cannot come to good.
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

[I, v, 92– 112] *Conjured by his father's ghost to
'Remember', Hamlet swears by every power imaginable never to forget :*

O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?
And shall I couple hell? O, fie! Hold, hold, my heart.
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee?
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. Remember thee?
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past
That youth and observation copied there,
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmixed with baser matter. Yes, by heaven!
O most pernicious woman!
O villain, villain, smiling, damnèd villain!
My tables – meet it is I set it down
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain.
At least I am sure it may be so in Denmark.

(He writes)

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word:

It is 'Adieu, adieu, remember me'.

I have sworn't.

[II, ii, 547– 603] *An actor's performance having brought humiliatingly home to him his own inability to take real- life action in avenging his father, Hamlet nevertheless sees an opportunity to use the theatre as a means to advance his own personal plot :*

O what a rogue and peasant slave am I!

Is it not monstrous that this player here,

But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,

Could force his soul so to his own conceit

That, from her working, all his visage wanned,

Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,

A broken voice, and his whole function suiting

With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing.

For Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,

That he should weep for her? What would he do

Had he the motive and the cue for passion

That I have? He would drown the stage with tears

And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,

Make mad the guilty and appal the free,

Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed

The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,

A dull and muddy- mettled rascal, peak

Like John- a- dreams, unpregnant of my cause,

And can say nothing, no, not for a king

Upon whose property and most dear life

A damned defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain? Breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? Gives me the lie i'th' throat
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
Ha, 'swounds, I should take it. For it cannot be
But I am pigeon- livered and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or ere this
I should ha' fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal. Bloody bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
O, vengeance!
Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murdered,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must like a whore unpack my heart with words
And fall a- cursing like a very drab,
A stallion! Fie upon't, foh!
About, my brain! Hum – I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaimed their malefactions.
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ, I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks.
I'll tent him to the quick. If he do blench,

I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
May be a devil, and the devil hath power
T' assume a pleasing shape, yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds
More relative than this. The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King.
[III, i, 56– 88] *Hamlet contemplates suicide* :
To be, or not to be – that is the question;
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them. To die, to sleep –
No more – and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die – to sleep –
To sleep – perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub.
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil
Must give us pause. There's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,

When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would these fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.

[III, ii, 395– 406] *Trying to get into the right frame of mind for action, Hamlet prepares to confront his mother with the wrongs she has committed against his father's memory :*

'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on. Soft! now to my mother.
O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom.
Let me be cruel, not unnatural.
I will speak daggers to her, but use none.
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites.
How in my words somever she be shent,
To give them seals never, my soul, consent!

[III, iii, 36– 72] *King Claudius, the usurper (and Hamlet's stepfather), at prayer, acknowledges his heinous crime, but acknowledges too that he cannot find it in himself to repent it :*

O, my offence is rank. It smells to heaven.

It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,

A brother's murder! Pray can I not,

Though inclination be as sharp as will.

My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,

And like a man to double business bound

I stand in pause where I shall first begin,

And both neglect. What if this cursèd hand

Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,

Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens

To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy

But to confront the visage of offence?

And what's in prayer but this twofold force,

To be forestallèd ere we come to fall

Or pardoned being down? Then I'll look up.

My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer

Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder'?

That cannot be, since I am still possessed

Of those effects for which I did the murder,

My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.

May one be pardoned and retain th' offence?

In the corrupted currents of this world

Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;

And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself

Buys out the law; but 'tis not so above.

There is no shuffling. There the action lies

In his true nature, and we ourselves compelled,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence. What then? What rests?
Try what repentance can. What can it not?
Yet what can it when one cannot repent?
O, wretched state! O, bosom black as death!
O limèd soul, that, struggling to be free
Art more engaged! Help, angels! Make assay.
Bow, stubborn knees, and heart with strings of steel,
Be soft as sinews of the new- born babe.
All may be well.

[III, iii, 73– 95] *Hamlet, finding Claudius at prayer and vulnerable, senses a golden opportunity to kill him, but pauses, fearing he might thus save a soul whom he thinks deserves damnation :*

Now might I do it pat, now 'a is a- praying.
And now I'll do't. And so 'a goes to heaven.
And so am I revenged. That would be scanned.
A villain kills my father, and for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven.
Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
'A took my father grossly, full of bread,
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;
And how his audit stands, who knows save heaven?
But in our circumstance and course of thought,
'Tis heavy with him! And am I then revenged,
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and seasoned for his passage?
No.

Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent.
When he is drunk asleep; or in his rage,
Or in th'incestuous pleasure of his bed,
At game, a- swearing, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in't –
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,
And that his soul may be as damned and black
As hell, whereto it goes.

[IV, iv, 32– 66] *The news of a war to be fought over ownership of a tiny piece of territory sparks thoughts in Hamlet of his own failure to avenge even the most grievous of wrongs :*

How all occasions do inform against me
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
Sure He that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on th' event –
A thought which, quartered, hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward – I do not know
Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do',
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me.
Witness this army of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit, with divine ambition puffed,

Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an eggshell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father killed, a mother stained,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep, while to my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men
That for a fantasy and trick of fame
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

Twelfth Night

[II, ii, 17– 41] *When Viola, disguised as a boy, is sent a love token by the beautiful Olivia – who claims to be ‘returning’ it – she is struck by the power of a handsome form over female sensibilities :*

I left no ring with her; what means this lady?
Fortune forbid my outside have not charmed her!
She made good view of me; indeed, so much
That – methought – her eyes had lost her tongue,
For she did speak in starts, distractedly.
She loves me, sure, the cunning of her passion
Invites me in this churlish messenger.
None of my lord’s ring! Why, he sent her none.
I am the man! If it be so – as ’tis –
Poor lady, she were better love a dream.
Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness
Wherein the pregnant enemy does much.
How easy is it for the proper false
In women’s waxen hearts to set their forms.
Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we,
For such as we are made of, such we be.
How will this fadge? My master loves her dearly;
And I, poor monster, fond as much on him;
And she, mistaken, seems to dote on me.
What will become of this? As I am man,
My state is desperate for my master’s love.
As I am woman – now alas the day,

What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe!

O time, thou must untangle this, not I!

It is too hard a knot for me t' untie.

Troilus and Cressida

[I, i, 91– 106] *Though his city, Troy, is at war, Prince Troilus deems no dispute worthy of his Cressida- engrossed attention – his anger is saved for the difficult intermediary who is running his love affair, Lord Pandarus :*

Peace, you ungracious clamours! Peace, rude sounds!

Fools on both sides! Helen must needs be fair,

When with your blood you daily paint her thus.

I cannot fight upon this argument;

It is too starved a subject for my sword.

But Pandarus – O gods, how do you plague me!

I cannot come to Cressid but by Pandar,

And he's as tetchy to be wooed to woo

As she is stubborn- chaste against all suit.

Tell me, Apollo, for thy Daphne's love,

What Cressid is, what Pandar, and what we –

Her bed is India; there she lies, a pearl:

Between our Ilium and where she resides,

Let it be called the wild and wandering flood,

Ourself the merchant, and this sailing Pandar

Our doubtful hope, our convoy, and our bark.

[I, ii, 281– 95] *Cressida too finds romance conducted through a go- between hard, but knows enough not to surrender any ground. Love, she senses, is as much a power- struggle as any war :*

Words, vows, gifts, tears, and love's full sacrifice

He offers in another's enterprise;

But more in Troilus thousandfold I see

Than in the glass of Pandar's praise may be.
Yet hold I off. Women are angels, wooing;
Things won are done; joy's soul lies in the doing.
That she beloved knows naught that knows not this:
Men prize the thing ungained more than it is.
That she was never yet that ever knew
Love got so sweet as when desire did sue;
Therefore this maxim out of love I teach:
'Achievement is command; ungained, beseech.'
Then, though my heart's content firm love doth bear,
Nothing of that shall from mine eyes appear.

[III, ii, 16– 27] *All but overcome already by the anticipation of love, Troilus is sure he will be overwhelmed by love in fact – annihilated as effectively by pleasure, perhaps, as he might be by death in battle :*

I am giddy; expectation whirls me round.
Th' imaginary relish is so sweet
That it enchants my sense. What will it be,
When that the watery palate tastes indeed
Love's thrice-repured nectar? – death, I fear me,
Swooning destruction, or some joy too fine,
Too subtle-potent, tuned too sharp in sweetness,
For the capacity of my ruder powers.
I fear it much; and I do fear besides
That I shall lose distinction in my joys,
As doth a battle, when they charge on heaps
The enemy flying.

Measure for Measure

[II, ii, 162– 87] *Angelo, most pious of officials, claims he has resisted every other feminine temptation without difficulty, but is attracted despite himself to the chaste Isabella :*

What's this? What's this? Is this her fault or mine?

The tempter or the tempted, who sins most?

Ha?

Not she, nor doth she tempt; but it is I

That, lying by the violet in the sun,

Do as the carrion does, not as the flower,

Corrupt with virtuous season. Can it be

That modesty may more betray our sense

Than woman's lightness? Having waste ground enough,

Shall we desire to raze the sanctuary,

And pitch our evils there? O, fie, fie, fie!

What dost thou? Or what art thou, Angelo?

Dost thou desire her foully for those things

That make her good? O, let her brother live:

Thieves for their robbery have authority

When judges steal themselves. What, do I love her,

That I desire to hear her speak again,

And feast upon her eyes? What is't I dream on?

O cunning enemy, that, to catch a saint,

With saints dost bait thy hook. Most dangerous

Is that temptation that doth goad us on

To sin in loving virtue. Never could the strumpet,

With all her double vigour, art and nature,
Once stir my temper; but this virtuous maid
Subdues me quite. Ever till now,
When men were fond, I smiled and wondered how.

[II, iv, 1– 17] *His unlicensed feelings for Isabella, fears Angelo, make a mockery of his religious faith :*

When I would pray and think, I think and pray
To several subjects: heaven hath my empty words,
Whilst my invention, hearing not my tongue,
Anchors on Isabel: God in my mouth,
As if I did but only chew His name,
And in my heart the strong and swelling evil
Of my conception. The state, whereon I studied,
Is like a good thing being often read,
Grown seared and tedious; yea, my gravity,
Wherein, let no man hear me, I take pride,
Could I with boot change for an idle plume
Which the air beats for vain. O place, O form,
How often dost thou with thy case, thy habit,
Wrench awe from fools, and tie the wiser souls
To thy false seeming! Blood, thou art blood;
Let's write 'good Angel' on the devil's horn;
'Tis not the devil's crest.

Othello

[III, iii, 255– 74] Taken in as much by his own jealousy as by the lying insinuations of his malevolent ensign, Iago, the moor Othello is tragically ready to see his beloved Desdemona as his betrayer – no true falcon but an unruly ‘haggard’ hawk:

This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
And knows all qualities, with a learnèd spirit
Of human dealings. If I do prove her haggard,
Though that her jesses were my dear heart- strings,
I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind
To prey at fortune. Haply, for I am black
And have not those soft parts of conversation
That chamberers have; or for I am declined
Into the vale of years – yet that's not much –
She's gone: I am abused, and my relief
Must be to loathe her. O, curse of marriage!
That we can call these delicate creatures ours
And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad
And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,
Than keep a corner in the thing I love
For others' uses. Yet, 'tis the plague of great ones;
Prerogated are they less than the base.
'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death:
Even then this forked plague is fated to us
When we do quicken:

[V, ii, 1– 22] *Convinced of his wife's infidelity by no more*

compelling cause than his own frantic jealousy, Othello resolves to murder Desdemona :

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul:
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!
It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood,
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
And smooth as monumental alabaster:
Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
Put out the light, and then put out the light:
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,
Should I repent me; but once put out thy light,
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume. When I have plucked thy rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again,
It must needs wither. I'll smell it on the tree.

He kisses her

O, balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
Justice to break her sword! One more, one more.
Be thus when thou art dead and I will kill thee,
And love thee after. One more, and this the last.
So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep.
But they are cruel tears; this sorrow's heavenly –
It strikes where it doth love. She wakes.

All's Well That Ends Well

[I, i, 78– 97] *Helena should, she knows, reserve her sorrow for the recent death of her beloved father – but she finds her overpowering love for Bertram displacing such filial feelings :*

O, were that all! I think not on my father,
And these great tears grace his remembrance more
Than those I shed for him. What was he like?
I have forgot him; my imagination
Carries no favour in't but Bertram's.
I am undone: there is no living, none,
If Bertram be away. 'Twere all one
That I should love a bright particular star
And think to wed it, he is so above me.
In his bright radiance and collateral light
Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.
Th' ambition in my love thus plagues itself:
The hind that would be mated by the lion
Must die for love. 'Twas pretty, though a plague,
To see him every hour; to sit and draw
His archèd brows, his hawking eye, his curls,
In our heart's table – heart too capable
Of every line and trick of his sweet favour.
But now he's gone, and my idolatrous fancy
Must sanctify his relics.

Timon of Athens

[IV, i, 1– 41] *Having squandered a fortune in hospitality and gifts, Timon finds himself forgotten by his so- called ‘friends’ when, exhausted by generosity, his money runs out. Bitterly disenchanted with the world of men, he takes refuge in the wild woods outside the city, but allows himself a single backward glance at his hometown as he leaves :*

Let me look back upon thee. O thou wall
That girdles in those wolves, dive in the earth
And fence not Athens. Matrons, turn incontinent.
Obedience, fail in children. Slaves and fools
Pluck the grave wrinkled Senate from the bench,
And minister in their steads. To general filth
Convert, o’th’ instant, green virginity.
Do’t in your parents’ eyes. Bankrupts, hold fast;
Rather than render back, out with your knives
And cut your trusters’ throats. Bound servants, steal.
Large- handed robbers your grave masters are,
And pill by law. Maid, to thy master’s bed;
Thy mistress is o’th’ brothel. Son of sixteen,
Pluck the lined crutch from thy old limping sire,
With it beat out his brains. Piety and fear,
Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth,
Domestic awe, night- rest, and neighbourhood,
Instruction, manners, mysteries, and trades,
Degrees, observances, customs, and laws,
Decline to your confounding contraries

And let confusion live. Plagues incident to men,
Your potent and infectious fevers heap
On Athens, ripe for stroke. Thou cold sciatica,
Cripple our senators, that their limbs may halt
As lamely as their manners. Lust and liberty
Creep in the minds and marrows of our youth,
That 'gainst the stream of virtue they may strive,
And drown themselves in riot. Itches, blains,
Sow all th' Athenian bosoms, and their crop
Be general leprosy. Breath infect breath,
That their society, as their friendship, may
Be merely poison. Nothing I'll bear from thee
But nakedness, thou detestable town.
Take thou that too, with multiplying bans.
Timon will to the woods, where he shall find
Th' unkindest beast more kinder than mankind.
The gods confound – hear me, you good gods all –
The Athenians both within and out that wall.
And grant, as Timon grows, his hate may grow
To the whole race of mankind, high and low!
Amen.

[IV, iii, 1– 45] *Wealth, not worth, decides status in the world of men, inveighs an angry Timon as he digs in the woods for edible roots. When he finds gold instead he is filled with satirical scorn towards this basest of metals, the 'common whore' of all mankind :*

O blessed breeding sun, draw from the earth
Rotten humidity. Below thy sister's orb
Infect the air! Twinn'd brothers of one womb,
Whose procreation, residence, and birth,

Scarce is dividant – touch them with several fortunes,
The greater scorns the lesser. Not nature,
To whom all sores lay siege, can bear great fortune
But by contempt of nature.
Raise me this beggar and deject that lord –
The senator shall bear contempt hereditary,
The beggar native honour.
It is the pasture lards the wether's sides,
The want that makes him lean. Who dares, who dares,
In purity of manhood stand upright,
And say 'This man's a flatterer'? If one be,
So are they all, for every grise of fortune
Is smoothed by that below. The learned pate
Ducks to the golden fool. All's obliquy,
There's nothing level in our cursèd natures
But direct villainy. Therefore be abhorred
All feasts, societies, and throngs of men.
His semblable, yea, himself, Timon disdains.
Destruction fang mankind. Earth, yield me roots.

He digs

44 Who seeks for better of thee, sauce his palate
With thy most operant poison. What is here?
Gold? Yellow, glittering, precious gold?
No, gods, I am no idle votarist.
Roots, you clear heavens! Thus much of this will make
Black white, foul fair, wrong right,
Base noble, old young, coward valiant.
Ha, you gods! Why this? What, this, you gods? Why, this

Will lug your priests and servants from your sides,
Pluck stout men's pillows from below their heads.
This yellow slave
Will knit and break religions, bless th' accursed,
Make the hoar leprosy adored, place thieves
And give them title, knee, and approbation,
With senators on the bench. This is it
That makes the wappened widow wed again –
She whom the spital- house and ulcerous sores
Would cast the gorge at, this embalms and spices
To th' April day again. Come, damned earth,
Thou common whore of mankind, that puts odds
Among the rout of nations, I will make thee
Do thy right nature.

King Lear

[I, ii, 1– 22] *What makes a bastard less worthy than his legitimate brother? Conceived on the wrong side of the blanket, Edmund, Gloucester's bastard son, resolves that he will be no respecter of right in his own conduct :*

Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines
Log of a brother? Why bastard? Wherefore base?
When my dimensions are as well- compact,
My mind as generous, and my shape as true
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
With 'base'? with 'baseness'? 'bastardy'? 'base, base'?
Who in the lusty stealth of nature take
More composition and fierce quality
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed
Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops
Got 'tween asleep and wake? Well then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land.
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund
As to the legitimate. Fine word 'legitimate'!
Well, my 'legitimate', if this letter speed
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top the legitimate. I grow. I prosper.

Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

[II, iii, 1– 21] *His beloved father turned against him by his bastard brother's machinations, Edgar must flee for his life in disguise. So crazy do things seem to be that he can think of no better shape to adopt for his flight than that of a wandering, ranting Bedlam beggar :*

I heard myself proclaimed,
And by the happy hollow of a tree
Escaped the hunt. No port is free, no place
That guard and most unusual vigilance
Does not attend my taking. Whiles I may 'scape
I will preserve myself; and am bethought
To take the basest and most poorest shape
That ever penury, in contempt of man,
Brought near to beast. My face I'll grime with filth,
Blanket my loins, elf all my hair in knots,
And with presented nakedness outface
The winds and persecutions of the sky,
The country gives me proof and precedent
Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,
Strike in their numbed and mortified bare arms
Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;
And with this horrible object, from low farms,
Poor pelting villages, sheepcotes, and mills
Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,
Enforce their charity: 'Poor Turlygod! Poor Tom!'
That's something yet; Edgar I nothing am.

[IV, i, 1– 9] *Still in his mad disguise, Edgar finds he can take considerable comfort from the knowledge that he is firmly at the bottom of the social heap :*

Yet better thus, and known to be contemned

Than still contemned and flattered. To be worst,
The lowest and most dejected thing of fortune,
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear.
The lamentable change is from the best;
The worst returns to laughter. Welcome then,
Thou unsubstantial air that I embrace!
The wretch that thou hast blown unto the worst
Owes nothing to thy blasts.

[III, iv, 28– 36] *Brought low himself by circumstance, Lear reflects on the plight of his country's poor :*

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them
And show the heavens more just.

Macbeth

[I, v, 36– 52] *A single murder stands between her husband and the Scottish throne, realizes Lady Macbeth – and King Duncan is to be the guest of honour in her own home this very night :*

The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here
And fill me from the crown to the toe top- full
Of direst cruelty. Make thick my blood;
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose nor keep peace between
The effect and it. Come to my woman's breasts
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,
Wherever, in your sightless substances,
You wait on nature's mischief. Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunkest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark
To cry, 'Hold, hold!'

[I, vii, 1– 28] *His wife having put the idea of murdering Duncan in his head, Macbeth is appalled at the enormity of the contemplated crime :*

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly. If the assassination

Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
With his surcease, success – that but this blow
Might be the be- all and the end- all! – here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgement here – that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which being taught return
To plague the inventor. This even- handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet- tongued against
The deep damnation of his taking- off;
And pity, like a naked new- born babe
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin, horsed
Upon the sightless curriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other.

[II, i, 33– 64] *As he steels his nerves to kill the sleeping Duncan, an all but delirious Macbeth can hardly tell where his fantasies of power leave off and murderous fact takes up the story :*

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee –
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still!
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat- oppressed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going,
And such an instrument I was to use. –
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
Or else worth all the rest. – I see thee still,
And on thy blade and dudgeon, gouts of blood,
Which was not so before. There's no such thing:
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half- world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtained sleep. Witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecat's offerings; and withered Murder,
Alarumed by his sentinel the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm- set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts
And take the present horror from the time
Which now suits with it. – Whiles I threat, he lives:

Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

(*A bell rings .*)

I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.

Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell

That summons thee to heaven, or to hell.

[V, v, 17– 28] *On hearing the news of his lady's death, Macbeth retreats into a world of his own to reflect upon the meaningless futility of all he has fought and killed for :*

She should have died hereafter;

There would have been a time for such a word –

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,

Creeps in this petty pace from day to day

To the last syllable of recorded time;

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools

The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage

And then is heard no more. It is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

Signifying nothing.

Antony and Cleopatra

[IV, xiv, 44– 54] *Having parted at odds with his Egyptian lover, Antony is broken by the news of her death (though it will turn out to be untrue). He will himself commit suicide, he resolves, and they will be reconciled in the next life, like the Carthaginian Queen Dido and the Trojan hero Aeneas :*

I will o’ertake thee, Cleopatra, and
Weep for my pardon. So it must be, for now
All length is torture; since the torch is out,
Lie down, and stray no farther. Now all labour
Mars what it does; yea, very force entangles
Itself with strength. Seal then, and all is done.
Eros! – I come, my queen – Eros! Stay for me.
Where souls do couch on flowers, we’ll hand in hand,
And with our sprightly port make the ghosts gaze:
Dido and her Aeneas shall want troops,
And all the haunt be ours.

Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[I, i, 122– 43] *Pericles is horror- struck – and terrified – when he realizes that his intended bride has been the incestuous lover of her father, the great king Antiochus :*

How courtesy would seem to cover sin,
When what is done is like an hypocrite,
The which is good in nothing but in sight.
If it be true that I interpret false,
Then were it certain you were not so bad
As with foul incest to abuse your soul;
Where now you're both a father and a son
By your untimely claspings with your child,
Which pleasures fits a husband, not a father,
And she, an eater of her mother's flesh
By the defiling of her parents' bed;
And both like serpents are, who though they feed
On sweetest flowers, yet they poison breed.
Antioch, farewell, for wisdom sees those men
Blush not in actions blacker than the night
Will shun no course to keep them from the light.
One sin, I know, another doth provoke.
Murder's as near to lust as flame to smoke.
Poison and treason are the hands of sin,
Ay, and the targets to put off the shame.
Then, lest my life be cropped to keep you clear,
By flight I'll shun the danger which I fear.

[II, i, 1– 11] *Pericles harangues the storm that has wrecked his ship: it has shown its mastery, now he wishes it would leave him to die in peace :*

Yet cease your ire, you angry stars of heaven!
Wind, rain, and thunder, remember earthly man
Is but a substance that must yield to you,
And I, as fits my nature, do obey you.
Alas, the seas hath cast me on the rocks,
Washed me from shore to shore, and left my breath
Nothing to think on but ensuing death.
Let it suffice the greatness of your powers
To have bereft a prince of all his fortunes,
And, having thrown him from your watery grave
Here to have death in peace is all he'll crave.

Coriolanus

[IV, iv, 12– 26] *Exiled from Rome himself as an enemy of the people, Coriolanus now finds himself in Antium, an ‘enemy’ state. ‘City, ’tis I who made thy widows,’ he wryly recalls, as he sets off in search of his old adversary, Aufidius :*

O world, thy slippery turns! Friends now fast sworn,
Whose double bosoms seems to wear one heart,
Whose hours, whose bed, whose meal and exercise
Are still together, who twin, as ’twere, in love
Unseparable, shall within this hour,
On a dissension of a doit, break out
To bitterest enmity. So fellest foes,
Whose passions and whose plots have broke their sleep
To take the one the other, by some chance,
Some trick not worth an egg, shall grow dear friends
And interjoin their issues. So with me.
My birthplace hate I, and my love’s upon
This enemy town. I’ll enter. If he slay me,
He does fair justice: if he give me way,
I’ll do his country service.

The Winter's Tale

[III, iii, 58– 76] *King Leontes of Bohemia, having taken his head that his queen, Hermione, has been unfaithful, orders that their infant child – her bastard, he believes – be taken out and abandoned in the wilderness. Fortunately for the baby, an aged shepherd comes stumbling along, pondering as he goes the follies of youth :*

I would there were no age between ten and three- andtwenty, or that youth would sleep out the rest: for there is nothing in the between but getting wenches with child, wronging the ancientry, stealing, fighting. Hark you now: would any but these boiled brains of nineteen and two- and- twenty hunt this weather? They have scared away two of my best sheep, which I fear the wolf will sooner find than the master. If anywhere I have them, 'tis by the sea- side, browsing of ivy. Good luck, an't be thy will!

He sees the child

What have we here? Mercy on's, a barne! A very pretty barne. A boy or a child, I wonder? A pretty one, a very pretty one. Sure, some scape. Though I am not bookish, yet I can read waiting gentlewoman in the scape: this has been some stair- work, some trunk- work, some behind- door- work. They were warmer that got this than the poor thing is here. I'll take it up for pity – yet I'll tarry till my son come: he hallowed but even now. Whoa- ho- hoa!

Cymbeline

[II, ii, 12– 51] *Giacomo having bragged that he can seduce any woman he wants, Posthumus has made a bet on the chastity of his virtuous wife, Imogen. With not only his rakish pride but his fortune at stake, however, a desperate Giacomo has had himself carried into her chamber in a trunk so that he will be able to give Posthumus details suggestive of the closest intimacy. Emerging at dead of night, he begins to check off the features of her room and person: he may leave her body alone, but he will rape her reputation :*

The crickets sing, and man's o'er-laboured sense
Repairs itself by rest. Our Tarquin thus
Did softly press the rushes ere he waken'd
The chastity he wounded. Cytherea,
How bravely thou becom'st thy bed! Fresh lily,
And whiter than the sheets! That I might touch!
But kiss; one kiss! Rubies unparagoned,
How dearly they do't! 'Tis her breathing that
Perfumes the chamber thus. The flame o' th' taper
Bows toward her and would under-peep her lids
To see th' enclosed lights, now canopied
Under these windows white and azure, lac'd
With blue of heaven's own tinct. But my design
To note the chamber. I will write all down:
Such and such pictures; there the window; such
Th' adornment of her bed; the arras, figures –
Why, such and such; and the contents o' th' story.
Ah, but some natural notes about her body

Above ten thousand meaner movables
Would testify, t' enrich mine inventory.
O sleep, thou ape of death, lie dull upon her!

And be her sense but as a monument,
Thus in a chapel lying! Come off, come off;
(*Taking off her bracelet*)

As slippery as the Gordian knot was hard!
'Tis mine; and this will witness outwardly,
As strongly as the conscience does within,
To th' madding of her lord. On her left breast
A mole cinque- spotted, like the crimson drops
I' th' bottom of a cowslip. Here's a voucher
Stronger than ever law could make; this secret
Will force him think I have picked the lock and ta'en
The treasure of her honour. No more. To what end?
Why should I write this down that's riveted,
Screw'd to my memory? She hath been reading late
The tale of Tereus; here the leaf's turned down
Where Philomel gave up. I have enough.
To th' trunk again, and shut the spring of it.
Swift, swift, you dragons of the night, that dawning
May bare the raven's eye! I lodge in fear;
Though this a heavenly angel, hell is here.

(*Clock strikes*)

One, two, three. Time, time!

[II, v, 1– 35] *His life in tatters, his faith destroyed, after hearing Giacomo's tale of conquest, Posthumus is left in profoundly misogynistic mood:*

Is there no way for men to be, but women

Must be half- workers? We are all bastards,
And that most venerable man which I
Did call my father was I know not where
When I was stamped. Some coiner with his tools
Made me a counterfeit; yet my mother seem'd
The Dian of that time. So doth my wife
The nonpareil of this. O, vengeance, vengeance!
Me of my lawful pleasure she restrained,
And prayed me oft forbearance; did it with
A pudency so rosy, the sweet view on't
Might well have warmed old Saturn; that I thought her
As chaste as unsunned snow. O, all the devils!
This yellow Iachimo in an hour – was't not?
Or less! – at first? Perchance he spoke not, but,
Like a full- acorned boar, a German one,
Cried 'O!' and mounted; found no opposition
But what he look'd for should oppose and she
Should from encounter guard. Could I find out
The woman's part in me! For there's no motion
That tends to vice in man but I affirm
It is the woman's part. Be it lying, note it,
The woman's; flattering, hers; deceiving, hers;
Lust and rank thoughts, hers, hers; revenges, hers;
Ambitions, covetings, change of prides, disdain,
Nice longing, slanders, mutability,
All faults that man may name, nay, that hell knows,
Why, hers, in part or all; but rather all;
For even to vice

They are not constant, but are changing still
One vice but of a minute old for one
Not half so old as that. I'll write against them,
Detest them, curse them. Yet 'tis greater skill
In a true hate to pray they have their will:
The very devils cannot plague them better.

[III, vi, 1– 27] *Imogen has set off in joy to meet her husband, only to discover that he has been plotting her death – driven to a frenzy of jealousy by news of her alleged adultery. Now, in man's attire, she perseveres in her journey towards Milford Haven, hoping to find him there and convince him of her fidelity :*

I see a man's life is a tedious one.
I have tir'd myself, and for two nights together
Have made the ground my bed. I should be sick
But that my resolution helps me. Milford,
When from the mountain- top Pisanio showed thee,
Thou wast within a ken. O Jove! I think
Foundations fly the wretched; such, I mean,
Where they should be relieved. Two beggars told me
I could not miss my way. Will poor folks lie,
That have afflictions on them, knowing 'tis
A punishment or trial? Yes; no wonder,
When rich ones scarce tell true. To lapse in fullness
Is sorer than to lie for need; and falsehood
Is worse in kings than beggars. My dear lord!
Thou art one o' th' false ones. Now I think on thee
My hunger's gone; but even before, I was
At point to sink for food. But what is this?
Here is a path to 't; 'tis some savage hold.
I were best not call; I dare not call. Yet famine,

Ere clean it o'erthrow nature, makes it valiant.
Plenty and peace breeds cowards; hardness ever
Of hardness is mother. Ho! Who's here?
If anything that's civil, speak; if savage,
Take or lend. Ho! No answer? Then I'll enter.
Best draw my sword; and if mine enemy
But fear the sword, like me, he'll scarcely look on't.
Such a foe, good heavens!

[IV, ii, 293– 334] Still making her sad way westward, almost mad with grief, Imogen awakens from uneasy sleep to find herself lying by what appears to be the headless body of her husband:

Yes, sir, to Milford Haven. Which is the way?
I thank you. By yond bush? Pray, how far thither?
'Ods pittikins! Can it be six mile yet?
I have gone all night. Faith, I'll lie down and sleep.
But, soft! no bedfellow. O gods and goddesses!
(*Seeing the body*)

These flow'rs are like the pleasures of the world;
This bloody man, the care on't. I hope I dream;
For so I thought I was a cave- keeper,
And cook to honest creatures. But 'tis not so;
'Twas but a bolt of nothing, shot at nothing,
Which the brain makes of fumes. Our very eyes
Are sometimes, like our judgements, blind. Good faith,
I tremble still with fear; but if there be
Yet left in heaven as small a drop of pity
As a wren's eye, feared gods, a part of it!
The dream's here still. Even when I wake it is
Without me, as within me; not imagined, felt.

A headless man? The garments of Posthumus?

I know the shape of his leg; this is his hand,

His foot mercurial, his martial thigh,

The brawns of Hercules; but his jovial face –

Murder in heaven! How!

[V, v, 97– 123] *Posthumus, in prison, feels he could be in no better place as he mulls over the manifold wrongs he has done his beloved Imogen :*

Most welcome, bondage! For thou art a way,

I think, to liberty. Yet am I better

Than one that's sick o' th' gout, since he had rather

Groan so in perpetuity than be cured

By th' sure physician death, who is the key

T' unbar these locks. My conscience, thou art fettered

More than my shanks and wrists; you good gods, give me

The penitent instrument to pick that bolt,

Then, free for ever! Is't enough I am sorry?

So children temporal fathers do appease;

Gods are more full of mercy. Must I repent,

I cannot do it better than in gyves,

Desired more than constrained. To satisfy,

If of my freedom 'tis the main part, take

No stricter render of me than my all.

I know you are more clement than vile men,

Who of their broken debtors take a third,

A sixth, a tenth, letting them thrive again

On their abatement; that's not my desire.

For Imogen's dear life take mine; and though

'Tis not so dear, yet 'tis a life; you coined it.

'Tween man and man they weigh not every stamp;
Though light, take pieces for the figure's sake;
You rather mine, being yours. And so, great pow'rs,
If you will take this audit, take this life,
And cancel these cold bonds. O Imogen!
I'll speak to thee in silence.
(*Sleeps*)

The Tempest

[II, ii, 1– 17] *The savage Caliban curses Prospero, who has, he feels, usurped his rightful rule in this island realm, contriving cruel torments of every kind to maintain his obedience :*

All the infections that the sun sucks up
From bogs, fens, flats, on Prosper fall, and make him
By inch- meal a disease! His spirits hear me,
And yet I needs must curse. But they'll nor pinch,
Fright me with urchin- shows, pitch me i' th' mire,
Nor lead me, like a firebrand, in the dark
Out of my way, unless he bid 'em; but
For every trifle are they set upon me;
Sometime like apes that mow and chatter at me,
And after bite me; then like hedgehogs which
Lie tumbling in my barefoot way, and mount
Their pricks at my footfall. Sometime am I
All wound with adders, who with cloven tongues
Do hiss me into madness.

Enter Trinculo

Lo, now, lo!

Here comes a spirit of his, and to torment me
For bringing wood in slowly. I'll fall flat.
Perchance he will not mind me.

[18– 40] *No airy spirit but a sailor, cast ashore in the recent storm, Trinculo finds it hard to know what to make of Caliban's recumbent form :*

Here's neither bush nor shrub to bear off any weather at all, and another storm brewing. I hear it sing i' th' wind. Yond same black cloud, yond huge one, looks like a foul bombard that would shed his liquor. If it should thunder as it did before, I know not where to hide my head. Yond same cloud cannot choose but fall by pailfuls. What have we here? A man or a fish? Dead or alive? A fish! He smells like a fish; a very ancient and fish- like smell; kind of not-of- the- newest poor- John. A strange fish! Were I in England now, as once I was, and had but this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver. There would this monster make a man. Any strange beast there makes a man. When they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian. Legged like a man! And his fins like arms! Warm, o' my troth! I do now let loose my opinion, hold it no longer: this is no fish, but an islander, that hath lately suffered by thunderbolt.

(*Thunder*)

Alas, the storm is come again! My best way is to creep under his gaberdine. There is no other shelter hereabout. Misery acquaints a man with strange bed- fellows. I will here shroud till the dregs of the storm be past.

[V, i, 33– 57] *Prospero, the island's ruler, his work done, the wrongs once done to him put right, weaves the final spell by which he intends to forsake the world of magic :*

Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves,
And ye that on the sands with printless foot
Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him
When he comes back; you demi- puppets that
By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,
Whereof the ewe not bites; and you whose pastime
Is to make midnight mushrumps, that rejoice
To hear the solemn curfew; by whose aid –
Weak masters though ye be – I have bedimmed
The noontide sun, called forth the mutinous winds,
And 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault

Set roaring war; to the dread rattling thunder
Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak
With his own bolt; the strong-based promontory
Have I made shake, and by the spurs plucked up
The pine and cedar; graves at my command
Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let 'em forth
By my so potent art. But this rough magic
I here abjure; and, when I have required
Some heavenly music – which even now I do –
To work mine end upon their senses that
This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book.



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Apology

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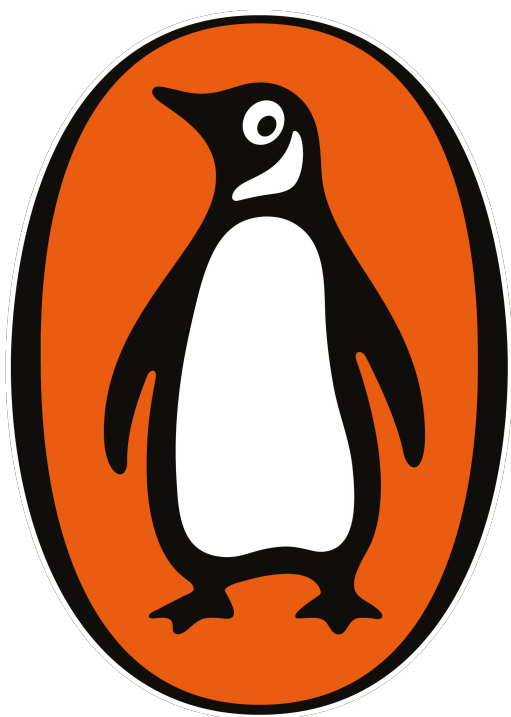
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很少有真话，
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但你们听我说的
都是真话。”



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正文目录

苏格拉底的申辩

Apology

苏格拉底的申辩

一、真理与修辞

[17a] [1] 雅典的人们，我不知道，你们到底是不是被我的控告者们说服了。至于我，我自己也快被他们说不知道自己是谁了，他们可真是雄辩！可他们简直一句真话也没说。他们信口雌黄，其中有句话[a5]特别让我惊讶，即，你们必须小心被我欺骗，[17b]因为我伶牙俐齿。他们真不害羞，不怕会被我用事实马上驳倒

（ἐξελεγχθήσονται）：我无论如何不像伶牙俐齿的——在我看来这是他们做的最可耻的事——除非是，他们把说真话叫作[b5]伶牙俐齿。而如果他们这么说，我会承认我是个演说者，但不是他们那种。可我得说，这些人说的话里，很少有真话，或根本没有真话，但你们听我说的都是真话。宙斯在上，雅典的人们，你们听到我说的并不像他们精心编造的词句那样，不是刻意修饰的[17c]辞令和名目，都是我临场口占的字句——我相信我说的是实事求是（δίκαια）的——你们中谁也不要期待别的说话方式。当然，诸位，在我这[c5]个年纪，是不该像孩子一样到你们这里来胡扯了。雅典的人们，我热切地求你们、恳请你们，如果你们听到我申辩的这些话，觉得和我在市场上的钱庄柜台边或别的地方常说的一样（你们中很多人在那里听到过），你们不要[17d]因此而惊讶或喧哗（θορυβεῖν）。因为事实是，现在我第一次到法庭上来，已经是七十高龄的老人。我完全不懂这里的说话方式。比如，要是我在这儿真的是一个外邦人，你们一定[d5]同意我用从小习惯了的[18a]口音和方式说话。那么，同样，我现在向你们提出这个正当请求——至少在我看来，它是正当的——你们不要管我的说话方式（这方式也许更糟，也许更好），只需了解我用这个方式表达出的想法，看我我说的是[a5]不是对的。这是法官们的美德，而演说者的美德就是说真话。

二、案情的真相

那么，雅典的人们，我认为正确的申辩方式是，首先针对那些最初的虚假控告和那些最初的控告者做申辩；其次，针对后面的控告和后面的[18b]控告者申辩。而很久之前（有些年头了），在你们面前就出现了很多控告我的人，说的根本不是真话。比起阿努图斯周围的人，我更怕他们，虽然阿努图斯他们也可怕。诸位，那些人更可怕，你们中[b5]很多人从孩童时代就被他们说服了，听他们控告我。其中

同样没有真话，他们说，有个苏格拉底，是个智慧的人，是关心天上的事的学究，还考察地下万物，把弱的说法变强。[18c]雅典的人们，他们散布这谣言，真是我可怕的控告者。听到这些话的人就认为，考察这些东西，就是不信神的。再者，这些控告者数量多，而且在很久以前[c5]就在告我了，他们在你们最易轻信的年龄里（你们是儿童或少年时）对你们讲的那些控告，都被想当然地接受了，根本无人申辩。在这一切当中，最没道理的是，我根本不[18d]知道，也无法说出他们的名字——除了其中一个正好是喜剧诗人。很多人出于嫉妒而诬蔑中伤我，说服了你们——或是先说服自己，再说服别人。所有这些人都是极难相处的。也不可能[d5]让他们中哪一个来此当面对质，那我就简直要像空拳练习 [2] 一般申辩，在无人回答时质疑他们。但你们要把我所说的当真，我有两拨[18e]控告者。其中一拨刚刚控告我，另外一拨就是我所说的很久之前控告我的那些。你们知道，我应该首先针对后者申辩，因为你们最先听到了后者的控告，听得比前者的多得多。

好了。雅典的人们，我是要申辩的，要试着[19a]在这么短的时间里，打消你们中间那么长时间以来持有的恶意。如果能对你们和我都好，我能圆满完成申辩，我当然愿意。但我认为这[a5]是很难的，这点根本不会逃过我的眼睛。一方面，神愿意怎样，就怎样发生吧；另一方面，我们要遵守法律来做申辩。

三、哲学生活的根据：针对第一拨控告者的辩护

A.智者之知

那么，是什么引起了对我的诬蔑？还是让我们从头讲起。莫勒图斯[19b]在写下现在这份诉状时，他信的就是这些诬蔑。好了。那些诬蔑者，究竟进行了怎样的诬蔑？他们若来控告，那他们起誓后的状辞一定是：“苏格拉底行了不义，忙忙碌碌，[b5]寻求地上和天上之事，把弱的说法变强，[19c]并把这些教给别人。”大体如此。而你们自己在阿里斯托芬的喜剧里看到了这些：有个苏格拉底被搬到那里，吹嘘说他在空气里走路，还胡说好些别的胡话。但对于这类事，我闻所未闻，无论[c5]大小。但我不是说，如果谁是擅长这些的智者，我就看不起这些学问——但愿莫勒图斯不会告我有这么重大的罪，让我辩护！但是，雅典的人们，这些事情和我都没有关系。[19d]并且，我可以让你们中的很多人做证，我觉得你们应该相互告知和展示，你们那些听到过我怎么说的人——你们中有很多人听我说过的——相互展示，无论听多听少，[d5]你们中是否有谁听我对此说过什么，因此你们就知道，很多人给我编造的其他罪名，也是这样莫须有的。

可这些都不是真的。如果你们听到，我试图教育人，然后从中牟

利，[19e]那也根本不是真的。而在我看来，谁要是能教育人们，这还是很高贵的，就像雷昂提尼人（Λεοντίνοϛ）高尔吉亚（Γοργίας）、西欧斯人（Κεῖοϛ）普罗迪科斯（Πρόδικοϛ）、埃利斯人（Ἠλεῖοϛ）希琵阿斯（Ἡππίας）那样。诸位，他们当中的每一个，都走[e5]到每个城邦中的年轻人中去——本来，这些年轻人只要愿意，他们可以免费和城邦里的任何人交往，并且能说服他们，不和自己城邦中的那些人在一起。[20a]而和他们在一起，得给他们财物，还要为此感激他们。

这里还有另外一个智者，是巴洛斯人（Πάριοϛ），听说他还在这里。我正好遇到了这么一个人，他在智者身上花的钱[a5]比别的人都多，就是希波尼科（Ἱππόνικοϛ）的儿子卡利亚（Καλλίας） [3]，卡利亚有两个儿子。我问他：

“卡利亚，如果你的两个儿子是马驹或牛犊，我们会给它们找个教习，雇用他，只要他愿意让它们按照自己[20b]的美德（ἀρετή）变得美好和善好，这个人就是一个马术师或者农夫；而今，你的儿子们是人，那么，你心里想给他们找什么人来做教习呢？是一个精通这样的美德，即关于做人和做公民[b5]的美德的教习吗？而我想，你既然有两个儿子，应该已经考量过这点了。是这样，”我说，“还是不是？”

“当然。”他说。

“他是谁？”我说，“从哪里来，要多少学费？”

“是欧埃诺斯（Εὐήνοϛ），苏格拉底，他是巴洛斯人，五个米纳。”

如果欧埃诺斯真有这技艺，并且会循循善诱，那我祝福他。[20c]如果我懂这些，我就会美滋滋的，自我膨胀。但是我并不懂，雅典的人们。

B.无知之知

那么，也许你们当中有人会插话说：

“那么，苏格拉底，[c5]你到底是怎么回事呢？对你的诬蔑都从何而起呢？也许你没有做多少出格的事，但如果你所做的真的和大多数人没有不同，就不会出现这些流言和说法。那么告诉我们你出了什么事吧，[20d]以免我们武断地对待你。”

我看说这话的人说得很对，我会试着向你们揭示出来，是什么给我带来了这名声和诬蔑。听清楚了。也许在你们中的一些人看来，[d5]我是在说笑话。但你们要明白，我要告诉你们的都是真的。

雅典的人们，我得到这个名声，不因为别的，正是因为智慧。这

到底是什么样的智慧？也许就是凡人的智慧。也许我确实善于这种智慧。而我刚刚提到的人，[20e]要么确实有比人更高的智慧，因而是智慧的，要么我说不出那是什么。因为我不懂这些，而谁说懂，都是在说谎，制造对我的诬蔑。雅典的人们，不要对我喧哗，哪怕我好像在对[e5]你们说大话。我说的这话并不是我自己说的，我是借用你们认为值得信赖的（ἄξιόχρεων）一个人说的话。我的这些，究竟是不是真的智慧，是什么样的智慧，我要向你们举出的证人，就是德尔斐（Δελφοί）的神。你们该知道凯瑞丰（Χαίρεφών）的。他和我从年轻时就是伙伴，[21a]他也是你们大家（πλήθει）的伙伴，一起在新近的逃亡中出逃，又和你们一起回来 [4]。你们知道凯瑞丰是怎样一种人 [5]，知道他无论做什么事，都是那么莽撞。有一次他到了德尔斐，竟敢提出这[a5]个问题——我说过了，诸位，你们不要喧哗——他问，是否有人比我更智慧。于是皮提亚女祭司 [6] 拿起签（ἀνεῖλειν）说，没有人更智慧。这个人已经死了，但他的弟弟在你们中间，可以做证。

[21b]你们看我为什么说这些。我想要告诉你们，对我的诬蔑是从何而起的。听到这话，我就自己寻思：“神说的究竟是什么，这到底是什么哑谜？我自己知道，我没有大智慧，也没有小[b5]智慧。那么他说我最智慧，到底是什么意思呢？神可不会说假话，因为这不是神的做法。”在好长时间里，我都不明白他说的到底是什么。随后，我很不情愿地转向下面这样的探讨。我去拜访一个据说很智慧的人，[21c]好像在那里就可以证明（ἐλέγζων）这说法是错的，回应神谕说：

“你说我是最智慧的，但这个人比我更智慧。”于是我仔细审视了他——他的名字我不必说，雅典的人们，那是一个政治家[c5]——我观察了他，并且和他对话之后，得到这么个印象：我看到，虽然很多别的人觉得他很智慧，特别是他自己，但其实不然。随后，我试着告诉他，虽然他认为自己是智慧的，其实他不智慧。[21d]结果，我遭到他和在场很多人的忌恨。我离开那里，寻思，我比这个人更智慧。也许我俩都不知道美好（καλόν）和善好（ἀγαθόν）是什么，但是那个人[d5]认为他知道自己不知道的事，而我既然不知道，也就不认为我知道。我觉得好像在这件事上总比他智慧一点儿，即我不知道的事，我就不认为我知道。我离开那儿，到另外一个看起来更智慧的人那里去，[21e]结果在我看来也是这样，于是我就遭到那人和别的很多人的忌恨。

在这之后，我拜访了一个又一个人，痛苦而恐惧地看到，我被人们忌恨。可是在我看来，[e5]完成神给的任务一定先于所有别的事——为了考察他说的神谕，就要去找所有[22a]好像有知识的人。天狗在上 [7]，雅典的人们——而我必须对你们说真话——我经历的就

是这类的事。我按照神的说法考察之后，那些声名显赫的人在我看来是最无能的；而[a5]另外那些看上去更一般的人，却好像更明智些（φρονίμως）。我必须告诉你们，我的奔波真是干苦活，我这才觉得那个神谕变得不可驳斥了。在这些政治家之后，我去拜访了一些诗人，包括悲剧诗人、[22b]酒神的赞美诗人，还有别的诗人，自以为我在那里就可以当场发现，我比他们无知。我拿起在我看来他们最用心写的诗，细细询问他们说了什么，[b5]也看我能从他们那里学到什么。诸位，我简直羞于说出真相。可我必须讲出来。当时在场的人谈到他们花心血写的诗歌，没有几个人不比诗人自己说得好。于是，很快我也明白诗歌是怎么回事了，作诗不是靠智慧[22c]作的，而是靠某种自然，被灵感激发，就像先知和灵媒一样：他们是说了很多很美的话，但是他们并不理解自己所说的。我明白了，诗人所感到的，也是他们的这种感觉。[c5]同时，我也看到，他们因为诗歌，就认为自己在别的事情上也是最智慧的人，其实并不是。于是我离开了他们，结果认为自己更高明，就像我比政治家高明一样。

最后我走到匠人们当中。[22d]我知道，我是所谓的什么也不知道，而我也知道，我会发现他们知道很多美好的事情。这一点我没弄错，他们知道我所不知道的，在这一点上比我智慧。但是，雅典的人们，[d5]在我看来，这些能工巧匠和诗人有一样的毛病——因为能漂亮地完成自己的技艺，他们一个个就自以为在别的事情上，哪怕天下大事上（τὰ μέγιστα），也是最智慧的。他们的这种自以为是遮蔽了他们的智慧。[22e]于是我从那个神谕的角度问我自己，我究竟是愿意这样是我所是，既不像他们的智慧那样智慧，也不像他们的愚蠢那样愚蠢，还是像他们那样，兼有二者。我对我自己[e5]和神谕回答说：“‘是我所是’对我更好些。”

由于这种省察，雅典的人们，[23a]我遭到了很多人的忌恨，是最苛刻和最沉重的忌恨，因而他们对我也就有了很多诬蔑，于是人们用这么个名儿来说我：“智慧的。”每一次，在场的人都认为，我在什么问题上的驳斥别人，我在那个问题上就[a5]是智慧的。而其实，诸位，神才是真正智慧的，他在那个神谕里表明的是这个：人的智慧价值很小，几乎什么也不是。他好像是在这样说：“这个苏格拉底，其实是假借[23b]我的名字，用我做个例子，如同在说‘你们中最智慧的，人类啊，就是像苏格拉底那样，知道就智慧而言，他真是毫无价值’。”正是因此，我现在[b5]还在按照神的意愿，四处寻求和追问每一个我以为智慧的公民及外邦人。每当我发现他并不智慧，我就替神证明，指出此人不智慧。因为忙于这些，我没有空闲从事城邦里那些值得一提的事务，也无暇顾及家里的事，而是[23c]因为服务于神而陷入赤贫。

C. 诬蔑的形成

除此之外，有些青年自愿追随我——他们最有闲工夫，出身豪富。他们乐于听我省察人们，自己[c5]经常模仿我，还试着省察别人。于是，我想他们发现无数的人是自以为知道一些，其实知道得很少，甚至什么也不知道。于是，那些被他们省察的人对我生气了，却不对他们自己生气，[23d]说什么，苏格拉底是最有害的人，把青年都败坏了。有人问他们我做了什么，教了什么，他们什么也说不出，根本不知道，但又不愿表现得毫无根据，于是就说出了所有那些为爱知[d5]者们（φιλοσοφούντων）预备的控诉，说什么“天上地下的事”，什么“不信神”，什么“把弱的说法变强”。我认为他们并不想说出事实，非常明显，他们假装知道，其实不知道。同时，我认为他们是爱名者（φιλότιμοι）[23e]，很使劲，人数也多，异口同声（ξυντεταγμένως）、言之凿凿地说我的坏话，灌满了你们的耳朵，长期以来，一直使劲地诬蔑我。靠了这些，莫勒图斯伙同阿努图斯和卢孔攻击我。其中，莫勒图斯[e5]为诗人们不平，阿努图斯为那些匠人和[24a]政治家不平，卢孔为演说家不平。就像我开头说的，我要是能在这么短的时间里消除在你们当中已根深蒂固的诬蔑，那就怪了。雅[a5]典人，这就是你们要知道的真相，无论大事小事，我都说出来，都不隐瞒你们，一点儿也不保留。而且我清楚地知道，我也会因为这些而招致忌恨。这也证明我说的是真相，这就是对我的诬蔑，这就是诬蔑我的原因[24b]。无论你们现在还是以后考察这一点，你们都会发现是这样的。

四、在哲学与政治之间：针对第二拨控告者的辩护

A. 诉状

那么，针对那些最先对我提出控告的控告者，向你们做这些申辩，就该够了。至于那所谓的好人和[b5]爱城者莫勒图斯，以及后来的控告者，我说过，我随后就要来申辩。既然这些人看来是另外一群控告者，我们就再来看他们宣誓所写的诉状 [8]。上面是这样说的：苏格拉底行了不义，因为他败坏青年，不信城邦[24c]信的神，而是信新的精灵之事（δαίμόνιακαινά）。那控告就是这样的。我们来一条一条地省察这份控告。

他说我因败坏青年行了不义。而我[c5]，雅典的人们啊，说莫勒图斯行了不义，因为他把正事当玩笑，轻易地把人陷进官司（ἄγωνα），对他从未关心过（ἐμέλησεν）的事情假装正经，无中生非。事情是不是这样的，我且来摆给你们看。

B. 败坏青年

来吧，莫勒图斯，回答我。把[24d]青年们变得尽可能最好，不是顶重要的事吗？

我同意。

现在，告诉诸位，谁把他们变得更好了？显然你知道，因为你关心这事。像你说的，[d5]因为你发现了败坏青年的人，也就是我，所以把我带到诸位面前，提出控告。那么说说是谁把他们变好的，披露给大家。你看，莫勒图斯，你不说话，没什么可说的？这不可耻吗？这不是我所说的话的足够证据吗：你从未关心过此事！但是，[d10]说吧，来吧，是谁把他们变得更好的？

法律。

[24e]但这不是我所问的，最好的人啊。我问的是，最先知道这些——法律——的人，是谁呢？

他们，苏格拉底，法官们。

你怎么讲，莫勒图斯？他们能够教育[e5]年轻人成为更好的人？

当然是。

他们都能，还是有些人能，别的人不能？

都能。

赫拉在上，你说得好，青年的帮助者真是[e10]人才济济了。那怎样呢？这些听众会把他们变得更好，[25a]还是不会？

他们会。

怎样，议员们呢？

议员们也会。

[a5]那么，莫勒图斯，在公民大会上呢，参加大会的那些人，是不会败坏青年的？或者他们也都会把青年变得更好？

他们也会。

看来，除我之外，雅典人都会把年轻人变得[a10]高贵和好，只有我败坏他们。你是这么说的吧？

这正是我说的意思。

你可让我倒大霉了。回答我。你是否认为马也是这样的？所有[25b]人都可以把它们变得更好，只有一人是败坏者？或者是完全相反，只有特定的一人或很少的人，精于驯马，能把马变得更好，大多数入如果和马在一起，使用它们，就会败坏它们？无论是马，还是别

的牲畜，[b5]难道不都是这样吗，莫勒图斯？一定是的，不论你和阿努图斯承认不承认。如果只有一人败坏，别人都帮助，那青年们可是太[25c]幸运了。但是，莫勒图斯，你已足以表明，你从未挂念过青年，还清楚地表现出了你的这种漠不关心。虽然你因此把我带上了法庭，但你自己从未关心过此事。

[c5]当着宙斯的面，你对我们说，莫勒图斯，是在善良的公民中过日子（oikeĩv）好，还是在邪恶的公民中过日子好？伙计（τᾶν），回答啊！我问的可不是个难题。难道不是恶人总是对身边的人做坏事，好人做好事吗？

[c10]当然是。

[25d]那么，是否有人更愿遭到身边的人的伤害，而不是得到帮助呢？回答呀，好人。因为法律命令你回答呢。有人愿意被伤害吗？

当然没有。

[d5]来吧，你带我到这儿来，说我败坏青年，把他们变得更坏，我是有意的还是无意的？

我认为是有意的。

那怎样，莫勒图斯？难道你小小年纪，比我这么大把年纪更有智慧，知道坏[d10]人总是对和自己最接近的人做坏事，好人做好事？[25e]难道我反而那么无知，根本不知道，如果我要给身边的人带来痛苦，我就会冒着被他伤害的危险，所以我还是像你所说的那样，有意做了这些坏事？[e5]我可不信你这一套，莫勒图斯，我认为别人也不相信。[26a]我要么没败坏他们，要么败坏了他们，但不是有意的；在这两种情况下，你都在撒谎。如果我无意败坏了他们，法律就不该因为这种（无意的）过错，让人带我来这里，而应该让人私下教育和警告我。显然，如果我得到了教诲，我就会停止我无意做的事。[a5]而你却回避，不愿意与我交往，不愿意教育我，反而把我带到这儿来，而法律只要求把需要惩罚的人带到这儿来，不是需要教育的人。

C.不敬之罪

然而，雅典的人们，我说得很清楚，[26b]莫勒图斯从未或多或少地关心过这事。可你要告诉我们，莫勒图斯，你说，我怎么败坏青年？不过很明显，按照你写的这份诉状，我是通过教给他们不信[b5]城邦信的神，而是信新的精灵之事。你说的是不是这个：我用教育败坏他们？

我说的的确是这个。

现在谈的这些神，当着他们的面，莫勒图斯，你说得更清楚些，

对我，[26c]也对这些人。我还不能明白，你是不是说我教育人们信（νομίζεῖν）有神存在——我自己信有神存在，并不完全是无神论，不因为这行不义——但不是城邦信的神，而是信别的神，这就是[c5]你状告我的原因，说我信别的神？或者你说我根本不信神，并把这教给别人？

我说的是后者，你根本不信神。

[26d]奇怪的莫勒图斯呀，你怎么这么说呢？难道我竟不像别的人那样，相信日月是神吗？

宙斯在上，法官们，他说太阳[d5]是石头，月亮是泥土。

你以为你控告的是阿那克萨哥拉（ἀναξαγόρης）吗，亲爱的莫勒图斯？你还如此看不起在场的人们，认为他们不通文墨，以至于不知道，这是充斥克拉佐梅纽（Κλαζομένιος）的阿那克萨哥拉的著作的说法？哪怕价格很高的时候，青年们也可以花一个德拉克马，[d10]从乐队 [9] 那里得到，难道竟然要从我这里学这些？如果苏格拉底自称这是他的说法，[26e]他们会笑话苏格拉底，特别是这么一个奇特的说法。宙斯面前的人啊，我在你看来是这样的吗？我不信有神存在吗？

[e5]不信，宙斯在上，从来都不信。

莫勒图斯，你让人无法相信，在我看来，连你自己都无法相信自己。这个人，雅典的人们啊，看来是太自负、太放肆了，他就是因为如此自负和放肆，年轻气盛，才如此控告。[27a]他就像编造了谜语来审查我：“智慧的苏格拉底是不是知道，我在开玩笑，说得自相矛盾，还是我会欺骗他和别的听众？”因为在我看来，他[a5]在自己的诉状里就说得自相矛盾，他如同在说：“苏格拉底因为不信神而行了不义，而他信神。”这真是开玩笑。

诸位，一起来看，为什么在我看来他是这么说的。你要回答我们，莫勒图斯。而你们，就像我[27b]一开始就请求你们的，如果我按照我习惯的方式讲话，记住不要喧哗。

莫勒图斯，是否会有一个人，相信有人事存在，但又不相信有人存在？让他回答，诸[b5]位，不要让他一次又一次地喧哗。是否有人相信没有马，而有马之事？是否有人不相信有吹笛者，而有笛子之事？没有吧，最好的人？如果你不想回答，我替你和别的这些人说出来。回答这个问题：[27c]是否有人信有精灵之事，而不信有精灵？

没有。

太好了，你终于回答了，虽然是吞吞吐吐，在这些人的逼迫下[c5]回答的。那么，你说我信仰和教授精灵之事，且不论新旧，但按

照你的说法，我相信精灵之事，你在诉状中已经就此发誓。而如果我相信精灵之事，那么我一定信精灵？不是这样吗？是这样的。[c10]既然你不回答，我就认为你同意了。而我们认为，[27d]精灵（δαίμων）当然就是神或神的孩子，不是吗？你说是还是不是？

当然是。

那么，倘若如你所说，我认为有精灵，而如果精灵们[d5]又是某种神，这就是我说的你出的谜和玩笑：说我不认为有神，又说我认为有神，因为我认为有精灵。如果精灵们是神的某种庶子，是仙女所生的，或是无论人们所说的别的什么所生，什么人[d10]会认为，有神的孩子存在，但没有神存在？这太奇怪了，[27e]就如同说认为马和驴的孩子（παῖδας），即骡子，存在，而马不存在，驴也不存在。但是，莫勒图斯，你做出这样的控告，难道不是要么为了用这个考我们，要么因为不知道[e5]该告我行了什么真的不义？哪怕那些心灵闭塞的人，你也没办法说服他们，一个信精灵之事又信神之事的人，却不信[28a]有精灵、神、英雄。

五、为哲学而死的理由

A. 苏格拉底与阿喀琉斯

然而，雅典的人们啊，我并不像莫勒图斯的诉状上所说的那样行了不义，我认为不必再为此做更多申辩，这些也就够了。而我先前[a5]说的，即，在很多人当中，对我产生了很多忌恨，你们要清楚地知道，这是真的。就是这一点把我拿下的。如果有什么把我拿下了，那不是莫勒图斯，也不是阿努图斯，而是众人的诬蔑与嫉妒。这曾经拿下了很多其他的好[28b]人，我想还会拿下更多人。不必担心，这不会到我为止。

也许有人会说：“你难道不羞愧吗，苏格拉底，为了忙于这些事务（ἐπιτήδευμα ἐπιτηδεύσας），现在招来了杀[b5]身之祸？”

我义正词严地回应他：

“这位，如果你认为有点儿人格的人应该计较生死的危险，而不是在做事时仅仅关心这个——做的究竟是正义还是不义，是好人做的还是坏人做的，那你说得真不美。而依着[28c]你的说法，在特洛伊死去的半神们，包括忒提斯之子 [10]，都是微不足道的了。忒提斯之子不愿在耻辱中苟活，藐视危险，所以，当他急切地要杀死赫克托耳的时候，他的女神[c5]母亲对他说了番话，我记得是这么说的：‘孩子，如果你为你的朋友帕特罗克洛斯之死报仇，杀死赫克托耳，你的死期将至——因为，在赫克托耳死后，马上就是你了，轮到你了。’他

听了这话，根本就蔑视死亡和危险。[28d]他更害怕过坏的生活，害怕朋友们得不到复仇。‘那就马上死吧，’他说，‘我让那行不义者得到惩罚后，不必留在这弓船旁边让人嘲笑，成为大地上的负担。’你不认为他考虑死亡和[d5]危险了吧？”

这样就是依循了真理，雅典的人们。人无论是自己认为这样最好，从而让自己站在一个岗位上，还是被长官安排在岗位上，在我看来，都应该在危险中坚守，不把死亡或别的什么看得比[d10]耻辱还重。雅典的人们，当你们选举来指挥我的长官[28e]来安排我在某个岗位上时，无论是在波底代亚（Ποσειδαία） [11]、安菲玻里（Ἀμφιπόλις） [12]，还是在德利昂（Δελίον）附近 [13]，我就像别的任何人一样，冒着死的危险待在被安排的岗位上。而我在这里，我[e5]认为并意识到，是神安排我以爱知为生，省察自己和别人。我如果反而怕死，[29a]或因为别的什么原因，而脱离岗位，从这里逃走，那我可真是做了可怕之事了。而如果我不服从（ἄπειθῶν）神谕，怕死，以不智慧为智慧，那才是可怕之事，人们就可以正当地把我带上法庭，说我不信有神存在。所谓[a5]的怕死，诸位，不过是不智慧而自以为智慧，因为这就是自以为知道自己不知道的事。没人知道，死没准儿是人的所有好处中最大的一个，人们都害怕，好像明确知道[29b]，它是坏事中最大的。认为知道自己不知道的事，这不是极为可耻的无知吗？诸位，我和多数人不同或许也是因为这个。如果我要说我是更智慧的，就是因为这一点：[b5]我既然不足以知道冥界里的事，我就认为我不知道。但我知道，对比自己好的神和人行不义或不服从，是坏的和可耻的。相对于这些我知道是坏的坏事情，我从来不会害怕，也不会逃避那些我不知道没准儿是好的事情。

B. 苏格拉底的哲学使命

而如果[29c]你们不听阿努图斯的话（他说，要么一开始就不该把我带到这里来；要么，既然我被带来了，就不能不处死我。他对你们说，我要是给放了，你们的孩子就都会[c5]按照苏格拉底教的去，就全都败坏了），如果你们就此跟我说：

“苏格拉底，现在你们不听阿努图斯的话，而是放了你，但有一个条件，即，你不要再花时间研究了，不再爱知了。而如果[29d]我们逮着你还在做这些，你就要死。”

如果你们就是在我说的这些条件下放我，我要告诉你们：

“雅典的人们，我向你们致敬，爱你们，但是我更要听神的话，而不是你们的。只要我还有一口气，能够做，我就根本不能[d5]停止爱知，要激励你们，告诉你们中每个我遇到的人，说我习惯说的话：‘最好的人，你是雅典人，是这个最伟大、最以智慧（σοφία）和

力量著称的城邦的人，你只想着聚敛尽可能多的钱财[29e]，追求名声和荣誉，却不关心，也不求知（φροντίζω）智慧（φρόνησις）和真理，以及怎样使灵魂变成最好的，你不为这些事而羞愧吗？’如果你们中有人反驳，说他关心，我不会轻易放他走，自己也不走，而是询问他，省察他。如果我发现他并没有美德，[e5]他反而说自己有，就羞辱（ἐλέγξω）他，责备他[30a]把最大价值的当成最不重要的，把更微小的当成更大的。只要我遇上了，无论年轻人还是老人，无论外邦人还是本城的人，我都会对他这么做，尤其是本城的人，因为你们是离我最近的同胞。[a5]你们要清楚，是神命令我这么做的。我认为，比起我对神的服务，你们在这城里还没有过什么更大的好处。我在城中转悠，所做的不过就是劝说你们当中的青年和老人，不要这么关心身体或金钱，[30b]而要使劲让灵魂变得尽可能最好，对你们说：‘美德不来自金钱，相反，金钱和人类所有别的好处，无论个体的还是城邦的，之所以好，都是因为美德。’[b5]那么，如果我就是用说这些来败坏青年，那么这就是有害的。但，如果谁说我说的是不是这些，他说得不对。对此，我会说：‘雅典的人们，不论你们是否被阿努图斯说服了，不论你们是否放我，我都会[30c]这么做，虽九死而不悔。’”

不要喧哗，雅典的人们，请按照我请求你们的做，在我说话时不對我喧哗，而是听我说。因为，我认为，听我说话也对你们有益。我要对[c5]你们说一些话，也许这会让他们叫（βοήσθε）起来。但是永远不要这么做。而要清楚地知道，如果你们杀了我，而我是我所说的这样的人，那么，你们对我的伤害，并不比对你们自己的伤害大。没人会伤害我，无论是莫勒图斯还是阿努图斯——他们没有能力——因为我想，让[30d]更好的人被更坏的人伤害，是渎神违法的。也许有人能杀死、放逐或羞辱我。此人和别人一定都认为，这是很大的坏事，但是我不这么想，而是认为，现在做这事（即[d5]试图不义地杀人）的人对自己带来了大得多的伤害。而现在，雅典的人们，我远不是常人想象的那样，在为自己申辩，而是为你们申辩，以免你们判了我罪，从而对神给你们的赐予犯了错误。[30e]而如果你们杀死我，你们将不容易找到别的这类赐予了，即——打个不恰当的比方——像我这样，受命于神，献身城邦的一个。这城邦就如同一匹高头大马，因为大，就会[e5]慵懒，需要一只牛虻来惊醒。在我看来，神就派我到城邦里来当这样的一个人，惊醒、[31a]劝说、责备你们每一个，我整天不停地在各处安顿你们。诸位，另外一个这样的人不容易出现在你们中间了，而如果你们听了我的话，你们就放了我。也许你们立即会遭到烦扰，就像打盹儿的人被惊醒；如果你们要打[a5]我，听信了阿努图斯的话，很容易就能杀我。如果神不再操心，派另外一个来烦你们，随后你们就要在沉睡中度完余生。

而我恰巧就是神派给城邦的这样一个，你们[31b]由下面的事会明白的：我不关心我自己的任何事，简直不像是人所能为。多年来，家里的事都得不到关心，而我总是为你们做事，亲自走到你们每个人那里，像父亲或长兄一样，[b5]劝你们关心美德。如果我从中得到什么，或靠叫你们做这些挣薪水，那还有些道理。现在，你们自己看，他们，那些控告者，虽然如此无耻地在别的所有事情上控告我，却不能厚着脸皮[31c]提供证人，证明我拿过或乞求过薪水。而我认为，我可以提供足够的证据，证明我说的是真的，那就是我的贫困。

C. 哲学作为政治

这看起来也许有点儿不合常理：我私下为[c5]人们出主意，奔走忙碌。在公共场合，却不肯走到你们众人当中，为城邦出主意。此事的原因，就是你们多次听我在很多地方说的，会出现一个神性的[31d]精灵的声音，而莫勒图斯在写诉状时，嘲讽的也许就是这一点。这从我小时候就开始了，就出现了某种声音，每当它出现时，它总是阻止我做事，却从不鼓励我做什么。[d5]就是它反对我参与政事，而且我认为反对得漂亮（παγκάλως）。可你们要清楚地知道，雅典的人们，如果我很早以前就试图参与政事，我早就死了，那么我[31e]对你们和我自己都会毫无益处。不要因为我说出真话而对我动怒。凡是坦诚地反对你们或别的大众，阻止在城邦里发生不义或犯法的事的人，都活不了。事实[32a]上，谁若一定要为正义而战，并且想多活一段，他必须私下干，而不是参与政事。

对这些，我会给你们举出有力的证据，不用[a5]语言，而是用你们看重的事实。请你们听我的经历，你们就会知道，我不会因为怕死而向一个违背正义的人屈服，哪怕不屈服就会灭亡。我要告诉你们的，虽然像是讼师的陈词滥调，却都是真的。而我，雅典的人们，从来没有在城邦里担任过[32b]别的职务，只当过议员 [14]。那时正该我们的部族安提俄克斯（'Αντιοχίς）当主席（πρυτανεύω） [15]，而你们通过决议 [16]，要集体审判十个将军，因为他们从海战班师时，很多阵亡将士的尸体没有被运回——后来，[b5]你们都认为这是不合法的。但在那时的主席（πρύτανις）当中，只有我反对你们做违法的事，投了反对票。虽然那些演说家准备弹劾我，要逮捕我，你们发号施令、大喊大叫，但我认为我掌握了法[32c]律和正义，认为自己应该冒风险，而不是因为害怕被捕或死亡，就赞同你们提不义的建议。那是城邦里还是民主制的时候。等到成了寡头制，三十僭主 [17] [c5]召我们五个人到圆宫 [18]，命我们把撒拉密斯的赖翁（Σαλαμῖνος Λέοντα） [19] 从撒拉密斯带走处死，他们也给了别的很多人很多这类命令，希望让尽可能多的人承担责任。对此我[32d]又用行动（而非言辞）指出，我宁愿死（如果这不是一个很粗鲁的说

法)，也不愿意做这个，这不义或不虔诚（ἀνόσιον）的事。这是我的全部关心所在。因为那个政府虽然强硬，却不能逼我[d5]去行不义，于是，我们走出圆宫后，另外四个人到撒拉密斯去带赖翁，我却回家去了。也许，如果这个政府不很快被推翻，我会因此而死。[32e]关于这，很多人可以向你们做证。

那么，如果我以公事为业，做一个好人应该做的事，扶助正义，公事公办地把这当作最重要的事来做，你们认为我还能活这么大岁数吗？[e5]根本不能，雅典的人们。谁也不能。[33a]在我的整个一生中，我若是从事公共事务，就都是这样的，在私下的活动中，也是如此。我从来没有屈服于任何违背正义的事，不论是对诬蔑我的人、称为我的学生的人，[a5]还是别人。我从来都不是老师。如果有谁想听我说话，听我完成我的任务，不论老少，我都从不拒绝。我不会收了钱[33b]才讲，不收钱就不讲。不论贫富，我都会向他们问问题。谁要想听我说什么，就要回答我的问题。不论这些人变好没有，都不该由我[b5]负责，因为我对他们从未许诺什么，也没教给他们什么。如果有人说过，曾经从我处私下学过或听到过什么，而别人都没有，你们一定要知道，他说的不是真的。

但是，为什么有人那么喜欢和我来往[33c]这么长时间？你们听到了，雅典的人们，我对你们说的是全部真相。这是因为，他们喜欢听我省察那些自以为智慧其实不智慧的人。这不是不愉快的事。正如我说的，这是神[c5]派我干的，通过神谕，通过托梦，通过凡是神分派让人完成任务时，所采用的别的各种方式。

这些，雅典的人们，都是真的，很容易检验。而如果我败坏[33d]青年，我就已经败坏了一些，他们中一些人应该已经长大了，就会认识到，他们在年轻的时候，我曾经给他们出过坏主意，现在就会走上来控告我，报复我。如果他们[d5]自己不愿意，他们的那些亲戚中也会有人来，父亲、兄弟，以及别的亲戚都会。如果这些人的一些亲戚曾经从我这里遭遇了坏事，他们现在就会记起来，报复我。我看到，这里有他们中的很多人，首先是这个克力同（Κρίτων），[33e]和我是同龄人，出身也相同，是这个克力同布鲁斯（Κριτοβούλυσ）的父亲；然后是斯菲图斯（Σφήττιος）人吕萨尼亚（Λυσανίας），这个埃斯奇涅（Αισχίνης）的父亲；还有这个凯菲西欧（Κηφισιεύς）人安提丰（Αντιφών），埃匹格涅斯（Επιγένης）的父亲。还有别的一些人，他们的兄弟都和我来往。还有西奥佐提多斯（Θεοζοτίδος）的儿子[e5]尼克斯特拉托斯（Νικόστρατος），是西奥多托斯（Θεόδοτος）的兄弟，现在西奥多托斯死了，他不能阻止尼克斯特拉托斯告我了。还有[34a]德谟多克斯（Δημοδόκος）的儿子，那个帕拉鲁斯（Πάραλος），已故的忒阿格斯（Θεάγης）是他的兄弟。还有阿里斯图诺斯（Ἀρίστωνος）

的儿子，那个阿德曼托斯（Ἀδεύμαντος），柏拉图是他的兄弟。还有艾安托多罗斯（Αἰαντόδωρος），那个阿波罗多罗斯（Ἀπολλόδωρος）是他的兄弟。

我还可以说出好多人来，莫勒图斯真应该在他的演说中把其中一些当成证人。如果[a5]他忘了，现在他可以举出来——我可以让步——让他说，他可有一个这种证人？但是你们会发现，事实是完全相反的，诸位，他们都会帮助我这个莫勒图斯和阿努图斯认为的所谓败坏了他们的亲戚、对他们[34b]作恶的人。那些被败坏的人自己帮助我还有道理。而那些未被败坏的亲戚，已在耄耋之年，都会来帮我。如果不是他们有正当和正义的原因，[b5]知道莫勒图斯是在说谎，我说的是真的，那还有什么原因来帮我？

D. 爱智者的荣耀

诸位，这些，也许还有别的更多此类的话，就是我所要申辩的。你们中也许有人[34c]想起自己的申辩来，会受刺激，也许他在为比这个官司（ἄγωνα）还小的官司角逐（ἀγωνιζόμενος）时，泪流满面地向法官们恳求，还带孩子上来，以便能得到最大的同情，甚至还带上来很多别的[c5]亲戚朋友。我可不做这些事，宁愿冒着好像是最大的危险。那么，这样想的人也许会对我的态度更固执，就因为这而生气，冲动地投[34d]我的反对票。如果你们中有人是这样——我认为没有，但如果有，我这么对他说就很好：

“最好的人，我也有家庭。因为就像荷马说的，我不是[d5]出生于岩石或古老的橡树。我是父母生的，也有家庭，还有儿子，雅典的人们，有三个呢，一个已经是小伙子，其余两个还是小孩儿。我不需要带他们中的哪个上来，求你们投票放过我。”

那么，我到底为什么不这样做？不是因为我太固执，雅典[34e]的人们，也不是我看不起你们；究竟我是否敢于面对死亡，是另外一个问题（λόγος）；但对声望而言，无论是我的、你们的，还是整个城邦的，我这样年纪和名声的人这么做，都是不大[e5]高贵的。不论真假，人们[35a]认为，苏格拉底与大多数人有些不同。那么，如果你们当中有什么人，无论因为智慧、勇敢，还是别的这类美德，看起来和别人不同，要这样做就太可耻了。我经常看到，本来[a5]很体面的人，在受审时做出非常奇怪的事，以为死就是遭受很可怕的事，好像你们如果不杀他们，他们就不会死（ἀθανάτος）。在我看来，他们真是给城邦带来（περίπτω）耻辱，让一个外邦人[35b]以为，在雅典人中，那些本来靠美德与别人不同，从而让人们选出授予职位和别的荣誉的，和女人没什么不同。雅典的人们，你们中凡是有体面的，[b5]不管在哪方面有体面，都不该这么做；我们若是这么做了，

你们也不该允许。而你们要由此表明，谁要把这种可怜的表演带上台来，把城邦变得滑稽可笑，你们就更应该投他的反对票，而不是给那保持安静的投反对票。

除去名声，诸位，我认为，哀求法官[35c]是不对的，靠乞求逃脱也是不应该的，而应该教育和说服。因为法官占据那席位，不是为了施舍正义，而是要裁判正义。他们发誓并不是要按照自己的喜好施舍，而是根据[c5]法律裁判。所以，我们不能让你们习惯于发假誓，你们也不该习惯于此。否则我们双方就都不虔敬（εὐσεβοῦν）了。所以，雅典的人们，你们不能认为我应该对你们做这些我觉得不高贵、不[35d]正义、不虔诚（ὀσιον）的事，特别是，宙斯在上，不虔敬又是莫勒图斯给我加的罪名。显然，既然你们已经发了誓，如果我劝说和以乞求逼迫，我就是在教给你们，不要认为神存在，我这申辩简[d5]直就成了控告自己不信神。但是远不是这样。我信神，雅典的人们，我的控告者们无人比得上我，我请你们和神抉择，怎样才是对我对你们都最好的。

六、惩罚与荣耀

[35e]雅典的人们，你们投我的反对票 [20]，我[36a]对这结果并不生气。这有很多原因，其中一个，是这样的结果并不出乎我的意料，但我反而更惊讶于双方所投石子的数目。因为我记得反对票不会只[a5]多一点儿，而要多出更多。但现在看起来，只要有三十个石子不这么投，我就会被放了。要是只有莫勒图斯，看来我现在就已经被放了；不仅放了，而且每个人都清楚，如果阿努图斯不和卢孔上来告我，那他就要付一千[36b]德拉克马，因为他得不到五分之一的石子。 [21]

他对我提出（τιμάω）死刑。好吧。雅典的人们，我应向你们提出什么替代 [22] 的呢？不是显然要按[b5]照我的品行（ἄξιός）吗？那该是什么呢？按我这品行该遭受或付出什么呢？要知道，我一生没有庸庸碌碌地过，我不关心众人所关心的金钱、家业、军阶，不做公众演说，也不做别的当权者，不想参加城里的朋党和帮派，我认为自己真是[36c]太忠厚了，要参与这些就难以保命。我没有去那儿做这些事，如果去了，我认为我对你们和我自己都没有什么助益。但正如我说的，我私下到你们每个人那里，做有最大益处（εὐεργετεῖν）的益事（εὐεργεσία）。我[c5]尝试着劝你们中的每个人，不要先关心“自己的”，而要先关心自己，让自己尽可能变得最好和最智慧；不要关心“城邦的”，而要关心城邦自身，对其他事情也要按同样的方式关心——我既然是这样，[36d]那么按这品行应该得到什么呢？应该是好的——雅典的人们，如果真正要按照我的品行提出我应得的。而

且是我该得到的那种好事。我这样一个需要闲暇来劝勉你们的贫穷的恩人（εὐεργέτης），[d5]应得到什么样的好处呢？雅典的人们，给我这种人最合适不过的，就是在政府大厅（πρυτανεῖον）里用膳 [23]。你们中有谁在奥林匹亚运动会中用一匹马、两匹马或四匹马的马车赢了比赛，我比他都更适合在那里吃。因为，他好像在给你们造福，我就是在造福；而他[36e]不需要这供养，我需要。那么，如果按照正义，根据我的品行提出，我就要提出这个：[37a]在政府大厅用膳。

也许，就像我谈乞怜和妥协时一样，你们觉得我说这些是大放厥词。雅典的人们，不是那样的，而应该是[a5]下面这样。我认为，我从不曾对谁行不义，至少不曾有意行不义，但是我不能说服你们这样认为。因为我们相互交谈的时间太短。我就认为，如果你们有一项法律，就像别人有一样 [24]，并不选[37b]某一天来判死刑，而是多等几天，你们会被说服的。而今，在这么短的时间里，从这么大的诬蔑中解脱出来，是不容易了。我相信，我没有对任何人行不义，我也不会对自己行不义，不会说我自己的品行该得恶报，[b5]给自己提出这样一种惩罚方式。我怕什么？怕遭到莫勒图斯给我提的惩罚吗？我说了，我不知道那是好还是坏。难道我不这样，而是从我明知道是坏的事情中，另找一种，提出来罚我？难道要监禁？我为什么[37c]要在监狱里生活，给每届（ἀεὶ）选出来的惯例者当奴隶，给十一人 [25]当奴隶？难道要在付清罚款前先收监吗？但对于我来说，罚款和我刚说的监禁是一样的。因为我从哪儿也找不到钱来付清。但是我可以提出[c5]流放吗？也许，你们将会给我这个惩罚。我也太贪生怕死（φιλοψυχία）了，雅典的人们，才会这么不合情理，以至于不能明白，你们，我的同胞公民，都不能忍受我的行事[37d]和言辞，觉得这些是那么难以承受，惹人忌恨，以至你们要寻求除掉这些；难道别人会容易忍受这类东西吗？雅典的人们，根本不可能。对于我这年纪的人，此时被流放，[d5]轮番跑到一个又一个别的城邦去，又被赶出来，这可真是高贵的生活。因为我清楚地知道，我无论到哪里去，青年人们都会像在这里一样倾听我说话。如果我赶他们走，他们会说服自己的长辈，赶我走；但如果[37e]我不赶他们走，他们的父辈和家人会为了他们赶我走。

也许有人会说：

“苏格拉底，你要是沉默不语，在流放后，不就可以过日子了吗？”

要在这方面说服你们[e5]中那些人，是最难的。因为，如果我说那是不遵从神的，因此我不能[38a]保持沉默，你们不会被说服，好像我在出言讥讽（εἰρωνευομένω）。如果我又说，每天谈论美德，

谈论别的你们听我说的话——听我对自己[a5]和别的人做省察，听我说，未经省察的生活是不值得过的生活——这对人而言恰恰是最大的好，你们就更不可能被我说服了。事情就是我说的那样；但诸位，要说服你们可不容易。同时，我不习惯认为我的品行该遭什么恶罚。如果我有钱，我就会[38b]按我能够付的那么多提出罚我的钱，因为那不会伤害我。但现在不是这样，除非你们同意我提出我付得起的钱数。也许，我能付[b5]一个米纳的银子。那我就提这么多。

雅典的人们，柏拉图、克力同、克力同布鲁斯和阿波罗多罗斯叫我付三十个米纳的罚款，他们做担保。那么我就提出这些。他们可以向你们做这银子的可信赖的担保。

七、临别告白

[38c]雅典的人们 [26]，不必多长时间，那些想毁掉城邦的人就可以加给你们杀害智者苏格拉底的罪名和责任——虽然我不智慧，那些想责怪你们的人会说智慧——[c5]但只要你们等一小段时间，你们期待的自然就发生了。看我这把年纪，活了很久，离死很近了。我不是对你们全体说这话的，而是对那些[38d]投票处死我的人说的。我对这些人还说下面的话：雅典的人们，你们也许认为，我很难用语言说服你们，来赢得你们——好像我认为需要[d5]用尽各种言行来逃出这个案子。根本不是。我很难赢得你们，不是因为缺少语言，而是因为缺乏勇气和无耻，我不愿对你们说那些你们最喜欢听的话，我不哀悼，不悲恸，不做也不[38e]说别的很多我认为不合我的品行（如我所说的）而你们习惯从别人那里听到的那些。我认为，我不该因为危险而做自由人该做的事，而且我现在也不后悔做了这样的申辩，我宁愿[e5]选择这样申辩而死，也不选择那样活着。因为，不论是在法庭上，还是在战斗中，无论是我还是别人，都不该[39a]蓄意做什么事来逃脱死亡。因为在很多战争中都很明显，有人丢盔弃甲，对追击者摇尾乞怜，从而逃脱死亡；还有很多别的办法，[a5]如果有勇气做任何事、说任何话，在任何危险中都有办法逃脱死亡。但是各位，逃离死亡并不难，可逃离邪恶（πονηρία）却难得多。因为邪恶比死亡跑得更快。而[39b]今我迟缓年迈，那慢一些的会赢我，那些控诉我的又聪明又敏捷，却被快一些的赢了，那就是恶（κακίας）。而今我要走了，接受你们判的死刑；他们却要接受真理所判的罪恶[b5]和不义。那就让我服从这个惩罚，他们也要服从他们的。也许就该是这样了，我认为他们也该得到所应得的。

然后，[39c]投票判我罪的人们，我愿对你们预言。因为我所在的处境，是人们大多要预言的处境：就是临死之前。而我说，杀我的人们，宙斯在上，[c5]我死之后，你们的报应（τιμωρία）也会很快

来临，那可比你们给我的这惩罚——杀我——残酷多了。现在你们这么做了，以为就可以摆脱对生活做出检验（ἐλεγχον），但是，如我所说，结果会完全相反。会有更多的人检验你们，现在我一直阻拦他们，而你们[39d]看不到。他们会更严厉，也更年轻，会让你们更加恼怒。你们靠杀人来阻止人们责备你们活[d5]得不正确，这念头可不美。因为这种解脱既全无可能，也不美。而那最美和最容易的解脱，不是阻止别人，而是把自己培养成最好的。对你们中那些投我反对票的人，我如此预言，[39e]然后我就走了。

至于那些投票认为我无罪的人，我们可以愉快地谈谈所发生的事，趁着当官的还忙着，我还没有到就死之地去。诸位，和我待一会儿吧。只要还能，我们不[e5]妨互相聊聊天（διαμυθολογήω）。我想把你们当[40a]朋友，告诉你们，刚刚所发生的对我究竟意味着什么。各位法官（ἄνδρεςδικασταί）——我叫你们法官（δικασταῖς），才叫得对了——我这里发生了奇妙的事。在以前的时候，那个和我相伴的[a5]精灵的声音，总会不断出来反对——只要我想做不对的事，哪怕是小事。而刚才，你们看到，我这儿发生的，人们总是以为，并且确实都相信，是最大的坏事。但是，从早晨[40b]离家开始，这个神就没有给出信号反对，即使到了法庭这里，也没有，在我说话的过程中，也没有反对我要说的话。而别的时候在我说话时，它却不断在讲话的中途阻拦。现在，针对我[b5]做的这件事，它从来没有反对我的言行。在我看来，这事的原因是什么呢？我要告诉你们：或许，我的这次遭遇变成了好事，我们要认为死是坏的，[40c]都是不对的。我认为，这里有一个巨大征兆发生了：如果我我要做的不是件好事，那么，我所熟悉的信号就不会不反对我。

让我们这么来想，这为什么很有希望（ἐλπὶς）成为[c5]好事。因为死是下面的两者之一。要么死就是什么也不存在，死者没有任何感觉；要么，根据一些人的说法，死就是发生一种变化，就是灵魂从这里迁移到别的地方。如果就是没有感觉，那就[40d]如同睡觉，而且睡着的人还不做梦，那死可真是很奇妙的好事。我认为，如果让人选出一个他沉睡而没有梦境的夜晚，把他一生中别的夜晚和[d5]白天同这个夜晚相比，让他仔细想后，说出，在他一生所经历的当中，有多少日夜，比这个夜晚更好、更舒服，我想，且不说一个老百姓，就是波斯大王 [27] [40e]也会发现，和别的日夜比起来，像这样好的屈指可数。而如果死是这样的，我说它是好事。那时候，永恒好像也不比一夜更长。

另外，如果死就是从这里[e5]迁移到另外一个地方，而且人们所说的是真的，即，所有的死人都在那里，法官们，还有什么比这更好的？如果一个到了冥府的人，从这些[41a]所谓的法官中得到解脱，他会发现那些真正的法官，他们据说在那里审判，有米诺斯

(Μίνως) [28]、拉达马索斯(Ραδάμανθους) [29]、埃亚库斯(Αἰακός) [30]、特里普托勒摩斯(Τριπτόλεμος) [31]和别的很多活着[a5]时公正(δίκαιοι)的半神。那这趟旅行岂可小看？还有，要是能和俄耳甫斯(Ὀρφεύς)、穆塞欧(Μουσαῖος)、赫西俄德(σίοδος)、荷马(Ὅμηρος) [32]在一起，你们中谁不宁愿付出高额代价？如果这是真的，我愿意死很多次。当我[41b]遇到帕拉梅德(Παλαμήδης) [33]、特拉蒙(Τελαμών)的埃阿斯(Αἴας) [34]，还有别的死于不义的冤狱的古人时，我会把我自己的遭遇和他们的相比，对我而言，在那里这样过日子是尤其奇妙的——我认为，[b5]这没有什么不快乐的——而最大的好事是，在那里省察和询问他们，就像在这里做的那样，看他们当中谁有智慧，谁自以为有智慧，而其实没有。法官们，人们愿付出多大代价，来省察带领大军攻打特洛伊的人 [35]、奥德修斯(Ὀδυσσεύς)、[41c]西西弗斯(Σίσυφος) [36]，或人们能提到的其他无数男人、女人？在那里和他们谈论、交往，省察他们，会是无比幸福。当然，那里的人根本不会因此[c5]杀人。如果所说的是真的，那里的人不仅在别的方面比这里的人幸福，而且在余下的时间里都是不朽的。

法官们啊，你们也应该对死抱有良好的希望，把这当成真的：[41d]好人不会有恶报，无论生前还是死后，诸神不会不关心他的事。我出的这事不是偶然的，而是明白显示给我的——死去，从杂事[d5]中解脱，这对我更好。因此，那征兆不让我转向任何地方，我也并不抱怨那些投我反对票和控告我的人。但他们并不是因为想到了这，才投我的反对票和控告我的；他们是要伤害我。为此[41e]他们该受谴责。

但我对他们提个请求。我的儿子们长大以后，诸位，如果他们在你们看来关心钱财或别的东西[e5]胜过了关心美德，你们就惩罚(τιμωρέω)他们，像我烦扰你们一样烦扰他们；如果他们实际不是什么而自以为是，你们就要谴责他们，就像我谴责你们一样，告诉他们他们没有关心应该关心的，他们的认知配不上自己的品行。如果你们这么做，我和[42a]我的儿子从你们这里得到的就是正义的。不过，是该走的时候了，我去死，你们去生。我们所去做的究竟哪个更好，谁也不知道——除了[a5]神。

[1] 柏拉图著作中的数字和字母标号即“斯特方页码”，来自1578年斯特方在巴黎出版的柏拉图希腊文著作的页码标注，是柏拉图著作的标准页码标号。（说明：书中脚注均为译者注。）

[2] 即拳击手在没有对手时所做的练习。在现代拳击中，仍有“空拳练习”(shadow-boxing)。

[3] 卡利亚是雅典的巨富。在《普罗塔戈拉》中，他同时款待普罗塔戈拉、西庇亚和普罗迪科斯。色诺芬的《会饮》所记述的场景就发生在卡利亚家中。此外，还有很多雅典作家提到过他。

[4] 这次出逃发生在公元前404年，也就是苏格拉底审判的五年前，他们八个月后回到雅典。当时，雅典在伯罗奔尼撒战争中战败，斯巴达人为雅典建立了寡头制，而这些寡头为自己攫取了绝对权力，因此被称为“三十僭主”。于是，很多民主派逃离雅典。苏格拉底反对民主制，但也不支持寡头制，不过苏格拉底一直留在了雅典城。

[5] 苏格拉底的早年同伴凯瑞丰举止怪异，是雅典人所熟知的。他不仅出现在柏拉图的对话中，还出现在很多喜剧当中，阿里斯托芬的《云》《鸟》《蛙》等作品都讽刺了他。

[6] 阿波罗杀死了德尔斐看守神殿的龙皮图（πύθω），于是得到了皮提亚的徽标。他的祭司都被称为皮提亚。

[7] 苏格拉底多次以天狗发誓，比如在《高尔吉亚》[482b5]中。他在那里还明确讲，这是埃及的一个神。早在希罗多德的时候，希腊人已经知道了埃及人对狗的崇拜。

[8] 第欧根尼·拉尔修在《名哲言行录》第二卷的“苏格拉底”部分提到，这份诉状在罗马皇帝哈德良时期还保存在雅典的档案里，其中写道：“皮特索斯的莫勒图斯的儿子莫勒图斯盟誓，状告阿罗匹克的索夫罗尼斯克的儿子苏格拉底，说：‘苏格拉底行了不义，因为他不信城邦信的神，而是带进新的精灵之事。他还因为败坏青年而行了不义。判死刑。’”

[9] 有关“乐队”的说法，通常有两种解释。一是指通过悲剧了解阿那克萨哥拉的说法；二是雅典广场中卖书的地方通常在乐队旁边。

[10] 即阿喀琉斯，这里不说“阿喀琉斯”而说“忒提斯之子”，是为了突出阿喀琉斯的半神身份。在希腊散文中，以某人的父母指代某人是常见的，不过一般是用父名，而不是母名。

[11] 这一战役发生在公元前432年（修昔底德《伯罗奔尼撒战争史》卷一），当时苏格拉底37岁。在《会饮》[219e5]以下，阿尔喀比亚德详细描述了苏格拉底在这次战役中的表现。在这一战里，苏格拉底连续站了24小时，救了阿尔喀比亚德的性命。

[12] 这可能指的是公元前422年的一场著名战役，但并没有充足的证据（修昔底德《伯罗奔尼撒战争史》卷二）。当时苏格拉底已经47岁，不太可能参加这样的远征。另外一种可能是，这指的是在公元前437年至公元前436年之间建造安菲玻里时的战斗。那时候苏格拉底32岁。

[13] 德利昂不是城镇名，而是阿波罗一个神殿的名字，那次战役发生在这“附近”（参见色诺芬《回忆苏格拉底》）。在德利昂之战中，雅典人被忒拜人打败（参见修昔底德《伯罗奔尼撒战争史》卷四）。在《会饮》[221a2]中，阿尔喀比亚德描述到，苏格拉底从战场上撤退时极为沉着和勇敢，超出了将军拉克斯，他的表现比在波底代亚之战中更加突出。

[14] 苏格拉底说自己只当过议员，并不意味着他只当过一次议员。亚里士多德在《政治学》62：3里谈到，一个人可以当两次议员。我们会在[32b6]看到，这很可能是苏格拉底第二次当议员。另外，苏格拉底当议员，也并不违背他不从政的原则。当议员和当兵一样，是公民的义务，不算从政。

[15] 雅典的议会一般由十个部落分别出五十人组成。每个部落的五十个人，通过抽签，组成议会为城邦工作三十五或三十六天。议会决定把什么事情提交公民大会讨论。这五十个人被称为“主席”。

[16] 在雅典和斯巴达的战争结束前两年，也就是公元前406年，雅典和斯巴达在爱琴岛附近有一场海战，雅典取得了胜利。战斗结束后，海上起了风暴，很多被打坏的战船和雅典将士（包括阵亡的和活着的）还在战场上，无法营救。公民大会举行了两次集会，要集体判处十个将军中的六人死刑，但苏格拉底认为这是不合法的，应该分别审判。他的反对没有起到作用。

[17] 伯罗奔尼撒战争结束后，斯巴达取胜，在雅典扶植了三十僭主。三十僭主起初只是处死一些人们不喜欢的煽动家和政治人物，后来就发展到诛杀了很多民主制的支持者，以及富有的公民和外邦人。很多同情民主制的人逃离了雅典。公元前403年，三十僭主的统治只有八个月，就被这些逃亡者推翻了。寡头党的余部从雅典退到附近的一个小镇上，到公元前401年才被彻底消灭，当时距苏格拉底的审判只有两年。苏格拉底不是民主派，所以在三十僭主时期没有离开雅典。

[18] 圆宫（θολός），又称“伞宫”（σκιάς），是一个圆形建筑，在民主制时期的雅典，当主席的五十个议员在那里集会、献祭、吃饭。三十僭主把这里当成他们主要的政府建筑之一。

[19] 赖翁据说是一个很正直的人。处死他是三十僭主犯下的一大罪行。三十僭主处死的无辜的人很多，但赖翁之死尤其引起人们的愤恨。

[20] 这是在陪审团投票之后的演说。雅典人用石子投票。这次一共有500人，投票结果应该是280（反对票）：220（赞成票）。

[21] 苏格拉底的算法，是认为三个人分别得了280票中的三分

之一，这个数字不到500票的五分之一。按照雅典的法律，如果原告得票不到总数的五分之一，就会因为诬告的罪名而被判处一千德拉克马的罚金。

[22] 按照雅典的法律，有些案件按照固有的规定处罚，有些则不必。苏格拉底的这个案子就是没有固定处罚的。在这样的案子中，法律要求法官从两者之中选择一个处罚方式，即，原告在诉讼书最后提出的惩罚，以及被告在判罪之后提出的惩罚。而法官不准提出第三种处罚。

[23] 在古典时代，在政府大厅用膳的人是享有特权的极少数人，贵宾一般只包括奥林匹亚运动会的得胜者、雅典民主制的建立者哈摩狄阿斯（Ἀρμόδιος）和阿利斯托斋吞（Ἀριστογείτων）的直系后裔中的长子。有时候，也会有大使、经选举获得此荣耀的官员、得胜的将军等被邀请去用膳。

[24] 斯巴达的法律就是这样规定的。

[25] 雅典管理监狱和刑罚的官员共有十一人，是抽签选定的。

[26] 在苏格拉底正式提出了一种惩罚方式后，陪审团再次投票，结果是大多数人支持死刑。

[27] 因为波斯国王拥有巨大的财富和庞大的帝国，希腊人一般认为他是最快乐的人。

[28] 米诺斯是古代克里特的国王，扫清了附近的海盗。据说他制定了克里特的法律，生时是一个正义的人。传说他让雅典每年送七个童男和七个童女到克里特，给怪兽做牺牲。忒修斯杀死了怪兽，解救了童男童女。此后，雅典每年有纪念忒修斯的仪式。苏格拉底之所以没有很快被处死，就是因为这个仪式正在进行。在《奥德赛》卷十一：568-571，奥德修斯曾游冥府，看到米诺斯在那里的各位法官之中。

[29] 拉达马索斯是米诺斯的兄弟，也有义人之名。品达曾说，他执掌幸福岛（好人死后去的地方）。

[30] 据品达说，埃亚库斯是爱琴海的立法者，甚至还审理诸神之间的争执，但没有说他审判死人。在《高尔吉亚》[523e-527a]中，苏格拉底谈到，米诺斯、拉达马索斯、埃亚库斯是冥府的法官。

[31] 特里普托勒摩斯是传说中阿提卡地区厄琉西斯的国王克琉斯的儿子。他从女神得墨忒尔处学到了让作物生长收获的方法。

[32] 这是希腊文化中最重要四位诗人。俄耳甫斯和穆塞欧可能只是传说人物。在《普罗塔戈拉》[316d8]、《理想国》[364e3]

中，按照俄耳甫斯神话传统，俄耳甫斯和穆塞欧并提。在阿里斯托芬的《蛙》[1032-1036]中，四位诗人按照和这里同样的顺序排列。

[33] 帕拉梅德参加了希腊人对特洛伊的战争。据说，因为某种原因（对此有各种说法），帕拉梅德和奥德修斯陷入争执，于是奥德修斯以背叛希腊、里通特洛伊的名义逮捕了帕拉梅德。帕拉梅德被希腊军队用石头砸死。埃斯库罗斯、欧里庇得斯、索福克勒斯都曾写过题为《帕拉梅德》的悲剧，但都没有流传下来。高尔吉亚曾写过《帕拉梅德的申辩》，没有佚失。在色诺芬的《申辩》[26]中，苏格拉底提到了帕拉梅德的申辩。第欧根尼·拉尔修说，欧里庇得斯在《帕拉梅德》中提到了苏格拉底的申辩，但这是不可能的，因为欧里庇得斯比苏格拉底早死十六年。

[34] 埃阿斯是特洛伊战争中著名的希腊勇士。在阿喀琉斯死后，他和奥德修斯争夺阿喀琉斯的盔甲。奥德修斯作弊取胜。埃阿斯为了报复，想杀死奥德修斯和阿伽门农。但雅典娜把他变疯癫了，疯了的埃阿斯杀死了一群羊。他清醒过来以后，羞愤自杀。

[35] 指希腊军队的统帅阿伽门农。

[36] 在《伊利亚特》卷五：153中，西西弗斯被称为“最巧的人”。

‘Practically
nothing they said
was true. From
me you will hear
the whole truth.’

Apology

I do not know, men of Athens, how my accusers affected you; as for me, I was almost carried away in spite of myself, so persuasively did they speak. And yet, hardly anything of what they said is true. Of the many lies they told, one in particular surprised me, namely that you should be careful not to be deceived by an accomplished speaker like me. That they were not ashamed to be immediately proved wrong by the facts, when I show myself not to be an accomplished speaker at all, that I thought was most shameless on their part—unless indeed they call an accomplished speaker the man who speaks the truth. If they mean that, I would agree that I am an orator, but not after their manner, for indeed, as I say, practically nothing they said was true. From me you will hear the whole truth, though not, by Zeus, gentlemen, expressed in embroidered and stylized phrases like theirs, but things spoken at random and expressed in the first words that come to mind, for I put my trust in the justice of what I say, and let none of you expect anything else. It would not be fitting at my age, as it might be for a young man, to toy with words when I appear before you. One thing I do ask and beg of you, gentlemen: if you hear me making my defense in the same kind of language as I am accustomed to use in the marketplace by the bankers' tables, where many of you have heard me, and elsewhere, do not be surprised or create a disturbance on that account. The position is this: this is my first appearance in a lawcourt, at the age of seventy; I am therefore simply a stranger to the manner of speaking here. Just as if I were really a stranger, you would certainly excuse me if I spoke in that dialect and manner in which I had been brought up, so too my present request seems a just one, for you to pay no attention to my manner of speech—be it better or worse—but to concentrate your attention on whether what I say is just or not, for the excellence of a judge lies in this, as that of a speaker lies in telling the truth.

It is right for me, gentlemen, to defend myself first against the first lying accusations made against me and my first accusers, and then against the later accusations and the later accusers. There have

been many who have accused me to you for many years now, and none of their accusations are true. There I fear much more than I fear Anytus and his friends, though they too are formidable. These earlier ones, however, are more so, gentlemen; they got hold of most of you from childhood, persuaded you and accused me quite falsely, saying that there is a man called Socrates, a wise man, a student of all things in the sky and below the earth, who makes the worse argument the stronger. Those who spread that rumor, gentlemen, are my dangerous accusers, for their hearers believe that those who study these things do not even believe in the gods. Moreover, these accusers are numerous, and have been at it a long time; also, they spoke to you at an age when you would most readily believe them, some of you being children and adolescents, and they won their case by default, as there was no defense. What is most absurd in all this is that one cannot even know or mention their names unless one of them is a writer of comedies. [37] Those who maliciously and slanderously persuaded you—who also, when persuaded themselves then persuaded others—all those are most difficult to deal with: one cannot bring one of them into court or refute him; one must simply fight with shadows, as it were, in making one's defense, and cross-examine when no one answers. I want you to realize too that my accusers are of two kinds: those who have accused me recently, and the old ones I mention; and to think that I must first defend myself against the latter, for you have also heard their accusations first, and to a much greater extent than the more recent.

Very well then, men of Athens. I must surely defend myself and attempt to uproot from your minds in so short a time the slander that has resided there so long. I wish this may happen, if it is in any way better for you and me, and that my defense may be successful, but I think this is very difficult and I am fully aware of how difficult it is. Even so, let the matter proceed as the god may wish, but I must obey the law and make my defense.

Let us then take up the case from its beginning. What is the accusation from which arose the slander in which Meletus trusted when he wrote out the charge against me? What did they say when they slandered me? I must, as if they were my actual prosecutors, read the affidavit they would have sworn. It goes something like this: Socrates is guilty of wrongdoing in that he busies himself

studying things in the sky and below the earth; he makes the worse into the stronger argument, and he teaches these same things to others. You have seen this yourself in the comedy of Aristophanes, a Socrates swinging about there, saying he was walking on air and talking a lot of other nonsense about things of which I know nothing at all. I do not speak in contempt of such knowledge, if someone is wise in these things—lest Meletus bring more cases against me—but, gentlemen, I have no part in it, and on this point I call upon the majority of you as witnesses. I think it right that all those of you who have heard me conversing, and many of you have, should tell each other if anyone of you has ever heard me discussing such subjects to any extent at all. From this you will learn that the other things said about me by the majority are of the same kind.

Not one of them is true. And if you have heard from anyone that I undertake to teach people and charge a fee for it, that is not true either. Yet I think it a fine thing to be able to teach people as Gorgias of Leontini does, and Prodicus of Ceos, and Hippias of Elis. [38] Each of these men can go to any city and persuade the young, who can keep company with anyone of their own fellow citizens they want without paying, to leave the company of these, to join with themselves, pay them a fee, and be grateful to them besides.

Indeed, I learned that there is another wise man from Paros who is visiting us, for I met a man who has spent more money on Sophists than everybody else put together, Callias, the son of Hipponicus. So I asked him—he has two sons—

“Callias,” I said, “if your sons were colts or calves, we could find and engage a supervisor for them who would make them excel in their proper qualities, some horse breeder or farmer. Now since they are men, whom do you have in mind to supervise them? Who is an expert in this kind of excellence, the human and social kind? I think you must have given this thought to this since you have sons. “Is there such a person,” I asked, “or is there not?”

“Certainly there is,” he said.

“Who is he?” I asked, “What is his name, where is he from? and what is his fee?”

“His name, Socrates, is Evenus, he comes from Paros, and his fee is five minas.”

I thought Evenus a happy man, if he really possesses this art, and teaches for so moderate a fee. Certainly I would pride and preen myself if I had this knowledge, but I do not have it, gentlemen.

One of you might perhaps interrupt me and say:

“But Socrates, what is your occupation? From where have these slanders come? For surely if you did not busy yourself with something out of the common, all these rumors and talk would not have arisen unless you did something other than most people. Tell us what it is, that we may not speak unadvisedly about you.”

Anyone who says that seems to be right, and I will try to show you what has caused this reputation and slander. Listen then. Perhaps some of you will think I am jesting, but be sure that all that I shall say is true.

What has caused my reputation is none other than a certain kind of wisdom. What kind of wisdom? Human wisdom, perhaps. It may be that I really possess this, while those whom I mentioned just now are wise with a wisdom more than human; else I cannot explain it, for I certainly do not possess it, and whoever says I do is lying and speaks to slander me. Do not create a disturbance, gentleman, even if you think I am boasting, for the story I shall tell does not originate with me, but I will refer you to a trustworthy source. I shall call upon the god at Delphi as witness to the existence and nature of my wisdom, if it be such. You know Chaerephon. He was my friend from youth, and the friend of most of you, as he shared your exile and your return. You surely know the kind of man he was, how impulsive in any course of action. He went to Delphi at one time and ventured to ask the oracle—as I say, gentlemen, do not create a disturbance—he asked if any man was wiser than I, and the Pythian replied that no one was wiser. Chaerephon is dead, but his brother will testify to you about this.

Consider that I tell you this because I would inform you about the origin of the slander. When I heard of this reply I asked myself: “Whatever does the god mean? What is his riddle? I am very conscious that I am not wise at all; what then does he mean by saying that I am the wisest? For surely he does not lie; it is not legitimate for him to do so.” For a long time I was at a loss as to his meaning; then I very reluctantly turned to some such investigation

as this; I went to one of those reputed wise, thinking that there, if anywhere, I could refute the oracle and say to it:

“This man is wiser than I, but you said I was.” Then, when I examined this man—there is no need for me to tell you his name, he was one of our public men—my experience was something like this: I thought that he appeared wise to many people and especially to himself, but he was not. I then tried to show him that he thought himself wise, but that he was not. As a result he came to dislike me, and so did many of the bystanders. So I withdrew and thought to myself: “I am wiser than this man; it is likely that neither of us knows anything worthwhile, but he thinks he knows something when he does not, whereas when I do not know, neither do I think I know what I do not know.” After this I approached another man, one of those thought to be wiser than he, and I thought the same thing, and so I came to be disliked both by him and by many others.

After that I proceeded systematically. I realized, to my sorrow and alarm, that I was getting unpopular, but I thought that I must attach the greatest importance to the god’s oracle, so I must go to all those who had any reputation for knowledge to examine its meaning. And by the dog, men of Athens—for I must tell you the truth—I experienced something like this: in my investigation in the service of the god I found that those who had the highest reputation were nearly the most deficient, while those who were thought to be inferior were more knowledgeable. I must give you an account of my journeyings as if they were labors I had undertaken to prove the oracle irrefutable. After the politicians, I went to the poets, the writers of tragedies and dithyrambs and the others, intending in their case to catch myself being more ignorant than they. So I took up those poems with which they seemed to have taken most trouble and asked them what they meant, in order that I might at the same time learn something from them. I am ashamed to tell you the truth, gentlemen, but I must. Almost all the bystanders might have explained the poems better than their authors could I soon realized the poets do not compose their poems with knowledge, but by some inborn talent and by inspiration, like seers and prophets who also say many fine things without any understanding of what they say. The poets seemed to me to have had a similar experience. At the same time I saw that, because of their poetry, they thought themselves very wise men in other respects, which they were not.

So there again I withdrew, thinking that I had the same advantage over them as I had over the politicians.

Finally I went to the craftsmen, for I was conscious of knowing practically nothing, and I knew that I would find that they had knowledge of many fine things. In this I was not mistaken; they knew things I did not know, and to that extent they were wiser than I. But, men of Athens, the good craftsmen seemed to me to have the same fault as the poets: each of them, because of his success at his craft, thought himself very wise in other most important pursuits, and this error of theirs overshadowed the wisdom they had, so that I asked myself, on behalf of the oracle, whether I should prefer to be as I am, with neither their wisdom nor their ignorance, or to have both. The answer I gave myself and the oracle was that it was to my advantage to be as I am.

As a result of this investigation, men of Athens, I acquired much unpopularity, of a kind that is hard to deal with and is a heavy burden; many slanders came from these people and a reputation for wisdom, for in each case the bystanders thought that I myself possessed the wisdom that I proved that my interlocutor did not have. What is probable, gentlemen, is that in fact the god is wise and that his oracular response meant that human wisdom is worth little or nothing, and that when he says this man, Socrates, he is using my name as an example, as if he said: "This man among you, mortals, is wisest who, like Socrates, understands that his wisdom is worthless." So even now I continue this investigation as the god bade me—and I go around seeking out anyone, citizen or stranger, whom I think wise. Then if I do not think he is, I come to the assistance of the god and show him that he is not wise. Because of this occupation, I do not have the leisure to engage in public affairs to any extent, nor indeed to look after my own, but I live in great poverty because of my service to the god.

Furthermore, the young men who follow me around of their own free will, those who have most leisure, the sons of the very rich, take pleasure in hearing people questioned; they themselves often imitate me and try to question others. I think they find an abundance of men who believe they have some knowledge but know little or nothing. The result is that those whom they question are angry, not with themselves but with me. They say: "That man Socrates is a pestilential fellow who corrupts the young." If one asks

them what he does and what he teaches to corrupt them, they are silent, as they do not know, but, so as not to appear at a loss, they mention those accusations that are available against all philosophers, about “things in the sky and things below the earth,” about “not believing in the gods” and “making the worse the stronger argument”; they would not want to tell the truth, I’m sure, that they have been proved to lay claim to knowledge when they know nothing. These people are ambitious, violent and numerous; they are continually and convincingly talking about me; they have been filling your eyes for a long time with vehement slanders against me. From them Meletus attacked me, and Anytus and Lycon, Meletus being vexed on behalf of the poets, Anytus on behalf of the craftsmen and the politicians, Lycon on behalf of the orators, so that, as I started out by saying, I should be surprised if I could rid you of so much slander in so short a time. That, men of Athens, is the truth for you. I have hidden or disguised nothing. I know well enough that this very conduct makes me unpopular, and this is popular, and this is proof that what I say is true, that such is the slander against me, and that such are its causes. If you look into this either now or later, this is what you will find.

Let this suffice as a defense against the charges of my earlier accusers. After this I shall try to defend myself against Meletus, that good and patriotic man, as he says he is, and my later accusers. As these are a different lot of accusers, let us again take up their sworn deposition. It goes something like this: Socrates is guilty of corrupting the young and of not believing in the gods in whom the city believes, but in other new spiritual things. Such is their charge. Let us examine it point by point.

He says that I am guilty of corrupting the young, but I say that Meletus is guilty of dealing frivolously with serious matters, of irresponsibly bringing people into court, and of professing to be seriously concerned with things about none of which he has ever cared, and I shall try to prove that this is so.

Come here and tell me, Meletus. Surely you consider it of the greatest importance that our young men be as good as possible?

Indeed I do.

Come then, tell these men who improves them. You obviously know, in view of your concern. You say you have discovered the

one who corrupts them, namely me, and you bring me here and accuse me to these men. Come, inform them and tell them who it is. You see, Meletus, that you are silent and know not what to say. Does this not seem shameful to you and a sufficient proof of what I say, that you have not been concerned with any of this? Tell me, my good sir, who improves our young men?

The laws.

That is not what I am asking, but what person who has knowledge of the laws to begin with?

These jurymen, Socrates.

How do you mean, Meletus? Are these able to educate the young and improve them?

Certainly.

All of them, or some but not others?

All of them.

Very good, by Hera. You mention a great abundance of benefactors. But what about the audience? Do they improve the young or not?

They do, too.

What about the members of Council?

The Councillors, also.

But, Meletus, what about the assembly? Do members of the assembly corrupt the young, or do they all improve them?

They improve them.

All the Athenians, it seems, make the young into fine good men, except me, and I alone corrupt them. Is that what you mean?

That is most definitely what I mean.

You condemn me to a great misfortune. Tell me: does this also apply to horses do you think? That all men improve them and one individual corrupts them? Or is quite the contrary true, one individual is able to improve them, or very few, namely the horse breeders, whereas the majority, if they have horses and use them, corrupt them? Is that not the case, Meletus, both with horses and all

other animals? Of course it is, whether you and Anytus say so or not. It would be a very happy state of affairs if only one person corrupted our youth, while the others improved them. You have made it sufficiently obvious, Meletus, that you have never had any concern for our youth; you show your indifference clearly; that you have given no thought to the subjects about which you bring me to trial.

And by Zeus, Meletus, tell us also whether it is better for a man to live among good or wicked fellow citizens. Answer, my good man, for I am not asking a difficult question. Do not the wicked do some harm to those who are ever closest to them, whereas good people benefit them?

Certainly.

And does the man exist who would rather be harmed than benefited by his associates? Answer, my good sir, for the law orders you to answer. Is there any man who wants to be harmed?

Of course not.

Come now, do you accuse me here of corrupting the young and making them worse deliberately or unwillingly?

Deliberately.

What follows, Meletus? Are you so much wiser at your age than I am at mine that you understand that wicked people always do some harm to their closest neighbors while good people do them good, but I have reached such a pitch of ignorance that I do not realize this, namely that if I make one of my associates wicked I run the risk of being harmed by him so that I do such a great evil deliberately, as you say? I do not believe you, Meletus, and I do not think anyone else will. Either I do not corrupt the young or, if I do, it is unwillingly, and you are lying in either case. Now if I corrupt them unwillingly, the law does not require you to bring people to court for such unwilling wrongdoings, but to get hold of them privately, to instruct them and exhort them; for clearly, if I learn better, I shall cease to do what I am doing unwillingly. You, however, have avoided my company and were unwilling to instruct me, but you bring me here, where the law requires one to bring those who are in need of punishment, not of instruction.

And so, men of Athens, what I said is clearly true: Meletus has

never been at all concerned with these matters. Nonetheless tell us, Meletus, how you say that I corrupt the young; or is it obvious from your deposition that it is by teaching them not to believe in the gods in whom the city believes but in other new spiritual things? Is this not what you say I teach and so corrupt them?

That is most certainly what I do say.

Then by those very gods about whom we are talking, Meletus, make this clearer to me and to these men: I cannot be sure whether you mean that I teach the believe that there are some gods—and therefore I myself believe that there are gods and am not altogether an atheist, nor am I guilty of that—not, however, the gods in whom the city believes, but others, and that this is the charge against me, that they are others. Or whether you mean that I do not believe in gods at all, and that this is what I teach to others.

This is what I mean, that you do not believe in gods at all.

You are a strange fellow, Meletus. Why do you say this? Do I not believe, as other men do, that the sun and the moon are gods?

No, by Zeus, gentlemen of the jury, for he says that the sun is stone, and the month earth.

My dear Meletus, do you think you are prosecuting Anaxagoras? Are you so contemptuous of these men and think them so ignorant of letters as not to know that the books of Anaxagoras of Clazomenae are full of those theories, and further, that the young men learn from me what they can buy from time to time from a drachma, at most, in the bookshops, and ridicule Socrates if he pretends that these theories are his own, especially as they are so absurd? Is that, by Zeus, what you think of me, Meletus, that I do not believe that there are any gods?

That is what I say, that you do not believe in the gods at all.

You cannot be believed, even, I think, by yourself. The man appears to me, men of Athens, highly insolent and uncontrolled. He seems to have made this deposition out of insolence, violence and youthful zeal. He is like one who composed a riddle and is trying it out: “Will the wise Socrates realize that I am jesting and contradicting himself in the affidavit, as if he said: “Socrates is guilty of not believing in gods but believing in gods,” and surely that is the part of a jester!

Examine with me, gentlemen, how he appears to contradict himself, and you, Meletus, answer us. Remember, gentlemen, what I asked you when I began, not to create a disturbance if I proceed in my usual manner.

Does any man, Meletus, believe in human activities who does not believe in humans? Make him answer, and not again and again create a disturbance. Does any man who does not believe in horses believe in horsemen's activities? Or in flute-playing activities but not in fluteplayers? No, my good sir, no man could. If you are not willing to answer, I will tell you and these men. Answer the next question, however. Does any man believe in spiritual activities who does not believe in spirits?

No one.

Thank you for answering, if reluctantly, when these gentlemen made you. Now you say that I believe in spiritual things and teach about them, whether new or old, but at any rate spiritual things according to what you say, and to this you have sworn in your deposition. But if I believe in spiritual things I must quite inevitably believe in spirits. Is that not so? It is indeed. I shall assume that you agree, as you do not answer. Do we not believe spirits to be either gods or the children of gods? Yes or no?

Of course.

Then since I do believe in spirits, as you admit, if spirits are gods, this is what I mean when I say you speak in riddles and in jest, as you state that I do not believe in gods and then again that I do, since I do believe in spirits. If on the other hand the spirits are children of the gods, bastard children of the gods by nymphs or some other mothers, as they are said to be, what man would believe children of the gods to exist, but not gods? That would be just as absurd as to believe the young of horses and asses, namely mules, to exist, but not to believe in the existence of horses and asses. You must have made this deposition, Meletus, either to test us or because you were at a loss to find any true wrongdoing of which to accuse me. There is no way in which you could persuade anyone of even small intelligence that it is possible for one and the same man to believe in spiritual but not also in divine things, and then again for that same man to believe neither in spirits nor in gods nor in heroes.

I do not think, men of Athens, that it requires a prolonged defense to prove that I am not guilty of the charges in Meletus' deposition, but this is sufficient. On the other hand, you know that what I said earlier is true, that I am very unpopular with many people. This will be my undoing, if I am undone, not Meletus or Anytus but the slanders and envy of many people. This has destroyed many other good men and will, I think, continue to do so. There is no danger that it will stop at me.

Someone might say: "Are you not ashamed, Socrates, to have followed the kind of occupation that has led to your being now in danger of death?"

However, I should be right to reply to him:

"You are wrong, sir, if you think that a man who is any good at all should take into account the risk of life or death; he should look to this only in his actions, whether what he does is right or wrong, whether he is acting like a good or a bad man." According to your view, all the heroes who died at Troy were inferior people, especially the son of Thetis who was so contemptuous of danger compared with disgrace.³ When he was eager to kill Hector, his goddess mother warned him, as I believe, in some such words as these: "My child, if you avenge the death of your comrade, Patroclus, and you kill Hector, you will die yourself, for your death is to follow immediately after Hector's." Hearing this, he despised death and danger and was much more afraid to live a coward who did not avenge his friends. "Let me die at once," he said, "when once I have given the wrongdoer his deserts, rather than remain here, a laughing-stock by the curved ships, a burden upon the earth." Do you think he gave thought to death and danger?

This is the truth of the matter, men of Athens: wherever a man has taken a position that he believes to be best, or has been placed by his commander, there he must I think remain and face danger, without a thought for death or anything else, rather than disgrace. It would have been a dreadful way to behave, gentlemen of the jury, if, at Potidaea, Amphipolis and Delium, I had, at the risk of death, like anyone else, remained at my post where those you had elected to command had ordered me, and then, when the god ordered me, as I thought and believed, to live the life of a philosopher, to examine myself and others, I had abandoned my

post for fear of death or anything else. That would have been a dreadful thing, and then I might truly have justly been brought here for not believing that there are gods, disobeying the oracle, fearing death, and thinking I was wise when I was not. To fear death, gentlemen, is no other than to think oneself wise when one is not, to think one knows what one does not know. No one knows whether death may not be the greatest of all blessings for a man, yet men fear it as if they knew that it is the greatest of evils. And surely it is the most blameworthy ignorance to believe that one knows what one does not know. It is perhaps on this point and in this respect, gentlemen, that I differ from the majority of men, and if I were to claim that I am wiser than anyone in anything, it would be in this, that, as I have no adequate knowledge of things in the underworld, so I do not think I have. I do know, however, that it is wicked and shameful to do wrong, to disobey one's superior, be he god or man. I shall never fear or avoid things of which I do not know, whether they may not be good rather than things that I know to be bad.

Even if you acquitted me now and did not believe Anytus, who said to you that either I should not have been brought here in the first place, or that now I am here, you cannot avoid executing me, for if I should be acquitted, your sons would practice the teachings of Socrates and all be thoroughly corrupted; if you said to me in this regard:

“Socrates, we do not believe Anytus now; we acquit you, but only on condition that you spend no more time on this investigation and do not practice philosophy, and if you are caught doing so you will die;”

If, as I say, you were to acquit me on those terms, I would say to you:

“Men of Athens, I am grateful and I am your friend, but I will obey the god rather than you, and as long as I draw breath and am able, I shall not cease to practice philosophy, to exhort you and in my usual way to point out to any one of you whom I happen to meet: Good Sir, you are an Athenian, a citizen of the greatest city with the greatest reputation for both wisdom and power; are you not ashamed of your eagerness to possess as much wealth, reputation and honors as possible, while you do not care for nor

give thought to wisdom or truth, or the best possible state of your soul?" Then, if one of you disputes this and says he does care, I shall not let him go at once or leave him, but I shall question him, examine him and test him, and if I do not think he has attained the goodness that he says he has, I shall reproach him because he attaches little importance to the most important things and greater importance to inferior things. I shall treat in this way anyone I happen to meet, young and old, citizen and stranger, and more so the citizens because you are more kindred to me. Be sure that this is what the god orders me to do, and I think there is no greater blessing for the city than my service to the god. For I go around doing nothing but persuading both young and old among you not to care for your body or your wealth in preference to or as strongly as for the best possible state of your soul, as I say to you: "Wealth does not bring about excellence, but excellence makes wealth and everything else good for men, both individually and collectively."

[39] Now if by saying this I corrupt the young, this advice must be harmful, but if anyone says that I give different advice, he is talking nonsense. On this point I would say to you, men of Athens: "Whether you believe Anytus or not, whether you acquit me or not, do so on the understanding that this is my course of action, even if I am to face death many times."

Do not create a disturbance, gentlemen, but abide by my request not to cry out at what I say but to listen, for I think it will be to your advantage to listen, and I am about to say other things at which you will perhaps cry out. By no means do this. Be sure that if you kill the sort of man I say I am, you will not harm me more than yourselves. Neither Meletus nor Anytus can harm me in any way; he could not harm me, for I do not think it is permitted that a better man be harmed by a worse; certainly he might kill me, or perhaps banish or disfranchise me, which he and maybe others think to be great harm, but I do not think so. I think he is doing himself much greater harm doing what he is doing now, attempting to have a man executed unjustly. Indeed, men of Athens,

I am far from making it defense now on my own behalf, as might be thought, but on yours, to prevent you from wrongdoing by mistreating the god's gift to you by condemning me; for if you kill me you will not easily find another like me. I was attached to this city by the god—though it seems a ridiculous thing to say—as upon

a great and noble horse which was somewhat sluggish because of its size and needed to be stirred up by a kind of gadfly. It is to fulfill some such function that I believe the god has placed me in the city. I never cease to rouse each and every one of you, to persuade and reproach you all day long and everywhere I find myself in your company. Another such man will not easily come to be among you, gentlemen, and if you believe me you will spare me. You might easily be annoyed with me as people are when they are aroused from a doze, and strike out at me; if convinced by Anytus you could easily kill me, and then you could sleep on for the rest of your days, unless the god, in his care for you, sent you someone else.

That I am the kind of person to be a gift of the god to the city you might realize from the fact that it does not seem like human nature for me to have neglected all my own affairs and to have tolerated this neglect now for so many years while I was always concerned with you, approaching each one of you like a father or an elder brother to persuade you to care for virtue. Now if I profited from this by charging a fee for my advice, there would be some sense to it, but you can see for yourselves that, for all their shameless accusations, my accusers have not been able in their impudence to bring forward a witness to say that I have ever received a fee or ever asked for one. I, on the other hand, have a convincing witness that I speak the truth, my poverty.

It may seem strange that while I go around and give this advice privately and interfere in private affairs, I do not venture to go to the assembly and there advise the city. You have heard me give the reason for this in many places. I have a divine or spiritual sign which Meletus has ridiculed in his deposition. This began when I was a child. It is a voice, and whenever it speaks it turns me away from something I am about to do, but it never encourages me to do anything. This is what has prevented me from taking part in public affairs, and I think it was quite right to prevent me. Be sure, men of Athens, that if I had long ago attempted to take part in politics, I should have died long ago, and benefited neither you nor myself. Do not be angry with me for speaking the truth; no man will survive who genuinely opposes you or any other crowd and prevents the occurrence of many unjust and illegal happenings in the city. A man who really fights for justice must lead a private, not a public, life if he is to survive for even a short time.

I shall give you great proofs of this, not words but what you esteem, deeds. Listen to what happened to me, that you may know that I will not yield to any man contrary to what is right, for fear of death, even if I should die at once for not yielding. The things I shall tell you are commonplace and smack of the law courts, but they are true. I have never held any other office in the city, but I served as a member of the Council, and our tribe Antiochis was presiding at the time when you wanted to try as a body the ten generals who had failed to pick up the survivors of the naval battle.

[40] This was illegal, as you all recognized later. I was the only member of the presiding committee to oppose you doing something contrary to the laws, and I voted against it. The orators were ready to prosecute me and take me away; and your shouts were egging them on, but I thought I should run any risk on the side of law and justice rather than join you, for fear of prison or death, when you were engaged in an unjust course. This happened when the city was still a democracy. When the oligarchy was established, the Thirty [41] summoned me to the Hall, along with four others, and ordered us to bring Leon from Salamis, that he might be executed. They gave many such orders to many people, in order to implicate as many as possible in their guilt. Then I showed again, not in words but in action, that, if it were not rather vulgar to say so, death is something I couldn't care less about, but that my whole concern is not to do anything unjust or impious. That government, powerful as it was, did not frighten me into any wrongdoing. When we left the Hall, the other four went to Salamis and brought in Leon, but I went home. I might have been put to death for this, had not the government fallen shortly afterwards. There are many who will witness to these events.

Do you think I would have survived all these years if I were engaged in public affairs and, acting as a good man must, came to the help of justice and considered this the most important thing? Far from it, men of Athens, nor would any other man. Throughout my life, in any public activity I may have engaged in, I am the same man as I am in private life. I have never come to an agreement with anyone to act unjustly, neither with anyone else nor with any one of those who they slanderously say are my pupils. I have never been anyone's teacher. If anyone, young or old, desires to listen to me when I am talking and dealing with my own concerns, I have never begrudged this to anyone, but I do not converse when I receive a

fee and not when I do not. I am equally ready to question the rich and the poor if anyone is willing to answer my questions and listen to what I say. And I cannot justly be held responsible for the good or bad conduct of these people, as I never promised to teach them anything and have not done so. If anyone says that he has learned anything from me, or that he heard anything privately that the others did not hear, be assured that he is not telling the truth.

Why then do some people enjoy spending considerable time in my company? You have heard why, men of Athens; I have told you the whole truth. They enjoy hearing those being questioned who think they are wise, but are not. And this is not unpleasant. To do this has, as I say, been enjoined upon me by the god, by means of oracles and dreams, and in every other way that a divine manifestation has ever ordered a man to do anything.

This is true, gentlemen, and can easily be established. If I corrupt some young men and have corrupted others, then surely some of them who have grown older and realized that I gave them bad advice when they were young should now themselves come up here to accuse me and avenge themselves. If they were unwilling to do so themselves, then some of their kindred, their fathers or brothers or other relations should recall it now if their family had been harmed by me. I see many of these present here, first Crito, my contemporary and fellow demesman, the father of Critobulus here; next Lysanias of Sphettus, the father of Aeschines here; also Antiphon the Cephisian, the father of Epigenes; and others whose brothers spent their time in this way; Nicostratus, the son of Theozotides, brother of Theodotus, and Theodotus has died so he could not influence him; Paralius here, son of Demodocus, whose brother was Theages; there is Adeimantus, son of Ariston, brother of Plato here; Aeantodorus, brother of Apollodorus here.

I could mention many others, some one of whom surely Meletus should have brought in as witness in his own speech. If he forgot to do so, then let him do it now; I will yield time if he has anything of the kind to say. You will find quite the contrary, gentlemen. These men are all ready to come to the help of the corruptor, the man who has harmed their kindred, as Meletus and Anytus say. Now those who were corrupted might well have reason to help me, but the uncorrupted, their kindred who are older men, have no reason to help me except the right and proper one, that

they know that Meletus is lying and that I am telling the truth.

Very well, gentlemen of the jury. This, and maybe other similar things, is what I have to say in my defense. Perhaps one of you might be angry as he recalls that when he himself stood trial on a less dangerous charge, he begged and implored the jurors with many tears, that he brought his children and many of his friends and family into court to arouse as much pity as he could, but that I do none of these things, even though I may seem to be running the ultimate risk. Thinking of this, he might feel resentful toward me and, angry about this, cast his vote in anger. If there is such a one among you—I do not deem there is, but if there is—I think it would be right to say in reply:

My good sir, I too have a household and, in Homer's phrase, I am not born "from oak or rock" but from men, so that I have a family, indeed three sons, men of Athens, of whom one is an adolescent while two are children. Nevertheless, I will not beg you to acquit me by bringing them here.

Why do I do none of these things? Not through arrogance, gentlemen, nor through lack of respect for you. Whether I am brave in the face of death is another matter, but with regard to my reputation and yours and that of the whole city, it does not seem right to me to do these things, especially at my age and with my reputation. For it is generally believed, whether it be true or false, that in certain respects Socrates is superior to the majority of men. Now if those of you who are considered superior, be it in wisdom or courage or whatever other virtue makes them so, are seen behaving like that, it would be a disgrace. Yet I have often seen them do this sort of thing when standing trial, men who are thought to be somebody, doing amazing things as if they thought it a terrible thing to die, and as if they were to be immortal if you did not execute them. I think these men bring shame upon the city so that a stranger, too, would assume that those who are outstanding in virtue among the Athenians, whom they themselves select from themselves to fill offices of state and receive other honors, are in no way better than women. You should not act like that, men of Athens, those of you who have any reputation at all, and if we do, you should not allow it. You should make it very clear that you will more readily convict a man who performs these pitiful dramatics in court and so makes the city a laughingstock, than a man who keeps

quiet.

Quite apart from the question of reputation, gentlemen, I do not think it right to supplicate the jury and to be acquitted because of this, but to teach and persuade them. It is not the purpose of a juryman's office to give justice as a favor to whoever seems good to him, but to judge according to law, and this he has sworn to do. We should not accustom you to perjure yourselves, nor should you make a habit of it. This is irreverent conduct for either of us. Do not deem it right for me, men of Athens, that I should act towards you in a way that I do not consider to be good or just or pious, especially, by Zeus, as I am being prosecuted by Meletus here for impiety; clearly, if I convinced you by my supplication to do violence to your oath of office, I would be teaching you not to believe that there are gods, and my defense would convict me of not believing in them. This is far from being the case, gentlemen, for I do believe in them as none of my accusers do. I leave it to you and the god to judge me in the way that will be best for me and for you.

[The jury now gives its verdict of guilty, and Meletus asks for the penalty of death.]

There are many other reasons for my not being angry with you for convicting me, men of Athens, and what happened was not unexpected. I am much more surprised at the number of votes cast on each side for I did not think the decision would be by so few votes but by a great many. As it is, a switch of only thirty votes would have acquitted me. I think myself that I have been cleared on Meletus' charges, and not only this, but it is clear to all that, if Anytus and Lycon had not joined him in accusing me, he would have been fined a thousand drachmas for not receiving a fifth of the votes.

He assesses the penalty at death. So be it. What counter-assessment should I propose to you, men of Athens? Clearly it should be a penalty I deserve, and what do I deserve to suffer or to pay because I have deliberately not led a quiet life but have neglected what occupies most people: wealth, household affairs, the position of general or public orator or the other offices, the political clubs and factions that exist in the city? I thought myself too honest to survive if I occupied myself with those things. I did not follow

that path that would have made me of no use either to you or to myself, but I went to each of you privately and conferred upon him what I say is the greatest benefit, by trying to persuade him not to care for any of his belongings before caring that he himself should be as good and as wise as possible, not to care for the city's possessions more than for the city itself, and to care for other things in the same way. What do I deserve for being such a man? Some good, men of Athens, if I must truly make an assessment according to my deserts, and something suitable. What is suitable for a poor benefactor who needs leisure to exhort you? Nothing is more suitable, gentlemen, than for such a man to be fed in the Prytaneum, [42] much more suitable for him than for any one of you who has won a victory at Olympia with a pair or a team of horses. The Olympian victor makes you think yourself happy; I make you be happy. Besides, he does not need food, but I do. So if I must make a just assessment of what I deserve, I assess it at this: free meals in the Prytaneum.

When I say this you may think, as when I spoke of appeals to pity and entreaties, that I speak arrogantly, but that is not the case, men of Athens; rather it is like this: I am convinced that I never willingly wrong anyone, but I am not convincing you of this, for we have talked together but a short time. If it were the law with us, as it is elsewhere, that a trial for life should not last one but many days, you would be convinced, but now it is not easy to dispel great slanders in a short time. Since I am convinced that I wrong no one, I am not likely to wrong myself, to say that I deserve some evil and to make some such assessment against myself. What should I fear? That I should suffer the penalty Meletus has assessed against me, of which I say I do not know whether it is good or bad? Am I then to choose in preference to this something that I know very well to be an evil and assess the penalty at that? Imprisonment? Why should I live in prison, always subjected to the ruling magistrates the Eleven? A fine, and imprisonment until I pay it? That would be the same thing for me, as I have no money. Exile? For perhaps you might accept that assessment. I should have to be inordinately fond of life, men of Athens, to be so unreasonable as to suppose that other men will easily tolerate my company and conversation when you, my fellow citizens, have been unable to endure them, but found them a burden and resented them so that you are now seeking to get rid of them. Far from it, gentlemen. It would be a fine

life at my age to be driven out of one city after another, for I know very well that wherever I go the young men will listen to my talk as they do here. If I drive them away, they will themselves persuade their elders to drive me out; if I do not drive them away, their fathers and relations will drive me out on their behalf.

Perhaps someone might say:

But Socrates, if you leave us will you not be able to live quietly, without talking?

Now this is the most difficult point on which to convince some of you. If I say that it is impossible for me to keep quiet because that means disobeying the god, you will not believe me and will think I am being ironical. On the other hand, if I say that it is the greatest good for a man to discuss virtue every day and those other things about which you hear me conversing and testing myself and others, for the unexamined life is not worth living for man, you will believe me even less. What I say is true, gentlemen, but it is not easy to convince you. At the same time, I am not accustomed to think that I deserve any penalty. If I had money, I would assess the penalty at the amount I could pay, for that would not hurt me, but I have none, unless you are willing to set the penalty at the amount I can pay, and perhaps I could pay you one mina of silver. [43] So that is my assessment.

Plato here, men of Athens, and Crito and Critobulus and Apollodorus bid me put the penalty at thirty minas, and they will stand surety for the money. Well then, that is my assessment, and they will be sufficient guarantee of payment.

[The jury now votes again and sentences Socrates to death .]

It is for the sake of a short time, men of Athens, that you will acquire the reputation and the guilt, in the eyes of those who want to denigrate the city, of having killed Socrates, a wise man, for they who want to revile you will say that I am wise even if I am not. If you had waited but a little while, this would have happened of its own accord. You see my age, that I am already advanced in years and close to death. I am saying this not to all of you but to those who condemned me to death, and to these same ones I say: Perhaps you think that I was convicted for lack of such words as might have convinced you, if I thought I should say or do all I could to avoid

my sentence. Far from it. I was convicted because I lacked not words but boldness and shamelessness and the willingness to say to you what you would most gladly have heard from me, lamentations and tears and my saying and doing many things that I say are unworthy of me but that you are accustomed to hear from others. I did not think then that the danger I ran should make me do anything mean, nor do I now regret the nature of my defense. I would much rather die after this kind of defense than live after making the other kind. Neither I nor any other man should, on trial or in war, contrive to avoid death at any cost. Indeed it is often obvious in battle that one could escape death by throwing away one's weapons and by turning to supplicate one's pursuers, and there are many ways to avoid death in every kind of danger if one will venture to do or say anything to avoid it. It is not difficult to avoid death, gentlemen; it is much more difficult to avoid wickedness, for it runs faster than death. Slow and elderly as I am, I have been caught by the slower pursuer, whereas my accusers, being clever and sharp, have been caught by the quicker, wickedness. I leave you now, condemned to death by you, but they are condemned by truth to wickedness and injustice. So I maintain my assessment, and they maintain theirs. This perhaps had to happen, and I think it is as it should be.

Now I want to prophesy to those who convicted me, for I am at the point when men prophesy most, when they are about to die. I say gentlemen, to those who voted to kill me, that vengeance will come upon you immediately after my death, a vengeance much harder to bear than that which you took in killing me. You did this in the belief that you would avoid giving an account of your life, but I maintain that quite the opposite will happen to you. There will be more people to test you, whom I now held back, but you did not notice it. They will be more difficult to deal with as they will be younger and you will resent them more. You are wrong if you believe that by killing people you will prevent anyone from reproaching you for not living in the right way. To escape such tests is neither possible nor good, but it is best and easiest not to discredit others but to prepare oneself to be as good as possible. With this prophecy to you who convicted me, I part from you.

I should be glad to discuss what has happened with those who voted for my acquittal during the time that the officers of the court

are busy and I do not yet have to depart to my death. So, gentlemen, stay with me awhile, for nothing prevents us from talking to each other while it is allowed. To you, as being my friends, I want to show the meaning of what has occurred. A surprising thing has happened to me, jurymen—you I would rightly call jurymen. At all previous times my familiar prophetic power, my spiritual manifestation, frequently opposed me, even in small matters, when I was about to do something wrong, but now that, as you can see for yourselves, I was faced with what one might think, and what is generally thought to be, the worst of evils, my divine sign has not opposed me, either when I left home at dawn, or when I came into court, or at any time that I was about to say something during my speech. Yet in other talks it often held me back in the middle of my speaking, but now it has opposed no word or deed of mine. What do I think is the reason for this?

I will tell you. What has happened to me may well be a good thing, and those of us who believe death to be an evil are certainly mistaken. I have convincing proof of this, for it is impossible that my familiar sign did not oppose me if I was not about to do what was right.

Let us reflect in this way, too, that there is good hope that death is a blessing, for it is one of two things: either the dead are nothing and have no perception of anything, or it is, as we are told, a change and a relocating for the soul from here to another place. If it is complete lack of perception, like a dreamless sleep, then death would be a great advantage. For I think that if one had to pick out that night during which a man slept soundly and did not dream, put beside it the other nights and days of his life, and then see how many days and nights had been better and more pleasant than that night, not only a private person but the great king would find them easy to count compared with the other days and nights. If death is like this I say it is an advantage, for all eternity would then seem to be no more than a single night. If, on the other hand, death is a change from here to another place, and what we are told is true and all who have died are there, what greater blessing could there be, gentlemen of the jury? If anyone arriving in Hades will have escaped from those who call themselves jurymen here, and will find those true jurymen who are said to sit in judgement there, Minos and Rhadamanthus and Aeacus and Triptolemus and the other

demi-gods who have been upright in their own life, would that be a poor kind of change? Again, what would one of you give to keep company with Orpheus and Musaeus, Hesiod and Homer? I am willing to die many times if that is true. It would be a wonderful way for me to spend my time whenever I met Palamedes and Ajax, the son of Telamon, and any other of the men of old who died through an unjust conviction, to compare my experience with theirs. I think it would be pleasant. Most important, I could spend my time testing and examining people there, as I do here, as to who among them is wise, and who thinks he is, but is not.

What would one not give, gentlemen of the jury, for the opportunity to examine the man who led the great expedition against Troy, or Odysseus, or Sisyphus, and innumerable other men and women one could mention. It would be an extraordinary happiness to talk with them, to keep company with them and examine them. In any case, they would certainly not put one to death for doing so. They are happier there than we are here in other respects, and for the rest of time they are deathless, if indeed what we are told is true.

You too must be of good hope as regards death, gentlemen of the jury, and keep this one truth in mind, that a good man cannot be harmed either in life or in death, and that his affairs are not neglected by the gods. What has happened to me now has not happened of itself, but it is clear to me that it was better for me to die now and to escape from trouble. That is why my divine sign did not oppose me at any point. So I am certainly not angry with those who convicted me, or with my accusers. Of course that was not their purpose when they accused and convicted me, but they thought they were hurting me, and for this they deserve blame. This much I ask from them: when my sons grow up, avenge yourselves by causing them the same kind of grief that I caused you, if you think they care for money or anything else more than they care for virtue, or if they think they are somebody when they are nobody. Reproach them as I reproach you, that they do not care for the right things and think they are worthy when they are not worthy of anything. If you do this, I shall have been justly treated by you, and my sons also.

Now the hour to part has come. I go to die, you go to live. Which of us goes to the better lot is known to no one, except the

god.

[37] This is Aristophanes. Socrates refers below (19c) to the character Socrates in his *Clouds* (225 ff.), first produced in 423 B.C.

[38] These were all well-known Sophists. For Gorgias and Hippias see Plato's dialogues named after them; both Hippias and Prodicus appear in *Protagoras* .

[39] Alternatively, this sentence could be translated: "Wealth does not bring about excellence, but excellence brings about wealth and all other public and private blessings for men."

[40] This was the battle of Arginusae (south of Lesbos) in 406 B.C., the last Athenian victory of the Peloponnesian war. A violent storm prevented the Athenian generals from rescuing their survivors.

[41] This was the harsh oligarchy that was set up after the final defeat of Athens in 404 B.C. and ruled Athens for some nine months in 404-3 before the democracy was restored.

[42] The Prytaneum was the magistrates' hall or town hall of Athens in which public entertainments were given, particularly to Olympian victors on their return home.

[43] One mina was the equivalent of 100 drachmas. In the late fifth century one drachma was the standard daily wage of a laborer. A mina, then, was a considerable sum.



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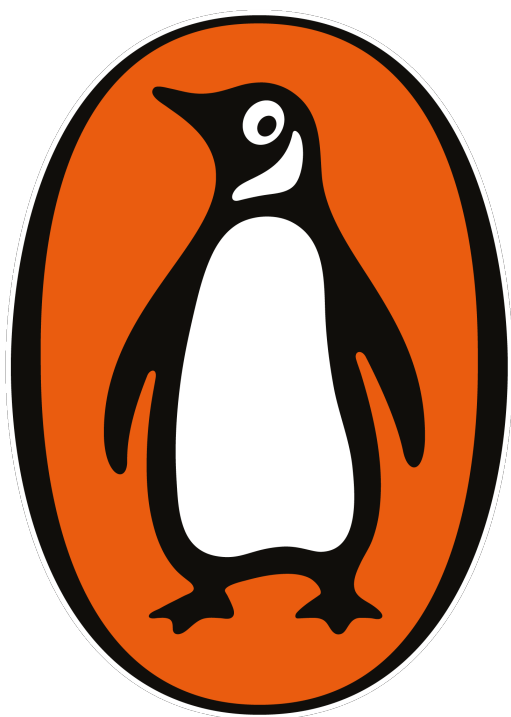
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山魈

/

孙太白尝言：其曾祖肄业于南山柳沟寺。麦秋旋里 [1]，经旬始返。启斋门，则案上尘生，窗间丝满。命仆粪除 [2]，至晚始觉清爽可坐。乃拂榻陈卧具，扃扉 [3] 就枕，月色已满窗矣。

辗转移时，万籁俱寂。忽闻风声隆隆，山门忽然作响，窃谓寺僧失扃。注念间 [4]，风声渐近居庐，俄而房门辟矣。大疑之。思未定，声已入屋；又有靴声铿铿然，渐傍寝门。心始怖。俄而寝门辟矣。忽视之，一大鬼鞠躬塞入，突立榻前，殆与梁齐。面似老鸦皮色；目光睽闪 [5]，绕室四顾；张巨口如盆，齿疏疏长三寸许；舌动喉鸣，呵喇 [6] 之声，响连四壁。

公惧极；又念咫尺之地，势无所逃，不如因而刺之。乃阴抽枕下佩刀，遽 [7] 拔而斫之，中腹，作石缶声。鬼大怒，伸巨爪攫公。公少缩。鬼攫得衾，捽 [8] 之，忿忿而去。

公随衾堕，伏地号呼。家人持火奔集，则门闭如故，排窗入，见公状，大骇。扶曳登床，始言其故。共验之，则衾夹于寝门之隙。启扉检照，见有爪痕如箕，五指着处皆穿。

既明，不敢复留，负笈 [9] 而归。后问僧人，无复他异。

译文

孙太白曾经讲过这样一件事：他的曾祖父在南山柳沟寺读书，某一年的麦秋时节回故乡，在家待了十多天才返回寺里。他打开书房的门，只见书案上落满了灰尘，窗户上也布满了蜘蛛网。他叫来仆人打扫房间，一直到晚上才觉得屋子清爽了，可以坐下来了。于是，他掸掸床，铺好被褥，关上门躺下休息。这时，月光已满西窗棂间。

他翻来覆去很久都无法入眠，四周静悄悄的，没有一点儿声音。忽然，他听到风声隆隆大作，山门也“砰”地发出巨响，他心道：一定是寺里的僧人忘记关门了。正在凝思驻想间，只听得风声离他住的屋子越来越近，不一会儿，房门自动打开了。他大为疑惑，但还没等想明白，风声已经进了屋。又听见穿着靴子的脚步声铿铿作响，逐渐靠近卧室的门。他开始感到恐怖。不一会儿，卧室的门也自动打开了，他猛然看过去，只见一个大鬼正弯腰挤进房里来。它耸立床前，几乎与房梁一样高；它的面孔是老瓜皮似的颜色，目光闪烁不定；它在房

间里走来走去四下张望，张开如盆大口，稀疏的牙齿约有三寸长，舌头一动喉咙里就发出哗啦哗啦的声音，震得四面墙壁嗡嗡响。

孙公害怕极了，但想到卧室这样的方寸之地根本无处可逃，不如乘势刺杀它。于是，他偷偷从枕头下抽出佩刀，猛地拔出砍向大鬼，正好砍在大鬼的肚子上，发出撞击石缶似的声音。大鬼勃然大怒，伸出巨爪来抓他。孙公稍稍缩了缩身子，大鬼抓住被子揪扯着，气冲冲地离开了。

孙公随着被子掉在床下，趴在地上大声呼救。家人都拿着火把赶了过来，只见门和原先一样依然关着，就打开窗子跳了进去。见到孙公的样子，大家都吓了一跳。家人将他搀扶到床上，他才将事情的原委说了一遍。大家一起查看，只见被子夹在卧室的门缝里。再打开门，就着火把查看，看到门上留有簸箕般大小的爪子印，五根手指抠着的地方将门板都穿透了。

等到天亮，孙公不敢再留下来，就背起书箱回去了。后来问僧人，他们说并没有再发生什么怪事。

[1] 旋里：返回故乡。

[2] 粪除：打扫，扫除。

[3] 扃（jiōng）扉：扃，原指关闭门户用的门闩，引申为关闭；扉，门扇。扃扉，指关门。

[4] 注念间：凝注思虑的时候。

[5] 眴（shǎn）闪：闪烁的样子。

[6] 呵喇：拟声词，形容喘气的声音。

[7] 遽：急速，匆忙。

[8] 掙（zuó）：揪扯。

[9] 笈：书箱。

莽中怪

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长山安翁者，性喜操农功。秋间莽熟，刈 [10] 堆陇畔。时近村有盗稼者，因命佃人，乘月辇运登场 [11]；俟其装载归，而自留逻守。遂枕戈 [12] 露卧。目稍瞑，忽闻有人践莽根，咋咋作响。心疑暴客。

急举首，则一大鬼，高丈余，赤发髻须 [13]，去身已近。大怖，不遑他计，蹣身暴起，狠刺之。鬼鸣如雷而逝。恐其复来，荷戈而归。迎佃人于途，告以所见，且戒勿往。众未深信。

越日，曝麦于场，忽闻空际有声。翁骇曰：“鬼物来矣！”乃奔，众亦奔。移时复聚，翁命多设弓弩以俟之。

异日，果复来，数矢齐发，物惧而遁。二三日竟不复来。

麦既登仓，禾 [14] 杂糴 [15]，翁命收积为垛，而亲登践实之，高至数尺。忽遥望骇曰：“鬼物至矣！”众急觅弓矢，物已奔翁。翁仆，齧 [16] 其额而去。共登视，则去额骨如掌，昏不知人。负至家中，遂卒。后不复见。不知其为何怪也。

译文

长山有一位安姓老翁，生性喜欢做农活。有一年秋天，莽麦熟了，收割后就堆在田垄边。当时邻近的村庄有偷盗庄稼的人，安翁就让佃户们趁着月光连夜用推车将莽麦运到场上。等佃户们装车运走后，他自己留下来巡逻守卫。安翁枕着武器躺在露天的野地里，刚闭上眼，忽然听到有人踩得莽根咋咋响。他怀疑来了盗贼，猛然抬起头，却看见一个一丈多高的大鬼，红色的头发，蓬乱的胡须，离自己已经很近。安翁很害怕，顾不上想别的，忽地跳起狠狠刺过去。鬼大叫一声，如雷声轰鸣，消失不见了。安翁害怕鬼还会来，就扛着利器回去。在路上遇到佃户们，他将刚刚看到的一切告诉他们，并劝告他们不要过去。但大家都不太相信。

过了一天，大家在场上晾晒莽麦，忽然听到空中传来声音。安翁大惊，说：“鬼来了！”拔腿就跑，大家也跟着他奔逃。过了一会儿，大家又聚集在一起，安翁让大家多准备一些弓箭以防备鬼再来。第二天，鬼果然又来了，大家数箭齐发，鬼被吓跑了，此后两三天都没有再过来。

荞麦都已入仓，麦场上还散乱堆放着荞麦秸秆。安翁让佃户们将秸秆收起来堆成垛，他亲自爬上垛顶用脚踏实。当秸垛高达几尺时，忽然，他望着远处惊慌大叫：“鬼来了！”大家急忙寻找弓箭，鬼已扑向安翁。安翁倒在了垛顶，鬼咬了他的额头就离开了。大家爬上垛顶一看，只见安翁的前额被咬去巴掌大一块额骨，人已昏迷不醒。大家将安翁背回家，他很快就死了。后来鬼也没再出现过，不知它究竟是什么怪物。

[10] 刈 (yì)：收割草或谷物。

[11] 登场：将谷物收割后运到场上。

[12] 戈：泛指武器。

[13] 髭 (níng) 须：髭须散乱凶恶的样子。

[14] 秸 (jiē)：同“秸”，指农作物收割后的茎秆。

[15] 杂遝 (tà)：众多杂乱的样子。

[16] 齧 (hé)：咬。

偷桃

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童时赴郡试，值春节。旧例，先一日，各行商贾，彩楼鼓吹赴藩司，名曰“演春”。余从友人戏瞩。

是日游人如堵。堂上四官，皆赤衣，东西相向坐。时方稚，亦不解其何官，但闻人语哢哢 [17]，鼓吹聒耳。忽有一人，率披发童，荷担而上，似有所白 [18]；万声汹动，亦不闻其为何语，但视堂上作笑声。即有青衣人 [19] 大声命作剧。其人应命方兴，问：“作何剧？”堂上相顾数语。吏下宣问所长。答言：“能颠倒生物。”吏以白官。少顷复下，命取桃子。

术人应诺，解衣覆笥 [20] 上，故作怨状，曰：“官长殊不了了 [21]！坚冰未解，安所得桃？不取，又恐为南面者怒。奈何！”其子曰：“父已诺之，又焉辞？”术人惆怅良久，乃曰：“我筹之烂熟。春初雪积，人间何处可觅？惟王母园中，四时常不凋谢，或有之。必窃之天上，乃可。”子曰：“嘻！天可阶而升乎？”曰：“有术在。”乃启笥，出绳一团，约数十丈，理其端，望空中掷去；绳即悬立空际，若有物以挂之。未几，愈掷愈高，渺入云中；手中绳亦尽。乃呼子曰：“儿来！余老惫，体重拙，不能行，得汝一往。”遂以绳授子，曰：“持此可登。”

子受绳，有难色，怨曰：“阿翁亦大愤愤 [22]！如此一线之绳，欲我附之，以登万仞之高天。倘中道断绝，骸骨何存矣！”父又强鸣拍之，曰：“我已失口，追悔无及，烦儿一行。儿勿苦，倘窃得来，必有百金赏，当为儿娶一美妇。”子乃持索，盘旋而上，手移足随，如蛛趁丝，渐入云霄，不可复见。

久之，坠一桃，如碗大。术人喜，持献公堂。堂上传示良久，亦不知其真伪。忽而绳落地上，术人惊曰：“殆矣！上有人断吾绳，儿将焉托！”移时，一物坠。视之，其子首也。捧而泣曰：“是必偷桃，为监者所觉。吾儿休矣！”又移时，一足落；无何 [23]，肢体纷堕，无复存者。

术人大悲，一一拾置笥中而阖之，曰：“老夫止此儿，日从我南北游。今承严命，不意罹此奇惨！当负去瘞 [24] 之。”乃升堂而跪，曰：“为桃故，杀吾子矣！如怜小人而助之葬，当结草以图报耳。”坐官骇詫，各有赐金。术人受而缠诸腰，乃扣笥而呼曰：“八八儿，不

出谢赏，将何待？”忽一蓬头童首抵笥盖而出，望北稽首，则其子也。

以其术奇，故至今犹记之。后闻白莲教能为此术，意此其苗裔耶？

译文

年少的时候，我曾去济南府参加府试。正好碰到春节，按照旧时风俗，春节的前一天，各行各业做生意的人要抬着彩楼，吹吹打打到藩司衙门去庆贺，这叫“演春”。我也跟着友人去看热闹。

这天游人众多，把四周围得像一堵堵墙。大堂上坐着四位官员，都穿着红色官袍，东西相对而坐。我当时年纪还小，也不知道他们是什么官，只听得人声嘈杂，鼓乐喧天，震耳欲聋。忽然，有一人领着一个披散着头发的小孩儿，挑着一副担子走了上来，好像说了几句话。当时人声鼎沸，也听不见他说了些什么，只看到堂上的人都在笑，随即有一名衙役大声吩咐他们进行表演。那人答应一声站起来，问道：“表演什么？”堂上的官员互相看看商量了几句，就有一名衙役走下堂来，问他们有什么拿手的表演。他回答说：“我能变出不按季节时令生长的植物。”衙役回到堂上禀告官员，过了一会儿又走下来，让他们表演取桃子。

变戏法的答应了，脱下衣服盖在竹箱上，故意装出一副埋怨的样子，说：“长官们太不明事理了，现在厚厚的冰还没有融化，到哪里能找到桃子呢？不去找的话，又怕当官的生气发怒，这可怎么办？”他儿子说：“父亲已经答应了，又怎能推托呢？”变戏法的人懊恼发愁了好一会儿，才说道：“我已想得很清楚，眼下还是初春时节，冰雪尚未融化，人间哪里能找到桃子？只有王母娘娘的桃园中四季如春，花木不会凋零，也许会有桃子。必须上天去偷才行。”儿子说：“嘻！天也能像爬台阶一样登上去吗？”变戏法的说：“我有办法。”于是打开竹箱，拿出一团有几十丈长的绳子。他理出绳子的一头，向空中抛去，绳子立刻立在了空中，好像挂在了什么东西上一样。不一会儿，绳子越升越高，隐约没入云彩中，他手中的绳子也放到了尽头。这时，变戏法的人叫来儿子，说：“孩子，你过来。我年老力衰，身体笨重，行动不灵便，爬不上去了，还得你上去一趟。”就将绳子头交给儿子，说：“抓着它可以爬上去。”

儿子接过绳子，面有难色，抱怨说：“父亲真是太糊涂了！这么一根细线似的绳子，想让我顺着它爬上万丈高空，如果半路上绳子断了，我岂非尸骨无存！”做父亲的又尽力哄劝，拍抚着他说：“我已经脱口答应了，后悔也来不及了，还是要麻烦你走一趟。你不要怕苦，万一能偷来桃子，定能得到上百两银子的赏赐，到时我一定给你娶个

漂亮媳妇。”儿子这才抓着绳子，盘旋着向上攀爬，脚随着手向上移动，好像蜘蛛在丝网上爬行一样，渐渐没入云端看不见了。

过了好久，从天上掉下一个桃子，有碗口那么大。变戏法的人很高兴，拿着献到公堂上。堂上的官员传递着看了很久，也不知道桃子是真还是假。忽然绳子掉落在地，变戏法的人大惊失色，说：“危险！天上有人弄断了我的绳子，我儿子靠什么下来啊？”过了一会儿，又有东西掉下来，一看，是他儿子的头。变戏法的人捧着儿子的头，哭着说：“这一定是偷桃子的时候被看守的人发现了，我儿子这回可完了。”又过了一會兒，掉下一只脚来；接着，四肢、躯干纷纷掉下来，再不可能活着了。

变戏法的人悲恸欲绝，一件一件捡起来放进竹箱里，并盖上盖子，说：“老汉只有这么一个儿子，每天跟着我走南闯北。今天因遵循长官们的命令去取桃，想不到遭遇这样的惨祸，我要将他背回去安葬。”于是，他走到堂上，跪下说道：“因为桃子的缘故，我儿子被杀了。大人们如果可怜小人，帮助我安葬了他，我即使死了也要报答各位大人的恩情。”堂上的官员惊骇不已，各自拿出银钱赏赐他。变戏法的人接过钱缠在腰上，然后拍了拍竹箱说：“八八儿，不出来谢各位大人的赏赐，还等什么呢？”忽然，一个披头散发的小孩用头顶開箱盖，从里面爬了出来，朝北面大堂上的官员们叩头。一看，正是变戏法老汉的儿子。

因为这个戏法太神奇了，所以直到现在我都记得。后来听说白莲教能表演这样的法术，这父子二人是白莲教的后人吧？

[17] 哏(jì) 嘈：形容人声杂乱。

[18] 白：禀告，报告。

[19] 青衣人：指衙役，皂隶。

[20] 筥(sì)：盛饭或衣物的方形竹器。

[21] 了了：指心里明白，通达事理。

[22] 愤愤：糊涂。

[23] 无何：不久，很短时间之后。

[24] 瘞(yì)：掩埋，埋葬。

种梨

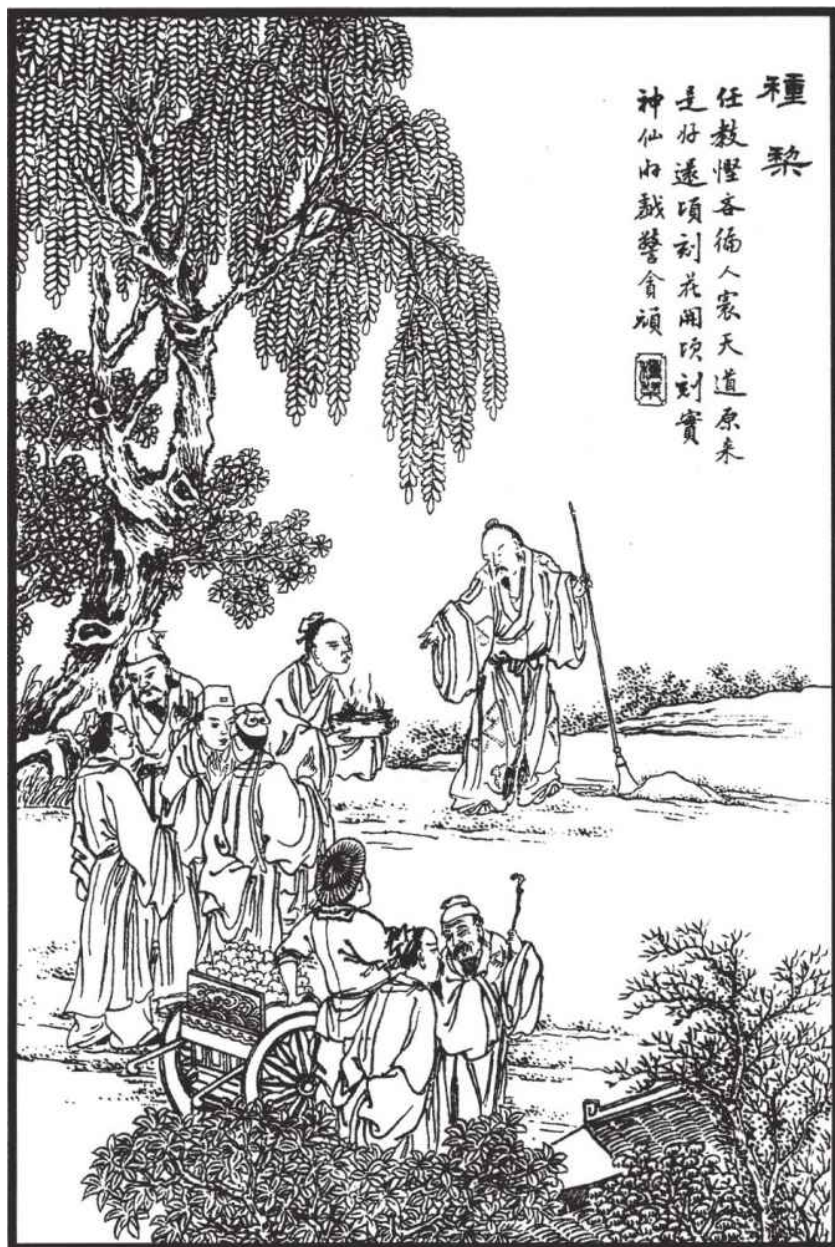
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有乡人货梨于市，颇甘芳，价腾贵。有道士破巾絮衣，丐于车前，乡人咄之，亦不去；乡人怒，加以叱骂。道士曰：“一车数百颗，老衲止丐其一，于居士亦无大损，何怒为？”观者劝置劣者一枚令去，乡人执不肯。

肆中佣保 [25] 者，见喋聒不堪，遂出钱市一枚，付道士。道士拜谢，谓众曰：“出家人不解吝惜。我有佳梨，请出供客。”或曰：“既有之，何不自食？”曰：“我特需此核作种。”

于是掬梨啖。且尽，把核于手，解肩上镢 [26]，坎地深数寸，纳之而覆以土。向市人索汤沃灌。好事者于临路店索得沸沈 [27]，道士接浸坎上。万目攒视，见有勾萌 [28] 出，渐大；俄成树，枝叶扶苏；倏而花，倏而实，硕大芳馥，累累满树。道士乃即树头摘赐观者，顷刻向尽。已，乃以镢伐树，丁丁良久，方断；带叶荷肩头，从容徐步而去。

初，道士作法时，乡人亦杂立众中，引领注目，竟忘其业。道士既去，始顾车中，则梨已空矣。方悟适所依散 [29]，皆己物也。又细视车上一靶 [30] 亡，是新凿断者。心大愤恨。急迹之，转过墙隅，则断靶弃垣下，始知所伐梨本，即是物也，道士不知所在。一市粲然。



好事者于临路店索得沸瀋

译文

有个乡下人在集市上卖梨，梨的味道非常香甜，但价格很贵。有

个道士，戴着破头巾穿着破棉衣，站在卖梨人的车前讨梨吃。乡下人呵斥他，他也不走；乡下人非常生气，就责骂他。道士说：“你一车梨有好几百个，贫道只讨一个，对你也没什么大损失，你何必发这么大脾气？”旁观的人劝卖梨的拿一个不好的梨给道士，打发他离开，但乡下人坚决不肯。

旁边店铺里的一个伙计，见他们吵嚷得不成样子，就拿出钱买了一个梨送给道士。道士致谢之后对众人说：“出家人不知道吝惜东西，我有好梨，准备拿出来请大家品尝。”有人问：“你既然有梨，为什么不吃自己的？”道士说：“我只是需要这个梨核做种子。”

于是道士捧着梨大口吃起来，吃完梨，将梨核放在手中，取下肩上背着铁铲，在地上挖了个几寸深的坑，将梨核放进坑里又盖上土。道士向集市上的人要热水来浇灌。有好事的人就到路边店铺中要滚烫的水，道士接过来浇进坑里。大家都瞪着眼睛围观，只见有嫩芽儿破土而出，并渐渐长大，一会儿就长成一棵大树，枝叶繁茂。转眼间开了花，转眼间又结了果，又大又香的梨子挂满枝头。道士就从树上摘下梨子分给围观的人，一会儿就分完了。然后，道士又用铁铲砍树，叮叮当当好久才砍断。道士将带着枝叶的梨树扛在肩上，从从容容、不慌不忙地走了。

一开始道士作法时，那个乡下人也在人群中，伸长脖子全神贯注地观看，竟然忘记了自己的生意。道士走了以后，他才回头看向他的车子，只见车里的梨一个都没有了。他这才恍然大悟，原来道士分发的梨都是自己的。再细细一看，一根车把也没有了，是刚刚砍断的。乡下人又气又恨，急忙追赶道士，转过一个墙角，看到砍断的车把被扔在墙下，这才明白道士砍断的梨树就是他的车把，而道士早已不知所踪。集市上的人都大笑不止。

[25] 佣保：雇工。

[26] 钁（chán）：古代一种铁制的掘土工具，也是一种挖草药的器具。

[27] 沈：汁。

[28] 勾萌：草木初发的嫩芽，屈者为勾，直者为萌。

[29] 俵（biào）散：分发，分给。

[30] 靶：通“把”，器物上便于用手拿的部分，此指车把。

狐嫁女

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历城殷天官，少贫，有胆略。邑有故家之第，广数十亩，楼宇连亘。常见怪异，以故废无居人；久之，蓬蒿渐满，白昼亦无敢入者。会公与诸生饮，或戏云：“有能寄此一宿者，共釀 [31] 为筵。”公跃起曰：“是亦何难！”携一席往。众送诸门，戏曰：“吾等暂候之，如有所见，当急号。”公笑云：“有鬼狐，当捉证耳。”

遂入，见长莎 [32] 蔽径，蒿艾如麻。时值上弦，幸月色昏黄，门户可辨。摩娑数进，始抵后楼。登月台，光洁可爱，遂止焉。西望月明，惟衔山一线耳。坐良久，更无少异，窃笑传言之讹。席地枕石，卧看牛女。

一更向尽，恍惚欲寐，楼下有履声，籍籍而上。假寐睨之，见一青衣人，挑莲灯，猝见公，惊而却退。语后人曰：“有生人在。”下问：“谁何？”答云：“不识。”俄一老翁上，就公谛视，曰：“此殷尚书，其睡已酣。但办吾事，相公侗傥，或不叱怪。”乃相率入楼，楼门尽辟。移时，往来者益众。楼上灯辉如昼。

公稍稍转侧，作嚏咳。翁闻公醒，乃出，跪而言曰：“小人有箕帚女 [33] ，今值于归。不意有触贵人，望勿深罪。”公起，曳之曰：“不知今夕嘉礼，惭无以贺。”翁曰：“贵人光临，压除凶煞，幸矣。即烦陪坐，倍益光宠。”公喜，应之。入视楼中，陈设绮丽。遂有妇人出拜，年可四十余。翁曰：“此拙荆。”公揖之。

俄闻笙乐聒耳，有奔而上者，曰：“至矣！”翁趋迎，公亦立俟。少间，笼纱 [34] 一簇，导新郎入。年可十七八，丰采韶秀。翁命先与贵客为礼。少年目公。公若为宾，执半主礼。次翁婿交拜，已，乃即席。少间，粉黛云从，酒馥雾霏 [35] ，玉碗金瓯，光映几案。酒数行，翁唤女奴请小姐来。女奴诺而入，良久不出。翁自起，牵 [36] 帟促之。俄婢媼辈拥新人出，环佩璆然 [37] ，麝兰散馥。翁命向上拜。起，即坐母侧。微目之，翠凤明珰，容华绝世。

既而酌以金爵，大容数斗。公思此物可以持验同人，阴内袖中。伪醉隐几 [38] ，颓然而寝。皆曰：“相公醉矣。”居无何，新郎告行，笙乐暴作，纷纷下楼而去。已而主人敛酒具，小一爵，冥搜不得。或窃议卧客；翁急戒勿语，惟恐公闻。

移时，内外俱寂，公始起。暗无灯火，惟脂香酒气，充溢四堵。视东方既白，乃从容出。探袖中，金爵犹在。及门，则诸生先候，疑其夜出而早入者。公出爵示之。众骇问，公以状告。共思此物非寒士所有，乃信之。

后公举进士，任肥丘。有世家朱姓宴公，命取巨觥，久之不至。有细奴掩口与主人语，主人有怒色。俄奉金爵劝客饮。谛视之，款式雕文，与狐物更无殊别。大疑，问所从制。答云：“爵凡八只，大人为京卿时，觅良工监制。此世传物，什袭 [39] 已久。缘明府辱临，适取诸箱篋，仅存其七，疑家人所窃取；而十年尘封如故，殊不可解。”公笑曰：“金杯羽化矣。然世守之珍不可失。仆有一具，颇近似之，当以奉赠。”终筵归署，拣爵持送之。主人审视，骇绝。亲诣谢公，诘所自来。公为历陈颠末。始知千里之物，狐能摄致，而不敢终留也。

译文

山东历城的殷尚书，年轻时家中贫寒，但他有胆量有见识。县里有一处世家大族的宅院，占地几十亩，里面的亭台楼阁连成一片。因为那里经常发生怪异的事，所以被荒废了，无人居住。时间长了，宅院里渐渐长满了蓬蒿，即使白天也没人敢进去。一天，殷公与一群生员在一起喝酒，有人开玩笑说：“如果有人能在那里住一宿，大家就一起凑钱请他吃桌酒席。”殷公一跃而起，说：“这有什么难的！”当晚就带着一张席子过去了。大家将他送到门口，开玩笑说：“我们暂且在这里等着，如果你见到什么鬼狐精怪，赶紧呼救。”殷公笑着说：“如果有鬼狐的话，我一定捉住它做个证明。”

于是殷公走进院子，只见高高的莎草掩隐了路径，蒿艾也长得密密麻麻。这时正是初七初八的样子，幸好有昏黄的月光，勉强可以分辨出门户。殷公摸索着走过几重院落，才到了后面的楼阁。登上月台，见上面光洁可爱，就停了下来。再看看西边的月亮，已落到山后，只留下一线余晖。殷公坐了好久，并无一点儿异常，心中暗笑传言的荒谬。他在地铺上席子，枕着石头，仰面躺下观赏起天边的牛郎织女星。

一更将尽的时候，殷公迷迷糊糊快睡着了，楼下忽传来杂乱的脚步声，有人上楼来了。殷公假装睡着了，斜眼看去，是一个身穿青衣提着莲花灯的人。这人猛然看见殷公，吓了一跳往后退去，对后面的人说：“有个陌生人在上面。”下面的人问：“是谁？”他回答道：“不认识。”不一会儿，一老翁上来，靠近殷公仔细看了看，说：“这是殷尚书，他已睡熟了。只管办我们的事吧，殷相公洒脱不拘小节，或许不会责怪我们。”于是众人相继上了楼，将楼上的门都打开了。又过了一会，来来往往的人越来越多，楼上灯火辉煌，如同白昼。

殷公轻轻翻了个身，打了个喷嚏。老翁听到他醒了，赶快走出来并跪下说道：“小人有个女儿，今晚出嫁。想不到冒犯了贵人，还望不要怪罪。”殷公起身，将他扶起来，说：“不知道贵府今晚有喜事，很抱歉没有奉上贺礼。”老翁说：“贵人大驾光临，能压除凶神恶煞，我们已经很荣幸。如果能麻烦您入座陪客，那更是加倍的荣光。”殷公很高兴，就答应了。进楼一看，屋内陈设很华丽。又有妇人出来拜见，年纪四十几岁。老翁说：“这是我妻子。”殷公也拱手还礼。

一会儿，听到笙管鼓乐震耳欲聋，有人跑上来说：“来了！”老翁急忙快步上前迎接，殷公也站起来等候。不一会儿，好多灯笼引导着新郎走了进来。他年纪十七八岁，相貌俊雅，风度翩翩。老翁让他先给殷公行礼。新郎看着殷公，殷公像代主人迎接宾客的傧相一样，还了半主礼。接着翁婿互拜，拜完后才入席。又过了一会儿，年轻美貌的丫鬟侍女们一个接一个送上热气腾腾的美酒佳肴，玉碗金杯，光芒映照在酒桌上。酒过数巡，老翁让侍女请小姐过来。侍女应声而去，但过了好久也没出来。老翁亲自起身，掀起帷幔进去催促。一会儿，几个丫鬟仆妇簇拥着新娘走了出来，新娘身上的环佩叮当作响，兰麝之香四溢。老翁让女儿向上座贵客行礼，新娘礼毕起身后就坐在了母亲身边。殷公稍微看了一眼，只见她髻插翡翠凤钗，耳戴明珠耳坠，容颜艳丽，举世无双。

随后用金爵斟酒，金爵大得能装下好几斗的酒。殷公心想这个东西可以拿回去向同窗们做证，就偷偷藏在了袖子中。他假装醉酒倚靠在几案上，好像萎靡不振地睡着了。众人都说：“殷相公醉了。”没过多久，听见新郎辞行，笙管鼓乐猛然间又响了起来，大家纷纷离席下楼而去。过后主人收拾酒具，发现少了一个金爵，四处寻找也没找到。有人私下议论可能为醉卧的殷公所拿，老翁急忙告诫大家不要乱说，唯恐殷公听见。

又过了一阵，内外都已寂静无声，殷公这才起来。周围一片黑暗，没有一点儿灯火，只有脂粉的芳香、浓郁的酒气弥漫在室内。看东方已发白，殷公才不慌不忙走出来，伸手摸摸袖子，金爵还在。殷公到了门口，众生员已经先等候在那里，都怀疑他是夜里出来早晨又进去的。殷公拿出金爵给大家看，众人惊讶地询问，殷公就将自己的所见所闻告诉他们。大家都认为金爵这么贵重的东西非贫寒的读书人所能拥有，于是都相信了他的话。

后来殷公中了进士，在肥丘任职。当地的世家大族朱氏宴请殷公，让家人去取大酒杯，过了好久也没拿来。有个小童捂着嘴与主人说了几句话，主人面有怒色。不一会儿捧来金爵劝殷公饮酒。殷公仔细一看，金爵的款式及上面雕刻的图案，与狐狸的金爵毫无差别。他心中十分疑惑，就问主人金爵是什么地方制造的。朱氏回答说：“金

爵一共八个，是我祖上做京官时找能工巧匠打造的。这是家传宝物，已珍藏很久。因为大人驾光临，刚才从竹箱里取出来，仅剩下七只，怀疑是家里人偷走了。但十年间灰尘厚积，与原来一样，实在无法解释。”殷公笑着说：“你那只金爵羽化成仙了，但家传的珍宝不能丢失了。我也有一只，与您的金爵很相似，我要赠送与您。”散席后，殷公回到官署，找出金爵并派人送了过去。朱氏拿着金爵反复查看，非常震惊，亲自到官署感谢殷公，并询问金爵的来历。殷公就将事情的原委一一讲给他听。这才知道千里以外的东西，狐狸也能取来，但终究不敢留下。

[31] 釁（jù）：凑钱。

[32] 莎（suō）：指莎草，多年生草本植物，地下的块根称“香附子”，可入药，此处泛指野草。

[33] 箕帚女：旧时谦称自己的女儿缺乏才貌，只能胜任家务粗活。箕帚，泛指家中洒扫之事。

[34] 笼纱：用绢纱做外罩的灯笼。

[35] 酒馘（zì）雾霏：美酒佳肴，热气蒸腾。酒馘，酒与肉，泛指酒肴。雾霏，热气蒸腾的样子。

[36] 拏（qiān）：撩起。

[37] 璆（qiú）然：形容佩玉相击之声。

[38] 隐（yìn）几：倚靠着几案。

[39] 什袭：原指将物品一层层地包裹起来，后形容珍重地收藏。

鬼哭

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谢迁之变 [40]，宦第皆为贼窟。王学使七襄之宅，盗聚尤众。城破兵入，扫荡群丑，尸填堦 [41]，血至充门而流。公入城，扛尸涤血而居。往往白昼见鬼；夜则床下磷飞，墙角鬼哭。

一日，王生皞迪，寄宿公家，闻床底小声连呼：“皞迪！皞迪！”已而声渐大，曰：“我死得苦！”因哭，满庭皆哭。公闻，仗剑而入，大言曰：“汝不识我王学院耶？”但闻百声嗤嗤，笑之以鼻。公于是设水陆道场，命释道忏度之。夜抛鬼饭，则见磷火荧荧，随地皆出。

先是，閤人 [42] 王姓疾笃 [43]，昏不知人事者数日矣。是夕，忽欠伸若醒。妇以食进。王曰：“适主人不知何事施饭于庭，我亦随众啖噉 [44]。食已方归，故不饥耳。”由此鬼怪遂绝。岂钹铙钟鼓 [45]，焰口瑜伽 [46]，果有益耶？

译文

谢迁起义时，官宦之家都被贼寇占据，学使王七襄家里聚集的盗贼尤其多。官兵破城后，扫荡搜杀叛乱的人，死尸躺满了台阶，血一直流到大门口。王学使进城回到家里，扛出尸体，洗净血污，这才住了下来。但常常大白天也能看到鬼，一到夜晚，床下鬼火乱飞，墙角鬼哭之声不断。

一天，有个叫王皞迪的书生借住在王公家，听到床底有细小的声音连连呼喊他：“皞迪！皞迪！”随即声音越来越大，并且说道：“我死得好苦啊！”又哭起来，于是满院子都是啼哭声。王公听见后，拿着宝剑冲入王生屋里，大声说：“你们不认识我王学院吗？”却只听见众鬼哧哧冷笑。王公没有办法，只好设了水陆道场，让和尚、道士念经超度这些亡魂。夜里又将饭抛撒在院子里让群鬼吃，只见磷火飞来飞去，到处都是。

此前，王公家的一个王姓看门人病情严重，已昏迷数天不省人事。这天晚上，他忽然伸了伸懒腰，好像刚睡醒的样子。他妻子给他端来食物，他说：“刚才主人不知道为什么在院子里施饭，我也跟大家一起吃了。吃完才回来的，所以现在不觉得饿。”从此以后鬼怪就绝迹了。难道和尚道士们奏乐作法、放焰口念经超度亡魂，果然有

效果吗？

[40] 谢迁之变：指顺治初年谢迁领导的一次农民起义。

[41] 墀（chí）：台阶上的空地，亦指台阶。

[42] 阍人：守门人。

[43] 疾笃：病情严重。

[44] 噉（dàn）：同“啖”，吃或给人吃。

[45] 钹铙钟鼓：法会上僧众所使用的四种法器。钹、铙，圆形的铜质打击乐器，为两个圆铜片，中心鼓起呈半球形，正中有孔，可以穿绸条等用以持握，两片相击作声。小的叫钹，大的叫铙。

[46] 焰口瑜伽（qié）：指招僧众做佛事以超度亡魂。焰口，佛经中饿鬼名。密宗对饿鬼施食超度的仪式，称为“放焰口”。瑜伽，指瑜伽僧，即密宗僧侣。

焦螟

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董侍读默庵家，为狐所扰，瓦砾砖石，忽如雹落，家人相率奔匿，待其间歇，乃敢出操作。公患之，假 [47] 作庭孙司马 [48] 第移避之。而狐扰犹故。

一日，朝中待漏 [49]，适言其异。大臣或言：关东道士焦螟，居内城，总持敕勒之术 [50]，颇有效。公造庐而请之。道士朱书符，使归粘壁上。狐竟不惧，抛掷有加焉。公复告道士。道士怒，亲诣公家，筑坛作法。俄见一巨狐，伏坛下。家人受虐已久，衔恨暴 [51] 甚，一婢近击之。婢忽仆地气绝。

道士曰：“此物猖獗，我尚不能遽服之，女子何轻犯尔尔。”既而曰：“可借鞫 [52] 狐词亦得。”戟指 [53] 咒移时，婢忽起，长跪。道士诘其里居。婢作狐言：“我西域产，入都者十八辈。”道士曰：“鞫下 [54]，何容尔辈久居？可速去！”狐不答。

道士击案怒曰：“汝欲梗吾令耶？再若迁延，法不汝宥 [55]！”狐乃蹙怖作色，愿谨奉教。道士又速之。婢又仆绝，良久始苏。俄见白块四五团，滚滚如毯，附檐际而行，次第追逐，顷刻俱去。由是遂安。

译文

翰林院侍读学士董默庵家中被狐狸骚扰，砖瓦沙石经常忽然间像下冰雹一样落下来，一家人只好纷纷奔跑躲藏，等到狐狸停下来才敢出来干活。董公深感忧虑，借了司马孙祚庭的宅子搬过去躲避，但狐狸仍像以前一样来骚扰。

一天，董公在朝房等候上朝时，与同僚们谈起这件怪事。有位大臣说，关东道士焦螟，现在居住在内城，他会道教画符降妖的法术，非常灵验。董公于是登门拜访焦螟，请他帮忙降妖。道士用朱砂画了一道符，让董公回去后贴在墙上。狐狸竟然不害怕，还变本加厉地抛掷砖石。没有办法，董公只好又去告诉道士。道士大怒，亲自来到董公家，筑起神坛，施展法术。不一会儿，只见一只大狐狸趴在了神坛下。董家人受害很久，对狐狸恨之入骨，一个丫鬟上前击打它，却忽然倒在地上没有了呼吸。

道士说：“这个狐狸非常猖獗，我都不能一下子降伏它，一个女

子怎么敢轻易冒犯它呢？”接着又说道：“正好我可以借这个丫鬟之口来审问狐狸，也是个办法。”于是，他伸出食指与中指，念起咒语。过了一会儿，丫鬟忽然从地上爬起来，直身跪在坛前。道士问它住在哪里，丫鬟发出狐狸的声音说：“我出生在西域，来京城已经十八辈子了。”道士说：“京城里，哪里容得下你们长久居住？赶快离开吧。”狐狸没有回答。

道士大怒，拍着桌子说：“你还想违抗我的命令吗？如果再拖延，道法绝不饶恕你！”狐狸这才面露恐惧之色，表示愿意遵守教令。道士又催它快走。丫鬟这时又倒地没了呼吸，过了很久才苏醒过来。又过了一会儿，只见四五个白色团块，圆滚滚的像球一样，贴着屋檐边儿，一个挨着一个依次相随，转眼间都离开了。从此董公家就安宁下来了。

[47] 假：借。

[48] 忤庭孙司马：指孙光祀，字溯玉，号忤庭，平阴人。顺治乙未进士，历任礼科给事中、兵部右侍郎等职。忤，当作“忤”。

[49] 待漏：指官员们五更前到朝房等待上朝的时刻。漏指铜壶滴漏，古代计时器，此处代指时间。

[50] 敕勒之术：道士画符咒驱鬼怪的法术。因画符咒时，上书“时令”“敕勒”字样，因此被用来代称符咒。

[51] 綦（qí）：极，很。

[52] 鞫（jū）：审问犯人。

[53] 戟指：伸出或竖起食指和中指。

[54] 辇毂（niǎn gǔ）下：天子的车驾之下，代指京城。辇毂，天子的车驾，用以指天子。

[55] 宥：宽恕，原谅。

张老相公

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张老相公，晋人。适将嫁女，携眷至江南，躬市奁妆。舟抵金山，张先渡江，嘱家人在舟，勿燔 [56] 膾脔。盖江中有鼉怪，闻香辄出，坏舟吞行人，为害已久。

张去，家人忘之，炙肉舟中。忽巨浪覆舟，妻女皆没。张回棹，悼恨欲死。因登金山，谒寺僧，询鼉之异，将以仇鼉。僧闻之，骇言：“吾侪日与习近，惧为祸殃，惟神明奉之，祈勿怒；时斩牲牢，投以半体，则跃吞而去。谁复能相仇哉！”

张闻，顿思得计。便招铁工，起炉山半，冶赤铁，重百余斤。审知所常伏处，使二三健男子，以大钳举投之。鼉跃出，疾吞而下。少时，波涌如山。顷之浪息，则鼉死已浮水上矣。

行旅寺僧并快之，建张老相公祠，肖像其中，以为水神，祷之辄应。

译文

张老相公是山西人，因为女儿将要出嫁，就携带家眷到江南一带，亲自为女儿置办嫁妆。船到镇江金山时，张老相公准备先过江，就嘱咐家里人在船上不要烹饪有腥膻气味的食物。因为江中有大鼉作怪，它闻到香味就会出来，毁坏船只、吞食行人，在此已为害很久。

张老相公离开后，家里人忘记了他的嘱咐，在船上烤肉。忽然滔天巨浪将船打翻，张老相公的妻子女儿都落水沉没。等张老相公驾船返回得知消息，他悲伤痛恨，几不欲独活。他登上金山，拜见金山寺的和尚，打听大鼉的怪异之事，准备找大鼉报仇。僧人们听了非常害怕，说：“我们每天与它相邻，担心被它祸害，只好将它当神仙一样供奉着，祈祷它不要发怒。经常屠宰牲畜，半只半只地扔到江中，大鼉就会跳出水面吞食。谁还敢跟它作对啊？”

张老相公听后，立刻想出了报仇的办法。他找来几个铁匠，在金山的半山腰建起冶炼炉，炼成一块百余斤重的大铁块。问清大鼉经常出没的地方，让两三位身强力壮的男子，用大铁钳举起铁块投入江中。大鼉跳出水面，快速将铁块吞下又沉入水底。不一会儿，江面波涛汹涌，浪高如山。又过了一会儿，波平浪息，大鼉的尸体浮上水面。

过往的旅客、寺中的僧人都很高兴，修建了张相公祠，并在祠内塑了他的像。人们将他当作水神供奉，向他祈愿都很灵验。

[56] 爇（bó）：煎炒或烘烤食物。

戏缢

/

邑人某，佻无赖。偶游村外，见少妇乘马来，谓同游者曰：“我能令其一笑。”众不信，约赌作筵。

某遽奔去，出马前，连声呼曰：“我要死！”因于墙头抽梁□一本[57]，横尺许，解带挂其上，引颈作缢状。妇果过而哂之，众亦粲然。妇去既远，某犹不动，众益笑之。近视，则舌出目瞑，而气真绝矣。

梁干自经，不亦奇哉？是可为儆薄[58]者戒。

译文

淄川有个人一向轻佻无赖，一次，他偶然在村外游玩，见一少妇骑马而来，就对同伴说：“我能让她笑一笑。”大家都不相信，于是约定打赌，输了的请客吃饭。

此人突然跑出去奔到少妇马前，一连声地嚷着：“我要死！”就从墙头抽出一根高粱秸秆，横长一尺多，解下腰带挂在上面，自己伸长脖子做出上吊的样子。少妇经过时，果然被逗笑了，众人也都笑了起来。少妇已经过去很远，此人仍然一动不动，大家笑得更厉害了。走近一看，只见他伸出舌头闭着眼睛，已经真的断气而亡了。

在高粱秆上自缢而亡，不也很奇怪吗？这件事可以作为对那些轻薄子的警诫了。

[57] 梁□一本：一根高粱秸秆。

[58] 儆（xuān）薄：巧佞轻佻。

九山王

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曹州李姓者，邑诸生 [59]。家素饶。而居宅故不甚广；舍后有园数亩，荒置之。一日，有叟来税屋，出直百金。李以无屋为辞。叟曰：“请受之，但无烦虑。”李不喻其意，姑受之，以覘 [60] 其异。

越日，村人见舆马眷口入李家，纷纷甚夥 [61]，共疑李第无安顿所，问之。李殊不自知，归而察之，并无迹响。过数日，叟忽来谒。且云：“庇宇下已数晨夕。事事都草创，起炉作灶，未暇一修客子礼。今遣小女辈作黍，幸一垂顾。”李从之。则入园中，欵 [62] 见舍宇华好，崭然一新。入室，陈设芳丽。酒鼎沸于廊下，茶烟袅于厨中。俄而行酒荐饌，备极 [63] 甘旨 [64]。时见庭下少年人，往来甚众。又闻儿女喁喁，幕中作笑语声。家人婢仆，似有数十百口。李心知其狐。

席终而归，阴怀杀心。每入市，市硝硫，积数百斤，暗布园中殆满。骤火之，焰亘霄汉，如黑灵芝，燔臭 [65] 灰眯不可近；但闻鸣啼噪动之声，嘈杂聒耳。既熄入视，则死狐满地，焦头烂额者，不可胜计。方阅视间，叟自外来，颜色惨恻，责李曰：“夙无嫌怨。荒园报岁百金，非少；何忍遂相族灭？此奇惨之仇，无不报者！”忿然而去。疑其掷砾为殃，而年余无少怪异。

时顺治初年，山中群盗窃发，啸聚万余人，官莫能捕。生以家口多，日忧离乱。适村中来一星者 [66]，自号“南山翁”，言人休咎 [67]，了若目睹，名大噪。李召至家，求推甲子。翁愕然起敬，曰：“此真主也！”李闻大骇，以为妄。翁正容固言之。李疑信半焉，乃曰：“岂有白手受命而帝者乎？”翁谓：“不然。自古帝王，类多起于匹夫，谁是生而天子者？”



夙无嫌怨

生惑之，前席 [68] 而请。翁毅然以“卧龙”自任。请先备甲冑数千具、弓弩数千事。李虑人莫之归。翁曰：“臣请为大王连诸山，深相

结。使言者谓大王真天子，山中士卒，宜必响应。”李喜，遣翁行。发藏镞 [69]，造甲冑。翁数日始还，曰：“借大王威福，加臣三寸舌，诸山莫不愿执鞭勒 [70]，从戟下。”浹旬 [71] 之间，果归命者数千人。于是拜翁为军师；建大纛 [72]，设彩帜若林；据山立栅，声势震动。

邑令率兵来讨，翁指挥群寇，大破之。令惧，告急于兗 [73]。兗兵远涉而至，翁又伏寇进击，兵大溃，将士杀伤者甚众。势益震，党以万计，因自立为“九山王”。翁患马少，会都中解马赴江南，遣一旅要路篡取之。由是“九山王”之名大噪。加翁为“护国大将军”。高卧山巢，公然自负，以为黄袍之加，指日可俟矣。

东抚以夺马故，方将进剿；又得兗报，乃发精兵数千，与六道合围而进。军旅旌旗，弥满山谷。“九山王”大惧，召翁谋之，则不知所往。“九山王”窘急无术，登山而望曰：“今而知朝廷之势大矣！”山破，被擒，妻孥 [74] 戮之。始悟翁即老狐，盖以族灭报李也。

译文

曹州有个姓李的秀才，家中一直很富有，但住宅并不太宽敞。屋子后面有一片几亩地的园子，一直荒废着。一天，有一老翁来租房，愿出一百两银子的租金，李生以没有多余的屋子为由拒绝。老翁说：“你收下租金就好，不要有什么顾虑。”李生不明白他的意思，暂且收下银子，看看到底有什么怪异之事。

过了一天，村里人看到有车马家眷进入李家，纷纷杂杂很多人的样子。大家都疑惑李家安顿不下这么多人，就去问李生。李生自己还不知道怎么回事，回家察看，并没有什么动静。又过了几天，老翁忽然来拜访李生，并且说道：“搬来贵府已有几天了，每件事都要重新安排，还要起炉灶生火做饭，一直没有时间来尽客居的礼节。今天安排孩子们做了饭，还请你赏光去坐坐。”李生跟着老翁进入园子里，忽然看到一片华美的屋子，都是新盖的。走进室内，陈设也很华美。走廊上酒鼎沸腾，厨房中茶烟袅袅。一会儿，端上了美酒佳肴，极尽美味。不时看到庭院中有少年人来来往往，人数挺多；又听见小儿女轻声细语，帘幕内不时传来笑语声。家眷加上丫鬟奴仆有数十上百人。李生心里明白这家人是狐狸。

李生喝完酒回家，心里暗暗起了杀机。每次去集市上，就买一些芒硝、硫黄，积攒了几百斤，偷偷布满了整个园子。一天，忽然点燃，顿时园中烈焰冲天，浓烟滚滚如黑灵芝一般，起火处焦臭刺鼻，烟尘迷目，让人无法靠近。只听到火中呼号挣扎的声音，喧嚣刺耳。火熄灭后进去一看，满园都是烧死的狐狸，头被烧伤的不计其数。李生正在察看，老翁从外面回来了，脸色悲恸欲绝，质问李生说：“我

与你并无仇怨，每年以百两银子租你的荒园也不算少，你怎么忍心灭我一族？此深仇血恨岂有不报的道理！”说完愤然离去。李生以为老翁会抛掷砖瓦碎石来祸害他，但过了一年多，并没有发生什么怪异的事情。

到了顺治初年，山中盗贼纷起，聚集了有一万多人，官兵也没有能力抓捕他们。李生因为家中人口多，天天担心会发生离乱之事。正好村中来了一位算命先生，自称“南山翁”，算人的吉凶祸福明明白白，好像他亲眼所见一样，一时声名大噪。李生将他请到家中，请他推算生辰八字。南山翁很惊讶，恭敬地说：“这是真命天子啊！”李生听了大吃一惊，以为是无稽之谈，南山翁却一脸严肃坚持此说。李生半信半疑，说：“哪有白手起家而做了帝王的？”南山翁说：“不是这样的。自古帝王大多出身平民，有谁天生就是天子的呢？”

李生被南山翁的话蛊惑，很动心，向他请教各项事宜。南山翁毅然承担起“卧龙”诸葛先生的职责，让李生先准备甲冑数千套、弓箭数千副。李生担心没有人来归附他，南山翁说：“我愿为大王联合各路山寨，深入交结，再派人到处宣扬你是真龙天子，山中的将领兵卒一定会响应。”李生大喜，便打发南山翁去办事。他将家藏的银子都拿了出来，制造盔甲。南山翁几天后才回来，说：“凭借大王的威望福运，加上我的三寸不烂之舌，各山寨都愿跟从你，听从你的指挥。”果然，十天左右就有数千人来归附。于是李生拜南山翁为军师，竖起大旗，设置的五色彩旗林立，又占据山头建起营寨，一时声势大作。

县令带兵来讨伐，南山翁指挥兵马大败官兵。县令很害怕，将紧急情况报告给兖州府。兖州兵马长途征伐，南山翁又埋伏人马进行攻击，兖州军大败，将士们死伤惨重。从此，李生声势更为壮大，党徒数以万计，因此自立为“九山王”。南山翁还嫌马匹太少，正好有京城的马匹要运往江南，他就派遣一支部队拦路抢了下来。由此“九山王”名声大噪，加封南山翁为“护国大将军”。李生高卧山寨中，非常自负，认为黄袍加身称王称帝的日子指日可待。

山东巡抚因为马匹被夺一事，正准备进山剿灭贼寇，又得到兖州府的报告，于是派遣数千精兵，分六路合围而来，兵士旗帜布满山谷。“九山王”非常恐惧，召来南山翁商议对策，却不知南山翁去了哪里。“九山王”束手无策，登上山顶一望，说道：“今天才知道朝廷势力有多强大！”最终官兵攻破了山寨，李生被擒，妻子儿女全被杀了。他这才明白，南山翁就是老狐，这是用杀李生满门来报当年的灭族之仇。

[59] 诸生：明清两代称考取秀才入学的生员为诸生。

[60] 觇（chān）：看，偷偷地察看。

[61] 夥：多。

[62] 欻（xū）：忽然。

[63] 备极：犹言十二分，形容程度极深。

[64] 甘旨：美味的食物。

[65] 燔臭：焦臭刺鼻。

[66] 星者：星相术士，指算命先生。

[67] 休咎：吉与凶，善与恶。

[68] 前席：古人席地而坐，欲更接近而移坐向前，表示为其说所吸引。

[69] 铤（qiǎng）：铤，成串的钱，泛指钱币、银锭。

[70] 鞚（dí）：马缰绳。

[71] 浹旬：一旬，十天。

[72] 大纛（dào）：军中或仪仗队的大旗。

[73] 兗：指兗州府。

[74] 妻孥：妻子和儿女。

罗子浮，邠人。父母俱早世。八九岁，依叔大业。业为国子左厢[75]，富有金缯而无子，爱罗若己出。

十四岁，为匪人诱去作狭邪游[76]。会有金陵娼，侨寓郡中，生悦而惑之。娼返金陵，生窃从遁去。居娼家半年，床头金尽，大为姊妹行齿冷。然犹未遽绝之。无何，广疮[77]溃臭，沾染床席，逐而出。丐于市，市人见辄遥避。自恐死异域，乞食西行；日三四十里，渐至邠界。又念败絮脓秽，无颜入里门，尚趑趄[78]近邑间。

日就暮，欲趋山寺宿。遇一女子，容貌若仙。近问：“何适？”生以实告。女曰：“我出家人，居有山洞，可以下榻，颇不畏虎狼。”生喜，从去。入深山中，见一洞府。入则门横溪水，石梁驾之。又数武[79]，有石室二，光明彻照，无须灯烛。命生解悬鹑[80]，浴于溪流，曰：“濯之，疮当愈。”又开幃拂褥促寝，曰：“请即眠，当为郎作裤。”乃取大叶类芭蕉，剪缀作衣。生卧视之。制无几时，折迭床头，曰：“晓取着之。”乃与对榻寝。

生浴后，觉疮疡无苦。既醒，摸之，则痂厚结矣。诘旦，将兴，心疑蕉叶不可着。取而审视，则绿锦滑绝。少间，具餐。女取山叶呼作饼，食之，果饼；又剪作鸡、鱼烹之，皆如真者。室隅一罍，贮佳酝，辄复取饮；少减，则以溪水灌益之。数日，疮痂尽脱，就女求宿。女曰：“轻薄儿！甫能安身，便生妄想！”生云：“聊以报德。”遂同卧处，大相欢爱。

一日，有少妇笑入曰：“翩翩小鬼头快活死！薛姑子好梦，几时做得？”女迎笑曰：“花城娘子，贵趾久弗涉，今日西南风紧，吹送来也！小哥子抱得未？”曰：“又一小婢子。”女笑曰：“花娘子瓦窑[81]哉！那弗将来？”曰：“方鸣之，睡却矣。”于是坐以款饮。又顾生曰：“小郎君焚好香也。”生视之，年二十有三四，绰有余妍。心好之。剥果误落案下，俯地假拾果，阴捻翘凤。花城他顾而笑，若不知者。生方恍然神夺，顿觉袍裤无温；自顾所服，悉成秋叶。几骇绝。危坐移时，渐变如故。窃幸二女之弗见也。

少顷，酬酢[82]间，又以指搔纤掌。花城坦然笑谑，殊不觉知。突突[83]怔忡间，衣已化叶，移时始复变。由是惭颜息虑，不敢妄想。花城笑曰：“而家小郎子，大不端好！若弗是醋葫芦娘子，恐跳

迹入云霄去。”女亦哂曰：“薄幸儿，便值得寒冻杀！”相与鼓掌。花城离席曰：“小婢醒，恐啼肠断矣。”女亦起曰：“贪引他家男儿，不忆得小江城啼绝矣。”花城既去，惧貽诮责；女卒晤对如平时。居无何，秋老风寒，霜零木脱，女乃收落叶，蓄旨御冬。顾生肃缩，乃持襖 [84] 掇拾洞口白云为絮复衣，着之温暖如襦，且轻松常如新绵。

逾年，生一子，极惠美。日在洞中弄儿为乐。然每念故里，乞与同归。女曰：“妾不能从；不然，君自去。”因循二三年，儿渐长，遂与花城订为姻好。生每以叔老为念。女曰：“阿叔腊 [85] 故大高，幸复强健，无劳悬耿。待保儿婚后，去住由君。”女在洞中，辄取叶写书，教儿读，儿过目即了。女曰：“此儿福相，放教入尘寰，无忧至台阁。”

未几，儿年十四，花城亲诣送女。女华妆至，容光照人。夫妻大悦，举家宴集。翩翩扣钗而歌曰：“我有佳儿，不羨贵官。我有佳妇，不羨绮纨。今夕聚首，皆当喜欢。为君行酒，劝君加餐。”既而花城去，与儿夫妇对室居。新妇孝，依依膝下，宛如所生。

生又言归。女曰：“子有俗骨，终非仙品。儿亦富贵中人，可携去，我不误儿生平。”新妇思别其母，花城已至。儿女恋恋，涕各满眶。两母慰之曰：“暂去，可复来。”翩翩乃剪叶为驴，令三人跨之以归。

大业已归老林下，意侄已死，忽携佳孙美妇归，喜如获宝。入门，各视所衣，悉蕉叶；破之，絮蒸蒸腾去。乃并易之。

后生思翩翩，偕儿往探之，则黄叶满径，洞口路迷，零涕而返。

译文

罗子浮是邠州人，父母都早早去世了，八九岁时就由叔叔罗大业抚养。大业为国子监祭酒，家境富有但没有儿子，他很疼爱罗子浮，把他当作自己的亲生儿子一样。

罗子浮十四岁时，被坏人引诱着狎妓宿娼。当时有个从金陵来的妓女侨居本郡，子浮很喜欢她，被她迷住了。当妓女返回金陵时，罗子浮也偷偷跟着她逃离了家乡。他在妓院住了半年，钱财都用光了，被妓女们嘲笑、嫌弃，但他并没有被立即赶走。不久，罗子浮身上的梅毒疮溃烂发臭，弄脏了床褥席子，终于被妓院赶了出来。他只能在街市上乞讨，街上的人见到他都远远地躲开。罗子浮担心自己客死他乡，便一边讨饭一边西行，每天走三四十里，渐渐到了邠州地界。又想到自己衣衫褴褛，一身脓疮污秽不堪，实在没脸回家，就先滞留在邻近的县里。

一天傍晚，罗子浮打算去山中寺庙投宿，路上遇到一位女子，容

颜美丽如仙女一般。女子上前问道：“你要去哪里？”罗子浮如实相告。女子说：“我是出家人，住的地方有山洞，你可以住下来，不用担心有虎狼相害。”罗子浮很高兴，跟着女子去了。进入深山中，看到一个洞府，进去后看到门前横淌着一条小溪，上面架着小石桥。又走了几步，有两间石室，室内非常光亮，不需要点灯烛。女子让罗子浮脱去破烂衣服在溪水中沐浴，说：“洗洗吧，身上的毒疮自然会痊愈。”又打开帷幃，铺好被褥，催促罗子浮去睡觉，说道：“你赶快睡吧，我要给你做套衣裤。”于是取来像芭蕉叶一样的大叶子，裁剪后缝起来做衣服，罗子浮躺在床上看着。过了一会儿，衣服便缝好了，女子将衣服折叠整齐放在他床头，说：“早上起床后穿上吧。”说完，便在对面的床上睡下了。

罗子浮洗浴后，感觉身上的烂疮不疼了。醒来后一摸，已经结了厚厚的痂。清晨准备起床时，他心里怀疑叶子做的衣服没法儿穿，取过来仔细一看，却是绿色锦缎，非常光滑。过了一会儿准备吃早餐，女子拿来山叶说是饼，一吃果然是饼；又将叶子剪成鸡、鱼的样子烹饪，都跟真的一样。室内一角存放着一坛好酒，女子一次次取来饮用，坛中美酒稍微少一些，她就将溪水灌进去补充。过了几天，罗子浮身上的疮痂都脱落了，他靠近女子恳请同宿。女子说：“你这个轻薄的人，刚能安身，就开始胡思乱想。”罗子浮说：“我只是想以此报答你的恩德。”于是二人同床而眠，非常愉悦开心。

一天，有一少妇笑着进来，说：“翩翩小鬼头快活死了，你们俩何时做成的好事啊？”翩翩迎上去笑着说：“原来是花城娘子。你这贵客可是好久没有光临此地了，今天定是西南风吹得紧，将你吹过来了。抱上儿子没有？”花城说：“又是个小丫头。”翩翩笑着说：“花城娘子真是个瓦窑啊。怎么没有将孩子带来啊？”花城说：“刚刚哄了她一会儿，已经睡下了。”于是三人一齐落座，慢慢饮酒。花城又看着罗子浮说：“小郎君烧高香了。”罗子浮见她二十三四岁，风姿绰约、容貌秀美，心里很喜欢。剥果实时不小心将果子掉到桌子底下，他俯身假装拾果子，偷偷捏了一下花城的小脚。花城看着别处笑笑，好像什么都不知道。罗子浮正在神魂颠倒间，忽然觉得身上的衣服裤子都不暖和了，低头一看，自己穿的衣服已都变成了秋叶。他差点吓死，赶紧坐端正，过了一会儿，身上的衣服才慢慢变回原来的样子，他暗自庆幸两位女子没看见。

又过了一会儿，罗子浮在给花城敬酒时，又用手指挠她的掌心。花城坦然地说笑戏谑，好像完全没有感觉。正在罗子浮心神不宁、心怦怦乱跳时，身上的衣服又已变成了叶子。过了一会儿才又变回来。罗子浮满面羞惭，这才打消杂念，再不敢胡思乱想。花城笑着说：“你家小郎君太不正经了。如果不是醋葫芦娘子拘管得严，他大概早跳到云端逍遥快活了。”翩翩也讥笑说：“这个轻薄的人，就应该

活活被冻死。”两人拍掌大笑。花城离席说：“小丫头醒来，恐怕要哭断肠子了。”翩翩也起身说：“你只顾勾引别人的男人，就想不起小江城会哭死了。”花城走后，罗子浮害怕翩翩嘲笑责骂他，但翩翩仍像平时一样对待他。

住了不久，已到深秋季节，寒风阵阵，霜降叶落，翩翩就捡拾起落叶，储存食物准备过冬。她看到罗子浮冻得瑟瑟发抖，就拿着个包袱，收集起洞口的白云，铺在衣服里做成棉衣。罗子浮穿在身上，暖和得像穿了短袄一样，并且轻软蓬松，就跟新棉衣一样。

过了一年，翩翩生了个儿子，非常聪明漂亮，罗子浮每天的乐趣就是在山洞里逗弄儿子。但他常常想念家乡，恳请翩翩跟他一起回去。翩翩说：“我不能跟你回去，要不你就自己回去吧。”这样拖延了两三年，儿子渐渐长大，翩翩就与花城结成了亲家。罗子浮常常牵挂年迈的叔叔，翩翩说：“叔叔虽然年纪大了，但身体还很强健，用不着你挂念。等保儿结婚后，是走是留，你自己决定。”翩翩在山洞用树叶写字，教儿子读书，儿子一看就明白了。翩翩说：“这孩子有福相，让他到人间，不愁做不到台阁大臣这样的高官。”

又过了几年，他们的儿子十四岁了，花城亲自将女儿送来完婚。只见花城之女衣着华美，容貌艳丽，夫妻二人都很高兴，合家团聚设宴庆贺。翩翩敲着钗环唱道：“我有好儿郎，不羨做高官。我有好儿媳，不羨穿绣锦。今晚聚一起，大家都喜欢。为君斟满酒，劝君多进餐。”酒后，花城离去，翩翩夫妇与儿子儿媳对门住着。新媳妇很孝顺，依恋在翩翩膝下，犹如亲生女儿一样。

罗子浮又说要去，翩翩说：“你有俗骨，终究不能成仙。儿子也是富贵中人，你可将他带回去，我不耽误他的前程。”新媳妇正想着要与母亲告别，花城已经来了。小儿女对他们的母亲恋恋不舍，眼泪盈眶。翩翩与花城都安慰说：“你们暂时离开，以后还可以回来。”翩翩就将树叶剪成毛驴，让三人骑上回家去。

罗大业此时已告老还乡，他以为侄子早已死了，忽见罗子浮带着英俊的孙子、美貌的孙媳回来，欢喜得像得到了宝贝。罗子浮三人入门后，再看看自己所穿的衣服，都已变成了蕉叶。扯破蕉叶，里面充作棉絮的白云也升到了天空。于是，三人都换了衣服。

后来罗子浮思念翩翩，带着儿子回去探望，只见路上落满了黄叶，再也找不到通往洞口的路，父子二人只能流着泪回了家。

[75] 国子左厢：明清时国子监祭酒的别称。

[76] 狹邪游：冶游，狎妓。

[77] 广疮：即梅毒。据说此病最先由粤广通商口岸传入，因称“广疮”。

[78] 趑趄：滞留，徘徊不前。

[79] 武：半步，泛指脚步。

[80] 悬鹑：鹑鹑毛斑尾秃，似披敝衣，因以“悬鹑”比喻衣服破烂。

[81] 瓦窑：烧制砖瓦的窑，用以戏称生女不生男的妇女，因称生女为“弄瓦”，故云。

[82] 酬酢：主客相互敬酒，主敬客称酬，客还敬称酢。

[83] 突突：形容心跳剧烈。

[84] 褌：同“裯”，包袱。

[85] 腊：古代在农历十二月合祭众神叫作腊，因以纪年，此指年岁。

黑兽

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闻李太公敬一言：“某公在沈阳，宴集山颠。俯瞰山下，有虎衔物来，以爪穴地，瘞 [86] 之而去。使人探所瘞，得死鹿。乃取鹿而掩其穴。少间，虎导一黑兽至，毛长数寸。虎前驱，若邀尊客。既至穴，兽眈眈蹲伺。虎探穴失鹿，战伏不敢少动。兽怒其诳，以爪击虎额，虎立毙。兽亦径去。”



少間，虎導一黑兽至

译文

我曾听李太公敬一讲过这样一件事：有一人在沈阳，于一山顶上

集会宴饮。他从山顶往下看时，看到有只老虎口中衔着什么东西过来，老虎用爪子在地上挖了个洞，将东西放进去掩埋好就走了。这人就派人去查看老虎埋的是什么东西，原来是一头死鹿。查看的人将鹿取走，又将洞埋好。过了一会儿，老虎引导着一只黑兽过来，黑兽身上的毛有几寸长。老虎在前面带路，好像在邀请一位尊贵的客人。到了洞前，黑兽凶狠地盯着，在一旁蹲踞守候。老虎往洞里一伸爪子，发现鹿不见了，吓得颤抖着趴在地上一动不敢动。黑兽被老虎欺骗非常愤怒，用爪子猛击老虎额头。老虎立刻毙命，黑兽也径自离开了。

[86] 瘞(yì)：掩埋，埋葬。

余德

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武昌尹图南，有别第，尝为一秀才税居 [87]。半年来，亦未尝过问。一日，遇诸其门，年最少，而容仪裘马，翩翩甚都 [88]。趋与语，却又蕴藉 [89] 可爱。异之。归语妻。妻遣婢托遗问以窥其室。室有丽姝，美艳逾于仙人；一切花石服玩，俱非耳目所经。

尹不测其何人，诣门投谒，适值他出。翼日，却来拜答，展其刺呼 [90]，始知余姓德名。语次，细审官阀，言殊隐约。固诘之，则曰：“欲相还往，仆不敢自绝。应知非寇窃逋逃者，何须必知来历。”尹谢之。命酒款宴，言笑甚欢。向暮，有昆仑 [91] 捉马挑灯，迎导以去。

明日，折简报主人。尹至其家，见屋壁俱用明光纸裱，洁如镜。金狻猊 [92] 薰 [93] 异香。一碧玉瓶，插凤尾孔雀羽各二，各长二尺余。一水晶瓶，浸粉花一树，不知何名，亦高二尺许，垂枝覆几外；叶疏花密，含苞未吐；花状似湿蝶敛翼；蒂即如须。

筵间不过八簋，丰美异常。即命童子击鼓催花为令。鼓声既动，则瓶中花颤颤欲折；俄而蝶翅渐张；既而鼓歇，渊然 [94] 一声，蒂须顿落，即为一蝶，飞落尹衣。余笑起，飞一巨觥；酒方引满，蝶亦颺去。顷之，鼓又作，两蝶飞集余冠。余笑云：“作法自毙矣。”亦引二觥。三鼓既终，花乱堕，翩翩而下，惹袖沾衿。鼓童笑来指数：尹得九筹，余得四筹。尹已薄醉，不能尽筹，强引三爵，离席亡去。由是益奇之。

然其为人寡交与，每阖门居，不与国人通吊庆 [95]。尹逢人辄宣；闻其异者，争交欢余，门外冠盖相望。余颇不耐，忽辞主人去。去后，尹入其家，空庭洒扫无纤尘；烛泪堆掷青阶下；窗间零帛断绵，指印宛然。惟舍后遗一小白石缸，可受石许。尹携归，贮水养朱鱼。经年，水清如初贮。后为佣保移石，误碎之。水蓄并不倾泻。视之，缸宛在，扪之虚爽。手入其中，水随手泄；出其手，则复合。冬月不冰。一夜，忽结为晶，鱼游如故。

尹畏人知，常置密室，非子婿不以示也。久之渐播，索玩者纷错于门。腊月，忽解为水，阴湿满地，鱼亦渺然。其旧缸残石犹存。忽有道士踵门求之。尹出以示。道士曰：“此龙宫蓄水器也。”尹述其破而不泄之异。道士曰：“此缸之魂也。”殷殷然乞得少许。问其何用，

曰：“以屑合药，可得永寿。”予一片，欢谢而去。

译文

武昌尹图南有一处宅院，曾租给一个秀才居住，半年多也没问过此事。一天，尹图南在宅子门口遇到秀才，只见他非常年轻，容仪俊美，衣着华丽，风度翩翩。尹图南上前与他交谈，又觉得他谈吐优雅，令人喜爱。尹图南认为此人很特别，回去后告诉妻子。妻子便让丫鬟以送礼为名，暗地里查看秀才的家庭情况。发现他妻子也是美女，比天仙还美艳，家里所有的奇花异石、衣饰珍玩，都是从来没有看见过、没有听说过的。

尹图南猜测不出秀才是什么人，就递上名帖，登门拜访。秀才正好外出了。第二天，秀才来回拜。尹图南打开他的名帖，才知道他姓余名德。两人交谈之间，尹图南细细询问他的家族门第，余德的回答非常含糊。尹图南反复追问，余德说：“您如想与我交往，我也不敢拒绝。您应该知道我并不是逃亡在外的窃贼盗匪，何必一定要知道我的来历呢？”尹图南连忙道歉，命家人上酒款待他。二人相谈愉快，一直到傍晚，才有两个奴仆牵着马提着灯过来将余德接了回去。

第二天，余德写便笺给尹图南要回请他。尹图南来到余德家，见室内墙壁都用明光纸装裱，光洁如镜子。金狻猊香炉里燃烧着特别的香料，一只碧玉瓶里插着凤尾与孔雀翎各两支，每支二尺多长。一只水晶瓶里浸着一树粉花，叫不出名字，也是二尺多高。垂下的枝条覆盖到了几案之外，树叶稀疏，花朵繁密，含苞待放。花朵的形状像沾水的蝴蝶收拢着翅膀，花蒂像蝴蝶的触须。

酒席上不过摆了八个盘子的菜肴，但异常丰盛精美。余德命童子击鼓催花行酒令。鼓声一响，水晶瓶中的花就微微颤动起来，好像要折断一样。不一会儿，“蝴蝶”的翅膀慢慢张开。接着停止击鼓，随着一声闷响，蝶须样的花蒂立刻凋落，当即变成一只蝴蝶飞落在尹图南的衣服上。余德笑着起身，递上一个大酒杯，斟上酒让尹图南喝。酒刚斟满，蝴蝶便飞走了。一会儿，鼓声又响起，两只蝴蝶飞来落在余德的帽子上，余德笑着说：“我这是自作自受了。”也喝了两大杯。第三次鼓声响过，花纷纷飘落，化作蝴蝶翩翩飞舞，落在二人的袖子上、衣襟上。击鼓的童子笑着过来，指点计数二人身上各落了多少，结果尹图南应喝九杯，余德应喝四杯。这时尹图南已有些醉意，不敢多喝，勉强喝了三杯便离席逃遁。从此，尹图南越发觉得余德是个奇人。

然而余德很少与人打交道，总是关着门待在家里，不与周围的人有婚丧庆吊的往来。尹图南逢人就为余德宣扬，听说他逸事的人都争相与他结交，常常是贵客盈门、络绎不绝。余德很不耐烦，忽然辞别

尹图南离开了。余德走后，尹图南来到他家，只见空空的庭院打扫得一尘不染，烛油堆放在青石阶下，窗户上只剩些残布断线，上面还印着清晰的指痕。只有屋后留下一个小小的白色石缸，可以盛一石水左右。尹图南将缸带回去，盛上水养了几条红鱼，过了一年，缸里的水仍然清澈如初。后来，仆人在搬石块时不小心打碎了石缸，但缸里的水仍凝聚着没流出来。再一看，缸好像还在，用手一摸却空空的、软软的。将手伸进去，水就随着手流出来，手拿开，水又合拢过来，到了冬天也不结冰。一天夜里，缸里的水忽然结成冰晶，而鱼仍在里面游动。

尹图南怕别人知道这件事，一直将它放在密室里，除了儿子、女婿这样的至亲之人，从不给别人看。但时间长了，消息逐渐传开，要求观看赏玩的人纷纷登门。腊月里，冰晶忽然化为水，流了一地，里面的鱼也不见了，只剩下原来旧缸的碎石。忽然有一道士登门索看，尹图南拿出残石给他看，道士说：“这是龙宫中盛水的器皿。”尹图南又跟他讲述了缸破后水不流的奇特之处，道士说：“这是缸的魂魄。”又很殷切地向尹图南求取一点儿碎石，问他有什么用处，道士说：“用石缸的碎屑合药，吃了能够长寿。”尹图南给了他一片，道士高兴地道谢而去。

[87] 税居：租赁居住。

[88] 都：美好。

[89] 蕴藉：宽厚而有涵养。

[90] 刺呼：名帖上所写的姓名。

[91] 昆仑：昆仑奴的省称，泛指奴仆。

[92] 金狻猊：一种金属香炉，上铸有狻猊，有口可通烟火。

[93] 蕪（ruò）：点燃，焚烧。

[94] 渊然：形容鼓声低沉。

[95] 吊庆：吊唁与庆贺。

‘ . . . revealing
great shining
fangs more than
three inches
long.’

Te Troll

Sun Taibo told me this story.

His great-grandfather, also named Sun, had been studying at Willow Gully Temple on South Mountain, and came home for the autumn wheat harvest. He only stayed at home for ten days, but when he returned to the temple and opened the door of his lodgings, he saw that the table was thick with dust and the windows laced with cobwebs. He ordered his servant to clean the place, and by evening it was in sufficiently good order for him to be able to install himself comfortably again. He dusted off the bed, spread out his quilt, closed the door and lay his head down on the pillow. Moonlight came flooding in at the window.

He tossed and turned a long while, as silence descended on the temple. Then suddenly a wind got up and he heard the main temple door flapping noisily. Thinking to himself that one of the monks must have forgotten to close it, he lay there a while in some anxiety. The wind seemed to be coming closer and closer in the direction of his quarters, and the next thing he knew the door leading into his room blew open. He was now seriously alarmed, and quite unable to compose himself. His room filled with the roaring of the wind, and he heard the sound of clomping boots gradually approaching the alcove in which his bed was situated. By now he was utterly terrified. Then the door of the alcove itself flew open, and there it was, a great troll, stooping down at first as it approached, then suddenly looming up over his bed, its head grazing the ceiling, its face dark and blotchy like an old melon rind. Its blazing eyes scanned the room, and its cavernous mouth lolled open, revealing great shining fangs more than three inches long. Its tongue flickered from side to side, and from its throat there issued a terrible rasping sound that reverberated through the room.

Sun quaked in sheer terror. Thinking quickly to himself that the beast was already too close for him to have any chance of escape and that his only hope now lay in trying to kill it, he secretly drew his dagger from beneath his pillow, concealed it in his sleeve, then

swiftly drew it out and stabbed the creature in the belly. The blade made a dull thud on impact, as if it had struck a stone mortar. The enraged troll flailed out at him with its huge claws, but Sun shrank back from it. The troll only succeeded in tearing at the bedcover, and pulled it down on to the ground as it stormed out.

Sun had been dragged to the ground with the bedcover, and he lay there howling. His servant came running with a lantern, and, finding the door locked, as it usually was during the night, he broke open the window and climbed in. Appalled at the state his master was in, he helped him back to bed and heard his tale. Afterwards they examined the room together and saw that the bedcover was still caught tight between the door and the door frame. As soon as they opened the door and the cover fell free, they saw great holes in the fabric, where the beast's claws had torn at it.

When dawn broke the next morning, they dared not stay there a moment longer but packed their things and returned home. On a subsequent occasion they questioned the resident monks, but there had been no further apparition.

The Monster in the Buckwheat

An old gentleman of Changshan County, by the name of An, enjoyed working on his land. One autumn, when his buckwheat was ripe, he went to supervise the harvest, cutting it and laying it out in stacks along the sides of the fields. At that time, someone was stealing the crops in the neighbouring village, so the old gentleman asked his men to load the cut buckwheat on to a cart that very night and push it to the threshing ground by the light of the moon. He himself stayed behind to keep watch over his remaining crops, lying in the open field with spear at hand as he waited for them to return. He had just begun to doze off, when he heard the sound of feet trampling on the buckwheat stalks, making a terrific crunching noise, and suspected that it might be the thief. But when he looked up, he saw a huge monster bearing down upon him, more than ten feet tall, with red hair and a big bushy beard. Leaping up in terror, he struck out at it with all his might, and the monster gave a great howl of pain and fled into the night.

Afraid that it might reappear at any moment, An shouldered his spear and headed home, telling his labourers, when he met them on the road, what he had seen, and warning them not to proceed any further. They were reluctant to believe him.

The next day, they were spreading out the buckwheat in the sun when suddenly they heard a strange sound in the air.

'It's the monster again!' cried old An in terror, and fled, as did all the others.

A little later that day, they gathered together again and An told them to arm themselves with bows and lie in wait. The following morning, sure enough, the monster returned a third time. They each shot several arrows at it, and it fled in fear. Then for two or three days it did not return. By now all the threshed buckwheat was safely stored in the granary, but the stalks of straw still lay higgledy- piggledy on the threshing floor. Old An gave orders for the straw to be bound together and piled into a rick, then he

himself climbed up on to the rick, which was several feet high. He was treading it down firmly when suddenly he saw something in the distance.

‘The monster is coming again!’ he cried aghast.

Before his men could get to their bows, the creature had already jumped at him, and knocked him back on to the rick. It took a bite out of his forehead and went away again. The men climbed up and saw that a whole chunk of the old man’s forehead, a piece the size of a man’s palm, had been bitten off, bone and all. He had already lost consciousness, and they carried him home, where he died.

The monster was never seen again. Nobody could even agree on what sort of creature it was.

Stealing a Peach

When I was a boy, I went up to the prefectural city of Ji'nan to take an examination. It was the time of the Spring Festival, and, according to custom, on the day before the festival all the merchants of the place processed with decorated banners and drums to the provincial yamen. This procession was called Bringing in the Spring. I went with a friend to watch the fun. There was a huge crowd milling about, and ahead of us, facing each other to the right and left of the raised hall, sat four mandarins in their crimson robes. I was too young at the time to know who they were. All I was aware of was the hum of voices and the crashing noise of the drums and other instruments.

In the middle of it all, a man led a boy with long unplaited hair into the space in front of the dais and knelt on the ground. The man had two baskets suspended from a carrying pole on his shoulders and seemed to be saying something, which I could not distinguish for the din of the crowd. I only saw the mandarins smile, and immediately afterwards an attendant came down and in a loud voice ordered the man to give his performance.

‘What shall I perform?’ said the man, rising to his feet.

The mandarins on the dais consulted among themselves, and then the attendant inquired of the man what he could do best.

‘I can make the seasons go backwards, and turn the order of nature upside down.’

The attendant reported back to the mandarins, and after a moment returned and ordered the man to produce a peach. The man assented, taking off his coat and laying it on one of his baskets, at the same time complaining loudly that they had set him a very hard task.

‘The winter frost has not melted – how can I possibly produce a peach? But if I fail, their worships will surely be angry with me. Alas! Woe is me!’

The boy, who was evidently his son, reminded him that he had already agreed to perform and was under an obligation to continue. After fretting and grumbling a while, the father cried out, 'I know what we must do! Here it is still early spring and there is snow on the ground – we shall never get a peach *here*. But up in heaven, in the garden of the Queen Mother of the West, they have peaches all the year round. *There* it is eternal summer! It is *there* we must try!'

'But how are we to get up there?' asked the boy.

'I have the means,' replied his father, and immediately proceeded to take from one of his baskets a cord some dozens of feet in length. He coiled it carefully and then threw one end of it high up into the air, where it remained suspended, as if somehow caught. He continued to pay out the rope, which kept rising higher and higher until the top end of it disappeared altogether into the clouds, while the other end remained in his hands.

'Come here, boy!' he called to his son. 'I am getting too old for this sort of thing, and anyway I am too heavy, I wouldn't be able to do it. It will have to be you.'

He handed the rope to the boy.

'Climb up on this.'

The boy took the rope, but as he did so he pulled a face. 'Father, have you gone mad?' he protested. 'You want me to climb all the way up into the sky on this flimsy thing? Suppose it breaks and I fall – I'll be killed!'

'I have given these gentlemen my word,' his father pleaded, 'and there's no backing out now. Please do this, I beg of you. Bring me a peach, and I am sure we will be rewarded with a hundred taels of silver. Then I promise to get you a pretty wife.'

So his son took hold of the rope and went scrambling up it, hand over foot, like a spider running up a thread, finally disappearing out of sight and into the clouds.

There was a long interval, and then down fell a large peach, the size of a soup bowl. The delighted father presented it to the gentlemen on the dais, who passed it around and studied it carefully, unable to tell at first glance whether it was genuine or a fake. Then suddenly the rope came tumbling to the ground.

‘The poor boy!’ cried the father in alarm. ‘He is done for! Someone up there must have cut my rope!’

The next moment something else fell to the ground, an object which was found on closer examination to be the boy’s head. ‘Ah me!’ cried the father, weeping bitterly and holding the head up in both his hands. ‘The heavenly watchman caught him stealing the peach! My son is no more!’

After that, one by one, the boy’s feet, his arms and legs, and every single remaining part of his anatomy came tumbling down in a similar manner. The distraught father gathered all the pieces up and put them in one of his baskets, saying, ‘This was my only son! He went with me everywhere I went. And now, at his own father’s orders, he has met with this cruel fate. I must away and bury him.’

He approached the dais.

‘Your peach, gentlemen,’ he said, falling to his knees, ‘was obtained at the cost of my boy’s life. Help me, I beg you, to pay for his funeral expenses, and I will be ever grateful to you for your kindness.’

The mandarins, who had been watching the scene in utter horror and amazement, immediately collected a good purse for him. When the father had received the money and put it in his belt, he rapped on the basket.

‘*Babar !* ’ he called out. ‘Out you come now and thank the gentlemen! What are you waiting for?’

He had no sooner said this than there was a knock from within and a tousled head emerged from the basket. Out jumped the boy, and bowed to the dais. It was his son.

To this very day I have never forgotten this extraordinary performance. I later learned that this ‘rope trick’ was a speciality of the White Lotus sect. Surely this man must have learned it from them.

Growing Pears

A peasant was selling pears in the market. Sweet they were and fragrant – and exceedingly expensive. A Taoist monk in a tattered cap and robe came begging by the pear vendor's cart, and the man told him to be gone. When the monk lingered, the vendor began to abuse him angrily.

'But you have hundreds of pears in your cart,' returned the monk, 'and I am only asking for one. You would hardly notice it, sir. Why are you getting so angry?'

Onlookers urged the vendor to give the monk one of his less succulent pears, just to be rid of him, but the man obstinately refused. A waiter who was serving the customers at a nearby wine-stall, seeing that the scene was threatening to grow ugly, bought a pear and gave it to the monk, who bowed in thanks and turned to the assembled crowd.

'Meanness,' he declared, 'is something we monks find impossible to understand. I have some very fine pears of my own, which I should like to give you.'

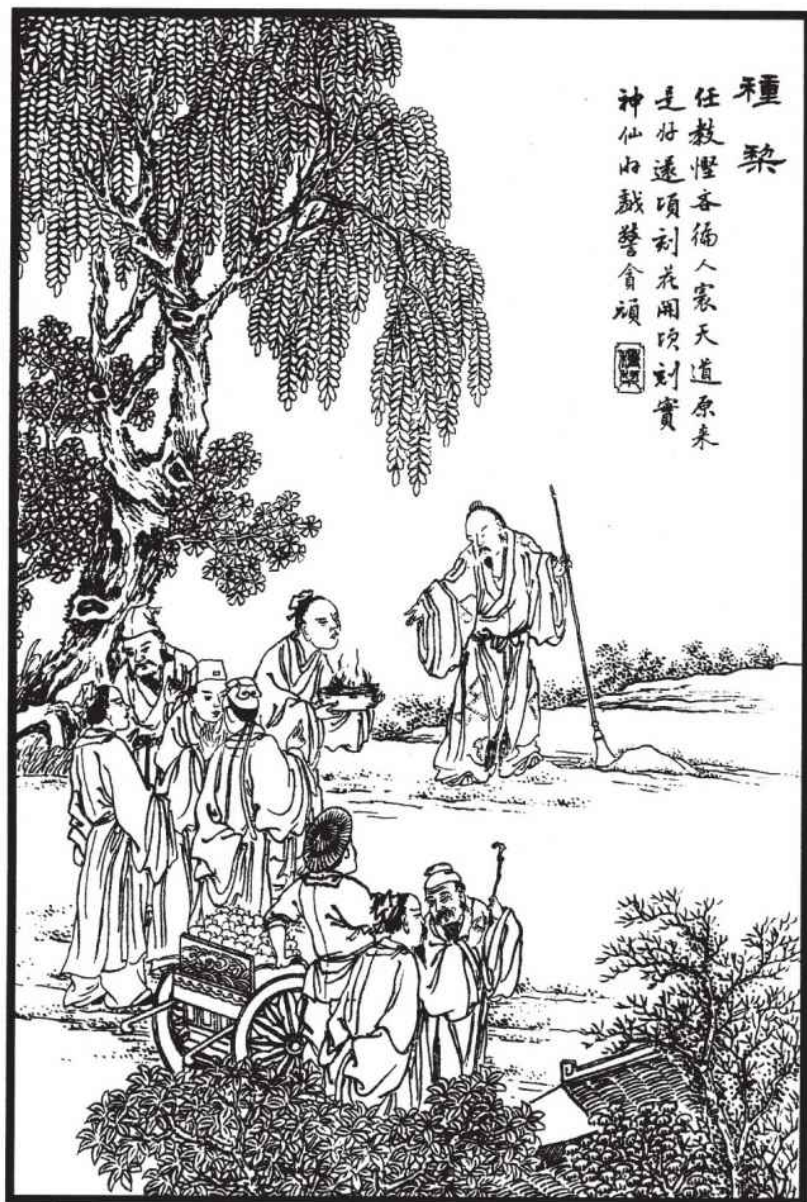
'If you have such fine pears,' said one of the crowd, 'then why did you not eat them yourself? Why did you need to go begging?'

'I needed this one for the seed,' was the monk's reply.

So saying, he held the pear out in front of him and began munching it until all he had left was a single seed from its core, which he held in one hand while taking down a hoe from his shoulder and making a little hole in the ground. Here he placed the seed and covered it with earth. He now asked for some hot water to sprinkle on it, and one of the more enterprising members of the crowd went off and fetched him some from a roadside tavern. The water was scalding hot, but the monk proceeded to pour it on the ground over his seed. The crowd watched riveted, as a tiny sprout began pushing its way up through the soil, growing and growing until soon it was a fully fledged tree, complete with branches and leaves. And then it flowered and bore fruit, great big, fragrant

pears. Every branch was laden with them. The monk now climbed up into the tree and began picking the pears, handing them down to the crowd as he did so. Soon every single pear on the tree had been given away. When this was done, he started hacking at the tree with his hoe, and had soon felled it. Then, shouldering the tree, branches, leaves and all, he sauntered casually off.

Now, from the very beginning of this performance, the pear vendor had been standing in the crowd, straining his neck to see what the others were seeing, quite forgetting his trade and what he had come to market for. Only when the monk had gone did he turn and see that his own cart was empty. Then he knew that the pears the monk had just been handing out were all from his cart. And he noticed that his cart was missing one of its handles; it had been newly hacked away. The peasant flew into a rage and went in hot pursuit of the monk, following him the length of a wall, round a corner, and there was his cart- handle lying discarded on the ground. He knew at once that it had served as the monk's pear tree. As for the monk himself, he had vanished without trace, to the great amazement of the crowd.



The water was scalding hot.

The Golden Goblet

Yin Shidan, who rose to be President of the Board of Civil Office, was a native of Licheng who grew up in circumstances of great poverty and had shown himself to be a young man of courage and resourcefulness.

In his home town there was a large estate that had once belonged to a long-established family, a rambling property consisting of a series of pavilions and other buildings that extended over several acres. Strange apparitions had often been witnessed on the estate, with the result that it had been abandoned and allowed to go to ruin. No one was willing to live there. With time the place grew so overgrown and desolate that no one would so much as enter it even in broad daylight.

One day, Yin was drinking with some young friends of his when one of them had a bright idea.

‘If one of us dares to spend a night in that haunted place,’ he proposed jokingly, ‘let’s all stand him a dinner!’

Yin leaped up at once. ‘Why, what could be easier!’

And so saying he took his sleeping mat with him and went to the place, the others accompanying him as far as the entrance.

‘We will wait here outside,’ they said, smiling nervously. ‘If you see anything out of the ordinary, be sure to raise the alarm.’

Yin laughed. ‘If I find any ghosts or foxes, I’ll catch one to show you.’ And in he went.

The paths were overgrown with long grass and tangled weeds. It was the first quarter of the month, and the crescent moon gave off just enough light for him to make out the gateways and doors. He groped his way forwards until he found himself standing before the building that stood at the rear of the main compound. He climbed on to the terrace and thought it seemed a delightful place to take a little nap. The slender arc of the moon shining in the western sky seemed to hold the hills in its mouth. He sat there a

long while without observing anything unusual, and began to smile to himself at the foolish rumours about the place being haunted. Spreading his mat, and choosing a stone for a pillow, he lay there gazing up at the constellations of the Cowherd and the Spinning Maid in the night sky.

By the end of the first watch, he was just beginning to doze off when he heard the patter of footsteps from below, and a servant-girl appeared, carrying a lotus-shaped lantern. The sight of Yin seemed to startle her and she made as if to flee, calling out to someone behind her, 'There's a strange-looking man here!'

'Who is it?' replied a voice.

'I don't know.'

Presently an old gentleman appeared and, approaching Yin, scrutinized him.

'Why, that is the future President Yin! He is fast asleep. We can carry on as planned. He is a broad-minded fellow and will not take offence.'

The old man led the maid on into the building, where they threw open all the doors. After a while a great many guests started arriving, and the upper rooms were as brightly lit as if it had been broad daylight.

Yin tossed and turned on the terrace where he lay. Then he sneezed. The old man, hearing that he was awake, came out and knelt down by his side.

'My daughter, sir, is being given in marriage tonight. I had no idea that Your Excellency would be here, and crave your indulgence.'

Yin rose to his feet and made the old man do likewise. 'I was not aware that a wedding was taking place tonight. I regret I have brought no gift with me.'

'Your very presence is gift enough,' replied the old man graciously, 'and will help to ward off noxious influences. Would you be so kind as to honour us further with your company now?'

Yin assented. Entering the building, he looked around him at the splendid feast that had been prepared. A woman of about forty,

whom the old gentleman introduced as his wife, came out to welcome him, and Yin made her a bow. Then the sound of festive pipes was heard, and someone came rushing in, crying, 'He has arrived!'

The old man hurried out to receive his future son-in-law, and Yin remained standing where he was in expectation. After a little while, a bevy of servants bearing gauze lanterns ushered in the groom, a handsome young man of seventeen or eighteen, of a most distinguished appearance and prepossessing bearing. The old gentleman bade him pay his respects to the guest of honour, and the young man turned to Yin, whom he took to be some sort of Master of Ceremonies, and bowed to him in the appropriate fashion. Then the old man and the groom exchanged formal courtesies, and when these were completed, they took their seats. Presently a throng of finely attired serving-maids came forward, with choice wines and steaming dishes of meat. Jade bowls and golden goblets glistened on the tables. When the wine had been round several times, the old gentleman dispatched one of the maids to summon the bride. The maid departed on her errand, but when she had been gone a long while and still there was no sign of his daughter, the old man himself eventually rose from his seat and, lifting the portière, went into the inner apartments to chivvy her along. At last several maids and serving-women ushered in the bride, to the sound of tinkling jade pendants, and the scent of musk and orchid wafted through the room. Obedient to her father's instructions, she curtsied to the senior guests and then took her seat by her mother's side. Yin could see from a glance that beneath the kingfisher-feather ornaments she was a young woman of extraordinary beauty.

They were drinking from large goblets of solid gold, each of which held well over a pint, and Yin thought to himself that one of these would be an ideal proof of his adventure that night. So he hid one in his sleeve, to show his friends on his return, then slumped across the table, pretending to have been overpowered by the wine.

'His Excellency is drunk,' they remarked.

A little later, Yin heard the groom take his leave, and as the pipes started up again, all the guests began trooping downstairs.

The old gentleman came to gather up his golden goblets, and noticed that one of them was missing. He searched for it to no avail. Someone suggested their sleeping guest as the culprit, but the old gentleman promptly bid him be silent, for fear that Yin might hear.

After a while, when all was still within and without, Yin rose from the table. The lamps had all been extinguished and it was dark, but the aroma of the food and the fumes of wine still lingered in the hall. As he made his way slowly out of the building, and felt inside his sleeve for the golden goblet, which was still safely hidden, the first light of dawn glimmered in the eastern sky.

He reached the entrance of the estate to find his friends still waiting outside. They had stayed there all night, in case he should try to trick them by coming out and going back in again early in the morning. He took the goblet from his sleeve and showed it to them. In utter amazement they asked him how he had come by it, whereupon he told them the whole story. They knew how poor he was, and that he was most unlikely to have owned such a valuable object himself, and so were obliged to believe him.

Some years later, Yin passed his final examination and obtained the degree of Doctor or *jìnshi*, after which he was appointed to a post in Feiqiu. A wealthy gentleman of the district by the name of Zhu gave a banquet in his honour, and ordered his large golden goblets to be brought out for the occasion. They were a long time coming, and as the company waited a young servant came up and whispered something to the master of the household, who instantly flew into a rage. Presently the goblets were brought in, and Zhu urged his guests to drink. To his astonishment, Yin at once recognized the shape and pattern of the goblets as being identical with the one he had 'kept' from the fox wedding. He asked his host where they had been made.

'I had eight of them,' was the reply. 'An ancestor of mine was a high-ranking mandarin in Peking and had them made by a master goldsmith of the time. They have been in my family for generations, but it is a long while since I last had them taken out of storage. When I knew we would have the honour of your company today, I told my man to open the box, and it turns out there are only seven left! I would have suspected one of my household of stealing it, but apparently there was ten years' dust on the seals and the box was

untampered with. It baffles me how this can have happened.'

'The thing must have grown wings and flown away of its own accord!' quipped Yin with a laugh. 'But seeing that you have lost an heirloom, I feel I must help you replace it. I myself have a goblet, sir, very similar to this set of yours. Allow me to make you a present of it.'

When the meal was over, he returned to his official residence, and taking out his own goblet, sent it round straightaway to Zhu's house. When he inspected it, Zhu was absolutely amazed. He went to thank Yin in person, and when he asked him where he had acquired the goblet, Yin told him the whole story.

Which all goes to show that although foxes may be capable of getting hold of objects from a very long way away, they do not hold on to them for ever.

Wailing Ghosts

At the time of the Xie Qian troubles in Shandong, the great residences of the nobility were all commandeered by the rebels. The mansion of Education Commissioner Wang Qixiang accommodated a particularly large number of them. When the government troops eventually retook the town and massacred the rebels, every porch was strewn with corpses. Blood flowed from every doorway.

When Commissioner Wang returned, he gave orders that all the corpses were to be removed from his home and the blood washed away, so that he could once more take up residence. In the days that followed, he frequently saw ghosts in broad day light, and during the night ghostly will- o'- the- wisp flickerings of light beneath his bed. He heard the voices of ghosts wailing in various corners of the house.

One day, a young gentleman by the name of Wang Gaodi who had come to stay with the Commissioner heard a little voice crying beneath his bed, 'Gaodi! Gaodi!'

Then the voice grew louder. 'I died a cruel death!'

The voice began sobbing, and was soon joined by ghosts throughout the house.

The Commissioner himself heard it and came with his sword.

'Do you not know who I am?' he declared loudly. 'I am Education Commissioner Wang.'

The ghostly voices merely sneered at this and laughed through their noses, whereupon the Commissioner gave orders for a lengthy ritual to be immediately performed for all departed souls on land and sea, in the course of which Buddhist bonzes and Taoist priests prayed for the liberation of his supernatural tenants from their torments. That night they put out food for the ghosts, and will- o'- the- wisp lights could be seen flickering across the ground.

Now before any of these events, a gate- man, also named Wang, had fallen gravely ill, and had been lying unconscious for

several days. The night of the ritual he suddenly seemed to regain consciousness, and stretched his limbs. When his wife brought him some food, he said to her, 'The Master put some food out in the courtyard – I've no idea why! Anyway I was out there eating with the others, and I've only just finished, so I'm not that hungry.'

From that day, the hauntings ceased.

Does this mean that the banging of cymbals and gongs, the beating of bells and drums, and other esoteric practices for the release of wandering souls are necessarily efficacious?

Scorched Moth the Taoist

The household of Hanlin Academician Dong was troubled by fox-spirits. Tiles, pebbles and brick shards were liable to fly around the house like hailstones at any moment, and his family and household were forever having to take shelter and wait for the disturbances to abate before they dared carry on with their daily duties. Dong himself was so affected by this state of affairs that he rented a residence belonging to Under-Secretary Sun, and moved there to avoid his troubles. But the fox-spirits merely followed him.

One day when he was on duty at court and described this strange phenomenon to his colleagues, a senior minister mentioned a certain Taoist master from the north-east by the name of Jiao Ming – Scorched Moth – who lived in the Inner Manchu City and issued exorcist spells and talismans reputed for their efficacy. Dong paid the man a personal call and requested his aid, whereupon the Master wrote out some charms in cinnabar-red ink and told Dong to paste them on his wall. The foxes were unperturbed by these measures, however, and continued to hurl things around with greater vigour than ever. Dong reported back to the Taoist, who was angered by this apparent failure of his charms and came in person to Dong's house, where he set up an altar and performed a full rite of exorcism. Suddenly they beheld a huge fox crouching on the ground before the altar. Dong's household had suffered long from this creature's antics, and the servants felt a deep-seated sense of grievance towards it. One of the maids went up to it to deal it a blow, only to fall dead to the ground.

'This is a vicious beast!' exclaimed the Taoist. 'Even I could not subdue it! This girl was very foolish to provoke it.' He continued, 'Nonetheless, we can now use *her* to question the fox.'

Pointing his index finger and middle finger at the maid, he pronounced certain spells, and suddenly she rose from the ground and knelt before him. The Taoist asked her where she hailed from.

'I come from the Western Regions,' replied the maid, in a voice

that was clearly not her own but that of the fox. 'We have been here in the capital for eighteen generations.'

'How dare creatures such as you dwell in the proximity of His Imperial Majesty? Off with you at once!'

The fox-voice was silent, and the Taoist thumped the altar-table angrily. 'How dare you disobey my orders? Delay a moment longer, and my magic powers will work on you harshly!'

The fox shrank back fearfully, indicating his submission, and the Taoist urged him once more to be gone. Meanwhile the maid had fallen to the ground again, dead to the world. It was a long while before she regained consciousness.

All of a sudden they saw four or five white lumps of some strange substance go bouncing like balls one after the other along the eaves of the building, until they were all gone. Then peace finally reigned in the Dong household.

The Giant Turtle

An elderly gentleman called Zhang, a native of the western region of Jin, was about to give away his daughter in marriage, and took his family with him by boat on a trip to the South, having decided to purchase there all that was necessary for her trousseau. When the boat arrived at Gold Mountain, he went ahead across the river, leaving his family on board and warning them not to fry any strong-smelling meat during his absence, for fear of provoking the turtle-demon that lurked in the river. This vicious creature would be sure to come out if it smelled meat cooking, and would destroy the boat and eat alive anyone on board. It had been wreaking havoc in the area for a long while.

Once the old man had left, his family quite forgot his words of caution, lit a fire on deck and began to cook meat on it. All of a sudden a great wave arose, overturning their boat and drowning both Zhang's wife and daughter. When Zhang returned, he was grief-stricken at their deaths. He climbed up to the monastery on Gold Mountain and called on the monks there, asking them for information about the turtle's strange ways, so that he could plan his revenge. The monks were appalled at his intentions.

'We live with the turtle every day, in constant fear of the devastation it is capable of causing. All we can do is worship it and pray to it not to fly into a rage. From time to time we slaughter animals, cut them in half and throw them into the river. The turtle jumps out of the water, gulps them down and disappears. No one would be so crazy as to try to seek revenge!'

As he listened to the monks' words, Zhang was already forming his plan. He recruited a local blacksmith, who set up a furnace on the hillside above the river and smelted a large lump of iron, over a hundred catties in weight. Zhang then ascertained the turtle's exact hiding place and hired a number of strong men to lift up the red-hot molten iron with a great pair of tongs and hurl it into the river. True to form, the turtle leaped out of the water, gulped down the molten metal and plunged back into the river. Minutes later,

mountainous waves came boiling to the water's surface. Then, in an instant, the river became calm and the turtle could be seen floating dead on the water.

Travellers and monks alike rejoiced at the turtle's death. They built a temple to old man Zhang, erected a statue of him inside it and worshipped him as a water god. When they prayed to him, their wishes were always fulfilled.

A Fatal Joke

The schoolmaster Sun Jingxia once told this story.

A certain fellow of the locality, let us call him 'X', was killed by bandits during one of their raids. His head flopped down on to his chest. When the bandits had gone and the family came to recover the corpse for burial, they detected the faintest trace of breathing, and on closer examination saw that the man's windpipe was not quite severed. A finger's breadth remained. So they carried him home, supporting the head carefully, and after a day and a night, he began to make a moaning noise. They fed him minute quantities of food with a spoon and chopsticks, and after six months he was fully recovered.

Ten years later, he was sitting talking with two or three of his friends when one of them cracked a hilarious joke and they all burst out laughing. 'X' was rocking backwards and forwards in a fit of hysterical laughter, when suddenly the old sword-wound burst open and his head fell to the ground in a pool of blood. His friends examined him, and this time he was well and truly dead.

His father decided to bring charges against the man who had told the joke. But the joker's friends collected some money together and succeeded in buying him off. The father buried his son and dropped the charges.

A Prank

A certain fellow of my home district, a well-known prankster and libertine, was out one day strolling in the countryside when he saw a young girl approaching on a pony.

‘I’ll get a laugh out of her, see if I don’t!’ he called out to his companions.

They were sceptical of his chances of success and wagered a banquet on it, even as he hurried forward in front of the girl’s pony and cried out loudly, ‘I want to die! I want to die ...’

He took hold of a tall millet stalk that was growing over a nearby wall and, bending it so that it projected a foot into the road, untied the sash of his gown and threw it over the stalk, making a noose in it and slipping it round his neck, as if to hang himself. As she came closer, the girl laughed at him, and by now his friends were also in fits. The girl then rode on into the distance, but the man still did not move, which caused his friends to laugh all the more. Presently they went up and looked at him: his tongue was protruding from his mouth, his eyes were closed. He was quite lifeless.

Strange that a man could succeed in hanging himself from a millet stalk. Let this be a warning to libertines and pranksters.

King of the Nine Mountains

There was a certain gentleman by the name of Li from the town of Caozhou, an official scholar of the town, whose family had always been well off, though their residence had never been extensive. The garden behind their house, of an acre or two, had been largely abandoned.

One day, an old man arrived at the house, inquiring about a place to rent. He said he was willing to spend as much as a hundred taels, but Li declined, arguing that he had insufficient space.

‘Please accept my offer,’ pleaded the old man. ‘I will cause you no trouble whatsoever.’

Li did not quite understand what he meant by this, but finally agreed to accept the money and see what happened.

A day later, the local people saw carriages and horses and a throng of people streaming into the garden behind Li’s residence. They found it hard to believe that the place could accommodate so many, and asked Li what was going on. He himself was quite at a loss to explain, and hurried in to investigate, but found no trace of anything.

A few days later, the old man called on him again.

‘I have enjoyed your hospitality already for several days and nights,’ he said. ‘Things have been very hectic. We have been so busy settling in, I am afraid we simply have not had time to entertain you as we should have done. Today I have asked my daughters to prepare a little meal, and I hope you will honour us with your presence.’

Li accepted the invitation and followed the old man into the garden, where this time he beheld a newly constructed range of most splendid and imposing buildings. They entered one of these, the interior of which was most elegantly appointed. Wine was being heated in a cauldron out on the verandah, while the delicate aroma of tea emanated from the kitchen. Presently wine and food were

served, all of the finest quality and savour. Li could hear and see countless young people coming and going in the courtyard, and he heard the voices of girls chattering and laughing behind gauze curtains. Altogether he estimated that, including family and servants, there must have been over a thousand people living in the garden.

Li knew they must all be foxes. When the meal was finished, he returned home and secretly resolved to find a way of killing them. Every time he went to market he bought a quantity of saltpetre, until he had accumulated several hundred catties of the stuff, which he put down everywhere in the garden. He set light to it, and the flames leaped up into the night sky, spreading a cloud of smoke like a great black mushroom. The pungent odour of the smoke and the choking particles of burning soot prevented anyone from getting close, and all that could be heard was the deafening din of a thousand screaming voices. When the fire had finally burned itself out and Li went into the garden, he saw the bodies of dead foxes lying everywhere, countless numbers of them, charred beyond recognition. He was still gazing at them when the old man came in from outside, an expression of utter devastation and grief on his face.

‘What harm did we ever do you?’ he reproached Li. ‘We paid you a hundred taels – far more than it was worth – to rent your ruin of a garden. How could you be so cruel as to destroy every last member of my family? It is a terrible thing that you have done, and we will most certainly be revenged!’

And with those bitter words of anger, he took his leave.

Li was concerned that he would cause trouble. But a year went by without any strange or untoward occurrence.

It was the first year of the reign of the Manchu Emperor Shunzhi. There were hordes of bandits up in the hills, who formed huge roving companies which the authorities were quite powerless to apprehend. Li had numerous dependants and was especially concerned at the disturbances.

Then, one day, a fortune-teller arrived in the town, calling himself the Old Man of the Southern Mountain. He claimed to be able to see into the future with the utmost accuracy, and soon

became something of a local celebrity. Li sent for him and asked him to read his Eight Astrological Signs. The old man did so, and then rose hurriedly to his feet with a gesture of reverence.



'What harm did we ever do you?'

‘You, sir, are a true lord, an emperor among men!’

Li was flabbergasted and thought that perhaps the old man was making it all up. But he insisted that he was telling the truth, and Li was almost tempted to believe it himself.

‘But I am a nobody,’ he said. ‘Tell me: when did a man ever receive the Mandate of Heaven and become Emperor in this way – with his own bare hands?’

‘Why,’ declared the old man, ‘throughout history! Our Emperors have always come from the ranks of the common people. Which founder of a dynasty was ever *born* Son of Heaven?’

Now Li, who was beginning to get carried away, drew close to the fortune-teller and asked him for further guidance. The old man declared that he himself would be willing to serve as Li’s Chief Marshal, just as the great wizard and strategist Zhuge Liang had once served the Pretender Liu Bei in the time of the Three Kingdoms. Li was to make ready large quantities of suits of armour and bows and crossbows. When Li expressed doubts that anyone would rally to his side, the old man replied, ‘Allow me to work for you in the hills, sir. Let me forge links and win men over. Once word is out that you are indeed the true Son of Heaven, have no fear, the fighters of the hills will flock to you.’

Li was overjoyed, and instructed the old man to do as he proposed. He took out all the gold he had and gave orders for the necessary quantity of suits of armour to be made. Several days later, the old man was back.

‘Thanks principally to Your Majesty’s great aura of blessing, and in some negligible part to my own paltry abilities as an orator, on every hill the men are now thronging to join your cause and rallying to your banner.’

Sure enough, ten days later, a large body of men came in person to swear their allegiance to the new Son of Heaven and to the Old Man of the Southern Mountain whom they acknowledged as their Supreme Marshal. They set up a great standard, with a forest of brightly coloured pennants fluttering in the breeze, and from their stockade on one of the hills they lorded it over the region.

The District Magistrate led out a force to quell this rebellion, and the rebels under the command of the old fortune-teller

inflicted a crushing defeat on the government troops. The Magistrate took fright and sent for urgent reinforcements from the Prefect. The Old Marshal harassed these fresh troops, ambushing and overwhelming them, killing large numbers, including several of their commanding officers. The rebels were now more widely feared than ever. They numbered ten thousand, and Li formally proclaimed himself the King of the Nine Mountains, while his Marshal was given the honorific title of Lord Marshal Protector of the Realm. The old man now reckoned his troops were short of horses, and since it so happened that the authorities in the capital were sending some horses under escort to the south, he dispatched some men to intercept the convoy and seize the horses. The success of this operation increased the prestige of the King of the Nine Mountains still further. He took his ease in his mountain lair, well satisfied with himself and considering it now merely a matter of time before he was officially installed on the Dragon Throne.

The Governor of Shandong Province now decided, mainly on account of the seizure of the horses, to launch a large-scale expedition to quell the rebellion once and for all. He received a report from the Prefect of Yanzhou, and sent large numbers of crack troops, who were to co-ordinate with detachments from the six local circuits and converge on the rebel stronghold from all sides. The King of the Nine Mountains became alarmed and summoned his Marshal for a strategic consultation, only to find that the old man had vanished. The 'King' was truly at his wits' end. He climbed to the top of one of the mountains of his 'domain' and looked down on the government forces and their standards, which stretched along every valley and on every hilltop.

'Now I see,' he declared sombrely, 'how great is the might of the Emperor's court!'

His stronghold was destroyed, the King himself was captured, his wife and entire family were executed. Only then did Li understand that the Marshal was the old fox, taking his revenge for the destruction of his own fox-family.

Butterfly

Luo Zifu was born in Bin County, and lost both his parents at an early age. When he was eight or nine years old he went to live with his Uncle Daye, a high official in the Imperial College and an immensely wealthy man. Daye had no sons of his own and came to love Luo as if he were his own child.

When the boy was fourteen, he fell in with bad company and became a regular frequenter of the local pleasure-houses. A famous Nanking courtesan happened to be in Bin County at the time, and the young Luo became hopelessly infatuated with her. When she returned to Nanking, he ran away with her and lived with her there in her establishment for a good six months – by which time his money was all gone and the other girls had begun to mock him mercilessly, though they still tolerated his presence.

Then he contracted syphilis and broke out in suppurating sores, which left stains on the bedding, and they finally drove him from the house. He took to begging in the streets, where the passers-by shunned him. He began to dread the thought of dying so far from home, and one day set off begging his way back to Shaanxi, covering ten or so miles a day, until eventually he came to the borders of Bin County. His filthy rags and foul, pus-covered body made him too ashamed to go any further into his old neighbourhood, and instead he hobbled about on the outskirts of town.

Towards evening, he was stumbling towards a temple in the hills, seeking shelter for the night, when he encountered a young woman of a quite unearthly beauty, who came up to him and asked him where he was going. He told her his whole story.

‘I myself have renounced the world,’ was her response. ‘I live here in a cave in the hills. You are welcome to stay with me. Here at least you will be safe from tigers and wolves.’

Luo followed her joyfully, and together they walked deeper into the hills. Presently he found himself at the entrance to a grotto,

inside which flowed a stream, with a stone bridge leading over it. A few steps further and they came to two chambers hollowed out of the rock, both of them brightly lit, but with no sign anywhere of either candle or lamp. The girl bid Luo remove his rags and bathe in the waters of the stream.

‘Wash,’ she said, ‘and your sores will all be healed.’

She drew apart the bed- curtains and made up a bed for him, dusting off the quilt.

‘Sleep now,’ she said, ‘and I will make you a pair of trousers.’

She brought in what looked like a large plantain leaf and began cutting it to shape. He lay there watching her, and in a very short while the trousers were made and placed folded on the bed.

‘You can wear these in the morning.’

She lay down on a couch opposite.

After bathing in the stream, Luo felt all the pain go out of his sores, and when he awoke during the night and touched them, they had already dried and hardened into thick scabs. In the morning he rose, wondering if he would truly be able to wear the plantain- leaf trousers. When he took them in his hands, he found that they were wonderfully smooth, like green satin.

In a little while, breakfast was prepared. The young woman brought more leaves from the mountainside. She said that they were pancakes, and they ate them, and sure enough they were pancakes. She cut the shapes of poultry and fish from the leaves and cooked them, and they made a delicious meal. In the corner of the room stood a vat filled with fine wine, from which they drank, and when the supply ran out she merely replenished it with water from the stream.

In a few days, when all his sores and scabs were gone, he went up to her and begged her to share his bed.

‘Silly boy!’ she cried. ‘No sooner cured than you go losing your head again!’

‘I only want to repay your kindness ...’

They had much pleasure together that night.

Time passed, and one day another young woman came into the

grotto and greeted them with a broad grin.

‘Why, my dear wicked little Butterfly!’ (for such was the girl’s name). ‘You *do* seem to be having a good time! And when did this cosy little idyll of yours begin, pray?’

‘It’s been such an age since you last visited, dearest Sister Flower!’ returned Butterfly, with a teasing smile. ‘What Fair Wind of Love blows you here today? And have you had your little baby boy yet?’

‘Actually I had a girl ...’

‘What a doll factory you are!’ quipped Butterfly. ‘Didn’t you bring her with you?’

‘She’s only just this minute stopped crying and fallen asleep.’

Flower sat down with them and drank her fill of wine.

‘This young man must have burned some very special incense to be so lucky,’ she remarked, looking at Luo. He in turn studied her. She was a beautiful young woman in her early twenties, and the susceptible young man was instantly smitten. He peeled a fruit and ‘accidentally’ dropped it under the table. Bending down to retrieve it, he gave the tip of one of her tiny embroidered slippers a little pinch. She turned away and smiled, pretending not to have noticed. Luo, who was now totally entranced and more than a little aroused, noticed all of a sudden that his gown and trousers were growing cold, and when he looked down at them they had turned into withered leaves. Horrified, he sat primly upright for a moment, and slowly they reverted to their former soft, silken appearance. He was secretly relieved that neither of the girls seemed to have noticed anything.

A little later, they were still drinking together when he let his finger stray to the palm of Flower’s dainty little hand. Flower carried on laughing and smiling, as if nothing had happened. And then suddenly, to his horror, it happened a second time: silk was transformed to leaf, and leaf back to silk. He had learned his lesson this time, and resolved to behave himself.

‘Your young man is rather naughty!’ said Flower, with a smile. ‘If you weren’t such a jealous jar of vinegar, he’d be roaming all over the place!’

'You faithless boy!' quipped Butterfly. 'You deserve to freeze to death!'

She and Flower both laughed and clapped their hands.

'My little girl's awake again,' said Flower, rising from her seat. 'She'll hurt herself crying like that.'

'Hark at you,' said Butterfly, 'leading strange men astray and neglecting your own child!' Flower left them, and Luo was afraid he would be subjected to mockery and recrimination from Butterfly. But she was as delightful as ever.

The days passed, and, as autumn turned to winter, the cold wind and frost stripped the trees bare. Butterfly gathered the fallen leaves and began storing them for food to see them through the winter. She noticed Luo shivering, and went to the entrance of the grotto, where she gathered white clouds with which to line a padded gown for him. When it was made, it was warm as silk, and the padding was light and soft as fresh cotton floss.

A year later, she gave birth to a son, a clever, handsome child with whom Luo loved to pass the days playing in the grotto. But, as time went by, he began to pine for home and begged Butterfly to return with him.

'I cannot go,' she told him. 'But you go if you must.'

A further two or three years went by. The boy grew, and they betrothed him to Flower's little daughter. Luo was now constantly thinking of his old uncle, Daye.

'The old man is strong and well,' Butterfly assured him. 'You do not need to worry on his behalf. Wait until your boy is married. Then you can go.'

She would sit in the grotto and write lessons on leaves for their son, who mastered them at a single glance.

'Our son has a happy destiny,' she said to Luo. 'If he goes into the human world, he will certainly rise to great heights.'

When the boy was fourteen, Flower came with her daughter, dressed in all her finery. She had grown into a radiantly beautiful young woman. She and Butterfly's son were very happy to be married, and the whole family held a feast to celebrate their union.

Butterfly sang a song, tapping out the rhythm with her hairpin:

A fine son have I,

Why should I yearn

For pomp and splendour?

A fine daughter is mine,

Why should I long

For silken luxury?

Tonight we are gathered

To sing and be merry.

For you, dear lad, a parting cup!

For you, a plate of food!

Flower took her leave. The young couple made their home in the stone chamber opposite, and the young bride waited dutifully on Butterfly as if she were her own mother.

It was not long before Luo started talking again of returning home.

‘You will always be a mortal,’ said Butterfly. ‘It is in your bones, and in our son’s. He, too, belongs in the world of men. Take him with you. I do not wish to blight his days.’

The young bride wanted to say a last farewell to her mother, and Flower came to visit them. Both she and her husband were loth to leave their mothers, and their eyes brimmed with tears.

‘Go for a while,’ said the women, by way of comforting them. ‘You can always come back later.’

Butterfly cut out a leaf and made a donkey, and the three of them, Luo and the young couple, climbed on to the beast and rode away upon it.

Luo’s uncle, Daye, was by now an old man and retired from

public life. He thought that his adopted son had died. And now, out of the blue, there he was, with a son of his own and a beautiful daughter-in-law! He rejoiced as if he had come upon some precious treasure. The moment they entered his house, their silken clothes all turned once more into crumbling plantain leaves, while the 'cotton padding' drifted up into the sky. They dressed themselves in new, more ordinary clothes.

As time went by, Luo pined for Butterfly, and he went in search of her with his son. But the path through the hills was strewn with yellow leaves, and the entrance to the grotto was lost in the mist. The two of them returned weeping from their quest.

The Black Beast

My friend's grandfather Li Jingyi once told the following story.

A certain gentleman was picnicking on a mountainside near the city of Shenyang when he looked down and saw a tiger come walking by, carrying something in its mouth. The tiger dug a hole and buried whatever it was in the ground. When he had gone, the gentleman told his men to find out what it was the tiger had buried. They came back to inform him that it was a deer, and he bade them retrieve the dead animal and fill up the hole.

Later the tiger returned, followed this time by a shaggy black beast. The tiger went in front as if it were politely escorting an esteemed guest. When the two animals reached the hole, the black beast squatted to one side and watched intently while the tiger felt in the earth with his paws, only to discover that the deer was no longer there. The tiger lay there prostrate and trembling, not daring to move. The black beast, thinking that the tiger had told a lie, flew into a fury and struck the tiger on the forehead with its paw. The tiger died immediately, and the black beast went away.



黑獸

鄭人蕉鹿竟成虛白額威
消一弊餘苛政由未猛於
原不知此獸可能除



The tiger returned, followed by a shaggy black beast.

The Stone Bowl

A certain gentleman by the name of Yin Tu'nan, of Wuchang, possessed a villa that he rented out to a young scholar. Half a year passed and he never once had occasion to call on this young tenant of his. Then one day he chanced to see him outside the entrance to the compound, and observing that, despite the tenant's evident youth, he had the fastidious manner and elegant accoutrements of a person of refinement, Yin approached him and engaged him in conversation. He found him indeed to be a most charming and cultivated person. Clearly this was no ordinary lodger.

Returning home, Yin mentioned the encounter to his wife, who sent over one of her own maids to spy out the land, on the pretext of delivering a gift. The maid discovered a young lady in the young man's apartment, of a breathtaking beauty that surpassed (as she put it) that of a fairy, while the living quarters, she observed to her mistress, were furnished with an extraordinary variety of plants, ornamental stones, rare clothes and assorted curios, things such as she had never before set eyes on.

Yin was intrigued to find out exactly what sort of person this young man could be, and went himself to the villa to pay him a visit. It so happened the man was out, but the following day he returned Yin's visit and presented his name card. Yin read on the card that his name was Yu De, but when Yin pressed Yu De for further details of his background, he became extremely vague.

'I am happy to make your acquaintance, sir. Trust me, I am no robber, nor am I a fugitive from justice. But beyond that, I am surely not obliged to divulge further particulars of my identity.'

Yin apologized for his incivility and set wine and food before his guest, whereupon they dined together in a most convivial manner until late in the evening, when two dark-skinned servants came with horses and lanterns to fetch their young master home.

The following day, he sent Yin a note inviting him over to the villa for a return visit. When Yin arrived, he observed that the walls

of the room in which he was received were lined with a glossy paper that shone like the surface of a mirror, while fumes of some exotic incense smouldered from a golden censer fashioned in the shape of a lion. Beside the censer stood a vase of dark- green jade containing four feathers – two phoenix feathers, two peacock – each of them over two feet in length. In another vase, made of pure crystal, was a branch of some flowering tree which he could not identify, also about two feet long, covered with pink blossoms and trailing down over the edge of the little table on which it stood. The densely clustered flowers, still in bud, were admirably set off by the sparsity of leaves. They resembled butterflies moistened by the morning dew, resting with closed wings on the branch, to which they were attached by delicate antenna- like tendrils.

The dinner served consisted of eight dishes, each one a gastronomic delicacy. After dinner, the host ordered his servant to ‘sound the drum for the flowers’ and to commence the drinking game. The drum duly sounded, and as it did so the flowers on the branch began to open tremulously, spreading their ‘butterfly wings’ very slowly one by one. And then as the drumming ceased, on the final solemn beat, the tendrils of one flower detached themselves from the branch and became a butterfly, fluttering through the air and alighting on Yin’s gown. With a laugh, Yu poured his guest a large goblet of wine, and when Yin had drained the goblet dry, the butterfly flew away. An instant later the drumming recommenced, and this time when it ceased two butterflies flew up into the air and settled on Yu’s cap. He laughed again.

‘Serves me right! I must drink a double scone myself!’

And he downed two goblets. At the third drumming, a veritable shower of butterfly- flowers began to fall through the air, fluttering here and there and eventually settling in large numbers on the gowns of both men. The pageboy drummer smiled and thrust out his fingers twice, in the manner of drinking games: once for Yin, and it came to nine fingers; once for Yu, and it came to four. Yin was already somewhat the worse for drink and was unable to down his quota. He managed to knock back three goblets, and then got down from the table, excused himself and stumbled home. His evening’s entertainment had only served to intensify his curiosity. There was indeed something very unusual about his lodger.

Yu seldom socialized, and spent most of his time shut up at home in the villa, never going out into society even for occasions such as funerals or weddings. Yin told his friends of his own strange experience and word soon got around, with the result that many of them competed to make Yu's acquaintance, and the carriages of the local nobility were often to be seen at the doors of the villa. Yu found this attention more and more irksome, and one day he suddenly took his leave of Yin and went away altogether. After his departure, Yin inspected the villa and found the interior of the building quite empty. It had been left spotlessly clean and tidy. Outside, at the foot of the stone steps leading up to the terrace, was a pile of 'candle tears', the waxen accumulation, no doubt, of the revels of many evenings. Tattered curtains still hung in the windows, and there seemed to be the marks of fingers still visible on the fabric. Behind the villa, Yin found a white stone bowl, about a gallon in capacity, which he took home with him, filled with water and used for his goldfish. A year later, he was surprised to see that the water in the bowl was still as clear as it had been on the very first day. Then, one day, a servant was moving a rock and accidentally broke a piece out of the rim of the bowl. But somehow, despite the break, the water stayed intact within the bowl, and when Yin examined it, it seemed to all intents and purposes whole. He passed his hand along the edge of the break, which felt strangely soft. When he put his hand inside the bowl, water came trickling out along the crack, but when he withdrew his hand, water filled the bowl as before.

Throughout the winter months, the water in the bowl never froze. And then one night it turned into a solid block of crystal. But the fish could still be seen swimming around inside it.

Yin was afraid that others might get to know of this strange bowl, and he kept it in a secret room, telling only his own children and their husbands and wives. But, with time, word got out and everyone was at his door wanting to see and touch this marvel.

The night before the festival of the winter solstice, the crystal block suddenly melted and water leaked from the bowl, leaving a large dark stain on the floor. Of the goldfish there was no sign whatsoever. Only the fragments of the broken bowl remained.

One day, a Taoist came knocking at the door and asked to see

the bowl. Yin brought out the broken pieces to show him.

‘This,’ said the Taoist, ‘was once a water vessel from the Dragon King’s Underwater Palace.’

Yin told him how it had been broken, and how it had continued to hold water.

‘That is the spirit of the bowl at work,’ commented the Taoist, entreating Yin to give him a piece of it. Yin asked him why he wanted it.

‘By pounding such a fragment into a powder,’ he replied, ‘I can make a drug that will give everlasting life.’

Yin gave him a piece, and the Taoist thanked him and went on his way.



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夏洛特·珀

陈

黄色墙纸

企鹅经典：小黑书 第五辑

（美）夏洛特·珀金斯·吉尔曼/著

陈笑黎/译



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The Yellow Wall-Paper

‘The Yellow Wall-Paper’ was first published in 1892; ‘The Rocking-Chair’ in 1893; and ‘Old

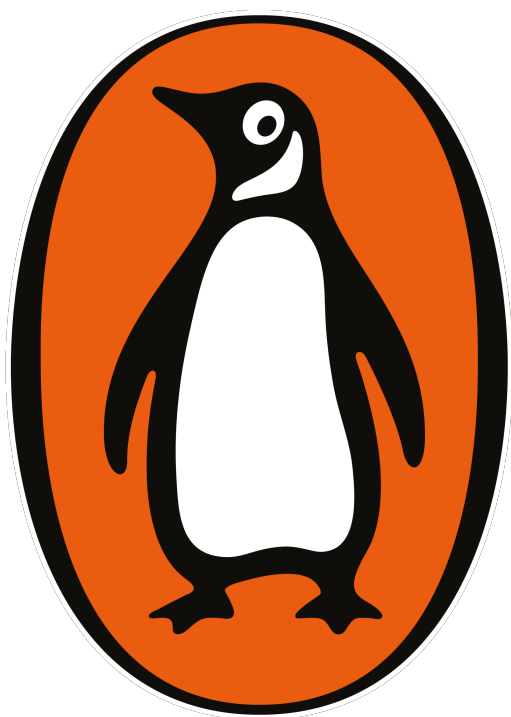
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“墙纸的颜色本就
丑陋至极、
变化多端，
令人恼火，
而墙纸的图案更是
极大的折磨。”



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黄色墙纸

/

像约翰和我这样的普通人居然会租一处祖传老宅来消夏，这是很不寻常的事情。

一幢殖民风格的别墅，一座世袭的房产，我愿称之为闹鬼的房子，由此获得一种浪漫主义的至喜体验——然而我又怎能对命运要求太多！

不过，我还是要骄傲地说这座房子确有古怪之处。

否则，它的租金为何如此便宜？又为何会空置如此之久？

当然，约翰会嘲笑我，这是婚姻中可以预料到的事情。

约翰极其现实。他对信仰毫无耐心，对迷信避之不及，并且公开嘲笑一切看不见摸不着且没有具体形象的东西。

约翰是一位医生，也许（当然我不会对任何一个活人这么说，但这是一张没有生命的纸，我用它来放松精神）——也许这就是我无法快速康复的原因之一。

你看，他不相信我病了！

那我又能做什么呢？

当一位权威的医生，同时也是你的丈夫，向亲朋好友保证你并没有什么严重的疾病，只不过是暂时性的精神抑郁——轻微情绪激动的倾向——你又能怎么做呢？

我的哥哥也是一名医生，同样很权威，他给出了一样的说辞。

所以我服用磷酸盐或亚磷酸盐——管它是哪一种呢——吃补药，进行康复旅行，呼吸新鲜空气，进行适当锻炼，而“工作”在康复之前是被绝对禁止的。

我并不同意他们的理念。

而我相信适宜的工作会带来兴奋和变化，将对我有益。

然而我又能做些什么呢？

我确实无视他们的意见，写作过一段时间。可这件事确实极大地

消耗了我——我需要精心隐藏，否则就要面对他们的强烈反对。

有时候我会想，像我这种状况如果能少一些反对，多一些社交和激励……可是约翰说，对我来讲最坏的事情就是去琢磨自己的状况，我也承认这总让我心绪不佳。

所以先不去管它，我来聊聊这幢房子吧。

这地方的确漂亮！房子孤零零的，远离大路，离村庄有三英里之遥。它令我想起了曾经读到过的英伦建筑，有篱笆，有高墙，有上锁的大门，还有很多为园丁和其他仆人准备的独栋小屋。

还有个宜人的花园！我从未见过这样的花园——巨大而阴凉，里面处处是树篱环绕的小径，小径两旁是长长的葡萄藤架，架下有一些座椅。

也有几处温室，只是完全毁坏了。

我想，这里可能存在着某种法律纠纷，继承人和共同继承人的问题。总之，出于某种原因，这个地方已经空置多年。

恐怕，这助长了我身上的幽灵之气。我有些害怕，但并不困扰——这幢房子有某种异样，我能感觉到。

一个月光朗照的夜晚，我甚至对约翰也说过这样的话，但他说我感受到的只不过是一阵气流而已，旋即便关上了窗子。

我时而会对约翰产生无名火。我确信自己过去从未如此敏感。我想这是我的精神状况所致。

但是约翰说，如果我放任自己这样感觉，我就是疏于恰当的自制。所以我很辛苦地控制自己——至少在他面前。而这让我感到疲惫至极。

我一点儿都不喜欢我们的房间。我想住楼下的那间，它对着走廊，窗户镶满玫瑰花，还挂着那么美丽的老式印花棉布帘子！可是约翰不愿意。

他说那个房间只有一个窗户，而且放不下两张床；假如他想分屋睡，隔壁也没有房间。

他非常细致体贴，除非有特别的指令，他也几乎不让我走动。

我有一份精确到小时的日常作息时间表。他照顾好我的一切，如果不加倍珍惜，真会觉得自己是卑鄙的忘恩负义之人。

约翰说，来这里纯粹是为了我，我应该好好休息，尽力多呼吸新鲜空气。“亲爱的，你的运动量取决于你的体力，”他说，“你的进食量也多多少少取决于你的胃口，而新鲜空气你随时都能呼吸到。”所以

我们住进了顶层的那间育婴室。

那是一间通风很好的大房间，几乎占据了整个楼层，四面都是窗子，空气和阳光十分充沛。我判断，它最初是一间育婴室，后来变成了游戏室和健身房，因为窗子装有保护小孩的栏杆，墙上还有一些圆环和类似的东西。

看墙漆和墙纸，这里像是办过男童学校。墙纸已经剥落——我床头伸手可及之处的墙纸被撕成一大块一大块的，对面墙脚有一大片也是如此。我此生从未见过比这更糟糕的墙纸了。

其中那蔓生开来华丽杂乱的纹饰，简直犯了艺术里的每一项大忌。

当你的目光追随它时，它沉闷得足以迷惑你的视线，又鲜明得不断激起你去一探究竟的欲望。当你追随那些蹙脚而飘忽的曲线看上一小段后，却发现它们突然无疾而终、自断前程——从一个极反常的角度跌落，在闻所未闻的矛盾中自我毁灭。

那色彩实在令人不快，几乎令人作呕；一种不洁净的焦黄色，在缓缓变化的日照中褪成了奇怪的颜色。

有些地方，呈现出一种乏味而又耀眼的橘黄色，其他地方则是一种惨淡的硫黄色。

难怪孩子们讨厌它！假如我不得不久居此地，我也会嫌弃它。

约翰来了，我要把这张纸放到一边去——我哪怕写下一个字，他都会厌恶。

我们来此地已经两个星期了，自从第一天起，我就没有写作的欲望。

此刻我坐在窗边，就在顶层这间恶劣的育婴室里。只要我愿意，没有什么能够阻止我写作，除非我体力不支。

约翰整个白天都不在，病人病情严重时，他晚上都要出诊。

我很欣慰我的病情并不严重！

可这些精神问题令人极其消沉。

约翰并不知道我有多么痛苦。在他的认知里，我没有痛苦的理由，而这足以让他感到满意。

当然我只是神经质而已。我没有尽到我在一方面的职责，这真的令我心情沉重！

我本想对约翰有所帮助，让他安心、感到宽慰，可到了今天这个

地步，我已然成了他的累赘。

没有人会相信，我付出了多大的努力，却连最简单的事情——穿衣、招待客人，以及订购物品——都力不从心。

幸亏玛丽很擅长照看宝宝。多可爱的一个宝贝！

但是我不能和他在一起，这也让我非常紧张。

我想约翰从来没觉得紧张不安。他狠狠嘲笑了我对墙纸的反应！

他原本想要给这个房间贴上新墙纸，后来他却说我是在放纵自己被情绪左右——对一位神经质患者来说，最坏的事情就是让这种幻想肆意生长。

约翰说，墙纸换过之后，便轮到笨重的床架，接着是带栏杆的窗户，然后是楼梯口的那扇门，如此等等。

“你知道这个地方对你的健康有益，”约翰说，“而且说真的，亲爱的，我可不想为了只租三个月的房屋大动干戈。”

“那我们搬到楼下吧，”我说，“楼下有那么漂亮的房间。”

他拥我入怀，唤我为幸运的小可爱，说如果我想的话，他愿搬去地下室，还会请人将它粉刷一新。

关于床、窗户，以及其他，他倒是说对了。

这是一间人人都会心仪的房间，通风又舒适，当然我也不会傻到为了一时的念头而为难约翰。

我确实喜欢上这个大房间了，除了那可怕的墙纸。

从一扇窗子望出去，我能看见花园，那里有被浓荫遮蔽的神秘的藤架凉亭，有怒放的老气的花朵，还有灌木丛和长满疙瘩的树木。

透过另一扇窗子，我可以看见迷人的海湾，还有一处隶属于这套房子的私人小码头。一条美丽的林荫小径从房子向下延伸至码头。我总是幻想路人在这些数不清的小路上和凉亭下散步，但是约翰已经警告我绝对不要沉溺于幻想。他说我的想象力以及虚构故事的习惯，会使得像我这样神经衰弱的病人产生各种活跃的幻想，我应该运用我的意念和理智去遏制这种倾向。于是我听从了他的建议。

有时候我想，要是我可以恢复到能写一点儿东西，我就能放下思想重负，得到休息。

可我发现，只要我一开始尝试，就会感觉非常疲惫。

在没有任何建议和陪伴的情况下写作，是一件十分令人气馁的事。约翰说，当我真正康复后，他愿邀请表亲亨利和朱莉娅前来长

住；但随后补充道，以我现在的状况，他宁可在我的枕头里放烟花，也不愿意让这些会令我情绪激动的人环绕在我周围。

我希望自己能快点儿康复。

不过我不能去思考这件事。那墙纸仿佛对自己的恶劣影响全然自知。

墙纸上有一种反复出现的斑点，那图案就像一只被拧断的脖子从那里耷拉下来，两只凸出的眼睛倒着瞪着你。

我对这图案的粗俗感到愤怒，而它们似乎还永无止境。它们上下左右匍匐而行，那些荒诞可笑、死鱼一样的眼睛则到处都是。有一个地方两边的宽度没有对上，竖直的衔接线两侧上上下下都是眼睛的图案，一侧比另一侧略高。

我从未在无生命体上见过如此丰富的表情，现在我们知道它们可以有多么丰富的表情了！小时候我经常睡不着，便躺在床上盯着空白的墙壁和简单的家具看，从中得到的乐趣和恐惧比大多数孩子在玩具店里得到的还要多。

我犹记得我们家那个巨大的老式衣柜，它的球形把手曾多么温和地闪烁着光泽；还有一把椅子，就像是一位坚定有力的朋友。

我曾觉得，如果其他任何一样东西露出狰狞的表情，我一定会跳入那把椅子，寻求安全。

这间房子里的家具，虽然和其他部分搭配不甚和谐，但鉴于它们都是临时从楼下搬来的，这一点也可以接受。我猜测当这间房被用作游戏室时，那些育婴用品也不得不搬出去。难怪房间的剩余部分被孩子们野蛮地破坏到面目全非。

正如我之前所说，一处处的墙纸都被撕破了，而它们和墙面曾像亲兄弟一样紧紧贴在一起——孩子们一定不乏毅力和怨恨才能把它们撕下来。

地板被划得沟壑纵横、坑坑洼洼，时不时扎出一根木刺，灰泥也被挖了出来，遍地都是。而这张笨重的大床，是我们在房间里找到的唯一的家具，它看上去似乎经历过战争的浩劫。

但对于这些，我丝毫不在乎——我眼里只有那墙纸。

约翰的妹妹来了。一个如此可爱的姑娘，对我又关心体贴！我绝不能让她发现我在写作。

她是一个完美又热情的管家，对这份工作也心满意足。我确信，她认为正是写作害得我生了病。

她出门后我就是能写作的，透过这些窗户，我目送她一路远去。

有一扇窗可以俯瞰那条路，一条林荫遮蔽的可爱的蜿蜒曲径。还有一扇窗正好眺望远处的乡村，那也是一处可爱的乡村，遍布着高大的榆树和丝绒般的草地。

墙纸还有一种不同色调的隐藏图案，特别令人不适，因为你只能在特定光线下才能看见它，而且还看不清楚。

但是在墙纸没有褪色的地方，在阳光正好的地方，我能看见一个奇怪的、讨厌的，而且形状不明的图案，仿佛躲在那愚蠢又显眼的表层图案后面，鬼鬼祟祟地走动。

约翰的妹妹上楼来了！

哎呀，七月四日 [1] 终于过去了！人们都走了，我累极了。约翰认为稍微见一见人，对我或许有益处，所以妈妈、内莉和孩子们刚刚来这里住了一个星期。

我自然一件事也没有做。现在是詹妮负责一切家务。

但我还是感到一样的疲劳。

约翰说，如果我不能尽快康复，今年秋天他就要把我送到威尔·米切尔 [2] 那里。

然而我根本不想去。我有一个朋友曾是他的病人，她说米切尔就跟约翰和我哥哥一样，甚至更过分！

况且，去那里路途遥远，于我是难以承受的。

我觉得任何事情都不值得我动一动手指，我变得异常不安，十分易怒。

我无缘无故地哭泣，大多数时候都在哭泣。

当然，约翰或别人在场时，我不会哭，我独自一人时才哭。

最近很多时候我都是一个人，约翰经常因为要照顾重症患者而留在镇上。而当我需要独处时，詹妮总是给我自由。

我会在花园里或是沿着那条可爱的小径散散步，在玫瑰花荫下的门廊里坐一坐，或者在这里躺上一会儿。

我真的喜欢上这个房间了，虽然那墙纸还在。也许正是因为这墙纸。

墙纸就这样占据了我的心！

我躺在这张无法移动的大床上——我确信，它被钉子牢牢固定

在地面上的——视线追踪着那个图案，一小时又一小时。我向你保证，这就像做体操一样有益。这样说吧，我从底部开始，视线落在那边角落下面还没有被触碰过的地方；我下了一千次决心，一定要追随那无意义的图案，直到得出某种结论。

我对设计原则略知一二，我知道这图案并非根据辐射、变换、重复或对称等法则（或是任何我听说过的设计逻辑）排布的。

当然，图案在每个幅宽上都是重复的，但在别的方向上并无规律可循。

从一个角度看，每个幅宽都是独立的，臃肿的曲线和花饰——一种蹩脚的罗马花纹——带着癫狂在愚昧的竖列里上下摇摆。

但从另一个角度看，它们又对角式地衔接在一起，蔓生的轮廓线越出边界，形成倾斜的巨大波纹，就像一群舞动的海藻在全力追逐，看起来很恐怖。

整个图案也在水平方向延展，至少表面如此，我费尽心力想辨认出它在那个方向上的排列次序。

他们贴上了一条约幅的水平腰线，这又加剧了混乱。

在房间一侧，墙纸几乎完好无损。当交错的光线暗淡下来，斜阳直射那里时，我几乎可以幻想到辐射线——漫无止境的怪影仿佛环绕着一个共同的中心而成形，又以同样的离心力向前突然跌落出去。

追随墙纸的图案令我感到疲倦。我想我要小睡片刻。

我不明白为什么我要写这个。

我并不想写。

我觉得很无力。

而且我知道约翰会认为它很可笑。但我必须用某种方式说出我的感觉和想法——它对我真是很大的安慰！

但是要付出的努力比获得的安慰还要大。

我有一半时间慵懒至极，总是躺在床上。

约翰说我不能丧失体力，他让我吃鳕鱼肝油和大量的补品、补药，麦芽酒、葡萄酒和嫩肉则更为常见。

亲爱的约翰！他深爱我，痛恨我生病。几天前，我跟他真诚又理性地聊过一次，我告诉他我多希望他能允许我离开此地，去我的表亲亨利和朱莉娅那儿小住。

他却说我既承受不了离开此地，也无法忍受那边的生活。我也没

能为自己据理力争，因为我话还没说完就哭了起来。

对我来说，正常思考变得愈发艰难。我想这正是我的神经衰弱造成的。

亲爱的约翰将我抱起，径直抱到楼上，然后把我放在床上。他坐在我身边念书给我听，直到我困倦。

他说我是他心爱的人，是他的安慰，是他的一切，我必须为了他照顾好我自己，我得保持健康。

他说，除了我自己，没有人能帮我走出困境，我必须依靠自我意志和自控力，不可以再任凭愚蠢的幻想蔓延。

毕竟还有一丝慰藉，那就是我的宝宝健康又快乐，不必住进这间贴着可怖墙纸的育婴室里。

如果不是我们占用了这个房间，我那有福的孩子肯定要住进来！多么幸运地逃过一劫啊！唉，无论如何我都不能让我的孩子，一个柔弱的小东西，住在这样一个房间里。

我之前从未想过这个问题，好在约翰把我留在了这里，你瞧，婴儿可没有我这样的忍耐力。

当然我再也没有对他们提起墙纸的事——我太明智了——但我仍然在观察它。

墙纸上有些东西，除了我，没人知道，以后也不会有人知道。

隐匿在表层图案背后的那些暗淡的图形，一天天地清晰起来了。

它的形状保持不变，只是数量越来越多。

那图形就像是一个女人弯下身子，在表层图案后缓慢地爬行。我一点儿也不喜欢它。我思考——我开始想——我盼望约翰能把我带离此地！

跟约翰谈论我的病情太困难了，因他如此智慧，又因他如此爱我。

但是昨晚我尝试了一次。

那是一个月夜。月色从四周注入房间，和白天的太阳光无异。

有时，我讨厌见到月光，它悄无声息地爬行，如此缓慢，总是透过这扇或那扇窗户进入房间。

约翰睡了，我不愿吵醒他，所以静静地注视着月光照在起伏的墙纸上，直到它令我感到害怕。

后面那个模糊的人影仿佛在摇动图案，好像想要挣脱而出。

我轻轻地起身，走过去触摸墙纸，看它是否真的在动。我回到床上时，约翰醒了。

“怎么了，小姑娘？”他说，“别那样起来走动——你会感冒的。”

我想这正是谈话的良机。我告诉他，实情是我在这里并没有好转，希望他能带我离开。

“哎呀，亲爱的！”他说，“我们的租期还有三个星期，我不知道那之前怎么走。

“家里的维修还没有完工，而且我现在也不太可能离开城镇。如果你有任何危险，我肯定能，当然也会带你走。但你真的好多了，亲爱的，不管你自己是否意识到了。我是医生，亲爱的，我知道。你恢复了体重，脸上有血色了，胃口也好多了，真的，你让我放心多了。”

“我一点儿都没有长胖，”我说，“体重还轻了一些。晚上你在时我的胃口或许好些，但早上你一离开我的胃口就差了！”

“上帝保佑她的小心脏！”约翰使劲地抱了我一下，“她想生病就生病吧！但现在我们要争分夺秒地睡觉，明天早上再谈！”

“那你打算走啦？”我郁闷地问道。

“哎呀，亲爱的，我怎么能呢？只有三个星期了，然后趁詹妮收拾房子时，我们走几天，好好享受一次短途旅行。真的，亲爱的，你好多了！”

“或许身体是好多了——”我刚一开口便咽了回去，因为约翰坐直了身子，严厉而责备地看着我，我无法再继续。

“亲爱的，”他说，“我请求你，为了我，为了我们的孩子，也为你自己，你一刻也不要让那个念头再进入你的头脑！对你这种性情的人来说，没有比这种幻想更危险、更魅惑的了，这是错误和愚蠢的幻想。我作为一名内科医生这样对你说，难道你还不能信任我吗？”

关于此事我便不再提及，很快我们就睡了。他以为我先睡着了，但我没有。我躺在床上有好几小时，试图确认墙纸的表层和背后的图案是一起移动，还是分开移动。

在白天看来，这样的图案缺乏连贯性，毫无规则可言，让正常人都感到愤怒。

墙纸的颜色本就丑陋至极、变化多端，令人恼火，而墙纸的图案更是极大的折磨。

你以为你已经看透了它，但正当你顺利地追随它时，它却向后翻了个筋斗，躲开你的追逐。它打了你一记耳光，把你撞翻在地，然后践踏你。这就像是一场噩梦。

墙纸的表层图案是华丽的阿拉伯式花纹，令人联想到一种菌类。如果你能想象一串串伞菌的样子，无穷无尽的伞菌在发育抽芽，绵延卷绕着——噢，就是那样的东西。

有时候，它就是那样！

墙纸有一个显著的特征，只有我一个人注意到了，那就是它会随着光线变化。

阳光从东边的窗子照进时——我总是会观察第一束长直的光线——图案在这光线里变化得如此之快，让人难以相信。

所以我总是观察它。

在月光下——如果有月亮的话，房间整晚都会月光朗照——我简直认不出那是同一张墙纸了。

晚上，在任何一种光线下——在暮色下，在烛光下，或是在灯光下，而最可怖的是在月光下，墙纸都变成了栏杆！我是指表层图案，而图案后面的那个女人真是清晰可见。

很长一段时间，我都没有意识到墙纸后面那模糊的图案是什么，而现在我非常确定它是一个女人。

日光下，她温顺、安静。我想，正是那图案使她一动不动。这真令人困惑，也让我长时间地默不作声。

我现在总是躺着。约翰说这对我的身体有好处，而且我要尽量多睡。

他确实形成了一个习惯，每餐过后都让我躺一小时。

我相信这是个很坏的习惯，因为你瞧，我并没有睡着。

而且那是欺骗的温床，因为我没有告诉他们我醒着——噢，不！

事实上我有点儿害怕约翰了。

他有时显得很奇怪，甚至詹妮的神情也令人费解。

偶尔我闪过一个念头，可以说是一种科学假设吧——或许就是因为墙纸！

我曾经在约翰不经意的时候观察过他。我以最若无其事的借口突然走进房间，有好几次发现他正盯着墙纸！詹妮也是如此。有一次我发现詹妮把手放在墙纸上。

她不知道我在房间里，而我极力克制自己，用一种平静得不能再平静的声调问她，她在对墙纸做什么。而她转过身来，好像窃贼被人捉住一样，看上去有点儿恼羞成怒——质问我为什么这样吓唬她！

她说，任何东西碰到墙纸都会沾上污色，我发现我所有的衣物和约翰的衣服上都有黄色污渍，希望我们更小心些！

听起来是不是很合情合理？其实我知道她正在研究那图案，可我坚信除了我没有谁能发现它的秘密！

* * *

与以往相比，目前的生活令人兴奋许多。你瞧，我有更多值得期盼和观察的东西。我的胃口确实变好了，人也比从前更安静了。

约翰见我状况改善，高兴极了！前几天，他甚至笑了笑，说我看上去活力四射，尽管房间里的墙纸还在。

我笑着转移了话题。我无意告知他正是因为墙纸——他会取笑我的，甚至有可能把我带走。

在解开墙纸的秘密之前，我还不想离开。租约还剩一个星期，我想时间是够用了。

我感觉好多了！晚上我睡眠不多，观察图案的发展实在有趣；但是白天我睡眠充足。

白天，墙纸显得无聊又令人困惑。

伞菌总是吐出新芽，到处都是新的黄色。尽管我认真地数过它们的数量，却永远也数不清。

那墙纸有着最奇怪的黄色！它使我想起见过的所有的黄色东西——不是毛茛那种黄花，而是污秽的、恶劣的黄色东西。

而且那墙纸还有一个特点——它的气味！我们一走进房间我就闻到了，但由于通风和阳光充足，那气味不算难闻。现在一个星期里都是雾雨天气，不管窗户是关还是开，气味总是经久不散。

这气味缓缓地爬满了整幢房子。

我发现这气味盘旋在餐厅里，悄悄潜入起居室，隐藏在大厅，埋伏在楼梯上等待我。

它渗入了我的头发。

甚至我出门骑马时，如果我趁其不备突然回头——也会闻到那个气味！

而且它还是如此奇特的味道！我花了几小时分析它，想弄清它闻起来像什么。

一开始，它并不浓郁，并且非常柔和，却是我遇到过的最微妙和最持久的味道。

现在天气潮湿，它就变得强烈，晚上我醒过来时发现它正悬在我上方。

起初，这气味总困扰我。我曾认真地想过烧掉房子——为了捕捉到这气味。

不过现在我习惯它了。我能想到的唯一与之相似的就是那墙纸的颜色！一种黄色的气味。

墙上有一个非常滑稽的痕迹，在下面很低的地方，靠近踢脚板。那是一道沿墙延展、环绕整个房间的条纹。它从除了床以外的家具后面绕过，长直而平坦，似乎被摩擦过一次又一次。

我好奇它是如何形成的，又是谁干的，他们为什么这样做。一圈，一圈，又一圈；一圈，一圈，又一圈——看得我头晕目眩！

终于，我还是发现了什么。

通过夜晚的长时间观察，在墙纸图案的诸多变化中，我终于发现了它的秘密。

表层图案果然在动——难怪！是图案后面的女人在摇动它！

有时候我觉得图案后面有很多很多女人；有时候又觉得只有一个，她飞快地来回匍匐而行，动作震动了整个图案。

遇到墙上的明处，她就安静不动；遇到暗处，她就抓住栏杆，使劲地摇动。

她一直努力想爬出来。然而没有人能从那图案里爬出来——图案勒死了她们，我想这就是墙纸上有多头颅的原因。

她们穿过来了，然而图案扼杀了她们，将她们倒吊起来，勒得她们眼珠上翻！

如果把那些头颅盖住或截掉，图案就远远没有那么可怕了。

我猜，那个女人在白天爬了出去！

我会告诉你为什么——悄悄告诉你——我见过她！

透过我房间的每一扇窗，我都能看见她！

这是同一个女人，我知道，因为她总是爬行，而其他被困住的女

人不在白天爬行。

我看见她在那条长长的林荫小径里，来来回回地爬行。我看见她在暗处的葡萄藤架下，环绕整个花园爬行。

我看见她沿着树下那条长道一直爬行，一有马车过来，她就躲入黑莓藤下。

我丝毫不想责怪她。被人发现大白天的在爬行，她必定感到非常羞耻！

我在白天爬行时总是锁上门。晚上我不能这样做，因为我知道约翰会立刻起疑心。

约翰最近也很反常，我不想去激怒他。我真希望他能搬到另一个房间！另外，我不想让任何除了我以外的人在晚上把那个女人放出来。

我时常好奇自己能否同时透过所有窗户看见她。

但是无论我转身有多快，只能在一个时刻观察一扇窗户。

而且尽管我总能看见她，她却可能爬得更快，超过我转身的速度！

有时候我看着她爬到空旷的乡间，速度快得像被强风吹动的云影。

要是能把表层的图案同下面的剥离出来，那多好啊！我打算尝试一下，一点点地剥。

我还发现了另一件有趣的事情，但现在我不想说！轻信他人是不好的。

我只有两天时间来剥掉这墙纸了，而且我相信约翰已经有所察觉了。我不喜欢他的眼神。

我听到他问詹妮许多关于我的专业性问题。詹妮也给他做了很详细的汇报。

她说我白天睡得很多。

约翰知道我晚上睡眠很不好，尽管我是那么安静！

他也问了我本人各种各样的问题，还假装充满爱意与柔情。

好像我无法看穿他似的！

不过他这样做我也不奇怪，毕竟在这墙纸下睡了三个月。

尽管只有我对墙纸产生了兴趣，但我确信，不知不觉中约翰和詹

妮也被墙纸影响到了。

太好啦！这是最后一天，不过时间够用了。约翰今晚将待在镇上，并且要到晚上才出发。

詹妮想与我一起睡——狡猾的东西！但我告诉她，我独自一人睡肯定会休息得好一些。

这是聪明的借口，因为我根本不是一个人！月夜初始，那可怜的东西就开始匍匐而行、摇动图案，我便立即起来跑过去帮她。

我拉她摇，我摇她拉，天亮之前我们剥掉了好几码墙纸。

一长条墙纸，有我本人那么高，绕房半圈那么长。

太阳升起了，那讨厌的图案开始嘲笑我，我宣布我今天就要把它结束！

我们明天就要离开了，他们正把我房间里所有的家具搬回楼下，恢复到出租前的状态。

詹妮惊讶地看着墙壁，但我欢快地告诉她，我这么做纯粹是出于对那邪恶墙纸的厌恶。

她笑着说她乐意自己来做，而我绝不能累倒。

她那样说是多么违心啊！

但我就在这里，除了我，没有人能触摸这墙纸——任何人都不行！

她想让我离开房间——她的用意太明显了！但我说现在房间这样安静、空荡和干净，我想要躺下来，尽可能再睡一会儿，晚餐时也不要叫醒我——我醒来后会叫她的。

她只好走了，所有的用人都走了，东西也都搬走了，除了那个被钉住的大床架，以及床架上那张原本就有的帆布床垫。

今晚我们将睡在楼下，明天乘船回家。

我很喜欢这个房间，现在它又空了。

这个床架磨损得很厉害！

想想那些孩子曾在这里怎样嬉闹过！

但是我必须着手工作了。

我锁上门，把钥匙扔到了楼下的门前小路上。

我不想出去，约翰回来之前我也不想让任何人进来。

我要让他大吃一惊。

我拿了一根绳子上楼，詹妮并没有发觉。假如那个女人真的从墙纸里出来了，试图逃离，我可以绑住她！

但是我忘记了，如果不站在什么东西上，我伸手够不到那么高！
这张床动不了！

我试图把床抬起来，推过去，直到累得一瘸一拐，我气急败坏地咬下一小块床角，却弄伤了自己的牙齿。

我站在地板上把够得着的墙纸全撕了下来。墙纸黏得吓人，而图案也享受着这种胶着！那些被勒下的头颅，凸起的眼睛，以及摇摆着滋生的伞菌，正发出嘲讽的尖叫声！

我愤怒得无以复加，要尝试些疯狂的举动。跳窗将是英勇之举，可是栏杆实在太坚固了，根本没必要去尝试。

而我也不会这么做。当然不会。我非常清楚，走出这一步是不恰当的，还可能被人误解。

我甚至都不想往窗外看——外面有那么多女人在爬行，而且她们爬得飞快。

我不知道她们是否像我一样，也是从那墙纸里爬出来的。

但是我现在已经被我悄悄藏匿的那根绳子牢牢地捆住了——你休想把我拉到那条路上！

我觉得到了晚上我应该回到那图案后面去，但这可不容易做到！

从墙纸里走出来，待在这个大房间里，我可以随意爬行，可真是件乐事！

我不想出去。即使詹妮叫我，我也不出去。

出去后你只能在地面上爬行，而且一切都是绿色而不是黄色的。

然而，在这里我可以在地板上顺畅地爬行，环绕墙壁的那条长长的污渍与我齐肩，所以我不会迷失方向。

哎呀，约翰在门口！

没有用的，年轻人，你打不开门！

他嚷叫，砸门，好大声！

他在大叫着让人拿一把斧头来。

砸烂那扇美丽的门将是一件可耻的事！

“约翰，亲爱的！”我用最温柔的声音说，“钥匙在楼下门前的台阶旁，在芭蕉叶下面！”

这让他沉默了片刻。

然后他轻声细语地说：“开门，我亲爱的！”

“我打不开门，”我说，“钥匙在楼下门前的芭蕉叶下面！”

我又说了一遍，非常温柔和缓地重复了好几遍。我反反复复地说，他只好下楼去看。当然他找到了钥匙，走了进来。他却突然止步在门口。

“怎么回事？”约翰大叫，“天哪，你在干什么？”

我一边不动声色地爬行着，一边扭头去看他。

“我终于出来了，”我说，“不管你和詹妮怎么反对！我已经把大部分墙纸撕下来了，你们无法把我放回去！”

那个男人为什么就昏倒了呢？他确实昏过去了，正好倒在了墙边，挡住了我的爬行之路，所以每次我都只能从他身上爬过去！

[1] 7月4日，美国国庆节。（书中脚注均为译者注。）

[2] 塞拉斯·威尔·米切尔（1829-1914），美国哈佛大学医学博士、法学博士，提出了著名的“休息疗法”，用以治疗神经衰弱。休息疗法包括6-8周的禁闭，在此期间女性被禁止写作和进行社交活动，要求卧床休息，严重时会被进行电击治疗。相反，威尔·米切尔提出的治疗男性神经衰弱的方法则是去西部，进行大量的体力和脑力劳动，例如写作。本书作者夏洛特·珀金斯·吉尔曼曾接受过威尔·米切尔的治疗，但强烈谴责休息疗法给女性带来的伤害。

摇椅

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一处摇曳的太阳光点，一个信号光源，在一片普通杂乱的房屋中间，在一条城市窄巷所有的沉闷昏暗之中，立刻吸引了我们的视线。

低矮的屋檐自水泥墙中伸出，落日发出一道明亮的光线，水平地穿越其下，落在窗边女孩的金色头发上。

她坐在一把高背摇椅上慢慢地前后摇晃，黄铜底座随着晃动闪闪发光。她的头始终没有抬起来，但她头发上的点点光芒却把街道点亮了。

我们两人停了下来，盯着这幅画面，这时就看见了楼下窗户上有一个小标牌——“房屋出租，配有家具”。怀着共同的憧憬，我们穿过马路，敲了敲暗淡的大门。

缓慢均匀的脚步声从里面传来，门开了，一阵少女柔和的笑声戛然而止——我们看到的是一位老妇人，面容呆滞，毫无表情，眼神无光。

是的，她有房间出租。是的，我们可以去看看。不，不提供服务。不，不提供餐食。她带着我们上了楼，一路这样单调地低语。这幢房子在一条穷街陋巷里，再普通不过，丝毫不突出，跟其他的房子没什么不同。

她带我们看了两个紧挨着的房间，与大多数同类房间相比，既不好，也不坏。房间更没有什么引人注目之处，除了窗边那把还在轻轻摇晃的黄铜包边大椅子。

那个金发女孩却不见了。

我幻想着里屋传来了少女长袍的窸窣声——一阵浅笑——但是这个公寓房间的门是锁着的。我问那个老妇人，我们是否可以看看其他房间，她说，她没有其他房间可租。

我和哈尔在一旁商量了几句，便决定租下这两个房间，立刻搬进去。我们没有理由不这样做。我们正在寻找住处时，那道晃动的光线吸引了我们，住宿条件完全对得起我们出得起的价格。我们当场成交，又回到原来破旧的旅馆去拿了几样行李，当晚就重新安顿下来。

哈尔和我都是年轻的记者——“穷苦文人”，我们是一群奋斗的有志者中的一员，我们追求文学，就像从前扈从和侍卫向往骑士身份一样。我们正在赢得功名的路上。目前为止这仍是一项缓慢的事业，令人不快，报酬很低——我肯定这正像扈从和侍卫的工作：提供卑贱的服务，日复一日地保养骑士的盔甲；主人骑马的时候，他们长时间步行。然而扈从至少对他的主人和领主心怀敬意，而我们呢，唉！在我们这个行业里，我们有着充分的理由对位高者嗤之以鼻；并且坚信，当我们身处同样的职位后，我们的所作所为会高尚得多！

这或许纯粹是一种文学本能——当代用文字糊口的作家对“素材”的攫取，又或许是另一种——被无名美人莫名吸引的本能。反正不管是什么原因，这个地方吸引了我们，我们就来了。

从婴儿时期就开始的友谊把我们两人联系在一起，坚不可摧。哈尔是一个快乐、缺乏想象力而头脑清醒的人，我是一个敏感又浪漫的人，这也使得我们的关系更加亲密。

我们对彼此有着家庭生活般无所畏惧的坦诚，但也尊重彼此的私人空间，因此我们之间的关系也一直张弛有度。

我们兴致勃勃地研究了新住处。前面的房间是哈尔的，相当大，空荡荡的。后面的房间是我的，相当小，也空荡荡的。

我相信，他比较喜欢那个房间，是因为有窗户和摇椅。我喜欢另一个，是因为那扇锁着的门。我们两人都对这些偏好闭口不提。

“你确定你不想要这个房间吗？”哈尔问道。或许，他是意识到了自己的选择有一种隐秘的动机。

“不想，真的，”我带着同样的保留态度说道，“你房间里只看得到街道，而我的窗外有真正的‘风景’。我唯一嫉妒的是你那把椅子！”

“不管白天还是晚上，你随时都可以来啊，坐在椅子上摇吧，”他大度地说，“它舒服极了，虽然外表黑乎乎的。”

这是一把舒服的椅子，非常舒服的椅子，我们两人都经常用它。椅背很高，顶部略微向前弯曲，四个方角很重。这些方角、摇杆的两头、焊在扶手上的尖尖的巨大把手，以及其他每一个节点和包角，都用黄铜和椅身嵌合。

“可以用作攻城锤 [3] ！”哈尔说。

他坐在椅子上抽烟，在窗边缓慢而惬意地摇晃着。而我懒洋洋地躺在床脚边，看着一轮苍白的新月慢慢从西边的屋顶落下。

月亮终于落出了视线，房间变得越来越暗，我只能看见，在暗淡的天空下，哈尔英俊的脑袋和那弧形的椅背一起慢慢地来回移动。

“莫里斯，是什么把我们突然带到这里的？”他在黑暗中问道。

“三个原因，”我回答，“我们需要住处，这里条件合适，还有一个美丽的脑袋。”

“没错，”他说，“还有别的吗？”

“即使有，你也不会承认它的存在，我逻辑严谨的朋友。但我觉得在这件事上，还有某种冲动，或者至少是吸引力，并不完全来自那金色头发。”

“这次我同意你，”哈尔说，“我自己也有同样的感觉，即使我不轻易受这类冲动的影响。”

我们沉默了片刻。我可能闭上了眼睛——也许比我想象的要久，但似乎就在下一秒，有什么东西轻轻拂过我的胳膊，而我看到哈尔坐在他的大椅子上，在我身旁摇晃着。

“对不起，”看见我吃了一惊，他说，“这把椅子显然会‘走路’，我以前也见到过。”

我也是，我见过它移动到地毯上，但现在这儿没有地毯，我想我应该脱离梦境了。

他将那把沉重的椅子拉回窗边，然后我们准备就寝。

我们的门开着，可以隔空交谈。但很快我就睡着了，睡得很沉，一觉到天亮。我一定是做了一个相当逼真的梦，因为哈尔说我在他的椅子上摇晃了半夜，他说在星光下能清楚地看到我的轮廓。

“不，”我说，“是你在做梦。那把摇椅深深烙印在你脑子里啦。”

“那就当它是梦吧，”他快活地回答，“噩梦总比矛盾强，吸血鬼总比吵架好！好啦，我们去吃早餐吧！”

日子一天天过去，我们很奇怪那位迷人的金发女孩竟然踪影全无。但我们只是默默好奇着，谁也没有向对方提起此事。

有时我听见她在我隔壁的房间里轻轻地走动，或者在屋子里什么地方轻声笑着。相比之下，那母亲缓慢而均匀的脚步其实更加频繁，可就连她也不常露面。

据我所知，我们两人都只从街上看到过那女孩，因为她仍然会坐在窗边我们的椅子上。在理论上，这种行为是不被许可的，尤其是我们还在门上落了锁时，而她的出现则说明她还有一把钥匙。不，也可能是通过我房间的那扇门！我没有将这个想法说出来。每当我们从窗外看见她晃着摇椅时，我们都不会抱怨，而是偷偷飞快地跑上楼梯，希望吓她一跳。但我们从未成功过，只有那张椅子时不时地仍在摇

晃，有时我也会想象有一股淡淡的甜蜜气味萦绕未散，一种令人悲伤又挑逗人的奇怪味道。但是有一天，我以为在房间里的是哈尔，便唐突地冲了进去。也就是在那时，我见到了她。那不过是惊鸿一瞥——身影迅疾、轻盈、无声地拂过——她消失在我自己的房间里。我跟着她，为自己的突然闯入致歉，但我没能追上她。那满怀妒意的门又锁上了。

每当被我们看到时，我们房东太太的漂亮女儿显然非常害羞。而奇怪的是，当我们不在时，她又显得十分自得。

我终究是看到了她，仅这一眼就会让我尽情地原谅她。她的美是一种奇特的美，无限迷人，又无限迷惑。我暗自赞叹，怀着痛苦的热盼，渴望再见她一面。但是我从没对哈尔说起我把她吓了一跳——这对那个女孩儿似乎不公平！她可能有充分的理由进到我们房间。也许我还能再见到她。

我开始找这样或那样的借口早早地回家，趁哈尔不在的时候，我又假借各种各样的理由进入他的房间。

不过，直到经历了无数次这样的突袭之后，我发现每每我以为他人在城里时，却能在他的房间里找到他。而他那些不必要的解释中，也多了一些牵强。直到那时我才开始怀疑，或许他和我一样，也在寻找着这同样一个身影。

不久我就确认了这个想法。一个日落时分，我正走到街角处——在打开的窗子的黑暗边框里，那个明亮的脑袋正有节奏地摆动。哈尔就在楼下的马路上。她向窗外看，笑了。他走进房子，上了楼。

我加快了脚步。我正好看到她停止晃动，那漂亮的脑袋转过去，哈尔站在她身后的阴影里。

我越过门，穿过街道，走了一小时、两小时——在某处吃完夜宵，到睡觉时间才回来。我心如刀绞，竭力想用理性说服自己，却失败了。或许哈尔和我有着同等的权利见她，但我依旧对他感到出奇的愤怒。

我回来的时候，灯光从白色的窗帘后面照过来，大椅子的影子矗立在那里一动不动，与另一个影子交错——是哈尔在抽烟。我走上楼去。

他热情洋溢地迎接我，问我为何回来这么晚，我在哪里吃的晚饭。他快活得不自然。我们之间忽然有了一种可怕的相互隐瞒。他什么也没说，我什么也没问，我们沉默地去睡觉了。

我责怪他对我们的神秘美人只字不提，但同样，我对自己那次见面也是守口如瓶。我左思右想，猜测他到底见过她几次面，她是否跟

他说过话，她告诉了他什么，她待了有多久。

我整夜辗转反侧，哈尔也睡不着，我听见他在离我们很近的窗前和床边摇了好几个小时，我从来不知道有一把摇椅能像它一样“行走”。

快到早晨的时候，持续的嘎吱声和摇摆声令我神经崩溃，快要发作。

“看在上帝的分儿上，哈尔，停下来吧，去睡觉！”

“什么？”传来带着睡意的声音。

“别犯傻！”我说，“你摇个不停，我一夜都没合眼。快停下来，去睡觉吧。”

“去睡觉！我整晚都睡在床上，我希望你也是！你能别自己晃着椅子，还怪到我头上来吗？”

而在我们对话期间，我依旧听见他一直摇呀摇，摇呀摇，就在大厅门口！

我悄悄地站起身，走进房间，想给这不合时宜开玩笑的人一个惊吓，把他当场抓住。

两个房间都注满了月色映射下的暗淡粼光。在黑暗中我也了解这房间的模样，可是我刚进门就被绊了一下，重重地摔倒了。

哈尔立刻下床开灯。

“我亲爱的小男孩，你受伤了吗？”

我受伤了，这完全是他的错，因为椅子不在我以为的地方，而是紧临着我卧室的门。他一定是听见我进来的声音，便立即从摇椅跳回了床上。我生硬地拒绝了他的帮助，一瘸一拐地回到自己那无眠的枕头上。我的脚踝撞在一根焊了黄铜的摇杆上，疼得要命。我从未见过那样伤人的椅子——又大又重，十分不平衡，每一个连接处和边角都包裹着黄铜。哈尔和我以前都因为这个椅子受过罪，尤其是在黑暗中，我们忘了那把椅子究竟身处何处，但没有哪一次撞得像这次这么疼。哈尔不像是玩这种把戏的人，我带着受伤的心灵和脚踝爬上床，翻来覆去，昏昏欲睡，做着梦，时不时地惊醒，直到早晨。

尽管语气十分友善，但哈尔还是坚持说他睡着了，是我整晚都在摇。我真的开始生他的气了。

“这玩笑实在太过分了，”我终于说，“我不在意玩笑，即使很伤人，但总要有限度。”

“是的，我承认。”他意味深长地说。我们不再继续这个话题。

几天过去了。哈尔又与那个金发少女见了几次面，这是我从街上看见的。而除了痛苦地目睹这一切，我只是徒劳地等待。

这是难以忍受的，几乎比哈尔和我日益疏远的关系还要难以忍受，这深深地刺痛了我。我想，我们两人最终会十分乐意各奔东西，但谁也不愿意让另一个人独享这房间、这椅子、这未知的美丽。

一天早晨我偶然回到家，发现那个面容呆滞的房东太太正在整理房间。我尽力想讨好她，却是白费心思。

“你那把老式椅子真好看。”我说道。而她站在那里用围裙机械地擦拭黄铜包角。

她看着那在暗中闪闪发光的東西，几乎是带着一抹骄傲。

“是的，”她说，“一把好椅子！”

“有些年头了？”我追问道。

“是的，非常老了。”她简短地回答。

“但是我以为摇椅是现代美国的发明？”我说。

她冷漠地看着我。

“这是西班牙的，”她说，“西班牙橡木，西班牙皮革，西班牙黄铜，西班牙……”我没有听清最后一个词，她也不再多说，就离开了房间。

尽管坐起来很放松，很舒服，这把椅子本身却相当古怪，很不稳当。摇杆的后面又长又尖，总像是在伏击粗心大意的人；前端却骤然缩短。椅背那么高，顶上那么重，这重量和前面的短摇杆，让摇椅以令人吃惊的力度轻松却猛烈地向前倾斜。

这是我的经验之谈，每当我碰到这把摇椅，它就会突然倒在我身上。哈尔也深受其害。我们身上都伤痕累累，但两人谁也不愿把椅子搬走，只因为她会一晚又一晚地坐在椅子上，在夕阳的金色余晖中摇晃。

于是，每天晚上我们都早早地下班，各自匆匆赶回家，各走各的路，走到那条肮脏的街道，走到那扇神圣的窗下。

我不可能永远忍受下去。当哈尔先回家的时候，我在楼下的街道徘徊，透过我们的窗户可以看见那个可爱的脑袋和他的脑袋紧贴在一起。当我先回来的时候，却只能看到楼上的匆匆一瞥——一个令人迷惑的微笑——除此之外，再也没有别的。我走进房间时，她总是消失得无影无踪，徒留房间里牢牢锁着的内门。

有时我甚至捕捉到门闩的咔嗒声，听到另一边宽松长袍的沙沙

声。有时，这种日复一日的失望，这种希望屡次落空的苦痛，驱使我跪在那扇门前，求她给我开门，用人类痛苦的心灵所能想到的每一种热烈的情话和劝告的言语对她哭诉。

哈尔现在既不跟我说话，也不看我一眼，只有刻意的礼貌和冷淡。既然他已经当着我的面说下谎言，我又怎能再坦诚相待？

一天晚上，我从街上看见他坐在那把椅子上，在宽阔平坦的太阳光影里，那个美丽的脑袋搭在他肩上。我忍无可忍了。假如他赢了，而且赢得如此彻底，我只要求跟她说一次话，然后跟他们两人从此永别。我重重地爬上楼梯，大声敲门，在哈尔的应和声中旋即进入房间，却发现他一个人坐着抽烟——是的，就在刚才搂着她的那把椅子上抽烟！

他刚刚才点燃那根雪茄，一个蒙蔽我眼睛的小动作。

“听着，哈尔，”我说，“我受不了了。我能否请求你一件事？让我看她一次，就一次，好让我跟她说一声再见，然后我就会从你们眼前消失！”

哈尔站起身，直视我的眼睛。他把整根雪茄扔出窗外，走到离我两英尺内的地方。

“你疯了吗？”他说，“我问她！我！我这辈子从来没有跟她说过话！而你——”他停住，转身而去。

“我什么？”我不顾一切地发问。

“你每天都见她，跟她说话，我不用把我亲眼所见全都重复一遍！”

“你不用，真的，”我说，“它甚至会让你更加无法自圆自说。在这个房间里我只见过她一次，转瞬即逝的一瞥——一句话也没有说。而我经常从街上看见她——跟你在一起！”

他脸色变得煞白，从我身边走到窗前，又转过身来。

“我从来没有在这个房间里见过她，哪怕是你所说的瞬间一瞥。我经常从街上看见她——跟你在一起！”

我们望着对方。

“你的意思是说，”我慢慢地问他，“我刚才并没有看见你坐在窗边的那把椅子上，还把她搂在怀里吗？”

“停！”他叫道，猛然挥手，却狠狠地打在了椅背的包角上。他机械地擦去手上三角伤口的血迹，目不转睛地盯着我。

“我看见你了。”我说。

“你没有！”他说。

我慢慢地转身走进我的房间。我不忍心告诉那个人，那个比兄弟还亲的人，他在撒谎。

我把头埋在手掌中，在床上坐了下来。不久我听见哈尔的门开了又关，我听见楼梯上他的脚步声，大门在他身后砰地关上了。他走了，我不知道他去了哪里。就算他正在走向死亡，就算我的一言一语能够拯救他，我也会保持沉默。我不知道自己在那里坐了多久，被无望的爱、嫉妒和仇恨所包围。

突然，从空房间的一片寂静中，传来了那把大椅子平稳摇动的嘎吱声。也许——一定是！我一跃而起，悄无声息地打开门。她坐在窗前，看向窗外，而且——是的——她给了窗下的某人一个飞吻。啊，她是多么美丽啊！多么美丽！我向她走近一步。我伸出手，我说了些自己都不知所以的话——突然，楼梯上传来了哈尔快步走来的声音。

她也听到了，她看了我一眼，微妙、神秘、胜利的一眼。而就在哈尔进门时，她从我身边溜了过去，溜进了我的房间。他看见她离开了。他径直朝我走来，我想他会原地把我打倒。

“别挡我的道，”他叫道，“我要跟她谈谈。难道我见的还不够吗？（他用受伤的手朝窗户指了指）让我过去！”

“她不在那儿，”我回答，“她已经去另一个房间了。”

我们的身旁响起一阵低低的笑声，一阵微弱的、柔和的、银铃般的笑声，几乎近在我的耳边。

哈尔用力推开我，猛地打开门，走了进去——房间是空的。

“你把她藏在哪里了？”他反问道。我冷冷地指着另一扇门。

“这么说她的房间和你的房间是相通的，是吗？”他苦笑着嘀咕，“难怪你更喜欢‘风景’！也许我也能打开它？”他把手放在门闩上。

我微笑，因为痛苦的经验告诉我它总是锁着的，对我所有的祈祷和恳求都无动于衷。让他像曾经的我那样跪在那儿苦苦哀求吧！但是门闩在他的手下打开了！我跑到他身边，一起朝里面看——一个壁橱，小得可怜，又空又浅，像空棺材！

他转向我，脸色因愤怒而发白，就像我的脸因恐惧而发白。我脑子里想的不是他。

“你对她做了什么？”他叫道。然后轻蔑地说——“我竟然停下来质问一个骗子！”

我没有理他，而是走向另一个房间——那把大椅子在窗边摇晃着。

他跟在我后面，失望得发狂。他的手放在摇晃的椅背上，手指用力地紧紧抓住它，直到指甲都发白了。

“你要离开这个地方吗？”他说。

“不。”我说。

“我不会再跟一个骗子、一个叛徒一起生活下去了。”他说。

“那你只能自杀。”我说。

他低声咒骂了一句，扑向我，但脚被长摇杆绊了一下，重重地摔倒了。

我心中涌起一股巨大的仇恨，如此强烈，以至于几乎想在他躺倒的身上踩一脚，让他像狗一样死去——我极力克制才从他身边转身，离开了房间。

我回来的时候，天已经亮了。清早寂静，太阳还没有升起，屋顶、墙壁和路面上却铺满了明亮的强光。我在楼下驻足，找到房东太太，告诉她我即将离开。我敲了一扇又一扇门，试着打开；我进了一个又一个房间，彻底搜查了一番。在整幢房子里，从地窖到阁楼，除了我们的房间外，其他房间什么家具也没有，没有人住过的痕迹。到处都是灰尘，灰尘，遍布蜘蛛网。除此之外，别无他物。

我的心奇怪地一沉，回到我们自己的门口。

我清楚地听见了房间里房东太太缓慢而均匀的脚步声，还有那柔和的、低低的笑声。我冲了进去。

房间里毫无生命的痕迹，两个房间都是。

是的，什么生命都没有。因为，当我怀着心中对哈尔所有的情感冲到他在窗下的所躺之处时，我发现他已经死了。

死了，而且死得惨烈至极。三个重重的标记——拳头的击打形成了三个深深的三角形裂口。我站起来——连那把椅子也不见了！

又是那窃窃私语的笑声。我绝望地逃离了那恐怖的房子。

我从街上瞥了一眼那扇致命的窗户，我的目光战栗。

冉冉升起的太阳给所有的屋顶都镀上了金，水平的光线打在对面建筑物高高的玻璃窗格上。窗边那把大椅子，那甜美的面孔，那垂下的眼睛，还有那晃动的金色脑袋，都反射出一缕宁静的光辉。

[3] 攻城锤，中世纪的一种武器，主体为一根重圆木，圆形或锥形的头部用金属制成，用以撞击围攻城镇和城堡的城墙或城门。

老水

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那湖水，平滑如镜地躺在水平的金色光线里。树木覆盖的湖岸投下长长的阴影，铺满了水面，那里一片漆黑，深不可测。湖的东岸有一处尖耸的小悬崖，它那明亮的倒影顺着水面铺展开来。

一只平静的独木舟慢慢地划过开阔的金色水面，由一双熟练的手臂迅疾而平稳地向前推去。

“多么强壮！多么辉煌！啊！她就像一位女武神！”那位诗人说道。奥斯古德太太抬起头，用欣赏的目光望着那深色的高大身躯。

“你不知道你这样说我有多高兴！”她温柔地说，“我也有这样的感觉，却没有天赋把它们付诸文字。而埃伦又是如此现实。”

“是你的女儿就一定会有诗意的灵魂。”他回答道，沉静地笑着。

“我真希望是这样。但我对这一点从来都没有信心！她小时候，我总是给她读诗。可她对诗没有兴趣——除非是她所谓的‘故事诗’。一旦她可以自己拿主意了，她就选择了科学。”

“诗就在那里。”他一边说着，眼睛盯着那光滑的褐色手臂——它离他越来越近。“那种姿势！那种动作！它就是诗性本身——还有那身体！她的身体就是一首诗！”

奥斯古德太太注视着那精准的着陆，那强劲的拉力带动独木舟越过滚柱 [4]，向上进入小船屋。“埃伦是如此现实！”她低声说道，“她甚至不承认自己的美丽。”

“她还没有觉醒，”诗人呢喃说，“还没有觉醒！”他的大眼睛似乎闪烁着希望的光芒。

“她也很勇敢，”母亲接着说，“她并不是真喜欢水，只是强迫自己到水面上去。我想她心里很害怕——但不愿承认。噢，埃伦！到这里来吧，亲爱的。这是潘达克斯特先生——那位诗人。”

埃伦伸出她褐色的手，手冰凉；她的手还有点儿湿，因为才在水边匆匆洗过。他热情地紧握了一下，对她划独木舟的技巧表示钦佩。

“哦，那没什么，”女孩儿说，“划独木舟非常容易。”

“你能教我吗？”他问，“我会是个最听话的学生。”

她狐疑地上下打量他那魁梧的身躯。他无疑是很健壮的，粗壮的四肢定然意味着力量，但他缺乏一种来自长期训练的平衡感以及一种自信的敏捷。

“你不会划桨吧？”她说。

“原谅我的无知吧——我从未坐上过那精巧纤细的小船。但我很乐意试试。”

“潘达克斯特先生主要在欧洲活动，比在美国待的时间多，”她母亲急忙插嘴道，“我亲爱的，不是所有人都喜爱这项运动。我相信如果你有兴趣，我女儿会非常乐意教你的，潘达克斯特先生。”

“当然，”埃伦说，“我可以尝试着教他一下。你想明天早晨开始吗？我通常很早就出发了。”

“我很愿意，”他说，“我们将一起向极光问好。”

“是曙光吧，亲爱的先生。”她母亲带着歉意，微笑地提示道。

“噢，是的，”女孩儿表示同意并对母亲说，“我还是认得出极光的，妈妈。晚饭做好了吗？”

“等你穿好衣服我们就可以用餐了，”母亲说，“穿上你的蓝色连衣裙，亲爱的——浅色的那件。”

“好啊。”埃伦说着轻快地跑上小径。

“多美呀！多美呀！”他喃喃地说，目光追寻着她飞逝的身影。“啊，夫人！你有这样一个女儿，这对你该多么有意义啊！看到你自己的青春——转瞬即逝——又重现在你眼前！”他说着，低头赞赏地瞥了一眼女主人的轮廓。

晚餐时分，奥斯古德夫人穿着一件有点儿古典的长裙出现在餐桌前，漂亮的头发上粗野地绑着些金饰。她满意地看着自己的女儿，在一片迷雾般的蓝色中，像年轻的朱诺 [5] 一样闪亮。埃伦兼具母亲的美貌和父亲的力量。她身材高大，流畅优雅的线条下藏着有力的肌肉。她的举止像一位王后，又带着一种健康女学生活泼烂漫的神情。一位健康的女学生，这确实就是埃伦。

她的食欲如此旺盛，她母亲几乎害怕这会令诗人有些不满，但很快发现诗人也正尽情享用着厨师准备的餐点。埃伦也观察他，她坦率地对诗人的用餐习惯表现出了些许异议，指出诗人糖果和奶油吃得太多，而且似乎过于喜欢喝咖啡和利口酒。

“埃伦从来不喝咖啡，”他们坐在豪华的起居室时，奥斯古德太太解释说，“我想是出于训练的考虑。”

“妈妈！我们还处在训练期！”女孩抗议道，“尽管不是正式的——因为没有比赛——但是我喜欢保持良好的状态。我在学校是尾桨手，品达克斯特先生，我在学校是尾桨手。”

“是潘达克斯特，亲爱的。”她母亲低声说。

这个魁梧的男人拿起了他的第二杯咖啡，坐在了女孩儿旁边。

“我的景仰之情无以言表，”他说着，身体前倾，“你像瑙西卡 [6]，像阿塔兰忒 [7]，像我梦中的那些女人！”

她对他公开的赞美并没有感到不快——即使是健美的女孩也会对恭维感到愉悦——尽管她接受得有些尴尬。

“我不相信梦。”她说。

“不，”他表示赞成，“不——人们也绝不该相信梦。可是——难道你从来没有反复做过一个梦吗？一个会重复的梦？”

“我做过噩梦，”她承认说，“恐怖的梦，但不是同样的梦。”

“在可怕的梦里，你梦到了什么？”

“野兽，”她立刻回答，“扑向我的巨兽！我跑啊跑啊——啊！”

奥斯古德太太抿了一口咖啡，看着他们。眼前这位是前途无量的诗人，他代表了她少女时代所渴望的一切，而这一切都是她那位极富有的工厂主丈夫身上所缺乏的。真希望她的女儿能弥补这个遗憾！

“他们说那些梦来自我们遥远的过去，”她说，“你相信吗，潘达克斯特先生？”

“是的，”他赞同地说，“来自我们这一物种演化早期的记忆，来自深藏已久的恐惧与痛苦的岁月。”

“那我们产生的‘似曾相识’的奇怪感觉，和反复的梦是同一种东西吗？”

“这人们还不知道，”他说，“有人说，这是由于一半大脑在思考中出现了片刻的延迟。我不知道，对我来说，把一个人突然产生的似曾相识的感觉解读为对前世生活的模糊记忆，会更加神秘，更加有趣。”他看着埃伦，仿佛她从他的前世中走出来。“你有过那种感觉吗，奥斯古德小姐？”

那个女孩儿有点儿羞怯地笑了。“在一件事上我有过，”她说，“那就是我怕水的原因。”

“居然怕水！你！一个水中女神！”

“哦，我当然没有放任这种恐惧。但这是我唯一感到紧张的事

情。我从小就有这种感觉——那种恐怖的感觉！”

她打了个寒战，问他是否想听听音乐。

“啊！你还会弹奏吗？”

她欢快地笑了。“我只会用自动钢琴，或其他某种自动乐器。我可以开始了吗？”

“等一下，”他说，“马上。但是，你可否告诉我这个关于可怕东西的梦？我非常非常感兴趣。”

“噢，不算什么啊，”她说，“我没有梦见它，真的——它是在我醒着的时候出现的。只有两三次——有一次是在我十岁或十一岁的时候，那以后还有一两次。是水——漆黑、平静、光滑的水——在我身下。我无法摆脱它。我想要——然后什么东西抓住了我——啊！”

她决然地站起身，走到乐谱架前。“如果那是我过去的记忆，我一定是曾被一只愤怒的猩猩过早地了结了！总之我不喜欢水，除非是一片汪洋大海。我该演奏什么呢？”

他本想第二天早晨天一亮就起来，却没有醒。当他往外看时，那只独木舟已经轻快地往家划来，正好赶上吃早餐。

她嘲笑他的懒惰，却答应以后给他补上这一课，并且很高兴地发现他会打网球。他穿着白色法兰绒长裤，看上去很帅气。事实上他的外表比他的球艺更令人赞赏，他被女孩儿打得落花流水，直至近乎发怒。

奥斯古德太太在他们打得精彩的时候，会偶尔在一旁高兴地观看一阵；有时候为了能让他们俩单独多待一会儿，则会找各种借口离开。

他私下向她提出一个问题，担心对于独木舟来说，自己会不会太重了。但她让他放宽心。

“哦，不必担心，真的，潘达克斯特先生，这是一只特别宽的独木舟，里面还有气囊——它不会下沉的。”这是她父亲为她亲手做的。“我父亲也是一个大块头，他很喜欢划独木舟。”

于是这位健壮的诗人被缓缓地领到船的中央，女孩儿递给他一支船桨。

看不到漂亮的女导师让他沮丧，所以他提议两人换一下位置。

“不，真不行！”她说，“把另一支桨也给你？——还不到时候吧！”

他提议能否至少面对着她。听了这话，她顽皮地笑了，告诉他最

好先学会划桨前进，然后再试着向后划。

“如果你想看我，你可以另找一只独木舟，试着跟上我吧。”她微笑着补充。直到听了这句话，他才宣布自己会对她的命令绝对服从。

他占满了那小小的藤制船椅，像她一样卷起袖子。她把桨交给他，给他演示应该怎样握着它。尽管她拼命地掌舵，他用力地划桨，小船仍左右摆动，引得她默默地笑了。

“别这么用力！”她说，“你比我有力量，你的桨又伸得太远了，让我们的船晃来晃去的。”

他稍微用了一点儿耐心就掌握了这门艺术，足以成为一名合格的舵手，但她不相信他能驾驭船尾。平静湖面上的所有美景都无法平复他看不见她的懊恼。不过他又想，她能看见他。或许这就是她把他留在前面的原因！——想到这点，他就坐得更直了。

她确实挺喜欢他那匀称的身躯，可是她瞧不上他的笨拙，而且对他手臂和双手上浓密的黑色汗毛感到深深的厌恶。

他厌倦了独木舟。他不能转头深情地注视她，也不能说些甜蜜的话；换言之，相处的效果并不好。打网球时，她发挥很稳，总是赢得比赛，这也令他厌倦。她不喜欢高尔夫球；他不会骑马；她开车时，她的手、眼睛和所有的注意力都集中在汽车上。所以他只能提议，一起去散步。

“你一定要在这美妙的树林里散散步，”他说，“我在许多方面都技不如人，但我起码可以走路！”

“好吧。”她愉快地同意了，然后和他一起在乡间漫步，轻快而不知疲倦。

她母亲在一旁屏息观察。这个大眼睛男人有着天鹅绒般的声音，柔软胡须下是两片红唇，她是彻底为他倾倒了。她认为他的诗歌极为精妙动听，埃伦却认为它“毫无实际用途”。

“他究竟想把那些古老的传说改写成什么呢？”当母亲试图赢得她的某种赞赏时，埃伦这样说，“难道现在就没有足够的东西可写了吗——一定要回到那些从不存在的人身上，写别人故事里的人物？”

“它们是世界诗歌素材的一部分，我亲爱的。民间传说、种族神话，它们关乎我们的世界意象。”

“好吧，我不喜欢关于世界意象的诗歌，仅此而已。就像木乃伊一样，是陈腐的，精心打扮的！”

“我感到很遗憾！”她母亲有些恼怒地说，“我们在此荣幸地迎来了我们最伟大的诗人之一——或许就是最伟大的诗人。我的亲生孩子却

没有能力欣赏他的美妙作品。你真像你父亲！”

“好吧，我也无能为力，”埃伦说，“我不喜欢那些愚蠢老套的故事，讲的都是那些不做实事，脑子里只有恋爱和谋杀的人！他们没有理智，没有勇气，毫不体面！”

她母亲设法使她承认诗人其他作品的价值。

“没有用的，妈妈！或许你心里有你的诗人，并从中得到所有审美的愉悦。我当然会对他以礼相待。但我不喜欢他写的东西。”

“亲爱的，你不喜欢他的《每日抒情诗》和《森林》吗？”

“不喜欢，妈妈，连那些也不行。我相信他从未真正看过日出——除非他是特意起床，像照相机一样站着记录！还有森林！哎呀，他都分不清这棵树和那棵树！”

她母亲几乎对她绝望了。但这位诗人并不气馁。

“啊！奥斯古德夫人！既然我有幸得到你的信任，我只有感谢你，并且试试我的运气。这个萌芽的灵魂是如此美丽——她的花苞还未开放，紧紧闭着，甚至有些坚硬！但是当她的玫瑰花瓣绽开的时候……”

然而，他并没有把自己的秘密向奥斯古德太太和盘托出，只是一种温柔、诗意的比喻来形容开花是为了什么。他没有告诉她自己内心正在酝酿的激情的风暴，这样沸腾的强度会使那个温和的灵魂极度惊恐，或许会使她怀疑自己的选择是否明智。

奥斯古德夫人仍然处于一种热切而克制的情感状态中，几乎对埃伦只字不提，生怕惊吓到她，却希望女孩儿能和这个伟大的灵魂一起找到幸福。

与此同时，那个伟大的灵魂继续在他的道路上前进着，运用他所了解的每一种艺术——对此他经验颇丰——去触碰身边那个拥有红褐色肌肤的仙女的心。

她天真又年轻。她深陷于自己的冷漠之中而无法真正欣赏他所付出的辛苦，更不用说同情了。而且她还以戏弄他为乐，伤害了他却毫无觉察，就像一个顽皮的孩子。她取笑他打网球、划桨和开车不行；她承认或许他高尔夫球打得不错，但她本人并不喜欢高尔夫球——这项运动太慢了；她甚至嘲笑他的林间散步。

“他并不想走路！”一天吃晚餐时，她兴高采烈地对她母亲说，“他只是想去一个地方，把自己优雅地安顿在一棵树下，给我读一些关于爱洛伊丝、阿拉明塔 [8] 或什么人的故事；都是苗条、白皙、金色鬈发的美人，还有她们是如何为爱而殉情的！”

她坦率地嘲笑他。他也和她一起笑，但他的内心深处炽热又黑暗。他越是追求，越是挫败，对她的欲望也就越强烈。这份爱持续的时间已经比平常要久了。他那势不可当的求爱，从来没有像现在这样被轻巧地回避和置之不理。

“今天吃过晚饭以后，你愿意和我一起去散步吗？”他提议说，“今晚有最圣洁的月亮——而我也无法看书，不能给你读诗。月光落在你的湖面上，一定会奇妙得可人，你说是吗，奥斯古德太太？”

“的确是这样。”奥斯古德太太热情地表示同意，不满地望着女孩——女孩仍沉浸在对金发的阿拉明塔的回忆里，小声地咯咯笑个不停——“带他去悬崖边散步吧，埃伦，一定要试着欣赏美啊！”

“好的，妈妈，”埃伦说，“我会乖乖的。”

她在月色下散步，是如此乖驯。她温柔，富有同情心，如此真诚地想与他达成一致。他的感情因此过于强烈，于是失去了判断力，他捉住她的手，吻了一下。她震惊得说不出话来，惊吓着把他推开。

“哎呀，潘达克斯特先生！你在想什么啊！”

然后他向她倾诉衷肠。他告诉她，他是多么爱她——疯狂地，热烈地，不可抗拒地。他恳求她听他诉说。

“啊！你这年轻的戴安娜！你不知道我有多痛苦！你这么年轻，这么冷淡！这么圣洁美丽！别那么残忍！听我说！说你愿意做我的妻子！给我一个吻！只一个！”

她年轻，冷淡，残忍，却不自知。她嘲笑他，无情地嘲笑，然后转身走了。

他跟着她，血脉偾张，声音因强烈的感情而颤抖。他抓住她的手，又把她拉了过来。她低低地叫了一声，挣脱了他，跑走了。他狂热地、发病地跟在后面，冲向她，抓住她，紧紧抱住她。

“你会爱我的！你会的！”他叫道。他的手热得发烫，在颤抖。他紧紧地抱住她，把她的脸转向他。

“我才不会！”她挣扎着叫道，“让我走！我恨你！我告诉你，我恨你！你真——恶心！”她尽可能地把她推得很远。

他们已经到了房子对面的小悬崖顶上。巨大的黑松林悬在他们头上，宽大的树枝温柔地摇摆。

脚下的水面躺在阴影里，平滑，油黑。

女孩低头看了看水面，紧张的身体突然打了个寒战。她发出一声低低的悲叹，用双手捂住脸。

“啊！”他叫道，“这是你的命运！我们的命运！我们前世经历过！假如我们不能生活在一起，我们就要死在一起！”

他把她拉进怀里，疯狂地、热烈地吻她，然后一起纵身跃进了黑色的湖水中。

“幸好我会游泳，”埃伦一边说，一边匆匆赶回家，“可他不会。这个可怜的人！噢，这个可怜的人！他一定是疯了！”

[4] 滚柱，用于将船只移到海里或船屋里。

[5] 朱诺（Juno），罗马神话中的天后，朱庇特之妻，婚姻和母性之神，罗马十二主神之一，集美貌、温柔、慈爱于一身。

[6] 瑙西卡（Nausicaa）是古希腊神话中法埃亚科安岛国王阿尔喀诺俄斯的女儿，长得美丽端庄。

[7] 阿塔兰忒（Atalanta）是古希腊神话中一位善于疾走的女猎手，是阿特弥斯女神的伙伴。她在野外长大，身形健壮，性情开朗。

[8] 均为传说中的人物，见于一些传奇和诗歌中的描写。

‘The color is
hideous enough,
and unreliable
enough, and
infuriating
enough, but
the pattern is
torturing . . .’

The Yellow Wall- Paper

It is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer.

A colonial mansion, a hereditary estate, I would say a haunted house, and reach the height of romantic felicity – but that would be asking too much of fate!

Still I will proudly declare that there is something queer about it.

Else, why should it be let so cheaply? And why have stood so long untenanted?

John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage.

John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense horror of superstition, and he scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures.

John is a physician, and *perhaps* – (I would not say it to a living soul, of course, but this is dead paper and a great relief to my mind –) *perhaps* that is one reason I do not get well faster.

You see he does not believe I am sick!

And what can one do?

If a physician of high standing, and one's own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression – a slight hysterical tendency – what is one to do?

My brother is also a physician, and also of high standing, and he says the same thing.

So I take phosphates or phosphites – whichever it is, and tonics, and journeys, and air, and exercise, and am absolutely forbidden to 'work' until I am well again.

Personally, I disagree with their ideas

Personally, I believe that congenial work, with excitement and

change, would do me good.

But what is one to do?

I did write for a while in spite of them; but it *does* exhaust me a good deal – having to be so sly about it, or else meet with heavy opposition.

I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus – but John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad.

So I will let it alone and talk about the house.

The most beautiful place! It is quite alone, standing well back from the road, quite three miles from the village. It makes me think of English places that you read about, for there are hedges and walls and gates that lock, and lots of separate little houses for the gardeners and people.

There is a *delicious* garden! I never saw such a garden – large and shady, full of box- bordered paths, and lined with long grape-covered arbors with seats under them.

There were greenhouses, too, but they are all broken now.

There was some legal trouble, I believe, something about the heirs and co- heirs; anyhow, the place has been empty for years.

That spoils my ghostliness, I am afraid, but I don't care – there is something strange about the house – I can feel it.

I even said so to John one moonlight evening, but he said what I felt was a *draught* , and shut the window.

I get unreasonably angry with John sometimes. I'm sure I never used to be so sensitive. I think it is due to this nervous condition.

But John says if I feel so, I shall neglect proper self- control; so I take pains to control myself – before him, at least, and that makes me very tired.

I don't like our room a bit. I wanted one downstairs that opened on the piazza and had roses all over the window, and such pretty old- fashioned chintz hangings! but John would not hear of it.

He said there was only one window and not room for two beds, and no near room for him if he took another.

He is very careful and loving, and hardly lets me stir without special direction.

I have a schedule prescription for each hour in the day; he takes all care from me, and so I feel basely ungrateful not to value it more.

He said we came here solely on my account, that I was to have perfect rest and all the air I could get. 'Your exercise depends on your strength, my dear,' said he, 'and your food somewhat on your appetite; but air you can absorb all the time.' So we took the nursery at the top of the house.

It is a big, airy room, the whole floor nearly, with windows that look all ways, and air and sunshine galore. It was nursery first and then playroom and gymnasium, I should judge; for the windows are barred for little children, and there are rings and things in the walls.

The paint and paper look as if a boys' school had used it. It is stripped off – the paper – in great patches all around the head of my bed, about as far as I can reach, and in a great place on the other side of the room low down. I never saw a worse paper in my life.

One of those sprawling flamboyant patterns committing every artistic sin.

It is dull enough to confuse the eye in following, pronounced enough to constantly irritate and provoke study, and when you follow the lame uncertain curves for a little distance they suddenly commit suicide – plunge off at outrageous angles, destroy themselves in unheard of contradictions.

The color is repellant, almost revolting; a smouldering unclean yellow, strangely faded by the slow- turning sunlight.

It is a dull yet lurid orange in some places, a sickly sulphur tint in others.

No wonder the children hated it! I should hate it myself if I had to live in this room long.

There comes John, and I must put this away, – he hates to have

me write a word.

We have been here two weeks, and I haven't felt like writing before, since that first day.

I am sitting by the window now, up in this atrocious nursery, and there is nothing to hinder my writing as much as I please, save lack of strength.

John is away all day, and even some nights when his cases are serious.

I am glad my case is not serious!

But these nervous troubles are dreadfully depressing.

John does not know how much I really suffer. He knows there is no *reason* to suffer, and that satisfies him.

Of course it is only nervousness. It does weigh on me so not to do my duty in any way!

I meant to be such a help to John, such a real rest and comfort, and here I am a comparative burden already!

Nobody would believe what an effort it is to do what little I am able, – to dress and entertain, and order things.

It is fortunate Mary is so good with the baby. Such a dear baby!

And yet I *cannot* be with him, it makes me so nervous.

I suppose John never was nervous in his life. He laughs at me so about this wall- paper!

At first he meant to repaper the room, but afterwards he said that I was letting it get the better of me, and that nothing was worse for a nervous patient than to give way to such fancies.

He said that after the wall- paper was changed it would be the heavy bedstead, and then the barred windows, and then that gate at the head of the stairs, and so on.

'You know the place is doing you good,' he said, 'and really, dear, I don't care to renovate the house just for a three months' rental.'

'Then do let us go downstairs,' I said, 'there are such pretty rooms there.'

Then he took me in his arms and called me a blessed little goose, and said he would go down to the cellar, if I wished, and have it whitewashed into the bargain.

But he is right enough about the beds and windows and things.

It is an airy and comfortable room as any one need wish, and, of course, I would not be so silly as to make him uncomfortable just for a whim.

I'm really getting quite fond of the big room, all but that horrid paper.

Out of one window I can see the garden, those mysterious deep- shaded arbors, the riotous old- fashioned flowers, and bushes and gnarly trees.

Out of another I get a lovely view of the bay and a little private wharf belonging to the estate. There is a beautiful shaded lane that runs down there from the house. I always fancy I see people walking in these numerous paths and arbors, but John has cautioned me not to give way to fancy in the least. He says that with my imaginative power and habit of story- making, a nervous weakness like mine is sure to lead to all manner of excited fancies, and that I ought to use my will and good sense to check the tendency. So I try.

I think sometimes that if I were only well enough to write a little it would relieve the press of ideas and rest me.

But I find I get pretty tired when I try.

It is so discouraging not to have any advice and companionship about my work. When I get really well, John says we will ask Cousin Henry and Julia down for a long visit; but he says he would as soon put fireworks in my pillow- case as to let me have those stimulating people about now.

I wish I could get well faster.

But I must not think about that. This paper looks to me as if it *knew* what a vicious influence it had!

There is a recurrent spot where the pattern lolls like a broken neck and two bulbous eyes stare at you upside down.

I get positively angry with the impertinence of it and the

everlastingness. Up and down and sideways they crawl, and those absurd, unblinking eyes are everywhere. There is one place where two breadths didn't match, and the eyes go all up and down the line, one a little higher than the other.

I never saw so much expression in an inanimate thing before, and we all know how much expression they have! I used to lie awake as a child and get more entertainment and terror out of blank walls and plain furniture than most children could find in a toy- store.

I remember what a kindly wink the knobs of our big, old bureau used to have, and there was one chair that always seemed like a strong friend.

I used to feel that if any of the other things looked too fierce I could always hop into that chair and be safe.

The furniture in this room is no worse than inharmonious, however, for we had to bring it all from downstairs. I suppose when this was used as a playroom they had to take the nursery things out, and no wonder! I never saw such ravages as the children have made here.

The wall- paper, as I said before, is torn off in spots, and it sticketh closer than a brother – they must have had perseverance as well as hatred.

Then the floor is scratched and gouged and splintered, the plaster itself is dug out here and there, and this great heavy bed which is all we found in the room, looks as if it had been through the wars.

But I don't mind it a bit – only the paper.

There comes John's sister. Such a dear girl as she is, and so careful of me! I must not let her find me writing.

She is a perfect and enthusiastic housekeeper, and hopes for no better profession. I verily believe she thinks it is the writing which made me sick!

But I can write when she is out, and see her a long way off from these windows.

There is one that commands the road, a lovely shaded winding

road, and one that just looks off over the country. A lovely country, too, full of great elms and velvet meadows.

This wallpaper has a kind of subpattern in a different shade, a particularly irritating one, for you can only see it in certain lights, and not clearly then.

But in the places where it isn't faded and where the sun is just so – I can see a strange, provoking, formless sort of figure, that seems to skulk about behind that silly and conspicuous front design.

There's sister on the stairs!

Well, the Fourth of July is over! The people are all gone and I am tired out. John thought it might do me good to see a little company, so we just had mother and Nellie and the children down for a week.

Of course I didn't do a thing. Jennie sees to everything now.

But it tired me all the same.

John says if I don't pick up faster he shall send me to Weir Mitchell in the fall.

But I don't want to go there at all. I had a friend who was in his hands once, and she says he is just like John and my brother, only more so!

Besides, it is such an undertaking to go so far.

I don't feel as if it was worth while to turn my hand over for anything, and I'm getting dreadfully fretful and querulous.

I cry at nothing, and cry most of the time.

Of course I don't when John is here, or anybody else, but when I am alone.

And I am alone a good deal just now. John is kept in town very often by serious cases, and Jennie is good and lets me alone when I want her to.

So I walk a little in the garden or down that lovely lane, sit on the porch under the roses, and lie down up here a good deal.

I'm getting really fond of the room in spite of the wallpaper. Perhaps *because* of the wall-paper.

It dwells in my mind so!

I lie here on this great immovable bed – it is nailed down, I believe – and follow that pattern about by the hour. It is as good as gymnastics, I assure you. I start, we'll say, at the bottom, down in the corner over there where it has not been touched, and I determine for the thousandth time that I *will* follow that pointless pattern to some sort of a conclusion.

I know a little of the principle of design, and I know this thing was not arranged on any laws of radiation, or alternation, or repetition, or symmetry, or anything else that I ever heard of.

It is repeated, of course, by the breadths, but not otherwise.

Looked at in one way each breadth stands alone, the bloated curves and flourishes – a kind of 'debased Romanesque' with *delirium tremens* – go waddling up and down in isolated columns of fatuity.

But, on the other hand, they connect diagonally, and the sprawling outlines run off in great slanting waves of optic horror, like a lot of wallowing seaweeds in full chase.

The whole thing goes horizontally, too, at least it seems so, and I exhaust myself in trying to distinguish the order of its going in that direction.

They have used a horizontal breadth for a frieze, and that adds wonderfully to the confusion.

There is one end of the room where it is almost intact, and there, when the crosslights fade and the low sun shines directly upon it, I can almost fancy radiation after all, – the interminable grotesques seem to form around a common centre and rush off in headlong plunges of equal distraction.

It makes me tired to follow it. I will take a nap I guess.

I don't know why I should write this.

I don't want to.

I don't feel able.

And I know John would think it absurd. But I must say what I feel and think in some way – it is such a relief!

But the effort is getting to be greater than the relief.

Half the time now I am awfully lazy, and lie down ever so much.

John says I mustn't lose my strength, and has me take cod liver oil and lots of tonics and things, to say nothing of ale and wine and rare meat.

Dear John! He loves me very dearly, and hates to have me sick. I tried to have a real earnest reasonable talk with him the other day, and tell him how I wish he would let me go and make a visit to Cousin Henry and Julia.

But he said I wasn't able to go, nor able to stand it after I got there; and I did not make out a very good case for myself, for I was crying before I had finished.

It is getting to be a great effort for me to think straight. Just this nervous weakness I suppose.

And dear John gathered me up in his arms, and just carried me upstairs and laid me on the bed, and sat by me and read to me till it tired my head.

He said I was his darling and his comfort and all he had, and that I must take care of myself for his sake, and keep well.

He says no one but myself can help me out of it, that I must use my will and self-control and not let any silly fancies run away with me.

There's one comfort, the baby is well and happy, and does not have to occupy this nursery with the horrid wallpaper.

If we had not used it, that blessed child would have! What a fortunate escape! Why, I wouldn't have a child of mine, an impressionable little thing, live in such a room for worlds.

I never thought of it before, but it is lucky that John kept me here after all, I can stand it so much easier than a baby, you see.

Of course I never mention it to them any more – I am too wise, – but I keep watch of it all the same.

There are things in that paper that nobody knows but me, or ever will.

Behind that outside pattern the dim shapes get clearer every day.

It is always the same shape, only very numerous.

And it is like a woman stooping down and creeping about behind that pattern. I don't like it a bit. I wonder – I begin to think – I wish John would take me away from here!

It is so hard to talk with John about my case, because he is so wise, and because he loves me so.

But I tried it last night.

It was moonlight. The moon shines in all around just as the sun does.

I hate to see it sometimes, it creeps so slowly, and always comes in by one window or another.

John was asleep and I hated to waken him, so I kept still and watched the moonlight on that undulating wallpaper till I felt creepy.

The faint figure behind seemed to shake the pattern, just as if she wanted to get out.

I got up softly and went to feel and see if the paper *did* move, and when I came back John was awake.

'What is it, little girl?' he said. 'Don't go walking about like that – you'll get cold.'

I thought it was a good time to talk, so I told him that I really was not gaining here, and that I wished he would take me away.

'Why, darling!' said he, 'our lease will be up in three weeks, and I can't see how to leave before.'

'The repairs are not done at home, and I cannot possibly leave town just now. Of course if you were in any danger, I could and would, but you really are better, dear, whether you can see it or not. I am a doctor, dear, and I know. You are gaining flesh and color, your appetite is better, I feel really much easier about you.'

'I don't weigh a bit more,' said I, 'nor as much; and my appetite may be better in the evening when you are here, but it is worse in the morning when you are away!'

'Bless her little heart!' said he with a big hug, 'she shall be as sick as she pleases! But now let's improve the shining hours by

going to sleep, and talk about it in the morning!"

"And you won't go away?" I asked gloomily.

"Why, how can I, dear? It is only three weeks more and then we will take a nice little trip of a few days while Jennie is getting the house ready. Really, dear, you are better!"

"Better in body perhaps -" I began, and stopped short, for he sat up straight and looked at me with such a stern, reproachful look that I could not say another word.

"My darling," said he, "I beg of you, for my sake and for our child's sake, as well as for your own, that you will never for one instant let that idea enter your mind! There is nothing so dangerous, so fascinating, to a temperament like yours. It is a false and foolish fancy. Can you not trust me as a physician when I tell you so?"

So of course I said no more on that score, and we went to sleep before long. He thought I was asleep first, but I wasn't, and lay there for hours trying to decide whether that front pattern and the back pattern really did move together or separately.

On a pattern like this, by daylight, there is a lack of sequence, a defiance of law, that is a constant irritant to a normal mind.

The color is hideous enough, and unreliable enough, and infuriating enough, but the pattern is torturing.

You think you have mastered it, but just as you get well underway in following, it turns a back-somersault and there you are. It slaps you in the face, knocks you down, and tramples upon you. It is like a bad dream.

The outside pattern is a florid arabesque, reminding one of a fungus. If you can imagine a toadstool in joints, an interminable string of toadstools, budding and sprouting in endless convolutions – why, that is something like it.

That is, sometimes!

There is one marked peculiarity about this paper, a thing nobody seems to notice but myself, and that is that it changes as the light changes.

When the sun shoots in through the east window – I always

watch for that first long, straight ray – it changes so quickly that I never can quite believe it.

That is why I watch it always.

By moonlight – the moon shines in all night when there is a moon – I wouldn't know it was the same paper.

At night in any kind of light, in twilight, candlelight, lamplight, and worst of all by moonlight, it becomes bars! The outside pattern I mean, and the woman behind it is as plain as can be.

I didn't realize for a long time what the thing was that showed behind, that dim sub- pattern, but now I am quite sure it is a woman.

By daylight she is subdued, quiet. I fancy it is the pattern that keeps her so still. It is so puzzling. It keeps me quiet by the hour.

I lie down ever so much now. John says it is good for me, and to sleep all I can.

Indeed he started the habit by making me lie down for an hour after each meal.

It is a very bad habit I am convinced, for you see I don't sleep.

And that cultivates deceit, for I don't tell them I'm awake – O no!

The fact is I am getting a little afraid of John.

He seems very queer sometimes, and even Jennie has an inexplicable look.

It strikes me occasionally, just as a scientific hypothesis, – that perhaps it is the paper!

I have watched John when he did not know I was looking, and come into the room suddenly on the most innocent excuses, and I've caught him several times *looking* at the paper! And Jennie too. I caught Jennie with her hand on it once.

She didn't know I was in the room, and when I asked her in a quiet, a very quiet voice, with the most restrained manner possible, what she was doing with the paper – she turned around as if she had been caught stealing, and looked quite angry – asked me why I should frighten her so!

Then she said that the paper stained everything it touched, that she had found yellow smooches on all my clothes and John's, and she wished we would be more careful!

Did not that sound innocent? But I know she was studying that pattern, and I am determined that nobody shall find it out but myself!

*

Life is very much more exciting now than it used to be. You see I have something more to expect, to look forward to, to watch. I really do eat better, and am more quiet than I was.

John is so pleased to see me improve! He laughed a little the other day, and said I seemed to be flourishing in spite of my wall-paper.

I turned it off with a laugh. I had no intention of telling him it was *because* of the wall- paper – he would make fun of me. He might even want to take me away.

I don't want to leave now until I have found it out. There is a week more, and I think that will be enough.

I'm feeling ever so much better! I don't sleep much at night, for it is so interesting to watch developments; but I sleep a good deal in the daytime.

In the daytime it is tiresome and perplexing.

There are always new shoots on the fungus, and new shades of yellow all over it. I cannot keep count of them, though I have tried conscientiously.

It is the strangest yellow, that wall- paper! It makes me think of all the yellow things I ever saw – not beautiful ones like buttercups, but old foul, bad yellow things.

But there is something else about that paper – the smell! I noticed it the moment we came into the room, but with so much air and sun it was not bad. Now we have had a week of fog and rain, and whether the windows are open or not, the smell is here.

It creeps all over the house.

I find it hovering in the dining- room, skulking in the parlor,

hiding in the hall, lying in wait for me on the stairs. It gets into my hair.

Even when I go to ride, if I turn my head suddenly and surprise it – there is that smell!

Such a peculiar odor, too! I have spent hours in trying to analyze it, to find what it smelled like.

It is not bad – at first, and very gentle, but quite the subtlest, most enduring odor I ever met.

In this damp weather it is awful, I wake up in the night and find it hanging over me.

It used to disturb me at first. I thought seriously of burning the house – to reach the smell.

But now I am used to it. The only thing I can think of that it is like is the *color* of the paper! A yellow smell.

There is a very funny mark on this wall, low down, near the mopboard. A streak that runs round the room. It goes behind every piece of furniture, except the bed, a long, straight, even *smooch*, as if it had been rubbed over and over.

I wonder how it was done and who did it, and what they did it for. Round and round and round – round and round and round – it makes me dizzy!

I really have discovered something at last.

Through watching so much at night, when it changes so, I have finally found out.

The front pattern *does* move – and no wonder! The woman behind shakes it!

Sometimes I think there are a great many women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it all over.

Then in the very bright spots she keeps still, and in the very shady spots she just takes hold of the bars and shakes them hard.

And she is all the time trying to climb through. But nobody could climb through that pattern – it strangles so; I think that is why it has so many heads.

They get through, and then the pattern strangles them off and turns them upside down, and makes their eyes white!

If those heads were covered or taken off it would not be half so bad.

I think that woman gets out in the daytime!

And I'll tell you why – privately – I've seen her!

I can see her out of every one of my windows!

It is the same woman, I know, for she is always creeping, and most women do not creep by daylight.

I see her in that long shaded lane, creeping up and down. I see her in those dark grape arbors, creeping all around the garden.

I see her on that long road under the trees, creeping along, and when a carriage comes she hides under the blackberry vines.

I don't blame her a bit. It must be very humiliating to be caught creeping by daylight!

I always lock the door when I creep by daylight. I can't do it at night, for I know John would suspect something at once.

And John is so queer now, that I don't want to irritate him. I wish he would take another room! Besides, I don't want anybody to get that woman out at night but myself.

I often wonder if I could see her out of all the windows at once.

But, turn as fast as I can, I can only see out of one at one time.

And though I always see her, she *may* be able to creep faster than I can turn!

I have watched her sometimes away off in the open country, creeping as fast as a cloud shadow in a high wind.

If only that top pattern could be gotten off from the under one! I mean to try it, little by little.

I have found out another funny thing, but I shan't tell it this time! It does not do to trust people too much.

There are only two more days to get this paper off, and I believe John is beginning to notice. I don't like the look in his eyes.

And I heard him ask Jennie a lot of professional questions about me. She had a very good report to give.

She said I slept a good deal in the daytime.

John knows I don't sleep very well at night, for all I'm so quiet!

He asked me all sorts of questions, too, and pretended to be very loving and kind.

As if I couldn't see through him!

Still, I don't wonder he acts so, sleeping under this paper for three months.

It only interests me, but I feel sure John and Jennie are secretly affected by it.

Hurrah! This is the last day, but it is enough. John is to stay in town over night, and won't be out until this evening.

Jennie wanted to sleep with me – the sly thing! but I told her I should undoubtedly rest better for a night all alone.

That was clever, for really I wasn't alone a bit! As soon as it was moonlight and that poor thing began to crawl and shake the pattern, I got up and ran to help her.

I pulled and she shook, I shook and she pulled, and before morning we had peeled off yards of that paper.

A strip about as high as my head and half around the room.

And then when the sun came and that awful pattern began to laugh at me, I declared I would finish it to- day!

We go away to- morrow, and they are moving all my furniture down again to leave things as they were before.

Jennie looked at the wall in amazement, but I told her merrily that I did it out of pure spite at the vicious thing.

She laughed and said she wouldn't mind doing it herself, but I must not get tired.

How she betrayed herself that time!

But I am here, and no person touches this paper but me, – not *alive* !

She tried to get me out of the room – it was too patent! But I said it was so quiet and empty and clean now that I believed I would lie down again and sleep all I could; and not to wake me even for dinner – I would call when I woke.

So now she is gone, and the servants are gone, and the things are gone, and there is nothing left but that great bedstead nailed down, with the canvas mattress we found on it.

We shall sleep downstairs to- night, and take the boat home tomorrow.

I quite enjoy the room, now it is bare again.

How those children did tear about here!

This bedstead is fairly gnawed!

But I must get to work.

I have locked the door and thrown the key down into the front path.

I don't want to go out, and I don't want to have anybody come in, till John comes.

I want to astonish him.

I've got a rope up here that even Jennie did not find. If that woman does get out, and tries to get away, I can tie her!

But I forgot I could not reach far without anything to stand on!

This bed will *not* move!

I tried to lift and push it until I was lame, and then I got so angry I bit off a little piece at one corner – but it hurt my teeth.

Then I peeled off all the paper I could reach standing on the floor. It sticks horribly and the pattern just enjoys it! All those strangled heads and bulbous eyes and waddling fungus growths just shriek with derision!

I am getting angry enough to do something desperate. To jump out of the window would be admirable exercise, but the bars are too strong even to try.

Besides I wouldn't do it. Of course not. I know well enough that a step like that is improper and might be misconstrued.

I don't like to *look* out of the windows even – there are so many of those creeping women, and they creep so fast.

I wonder if they all come out of that wall- paper as I did?

But I am securely fastened now by my well- hidden rope – you don't get *me* out in the road there!

I suppose I shall have to get back behind the pattern when it comes night, and that is hard!

It is so pleasant to be out in this great room and creep around as I please!

I don't want to go outside. I won't, even if Jennie asks me to.

For outside you have to creep on the ground, and everything is green instead of yellow.

But here I can creep smoothly on the floor, and my shoulder just fits in that long smooch around the wall, so I cannot lose my way.

Why there's John at the door!

It is no use, young man, you can't open it!

How he does call and pound!

Now he's crying for an axe.

It would be a shame to break down that beautiful door!

'John dear!' said I in the gentlest voice, 'the key is down by the front steps, under a plantain leaf!'

That silenced him for a few moments.

Then he said – very quietly indeed, 'Open the door, my darling!'

'I can't,' said I. 'The key is down by the front door under a plantain leaf!'

And then I said it again, several times, very gently and slowly, and said it so often that he had to go and see, and he got it of course, and came in. He stopped short by the door.

'What is the matter?' he cried. 'For God's sake, what are you doing!'

I kept on creeping just the same, but I looked at him over my shoulder.

'I've got out at last,' said I, 'in spite of you and Jane! And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!'

Now why should that man have fainted? But he did, and right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time!

The Rocking- Chair

A waving spot of sunshine, a signal light that caught the eye at once in a waste of commonplace houses, and all the dreary dimness of a narrow city street.

Across some low roof that made a gap in the wall of masonry, shot a level, brilliant beam of the just- setting sun, touching the golden head of a girl in an open window.

She sat in a high- backed rocking- chair with brass mountings that glittered as it swung, rocking slowly back and forth, never lifting her head, but fairly lighting up the street with the glory of her sunlit hair.

We two stopped and stared, and, so staring, caught sight of a small sign in a lower window – 'Furnished Lodgings.' With a common impulse we crossed the street and knocked at the dingy front door.

Slow, even footsteps approached from within, and a soft girlish laugh ceased suddenly as the door opened, showing us an old woman, with a dull, expressionless face and faded eyes.

Yes, she had rooms to let. Yes, we could see them. No, there was no service. No, there were no meals. So murmuring monotonously, she led the way up- stairs. It was an ordinary house enough, on a poor sort of street, a house in no way remarkable or unlike its fellows.

She showed us two rooms, connected, neither better nor worse than most of their class, rooms without a striking feature about them, unless it was the great brass- bound chair we found still rocking gently by the window.

But the gold- haired girl was nowhere to be seen.

I fancied I heard the light rustle of girlish robes in the inner chamber – a breath of that low laugh – but the door leading to this apartment was locked, and when I asked the woman if we could see the other rooms she said she had no other rooms to let.

A few words aside with Hal, and we decided to take these two, and move in at once. There was no reason we should not. We were looking for lodgings when that swinging sunbeam caught our eyes, and the accommodations were fully as good as we could pay for. So we closed our bargain on the spot, returned to our deserted boarding-house for a few belongings, and were settled anew that night.

Hal and I were young newspaper men, 'penny-a-liners,' part of that struggling crowd of aspirants who are to literature what squires and pages were to knighthood in olden days. We were winning our spurs. So far it was slow work, unpleasant and ill-paid – so was squireship and pagehood, I am sure; menial service and laborious polishing of armor; long running afoot while the master rode. But the squire could at least honor his lord and leader, while we, alas! had small honor for those above us in our profession, with but too good reason. We, of course, should do far nobler things when these same spurs were won!

Now it may have been mere literary instinct – the grasping at 'material' of the pot-boiling writers of the day, and it may have been another kind of instinct – the unacknowledged attraction of the fair unknown; but, whatever the reason, the place had drawn us both, and here we were.

Unbroken friendship begun in babyhood held us two together, all the more closely because Hal was a merry, prosaic, clear-headed fellow, and I sensitive and romantic.

The fearless frankness of family life we shared, but held the right to unapproachable reserves, and so kept love unstrained.

We examined our new quarters with interest. The front room, Hal's, was rather big and bare. The back room, mine, rather small and bare.

He preferred that room, I am convinced, because of the window and the chair. I preferred the other, because of the locked door. We neither of us mentioned these prejudices.

'Are you sure you would not rather have this room?' asked Hal, conscious, perhaps, of an ulterior motive in his choice.

'No, indeed,' said I, with a similar reservation; 'you only have the street and I have a real "view" from my window. The only thing

I begrudge you is the chair!'

'You may come and rock therein at any hour of the day or night,' said he magnanimously. 'It is tremendously comfortable, for all its black looks.'

It was a comfortable chair, a very comfortable chair, and we both used it a great deal. A very high- backed chair, curving a little forward at the top, with heavy square corners. These corners, the ends of the rockers, the great sharp knobs that tipped the arms, and every other point and angle were mounted in brass.

'Might be used for a battering- ram!' said Hal.

He sat smoking in it, rocking slowly and complacently by the window, while I lounged on the foot of the bed, and watched a pale young moon sink slowly over the western housetops.

It went out of sight at last, and the room grew darker and darker till I could only see Hal's handsome head and the curving chair- back move slowly to and fro against the dim sky.

'What brought us here so suddenly, Maurice?' he asked, out of the dark.

'Three reasons,' I answered. 'Our need of lodgings, the suitability of these, and a beautiful head.'

'Correct,' said he. 'Anything else?'

'Nothing you would admit the existence of, my sternly logical friend. But I am conscious of a certain compulsion, or at least attraction, in the case, which does not seem wholly accounted for, even by golden hair.'

'For once I will agree with you,' said Hal. 'I feel the same way myself, and I am not impressionable.'

We were silent for a little. I may have closed my eyes, – it may have been longer than I thought, but it did not seem another moment when something brushed softly against my arm, and Hal in his great chair was rocking beside me.

'Excuse me,' said he, seeing me start. 'This chair evidently "walks," I've seen 'em before.'

So had I, on carpets, but there was no carpet here, and I thought I was awake.

He pulled the heavy thing back to the window again, and we went to bed.

Our door was open, and we could talk back and forth, but presently I dropped off and slept heavily until morning. But I must have dreamed most vividly, for he accused me of rocking in his chair half the night, said he could see my outline clearly against the starlight.

'No,' said I, 'you dreamed it. You've got that rockingchair on the brain.'

'Dream it is, then,' he answered cheerily. 'Better a nightmare than a contradiction; a vampire than a quarrel! Come on, let's go to breakfast!'

We wondered greatly as the days went by that we saw nothing of our golden-haired charmer. But we wondered in silence, and neither mentioned it to the other.

Sometimes I heard her light movements in the room next mine, or the soft laugh somewhere in the house; but the mother's slow, even steps were more frequent, and even she was not often visible.

All either of us saw of the girl, to my knowledge, was from the street, for she still availed herself of our chair by the window. This we disapproved of, on principle, the more so as we left the doors locked, and her presence proved the possession of another key. No; there was the door in my room! But I did not mention the idea. Under the circumstances, however, we made no complaint, and used to rush stealthily and swiftly up-stairs, hoping to surprise her. But we never succeeded. Only the chair was often found still rocking, and sometimes I fancied a faint sweet odor lingering about, an odor strangely saddening and suggestive. But one day when I thought Hal was there I rushed in unceremoniously and caught her. It was but a glimpse – a swift, light, noiseless sweep – she vanished into my own room. Following her with apologies for such a sudden entrance, I was too late. The envious door was locked again.

Our landlady's fair daughter was evidently shy enough when brought to bay, but strangely willing to take liberties in our absence.

Still, I had seen her, and for that sight would have forgiven much. Hers was a strange beauty, infinitely attractive yet infinitely

perplexing. I marveled in secret, and longed with painful eagerness for another meeting; but I said nothing to Hal of my surprising her – it did not seem fair to the girl! She might have some good reason for going there; perhaps I could meet her again.

So I took to coming home early, on one excuse or another, and inventing all manner of errands to get to the room when Hal was not in.

But it was not until after numberless surprises on that point, finding him there when I supposed him downtown, and noticing something a little forced in his needless explanations, that I began to wonder if he might not be on the same quest.

Soon I was sure of it. I reached the corner of the street one evening just at sunset, and – yes, there was the rhythmic swing of that bright head in the dark frame of the open window. There also was Hal in the street below. She looked out, she smiled. He let himself in and went up- stairs.

I quickened my pace. I was in time to see the movement stop, the fair head turn, and Hal standing beyond her in the shadow.

I passed the door, passed the street, walked an hour – two hours – got a late supper somewhere, and came back about bedtime with a sharp and bitter feeling in my heart that I strove in vain to reason down. Why he had not as good a right to meet her as I it were hard to say, and yet I was strangely angry with him.

When I returned the lamplight shone behind the white curtain, and the shadow of the great chair stood motionless against it. Another shadow crossed – Hal – smoking. I went up.

He greeted me effusively and asked why I was so late. Where I got supper. Was unnaturally cheerful. There was a sudden dreadful sense of concealment between us. But he told nothing and I asked nothing, and we went silently to bed.

I blamed him for saying no word about our fair mystery, and yet I had said none concerning my own meeting. I racked my brain with questions as to how much he had really seen of her; if she had talked to him; what she had told him; how long she had stayed.

I tossed all night and Hal was sleepless too, for I heard him rocking for hours, by the window, by the bed, close to my door. I

never knew a rocking- chair to 'walk' as that one did.

Towards morning the steady creak and swing was too much for my nerves or temper.

'For goodness' sake, Hal, do stop that and go to bed!'

'What?' came a sleepy voice.

'Don't fool!' said I, 'I haven't slept a wink to- night for your everlasting rocking. Now do leave off and go to bed.'

'Go to bed! I've been in bed all night and I wish you had! Can't you use the chair without blaming me for it?'

And all the time I *heard* him rock, rock, rock, over by the hall door!

I rose stealthily and entered the room, meaning to surprise the ill- timed joker and convict him in the act.

Both rooms were full of the dim phosphorescence of reflected moonlight; I knew them even in the dark; and yet I stumbled just inside the door, and fell heavily.

Hal was out of bed in a moment and had struck a light.

'Are you hurt, my dear boy?'

I was hurt, and solely by his fault, for the chair was not where I supposed, but close to my bedroom door, where he must have left it to leap into bed when he heard me coming. So it was in no amiable humor that I refused his offers of assistance and limped back to my own sleepless pillow. I had struck my ankle on one of those brass-tipped rockers, and it pained me severely. I never saw a chair so made to hurt as that one. It was so large and heavy and ill-balanced, and every joint and corner so shod with brass. Hal and I had punished ourselves enough on it before, especially in the dark when we forgot where the thing was standing, but never so severely as this. It was not like Hal to play such tricks, and both heart and ankle ached as I crept into bed again to toss and doze and dream and fitfully start till morning.

Hal was kindness itself, but he would insist that he had been asleep and I rocking all night, till I grew actually angry with him.

'That's carrying a joke too far,' I said at last. 'I don't mind a joke, even when it hurts, but there are limits.'

'Yes, there are!' said he, significantly, and we dropped the subject.

Several days passed. Hal had repeated meetings with the gold-haired damsel; this I saw from the street; but save for these bitter glimpses I waited vainly.

It was hard to bear, harder almost than the growing estrangement between Hal and me, and that cut deeply. I think that at last either one of us would have been glad to go away by himself, but neither was willing to leave the other to the room, the chair, the beautiful unknown.

Coming home one morning unexpectedly, I found the dull-faced landlady arranging the rooms, and quite laid myself out to make an impression upon her, to no purpose.

'That is a fine old chair you have there,' said I, as she stood mechanically polishing the brass corners with her apron.

She looked at the darkly glittering thing with almost a flash of pride.

'Yes,' said she, 'a fine chair!'

'Is it old?' I pursued.

'Very old,' she answered briefly.

'But I thought rocking- chairs were a modern American invention?' said I.

She looked at me apathetically.

'It is Spanish,' she said, 'Spanish oak, Spanish leather, Spanish brass, Spanish -.' I did not catch the last word, and she left the room without another.

It was a strange ill- balanced thing, that chair, though so easy and comfortable to sit in. The rockers were long and sharp behind, always lying in wait for the unwary, but cut short in front: and the back was so high and so heavy on top, that what with its weight and the shortness of the front rockers, it tipped forward with an ease and a violence equally astonishing.

This I knew from experience, as it had plunged over upon me during some of our frequent encounters. Hal also was a sufferer, but in spite of our manifold bruises, neither of us would have had the

chair removed, for did not she sit in it, evening after evening, and rock there in the golden light of the setting sun.

So, evening after evening, we two fled from our work as early as possible, and hurried home alone, by separate ways, to the dingy street and the glorified window.

I could not endure forever. When Hal came home first, I, lingering in the street below, could see through our window that lovely head and his in close proximity. When I came first, it was to catch perhaps a quick glance from above – a bewildering smile – no more. She was always gone when I reached the room, and the inner door of my chamber irrevocably locked.

At times I even caught the click of the latch, heard the flutter of loose robes on the other side; and sometimes this daily disappointment, this constant agony of hope deferred, would bring me to my knees by that door begging her to open to me, crying to her in every term of passionate endearment and persuasion that tortured heart of man could think to use.

Hal had neither word nor look for me now, save those of studied politeness and cold indifference, and how could I behave otherwise to him, so proven to my face a liar?

I saw him from the street one night, in the broad level sunlight, sitting in that chair, with the beautiful head on his shoulder. It was more than I could bear. If he had won, and won so utterly, I would ask but to speak to her once, and say farewell to both forever. So I heavily climbed the stairs, knocked loudly, and entered at Hal's 'Come in!' only to find him sitting there alone, smoking – yes, smoking in the chair which but a moment since had held her too!

He had but just lit the cigar, a paltry device to blind my eyes.

'Look here, Hal,' said I, 'I can't stand this any longer. May I ask you one thing? Let me see her once, just once, that I may say good-bye, and then neither of you need see me again!'

Hal rose to his feet and looked me straight in the eye. Then he threw that whole cigar out of the window, and walked to within two feet of me.

'Are you crazy,' he said. 'I ask her! I! I have never had speech of her in my life! And *you* -' He stopped and turned away.

‘And I what?’ I would have it out now whatever came.

‘And you have seen her day after day – talked with her – I need not repeat all that my eyes have seen!’

‘You need not, indeed,’ said I. ‘It would tax even your invention. I have never seen her in this room but once, and then but for a fleeting glimpse – no word. From the street I have seen her often – with you!’

He turned very white and walked from me to the window, then turned again.

‘I have never seen her in this room for even such a moment as you own to. From the street I have seen her often – *with you* ! ’

We looked at each other.

‘Do you mean to say,’ I inquired slowly, ‘that I did not see you just now sitting in that chair, by that window, with her in your arms?’

‘Stop!’ he cried, throwing out his hand with a fierce gesture. It struck sharply on the corner of the chair- back. He wiped the blood mechanically from the three- cornered cut, looking fixedly at me.

‘I saw you,’ said I.

‘You did not!’ said he.

I turned slowly on my heel and went into my room. I could not bear to tell that man, my more than brother, that he lied.

I sat down on my bed with my head on my hands, and presently I heard Hal’s door open and shut, his step on the stair, the front door slam behind him. He had gone, I knew not where, and if he went to his death and a word of mine would have stopped him, I would not have said it. I do not know how long I sat there, in the company of hopeless love and jealousy and hate.

Suddenly, out of the silence of the empty room, came the steady swing and creak of the great chair. Perhaps – it must be! I sprang to my feet and noiselessly opened the door. There she sat by the window, looking out, and – yes – she threw a kiss to some one below. Ah, how beautiful she was! How beautiful! I made a step toward her. I held out my hands, I uttered I know not what – when all at once came Hal’s quick step upon the stairs.

She heard it, too, and, giving me one look, one subtle, mysterious, triumphant look, slipped past me and into my room just as Hal burst in. He saw her go. He came straight to me and I thought he would have struck me down where I stood.

'Out of my way,' he cried. 'I will speak to her. Is it not enough to see?' – he motioned toward the window with his wounded hand – 'Let me pass!'

'She is not there,' I answered. 'She has gone through into the other room.'

A light laugh sounded close by us, a faint, soft, silver laugh, almost at my elbow.

He flung me from his path, threw open the door, and entered. The room was empty.

'Where have you hidden her?' he demanded. I coldly pointed to the other door.

'So her room opens into yours, does it?' he muttered with a bitter smile. 'No wonder you preferred the "view"! Perhaps I can open it too?' And he laid his hand upon the latch.

I smiled then, for bitter experience had taught me that it was always locked, locked to all my prayers and entreaties. Let him kneel there as I had! But it opened under his hand! I sprang to his side, and we looked into – a closet, two by four, as bare and shallow as an empty coffin!

He turned to me, as white with rage as I was with terror. I was not thinking of him.

'What have you done with her?' he cried. And then contemptuously – 'That I should stop to question a liar!'

I paid no heed to him, but walked back into the other room, where the great chair rocked by the window.

He followed me, furious with disappointment, and laid his hand upon the swaying back, his strong fingers closing on it till the nails were white.

'Will you leave this place?' said he.

'No,' said I.

'I will live no longer with a liar and a traitor,' said he.

'Then you will have to kill yourself,' said I.

With a muttered oath he sprang upon me, but caught his foot in the long rocker, and fell heavily.

So wild a wave of hate rose in my heart that I could have trampled upon him where he lay – killed him like a dog – but with a mighty effort I turned from him and left the room.

When I returned it was broad day. Early and still, not sunrise yet, but full of hard, clear light on roof and wall and roadway. I stopped on the lower floor to find the landlady and announce my immediate departure. Door after door I knocked at, tried and opened; room after room I entered and searched thoroughly; in all that house, from cellar to garret, was no furnished room but ours, no sign of human occupancy. Dust, dust, and cobwebs everywhere. Nothing else.

With a strange sinking of the heart I came back to our own door.

Surely I heard the landlady's slow, even step inside, and that soft, low laugh. I rushed in.

The room was empty of all life; both rooms utterly empty.

Yes, of all life; for, with the love of a lifetime surging in my heart, I sprang to where Hal lay beneath the window, and found him dead.

Dead, and most horribly dead. Three heavy marks – blows – three deep, three-cornered gashes – I started to my feet – even the chair had gone!

Again the whispered laugh. Out of that house of terror I fled desperately.

From the street I cast one shuddering glance at the fateful window.

The risen sun was gilding all the housetops, and its level rays, striking the high panes on the building opposite, shone back in a calm glory on the great chair by the window, the sweet face, down-dropped eyes, and swaying golden head.

Old Water

The lake lay glassy in level golden light. Where the long shadows of the wooded bank spread across it was dark, fathomless. Where the little cliff rose on the eastern shore its bright reflection went down endlessly.

Slowly across the open gold came a still canoe, sent swiftly and smoothly on by well- accustomed arms.

'How strong! How splendid! Ah! she is like a Valkyr!' said the poet; and Mrs Osgood looked up at the dark bulk with appreciative eyes.

'You don't know how it delights me to have you speak like that!' she said softly. 'I feel those things myself, but have not the gift of words. And Ellen is so practical.'

'She could not be your daughter and not have a poetic soul,' he answered, smiling gravely.

'I'm sure I hope so. But I have never felt sure! When she was little I read to her from the poets, always; but she did not care for them – unless it was what she called "story poetry." And as soon as she had any choice of her own she took to science.'

'The poetry is there,' he said, his eyes on the smooth brown arms, now more near. 'That poise! That motion! It is the very soul of poetry – and the body! Her body is a poem!'

Mrs Osgood watched the accurate landing, the strong pull that brought the canoe over the roller and up into the little boathouse. 'Ellen is so practical!' she murmured. 'She will not even admit her own beauty.'

'She is unawakened,' breathed the poet – 'Unawakened!' And his big eyes glimmered as with a stir of hope.

'It's very brave of her, too,' the mother went on. 'She does not really love the water, and just makes herself go out on it. I think in her heart she's afraid – but will not admit it. O Ellen! Come here

dear. This is Mr Pendexter – the Poet.'

Ellen gave her cool brown hand; a little wet even, as she had casually washed them at the water's edge; but he pressed it warmly, and uttered his admiration of her skill with the canoe.

'O that's nothing,' said the girl. 'Canoeing's dead easy.'

'Will you teach it to me?' he asked. 'I will be a most docile pupil.'

She looked up and down his large frame with a somewhat questioning eye. It was big enough surely, and those great limbs must mean strength; but he lacked something of the balance and assured quickness which speaks of training.

'Can't you paddle?' she said.

'Forgive my ignorance – but I have never been in one of those graceful slim crafts. I shall be so glad to try.'

'Mr Pendexter has been more in Europe than America,' her mother put in hastily, 'and you must not imagine, my dear, that all men care for these things. I'm sure that if you are interested, my daughter will be very glad to teach you, Mr Pendexter.'

'Certainly,' said Ellen. 'I'll teach him in two tries. Want to start tomorrow morning? I'm usually out pretty early.'

'I shall be delighted,' he said. 'We will greet Aurora together.'

'The Dawn, dear,' suggested her mother with an apologetic smile.

'O yes,' the girl agreed. 'I recognize Aurora, mama. Is dinner ready?'

'It will be when you are dressed,' said her mother. 'Put on your blue frock, dear – the light one.'

'All right,' said Ellen, and ran lightly up the path.

'Beautiful! Beautiful!' he murmured, his eyes following her flying figure. 'Ah, madam! What it must be to you to have such a daughter! To see your own youth – but a moment passed – repeated before your eyes!' And he bent an admiring glance on the outlines of his hostess.

Mrs Osgood appeared at dinner in a somewhat classic gown,

her fine hair banded with barbaric gold; and looked with satisfaction at her daughter, who shone like a juvenile Juno in her misty blue. Ellen had her mother's beauty and her father's strength. Her frame was large, her muscles had power under their flowing grace of line. She carried herself like a queen, but wore the cheerful unconscious air of a healthy schoolgirl, which she was.

Her appetite was so hearty that her mother almost feared it would pain the poet, but she soon observed that he too showed full appreciation of her chef's creations. Ellen too observed him, noting with frank disapproval that he ate freely of sweets and creams, and seemed to enjoy the coffee and liqueurs exceedingly.

'Ellen never takes coffee,' Mrs Osgood explained, as they sat in the luxurious drawing room, 'she has some notion about training I believe.'

'Mother! I am training!' the girl protested. 'Not officially – there's no race on; but I like to keep in good condition. I'm stroke at college, Mr Pindexter.'

'Pindexter, dear,' her mother whispered.

The big man took his second demitasse, and sat near the girl.

'I can't tell you how much I admire it,' he said, leaning forward. 'You are like Nausicaa – like Atalanta – like the women of my dreams!'

She was not displeased with his open admiration – even athletic girls are not above enjoying praise – but she took it awkwardly.

'I don't believe in dreams,' she said.

'No,' he agreed, 'No – one must not. And yet – have you never had a dream that haunts you – a dream that comes again?'

'I've had bad dreams,' she admitted, 'horrid ones; but not the same dream twice.'

'What do you dream of when your dreams are terrible?'

'Beasts,' she answered promptly. 'Big beasts that jump at me! And I run and run – ugh!'

Mrs Osgood sipped her coffee and watched them. There was no young poet more promising than this. He represented all that her

own girlhood had longed for – all that the highly prosperous mill-owner she married had utterly failed to give. If her daughter could have what she had missed!

'They say those dreams come from our remote past,' she suggested. 'Do you believe that, Mr Pendexter?'

'Yes,' he agreed, 'from our racial infancy. From those long buried years of fear and pain.'

'And when we have that queer feeling of *having been there before* – isn't that the same thing?'

'We do not know,' said he. 'Some say it is from a moment's delay in action of one- half of the brain. I cannot tell. To me it is more mysterious, more interesting, to think that when one has that wonderful sudden sense of previous acquaintance it means vague memories of a former life.' And he looked at Ellen as if she had figured largely in his previous existence. 'Have you ever had that feeling, Miss Osgood?'

The girl laughed rather shamefacedly. 'I've had it about one thing,' she said. 'That's why I'm afraid of water.'

'Afraid of water! You! A water goddess!'

'O, I don't encourage it, of course. But it's the only thing I ever was nervous about. I've had it from childhood – that horrid feeling!'

She shivered a little, and asked if he wouldn't like some music.

'Ah! You make music too?'

She laughed gaily. 'Only with the pianola – or the other machine. Shall I start it?'

'A moment,' he said. 'In a moment. But tell me, will you not, of this dream of something terrible? I am so deeply interested.'

'Why, it isn't much,' she said. 'I don't dream it, really – it comes when I'm awake. Only two or three times – once when I was about ten or eleven, and twice since. It's water – black, still, smooth water – way down below me. And I can't get away from it. I want to – and then something grabs me – ugh!'

She got up decidedly and went to the music stand. 'If that's a relic of my past I must have been prematurely cut off by an enraged ape! Anyhow, I don't like water – unless it's wild ocean. What shall I

play?'

He meant to rise next morning with the daylight, but failed to awaken; and when he did look out he saw the canoe shooting lightly home in time for breakfast.

She laughed at him for his laziness, but promised a lesson later, and was pleased to find that he could play tennis. He looked well in his white flannels, in fact his appearance was more admirable than his playing, and the girl beat him till he grew almost angry.

Mrs Osgood watched delightedly on occasions where watching was agreeable, and on other occasions she took herself off with various excuses, and left them much together.

He expressed to her privately a question as to whether he was not too heavy for the canoe, but she reassured him.

'O, no, indeed, Mr Pendexter; it's a specially wide canoe, and has air chambers in it – it can't sink.' Her father had made it for her. 'He's a heavy man himself, and loves canoeing.'

So the stalwart poet was directed to step softly into the middle, and given the bow paddle.

It grieved him much that he could not see his fair instructress, and he proposed that they change places.

'No, indeed!' she said. 'Trust you with the other paddle? – Not yet!'

Could he not at least face her, he suggested. At which she laughed wickedly, and told him he'd better learn to paddle forward before he tried to do it backward.

'If you want to look at me you might get another canoe and try to follow,' she added, smiling; whereat he declared her would obey orders absolutely.

He sat all across the little rattan bow seat, and rolled up his sleeves as she did. She gave him the paddle, showed him how to hold it, and grinned silently as his mighty strokes swung them to right or left, for all her vigorous steering.

'Not so hard!' she said. 'You are stronger than I, and your stroke is so far out you swing me around.'

With a little patience he mastered the art sufficiently to wield a

fairly serviceable bow paddle, but she would not trust him with the stern; and not all the beauties of the quiet lake consoled him for losing sight of her. Still, he reflected, she could see him. Perhaps that was why she kept him there in front! – and he sat straighter at the thought.

She did rather enjoy the well proportioned bulk of him, but she had small respect for his lack of dexterity, and felt a real dislike for the heavy fell of black hair on his arms and hands.

He tired of canoeing. One cannot direct speaking glances over one's shoulder, nor tender words; not with good effect, that is. At tennis he found her so steadily victor that he tired of that too. Golf she did not care for; horses he was unfamiliar with; and when she ran the car her hands and eyes and whole attention were on the machine. So he begged for walking.

'You must having charming walks in these woods,' he said. 'I own inferiority in many ways – but I can walk!'

'All right,' she cheerily agreed, and tramped about the country with him, brisk and tireless.

Her mother watched breathlessly. She wholly admired this ox-eyed man with the velvet voice, the mouth so red under his soft mustache. She thought his poetry noble and musical beyond measure. Ellen thought it was 'no mortal use.'

'What on earth does he want to make over those old legends for, anyway!' she said, when her mother tried to win her to some appreciation. 'Isn't there enough to write about today without going back to people who never existed anyhow – nothing but characters out of other people's stories?'

'They are parts of the world's poetic material, my dear; folklore, race-myths. They are among our universal images.'

'Well, I don't like poetry about universal images, that's all. It's like mummies – sort of warmed over and dressed up!'

'I am so sorry!' said her mother, with some irritation. 'Here we are honored with a visit from one of our very greatest poets – perhaps the greatest; and my own child hasn't sense enough to appreciate his beautiful work. You are so like your father!'

'Well, I can't help it,' said Ellen. 'I don't like those foolish old

stories about people who never did anything useful, and hadn't an idea in their heads except being in love and killing somebody! They had no sense, and no courage, and no decency!

Her mother tried to win her to some admission of merit in his other work.

'It's no use, mama! You may have your poet, and get all the esthetic satisfaction you can out of it. And I'll be polite to him, of course. But I don't like his stuff.'

'Not his "Lyrics of the Day," dear? And "The Woods"?'

'No, mumsy, not even those. I don't believe he ever saw a sunrise – unless he got up on purpose and set himself before it like a camera! And woods! Why he don't know one tree from another!'

Her mother almost despaired of her; but the poet was not discouraged.

'Ah! Mrs Osgood! Since you honor me with your confidence I can but thank you and try my fate. It is so beautiful, this budding soul – not opened yet! So close – so almost hard! But when its rosy petals do unfold -'

He did not, however, give his confidence to Mrs Osgood beyond this gentle poetic outside view of a sort of floricultural intent. He told her nothing of the storm of passion which was growing within him; a passion of such seething intensity as would have alarmed that gentle soul exceedingly and make her doubt, perhaps, the wisdom of her selection.

She remained in a state of eager but restrained emotion; saying little to Ellen lest she alarm her, but hoping that the girl would find happiness with this great soul.

The great soul, meanwhile, pursued his way, using every art he knew – and his experience was not narrow – to reach the heart of the brown and ruddy nymph beside him.

She was ignorant and young. Too whole- souled in her indifference to really appreciate the stress he labored under; much less to sympathize. On the contrary she took a mischievous delight in teasing him, doing harm without knowing it, like a playful child. She teased him about his tennis playing, about his paddling, about his driving; allowed that perhaps he might play golf well, but she

didn't care for golf herself – it was too slow; mocked even his walking expeditions.

'He don't want to walk!' she said gaily to her mother one night at dinner. 'He just wants to go somewhere and arrange himself gracefully under a tree and read to me about Eloise, or Araminta or somebody; all slim and white and wavy and golden-haired; and how they killed themselves for love!'

She laughed frankly at him, and he laughed with her; but his heart was hot and dark within him. The longer he pursued and failed the fiercer was his desire for her. Already he had loved longer than was usual to him. Never before had his overwhelming advances been so lightly parried and set aside.

'Will you take a walk with me this evening after dinner?' he proposed. 'There is a most heavenly moon – and I cannot see to read to you. It must be strangely lovely – the moonlight – on your lake, is it not, Mrs Osgood?'

'It is indeed,' she warmly agreed, looking disapprovingly on the girl, who was still giggling softly at the memory of golden-haired Araminta. 'Take him on the cliff walk, Ellen, and do try to be more appreciative of beauty!'

'Yes, mama,' said Ellen, 'I'll be good.'

She was so good upon the moonlit walk; so gentle and sympathetic, and so honestly tried to find some point of agreement, that his feelings were too much for his judgment, and he seized her hand and kissed it. She pushed him away, too astonished for words.

'Why, Mr Pendexter! What are you thinking of!'

Then he poured out his heart to her. He told her how he loved her – madly, passionately, irresistably. He begged her to listen to him.

'Ah! You young Diana! You do not know how I suffer! You are so young, so cold! So heavenly beautiful! Do not be cruel! Listen to me! Say you will be my wife! Give me one kiss! Just one!'

She was young, and cold, and ignorantly cruel. She laughed at him, laughed mercilessly, and turned away.

He followed her, the blood pounding in his veins, his voice

shaken with the intensity of his emotions. He caught her hand and drew her toward him again. She broke from him with a little cry, and ran. He followed, hotly, madly; rushed upon her, caught her, held her fast.

'You shall love me! You shall!' he cried. His hands were hot and trembling, but he held her close and turned her face to his.

'I will not!' she cried, struggling. 'Let me go! I hate you, I tell you. I hate you! You are – disgusting!' She pushed as far from him as he could.

They had reached the top of the little cliff opposite the house. Huge dark pines hung over them, their wide boughs swaying softly.

The water lay below in the shadow, smooth and oil- black.

The girl looked down at it, and a sudden shudder shook her tense frame. She gave a low moan and hid her face in her hands.

'Ah!' he cried. 'It is your fate! Our fate! We have lived through this before! We will die together if we cannot live together!'

He caught her to him, kissed her madly, passionately, and together they went down into the black water.

'It's pretty lucky I could swim,' said Ellen, as she hurried home. 'And he couldn't. The poor man! O, the poor man! He must have been crazy!'



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The Reckoning

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‘The

Reckoning’ was published in 1902. This selection published in Penguin Classics 2015. The

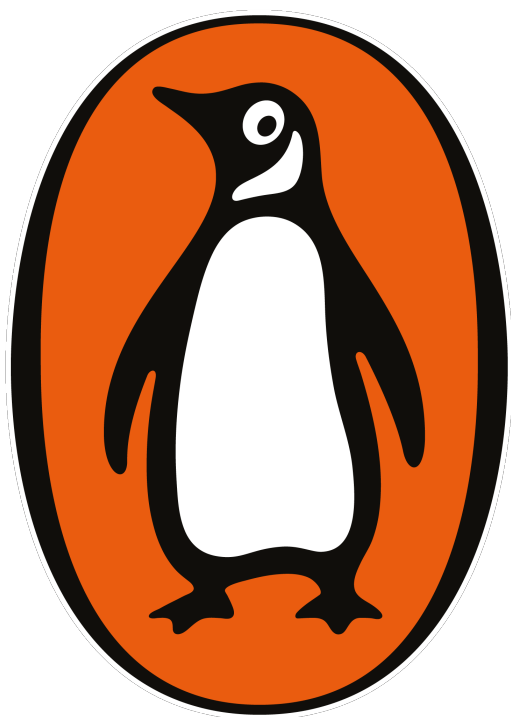
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曼斯蒂夫人窗外的景色

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曼斯蒂夫人窗外的景色

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曼斯蒂夫人窗外的景色谈不上多么引人注目，但至少对她来说，那景色是引人入胜、美丽动人的。曼斯蒂夫人所住之处是纽约一栋寄宿公寓三楼靠后的那个房间。在夜里，人行道上依旧摆放着灰桶 [1]，要是昆图斯·库尔提乌斯 [2] 还活着，人行道砖石之间的缝隙大到他都会感觉吃惊不已 [3]。曼斯蒂夫人已故的丈夫以前是一间规模庞大的批发商行里的售货员，因为她的独生女儿嫁到了加利福尼亚，也没钱长途跋涉来纽约探望母亲，所以丈夫死后，就只剩下曼斯蒂夫人孤身一人。或许曼斯蒂夫人也可以搬到西岸和她女儿团聚，可她们到目前为止已经分开多年，丝毫没有融入彼此社交圈的需求了。且长期以来，她俩的交流也仅限于几封敷衍的通信往来，女儿的信字里行间透露着冷漠，曼斯蒂夫人的信回得也困难——因为痛风，她的右手已经变得越来越僵硬。就算她强烈地渴望女儿能够陪伴在旁，可曼斯蒂夫人日渐虚弱的身体，让她就连从街上爬三层楼梯回到自己房内都感到恐惧，这样的状态肯定会让她在尝试如此漫长的旅途前夕犹豫不决，而或许就算不编造这些理由，她也早已理所当然地接受了自己得在纽约独自生活。

当然，她也算不上孤单，因为时不时地，还是会有一些朋友辛苦地爬楼，到她房间来，但是随着年纪的增长，她们来得也越来越少了。曼斯蒂夫人从来都不算是一个很热爱社交的人，丈夫还健在的那些日子里，他的陪伴对曼斯蒂夫人来说就绰绰有余了。多年来，她内心深处一直抱有能够回到乡村里生活的渴望，在那儿搭个鸡舍，再建个花园，但是随着年龄的增长，这个想法已渐渐淡去。这位不善言谈的老女人心中仅存的那一丝柔软之处，留给了植物和动物。或许就是这一丝柔软，让她对自己窗外的景色拥有如此炙热的情感。乍眼一看，这景色即便在最善于发现美的人眼中，恐怕都很难找到任何可取之处。

曼斯蒂夫人所处的有利位置是一个略微突出的弓形窗，她在这里种了一盆常春藤，还有一串看上去不太健康的鳞茎植物。从这里看上去，最先映入眼帘的是自己房间的后院，但她能瞥到的范围十分有限。当然，她还是能看到窗下臭椿树最顶端的那些枝干，也能知道每年荷包牡丹多早就在弯茎上挂出一簇簇粉红的心形花朵。

但她更感兴趣的是后面的院子。因为院子大部分和寄宿公寓相连，长期以来都是又脏乱又嘈杂，在一周的某些日子里，总会挂满各种各样的衣物和磨损的桌布。尽管如此，曼斯蒂夫人还是在自己所俯视的这片远景中找到了许多值得欣赏的地方。的确，院子里有很多石子瓦砾，人行道的缝隙间杂草丛生，春天的时候，除了晾衣绳上零零散散晾着的衣裳间露出的绿叶，没有任何荫蔽之处。曼斯蒂夫人不喜欢院子的这块地方，但她热爱其他部分——绿意盎然的那部分。凌乱的院子已经让她习以为常，那些破烂的木桶、空瓶子，还有没人打扫的小路也不再令她感到恼火。她拥有一种自我愉悦的能力，让自己可以沉浸在眼前景色中美好的那一面。

就在紧邻的圈地里，不是正有一棵木兰花在四月水蓝色的晴空下绽放出它那轮廓分明、洁白如雪的花朵？以及在不远处，每年一到五月，不是还有那淡紫色的紫藤花一浪接着一浪地从篱笆上冒出头来？更远的地方，一棵七叶树从它宽大的扇形叶片上举出了烛台一样淡黄色和粉色的花朵，而就在它对面的院子里，一到六月则会弥漫着丁香花那甜美的香气；它看起来并不打眼，尽管生长环境对它十分不利，却依旧不屈不挠。

如果说曼斯蒂夫人望向窗外，首先注意到的是自然景色，那么除此之外，窗外所有的房子和里面居住的人们的个性，对她来说，则更有吸引力。她非常不喜欢对面医生家最近挂上的那个芥末黄色的窗帘，不过，医生家后面那座房子的老砖块刷上一层新漆的时候，却令她脸上洋溢着喜悦。那座房子的住户并不经常在后窗露脸，可是透过窗户，总能看见他家的用人。曼斯蒂夫人多次表示那是一帮吵吵嚷嚷的荡妇，她了解她们的行为举止，且对此十分反感。但新粉刷房子里安静的厨师则得到了曼斯蒂夫人最深切的同情，女主人总是欺负她，而她在入夜后总会悄悄地去投喂流浪猫。有一次，曼斯蒂夫人的心情被疏忽的女佣给破坏了，女佣足足有两天忘记投喂交由她照看的鸚鵡。到了第三天，尽管右手患有痛风，曼斯蒂夫人还是拿起笔写了封信，信的开头是这样的：“夫人，你的鸚鵡已经三天没有吃饭了……”正在此时，健忘的女佣拿着一杯瓜子出现在了窗前。

但在曼斯蒂夫人更深的思绪中，最让她感到愉悦的是院子深处那道越发狭窄的深景。薄暮时分，当远处褐石尖顶看上去就像是和西边流动的黄晕融为一体时，她喜欢让自己的思绪迷走于多年前欧洲之行的那段模糊记忆当中。在她的想象里，那段回忆现已沦为一片关于朦胧尖塔和梦幻天空的苍白幻影。或许，曼斯蒂夫人内心深处实际上是个艺术家，在任何场合，她都能敏感地留意到普通人所注意不到的颜色变化。在早春的绿意中，她最喜欢的是下雪天的黄昏，在硫黄色天空的映衬下，那错落有致的树枝所拼凑出的黑色格子。她同样享受的还有三月份阳光灿烂的融雪天。每到这时，大地便会一点点从冰雪里

探出脑袋，就像是一张白色吸墨纸上散落的墨迹。更美好的是那朦胧的树影，虽然还没长出叶子，但都臃肿起来，不像冬天那样利落。她甚至饶有兴致地观察着远处工厂烟囱的一尾轻烟。当工厂关闭、烟雾消失后，这片风景中也便少了一个细节。

曼斯蒂夫人长时间坐在窗边并不是无所事事。她有时候读书，也织过无数双袜子，可就如同大海包围着孤单的岛屿一样，窗外的景色才真正占据着她的生活，也定义了她的生活。当难得有客人来时，她依旧会沉浸在对面正在清洗的窗户中不愿回神，或者很难从对某位邻居花床中那些绿点点——不知道它们会不会长成风信子——的仔细观察中抽离，而与此同时，她还要假装对访客某个从未谋面的孙子的逸事表示关心。曼斯蒂夫人真正的陪伴来自院子里的居民：那些风信子、木兰花；那只绿色的鸚鵡；那个喂猫的女佣；在芥末黄色窗帘后学习到深夜的医生；还有一同冥想的知己——那飘浮在夕阳之中的教堂塔尖。

四月的一天，曼斯蒂夫人正坐在老地方，手边放着正在织的活儿，眼睛盯着窗外，圆圆的云朵散落在湛蓝色天空中。一阵敲门声后，她的房东太太走了进来。曼斯蒂夫人不太喜欢她的房东，可还是礼貌性地迎房东进了屋。可今天似乎比起往常更难让她把目光从窗外的蓝天和绽放的木兰花上转移到桑普森夫人那张无趣的脸上，曼斯蒂夫人清楚地意识到自己费了很大的力气才把注意力拉回来。

“桑普森夫人，木兰花今年比往年开得要早。”她罕见地因为冲动脱口而出，因为她很少会提到自己生活中感兴趣的事。首先，这话题恐怕对她的访客来说没有任何吸引力，其次，她缺乏表达的能力，就算想要表达也没有办法说出自己的内心感受。

“什么花，曼斯蒂夫人？”房东太太一边问，一边在房间里四处张望，想要找到曼斯蒂夫人说那句话的原因。

“隔壁院子的木兰花——在布莱克的院子里。”曼斯蒂夫人又说了一次。

“真的吗？我都不知道那里有棵木兰。”桑普森夫人一脸不在乎地说。曼斯蒂夫人吃惊地看着她——她竟然不知道隔壁院子有一棵木兰！

“对了，”桑普森夫人继续道，“说起布莱克夫人，我想起来了，房屋扩建下周就要开工了。”

“开什么工？”这次轮到曼斯蒂夫人问了。

“房屋扩建。”桑普森夫人朝着自己忽视的木兰花那个方向点了点头，“你肯定知道布莱克夫人要给她的房子扩建的事儿吧？曼斯蒂夫

人，你肯定知道的。我听说一直要把房子扩建到院墙根那儿。我是不知道在这种困难时期她哪儿来的钱能支付得起这么大规模的扩建，但是她总是对盖房子很痴迷。她之前在十七号大街开了一所寄宿公寓，有一次在往外装拱形窗还是干什么的时候差点儿伤着自己，我以为那次能让她彻底断了盖房子的念头，但我猜这大概就像喝酒一样，是种病。无论如何，扩建工程星期一就开始了。”

曼斯蒂夫人脸色变得无比苍白。她说话总是很慢，所以房东太太没留意到她听完自己讲话之后漫长的停顿。最后曼斯蒂夫人说：“你知道扩建要盖多高吗？”

“这是最诡异的地方。扩建的部分要一直盖到和主楼的楼顶一样高，哎呀，怎么会这样？”

曼斯蒂夫人又停顿了一下。“这不会给你带来巨大的不便吗，桑普森夫人？”她问道。

“要我说的确会，但我说了也没有用。据我所知，如果有人想要扩建，没有哪条法律能够阻止他们。”曼斯蒂夫人听到后，安静了下来。“说了也没用，”桑普森夫人又重复了一次，“但如果我是教会成员，扩建的事要是把伊莱扎·布莱克的身体搞坏，我也不会替她难过。好吧，曼斯蒂夫人，再见啦，我很高兴你住得很舒服。”

很舒服——很舒服！剩下老妇人独自一人后，她又转身面对着窗户。那天的景色是多么的美丽啊！蔚蓝的天空上飘着朵朵白云，大地上的万物被天空映衬得那么明净祥和。臭椿刚披上一件淡淡的黄绿色新衣，风信子含苞欲放，而木兰花则比以往任何时候都更像是雪花石膏雕刻出的玫瑰花饰。很快地，紫藤花将要绽放，随后就是七叶树，但这都没她什么事儿了。在她的视线和它们之间，很快就会升起一堵泥灰砖墙，不久就连教堂的塔尖也会消失，而她那洋溢着幸福的世界将会被抹杀殆尽。曼斯蒂夫人把那天晚上送来的餐盘原封不动地退了回去。她在窗前提徊，直到夕阳在风中消失于暗黄的暮色之中，随后她上床就寝，躺在床上却彻夜未眠。

第二天一大早，她就起床了，站在窗前。窗外下着雨，可即使透过斜挂着的薄纱，窗外的景色依旧散发着它独特的魅力——雨水对树木是十分有益的。她前一天就注意到臭椿上已积满了尘土。

“我当然也可以搬走。”曼斯蒂夫人大声地说，然后从窗口转过身来，环顾了一下她的房间。当然，她也能搬走，正如她也能活生生地被人把皮剥掉一样。但无论经历哪一样，她还能活下来的概率都是微乎其微的。这房间对于她的幸福而言，虽然远没有窗外景色来得重要，但也是她人生的一部分。她在这里住了十七年了，她知道墙纸上的每一处污渍、地毯上的每一个裂缝；光线以某种方式洒落在她的版

画上，书架上所有的书本早已变得破旧不堪，她的鳞茎和常春藤已经习惯了它们的窗口，知道该靠着哪个方向更接近阳光。“我们都已经老得搬不动了。”她说。

那天下午就放晴了。外面湿漉漉又亮闪闪的，那一大片蓝色穿透破碎的残云再次现身，臭椿水光闪闪，花坛里的泥土看起来肥沃而温暖。今天是星期四，下个星期一房屋扩建的工程就要开始了。

星期天下午的时候，当布莱克夫人正在地下室忙着收集食材给寄宿客人准备晚餐之际，有人给她送来了一张卡片。这张嵌着黑边的卡片上写着曼斯蒂夫人的名字。

“桑普森夫人那里的一位寄宿客人，我猜可能是想搬家。好吧，黛娜，明年扩建完工后我可以给她一个房间，”布莱克夫人说，“告诉那位女士，我马上就上楼去。”

布莱克夫人发现曼斯蒂夫人站在长长的起居室里，里面摆放着许多小雕像和椅套。在这座房子里，她坐不下来。

布莱克夫人急忙弯下腰打开记账本，这个动作扬起了一团灰尘，然后她朝来客走去。

“很高兴见到你，曼斯蒂夫人，请坐。”女房东的声音十分洪亮，这嗓音绝对出自一位能够负担得起扩建的女人。曼斯蒂夫人没有办法，只能坐下。

“夫人，请问，我有什么能帮到你的吗？”布莱克夫人接着说，“我的房子现在都住满了，不过我打算扩建，而——”

“我想跟你说的就是关于那个扩建的事情。”曼斯蒂夫人突然开口说道，“我是个贫穷的女人，布莱克夫人，而我从来也没多快乐过。我必须先跟你说说我自己的事——这样才能让你理解。”

布莱克夫人吃了一惊，不过很快就镇静下来，顺从地听着这段突如其来地插话。

“我从来没有得到过我想要的，”曼斯蒂夫人接着说，“失望总是一个接着一个到来。多年以来，我一直想住到乡下去，我一直梦想着，可我们一直没能做到。我们的房子没有向阳的窗户，所以我所有的植物都死了。我女儿好多年前结婚搬走了——再说，她和我喜欢的东西从来都不一样。然后我的丈夫去世了，留下我孤单一人。这已经是十七年前的事了。我搬到桑普森夫人那儿，从那以后，我就一直住在那里。你也能看得出来，我变得有点儿虚弱了，而我也经常不出门，只有在天气好的时候，如果我覺得好一点儿才出去。所以你能够理解为什么我经常坐在我的窗户外——就是三楼的后窗。”

“好吧，曼斯蒂夫人，”布莱克夫人慷慨地说，“我向你保证，可以给你一间在后面的房间。新房间，就是扩——”

“但是我不想搬家，我不能搬家，”曼斯蒂夫人几乎要喊了起来，“而我来就是想告诉你，如果你扩建了房子，我的窗户就看不到任何景色了——没有任何景色！你明白吗？”

布莱克夫人以为自己碰到了疯子，而她总是听说疯子必须要哄着来。“我的天，我的天，”她一边说一边把椅子往后推了一点儿，“这太糟糕了，不是吗？为什么我从来没想到这一点。肯定的，曼斯蒂夫人，扩建会影响到你窗外的景色。”

“你真的懂？”曼斯蒂夫人惊了一下。

“我当然可以理解。而我对此也非常抱歉。但是，曼斯蒂夫人，你别担心。我想我们能够好好地这件事给解决了。”

曼斯蒂夫人从她的座椅上站了起来，而布莱克夫人溜向了门口。

“你说解决是什么意思，难道你的意思是我能够说服你改变扩建的主意？噢，布莱克夫人，听我说，我银行里有两千美元的存款，而我，我知道我能给你一千美元，如果——”曼斯蒂夫人停了下来，泪水滚落到她的脸颊上。

“好吧，好吧，曼斯蒂夫人，你不用担心。”布莱克夫人安抚地说道，“我肯定我们能够解决的。我很抱歉，不能继续待在这里和你聊下去，现在正是一天中最忙的时候，要准备晚——”

布莱克夫人的手已经伸到了门把上，但曼斯蒂夫人突然一下子用力抓住她的手腕。

“你没有给我一个确切的答复。你的意思是你接受了我的提议吗？”

“哎呀，曼斯蒂夫人，我会再考虑一下的，我肯定会。我无论如何也不会惹你生气的——”

“但我听说施工明天就要开始了。”曼斯蒂夫人非常坚持。

布莱克夫人犹豫了一下：“明天不会开始的，我向你保证，我今天晚上就给那些工人传话。”曼斯蒂夫人把她的手腕抓得更紧了。

“你不会是在骗我吧？”她说。

“不——不，”布莱克夫人结结巴巴地说，“曼斯蒂夫人，你怎么能这么想我呢？”

慢慢地，曼斯蒂夫人紧握的手松开了，她从敞开的门走了出去。“一千美元——”她停在大厅里重复了一次，然后她自己走出门

外，一瘸一拐地走下台阶，靠在铸铁栏杆上。

“我的老天爷，”布莱克夫人惊叹着关上了大厅的门，并把门闩上，“我以前从来不知道那个老妇人是个疯子！而她看起来非常安静，也很优雅。”

曼斯蒂夫人当晚睡得很好，但第二天一大早，她就被锤砸的声音吵醒了。她赶紧以最快的速度走到窗前，向外看，发现布莱克夫人的院子里到处都是工人。有的工人把砖块从厨房搬到院子里，其他人则开始动手拆除布莱克夫人房子每层楼都有的老式木阳台装饰。曼斯蒂夫人意识到自己被欺骗了。起初，她想把自己的烦恼告诉桑普森夫人，但很快一股深深的挫败感占据了她的思绪，她回到床上，不再理会外面所发生的一切。

不过到了下午，她觉得自己必须要了解最坏的那一步。她下了床，穿好了衣服。这对她来说是一项艰巨的任务，因为她的双手比往常更加僵硬，而那些钩子和纽扣似乎都在躲着她。

坐在窗前时，她看见窗外工人已经把阳台上半部分拆掉了，而砖块也比早上多了很多。其中一个男人——一个满脸浮肿的工人——捡起了一朵木兰花放在鼻子前闻了闻，然后把花丢在了地上。另一个男人，在搬砖的途中直接踩在这朵花上。

“吉姆，小心点，”一个男人对另外一个抽烟斗的男人喊道，“如果你把火柴扔到这些装满废纸的木桶附近，你还没能反应过来，可能就已经把这个危险的老房子给烧光了。”曼斯蒂夫人把头伸出窗外，看到在木阳台下有几个装了废纸的木桶，还有一些垃圾。

工程终于在暮色降临的时候停了下来。落日是如此完美，玫红色的余晖徘徊于西边的天际，让远处的教堂尖顶更加美轮美奂。当天色变暗的时候，曼斯蒂夫人拉下窗帘，以她一直以来有条不紊的方式点起了灯。她总是亲手把煤油装满再把灯点着，那壶煤油则一直存放在橱柜里一个锌盖架子上。煤油灯亮起来，充满灯光的房间立刻呈现出像平常一样宁静的样子。那些书本、画作以及植物，就像它们的主人一样，在又一个安静的夜晚要准备休息了。而曼斯蒂夫人就像往常一样，把扶手椅拉到桌子边上，开始织起袜子来。

这天夜晚，她没能睡着。变天了，屋外刮起了狂风，乌云密集，遮挡了空中的繁星。曼斯蒂夫人两三次起身，看向窗外，但是除了对面窗户里还亮着的那一两盏灯外，什么都看不清楚。最后这些灯光也熄灭了。曼斯蒂夫人一直在等这些灯光熄灭，此刻她穿起了衣服。她显然是非常着急，因为她只在睡衣外披了一件薄薄的晨衣，头上裹了一条围巾，然后打开壁橱的门，小心翼翼地拿出了那壶煤油。她把一把火柴塞进口袋，更加小心地打开了自己的房门。没过多久，在楼下

大厅里汽油灯微弱灯光的引领下，她摸索着走下了黑暗的楼梯，最后到达了楼梯底层，开始更加艰难地朝着漆黑一片的地下室走去。不过她在这里可以移动得更自由一些，因为在这里被听到的风险要小一点儿，而她毫不迟疑地设法打开了通向院子的铁门。她从地下室走出来，当她在晾衣绳下颤抖地摸索前行时，一阵冷风突然袭来。

那天清晨三点钟的时候，一阵火警警报把消防车带到了布莱克夫人的门口，同样也把桑普森夫人那些受到惊吓的房客带到了他们的窗口。布莱克夫人房子后面的木阳台烧起来了，而曼斯蒂夫人也在这群观望着火势的人群当中，她穿着薄薄的晨衣，把头探出了敞开的窗户外边。

不过火很快就被扑灭了，房子里那些惊慌失措的住户，之前穿着单薄的衣服逃出来了，天亮时分又重新回到住处，发现除了碎掉的玻璃窗和被烟熏黑的屋顶之外，房子并没有什么大碍。事实上，这场火最大的受害人是曼斯蒂夫人，第二天早晨，人们发现她气喘吁吁的，患上了肺炎，正如所有人所说，以她这个年纪还穿着晨衣把身子伸出窗外，这个结果也是意料之中的。很容易就能看得出她病得很重，但谁也没想到医生的诊断结果会是如此严重。那天晚上聚集在桑普森夫人桌前的每个人脸色都非常凝重和不安。并没有任何一个房客十分了解曼斯蒂夫人，“她总是独来独往”，正如她们所说，似乎觉得自己比其他房客都要高上一等。但是有人死在这所房子里总归是不太好，正如有位夫人对另外一位所说：“我亲爱的，这也很有可能发生在你我身上。”

但这就发生在了曼斯蒂夫人身上，她正在慢慢死去，就像她曾经活过那样，就算不是孤单一人，也是孤独的。医生派来了一位训练有素的护士，而桑普森太太时不时踩着低沉的步子走过来看看。但对于曼斯蒂夫人来说，这两个人都像是梦中人物一样遥远而虚幻。一整天下来她什么话也没说，但当有人问她女儿住址的时候，她摇了摇头。有时候护士留意到她在聚精会神地听着什么声音，没能听到后，就又昏睡过去了。

第二天天亮的时候，她的状态更差了。护士叫来了桑普森夫人，当她俩朝着这老太太俯下身的时候，她们看到她的嘴唇在动。

“扶我起来，扶我下床。”她轻声说道。

她们用手臂把她撑起来，她用僵硬的手指指向窗户。

“噢，那扇窗户——她想要坐在窗户边。她以前在那里一坐就是一天，”桑普森夫人解释道，“我想，这对她也没什么坏处吧？”

“现在什么都无所谓了。”护士说。

她们把曼斯蒂夫人扶到窗边，把她放在她的椅子上。窗外天刚亮，是一个让人感到喜悦的春日黎明，虽然木兰花和七叶树还在暗影中沉睡，但教堂的尖顶早已染上了一层金色的光芒。布莱克夫人的院子里一片寂静。阳台上烧焦的木头还躺在掉下来的地方。很明显，自从那场火灾后，工人们还没有继续他们的工作。木兰花又开出了几朵雕塑般立体的花朵，窗外的景色毫发无伤。

曼斯蒂夫人呼吸起来很辛苦，每呼吸一次都更加困难。她试图让她们把窗户打开，可她们并没有听懂。如果她能尝一口窗外的空气，臭椿那沁人心脾的芳香，会让她放松很多。可至少窗外的风景还在——教堂尖顶现在金光灿灿的，天空的颜色已经从蓝灰变成湛蓝，一天的开始是从东边到西边一丝丝被点亮的，就连木兰花现在也晒到了阳光。

曼斯蒂夫人的头向后一倒，在微笑中离开了人世。就在那一天，房子的扩建工程又恢复了。

[1] 十九世纪纽约人行道旁的灰桶用于丢弃炉灰和各种垃圾。（说明：书中脚注除特别标明的之外，均为译者注。）

[2] 罗马历史学家，大概生于一世纪。

[3] 昆图斯流传至今的作品少之又少，大部分内容都佚失了，这里用他来做类比，说明人行横道间的空隙之多、缝隙之大。——编者注

清算

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第一章

“新实施的婚姻法将是：你不应对自我不忠。”

表示赞同的呢喃声响起，填满整个画室。当她丈夫从临时搭建的讲台上走下来时，克莱门特·韦斯托尔的太太透过烟雾看见他融入到一群对他表示祝贺的女士当中。韦斯托尔对于“新伦理学”的非正式发言为他吸引来了一群精神匮乏的热情拥护者，用他自己的话说，这群人喜欢别人把精神食粮切好喂到嘴边。这一系列的发言并非计划好的。众所周知，韦斯托尔的思想属于“先锋派”，但是迄今为止，他并没有打算公开宣扬这些先锋思想。在他妻子看来，一直以来，他几乎是小心翼翼地不让自己的个人观点给自己的专业地位带来不良影响。然而，他近期表现出越来越武断的倾向让人疑惑。他发起了挑战，在公众社会的面前炫耀自己的个人准则，而且两性关系的话题肯定能吸引大量的眼球。有几个欣赏他的朋友说服他把自己晚餐后的谈资总结成一系列的演讲，在范·西德伦的画室里发表，让这些观点可以面向更多的听众。

赫伯特·范·西德伦夫妇在社交世界中安身立命的根本，便是他们所拥有的这间画室。范·西德伦画作的主要价值在于充当妻子聚会场所的背景装饰，使他妻子的午后聚会有别于其他在纽约那些长长的客厅里所举办的枯燥乏味的活动，也让她有机会给朋友们提供威士忌苏打而不是茶水。对范·西德伦夫人而言，她非常擅长于利用人体模型和画架所创造出的氛围。而如果时不时地，她觉得这种假象难以维持，甚至沮丧到希望赫伯特能再画些画时，她便会迅速地找来一些有才华的新鲜血液，加强一点儿艺术气氛，缓解此时的脆弱心理。也就是在寻找这种外援的时候，她逮住了韦斯托尔，哄着他——出乎他妻子的意料——让他倍感荣幸地变成了自己骗局中的一位参与者。在范·西德伦的圈子里，人们能够微妙感觉到，所有的大胆妄为都被看成是艺术性的。一位宣称婚姻是不道德的教师，就像是一位把草地画成紫色、天空画成绿色的画家一样与众不同。而范·西德伦那一帮人已经厌倦了艺术和行为上传统的色彩搭配。

茱莉亚·韦斯托尔一直以来都对婚姻的不道德性有着自己的看法，

或许她的确早已把她的丈夫纳为门徒。在他们的婚姻初期，她在心里对于丈夫不愿意宣称自己是新信条追随者这件事是感到怨恨的。她一直都更倾向于指责丈夫在道德方面是怯懦的，他根本没能履行二人婚姻理应坚持的信念。那是她第一次萌发了想要公开自己信仰的念头，正如普通女人一样，她想把自己的不服从变成合法的。现在她有了不同的感觉。她根本无法解释这些变化，可作为一个女人，她是永远不会允许自己的冲动无法得到合理解释的。为了使自己的冲动得到合理的解释，她说她不介意表达自己信念的文章被俗人所曲解。抱持着这样的想法，她开始觉得几乎所有人都是粗俗的。当然，她也觉得几乎没有什么人值得她去信赖，值得她去向他们阐释如此深奥的学说。然而也恰在此时，韦斯托尔决定抛开他保持沉默的原则，选择从隐私的制高点上走下来，开始站在街角兜售自己的信念。

在这种情况下，是尤娜·范·西德伦无意之中把韦斯托尔夫人摇摆不定的怨恨招惹到了自己身上。首先，这女孩儿根本就不应该出现在那里。光是一想到一个年轻的女孩儿竟然能够被允许去听这样的讲话，韦斯托尔夫人就觉得“可怕”——她发现自己又置身于过时的女性主义词汇之中——简直太“可怕”了。尤娜抽烟、偶尔抿一口鸡尾酒的这些行为，丝毫没有玷污她那光彩夺目的单纯形象，反而使她看上去更像是父母庸俗行为的受害者，而不是他们的帮凶。茱莉亚·韦斯托尔感到非常无助，她觉得必须得做点什么——有人应该要跟这女孩儿的母亲聊聊。而正在此时，尤娜溜到她身旁。

“哦，韦斯托尔夫人，刚才的演讲太棒了！”尤娜用清澈的大眼睛盯着她：“我想，你相信他所说的全部？”她的语气中带有一丝神圣的力量。

“全部……全部什么，我亲爱的孩子？”

女孩儿脸上露出了光彩。“关于更高级的生活……个人更自由的拓展……忠于自我的法则。”她流利地背诵出来。

韦斯托尔夫人大吃一惊，脸涨得通红。

“我亲爱的尤娜，”她说，“你根本不理解这是怎么一回事！”

范·西德伦小姐瞪大双眼，脸渐渐红了起来，回答道：“那么，您理解吗？”她喃喃说道。

韦斯托尔夫人笑了。“并不总是能理解……或并不能完全理解！但是我想喝点茶，麻烦你了。”

尤娜带着她来到了分发无酒精饮品的角落，茱莉亚接过她的茶，更仔细地打量着这个女孩儿。这不是一张未经世故、天真无邪的脸庞，毕竟在青春岁月的朦胧美好之下，棱角分明的轮廓也逐渐形成。

她想起来尤娜大概是二十六岁，好奇她为什么尚未结婚。要是能有许多好的想法作为嫁妆该多好！如果想法可以成为现代女孩儿嫁妆的一部分……

韦斯托尔夫人被自己的想法吓了一跳。仿佛就像是一个陌生人借用了自己的声音在说话：她觉得自己就像是被什么神奇的心理腹语术给骗了。她突然觉得房间里闷得透不过气来。尤娜的茶太甜了，她放下茶杯，四处张望，寻找韦斯托尔——和他的双目对视已经成为她面对一切不确定性时的避难所。现在，她找到了韦斯托尔的眼睛，但是她感到它们只是擦身而过而已，它们顺带把她捎上了一次更远大的飞行。她跟随着这班飞机，而它载着她来到了尤娜退避到的一个角落里——范·西德伦太太认为是这个热闹角落促成了她周六的聚会。韦斯托尔先生没过多久，就追赶上自己眼神的脚步，在女孩儿身边找到了一席之地。女孩儿倾身向前，急切地说着什么，他向后靠着，带着轻蔑的微笑听着，仿佛那笑容能将尤娜的吹捧过滤掉，让他能够在享用最大剂量的奉承之余，又不显现出自己对它的饥渴。茱莉亚对这个微笑的定义让她脸部的肌肉抽搐了一下。

在回家的路上，冬日的黄昏时分，街上没多少人，韦斯托尔突然像个小男孩儿似的握住了他妻子的胳膊：“我有没有让他们开了一点儿眼界？我有没有把你让我说的告诉他们？”他开心地问道。

几乎是无意识地，她把自己的胳膊从他的手中抽了出来。“我想让你说的……？”

“为什么，你不是——一直以来都？”她从他的语气里可以听出来，他是真的很吃惊。“不知怎么的，我觉得你……之前……还挺责怪我不愿意更公开地谈论……有时候，你几乎让我觉得我这么做是在为了私利而牺牲原则。”

她停顿了一会儿没答话，然后她平静地说：“是什么让你决定不再继续……？”

她又感到了一丝丝的惊讶。“为什么？为了能取悦你！”他回答得似乎太轻松了。“那我希望你不要继续了。”她突然说。他本来步伐飞快，突然停了下来，然后她感受到他在黑暗之中盯着自己看。

“不再继续——？”

“请你叫辆马车吧，我累了。”她突然之间觉得全身疲惫，不想再继续这个话题。

他立刻开始嘘寒问暖起来。那房间里热得要命……然后是那些可恶的烟味……他有一两次注意到她看上去脸色煞白——下个周六她不能再来了。她感到自己要彻底投降了，就像她往常一样，屈服于他对

她关怀的暖意之中，清楚地意识到自己放任心中女性柔弱的部分，轻轻地依靠在他内心中的男性特质上。

他把她扶进马车，黑暗之中，她把手偷偷伸进他的手中。眼中泛起了一两滴泪珠，她任由它们淌落脸颊。为想象出来的麻烦而哭泣是多么诱人的一件事啊！

当晚吃完晚饭后，出乎她意料的是，他把话题又带回到自己的演讲上。他讲话时结合了两种技巧，一种是当男性遇到让他感到不适问题时表现出厌恶情绪，另一种是近乎于女性化回避问题的说话方式。而她知道，如果他再回到这个话题上来，一定有什么特殊的原因。

“你似乎并不在乎我下午说的话。我解释得很不清楚吗？”

“不——你说得非常清楚。”

“那你说我不想我继续是什么意思？”

她紧张地瞥了他一眼，弄不清他的意图加深了她内心的无助感。

“我想我不愿意在公众场合听到讨论这些事。”

“我搞不懂你了。”他大叫。她再一次感到他的惊讶是发自内心的，这使她自己的态度显得有些暧昧不明。她不确定自己是否了解自己。

“难道你不想解释一下？”他的语气中有一丝不耐烦。

她的双眼游走于熟悉的客厅之中，这里曾是无数个夜晚中他们交换心声的地方。那些昏暗的灯、那些挂着金属版画的朴素墙面，浅色的春季花朵散落在各种威尼斯玻璃花瓶和老塞夫勒碗里。不知为何，她回想起在第一次婚姻中度过了无数夜晚的那所公寓——房间里有一大堆红木家具和室内饰品，壁炉上方挂着的画是一个罗马农民，客厅后方两扇折叠门之间放着一个希腊奴隶的大理石雕像。

她从未能与那个房间建立任何深入的联系，她和那个房间的关系，不会比一个旅客和火车站之间的关系来得更亲密。而此刻，当她环顾着这个与她有着最亲密关系的环境时——她为了这个房间而离开了另外那个房间——她被似曾相识的陌生感和不适感吓到了。那些画、那些花朵和那些老瓷器柔和的色调，看上去似乎仅仅是一种表面精致的象征，和生活之中深层的意义毫无关联。

突然之间，她听到她的丈夫重复了一次他的问题。

“我不确定我是否能解释。”她支支吾吾地说。

他把扶手椅向前拉了拉，这样就能隔着壁炉正对着她。台灯的灯光照在他那轮廓分明的脸上，那张脸看上去有一种肤浅的灵敏度，和

房间里表面上精致的摆设完全是同一种性质。

“难道说你不再相信我们的理念了？”他问。

“我们的理念指的是——”

“我正在传授的理念。你和我都应该支持的理念，”他停顿了一下，“我们的婚姻就建立在那些理念之上。”

血液涌到头上，她的双颊变得通红。那么他这么做是有自己的理由的——她现在敢肯定他有自己的理由。在他们十年的婚姻里，二人中没有哪个人经常停下来思考过彼此婚姻所立足的那个理念。人们隔多久才会把自己家的地下室挖开去检查地基呢？根基当然还在那里——整个房子都建立在根基之上——但是人们住在楼上，而不是住在地下室里。的确，一开始是她坚持偶尔回顾一下当时的情况——扼要重述一下坚持该道路的理由，时不时宣称一下自己信奉的是称之为个人独立的宗教理念。但她早已不再想坚持任何这些理想的标准，而是坦率而自然地接受了她的婚姻，就像它是建立在心灵原始需要的基础上的，并不需要特别的认可来解释或证明它是正当的。

“我当然还相信我们的理念！”她惊呼。

“那么我再说一遍，我搞不懂。应该尽可能地公开我们对婚姻的看法是你理论的一部分。在这方面你的想法已经改变了吗？”

她犹豫了一下：“这取决于具体情况——取决于是对哪些人公开。范·西德伦找来的那帮人根本不在乎信条的真伪。他们只是图个新鲜。”

“而恰好我们正是在这样一群人中相遇，了解到彼此内心之中的真实感受。”

“那不一样。”

“怎么不一样？”

“首先，我那时已经不是年轻姑娘了。年轻姑娘在……在这种时候……出现在这样的场合、听人们讨论这样的事情是完全不合适的……”

“我以为你觉得从不在年轻女性面前探讨这些问题才是这个社会最严重的错误之一，但那都无关紧要，因为我根本不记得在今天的听众里有看到任何年轻女性……”

“除了尤娜·范·西德伦！”

他轻轻地转过身，用胳膊肘子把台灯往后推了推。

“噢，范·西德伦小姐……当然……”

“为什么是当然？”

“她是那家人的女儿……难道你要让家庭教师和她一起离开？”

“如果我有女儿，肯定不会允许这样的事情在我家里发生的！”

韦斯托尔捋着他的胡子，面带微笑往后靠了一下。“我想范·西德伦小姐有足够的 ability 照顾好自己。”

“没有一个女孩儿知道该如何照顾自己——直到一切已经为时太晚。”

“而你却故意地阻止她得到最可靠的自卫手段？”

“你所说的‘最可靠的自卫手段’是什么？”

“对涉及婚姻牵绊时人性本能的相关知识的初步了解。”

她做了一个不耐烦的动作：“你愿意娶那种女孩儿作为妻子吗？”

“很乐意——如果她在其他方面是我喜欢的类型的话。”

她又从另一个角度继续这场争辩。

“如果你觉得这样的演讲不会影响年轻女性，那你就大错特错了。尤娜正处于一种极度可笑的亢奋之中……”她说了一半，突然停了下来，不知道自己为什么要说这句话。

韦斯托尔重新打开了一本杂志，在他们开始讨论之前，他把杂志先放到了一边。“你告诉我的话是对我演讲才能的极大恭维——但恐怕你高估了它的影响。我能向你保证，范·西德伦小姐不需要别人替她思考问题。她绝对有自己思考的能力。”

“你似乎对她的心理状态非常了解！”他妻子一时没忍住回击道。

他从正在翻的页面上静静地抬起头来。“我希望如此，”他回答，“她引起了我的兴趣。”

第二章

如果被误解能获得勋章，那茱莉亚·韦斯托尔离开第一任丈夫的时候，没能获此殊荣。当时每个人都愿意原谅她，甚至还想为她辩护。她的社交圈都认为约翰·阿蒙特简直是“让人无法忍受”，所有的女主人一想到再也不用邀请他一同进餐都松了一口气。

她第一次离婚并不涉及任何丑闻——夫妻双方甚至都没有婉转地指控对方触犯了什么。阿蒙特夫妇的确有责任把他们的忠诚奉献给自己所在的州，毕竟在他们的法律辖区里，公开遗弃是可以作为离婚理由的，而且该理由还能如此开明地得以阐释，以至于“遗弃”的种子开

始出现在各个婚姻当中。就连阿蒙特夫人的第二次婚姻也没能使沉睡的传统道德激起一丝波澜。众所周知，她是在和第一任丈夫分开后，才遇到第二任丈夫的，更何况，她以一个穷丈夫取代了一个有钱的丈夫。虽然克莱门特·韦斯托尔被公认为律师界冉冉升起的新星，可人们普遍认为他的财富并不会像他的名声那样迅速增长。因此韦斯托尔夫妇大概一直也只能安静地生活，乘马车外出用餐。这不正好证明阿蒙特夫人是彻彻底底公正无私的吗？

就算说她朋友们为她行为辩解的理由听上去比她自己对此事的阐述显得更为简单粗暴，但两种解释都得出了同一种结论：约翰·阿蒙特根本让人无法忍受。这两者之间唯一的区别在于，对他的妻子来说，他的“无法忍受”要比起他社交方面的拙劣表现更难以容忍一些。她曾经以嘲讽的方式为自己的婚姻“辩护”说，至少这样一来她就不用坐在他身旁用餐。只是她当时并没有意识到，为了不用坐在他身旁用餐将要付出多大的代价。约翰·阿蒙特的确让人无法忍受，但他让人无法忍受的痛处在于，他让身边的人除了变成像他一样的人之外，别无他选。在无意识的淘汰过程中，他把所有自己觉得不需要的东西都排除在他的世界之外，就好像他已经变成了一种只能满足他个人需求存活的气候。这似乎暗示着他的自私自利是故意的，但是阿蒙特完全不是刻意而为之。他就像是动物或者小孩儿一样完全凭借本能。正是他天性之中孩子气的特质，让他的妻子对他的评价暂时有点儿摇摆不定。有没有可能他只是发育不良，是他的成长过程比普通人要来得更长，是他艰辛的成长过程被推迟了吗？他偶尔会表现出一种精明，也正是这种精明让人推翻了他很迟钝这一说法，觉得他“并不傻”。恰恰，这种特质让他的妻子最忍受不了。即使对于博物学家来说，当他的推论因为他所研究的生物的形式和功能出现了不可预料的反常现象而受到干扰时，该情景也是十分令人恼火的。对一个妻子来说更是如此，因为不可避免的，她对自己的评价总与她对丈夫的判断息息相关！

事实上，阿蒙特的精明并不意味着任何潜在的智慧力量，相反地，它暗示着一种情感上的潜力、一种感知痛苦的潜力，或者正是这种盲目而不成熟的精明方式让茱莉亚自然而然地想要赶快离开。她对于自己要离开他的理由是如此清晰，以至于简直无法想象她丈夫竟然不怎么理解她为何离开。她在分析问题的时候，丈夫脸上困惑的表情，困扰得她语无伦次起来，而他听着这些解释，最终默许了离婚。

这种时刻对她来说是很少有的。她婚姻的痛苦太过于具体，很难从哲学的角度来审视。就算造成她不幸福的理由是复杂的，可她的不幸真得让这些理由都显得不再复杂了。灵魂比肉体更容易受伤，而茱莉亚的每一丝灵魂都伤痕累累。她丈夫的个性似乎在逐渐朝她逼近，遮挡住天空、切断了氧气，直到她觉得被困在了失去希望的腐烂躯体之中。她就像受到极其古老的阴谋的诱骗，进入到这种灵与肉的

束缚之中，这种感觉让她满心绝望。如果婚姻指的是需要用漫长的一生去偿在无知时欠下的债务，那它就是对人性的犯罪。她可不会同流合污维持这种伪装，她一直以来都是这种伪装的受害者：这种伪装就是男人和女人被迫进入一段最狭隘的个人关系之中，还必须在里面待到人生尽头。虽然他们可能就像幼苗时缠绕在树干上的铁圈困不住成年的大树一样，彼此个性的空间早已容不下对方。

她第一次从道德方面感到愤怒的时候，恰巧遇见了克莱门特·韦斯托尔。她立即就看出来自己引起了他的“兴趣”，并且对这一发现感到非常排斥，生怕有任何影响将她再次拉回到传统关系的束缚之中。为了避免危险，她几乎是以一种粗鲁急躁的态度把自己的观点告诉了他。让她感到惊讶的是，她发现他和自己的想法一致。她被这位追求者的坦率所吸引，他在追求自己的同时，也承认他并不相信婚姻。她最大胆的举动似乎并没有吓着他：她所感受到的他早就发现了，而他俩得到了同一个结论。人们成长的速度不同，对一个人来说很容易适应的束缚可能很快就会让另一个人感到不适。这就是离婚的目的：重新调整个人关系。只要双方必要的磨合期一过，彼此就能够获得尊严与和谐。再也不需要为了维持不完美的婚姻而卑微地退让和纵容；再也不需要为了维持不完美的婚姻永久地牺牲个人的优雅和道德尊严。在婚姻合约中的双方都要尽心尽力，必须达到自我发展的最高标准，违反者会以失去另一方的尊重和爱意论处。落后的那一方不能拖先进一方的后腿，而是必须要努力进步，否则只能独自一人停留在低等水平上。和谐婚姻唯一的必要条件是坦率地承认这一事实，并在缔约双方之间达成一项庄严的协议——对自己忠诚。当双方步调不再一致的时候，一刻也不会再继续生活在一起。对自己的不忠才是新的通奸行径。

正如韦斯托尔之前提醒她的那样，他们的婚姻建立在这样的共识之上。婚礼只是对于社会偏见无关紧要的让步：既然离婚的大门已开，没有一个婚姻应该成为牢笼，因此婚姻合同也不再涉及任何有损自尊的内容。他们感情的属性尽可能地避免了这样的偶然性发生在他们身上。因此对他们来说，也更容易以开放的态度来讨论这些问题。而茱莉亚的安全感使她对于韦斯托尔的承诺有种柔情的坚持，他答应一旦不再爱她，就会提出重获自由的要求。在某种意义上，交换这样的誓言似乎使他们成为新法律的拥护者，成为在个人自由遭到禁锢的国度里的先驱：他们觉得自己从某种程度上来讲，好像在没有殉道的情况下获得了至福 [4]。

当茱莉亚回顾过往的时候，她意识到，从理论上讲这一直是她对婚姻的态度。在她毫无意识的情况下，正是她和韦斯托尔在一起十年的幸福生活，不知不觉间使她对这段姻缘产生了另一种看法。更确切地说，是回归到过去那种，有强烈的依赖感和占有欲的原始本能，这

种回归让她只要察觉到一丝变化的迹象，就会热血沸腾。改变？重新开始？他们用愚蠢的专业术语就是这么说的吗？“破坏”，甚至是“根绝”——这撕裂了与另一个人交织在一起的无数纤维。另一个人？但他不是别人！他和她是一体的，这是一种神秘的感觉，而正是这神秘的感觉赋予了婚姻意义。新法律不是为他们制定的，而是为那些本来就不和谐、被迫进入到一段让人耻笑的婚姻之中的男女制定的。她觉得有必要宣扬的福音与她自己的情况无关……她叫来医生，告诉他自己肯定需要安神剂。

她按时按点地服用安神剂，但这药对她的恐惧起不到镇静作用。她不知道自己在害怕些什么，而这反而让她更难逃脱开自己的焦虑。她丈夫没有再重提周六演讲的话题。他和往常不同，变得非常和蔼体贴，急躁的脾气也有所软化，在体贴的同时略带羞涩，但这种恶心的感觉让她更害怕。她对自己说，正是因为她的脸色不好——因为他知道医生和安神剂的事——他才表现出顺从于她的想法，表现出这种急于把她从道德草案中屏蔽掉的态度，但这一解释只是为新的推论扫清了道路。

这周过得很慢，很空虚，就像是一个漫长的周日。周六早上，邮差送来了范·西德伦太太的一张字条。“亲爱的茱莉亚，是否可以请你让韦斯托尔先生比平常早来半小时，因为在他的‘演讲’之后，会有些音乐表演。”他妻子读到这字条的时候，韦斯托尔正要出门去办公室。她打开客厅的门，把他叫回来告诉他这个消息。

他瞥了一眼字条，把它扔在一边。“真麻烦！我得提早结束壁球。好吧，我想这也是无可奈何的事。你能写信告诉他们没问题吗？”

茱莉亚犹豫了一会儿，她的手僵硬地放在她靠着的椅背上。

“你打算继续这些演讲？”她问。

“我……为什么不呢？”他回答。而这一次，她意识到他的惊讶显得有点儿虚伪，这种想法让她找到了接下来要说的话。

“你之前说你开始这些演讲是为了取悦我……”

“然后？”

“上周我告诉你它们并不能让我高兴。”

“上周？……噢……”他看上去在努力回忆，“我以为那时你只是太紧张了，你第二天就叫了医生。”

“我需要的不是医生，而是你的保证……”

“我的保证？”

突然之间，她感到地板在她身下崩塌了。她滑落到椅子上，喉咙哽咽，她想说的话、她的理由就像置身洪流之中的稻草一般，从她口中溜走。

“克莱门特！”她大喊道，“难道你知道我讨厌那些讲话还不够吗？”

他转身关上他们身后的门，然后走到她身边坐下。“你讨厌的是什​​么？”他轻声问道。

她竭尽全力重新组织语言表达自己的论点。

“我无法忍受你说得好像……好像……我们的婚姻……就像其他的婚姻一样……就像那种错误的婚姻一样。那天下午，我听到你在那里，在那些爱打听别人闲话的人面前，宣称丈夫和妻子只要感到厌倦了……或是在和其他人约会……就有权利离开彼此……”

韦斯托尔面无表情地坐在那里，他的双眼直直地盯着地毯上的一个图案。

“那就是说，你已经不认同这个观点了？”他等她停下来之后说道，“你不再认为丈夫和妻子……在这种情况下是有理由分开的？”

“在这种情况下？”她结结巴巴地说，“不是……我还是相信的……可是我们如何替其他人做决定？我们怎么知道具体的情况是什么……”

他打断了她：“我以为这是我们信条的根本条款，即婚姻所产生的特殊情况不应妨碍个人自由的充分履行。”他停了一会儿：“我还以为这是你离开阿蒙特的理由呢。”

她的脸一下子红上了额头。在争论时进行人身攻击并不太像他的作风。

“这的确是我的理由。”她简单地说。

“好吧，那么……为什么你现在不愿意承认它的有效性呢？”

“我没有……我没有不承认……我只是说没人能够替别人做判断。”

他做了一个不耐烦的动作。“这简直令人毛骨悚然。你的意思是说，你需要的时候教义为你的目的服务，现在你却拒绝接受它。”

“好吧！”她大喊，脸上又烧了起来，“如果我就是呢？那对我们来说有什么所谓？”

韦斯托尔从椅子上站了起来，脸色煞白，他站在妻子面前，就像是陌生人。

“对我来说有所谓，”他低声说，“因为我并不拒绝接受它。”

“那么……？”

“而且因为我已经打算引用……”

他停顿了一下，深深地吸了一口气。她静静地坐着，几乎被自己的心跳声给震聋了。

“……它作为我接下来行动的全部理由。”

茱莉亚依旧面无表情。“你的行动是什么？”她问道。

他清了清喉咙：“我打算让你履行你的承诺。”

刹那间，房间里晃动起来，变得一片昏暗。然后她的视力突然之间变得敏锐得让人备受煎熬。她周围的每一个细节都在朝她逼近：时钟的嘀嗒声、斜射在墙上的阳光、她抓在手中椅子扶手的硬度，这些东西刺伤着她每一种知觉。

“我的承诺……”她迟疑了一下。

“我们共同协议之中你承诺的那部分，如果其中有一方希望得到解脱，另一方就放对方自由。”

她又沉默了。他等了一会儿，紧张地变换着姿势。然后，他略带恼怒地说：“你还承认这个协议吧？”

这个问题让她大吃一惊。她骄傲地抬起头说：“我承认这个协议。”

“那么……你不打算否认它？”

壁炉中的一块圆木向前倒了下来，他机械地上前把它推回去。

“不，”她回答得很缓慢，“我不打算否认它。”

他没有立刻回话。他留在炉边，胳膊肘搁在壁炉架上。他的手旁边放着一个小翡翠杯子，那是他们在某个结婚周年纪念日的时候送给她的。她模糊地想知道此刻他是否注意到了那个杯子。

“那么，你是打算离开我了？”她最后说。

他的手势似乎是在对这种暗示的粗鄙表示反对。

“去和其他人结婚？”

他的眼神和手又表示起抗议。她站起来，站在他面前。

“你何必害怕告诉我？是尤娜·范·西德伦吗？”

他陷入了沉默。

“我祝你好运。”她说。

第三章

她抬起头，发现自己独自一人在房间里。她不记得他是什么时候、是怎样离开房间的，也不记得在那之后自己在这里坐了多久。壁炉里的火苗还在冒着烟，但是斜着投射在墙上的阳光已经消失不见。

她第一个清醒的意识是她并没有食言，她履行了二人之间协议的每一个字。她并没有大哭小叫，没有徒劳地借助过往的回忆，没有试图拖延或者逃跑。她径直大步地走向了枪口。

既然一切都结束了，她嫌恶地发现自己还活着。她看了看四周，试图恢复自己对现实的掌控。她的身份在身体衰弱的过程中渐渐消失，似乎伴随着晕厥，已经悄然离她而去了。“这是我的房间——这是我的房子。”她听到自己喃喃自语。她的房间？她的房子？她几乎都能听到周围的墙壁在嘲笑自己。

她站了起来，浑身上下每一根骨头都感到疲惫不堪。房间里的寂静让她害怕。现在她记起来好久之前听到前门关上的声音——那声音突然之间在她脑中再次响起。她丈夫肯定是那时候离开房子的——她的丈夫？她已经不知道该用什么称呼他——最简单的词语也有恶毒的一面。她又瘫倒在椅子上，一种奇怪的脆弱之感向她袭来。时钟敲响十下——才十点！她突然意识到还没有点餐……还是说他们晚上要出去用餐？晚餐……外出用餐……那毫无意义的措辞抓着她不放！她必须要像另外一个人那样思考，她要把自己变成一个和这里过去熟悉的所有日常彻底脱离的人，必须要逐渐了解另外这个人的习惯和想法，就像一个人要窥探出奇怪的动物的生活习性……

钟表又敲响了——十一点。她再次站起来，走到门口，她想上楼回到自己的房间里去。她的房间？她又被这个词嘲笑了一次。她打开门，穿过狭窄的门厅，走上楼梯。路过时，她看到韦斯托尔的手杖和雨伞——他的一双手套摆在门厅的桌子上。一切都没有改变，两面墙之间的楼梯上铺着同样的地毯，当她走到楼梯口时，映入眼帘的还是同样的一幅法国旧版画，嵌在又黑又窄的画框里。这种视觉上接连不断的场景让她忍无可忍。她内心深处有一个巨大的裂口，而外部的一切依旧是如此平静和熟悉。她必须远离这一切，才能够尝试着思考。但是一走进自己的房间，她坐在沙发上，恍惚的感觉便开始笼罩着她……

她的视野逐渐清晰起来。在这段时间里发生了许多事情——情绪、争论和思想的激烈交锋——反叛者冲动的怒火又重新燃烧起来。起初，她试图把这些混乱的力量团结、组织起来。如果她能控制住内

心的骚乱，一定有什么方法可以改善这一切。生命不能因为一时的心血来潮、一个幻想，就这样突然被中断。法律本身会支持她，会保护她。法律？她能对法律提什么要求呢？她成了自己选择的囚犯：她是自己的立法者，她是自己所制定的法典注定的受害者。但是这是荒唐可笑的，是不能容忍的——这是一个疯狂的错误，不能让她为此负责！她所蔑视的法律仍然存在，也许还能执行……执行，但目的在于什么呢？她能让法律把韦斯托尔拴在她身边吗？当她要求得到自由的时候，她被允许自由地离开——难道她不该表现得比她之前所要求的更宽宏大量吗？宽宏大量？这个词以它的讽刺鞭笞着她——当一个人在为生命而战时，是不需要装腔作势的！她会威胁、她会摇尾乞怜、她会用甜言蜜语去哄骗……为了保住幸福，她愿意放弃一切。啊，但是困难重重啊！法律帮不了她——她背弃自己的信仰也帮不了她。她是她所抛弃的理论的受害者。就好像是她被自己制造的一台巨大的机器卷进轮子里，磨成了碎片……

她发现自己出门时已是下午了。她漫无目的地匆匆走着，生怕遇见熟悉的面孔。这种日子就是最能反映真实的美国的日子：阳光明媚，金光闪闪，照出了街道上没有打扫干净的地方，暴露出我们建筑的拥挤。这些街道看上去光秃秃的，十分丑陋，所有的东西都很显眼，闪闪发光。她叫住一辆过路的马车，给出了范·西德伦太太的地址。她不知道是什么原因导致了这个行为，但她突然下定决心要说出来、要大声地警告。现在想拯救自己已经太迟了——但或许她还能提醒那个年轻女孩儿点什么。那辆双轮马车嘎吱嘎吱地驶过第五大街，她目不斜视地坐在车里，避免被认出来。到了范·西德伦家的门口，她跳下马车，按响了门铃。行动使她的头脑清醒了，她感到平静和镇定。她现在清楚地知道自己想说什么了。

两位女士都出去了……侍女站在那儿等着茱莉亚递上卡片。茱莉亚嘟囔了一声，转身离开门口，在人行道上逗留了一会儿。然后她想起她还没有给车夫付钱。她从钱包里掏出一美元递给他。他摸着帽子示了示意，然后就赶着马车走了，把她一个人留在空荡荡的长街上。她徘徊着往西边走去，走到一条陌生的大道上，在这里她不大可能遇见熟人。漫无目的的感觉又回来了。有一次在一个下午，她发现自己置身于百老汇大街的洪流中，掠过花里胡哨的商店和色彩鲜艳的戏剧海报，一连串毫无意义的面孔从她面前朝相反的方向一一消失……

一阵眩晕的感觉突然袭来，她想起自己从早上起就没吃过东西。她拐进一条满是破旧房子的小巷，被弯曲的栏杆围了起来，栏杆后面放着一排排的灰桶。在地下室的一扇窗户上她看到了“女士餐厅”的招牌：一块馅饼和一盘甜甜圈靠在满是灰尘的玻璃窗上，就像民族博物馆里的石化食品。她走了进去，一个嘴巴轮廓不明显、眼睛很大的年轻女人在窗边给她收拾出一张桌子。桌上铺着红白相间的棉布，上面

摆着的装饰是一只又大又重的玻璃杯，里面放着一束芹菜，盐瓶里装满了灰白色的盐块。茱莉亚点了茶，等了好长时间都没上来。她很高兴能够远离街道上的嘈杂和混乱。天花板很低的房间里空无一人，两三个瘦削的女服务员懒洋洋地站在后面，一起盯着她窃窃私语。最后，茶水装在一个脏兮兮的金属茶壶里端了上来。茱莉亚倒了一杯匆忙喝下去。茶又黑又苦，但它就像是万灵药一样流过她的血管。她兴奋得几乎头晕目眩。啊，她实在是太累了，累得筋疲力尽！

她又喝了一杯，茶变得越来越黑、越来越苦，现在她的头脑又清醒了。她觉得就像是站在范·西德伦家的台阶上时那么精力充沛、那么果断——但她并不打算再回到那里。她现在看到了这样的企图是徒劳的——这可能使她蒙受耻辱……遗憾的是她不知道下一步该怎么办。冬季短暂的白昼即将过去，她意识到自己不能在餐馆里待太久，不然就会引起别人的注意。她付了茶钱，走到街上。路灯已经亮起来了，地下室里的一家店铺把长方块状的煤气灯影投射在裂开的人行道上。暮色中，这条街的样子有一种不祥的感觉，她急忙向第五大街走去。她不习惯一个人在这个时候外出。

在第五大街的拐角处，她停下来，站在那里看着川流不息的马车。最后一个警察看见了她，示意要带她过马路。她本不想过马路，但不知不觉地跟着过了马路，没多久就发现自己来到了更远的街角。她在那儿又停了一会儿，但是她觉得警察在看着她，这让她急匆匆地跑到最近的一条小街上去……之后她迷迷糊糊地走了好长时间……夜幕降临了，透过一辆辆驶过的马车窗户，她不时地瞥见一件巨大的晚礼服，或是一件闪闪发光的歌剧斗篷……

突然之间，她发现自己来到了一条熟悉的街道上。她静静地站了一会儿，急促地喘着气。她刚刚转过这个拐角的时候并没有注意它通向哪里，但现在，她看见前面几码远的地方是她曾经住过的房子——她第一任丈夫的房子。百叶窗都拉上了，窗户和门上方的横梁上只有一抹模糊的光线。当她站在那里时，她听到身后有一阵脚步声，一个男人朝房子的方向走了过去。他走得很慢，脚步有着中年人的沉重之感。他的脑袋稍稍缩在两肩之间，大衣的毛皮领子上露出脖子上的红色皱褶。他穿过街道，走上了房子的台阶，拿出一把钥匙，开门进去了……

眼前没有别人。茱莉亚在墙角的栏杆上靠了好久，眼睛盯着房子的前面。身体疲倦的感觉又回来了，但是浓茶仍然在她的血管里跳动着，使她的大脑格外清醒。不久之后，她听到又有脚步声走近了，她赶紧往前走，也穿过马路，跨上了房子的台阶。把她带到那儿去的那种冲动随着按下电铃后的急促声响，继续延长了一段时间——然后她突然感到虚弱和颤抖，抓住栏杆支撑着自己。门开了，一个年轻的男

仆站在门槛上，他的表情看上去略微稚嫩。茱莉亚立刻知道他会让她进去的。

“我看到阿蒙特先生刚刚进去了，”她说，“你能让他见我一下吗？”

男仆犹豫了一下：“女士，我想阿蒙特先生已经上楼更衣准备用晚餐了。”

茱莉亚走进门厅。“我敢肯定他会见我的——我不会耽搁他太久。”她说。

她说这些话的时候很平静、很有权威，一个好的仆人是不会把这种语气搞错的。男仆的手伸到了客厅门上。

“女士，我会告诉他的。请问，该如何称呼您？”

茱莉亚抖了一下，她没想到这一点。“就说是一位女士吧。”她漫不经心地回答。

男仆有点儿动摇，茱莉亚还以为自己败下阵来，但就在此时，门从里面开了，约翰·阿蒙特走进了门厅。他一看见她就猛然后退，他那红润的脸吓得变成了土黄色，然后血液又重新涌了回来，让他太阳穴上的血管肿胀起来，使他厚厚的耳垂变得通红。

茱莉亚已经很久没有见过他了，她对他外貌的变化感到吃惊。他变得又肿又胖，被一大团肉包裹起来。但是这是她无意间注意到的，她唯一有意识的想法是，既然现在和他面对面地见到了，在他听完自己想说的话之前一定不能让他逃走。她身体里的每一丝血脉都因急切要讲的话而激烈地跳动着。

他往后退的时候，她朝他走去。“我有话必须对你说。”她说。

阿蒙特满脸通红、结结巴巴地犹豫起来。茱莉亚瞥了一眼仆人，她的表情像是在警告。从“现场”离开的本能压倒了其他所有的冲动，阿蒙特慢吞吞地说：“请往这边走，好吗？”

他跟着她走进客厅，关上了门。茱莉亚往前走着，模模糊糊地意识到至少房间没有任何变化：时间并没有减低它给人带来的恐怖感觉。康塔迪娜 [5] 的味道依旧徘徊在烟囱壁上，希腊奴隶挡住了内室的门槛。关于这地方的回忆再次鲜活起来——一开始是从黄色缎子窗帘的每一个褶裥里开始，然后游走于红木家具的夹角之间。

但是，当大脑之中某个分支正在传递这些信息的时候，她的整个意识都努力集中在支配阿蒙特的意志上。她怕他会拒绝听自己说话，这种恐惧就像高烧一样，在她脑中沸腾起来。她感到自己的计划在恐惧之前慢慢融化，在她滚烫的渴望之中，每一个词句、每一个论点在

相互碰撞。她一时之间说不出话来，她想着自己可能还没来得及说话就会被推出门外。但正当她努力想找话说的时候，阿蒙特把一把椅子推到她前面，平静地说：“你不太好。”

他的声音使她镇定下来。这声音既不友好，也不冷酷——它使你大脑的判断和思考悬在那儿，等候意料不到的事态发展。她靠在椅背上，深深地吸了一口气。

“要叫他们给你准备点什么吗？”他继续说，礼貌之中带着一丝冷漠与尴尬。

茱莉亚做出了恳求的手势。“不……不需要……谢谢你。我很好。”

他本打算按铃的手停在半空，然后转向茱莉亚：“那么，我能问……？”

“是的，”她打断他，“我到这里来是因为我想见你。有些事我必须告诉你。”

阿蒙特继续打量着她。“我对此感到惊讶，”他说，“我本以为你有任何想要沟通的内容，都可以通过我们的律师。”

“我们的律师！”她突然微微笑了起来，“我不认为他们能帮得了我……这次不行。”

阿蒙特面露难色：“如果有什么需要帮忙的问题……当然……”

奇怪的是，她突然想到，以前有个衣衫褴褛的混混儿拿着认捐簿出现在他们的门口时，她曾看到过这种表情。也许他认为她为了博取他的同情——甚至是为了钱——想让他捐款……想到这里，她又笑了起来。她看到他的神色慢慢变得困惑起来。他所有的面部表情变化都是缓慢的，她突然记起，正是那种表情使她提出了离婚，从而不用再见到那种惹人烦的情景。她第一次意识到自己一直以来太残忍了。“是有需要帮助的问题，”她用比较柔和的声调说，“你只需要听我说完就是帮助我了……我想告诉你一件事……”

阿蒙特还是没有放弃抵抗。“写信……的话不是更容易？”他建议说。

她摇了摇头。“没时间写了……而且也不会太久的。”她抬起头，二人四目相对。“我的丈夫已经离开我了。”她说。

“韦斯托尔……？”他结结巴巴地说，脸色又变得通红。

“是的。今天早上。就像我离开你一样，因为他已经厌倦我了。”

这些话的音量比在耳边私语大不了多少，可又像是响亮到填满了

整个房间。阿蒙特朝门口看了一眼，然后他那窘迫的目光又回到茱莉亚身上。

“我很抱歉。”他尴尬地说。

“谢谢你。”她呢喃了一句。

“但是我看不出……”

“不……但过一会儿……你就会……你就不能听我说完吗？拜托！”她本能地改变了姿势，让自己挡在他和门之间。“事情是今天早上发生的，”她气喘吁吁地接着说，“我从来没有怀疑过什么……我以为我们……非常幸福……他突然对我说他厌倦我了……他更喜欢另一个女孩儿……他去找她了……”当她说话的时候，潜伏在她心头的痛苦又一次笼罩着她，把其他所有的情绪都排除在外了。她眼睛开始疼痛，喉咙也肿了起来，两颗痛苦的眼泪从脸上流淌而下。

阿蒙特显得越来越拘谨。“这……这很不幸。”他开口，“但我想说的是法律……”

“法律？”她讽刺地回答，“当他要求得到自己的自由的时候？”

“你没有义务给他自由。”

“你也没有义务给我自由——但是你给了。”他做了一个不同意她的看法的手势。

“你明白法律帮不了你的忙——是吗？”她接着说，“这就是我现在看到的。法律代表的是物质权利——在此之外，它无能为力。如果我们不承认内在规律……不承认爱所创造的责任……爱与被爱……那就没有什么能阻止我们传播势如破竹的毁灭……不是吗？”她悲哀地抬起头来，眼神流露出孩子般的迷惑不解。“这就是我现在看到的……我想告诉你的。他离开我是因为他厌倦了……但我并没有厌倦，我不明白他为什么会感到厌倦。这就是可怕的地方——不理解，不明白这是什么意思。但我一整天都在想这件事，而我又记起了一些事——那些我没有注意到的事情……当你和我……”她走近他，用一种难以言表的目光盯着他：“我现在明白了，你当时根本不理解……是吗？”

两人的目光在恍然大悟之中相遇：二人之间的那层面纱似乎被揭开了。阿蒙特的嘴唇在颤抖着。

“不，”他回答，“我不理解。”

她轻声叫了起来，几乎是胜利的声音。“我就知道！我就知道！你不理解……你试图告诉过我……但是却什么都没说……你看到自己的生活分崩离析……你的世界离你而去……而你什么都说不出，也动不了！”

她又滑落到之前靠着的椅子上。“现在我知道了……现在我知道了。”她重复着。

“我很替你难过。”她听到阿蒙特结结巴巴地说。她很快抬起头来：“这不是我来的目的。我不想让你为我感到难过。我是来请求你原谅我的……原谅我当时并不理解你的不理解……这就是我想说的全部。”她站起身来，迷茫地觉得差不多该结束了，用手摸索着伸向门口。

阿蒙特面无表情地站在那里。她转向他，脸上带着无力的笑容。

“你原谅我了吗？”

“没什么好原谅的——”

“那你愿意和我握手告别？”虽然感觉很无力也不情愿，但她还是握到了他的手。

“再见。”她重复了一次，“我现在理解了。”

她打开门，走到门厅离去。正当她要出去的时候，阿蒙特冲动地向前迈了一步，可是就在此时，男仆明显非常尽职，从后面走了出来准备让她出去。她听到阿蒙特退了回去。男仆猛一下把门打开，然后她发现自己身处于屋外的黑暗之中。

[4] 至福，指耶稣在山上垂训时所说的八种幸福。

[5] 意大利风味番茄产品和面包屑品牌。

‘If marriage was
the slow life-long
acquittal of a
debt contracted
in ignorance,
then marriage
was a crime
against human
nature.’

Mrs Manstey's View

The view from Mrs Manstey's window was not a striking one, but to her at least it was full of interest and beauty. Mrs Manstey occupied the back room on the third floor of a New York boarding-house, in a street where the ash- barrels lingered late on the sidewalk and the gaps in the pavement would have staggered a Quintus Curtius. She was the widow of a clerk in a large wholesale house, and his death had left her alone, for her only daughter had married in California, and could not afford the long journey to New York to see her mother. Mrs Manstey, perhaps, might have joined her daughter in the West, but they had now been so many years apart that they had ceased to feel any need of each other's society, and their intercourse had long been limited to the exchange of a few perfunctory letters, written with indifference by the daughter, and with difficulty by Mrs Manstey, whose right hand was growing stiff with gout. Even had she felt a stronger desire for her daughter's companionship, Mrs Manstey's increasing infirmity, which caused her to dread the three flights of stairs between her room and the street, would have given

her pause on the eve of undertaking so long a journey; and without perhaps formulating these reasons she had long since accepted as a matter of course her solitary life in New York.

She was, indeed, not quite lonely, for a few friends still toiled up now and then to her room; but their visits grew rare as the years went by. Mrs Manstey had never been a sociable woman, and during her husband's lifetime his companionship had been all-sufficient to her. For many years she had cherished a desire to live in the country, to have a hen- house and a garden; but this longing had faded with age, leaving only in the breast of the uncommunicative old woman a vague tenderness for plants and animals. It was, perhaps, this tenderness which made her cling so fervently to her view from her window, a view in which the most optimistic eye would at first have failed to discover anything admirable.

Mrs Manstey, from her coign of vantage (a slightly projecting bow- window where she nursed an ivy and a succession of unwholesome- looking bulbs), looked out first upon the yard of her own dwelling, of which, however, she could get but a restricted glimpse. Still, her gaze took in the topmost boughs of the ailanthus below her window, and she knew how early each year the clump of dicentra strung its bending stalk with hearts of pink.

But of greater interest were the yards beyond. Being for the most part attached to boarding- houses they were in a state of chronic untidiness and fluttering, on certain days of the week, with miscellaneous garments and frayed table- cloths. In spite of this Mrs Manstey found much to admire in the long vista which she commanded. Some of the yards were, indeed, but stony wastes, with grass in the cracks of the pavement and no shade in spring save that afforded by the intermittent leafage of the clotheslines. These yards Mrs Manstey disapproved of, but the others, the green ones, she loved. She had grown used to their disorder; the broken barrels, the empty bottles and paths unswept no longer annoyed her; hers was the happy faculty of dwelling on the pleasanter side of the prospect before her.

In the very next enclosure did not a magnolia open its hard white flowers against the watery blue of April? And was there not, a little way down the line, a fence foamed over every May by lilac

waves of wistaria? Farther still, a horse- chestnut lifted its candelabra of buff and pink blossoms above broad fans of foliage; while in the opposite yard June was sweet with the breath of a neglected syringa, which persisted in growing in spite of the countless obstacles opposed to its welfare.

But if nature occupied the front rank in Mrs Manstey's view, there was much of a more personal character to interest her in the aspect of the houses and their inmates. She deeply disapproved of the mustard- colored curtains which had lately been hung in the doctor's window opposite; but she glowed with pleasure when the house farther down had its old bricks washed with a coat of paint. The occupants of the houses did not often show themselves at the back windows, but the servants were always in sight. Noisy slatterns, Mrs Manstey pronounced the greater number; she knew their ways and hated them. But to the quiet cook in the newly painted house, whose mistress bullied her, and who secretly fed the stray cats at nightfall, Mrs Manstey's warmest sympathies were given. On one occasion her feelings were racked by the neglect of a house- maid, who for two days forgot to feed the parrot committed to her care. On the third day, Mrs Manstey, in spite of her gouty hand, had just penned a letter, beginning: 'Madam, it is now three days since your parrot has been fed,' when the forgetful maid appeared at the window with a cup of seed in her hand.

But in Mrs Manstey's more meditative moods it was the narrowing perspective of far- off yards which pleased her best. She loved, at twilight, when the distant brown- stone spire seemed melting in the fluid yellow of the west, to lose herself in vague memories of a trip to Europe, made years ago, and now reduced in her mind's eye to a pale phantasmagoria of indistinct steeples and dreamy skies. Perhaps at heart Mrs Manstey was an artist; at all events she was sensible of many changes of color unnoticed by the average eye, and dear to her as the green of early spring was the black lattice of branches against a cold sulphur sky at the close of a snowy day. She enjoyed, also, the sunny thaws of March, when patches of earth showed through the snow, like ink- spots spreading on a sheet of white blotting- paper; and, better still, the haze of boughs, leafless but swollen, which replaced the clear- cut tracery of winter. She even watched with a certain interest the trail of smoke from a far- off factory chimney, and missed a detail in the

landscape when the factory was closed and the smoke disappeared.

Mrs Manstey, in the long hours which she spent at her window, was not idle. She read a little, and knitted numberless stockings; but the view surrounded and shaped her life as the sea does a lonely island. When her rare callers came it was difficult for her to detach herself from the contemplation of the opposite window- washing, or the scrutiny of certain green points in a neighboring flower- bed which might, or might not, turn into hyacinths, while she feigned an interest in her visitor's anecdotes about some unknown grandchild. Mrs Manstey's real friends were the denizens of the yards, the hyacinths, the magnolia, the green parrot, the maid who fed the cats, the doctor who studied late behind his mustard-colored curtains; and the confidant of her tenderer musings was the church- spire floating in the sunset.

One April day, as she sat in her usual place, with knitting cast aside and eyes fixed on the blue sky mottled with round clouds, a knock at the door announced the entrance of her landlady. Mrs Manstey did not care for her landlady, but she submitted to her visits with ladylike resignation. To- day, however, it seemed harder than usual to turn from the blue sky and the blossoming magnolia to Mrs Sampson's unsuggestive face, and Mrs Manstey was conscious of a distinct effort as she did so.

'The magnolia is out earlier than usual this year, Mrs Sampson,' she remarked, yielding to a rare impulse, for she seldom alluded to the absorbing interest of her life. In the first place it was a topic not likely to appeal to her visitors and, besides, she lacked the power of expression and could not have given utterance to her feelings had she wished to.

'The what, Mrs Manstey?' inquired the landlady, glancing about the room as if to find there the explanation of Mrs Manstey's statement.

'The magnolia in the next yard – in Mrs Black's yard,' Mrs Manstey repeated.

'Is it, indeed? I didn't know there was a magnolia there,' said Mrs Sampson, carelessly. Mrs Manstey looked at her; she did not know that there was a magnolia in the next yard!

'By the way,' Mrs Sampson continued, 'speaking of Mrs Black

reminds me that the work on the extension is to begin next week.'

'The what?' it was Mrs Manstey's turn to ask.

'The extension,' said Mrs Sampson, nodding her head in the direction of the ignored magnolia. 'You knew, of course, that Mrs Black was going to build an extension to her house? Yes, ma'am. I hear it is to run right back to the end of the yard. How she can afford to build an extension in these hard times I don't see; but she always was crazy about building. She used to keep a boarding-house in Seventeenth Street, and she nearly ruined herself then by sticking out bow- windows and what not; I should have thought that would have cured her of building, but I guess it's a disease, like drink. Anyhow, the work is to begin on Monday.'

Mrs Manstey had grown pale. She always spoke slowly, so the landlady did not heed the long pause which followed. At last Mrs Manstey said: 'Do you know how high the extension will be?'

'That's the most absurd part of it. The extension is to be built right up to the roof of the main building; now, did you ever?'

Mrs Manstey paused again. 'Won't it be a great annoyance to you, Mrs Sampson?' she asked.

'I should say it would. But there's no help for it; if people have got a mind to build extensions there's no law to prevent 'em, that I'm aware of.' Mrs Manstey, knowing this, was silent. 'There is no help for it,' Mrs Sampson repeated, 'but if I *am* a church member, I wouldn't be so sorry if it ruined Eliza Black. Well, good- day, Mrs Manstey; I'm glad to find you so comfortable.'

So comfortable – so comfortable! Left to herself the old woman turned once more to the window. How lovely the view was that day! The blue sky with its round clouds shed a brightness over everything; the ailanthus had put on a tinge of yellow- green, the hyacinths were budding, the magnolia flowers looked more than ever like rosettes carved in alabaster. Soon the wistaria would bloom, then the horse- chestnut; but not for her. Between her eyes and them a barrier of brick and mortar would swiftly rise; presently even the spire would disappear, and all her radiant world be blotted out. Mrs Manstey sent away untouched the dinner- tray brought to her that evening. She lingered in the window until the windy sunset died in bat- colored dusk; then, going to bed, she lay sleepless all

night.

Early the next day she was up and at the window. It was raining, but even through the slanting gray gauze the scene had its charm – and then the rain was so good for the trees. She had noticed the day before that the ailanthus was growing dusty.

‘Of course I might move,’ said Mrs Manstey aloud, and turning from the window she looked about her room. She might move, of course; so might she be flayed alive; but she was not likely to survive either operation. The room, though far less important to her happiness than the view, was as much a part of her existence. She had lived in it seventeen years. She knew every stain on the wall-paper, every rent in the carpet; the light fell in a certain way on her engravings, her books had grown shabby on their shelves, her bulbs and ivy were used to their window and knew which way to lean to the sun. ‘We are all too old to move,’ she said.

That afternoon it cleared. Wet and radiant the blue reappeared through torn rags of cloud; the ailanthus sparkled; the earth in the flower- borders looked rich and warm. It was Thursday, and on Monday the building of the extension was to begin.

On Sunday afternoon a card was brought to Mrs Black, as she was engaged in gathering up the fragments of the boarders’ dinner in the basement. The card, black- edged, bore Mrs Manstey’s name.

‘One of Mrs Sampson’s boarders; wants to move, I suppose. Well, I can give her a room next year in the extension. Dinah,’ said Mrs Black, ‘tell the lady I’ll be upstairs in a minute.’

Mrs Black found Mrs Manstey standing in the long parlor garnished with statuettes and antimacassars; in that house she could not sit down.

Stooping hurriedly to open the register, which let out a cloud of dust, Mrs Black advanced to her visitor.

‘I’m happy to meet you, Mrs Manstey; take a seat, please,’ the landlady remarked in her prosperous voice, the voice of a woman who can afford to build extensions. There was no help for it; Mrs Manstey sat down.

‘Is there anything I can do for you, ma’am?’ Mrs Black continued. ‘My house is full at present, but I am going to build an

extension, and – ’

‘It is about the extension that I wish to speak,’ said Mrs Manstey, suddenly. ‘I am a poor woman, Mrs Black, and I have never been a happy one. I shall have to talk about myself first to – to make you understand.’

Mrs Black, astonished but imperturbable, bowed at this parenthesis.

Mrs Black, astonished but imperturbable, bowed at this parenthesis.

‘I never had what I wanted,’ Mrs Manstey continued. ‘It was always one disappointment after another. For years I wanted to live in the country. I dreamed and dreamed about it; but we never could manage it. There was no sunny window in our house, and so all my plants died. My daughter married years ago and went away – besides, she never cared for the same things. Then my husband died and I was left alone. That was seventeen years ago. I went to live at Mrs Sampson’s, and I have been there ever since. I have grown a little infirm, as you see, and I don’t get out often; only on fine days, if I am feeling very well. So you can understand my sitting a great deal in my window – the back window on the third floor – ’

‘Well, Mrs Manstey,’ said Mrs Black, liberally, ‘I could give you a back room, I dare say; one of the new rooms in the ex – ’

‘But I don’t want to move; I can’t move,’ said Mrs Manstey, almost with a scream. ‘And I came to tell you that if you build that extension I shall have no view from my window – no view! Do you understand?’

Mrs Black thought herself face to face with a lunatic, and she had always heard that lunatics must be humored.

‘Dear me, dear me,’ she remarked, pushing her chair back a little way, ‘that is too bad, isn’t it? Why, I never thought of that. To be sure, the extension *will* interfere with your view, Mrs Manstey.’

‘You do understand?’ Mrs Manstey gasped.

‘Of course I do. And I’m real sorry about it, too. But there, don’t you worry, Mrs Manstey. I guess we can fix that all right.’

Mrs Manstey rose from her seat, and Mrs Black slipped toward

the door.

‘What do you mean by fixing it? Do you mean that I can induce you to change your mind about the extension? Oh, Mrs Black, listen to me. I have two thousand dollars in the bank and I could manage, I know I could manage, to give you a thousand if – ’ Mrs Manstey paused; the tears were rolling down her cheeks.

‘There, there, Mrs Manstey, don’t you worry,’ repeated Mrs Black, soothingly. ‘I am sure we can settle it. I am sorry that I can’t stay and talk about it any longer, but this is such a busy time of day, with supper to get – ’

Her hand was on the door- knob, but with sudden vigor Mrs Manstey seized her wrist.

‘You are not giving me a definite answer. Do you mean to say that you accept my proposition?’

‘Why, I’ll think it over, Mrs Manstey, certainly I will. I wouldn’t annoy you for the world – ’

‘But the work is to begin to- morrow, I am told,’ Mrs Manstey persisted.

Mrs Black hesitated. ‘It shan’t begin, I promise you that; I’ll send word to the builder this very night.’ Mrs Manstey tightened her hold.

‘You are not deceiving me, are you?’ she said.

‘No – no,’ stammered Mrs Black. ‘How can you think such a thing of me, Mrs Manstey?’

Slowly Mrs Manstey’s clutch relaxed, and she passed through the open door. ‘One thousand dollars,’ she repeated, pausing in the hall; then she let herself out of the house and hobbled down the steps, supporting herself on the cast- iron railing.

‘My goodness,’ exclaimed Mrs Black, shutting and bolting the hall- door, ‘I never knew the old woman was crazy! And she looks so quiet and ladylike, too.’

Mrs Manstey slept well that night, but early the next morning she was awakened by a sound of hammering. She got to her window with what haste she might and, looking out, saw that Mrs Black’s yard was full of workmen. Some were carrying loads of

brick from the kitchen to the yard, others beginning to demolish the old-fashioned wooden balcony which adorned each story of Mrs Black's house. Mrs Manstey saw that she had been deceived. At first she thought of confiding her trouble to Mrs Sampson, but a settled discouragement soon took possession of her and she went back to bed, not caring to see what was going on.

Toward afternoon, however, feeling that she must know the worst, she rose and dressed herself. It was a laborious task, for her hands were stiffer than usual, and the hooks and buttons seemed to evade her.

When she seated herself in the window, she saw that the workmen had removed the upper part of the balcony, and that the bricks had multiplied since morning. One of the men, a coarse fellow with a bloated face, picked a magnolia blossom and, after smelling it, threw it to the ground; the next man, carrying a load of bricks, trod on the flower in passing.

'Look out, Jim,' called one of the men to another who was smoking a pipe, 'if you throw matches around near those barrels of paper you'll have the old tinder-box burning down before you know it.' And Mrs Manstey, leaning forward, perceived that there were several barrels of paper and rubbish under the wooden balcony.

At length the work ceased and twilight fell. The sunset was perfect and a roseate light, transfiguring the distant spire, lingered late in the west. When it grew dark Mrs Manstey drew down the shades and proceeded, in her usual methodical manner, to light her lamp. She always filled and lit it with her own hands, keeping a kettle of kerosene on a zinc-covered shelf in a closet. As the lamp-light filled the room it assumed its usual peaceful aspect. The books and pictures and plants seemed, like their mistress, to settle themselves down for another quiet evening, and Mrs Manstey, as was her wont, drew up her armchair to the table and began to knit.

That night she could not sleep. The weather had changed and a wild wind was abroad, blotting the stars with close-driven clouds. Mrs Manstey rose once or twice and looked out of the window; but of the view nothing was discernible save a tardy light or two in the opposite windows. These lights at last went out, and Mrs Manstey, who had watched for their extinction, began to dress herself. She

was in evident haste, for she merely flung a thin dressing- gown over her night- dress and wrapped her head in a scarf; then she opened her closet and cautiously took out the kettle of kerosene. Having slipped a bundle of wooden matches into her pocket she proceeded, with increasing precautions, to unlock her door, and a few moments later she was feeling her way down the dark staircase, led by a glimmer of gas from the lower hall. At length she reached the bottom of the stairs and began the more difficult descent into the utter darkness of the basement. Here, however, she could move more freely, as there was less danger of being overheard; and without much delay she contrived to unlock the iron door leading into the yard. A gust of cold wind smote her as she stepped out and groped shiveringly under the clothes- lines.

That morning at three o'clock an alarm of fire brought the engines to Mrs Black's door, and also brought Mrs Sampson's startled boarders to their windows. The wooden balcony at the back of Mrs Black's house was ablaze, and among those who watched the progress of the flames was Mrs Manstey, leaning in her thin dressing- gown from the open window.

The fire, however, was soon put out, and the frightened occupants of the house, who had fled in scant attire, reassembled at dawn to find that little mischief had been done beyond the cracking of window panes and smoking of ceilings. In fact, the chief sufferer by the fire was Mrs Manstey, who was found in the morning gasping with pneumonia, a not unnatural result, as everyone remarked, of her having hung out of an open window at her age in a dressing- gown. It was easy to see that she was very ill, but no one had guessed how grave the doctor's verdict would be, and the faces gathered that evening about Mrs Sampson's table were awe- struck and disturbed. Not that any of the boarders knew Mrs Manstey well; she 'kept to herself,' as they said, and seemed to fancy herself too good for them; but then it is always disagreeable to have anyone dying in the house and, as one lady observed to another: 'It might just as well have been you or me, my dear.'

But it was only Mrs Manstey; and she was dying, as she had lived, lonely if not alone. The doctor had sent a trained nurse, and Mrs Sampson, with muffled step, came in from time to time; but both, to Mrs Manstey, seemed remote and unsubstantial as the figures in a dream. All day she said nothing; but when she was

asked for her daughter's address she shook her head. At times the nurse noticed that she seemed to be listening attentively for some sound which did not come; then again she dozed.

The next morning at daylight she was very low. The nurse called Mrs Sampson and as the two bent over the old woman they saw her lips move.

'Lift me up – out of bed,' she whispered.

They raised her in their arms, and with her stiff hand she pointed to the window.

'Oh, the window – she wants to sit in the window. She used to sit there all day,' Mrs Sampson explained. 'It can do her no harm, I suppose?'

'Nothing matters now,' said the nurse.

They carried Mrs Manstey to the window and placed her in her chair. The dawn was abroad, a jubilant spring dawn; the spire had already caught a golden ray, though the magnolia and horse-chestnut still slumbered in shadow. In Mrs Black's yard all was quiet. The charred timbers of the balcony lay where they had fallen. It was evident that since the fire the builders had not returned to their work. The magnolia had unfolded a few more sculptural flowers; the view was undisturbed.

It was hard for Mrs Manstey to breathe; each moment it grew more difficult. She tried to make them open the window, but they would not understand. If she could have tasted the air, sweet with the penetrating ailanthus savor, it would have eased her; but the view at least was there – the spire was golden now, the heavens had warmed from pearl to blue, day was alight from east to west, even the magnolia had caught the sun.

Mrs Manstey's head fell back and smiling she died.

That day the building of the extension was resumed.

The Reckoning

I

‘The marriage law of the new dispensation will be: *Thou shalt not be unfaithful – to thyself*.’

A discreet murmur of approval filled the studio, and through the haze of cigarette smoke Mrs Clement Westall, as her husband descended from his improvised platform, saw him merged in a congratulatory group of ladies. Westall’s informal talks on ‘The New Ethics’ had drawn about him an eager following of the mentally unemployed – those who, as he had once phrased it, liked to have their brain- food cut up for them. The talks had begun by accident. Westall’s ideas were known to be ‘advanced,’ but hitherto their advance had not been in the direction of publicity. He had been, in his wife’s opinion, almost pusillanimously careful not to let his personal views endanger his professional standing. Of late, however, he had shown a puzzling tendency to dogmatize, to throw down the gauntlet, to flaunt his private code in the face of society; and the relation of the sexes being a topic always sure of an audience, a few admiring friends had persuaded him to give his after- dinner opinions a larger circulation by summing them up in a series of talks at the Van Sideren studio.

The Herbert Van Siderens were a couple who subsisted, socially, on the fact that they had a studio. Van Sideren’s pictures were chiefly valuable as accessories to the *mise en scène* which differentiated his wife’s ‘afternoons’ from the blighting functions held in long New York drawing- rooms, and permitted her to offer their friends whiskey- and- soda instead of tea. Mrs Van Sideren, for her part, was skilled in making the most of the kind of atmosphere which a lay- figure and an easel create; and if at times she found the illusion hard to maintain, and lost courage to the extent of almost wishing that Herbert could paint, she promptly overcame such moments of weakness by calling in some fresh talent, some extraneous re- enforcement of the ‘artistic’ impression. It was in quest of such aid that she had seized on Westall, coaxing him,

somewhat to his wife's surprise, into a flattered participation in her fraud. It was vaguely felt, in the Van Sideren circle, that all the audacities were artistic, and that a teacher who pronounced marriage immoral was somehow as distinguished as a painter who depicted purple grass and a green sky. The Van Sideren set were tired of the conventional color- scheme in art and conduct.

Julia Westall had long had her own views on the immorality of marriage; she might indeed have claimed her husband as a disciple. In the early days of their union she had secretly resented his disinclination to proclaim himself a follower of the new creed; had been inclined to tax him with moral cowardice, with a failure to live up to the convictions for which their marriage was supposed to stand. That was in the first burst of propagandism, when, womanlike, she wanted to turn her disobedience into a law. Now she felt differently. She could hardly account for the change, yet being a woman who never allowed her impulses to remain unaccounted for, she tried to do so by saying that she did not care to have the articles of her faith misinterpreted by the vulgar. In this connection, she was beginning to think that almost every one was vulgar; certainly there were few to whom she would have cared to entrust the defense of so esoteric a doctrine. And it was precisely at this point that Westall, discarding his unspoken principles, had chosen to descend from the heights of privacy, and stand hawking his convictions at the street- corner!

It was Una Van Sideren who, on this occasion, unconsciously focused upon herself Mrs Westall's wandering resentment. In the first place, the girl had no business to be there. It was 'horrid' – Mrs Westall found herself slipping back into the old feminine vocabulary – simply 'horrid' to think of a young girl's being allowed to listen to such talk. The fact that Una smoked cigarettes and sipped an occasional cocktail did not in the least tarnish a certain radiant innocence which made her appear the victim, rather than the accomplice, of her parents' vulgarities. Julia Westall felt in a hot helpless way that something ought to be done – that some one ought to speak to the girl's mother. And just then Una glided up.

'Oh, Mrs Westall, how beautiful it was!' Una fixed her with large limpid eyes. 'You believe it all, I suppose?' she asked with seraphic gravity.

‘All – what, my dear child?’

The girl shone on her. ‘About the higher life – the freer expansion of the individual – the law of fidelity to one’s self,’ she glibly recited.

Mrs Westall, to her own wonder, blushed a deep and burning blush.

‘My dear Una,’ she said, ‘you don’t in the least understand what it’s all about!’

Miss Van Sideren stared, with a slowly answering blush. ‘Don’t *you*, then?’ she murmured.

Mrs Westall laughed. ‘Not always – or altogether! But I should like some tea, please.’

Una led her to the corner where innocent beverages were dispensed. As Julia received her cup she scrutinized the girl more carefully. It was not such a girlish face, after all – definite lines were forming under the rosy haze of youth. She reflected that Una must be six- and- twenty, and wondered why she had not married. A nice stock of ideas she would have as her dower! If *they* were to be a part of the modern girl’s trousseau -

Mrs Westall caught herself up with a start. It was as though some one else had been speaking – a stranger who had borrowed her own voice: she felt herself the dupe of some fantastic mental ventriloquism. Concluding suddenly that the room was stifling and Una’s tea too sweet, she set down her cup and looked about for Westall: to meet his eyes had long been her refuge from every uncertainty. She met them now, but only, as she felt, in transit; they included her parenthetically in a larger flight. She followed the flight, and it carried her to a corner to which Una had withdrawn – one of the palmy nooks to which Mrs Van Sideren attributed the success of her Saturdays. Westall, a moment later, had overtaken his look, and found a place at the girl’s side. She bent forward, speaking eagerly; he leaned back, listening, with the depreciatory smile which acted as a filter to flattery, enabling him to swallow the strongest doses without apparent grossness of appetite. Julia winced at her own definition of the smile.

On the way home, in the deserted winter dusk, Westall surprised his wife by a sudden boyish pressure of her arm. ‘Did I

open their eyes a bit? Did I tell them what you wanted me to?' he asked gaily.

Almost unconsciously, she let her arm slip from his. 'What I wanted - ?'

'Why, haven't you - all this time?' She caught the honest wonder of his tone. 'I somehow fancied you'd rather blamed me for not talking more openly - before - . You almost made me feel, at times, that I was sacrificing principles to expediency.'

She paused a moment over her reply; then she asked quietly: 'What made you decide not to - any longer?'

She felt again the vibration of a faint surprise. 'Why - the wish to please you!' he answered, almost too simply.

'I wish you would not go on, then,' she said abruptly.

He stopped in his quick walk, and she felt his stare through the darkness.

'Not go on - ?'

'Call a hansom, please. I'm tired,' broke from her with a sudden rush of physical weariness.

Instantly his solicitude enveloped her. The room had been infernally hot - and then that confounded cigarette smoke - he had noticed once or twice that she looked pale - she mustn't come to another Saturday. She felt herself yielding, as she always did, to the warm influence of his concern for her, the feminine in her leaning on the man in him with a conscious intensity of abandonment.

He put her in the hansom, and her hand stole into his in the darkness. A tear or two rose, and she let them fall. It was so delicious to cry over imaginary troubles!

That evening, after dinner, he surprised her by reverting to the subject of his talk. He combined a man's dislike of uncomfortable questions with an almost feminine skill in eluding them; and she knew that if he returned to the subject he must have some special reason for doing so.

'You seem not to have cared for what I said this afternoon. Did I put the case badly?'

'No - you put it very well.'

‘Then what did you mean by saying that you would rather not have me go on with it?’

She glanced at him nervously, her ignorance of his intention deepening her sense of helplessness.

‘I don’t think I care to hear such things discussed in public.’

‘I don’t understand you,’ he exclaimed. Again the feeling that his surprise was genuine gave an air of obliquity to her own attitude. She was not sure that she understood herself.

‘Won’t you explain?’ he said with a tinge of impatience.

Her eyes wandered about the familiar drawing- room which had been the scene of so many of their evening confidences. The shaded lamps, the quiet- colored walls hung with mezzotints, the pale spring flowers scattered here and there in Venice glasses and bowls of old Sèvres, recalled, she hardly knew why, the apartment in which the evenings of her first marriage had been passed – a wilderness of rosewood and upholstery, with a picture of a Roman peasant above the mantelpiece, and a Greek slave in ‘statuary marble’ between the folding- doors of the back drawing- room. It was a room with which she had never been able to establish any closer relation than that between a traveler and a railway station; and now, as she looked about at the surroundings which stood for her deepest affinities – the room for which she had left that other room – she was startled by the same sense of strangeness and unfamiliarity. The prints, the flowers, the subdued tones of the old porcelains, seemed to typify a superficial refinement which had no relation to the deeper significances of life.

Suddenly she heard her husband repeating his question.

‘I don’t know that I can explain,’ she faltered.

He drew his armchair forward so that he faced her across the hearth. The light of a reading- lamp fell on his finely drawn face, which had a kind of surface- sensitiveness akin to the surface- refinement of its setting.

‘Is it that you no longer believe in our ideas?’ he asked.

‘In our ideas – ?’

‘The ideas I am trying to teach. The ideas you and I are

supposed to stand for.' He paused a moment. 'The ideas on which our marriage was founded.'

The blood rushed to her face. He had his reasons, then – she was sure now that he had his reasons! In the ten years of their marriage, how often had either of them stopped to consider the ideas on which it was founded? How often does a man dig about the basement of his house to examine its foundation? The foundation is there, of course – the house rests on it – but one lives above- stairs and not in the cellar. It was she, indeed, who in the beginning had insisted on reviewing the situation now and then, on recapitulating the reasons which justified her course, on proclaiming, from time to time, her adherence to the religion of personal independence; but she had long ceased to feel the want of any such ideal standards, and had accepted her marriage as frankly and naturally as though it had been based on the primitive needs of the heart, and required no special sanction to explain or justify it.

'Of course I still believe in our ideas!' she exclaimed.

'Then I repeat that I don't understand. It was a part of your theory that the greatest possible publicity should be given to our view of marriage. Have you changed your mind in that respect?'

She hesitated. 'It depends on circumstances – on the public one is addressing. The set of people that the Van Siderens get about them don't care for the truth or falseness of a doctrine. They are attracted simply by its novelty.'

'And yet it was in just such a set of people that you and I met, and learned the truth from each other.'

'That was different.'

'In what way?'

'I was not a young girl, to begin with. It is perfectly unfitting that young girls should be present at – at such times – should hear such things discussed –'

'I thought you considered it one of the deepest social wrongs that such things never *are* discussed before young girls; but that is beside the point, for I don't remember seeing any young girl in my audience to-day –'

'Except Una Van Sideren!'

He turned slightly and pushed back the lamp at his elbow.

‘Oh, Miss Van Sideren – naturally – ’

‘Why naturally?’

‘The daughter of the house – would you have had her sent out with her governess?’

‘If I had a daughter I should not allow such things to go on in my house!’

Westall, stroking his mustache, leaned back with a faint smile. ‘I fancy Miss Van Sideren is quite capable of taking care of herself.’

‘No girl knows how to take care of herself – till it’s too late.’

‘And yet you would deliberately deny her the surest means of self- defense?’

‘What do you call the surest means of self- defense?’

‘Some preliminary knowledge of human nature in its relation to the marriage tie.’

She made an impatient gesture. ‘How should you like to marry that kind of a girl?’

‘Immensely – if she were my kind of girl in other respects.’

She took up the argument at another point.

‘You are quite mistaken if you think such talk does not affect young girls. Una was in a state of the most absurd exaltation – ’ She broke off, wondering why she had spoken.

Westall reopened a magazine which he had laid aside at the beginning of their discussion. ‘What you tell me is immensely flattering to my oratorical talent – but I fear you overrate its effect. I can assure you that Miss Van Sideren doesn’t have to have her thinking done for her. She’s quite capable of doing it herself.’

‘You seem very familiar with her mental processes!’ flashed unguardedly from his wife.

He looked up quietly from the pages he was cutting.

‘I should like to be,’ he answered. ‘She interests me.’

If there be a distinction in being misunderstood, it was one denied to Julia Westall when she left her first husband. Every one was ready to excuse and even to defend her. The world she adorned agreed that John Arment was 'impossible,' and hostesses gave a sigh of relief at the thought that it would no longer be necessary to ask him to dine.

There had been no scandal connected with the divorce: neither side had accused the other of the offense euphemistically described as 'statutory.' The Arments had indeed been obliged to transfer their allegiance to a State which recognized desertion as a cause for divorce, and construed the term so liberally that the seeds of desertion were shown to exist in every union. Even Mrs Arment's second marriage did not make traditional morality stir in its sleep. It was known that she had not met her second husband till after she had parted from the first, and she had, moreover, replaced a rich man by a poor one. Though Clement Westall was acknowledged to be a rising lawyer, it was generally felt that his fortunes would not rise as rapidly as his reputation. The Westalls would probably always have to live quietly and go out to dinner in cabs. Could there be better evidence of Mrs Arment's complete disinterestedness?

If the reasoning by which her friends justified her course was somewhat cruder and less complex than her own elucidation of the matter, both explanations led to the same conclusion: John Arment was impossible. The only difference was that, to his wife, his impossibility was something deeper than a social disqualification. She had once said, in ironical defense of her marriage, that it had at least preserved her from the necessity of sitting next to him at dinner; but she had not then realized at what cost the immunity was purchased. John Arment was impossible; but the sting of his impossibility lay in the fact that he made it impossible for those about him to be other than himself. By an unconscious process of elimination he had excluded from the world everything of which he did not feel a personal need: had become, as it were, a climate in which only his own requirements survived. This might seem to imply a deliberate selfishness; but there was nothing deliberate about Arment. He was as instinctive as an animal or a child. It was this childish element in his nature which sometimes for a moment unsettled his wife's estimate of him. Was it possible that he was

simply undeveloped, that he had delayed, somewhat longer than is usual, the laborious process of growing up? He had the kind of sporadic shrewdness which causes it to be said of a dull man that he is 'no fool'; and it was this quality that his wife found most trying. Even to the naturalist it is annoying to have his deductions disturbed by some unforeseen aberrancy of form or function; and how much more so to the wife whose estimate of herself is inevitably bound up with her judgment of her husband!

Arment's shrewdness did not, indeed, imply any latent intellectual power; it suggested, rather, potentialities of feeling, of suffering, perhaps, in a blind rudimentary way, on which Julia's sensibilities naturally declined to linger. She so fully understood her own reasons for leaving him that she disliked to think they were not as comprehensible to her husband. She was haunted, in her analytic moments, by the look of perplexity, too inarticulate for words, with which he had acquiesced in her explanations.

These moments were rare with her, however. Her marriage had been too concrete a misery to be surveyed philosophically. If she had been unhappy for complex reasons, the unhappiness was as real as though it had been uncomplicated. Soul is more bruisable than flesh, and Julia was wounded in every fiber of her spirit. Her husband's personality seemed to be closing gradually in on her, obscuring the sky and cutting off the air, till she felt herself shut up among the decaying bodies of her starved hopes. A sense of having been decoyed by some world-old conspiracy into this bondage of body and soul filled her with despair. If marriage was the slow life-long acquittal of a debt contracted in ignorance, then marriage was a crime against human nature. She, for one, would have no share in maintaining the pretense of which she had been a victim: the pretense that a man and a woman, forced into the narrowest of personal relations, must remain there till the end, though they may have outgrown the span of each other's natures as the mature tree outgrows the iron brace about the sapling.

It was in the first heat of her moral indignation that she had met Clement Westall. She had seen at once that he was 'interested,' and had fought off the discovery, dreading any influence that should draw her back into the bondage of conventional relations. To ward off the peril she had, with an almost crude precipitancy, revealed her opinions to him. To her surprise, she found that he

shared them. She was attracted by the frankness of a suitor who, while pressing his suit, admitted that he did not believe in marriage. Her worst audacities did not seem to surprise him: he had thought out all that she had felt, and they had reached the same conclusion. People grew at varying rates, and the yoke that was an easy fit for the one might soon become galling to the other. That was what divorce was for: the readjustment of personal relations. As soon as their necessarily transitive nature was recognized they would gain in dignity as well as in harmony. There would be no farther need of the ignoble concessions and connivances, the perpetual sacrifice of personal delicacy and moral pride, by means of which imperfect marriages were now held together. Each partner to the contract would be on his mettle, forced to live up to the highest standard of self-development, on pain of losing the other's respect and affection. The low nature could no longer drag the higher down, but must struggle to rise, or remain alone on its inferior level. The only necessary condition to a harmonious marriage was a frank recognition of this truth, and a solemn agreement between the contracting parties to keep faith with themselves, and not to live together for a moment after complete accord had ceased to exist between them. The new adultery was unfaithfulness to self.

It was, as Westall had just reminded her, on this understanding that they had married. The ceremony was an unimportant concession to social prejudice: now that the door of divorce stood open, no marriage need be an imprisonment, and the contract therefore no longer involved any diminution of self-respect. The nature of their attachment placed them so far beyond the reach of such contingencies that it was easy to discuss them with an open mind; and Julia's sense of security made her dwell with a tender insistence on Westall's promise to claim his release when he should cease to love her. The exchange of these vows seemed to make them, in a sense, champions of the new law, pioneers in the forbidden realm of individual freedom: they felt that they had somehow achieved beatitude without martyrdom.

This, as Julia now reviewed the past, she perceived to have been her theoretical attitude toward marriage. It was unconsciously, insidiously, that her ten years of happiness with Westall had developed another conception of the tie; a reversion, rather, to the

old instinct of passionate dependency and possessorship that now made her blood revolt at the mere hint of change. Change? Renewal? Was that what they had called it, in their foolish jargon? Destruction, extermination rather – this rending of a myriad fibers interwoven with another's being! Another? But he was not other! He and she were one, one in the mystic sense which alone gave marriage its significance. The new law was not for them, but for the disunited creatures forced into a mockery of union. The gospel she had felt called on to proclaim had no bearing on her own case ... She sent for the doctor and told him she was sure she needed a nerve tonic.

She took the nerve tonic diligently, but it failed to act as a sedative to her fears. She did not know what she feared; but that made her anxiety the more pervasive. Her husband had not reverted to the subject of his Saturday talks. He was unusually kind and considerate, with a softening of his quick manner, a touch of shyness in his consideration, that sickened her with new fears. She told herself that it was because she looked badly – because he knew about the doctor and the nerve tonic – that he showed this deference to her wishes, this eagerness to screen her from moral drafts; but the explanation simply cleared the way for fresh inferences.

The week passed slowly, vacantly, like a prolonged Sunday. On Saturday the morning post brought a note from Mrs Van Sideren. Would dear Julia ask Mr Westall to come half an hour earlier than usual, as there was to be some music after his 'talk'? Westall was just leaving for his office when his wife read the note. She opened the drawing-room door and called him back to deliver the message.

He glanced at the note and tossed it aside. 'What a bore! I shall have to cut my game of racquets. Well, I suppose it can't be helped. Will you write and say it's all right?'

Julia hesitated a moment, her hand stiffening on the chair-back against which she leaned.

'You mean to go on with these talks?' she asked.

'I – why not?' he returned; and this time it struck her that his surprise was not quite unfeigned. The perception helped her to find words.

‘You said you had started them with the idea of pleasing me – ’

‘Well?’

‘I told you last week that they didn’t please me.’

‘Last week? – Oh – ’ He seemed to make an effort of memory. ‘I thought you were nervous then; you sent for the doctor the next day.’

‘It was not the doctor I needed; it was your assurance – ’

‘My assurance?’

Suddenly she felt the floor fail under her. She sank into the chair with a choking throat, her words, her reasons slipping away from her like straws down a whirling flood.

‘Clement,’ she cried, ‘isn’t it enough for you to know that I hate it?’

He turned to close the door behind them; then he walked toward her and sat down. ‘What is it that you hate?’ he asked gently.

She had made a desperate effort to rally her routed argument.

‘I can’t bear to have you speak as if – as if – our marriage – were like the other kind – the wrong kind. When I heard you there, the other afternoon, before all those inquisitive gossiping people, proclaiming that husbands and wives had a right to leave each other whenever they were tired – or had seen some one else – ’

Westall sat motionless, his eyes fixed on a pattern of the carpet.

‘You *have* ceased to take this view, then?’ he said as she broke off. ‘You no longer believe that husbands and wives *are* justified in separating – under such conditions?’

‘Under such conditions?’ she stammered. ‘Yes – I still believe that – but how can we judge for others? What can we know of the circumstances – ?’

He interrupted her. ‘I thought it was a fundamental article of our creed that the special circumstances produced by marriage were not to interfere with the full assertion of individual liberty.’ He paused a moment. ‘I thought that was your reason for leaving Arment.’

She flushed to the forehead. It was not like him to give a personal turn to the argument.

‘It was my reason,’ she said simply.

‘Well, then – why do you refuse to recognize its validity now?’

‘I don’t – I don’t – I only say that one can’t judge for others.’

He made an impatient movement. ‘This is mere hair- splitting. What you mean is that, the doctrine having served your purpose when you needed it, you now repudiate it.’

‘Well,’ she exclaimed, flushing again, ‘what if I do? What does it matter to us?’

Westall rose from his chair. He was excessively pale, and stood before his wife with something of the formality of a stranger.

‘It matters to me,’ he said in a low voice, ‘because I do *not* repudiate it.’

‘Well – ?’

‘And because I had intended to invoke it as – ’

He paused and drew his breath deeply. She sat silent, almost deafened by her heart- beats.

‘ – as a complete justification of the course I am about to take.’

Julia remained motionless. ‘What course is that?’ she asked.

He cleared his throat. ‘I mean to claim the fulfillment of your promise.’

For an instant the room wavered and darkened; then she recovered a torturing acuteness of vision. Every detail of her surroundings pressed upon her: the tick of the clock, the slant of sunlight on the wall, the hardness of the chair- arms that she grasped, were a separate wound to each sense.

‘My promise – ’ she faltered.

‘Your part of our mutual agreement to set each other free if one or the other should wish to be released.’

She was silent again. He waited a moment, shifting his position nervously; then he said, with a touch of irritability: ‘You acknowledge the agreement?’

The question went through her like a shock. She lifted her head to it proudly. 'I acknowledge the agreement,' she said.

'And – you don't mean to repudiate it?'

A log on the hearth fell forward, and mechanically he advanced and pushed it back.

'No,' she answered slowly, 'I don't mean to repudiate it.'

There was a pause. He remained near the hearth, his elbow resting on the mantelshelf. Close to his hand stood a little cup of jade that he had given her on one of their wedding anniversaries. She wondered vaguely if he noticed it.

'You intend to leave me, then?' she said at length.

His gesture seemed to deprecate the crudeness of the allusion.

'To marry some one else?'

Again his eye and hand protested. She rose and stood before him.

'Why should you be afraid to tell me? Is it Una Van Sideren?'

He was silent.

'I wish you good luck,' she said.

III

She looked up, finding herself alone. She did not remember when or how he had left the room, or how long afterward she had sat there. The fire still smoldered on the hearth, but the slant of sunlight had left the wall.

Her first conscious thought was that she had not broken her word, that she had fulfilled the very letter of their bargain. There had been no crying out, no vain appeal to the past, no attempt at temporizing or evasion. She had marched straight up to the guns.

Now that it was over, she sickened to find herself alive. She looked about her, trying to recover her hold on reality. Her identity seemed to be slipping from her, as it disappears in a physical swoon. 'This is my room – this is my house,' she heard herself saying. Her room? Her house? She could almost hear the walls laugh back at her.

She stood up, weariness in every bone. The silence of the room frightened her. She remembered, now, having heard the front door close a long time ago: the sound suddenly re-echoed through her brain. Her husband must have left the house, then – her *husband* ? She no longer knew in what terms to think: the simplest phrases had a poisoned edge. She sank back into her chair, overcome by a strange weakness. The clock struck ten – it was only ten o'clock! Suddenly she remembered that she had not ordered dinner ... or were they dining out that evening? *Dinner – dining out* – the old meaningless phraseology pursued her! She must try to think of herself as she would think of some one else, a some one dissociated from all the familiar routine of the past, whose wants and habits must gradually be learned, as one might spy out the ways of a strange animal ...

The clock struck another hour – eleven. She stood up again and walked to the door: she thought she would go upstairs to her room. *Her* room? Again the word derided her. She opened the door, crossed the narrow hall, and walked up the stairs. As she passed, she noticed Westall's sticks and umbrellas: a pair of his gloves lay on the hall table. The same stair- carpet mounted between the same walls; the same old French print, in its narrow black frame, faced her on the landing. This visual continuity was intolerable. Within, a gaping chasm; without, the same untroubled and familiar surface. She must get away from it before she could attempt to think. But, once in her room, she sat down on the lounge, a stupor creeping over her ...

Gradually her vision cleared. A great deal had happened in the interval – a wild marching and countermarching of emotions, arguments, ideas – a fury of insurgent impulses that fell back spent upon themselves. She had tried, at first, to rally, to organize these chaotic forces. There must be help somewhere, if only she could master the inner tumult. Life could not be broken off short like this, for a whim, a fancy; the law itself would side with her, would defend her. The law? What claim had she upon it? She was the prisoner of her own choice: she had been her own legislator, and she was the predestined victim of the code she had devised. But this was grotesque, intolerable – a mad mistake, for which she could not be held accountable! The law she had despised was still there, might still be invoked ... invoked, but to what end? Could she ask it

to chain Westall to her side? She had been allowed to go free when she claimed her freedom – should she show less magnanimity than she had exacted? Magnanimity? The word lashed her with its irony – one does not strike an attitude when one is fighting for life! She would threaten, grovel, cajole ... she would yield anything to keep her hold on happiness. Ah, but the difficulty lay deeper! The law could not help her – her own apostasy could not help her. She was the victim of the theories she renounced. It was as though some giant machine of her own making had caught her up in its wheels and was grinding her to atoms ...

It was afternoon when she found herself out- of- doors. She walked with an aimless haste, fearing to meet familiar faces. The day was radiant, metallic: one of those searching American days so calculated to reveal the shortcomings of our street- cleaning and the excesses of our architecture. The streets looked bare and hideous; everything stared and glittered. She called a passing hansom, and gave Mrs Van Sideren's address. She did not know what had led up to the act; but she found herself suddenly resolved to speak, to cry out a warning. It was too late to save herself – but the girl might still be told. The hansom rattled up Fifth Avenue; she sat with her eyes fixed, avoiding recognition. At the Van Siderens' door she sprang out and rang the bell. Action had cleared her brain, and she felt calm and self- possessed. She knew now exactly what she meant to say.

The ladies were both out ... the parlor- maid stood waiting for a card. Julia, with a vague murmur, turned away from the door and lingered a moment on the sidewalk. Then she remembered that she had not paid the cab- driver. She drew a dollar from her purse and handed it to him. He touched his hat and drove off, leaving her alone in the long empty street. She wandered away westward, toward strange thoroughfares, where she was not likely to meet acquaintances. The feeling of aimlessness had returned. Once she found herself in the afternoon torrent of Broadway, swept past tawdry shops and flaming theatrical posters, with a succession of meaningless faces gliding by in the opposite direction ...

A feeling of faintness reminded her that she had not eaten since morning. She turned into a side- street of shabby houses, with rows of ash- barrels behind bent area- railings. In a basement window she saw the sign *Ladies' Restaurant* : a pie and a dish of doughnuts lay

against the dusty pane like petrified food in an ethnological museum. She entered, and a young woman with a weak mouth and a brazen eye cleared a table for her near the window. The table was covered with a red and white cotton cloth and adorned with a bunch of celery in a thick tumbler and a salt- cellar full of grayish lumpy salt. Julia ordered tea, and sat a long time waiting for it. She was glad to be away from the noise and confusion of the streets. The low- ceilinged room was empty, and two or three waitresses with thin pert faces lounged in the background staring at her and whispering together. At last the tea was brought in a discolored metal teapot. Julia poured a cup and drank it hastily. It was black and bitter, but it flowed through her veins like an elixir. She was almost dizzy with exhilaration. Oh, how tired, how unutterably tired she had been!

She drank a second cup, blacker and bitterer, and now her mind was once more working clearly. She felt as vigorous, as decisive, as when she had stood on the Van Siderens' door- step – but the wish to return there had subsided. She saw now the futility of such an attempt – the humiliation to which it might have exposed her ... The pity of it was that she did not know what to do next. The short winter day was fading, and she realized that she could not remain much longer in the restaurant without attracting notice. She paid for her tea and went out into the street. The lamps were alight, and here and there a basement shop cast an oblong of gas- light across the fissured pavement. In the dusk there was something sinister about the aspect of the street, and she hastened back toward Fifth Avenue. She was not used to being out alone at that hour.

At the corner of Fifth Avenue she paused and stood watching the stream of carriages. At last a policeman caught sight of her and signed to her that he would take her across. She had not meant to cross the street, but she obeyed automatically, and presently found herself on the farther corner. There she paused again for a moment; but she fancied the policeman was watching her, and this sent her hastening down the nearest side- street ... After that she walked a long time, vaguely ... Night had fallen, and now and then, through the windows of a passing carriage, she caught the expanse of an evening waistcoat or the shimmer of an opera cloak ...

Suddenly she found herself in a familiar street. She stood still a

moment, breathing quickly. She had turned the corner without noticing whither it led; but now, a few yards ahead of her, she saw the house in which she had once lived – her first husband's house. The blinds were drawn, and only a faint translucence marked the windows and the transom above the door. As she stood there she heard a step behind her, and a man walked by in the direction of the house. He walked slowly, with a heavy middle-aged gait, his head sunk a little between the shoulders, the red crease of his neck visible above the fur collar of his overcoat. He crossed the street, went up the steps of the house, drew forth a latch-key, and let himself in ...

There was no one else in sight. Julia leaned for a long time against the area-rail at the corner, her eyes fixed on the front of the house. The feeling of physical weariness had returned, but the strong tea still throbbed in her veins and lit her brain with an unnatural clearness. Presently she heard another step draw near, and moving quickly away, she too crossed the street and mounted the steps of the house. The impulse which had carried her there prolonged itself in a quick pressure of the electric bell – then she felt suddenly weak and tremulous, and grasped the balustrade for support. The door opened and a young footman with a fresh inexperienced face stood on the threshold. Julia knew in an instant that he would admit her.

‘I saw Mr Arment going in just now,’ she said. ‘Will you ask him to see me for a moment?’

The footman hesitated. ‘I think Mr Arment has gone up to dress for dinner, madam.’

Julia advanced into the hall. ‘I am sure he will see me – I will not detain him long,’ she said. She spoke quietly, authoritatively, in the tone which a good servant does not mistake. The footman had his hand on the drawing-room door.

‘I will tell him, madam. What name, please?’

Julia trembled: she had not thought of that. ‘Merely say a lady,’ she returned carelessly.

The footman wavered and she fancied herself lost; but at that instant the door opened from within and John Arment stepped into the hall. He drew back sharply as he saw her, his florid face turning

sallow with the shock; then the blood poured back to it, swelling the veins on his temples and reddening the lobes of his thick ears.

It was long since Julia had seen him, and she was startled at the change in his appearance. He had thickened, coarsened, settled down into the enclosing flesh. But she noted this insensibly: her one conscious thought was that, now she was face to face with him, she must not let him escape till he had heard her. Every pulse in her body throbbed with the urgency of her message.

She went up to him as he drew back. 'I must speak to you,' she said.

Arment hesitated, red and stammering. Julia glanced at the footman, and her look acted as a warning. The instinctive shrinking from a 'scene' predominated over every other impulse, and Arment said slowly: 'Will you come this way?'

He followed her into the drawing-room and closed the door. Julia, as she advanced, was vaguely aware that the room at least was unchanged: time had not mitigated its horrors. The contadina still lurched from the chimneybreast, and the Greek slave obstructed the threshold of the inner room. The place was alive with memories: they started out from every fold of the yellow satin curtains and glided between the angles of the rosewood furniture. But while some subordinate agency was carrying these impressions to her brain, her whole conscious effort was centered in the act of dominating Arment's will. The fear that he would refuse to hear her mounted like fever to her brain. She felt her purpose melt before it, words and arguments running into each other in the heat of her longing. For a moment her voice failed her, and she imagined herself thrust out before she could speak; but as she was struggling for a word Arment pushed a chair forward, and said quietly: 'You are not well.'

The sound of his voice steadied her. It was neither kind nor unkind – a voice that suspended judgment, rather, awaiting unforeseen developments. She supported herself against the back of the chair and drew a deep breath.

'Shall I send for something?' he continued, with a cold embarrassed politeness.

Julia raised an entreating hand. 'No – no – thank you. I am

quite well.'

He paused midway toward the bell, and turned on her. 'Then may I ask – ?'

'Yes,' she interrupted him. 'I came here because I wanted to see you. There is something I must tell you.'

Arment continued to scrutinize her. 'I am surprised at that,' he said. 'I should have supposed that any communication you may wish to make could have been made through our lawyers.'

'Our lawyers!' She burst into a little laugh. 'I don't think they could help me – this time.'

Arment's face took on a barricaded look. 'If there is any question of help – of course – '

It struck her, whimsically, that she had seen that look when some shabby devil called with a subscription- book. Perhaps he thought she wanted him to put his name down for so much in sympathy – or even in money ... The thought made her laugh again. She saw his look change slowly to perplexity. All his facial changes were slow, and she remembered, suddenly, how it had once diverted her to shift that lumbering scenery with a word. For the first time it struck her that she had been cruel. 'There is a question of help,' she said in a softer key; 'you can help me; but only by listening ... I want to tell you something ... '

Arment's resistance was not yielding. 'Would it not be easier to – write?' he suggested.

She shook her head. 'There is no time to write ... and it won't take long.' She raised her head and their eyes met. 'My husband has left me,' she said.

'Westall – ?' he stammered, reddening again.

'Yes. This morning. Just as I left you. Because he was tired of me.'

The words, uttered scarcely above a whisper, seemed to dilate to the limit of the room. Arment looked toward the door; then his embarrassed glance returned to Julia.

'I am very sorry,' he said awkwardly.

'Thank you,' she murmured.

‘But I don’t see – ’

‘No – but you will – in a moment. Won’t you listen to me? Please!’ Instinctively she had shifted her position, putting herself between him and the door. ‘It happened this morning,’ she went on in short breathless phrases. ‘I never suspected anything – I thought we were – perfectly happy ... Suddenly he told me he was tired of me ... there is a girl he likes better ... He has gone to her ... ’ As she spoke, the lurking anguish rose upon her, possessing her once more to the exclusion of every other emotion. Her eyes ached, her throat swelled with it, and two painful tears ran down her face.

Arment’s constraint was increasing visibly. ‘This – this is very unfortunate,’ he began. ‘But I should say the law – ’

‘The law?’ she echoed ironically. ‘When he asks for his freedom?’

‘You are not obliged to give it.’

‘You were not obliged to give me mine – but you did.’

He made a protesting gesture.

‘You saw that the law couldn’t help you – didn’t you?’ she went on. ‘That is what I see now. The law represents material rights – it can’t go beyond. If we don’t recognize an inner law ... the obligation that love creates ... being loved as well as loving ... there is nothing to prevent our spreading ruin unhindered ... is there?’ She raised her head plaintively, with the look of a bewildered child. ‘That is what I see now ... what I wanted to tell you. He leaves me because he’s tired ... but I was not tired; and I don’t understand why he is. That’s the dreadful part of it – the not understanding: I hadn’t realized what it meant. But I’ve been thinking of it all day, and things have come back to me – things I hadn’t noticed ... when you and I ... ’ She moved closer to him, and fixed her eyes on his with the gaze which tries to reach beyond words. ‘I see now that *you* didn’t understand – did you?’

Their eyes met in a sudden shock of comprehension: a veil seemed to be lifted between them. Arment’s lip trembled.

‘No,’ he said, ‘I didn’t understand.’

She gave a little cry, almost of triumph. ‘I knew it! I knew it! You wondered – you tried to tell me – but no words came ... You

saw your life falling in ruins ... the world slipping from you ... and you couldn't speak or move!

She sank down on the chair against which she had been leaning. 'Now I know – now I know,' she repeated.

'I am very sorry for you,' she heard Arment stammer.

She looked up quickly. 'That's not what I came for. I don't want you to be sorry. I came to ask you to forgive me ... for not understanding that you didn't understand ... That's all I wanted to say.' She rose with a vague sense that the end had come, and put out a groping hand toward the door.

Arment stood motionless. She turned to him with a faint smile.

'You forgive me?'

'There is nothing to forgive – '

'Then you will shake hands for good- bye?' She felt his hand in hers: it was nerveless, reluctant.

'Good- bye,' she repeated. 'I understand now.'

She opened the door and passed out into the hall. As she did so, Arment took an impulsive step forward; but just then the footman, who was evidently alive to his obligations, advanced from the background to let her out. She heard Arment fall back. The footman threw open the door, and she found herself outside in the darkness.



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企鹅经典：小黑书 第五辑

（美）亨利·詹姆斯/著

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The Figure in the Carpet

‘The Figure in the Carpet’ first published in 1896. This edition published in Penguin Classics

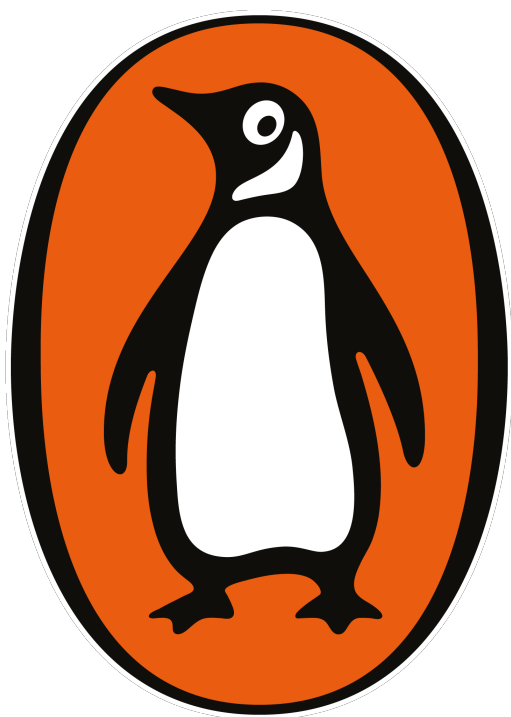
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“她是否知情？
如果她知情，
那会不会说出来……”



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正文目录

地毯上的花纹

译后记

The Figure in the Carpet

地毯上的花纹

—

我写过几篇稿子，赚过一点儿小钱，我甚至没准儿有时会动一动这样的心思：我本人要比那些居高临下之人眼里的我更为出色。不过，在略微追溯了一番我的路径（这习惯纯属无事生非，因为我走过的路并不算太长）之后，我把乔治·考威克气喘吁吁、忧心忡忡地跑来找我帮忙的那个晚上，算作我真正的起点。他写的东西比我多，赚过的小钱也比我多，不过在我看来，有时他会错过几个抖机灵的机会。不过，在那天晚上，我只能向他表示，他从来都不会错过一个做好事的机会。他请我替那份专门刊登学究文章的周刊《中点》——因其出刊时间位于每周中点而得名——备一篇稿，原先这稿约是他接的，现在他把文章的素材用一根结实的绳子扎成一捆，放在我桌上，我不禁一阵狂喜。我扑上去抓住了这个机会——抓住了那部作品的第一卷——至于我的朋友何以有此诉求，我没怎么留心他的解释。这份活儿显然适合我来接，有什么样的解释会比这一条更关键呢？以前我写过休·维里克，但是没有一个字发在《中点》上——在那里，我主要是炮制一点儿跟女士和小诗人有关的零碎。这是维里克的新小说，试读本，无论这本书对他的名声能起到多大或者多小的作用，我反正是当即明白，这事对我的名声能产生怎样的影响。非但如此，虽说我向来是一拿到他的书就要先睹为快的，但眼下我有了个特别的理由，恨不得马上读到他的作品：我收到了一份请柬，下周日去布里奇斯，简恩斯太太的便笺里提到维里克先生也会来。我正年轻，能见到像他这样有名的人物，难免激动，难免天真地相信，在这样的场合，必须好好显摆一下，我对他的“近作”是了然于胸的。

考威克本来答应给它写一篇书评，到头来却连读一遍的时间都没有，他被一则消息折腾得六神无主——一转念的工夫他便做了决定——要搭夜班邮船去巴黎。他收到一封来自格温德琳·埃尔梅的电报，回复他前一封表示想飞奔过去施以援手的信。对于格温德琳·埃尔梅，我已有所耳闻。我从未见过她，却也有点儿概念，大致说来，只要她母亲一死，考威克便能娶她。那位老太太眼下似乎很有可能成全他：从国外回来的路上，因为在气候或者某种“疗法”上出了点糟糕的岔子，她突然病倒。她的女儿孤立无援，惊恐万状，急着赶回家，又害怕路上遇险，于是接受了朋友的帮助，而我却暗自相信，恐怕埃尔梅太太一看到他就能缓过来。至于他自己确信什么，那几乎是昭然若揭

了，反正他相信的事显然跟我相信的事不一样。他给我看过格温德琳的照片，他说她算不得漂亮，但很有意思。她在十九岁那年出版了一部三卷本长篇小说——《内心深处》，他在《中点》上写过十分精彩的评论。对于我现在的跃跃欲试，他深表谢意，并且担保我们在谈论的那家杂志也会同样满怀热忱；末了，他一只手扶在门上，跟我说：“你当然没有问题，你知道。”他看出我多少有点儿迷糊，就加了一句：“我的意思是，你不会犯傻吧。”

“犯傻——对维里克！对于他，除了感叹聪明绝顶以外，我还能有什么想法？”

“呃，这不就是犯傻吗？‘聪明绝顶’到底是什么意思？看在上帝的分儿上，你得尽力懂得他。不能因为我们俩如此交接，就对他不利。请按照我谈论他的方式谈论他，如果你能做到的话。”

我踌躇片刻。“你的意思是，他在这些人里绝对是老大——诸如此类？”

考威克几乎在哀号了。“哦，你知道，我一般不会这样给他们排座次的，在艺术的婴儿期才会来这套！可他给我如此罕有的愉悦，那感觉——”他沉吟片刻——“有某种东西。”

我又困惑起来。“那感觉，请问，是什么？”

“我亲爱的朋友，这就是我想让你说的呀！”

甚至在他砰的一声关上门之前，我已经拿起那本书，准备把那种感觉说出来了。我读着维里克的书熬到半夜，考威克也不可能有我这么上心。维里克聪明绝顶——我坚持这一点，不过他在这些人里怎么也不能算是老大。不过，我在文章里并没有提及这些人。我颇为自得，觉得这一回应该是摆脱了艺术的婴儿期。“不错，”他们在办公室里热烈宣告，当那一期出版时，我觉得我有了与那位大人物会面的资本。这事给了我一两天的信心——紧接着信心又坠落。我想象过他津津有味地读我的文章的画面，但是，如果考威克都不满意，那维里克本人又怎么会满意呢？我真的琢磨过，有时候，爱慕者的热情甚至比写作者的胃口还要显而易见。无论如何，考威克从巴黎写来了一封郁郁寡欢的信：埃尔梅太太缓过来了，而我根本就没有说出维里克给了他怎样的感觉。

二

布里奇斯之行让我洞察更深。就我当场亲眼所见，休·维里克委实教人无从揣摩，以至于我不禁为自己事先对此缺乏思想准备而汗颜。即便他看来情绪不错，也并不是因为他读过我那篇文章；事实上，我相信在那个周日上午，他根本就没读过——尽管《中点》已经在三天

前出街，并且，我确信它就在某张镀金桌子上的那个傲气而挺括的期刊花园中怒放，这张堆满期刊的桌子看起来有点儿像是车站里的杂志摊。他给我留下的印象就是如此，所以我很想让他读一读。为了达到这个目的，我的手鬼鬼祟祟地给杂志原先或许不够理想的位置做了点儿修正，挪到既引人注目，又不显得太刻意地方。实话说，我甚至还观察了一下我的这番动作有没有什么效果，然而直到午餐时分，看来还是白忙了一场。

此后，在我们一群人闲庭信步之际，我有半个小时都跟在这位大人物身边——或许多少也是用了点儿花招的，他的和蔼可亲让我越发蠢蠢欲动，我对他做出了如此特殊而恰当的评论，真不希望他对此一无所知。而他似乎并不渴望什么恰当的评论；相反，在他的话语中，我捕捉不到一丁点儿愤愤不平的怨言——反正凭着我涉世不深的阅历，没有一点儿能让我听出端倪的信号。最近对他的赞誉越来越多，正如我们在《中点》中指出的那样，看到这些好评令他脱颖而出，真是一桩快意之事。他当然不算流行，但我断定，他之所以总是和颜悦色，原因之一恰恰是他的成功并不取决于作品是否流行。从某种角度看，他也算领风气之先，至少评论界骤然加速，奋力赶上他的步伐。我们终于发现他是多么聪明，而他就此失去了神秘感，只能随遇而安。我在他身边漫步，恨不得告诉他，世人揭开了他神秘的面纱，而我在其中起了多少作用；有那么一瞬间，要不是同行的某位女士在他另一侧的手肘边抢到个位置，以某种较为自私的劲头向他倾诉，我也许已经把这事儿做成了。真叫人沮丧：我几乎觉得她这是故意跟我本人作对了。

就我本人而言，确乎有一两句话掠过舌尖，关于在适当的时间用适当的词语之类，不过，事后想起，我庆幸这话没有讲出口，因为我们回到屋里，聚在一起喝茶时，我发现刚刚没跟我们一起出门的简太太 [1] 正伸长胳膊挥舞着《中点》杂志。她刚才闲来无事，随手拿起来，发现了那一篇，顿时兴高采烈。我看得出来，某些男人做了便是错的事情，若是换到女人身上，常常倒是一件值得庆幸的事。实际上，她是把我自己没能办到的事给做成了。“这里有几条小小的、甜美的真理，值得一说，”我听到她如此宣称，并把杂志塞给壁炉边一对神情茫然的夫妻。休·维里克跟我们一起散完步之后，上楼去换了衣服，他刚刚再度露面，简太太就把杂志从那对夫妻手里抢了回来。“我知道你向来是不看这类玩意儿的，不过这回你确实需要看看。你还没看过？那你一定得看。此人确实懂你，抓住了我一向的感觉，你知道的。”简太太眼波流转，那眼神确乎想把她一向的感觉传递出来，可她还是加了一句，说她终究难以表达。而杂志上的那个人用某种震撼人心的方式表达了出来。“就看看这里，还有那里，我画过的地方，看看他是怎么把那感觉提炼出来的。”她果真把我文章里

最亮的部分标出来给他看。如果说，当时我多多少少被她逗乐的话，那么维里克本人就完全可能被她逗得乐不可支。当着我们所有人的面，简太太想要大声读几句，维里克顿时就表现出他有多么忍俊不禁。他和和气气地从她手里抽走了那本杂志，就此打消了她的念头——无论如何，我喜欢他用这一招。等他换礼服时，他会把杂志带上楼，顺便看一看。半小时之后，他果然这么做了——当他回自己房间的时候，我看到杂志就拿在他手里。就在那一刻，为了让简太太开心，我跟她提起，我就是这篇书评的作者。我断定，我确实让她开了心，但是，也许，不像我原先期盼的那么开心。既然这位作者“只不过是而已”，那么事情就显得没什么了不起了。这么一来，我岂不是非但没有替自己增光添彩，反而使这篇文章为之失色吗？这位太太反正向来是一惊一乍的。这不要紧，我唯一在意的是，维里克此刻待在卧室的炉火边，那文章会让他作何感想。

晚餐席间，我一直留心着蛛丝马迹，试图想象他的眼睛里闪烁着更为愉悦的光彩。然而，让我失望的是，简太太并没有给我一点儿可以证实的机会。我本指望她会得意扬扬地在餐桌上大呼小叫，当众问他，她有没有说错。宴会的场地很大——还有一些从外面来的人，不过，我以前还从来没有见过有哪张餐桌长到连简太太都招呼不过来的地步。正当我在认真寻思，这回碰到了一张长得仿佛无穷无尽的桌子，恐怕是要剥夺我的机会了，坐在我边上的客人，一位亲爱的女士——她是教区牧师的妹妹博伊尔小姐，健壮而刚硬——灵光一闪，拿出非凡的勇气向维里克发问，后者坐在她对面，但不是正对面，所以他回答的时候，两个人的身体都只能向前靠。她不事矫揉，直接打听他对简太太的“歌颂”作何感想，文章她已经读过了——只是没有把文章跟坐在她右侧的客人联系在一起。我竖起耳朵听他的回话，他嘴里塞满面包，轻快地接口，答案让我呆若木鸡：“哦，过得去吧——反正就是那套胡说八道呗。”

维里克说话的当口，我们四目相对，好在博伊尔小姐的大惊失色掩饰了我的惊讶。“你是说，他的说法并不公正？”这位了不起的女士说。

维里克笑出了声，我很高兴我居然也能跟着一起笑。“这篇文章很迷人。”他回答我们。

博伊尔小姐的下巴往前伸，横跨了半张桌布的宽度。“哦，你真够深邃的！”她穷追不舍。

“像海一样深！我想宣告的是，这位作者看不出——”恰在此时，一盘菜从他肩上传过来，我们只能等他拿好自己的那份菜再说。

“看不出什么？”我的邻座继续追问。“什么都看不出。”

“天哪——真蠢啊！”

“一点儿都不，”维里克又笑起来。“没人能看到。”

有位离他较远的女士跟他搭讪，博伊尔小姐便又坐回原位，跟我说话。“没人看得出一点儿东西！”她兴高采烈地宣布，对此，我只能回答说虽然我过去也常常这么想，但是，无论如何，现在我反而用这种想法来证明自己具有某种惊人的眼力。我没有告诉她这篇文章是我写的，我还看到简太太在桌子的另一头忙忙碌碌，没有听到维里克刚才说了什么。

饭后我处处避开他，因为我得承认，他在我眼里显得既残忍又自负，他流露的真实想法也让我痛苦。“那套胡说八道”——那可是我敏锐而精巧的研究成果！对他钦佩之余，难免略有保留，就因为如此，他心里便怨恨到这种地步吗？我原以为他为人沉着，而他也确实足够沉着，表面如同坚硬的抛光玻璃盒子，里面装着精致而无用的虚荣心。我着实气恼，唯一聊以安慰的是，既然没人能看出什么来，那乔治·考威克也跟我一样被关在了门外。不过，在女士们散去之后，这点安慰并不足以让我以得体的仪态——我是说，穿着一件斑点外套，哼着小曲——走进吸烟室去。我多少有点儿沮丧地走向卧室，却在过道上又撞上维里克先生，他刚刚又上楼换了衣服，此刻正从自己的房间里出来。他正哼着小曲，身穿一件斑点外套，看到我那瞬间悚然一惊，猛地收住了那股子得意劲儿。

“我亲爱的年轻人，”他嚷起来，“能找到你真是太好了！刚刚晚餐时跟博伊尔小姐的一番话，怕是伤到了你，这实在不是我的本意啊。仅仅半小时之前，我才听简太太说起你便是《中点》上那篇小小的评论的作者。”

我并不同意，说这事也伤不到我的骨头，可他一路跟我到门口，手按在我肩膀上，好心好意地想摸摸我有没有骨折。他听说我上楼来是想就寝的，便恳求我允许他跨进门来跟我聊几句，说说他先前对我的文章作如是评价，究竟是什么意思。显然，他确实怕我受到伤害，而我一旦体察到他的担忧，一切在我眼里似乎突然就有所不同了。我那廉价的评论顿时飞入虚空，即便是我那文章里的精华，在他本人的光环辉映之下，也显得平淡无奇。他当时的形象此刻依然历历在目，他就站在我房间里的小地毯上，在壁炉火光的映照下，他那件斑点外套，精致而清朗的脸庞，都熠熠生辉，闪烁着某种急欲对年轻人表达善意的渴望。我不知道他起初想说什么，但是我估计，看到我为之释然的样子，他颇受触动，进而兴奋起来，将心底深处的言语调动到唇边。就这样，他很快就跟我说了那些话，事后我才得知，这话里包含了以前他从没跟任何人说过的意思。对于他这番慷慨的冲动，我一向有公允的看法：那纯粹是出于后悔，因为他无意中怠慢了一个地位比

他低微的文人，而且还是一个正对他褒奖有加的文人。为了有所弥补，他才会与我平等对话，并且出于我们同样最为珍视的理由。时间也好，地点也好，那份意料之外也好，都加深了这样的印象：没有比他这一招更有效的办法了。

三

“我不太懂得怎么跟你解释，”他说，“正是因为你给我写的书评颇有点儿智慧，正是因为你那非同俗流的敏锐，才会激发那种感觉——对我而言，这也有一段长久的渊源，请你相信我——出于一时冲动，我跟那位好太太说了那样的话，你听来自然不入耳。报纸杂志我是向来不看的，除非有人塞给我，这一篇便是如此——塞给我看的总是最好的朋友！不过我以前有时候也会看看——十年前吧。我敢说，一般而言，那时的文章要蠢得多。无论如何，在我看来，那些文章都完美地错过了我小小的主旨，不过，无论是轻拍我的背还是给我的小腿踢上一脚，都是同样值得赞赏的。无论何时，我若是碰巧朝它们瞥上一眼，它们总是照样光彩夺目——我是说，照样美妙绝伦地抓不住要点。你没抓住，我亲爱的朋友，虽然你的自信无与伦比。你聪明绝顶，你的文章也十分好看，但这些却没有让事实发生一丁点儿变化。恰恰是因为跟你们这些冉冉上升的年轻人在一起，”维里克笑道，“我才最深切地感到自己有多么失败！”

我怀着热切的兴趣听他讲，他说得越多，我的兴趣越是浓厚。“你失败——天哪！那么你所谓的‘小小主旨’，到底是什么呢？”

“在经过多年劳碌之后，我难道非得把这一点告诉你不成？”这句亲切的嗔怪——诙谐而夸张——蕴含着某种意味，使得我这个一向狂热追求真理的年轻人脸涨得通红，一直红到头发根。如今我跟以前一样懵然无知，不过，在某种程度上，我已经对自己的愚钝习以为常了。然而，在那一刻，维里克那欢乐的语调却让我在自己眼里，或许也在他眼里，成了个罕有的大傻瓜。那一刻，我正准备嚷起来：“啊，对啊，别告诉我——为了我的面子，为了我们这一行的面子，不要说！”而他却径自往下说，他的举止神态表明，他已经看穿了我的心思，至于我们是否终有一天能把面子找补回来，他自有看法。“说到我那小小的主旨，我的意思是——我该怎么说呢？——就是那个特别的原因，我之所以要写书，主要就是为了这个。每一个作家不是都有这样特别的原因吗？那个让他全神贯注的东西，若不是要努力达成这个目标，他根本就不会去写作，那是他真正的激情，对他而言，唯有在这部分，艺术的火焰才燃烧得最为激烈。对，就是这样！”

我思忖片刻——也就是说，我跟着他，保持着一段恭敬的距离，

几乎上气不接下气。我给迷住了——你可以说轻而易举，不过，无论如何，我可不打算丢盔弃甲。“你的描述当然很美，可你描述的东西却并未因此变得清晰可见。”

“我向你保证，你一旦恍然大悟，它就会清晰可见。”我发现，我们这个话题充满魅力，在我同伴身上也激起了与我一样强烈的情感。“无论如何，”他继续说，“我能代表自己说话：在我的作品中，总有那么一个观念，要是没有它，我对整个工作都不会有一丁点儿兴趣。它是作品最好、最完整的内涵，它能在作品中得以贯彻，我认为，这胜利应该归功于持久的耐心和巧妙的设计。这话我应该留给别人说；可是偏偏没人能把我们正在聊的话题准确地说出来。我那点小小的花招，从一本书延伸到另一本，至于其他种种，相对而言不过浮于表象而已。我那些书，叙述的顺序也好，形式也好，结构也好，或许总有一天会让内行的人看出门道，发现将它们合在一起，就能完整地体现作品的内涵。所以它自然是评论家们应该去寻觅的东西。我突然觉得，”我的客人微笑着补了一句，“它甚至应该是评论家们必须找到的东西。”

这似乎确实成了一种责任。“你管它叫‘小花招’？”

“这只是我的谦辞而已。究其实质，这是一个精巧的体系。”

“你相信你已经把这种体系建构出来了？”

“我建构这种体系的方式，便是我平生聊以自慰之事。”

我踌躇片刻。“难道你不觉得自己应该——稍稍——向评论家施以援手吗？”

“施以援手？我的每一笔每一画，不都是在施以援手吗？我对着他茫然的面孔，大声吼叫着我的意图。”说到这里，维里克又笑出了声，一只手搭在我肩膀上，表明他的话并不是冲着我个人的面相。

“可你说到了内行。既然如此，那要成为内行，总得有个先入门的过程吧。”

“天啊，除此之外，所谓的批评还能是什么呢？”这话恐怕又让我脸红了，可是我也找到了抵挡的办法：我不断重申，就一个普通人的认知而言，他对于那“一线真谛”的描述未免太过粗疏，难以理解。“那是因为你从来就没窥见一二，”他回敬我，“但凡你看到一眼我们正在谈及的要素，它马上就会实实在在地占据你整个视野。对我而言，它就像这个壁炉上的大理石一样清晰实在。更何况，评论家可不是什么普通人：如果他是的话，那么请问，他跑到邻居的花园里忙活什么呢？你本人就绝不是一个普通人，你们所有人‘存在的理由’^[2]是——

你们都是抓得住精妙奥义的小精灵。如果说我的头等大事是一个

秘密，那也只是因为它本身就是个秘密——这项令人惊叹的事业将它塑造成了一个秘密。我不仅从未采取过一丁点儿预警措施来保守这个秘密，而且做梦都没想过会出现这样的出人意料的局面。但凡我有所预料，我就没有心思再继续下去了。事实上，我自己也是在完成作品的同时，才渐渐明白过来的。”

“现在你很喜欢它？”我斗胆问道。

“我的作品？”

“你的秘密。一回事。”

“你既如此猜测，”维里克答道，“就证明你和我一样聪明！”在这话的鼓励下，我说他显然已经与那个秘密难舍难分了，而他也承认，如今这确实成了他生活中的一大乐趣。“我活着，几乎就是为了看看它到底会不会被人发现。”他看着我，仿佛在发起一项半开玩笑的挑战，他眼睛深处似乎有什么东西在向外窥视。“不过我也无须担忧——没人发现得了。”

“你把我整个人都点燃了，以前我可从未这样过，”我宣称，“你让我下定决心，做不到，毋宁死。”紧接着我又问：“这是什么圈内人士的机密吗？”

这话让他面色一沉——他伸出一只手仿佛要道晚安。“啊，亲爱的朋友，这事儿可不是用廉价的新闻语言就能描述清楚的。”

我当然知道他喜欢吹毛求疵，可是我们这番话聊下来，我也能感觉到他多少暴露了一些心事。我心有不甘——紧紧抓住他的手。“那我就不用这种说法好了，”我说，“最终我会在文章里宣告我的发现，不过，我敢说，如果不用这个词儿，那我还得下好多苦功夫。话说回来，为了让我快点度过这场‘难产’，你就不能给朋友一点儿线索吗？”此时我觉得自己放松多了。

“我为整个作品付出的努力清晰可见，给过线索啦——每一页，每一行，每个字母。那玩意儿就像笼中的小鸟、钩上的鱼饵、鼠夹上的奶酪一般具体。它塞在每一卷里，正如你的脚塞进你的鞋。它统治着每一行，它挑选了每个词，它给每一个字母i画上那个点，它给每一个逗号找到合适的位置。”

我挠挠头。“这种东西究竟存在于文体中，还是观念中？是一种形式的要素，还是情感的要素？”

他再度宽宏大量地握了握我的手，我顿时觉得刚才的问题粗糙浅陋，我对概念的区分显得可怜巴巴。“晚安，亲爱的孩子——别操心这事了。不管怎么说，你确实很像一个研究员。”

“是不是有一点儿小聪明反而会把这事儿搞砸？”我还是不肯放过他。

他犹豫了一下。“呃，你的身体里有一颗心脏。心脏是一种形式的要素呢，还是情感的要素？我的主张是，在我的作品中，迄今还没人提到的东西就像是生命的器官。”

“我明白——这是关于生命的观念，某种哲学。除非，”我热切地接着往下说，一个也许更让人快乐的想法冒出来，“某种你在文体中设计的游戏，某些你在语言中追求的东西。也许是对字母p的使用偏好！”我说着说着便信口开河起来。“papa（爸爸），potatoes（土豆），prunes（西梅）——诸如此类？”他得体地由着我胡说，只是表示我没有选对字母。不过他已经不觉得这事有什么意思了，我能看出他渐生倦意。然而，还有一句话我非得追问一下。“你能不能，执笔在手，亲自把它清清楚楚地写下来——给它命名，为它修辞，将它条分缕析？”

“哦，”他近乎热烈地叹了口气，“如果我是你们这些‘执笔在手’的家伙，就好了！”

“毫无疑问，这对你会是个很好的机会。可是，为什么，就因为我们这些家伙没做你自己也做不到的事，你就要鄙视我们呢？”

“做不到？”他瞪大了眼睛。“在这二十卷作品里，难道我没有把这事做到吗？我用我的方式做到了，”他继续说，“走你的吧，别用你那套方式。”

“我们的方式真是无比艰辛呢。”我有气无力地说。

“我的方式也一样！我们各选各的路。谁也不用强迫谁。你不想下楼抽根烟吗？”

“算了。我想把这事琢磨透。”

“那么明天早上你就要揭穿我，让我‘一丝不挂’了？”

“且看我能做点什么吧，我睡觉的时候也要琢磨琢磨。不过还有一句话，”我继续说，此时我们已经离开了房间——我又跟着他沿着走廊走了几步，“这不同凡响的‘整体意图’，我是按照你的说法——这是我能引诱你对此做出的最生动的描述——也就是说，总体上看，它是一种被掩埋的珍宝？”

他脸上闪着光。“好吧，就这么说吧，尽管这话也许不应该我来说。”

“胡说！”我笑起来，“你明明对此深感自豪。”

“呃，我本不想告诉你，不过这份喜乐确实发自我的灵魂！”

“你是说，它是稀世绝美之物？”

他再次犹豫了一会儿。“全世界最美妙的东西！”我们打住了，他扔下这些言辞，便离我而去，然而，我的目光仍然热切地追着他来到走廊的尽头，于是他转过头，一眼看见我困惑的脸庞。见状，他热诚地，其实在我看来是近乎不安地摇摇头，挥挥手指。“放弃吧——放弃吧！”

这并不是挑战——这是满含父爱的忠告。假如我手头有他的某本书，我就会把近来满怀信仰、忙忙碌碌的过程再重复一遍——我会彻夜研读他的作品。凌晨三点，我还是睡不着，进而想起，他对简太太而言是如何不可或缺，于是我拿起一支蜡烛，偷偷下楼。却发现整栋房子里看不到一行他的作品，反正我找不到。

四

回到城里，我狂热地把他的书都收齐了；我按着顺序把每本都单独挑出来，挑灯夜读。如此这般，我度过了发疯般的一个月，有几件事在这段时间里接连发生。其中之一，也就是最后发生的那件，我不妨先提一提，就是我听从了维里克的忠告：我扔掉了我那荒唐的企图。此事我确实无能为力，事实证明这样做满盘皆输。不管怎么说，正如他自己察觉的那样，我一向都是喜欢他的，眼下的情形，只不过是那乍现的灵光和徒劳的心血损害了我的一腔热爱而已。我非但没能一鼓作气，挖出整体意图，而且还发现，就连以前那些能让我乐在其中的次要内涵，都踪影匿影。他的书甚至不再像以前那样让我入迷，这一番寻寻觅觅令我愤懑不已，以至于我没法对它们再抱有什么好感。没有新添什么乐趣，反而减少了种种快意。因为自从我没法参透作者的暗示之后，我当然就认定，原先我以职业的眼光来感知这些作品，如今为了维护体面，这一套是再也不能拿出来说了。我一无所知——人人都一无所知。真丢人，不过我能忍——现在最多是让我有点儿气恼而已。到头来这事甚至令我厌倦，于是我把我的困惑归咎于——我得承认这想法有悖情理——维里克耍了我。被掩埋的珍宝只是个恶作剧，所谓的整体意图是荒诞不经的装腔作势。

不过，在此期间，最重要的一件事是我把自己的这番遭遇告诉了乔治·考威克，这个消息让他颇为震撼。他终于回来了，可不幸的是埃尔梅太太也回来了，因此，在我看来，他的婚礼尚属空中楼阁。我在布里奇斯经历的逸事让他激动不已。这种说法与他的感觉完全吻合，从一开始他就认为，维里克的作品里含有某种用眼睛无法看透的东西。我说，把书印出来，就是特意为了让你用眼睛看的，他立马就指责我因为深感挫败而心怀不满。我们俩的交往，历来就是这么愉快而自由的。维里克跟我提到的那一点，恰恰就是他考威克想让我在书评

里表达的东西。我提议说，既然如今我已经提供了帮助，他一定准备自己来畅所欲言了吧，而他坦白承认，他还得有更深入的理解，才能着手做这件事。当初要是他来给这部新作写评论，他会说，在这位作家的叙事艺术的最深层面，显然还有某些特质有待解读。我连这样的暗示都没有，难怪作家并不觉得受到了褒奖！我问考威克，关于作家所说的他那精美微妙的奥义，他究竟作何感想，考威克的回答无疑是激情满怀的：“这可不是说给俗人听的——这可不是说给俗人听的！”他已经抓住了什么东西的尾巴，他会努力拽，把它整个拽出来。他不放过维里克与我的这番奇怪的密谈的所有细枝末节，把我说成是最走运的那种人，同时又列举了半打问题，说真希望我当时能机灵一点儿，能把这些问题提出来。然而，在另一方面，他又不想知道太多——那会破坏静观其变的乐趣。当我们俩见面时，我的乐趣尚未丧失殆尽，但彼时我已经能预见那结果，而考威克也看出我已窥见端倪。至于我，同样也看出他马上要干的一件事，就是冲出门去，把这个故事讲给格温德琳听。

在我跟考威克谈话之后的第二天，我惊讶地收到一张来自休·维里克的便条，他说起在一本杂志上偶然看到一篇我署名的文章，不由得想起我们在布里奇斯的会面。“我兴致勃勃地读完，”他写道，“由此回忆起我们在你卧室壁炉边的愉快的对话。进而，我开始琢磨自己有多么冒失，非要把可能会对你造成负担的知识压在你身上。如今冲动已过，我简直无法想象当初何以如此激动，居然一反常态。以前，无论把话题扩展到怎样的程度，我都从来没有提过我那个小秘密，而且以后我也永远不会再说起这个奥秘了。偶然间，我对你直言相告，那份坦率远远超过以前此事进入我的游戏时所达到的程度，以至于我发觉这个游戏——我是说玩游戏时享受的乐趣——因此而蒙受巨大的损失。简而言之，如果你能听懂的话，我把我的娱乐活动搞砸了。我真的不想透露给任何人，我相信你们这些聪明的年轻人管那个叫‘要诀’。这当然是一种自私的焦虑，我告诉你这一点，也许这说法对你有点价值。如果你乐意迁就我，就不要把我透露的事情再说给别人听。就当我的精神错乱好了——这是你的权利；但是不要把个中缘由告诉任何人。”

这番交流还有下文，次日一早我就斗胆驱车直奔维里克家门。那些年他住在肯辛顿广场的一栋朴实的老房子里。他马上接待了我，我一进门就发现，我并未丧失逗他开心的能力。他一看见我的面孔就笑起来，因为我脸上的表情无疑显得颇为不安。我太轻率了——我后悔不已。“我已经告诉别人了，”我喘着粗气说，“而且我断定，那人已经转告他人！更何况，那是个女人。”

“就是你告诉的那位？”

“不是，另一位。我相信，他肯定已经告诉了她。”

“这对她能有什么好处——对我也一样！女人永远也弄不懂这些的。”

“没错，可是她会走到哪儿说到哪儿：她要做的，就是你不愿意它发生的事情。”

维里克思忖片刻，不过并没像我担心的那样惊慌失措，在他看来，既然伤害已经造成，那就是他应得的。“没关系——别担心。”

“我会尽力，我向你保证，不让我们俩谈的事情再扩散出去。”

“很好，你尽力就好。”

“同时，”我继续说，“乔治·考威克得到了这个要诀，就他而言，倒是真有可能会有所收获的。”

“那可就是个大日子了。”

我跟他说起考威克有多么聪明，对维里克是多么欣赏，对我这件逸事又是抱有怎样浓厚的兴趣。我并未渲染我们各自的判断有多大分歧，只是提到我的朋友已经认定，在某些特定的事情上他要比大多数人都看得深远。他就和我在布里奇斯时一样热血沸腾。而且他正在跟那位年轻女士相爱，也许这两位凑到一起，能把某些疑问解开。

维里克似乎为之一动。“你是说他们快要结婚了吗？”

“我敢说迟早会有这一天。”

“那可能对他们有点好处，”他只好承认，“不过我们得给他们一点儿时间！”

我说到我又狠下了一番功夫，也承认处处碰壁，于是他又翻出以前的忠告念叨起来：“放弃吧，放弃吧！”他显然认为我在心智上并不具备从事这番冒险的条件。我待了半小时，他生性善良，可我不得不说他的情绪很不稳定。他曾一时兴起便畅所欲言，也曾一时低落便懊悔不已，如今又换了一种情绪，开始变得无动于衷。如此反复无常，使得我越发相信，关于那个“要诀”的事，其中并无太多玄机。但我还是想法让他回答了几个问题，尽管他显然很不耐烦。在他本人看来，毫无疑问，那个让我们不胜迷惘的东西，明明是清晰可见的。那玩意儿，我猜想，就藏在最初的规划中；宛若波斯地毯上的一个复杂的纹样 [3]。当我使用这个意象时，他表示高度赞赏，而他自己则用了另一种说法。“它就是那根线，”他说，“把我的珍珠穿起来的那根！”他之所以要给我写那张便条，是因为他真的不想给我们一丁点儿帮助——我们之间的这种相处方式完美到无从触及。他早已养成习惯，心安理得地听天由命，所以如果要破解这魔咒，那只能靠它自身的某种

力量，不攻自破。如今，他在这最后一次会面时的样子仍历历在目——因为此后我再也没跟他说过话——他就是那种独步游戏禁地、确信安全无虞之人。我移步走开，心里不禁纳闷，他自己又是从哪里搞来“要诀”的呢？

五

当我跟乔治·考威克说起维里克给我的告诫时，他的反应让我觉得，只要对他审慎应对的能力稍有怀疑，就几乎对他是一种侮辱了。他当时确实马上转告了格温德琳，格温德琳回应热烈，这种态度本身就能保证她必会谨言慎行。如今他们俩的所有心思都用来研究这个问题，这种消遣方式何其珍贵，他们根本不舍得与众人分享。他们似乎本能地抓住了维里克关于娱乐性的高见。不过，尽管他们在智力上颇为自负，但我在此事上可能提供的进一步线索毕竟唾手可得，他们还不至于骄傲到对此漠不关心。他们确实具有“艺术气质”，而我的这位同人一碰到艺术问题便能让自己如此兴奋，这一点也给我带来新鲜的震撼。他时而称之为文学，时而称之为生活，归根结底都是一回事。从他的话里，我现在似有所悟，他同时也要代表格温德琳讲话。话说埃尔梅太太的境况一有好转，好歹给了女儿一点儿空闲，他便特地安排，把我介绍给她。我记得，在八月里的某个周日，我们相聚在切尔西的一座拥挤的房子里，我不禁再次嫉妒起考威克能有这么一位心气相通的朋友。那些我永远不会跟他说的话，他却是可以跟她说的。其实她这人毫无幽默感，她把脑袋歪向一边的样子很好看，她是那种你想——那个词儿怎么说的——就是你想要“搅乱”的人，这种人靠自学就能掌握匈牙利语。她没准儿跟考威克就是用匈牙利语来交谈的；她跟他的朋友说话，极少用英文，这一点让人印象深刻。考威克后来告诉我，我显然并不乐意把维里克跟我说的话一五一十都讲出来，这让她颇为不悦。我承认，我觉得我已经对那番指示有过深思熟虑：难道我没有判定，这全是白费工夫，必将找不到出路吗？他们对这些话如此重视，让我好生气恼，弄得我的怀疑好像成了什么有毒的东西。

这说法看起来不太友善，也可能因为我看见一个只能带给我懊恼的实验却让别人深深着迷，便觉得受到了侮辱。我被排除在外，周围寒气逼人，而他们却置身于傍晚的壁炉边、灯光下，忙于追踪捕猎，可那号角明明是我吹响的。他们做的事情跟我一样，只是更刻意更善解人意——他们从头开始，把作者细细研读。这事急不得——考威克说——未来就在他们眼前，作品的魅力只会越来越大。他们会一页一页地读他，就像读一部经典名著，将他慢慢吸入肺腑，让他整个沉淀下去。若非深陷爱河，我想，他们是不太可能像上足了发条这般亢奋的：可怜的维里克的内涵给了他们无穷无尽的机会，好把他们年轻的脑袋凑在一起。然而，它代表了考威克特别乐于钻研的那类问题，勾

引出他那种特殊的、富于洞察力的耐心，如果他活下去，就会给出更震撼人心、想必也更富有成效的例子。用维里克的话说，他至少是那种“抓得住精妙奥义的小精灵”。我们始于争论，但我很快就看出，若非我稍稍出手相助，他这番昏头昏脑的热情必会饱受挫折。他会像我一样，闻到误导的气味就跳起来——看到新的光便拍手称快，然后眼看着翻飞的书页掀起一阵风，将烛火吹灭。我告诉他，维里克平平无奇，只是个疯子，怀抱着某种癫狂的理论，认定莎士比亚的内涵晦涩神秘。对此，他答道，如果我们听到莎士比亚本人说自己晦涩神秘，那他会马上接受这种说法。至于现在这件事，情况完全不同——我们别无凭据，只有“不屑一顾先生”的话。我马上反驳，说看到他连维里克先生的话都如此重视，真是目瞪口呆。于是，他说他想知道我是不是把维里克先生的话当成了谎言。我当时郁郁不乐、心灰意懒，其实本来并不打算说得这么过头，可还是坚持说，在相反的情况得到证实之前，我会将它视为过于深情的想象。我得承认，我并没有说出——当时我还不太知道——我的所有感想。在内心深处，用埃尔梅小姐的说法，我是颇为不安的，也是抱着某种期望的。在我仓皇失措的状态的核心——因为我那出于习惯的好奇心在灰烬中生生不息——是一种尖锐的直觉，觉得考威克也许终究会从哪里突围而出。他为了替自己的轻信辩护，反复强调：从很久以前开始，他在研究这位天才时，就捕捉到些许不知就里的气味和线索，微弱的音符似有若无地飘过。这正是难得之处、迷人之处：它是如此完美地契合我所报告的内容。

尽管有几次我回到切尔西的那座小房子，但我敢说，我去的两个目的是同等重要的，既打听埃尔梅小姐的母亲病情，也想知道关于维里克有什么进展。在我的想象中，考威克就像一位棋手，眉头紧锁，一言不发，在需要灯光照明的整个冬天里，低下头盯着棋盘，运筹帷幄。我的想象逐渐填满整个画面，挥之不去。一个如幽灵般的身影出现在桌对面，淡淡的轮廓勾勒出一位生性和蔼、胸有成竹却也略显疲态的对手——他靠在椅子上，双手插在口袋里，俊朗优雅的脸上挂着笑容。紧跟在考威克身后的是个姑娘，起初她看起来苍白而消瘦，多看几眼以后渐渐觉得她颇为秀美，她靠在他肩上，紧盯着他的一招一式。他抓起一颗棋子，攥在手里，在棋盘的某个小方格上方盘旋了一会儿，然后失望地长叹一声，又把棋子放回原位。见状，那位年轻女士不安地稍稍变换姿势，以某种拼尽全力且相当诡异的方式久久凝视对面那位轮廓模糊的对手。早在此事刚刚开始时，我就问过他们，若是能跟维里克亲密接触，会不会有助于他们大功告成。鉴于情况如此特殊，我当然有理由把他们介绍给维里克。考威克立即回答，在他准备好祭品之前，实在无意靠近祭坛。他完全同意我们的朋友的说法，追猎既是出于乐趣，也是为了荣誉——他要用自己的来复枪，把野兽撂倒。我问他，埃尔梅小姐是否也热衷射击之道，他思忖片刻之后说：“不是，我真是羞于启齿，她其实想铺设陷阱。若能见他一

面，她什么都愿意；她说她想再讨一条线索来。对于此事，她实在有些病态了。可是她得恪守规则——她不能见他！”他加重语气补了一句。我猜想他们是不是在这个问题上吵过几句——这种疑虑并没有被他打消，因为他只是一再对我嚷：“她对文学的热情高得难以置信，你知道——真是异想天开！”我想起他说过她以斜体感知，用大写思索。“哦，待我将他的谜底揭开之时，”他还说，“你知道，我就会去敲他的门。我宁愿如此——请你相信我。我要听他亲口说出来：‘你是对的，我的孩子，这回你做到了！’他将给我这位胜者加冕——戴上批评界的桂冠。”

与此同时，既然在伦敦生活，就难免有不少与这位杰出小说家不期而遇的机会，他确实躲开了好几个。不过，随着维里克无限期离开英国——据报上说是去南方，原因与他太太的健康有关，她已经因病退隐很长一段时间了——这个危险也消失了。布里奇斯的会面之后，已经过去了一年——还不止一年，可我再也没有见过他。我想，内心深处，我是深感羞愧的——我不愿意让他想起，尽管我无可救药地错过了他的要旨，但“思维敏锐”的名声还是很快压得我不胜负荷。这一层顾虑给我惹来不少麻烦，弄得我不敢踏进简太太的房子，甚至，当她出于好意，不顾我向来礼数不周的毛病，第二次暗示我、邀请我去她那美丽的宅院时，我也只能拒绝。有一回，我注意到她在维里克的陪同下出席一场音乐会，而且也确信他们都看到了我，可我还是溜之大吉，没跟他们狭路相逢。那一次，我走在雨中，一路上被雨水溅湿，只觉得我别无选择，即便如此，我记得我当时对自己说，这样做很难，甚至未免残忍。我非但失去了那些书，而且也失去了这个人：对我而言，书和书的作者都已经给毁了。我也知道哪种损失最让我遗憾。毕竟我爱人，还是胜于爱书。

六

在我们的朋友离开英国之后，又过了六个月，素来以文字为生的乔治·考威克签下一纸合同，打算写一部书，而为了完成这项工作，他得离开一段时间，还得踏上一段艰苦的旅程——他居然会接受，这可真让我吃惊。起因是他的姐夫当上了一份外省大报的编辑，而这份外省大报，出于某种天马行空的心血来潮，构思了把“特派专员”送到印度去的计划。特派员在如今的“大都会报刊”上渐成时尚，而前面提及的这份报纸一定是觉得，它在人们心目中留下的“乡下小弟”的印象实在是太久了。当一名记者动静不小，考威克并不善于此道，可这是他姐夫的事情，而且，当某项任务并非他所长时，反而恰恰会成为他欣然接受的理由。他打算赶超“大都会报刊”，他严阵以待，防止笔下学究气泛滥，费尽心机地糟蹋文字的品味。没人知道——那些违反原则的事儿都是他自愿的。除了报销他的生活费用之外，他还会得到一笔

合适的酬劳，我发觉自己也能帮上他的忙，帮这本平平常常、有利可图的书，做出看起来还说得过去的安排——找了家平平常常、有利可图的出版社。顺理成章地，我做出了这样的推断：他明显是想赚点钱，而这跟他想与格温德琳·埃尔梅共结连理的愿望并非没有关系。我知道，她的母亲之所以反对，主要是因为他资产匮乏，也没有什么能赚大钱的手段。然而，说来也巧，上次我见到他时，随口说了句什么，牵扯到他和我们那位年轻小姐分手的问题，他着重强调的话吓了我一跳：“啊，你知道，我和她根本没订过婚啊！”

“就是没有公开吧，”我答道，“因为她母亲不喜欢你。可是，我一直以为，你们私下里是有默契的。”

“呃，也算有过吧。不过现在没有了。”讲到这里他便打住了，只说埃尔梅太太居然又能站起来了，这可真是非同寻常——我猜想，这话指明了一个道理，私下达成的默契几乎百无一用，除非医生也入了伙。我擅自做了更为缜密的推断，想来那姑娘多半已经用某种方式疏远他了。好吧，即便他会因此转变性情，比如妒火中烧，那也不太会妒忌到我头上。真要是那样的话——且不说这个假设有多么荒唐——那他就不会一走了之，反而让我们俩有机会在一起。我们任性地虚掷了他走之前的那段时光，没有提那被掩埋的宝藏，从他的沉默里——我那矜持克制的腔调就是从他那学来的——我能得出一个尖锐的结论。他的勇气已经一落千丈，他的热情也和我一样烟消云散——至少他把这样的表象留给我去揣摩。并不仅仅是他做不到的问题；一旦他明确承认失败，也许会让我得意扬扬，这种可能性是他无法面对的。他其实没必要害怕的，可怜的家伙，因为那时我已经觉得没有一丁点儿得意的必要了。实际上，我并没有指责他垮掉，我觉得这一点足以表明我的宽厚，因为一想到他已经放弃这场游戏，我就比以往任何时候都感觉到我对他有多么依赖。如果考威克一溃千里，我就永远不会知道真相了；如果连他都没用的话，那任何人都不会有用了。实际情况并不是我已经没了求知欲，渐渐地，我的好奇心不仅又开始作痛，而且已经成了绵延于朝朝暮暮的熟悉的折磨。毫无疑问，在有些人看来，这样一种折磨，并不见得会比疾病给人带来的痛苦更为自然，话说回来，毕竟我自己也不明白，我有什么必要在这种情况下提到他们。无论如何，在与我这件逸事扯得上关系的那几位——不管正常与否——看来，文学是一场关乎技术的游戏，而技术就意味着勇气，勇气则意味着荣誉，荣誉意味着激情，意味着人生。押在桌上的赌注是一种特别的东西，而我们的轮盘赌就是不停旋转的思绪，但是我们围坐在绿色的赌桌周围，像蒙特卡罗的冷血赌徒一样聚精会神。如此说来，格温德琳·埃尔梅，那一张苍白的脸庞和那一双全神贯注的眼睛，正是那种你会在“机遇殿堂”^[4]里遇上的纤瘦女子。在考威克离开的那段日子里，我意识到，她的行为生动地诠释了这个比喻。我得承

认，她全身心浸淫于写作艺术的方式过于奢侈。她显然受困于自己的激情，在她面前，我觉得自己几乎毫无热情。我又拿出了《内心深处》——那是一片沙漠，她置身于其中便迷失了自我，不过，她同时也在沙漠里挖出一个精美的洞穴——更惊人的是，考威克把她从这洞里拽了出来。

三月初，我收到她发来的一封电报，于是我马上赶到切尔西区，她见到我劈头就是一句：“他懂了，他懂了！”

我看得出，她的激动是如此深切强烈，所以她指的一定是那件天大的事。“维里克的观念？”

“他的整体意图。乔治的电报是从孟买发来的。”

她把电报在那里摊开，虽然简洁，却力重千钧。“我已发现 [5]。浩瀚无边。”仅此而已——为了省钱，他没有署名。对她此时迸发的情感我感同身受，可我自己挺失望的。“他没有说那是什么。”

“他怎么能说呢——在一封电报里说吗？他会写下来的。”

“可他是怎么知道的呢？”

“你是问他怎么知道这是真货？哦，我相信，等你亲眼看到，就会知道了。‘凭步态便足以证明她是女神！’ [6] ”

“埃尔梅小姐，你给我带来这样的消息，真是大好人啊！”——我格外兴奋，极尽言辞。“不过，想想看，在毗湿奴 [7] 的神殿里找到我们的女神！多么神奇啊，置身于那样迥然不同、异常强烈的诱惑中，乔治居然还能一头钻到那件事里去！”

“他并没有钻进去，我知道，是那事情自己浮现的，六个月来他庄严地将它抛在脑后，如今它就像一头母老虎从丛林中跃出，向他扑过去。他随身没有带一本书——每一页都被他，就像我一样，记在心里。它们在他心里共同作用，直到某时某地，当他的心思完全不在这上面时，它们所有高超复杂的机关，都突然形成唯一正确的组合。地毯上的花纹悄然浮现。他知道结局终究会这样呈现，这就是真正的原因——你完全无法理解，不过我想我现在可以告诉你了——他之所以去，我之所以同意他去，就是为了这个。我们知道这样的变化会有用——不同的想法，不同的场景，会带来必要的触动，带来神奇的震撼。我们周密地、绝妙地盘算过。所有的元素都在他脑中盘旋，只须一次新鲜而强烈的经历带来的‘震撼’ [8]，它们就会碰撞出火花来。”反正她本人是火花四溅了——她脸上真的在发光。我结结巴巴地念叨了几句关于无意识精神活动的词儿，而她只管接着自己的话头说：“他会直接回来——这事成了，他就回来了。”

“你是说，去见维里克吗？”

“见维里克——也来见我。想想吧，他会告诉我什么！”

我犹豫了。“说印度的事儿吗？”

“胡扯！说维里克啊——说地毯上的花纹。”

“可是，照你的说法，这事儿当然应该写在信上才对。”

她思索的样子就像是一个灵感勃发之人，我不禁想起很久以前考威克跟我说过，她的面孔耐人寻味。“既然它‘浩瀚无边’，那也许一封信都写不下呢。”

“也许是写不下，如果那尽是些浩瀚无边的蠢话。假如他没有抓住那种能够塞进一封信的东西，那他就没有抓住真谛。按照维里克本人对我的说辞，这‘花纹’恰恰是能塞进一封信的。”

“好吧，一个小时前我给乔治发了电报——就两个词儿。”格温德琳说。

“我是否能冒昧地问问是哪两个词儿？”

她犹豫不决，不过最后还是说了出来。“好人儿，写信。”

“好！”我嚷道，“我得让这事定下来——我要给他拍一样的电报。”

七

然而，我的电报并非跟她一模一样——我用了别的词代替“好人儿”。后来发现，似乎还是我用的昵称比较合适，因为当我们后来收到我们那位旅人的信时，我们只不过，或者说完全是，被他吊了一下胃口。他志得意满，容光焕发，把他的发现说得石破天惊一般，然而他的狂喜只是让事情本身更显得含含糊糊罢了——在他把想法呈交给最高权威之前，不会透露任何细节。他扔掉了特派任务，扔掉了他原本要写的书，扔掉了一切，一心只想马上赶到热那亚海岸边的拉帕罗 [9]，维里克正好在那里。我给考威克写了一封信，寄往亚丁 [10]，等着他过去收——我恳求他能稍许缓解悬在我心里的疑团。此后又过了好多个无聊的日子，我写给他的简短电报发到孟买后也迟迟没有回音，最后终于来了一封电报，表示他收到了那封信，显然，他是想用这封电报作为对我先后两次联络的回应。电文上寥寥数语，用法文的法文、时下流行的法文写成，考威克通常是拿这个来标榜自己并不是个老古板。对于某些人而言，这样做可能会起到反作用，不过，他的电文大致意思可以这样翻译：“保持耐心。我想看着它突然从天而降时，你脸上是什么表情！”

“Tellement envie de voir ta tête！” [11] ——这就是我不得不坐

下来面对的局面。其实我压根谈不上“坐下来”，因为我好像记得自己当时躁动不安，在切尔西的小房子和我自己的住所之间来回穿梭。我们都不耐烦，不管是格温德琳还是我，不过我总是希望她那边能更有灵感。在这段时间里，我们这几个囊中羞涩之人，扔了大把大把的钱在电报和出租马车上，我满心指望着发现者和被发现者在会合之后，能马上从拉帕罗发来新消息。这段时间似乎长得遥遥无期，但是，某一天，天色已晚，我听到一辆双轮出租马车向我家门飞驰而来，从那股子冲劲里，多少能猜出来人是乐于慷慨分享的。我的心都提到了嗓子眼儿，赶紧跳到窗口——立马看到一位年轻女子站在马车踏脚板上，热切地抬头看着我的房子。她一看到我就用力挥舞一张纸，那动作就像是在情节剧里，有人在绞刑架下挥动着手帕和缓刑令。

“刚见维里克——分毫不差。拥抱我——留我住一个月。”我在她那张纸上就读到这几个字，坐在高处座位上的马车夫冲着我咧开嘴笑了笑。我一时兴奋，好好打赏了他一番，而她也激动得顾不上心疼钱了，直到车夫驾车离去，我们才开始散步聊天。天知道，我们以前就聊得够多的了，但这回着实振奋人心。我们想象着拉帕罗的整个场景，想象他先是写信要求拜见，信里还提到了我的名字；这画面是我描述的，毕竟我比我身边这位朋友有更多的材料可以用。当我们故意停在橱窗、眼睛却并不往里面看的时候，我能感觉到她在认认真真听我的一字一句。有一件事我们很清楚：如果他在那里住下，跟维里克展开更充分的交流，那么他至少应该给我们写一封信，帮我们挺过这最后一点儿被拖延的时光。我们固然理解他为什么要在当地逗留，但是，在我看来，我们俩都能看出对方其实讨厌这样的局面。我们都心知肚明的那封信到底还是来了，是写给格温德琳的，为了让她省掉专程来一趟的麻烦，我及时上门拜访。她没有把信念出来，原因不言自明。不过她把信上的主要内容向我重述了一遍。信里有一句引人注目的话，他告诉她，等他们结婚之后，他会把她想知道的事情，一五一十全告诉她。

“只有到那时，在我嫁给他以后才行——不是以前，”她解释说，“也就是说——是不是？——我得马上跟他结婚！”她朝我微笑，而我失望得满脸通红，满脑子都是这刚刚冒出来的拖延理由，以至于我都没有意识到自己有多么惊讶。看起来这已经不仅仅是个暗示了——他也会向我提出让人讨厌的条件。她又跟我转告了几件信里提到的事情，说话间我突然想到，他当初在出发之前跟我说过话。他发觉维里克先生本身就有种令人晕眩的趣味，而他独守秘密的行为，着实教人神魂颠倒。那被掩埋的宝藏，都是黄金和宝石。它们就在那里，在他眼前越堆越高；它们将历经时代变迁、语言转换，成为文学艺术领域最奇妙的花朵之一。特别是你一旦跟它面对面，它所呈现的尽善尽美的完成度是无与伦比的。它一旦出现，就是真的出现了，自

带万丈光芒，让你自惭形秽。而且，即便是置身于这个时代的深不见底的庸俗中——人人缺乏品位，个个遭到污染，感官迟钝闭塞——也没有一丁点儿理由忽视它。它伟大，却又是那么简单；它简单，却又是那么伟大——而它终将被我们知晓，这经历殊为难得。他暗示，这样的经历着实迷人，他渴望趁着新鲜劲儿将其饮尽，一滴都不放过，所以始终在源头打转。格温德琳把这些只言片语向我随意抛洒的时候显然容光焕发，她自恃比我更有把握，所以得意扬扬。于是我回过头来说起婚事的问题，忍不住问她，刚才她让我大吃一惊的话是不是意味着他们本来就已经订了婚。

“我当然订了婚！”她答道，“你不知道吗？”她看起来十分惊讶，但是更惊讶的人是我，因为考威克以前讲述的情况正好与此相反。不过我没有提那老话，只是提醒她，在这个问题上，她也好，考威克也好，都没把我当自己人，况且，对于她母亲的禁令，我并非不知情。在心底深处，这两位全然不同的说法让我颇为不安，但是，没过多久，我又觉得考威克毕竟是最不该怀疑的人。于是不禁自问，这位姑娘是不是临场即兴创作了一纸婚约——或是把一份旧的拿来拼凑修补，或是草草来一份新的——只为了达成她渴望的心满意足的效果。她一定具有我所缺乏的急智，不过她立刻回答了我，从而把她的情况稍稍挑明了一点儿：“事情其实是这样，我们曾经以为，在妈妈的有生之年，当然是无法有所作为的。”

“然而现在你认为可以无须理会妈妈是否同意了？”

“啊，也许还不用到那一步！”我还在纳闷会到哪一步，她就继续说下去：“可怜的人儿，她也许得吞下这剂药啦。确实，你知道，”她又笑起来，补充说，“她真的得吃下去了！”考虑到所有与此相关之人的想法，我完全明白这个主意有多大的分量。

八

这辈子没有别的事比这件更让我恼火的了：在考威克抵达英国时，我意识到自己没法跑去将此事了结。我突然得去一趟德国，因为弟弟身染重病，他当初不顾我的劝阻执意去慕尼黑，拜在一位大师门下，学习肖像油画。那个给他提供资助的近亲曾经威胁说：但凡他拿出什么似是而非的借口，要到巴黎去寻求更为高尚的真理——不知为何，在一位居住在切尔滕纳姆的姑妈看来，巴黎就是邪恶的学校，是可怕的地狱——那她就要把资助一笔勾销。当时我对这种偏见就颇为反感，如今由它导致的深度伤害也显现出来了——首先，实际上，不去巴黎并没有让这个聪明、羸弱又傻头傻脑的孩子免于肺充血之苦。其次，此事逼得我只能远远地离开伦敦。那几周过得异常焦虑，我满脑子就在琢磨，但凡我们当初选择的是巴黎，那我就能跑过去见考威

克了。其实，从各方面看，这种假设都是不成立的：为了让我弟弟康复，我们俩都有一大堆事情要忙，他病足三个月，在此期间我没有离开他半步，末了，我们又不得不面对严禁回到英国的医嘱。出于气候方面的考虑是无法置之不理的，而他的状态也难以独自应付这局面。于是我把他带到意大利梅拉诺，在那里跟他共度了一个夏天，尽量举例教会他如何恢复工作，而另一种愤懑焦虑的情绪却在我心里渐渐滋长，我努力不让他看出来。

到头来，整件事成了一系列诡异地互相交织的现象的开端，把这些现象放在一起看——我只能这样看待它们——在我的记忆里，它们构成了绝佳的例证，表明命运有时会着手处置世人的欲念，从而使其灵魂受惠，这是确凿无疑的。我们此时心心念念的结局终究浅陋平庸——尽管我觉得那结局也值得郑重其事地说一说——相比之下，这些事件所具有的种种意义当然更为重要。无论如何，我承认，当时我被“流放”在外的恶果，主要就是在这样的角度下呈现在我面前的。甚至，当乔治·考威克从拉帕罗回来，用一种我并不赞成的方式给我写信时，由于我被那种我称为“欲念”的情绪所支配，所以起初我确实认为，这事一点儿也不能让那种情绪有所缓解。他的信起不到一丁点儿镇静剂的作用，如今回想起来我倒必须承认，他当时肯定是希望有此功效的。此后，事情的进展也并未井然有序，因而也无法弥补原先的缺憾。他当时已经开始着手为一家季刊撰文，要写一篇关于维里克作品的定评，这番详尽彻底的研究，唯一仅存的举足轻重的评论，将会点亮新的光芒，将会宣告——哦，静谧无声，悄然宣告！——那无从想象的真谛。换言之，它将细细描摹地毯上的花纹，勾勒每一个盘旋的纹样，再现每一种色泽。按我这位朋友的说法，最终成果将是最伟大的文学肖像，而他对我的要求也颇为善意，只要不提问打扰他就好，等着他把杰作挂到我眼前。他很给我面子，宣称除了那位超然物外、安坐在那里等着被人画的大人物之外，我是他个人最乐意效劳的鉴赏家。因此我得当个好孩子，在演出万事俱备之前，不要想方设法从幕布底下偷窥：我现在愈是坐得气定神闲，将来就愈是乐在其中。

我竭尽全力坐得气定神闲，然而，当我在《泰晤士报》上看到可怜的埃尔梅太太突然去世的消息时，还是忍不住跳了起来。那时我已经在慕尼黑待了一两个礼拜，而据我所知，考威克尚未抵达伦敦。我马上写信给格温德琳询问详情，她回信说家母在被心力衰竭的阴影笼罩多年之后终于倒下。她没有说，但我冒昧地揣测她话里有话，考虑到她的婚姻和她的渴望——就跟我的渴望相差无几，这倒不失为一种解决方式，比原来预想中的情况更为迅速，也比让老太太吞下苦药更为彻底。我坦率承认，当时——因为我一再收到她的信——我从格温德琳的话里读出了某些不同寻常的意味，而在她沉默不语的部分，甚至能读出更加不同凡响的内容。此刻我手中握着笔，回首当时情状，

那种极为古怪的感觉再度涌来，它不仅绵延数月，而且我不由自主地成了某种被胁迫着旁观的人。我的所有生活似乎都躲在我双眼的庇护所里，而随着事件推进，我瞪大的眼睛似乎根本无法挪开视线。某些日子里，我想给休·维里克写信，干脆求他发发善心算了。但我更深切地感到，我还不至于落到这么不堪的地步——何况，以我的所作所为，他要是把我赶走也是十分得体的。埃尔梅太太一死，考威克便立刻回来了。就在那个月里，他与那位他爱过又放弃过的年轻女子“安安静静地”结了婚——我看得出来，这种安静就跟他打算在文章里宣布他的“意外收获”一样悄无声息。顺便说一句，我之所以要用“放弃”这个词儿，是因为后来我渐渐确信，他当初去印度，在孟买发来那条重大新闻时，他们俩之间根本没有什么确凿的誓约。当她在跟我言之凿凿地说订过婚时，其实还不存在什么婚约。不过话说回来，他一回国当然就订了婚。这一对幸福的人儿直奔托基 [12] 度蜜月，在那里，可怜的考威克一时鲁莽，突然带着他年轻的新娘驾车出游。这事他可不在行：以前我们一起坐过一趟轻便马车，因此对这一点我心知肚明。这一回他让他的伴侣坐在轻便马车的高座上，驾车在德文郡的群山疾驰，在其中一座看起来最惬意的山上，他把已经脱缰（千真万确）的马拽住，却用力过猛，以至于车上的人都被甩到前方，他头部着地，情状可怖。他当场就死了，格温德琳幸免于难，没有受伤。

关于这场十足的悲剧，关于失去最好的朋友对我意味着什么，我且草草略过吧。这一小段关乎我的耐心和痛苦的历史，我只想以如下坦诚的叙述来完成：在收到噩耗之后，我在给她写的第一封信末尾留了一句附言，询问考威克夫人，她的丈夫有没有可能至少写完了那篇论述维里克的大作。她的回答和我的提问同样飞快：那篇文章刚刚写了个开头，只不过是让人心碎的一鳞半爪而已。她解释说，当初我们的朋友在海外刚刚安顿下来开始动笔，就被她母亲的死讯打断了。回国之后，因为忙于种种丧葬事宜，他始终无暇工作。如今留下的只有开头几页，它们固然震撼人心、蕴藏潜力，却并未揭开蒙在偶像脸上的面纱。显然，那种彰显智慧的炫技，原本会构成他文章的高潮。她没再多说什么，没有什么能让我看出她自己究竟知道了多少——我本来以为她那些令人惊诧的行为就是为了千方百计地得到那点儿知识。我最想知道的是：她有没有见到偶像被揭开面纱？是否有过一场私密的仪式，观众席上只有一个心怦怦直跳的人？如果不是为了这样的仪式，那为什么要结婚呢？那时我不愿逼她，可是一想到当初考威克不在时我们说起这个话题的情形，我便对她此刻的沉默寡言颇为惊讶。所以，不久以后，鉴于她继续对我守口如瓶，于是我再次鼓起勇气——战战兢兢地鼓起勇气——从梅拉诺发信给她。“你在狂喜中突然遭遇飞来横祸，那短短几天里，你可曾听到我们如此渴望听到的东西？”我故意说“我们”，是为了给她一点儿小小的暗示，而她的回答表明她是能够心领神会的。“我什么都听到了，”她答道，“我打算守住这

个秘密！”

九

不对她抱以最强烈的同情，是不可能的事，所以我回到英国以后就对她无微不至。她母亲的去世倒是让她财力丰厚，于是她搬到了一个生活更方便的区域。然而她的损失毕竟惨重，探望她也教人不胜悲伤。而且我也从来没有产生过那样的念头，认为拥有一条技术上的秘诀、一点儿文学经验，就能够抵消她的悲伤。不过，说来诡异，当我见过她几次之后，我忍不住相信自己多少窥见了一点儿这样古怪的事情。我得马上做个说明，以前也有一些别的事情是我忍不住要相信，或者至少是忍不住要去想象的。既然我向来觉得自己对这类事并不是很清楚原委，那么，对于眼前说到的这个问题，我就权且假定她的记忆毫无瑕疵。她深受打击，孑然一身，却也擅长社交，如今，在深切的悼亡中，她的优雅风范愈显成熟，哀伤却无一句怨言，洋溢着某种不容争辩的美，让人觉得她过着一种富有独特尊严和美感的生活。起初，我说服自己，在那场大灾之后的一周里，她以沉默回应我的诉求，我并非没有意识到那个时机是很不合适的，不久以后，我应该就能打破这个僵局了。当然，她的沉默让我多少有点震惊——越寻思当然就越疑惑不解，尽管我努力解释（有时也能成功），把问题归咎于高尚的情感、出于迷信的忌惮和某种出于忠诚的教养。当然，与此同时，维里克的秘密的身价又在无形中被大大提高，尽管这个谜本来似乎已经够昂贵的了。我不妨谦卑地承认，考威克太太出人意料的态度在钉子上敲了最后一下，把我那不幸的念想牢牢钉住，将它转化成我永远为之魂牵梦绕的迷思。

然而这只是让我行事更狡猾、更灵巧而已，于是我等了一段时间以后再旧事重提。在这段时间里不乏大量推测，其中有一条颇为有趣：考威克对他那年轻的朋友一直守口如瓶，要等到他们之间的亲密关系的最后一道障碍被扫除之后才松口——只有到那时他才会亮出底牌。格温德琳是否从他那里得到提示，如果要她亮出底牌，也唯有建立诸如此类的崭新的关系以后才能如愿？是不是唯有展现在丈夫和妻子——永结同心的爱人——眼前，地毯上的花纹才能被发现或者描述出来？在某种神秘莫测的氛围中，我突然想起当初在肯辛顿广场，我提起考威克会对他爱上的姑娘言无不尽，于是维里克回了一句话，这话是能替这种可能性增添一点儿色彩的。也许话里并无深意，却足以让我踌躇——若是为了得到自己想要的东西，我是否有必要娶考威克太太为妻。为了拥有她的知识，我是否准备好付出这样的代价？啊，那样可真够疯狂的！——至少，在我茫然无措的时候，我是这么跟自己说的。与此同时，我能看见她不愿意传递的火炬仍在她记忆的密室里燃烧——在她双眸流转之间，一道光倾泻而下，照亮她那孤独的宅

邸。时间过去将近六个月时，我完全确信，这温暖的画面对她而言能构成怎样的补偿。我们一遍又一遍地说起那个把我们连接在一起的男人——谈起他的才华，他的性格，他的个人魅力，他的特定成就，他那可怕的厄运，甚至还说到他的那场伟大研究有个清晰的目标，想要成就一幅精妙绝伦的文学画像，成为类似于评论界的凡·戴克 [13] 或者委拉斯开兹 [14] 那样的人物。她多次向我表示，凭着她的倔强和虔诚，她将缄默不语，她绝不会打破沉默，除非把它交给“合适的人”（照她的说法）去打破。然而那个时刻终究还是来了。某天晚上，我和她坐在一起，比平常坐得更久，我坚定地把手搭在她的胳膊上。“说吧，到底是什么？”

她一直预料我会有这样的举动，所以做好了准备。许久，她缓慢而无声地摇头，脸上浮现的慈悲仅仅是因为穷于言辞。虽则慈悲，她还是向我猛地扔出了那句最宏大、最锋利、最冷酷的“永不”！在我屡屡遭到拒绝的一生中，还从来没有当面领受过这样的打击。我承受了这严酷的打击，并且感觉到眼泪随之涌入眼眶。于是，我们坐了一会儿，互相对视，然后我慢慢起身。我在寻思有朝一日她是否能接受我，但我没把这话说出来。我一边把帽子抚平，一边说：“我知道接下来该怎么想。没事！”

她朦胧的微笑中堆积着某种针对我的孤傲而鄙夷的怜悯，接着，她开口，那话音仿佛此刻仍在我耳畔回响。“那是我的命啊！”我站在门口时，她又加了一句，“你侮辱了他！”

“你说维里克吗？”

“我说的是辞世之人！”

走到大街上，我便意识到她的指责不无公正之处。是啊，那是她的命——我也意识到了，然而，随着时过境迁，她的生命又为另一种兴趣匀出了空间。考威克去世一年半之后，她出版了她的第二部长篇小说——单卷本，名为《征服》，我赶忙去弄了一本，希望在其中能找到一点儿泄露天机的回音或者一张正在偷窥的脸。结果我只是发现，这一部比她年轻时写的那本要好得多，我觉得这表明她曾有过比以往更好的伴侣。作为一种颇为复杂精致的织物，这条地毯的花纹是它独有的；但这花纹并不是我在寻找的那种花纹。我给这本书写了一篇评论投给《中点》，却惊讶地从编辑部那里得知，已经有另一篇书评上了版。待杂志出街，我毫不犹豫地认定，这篇俗气而过火的文章出自德雷顿·迪恩的手笔，此人昔日也得算是考威克的一个朋友，直到最近几周才跟他的遗孀相识。我算是很早便弄到了一本初版，而迪恩显然比我更早。尽管如此，以往考威克善于替华而不实之物镀上一层金，如此轻灵的手法迪恩是没有的——他就只会把金箔金线什么的瞎堆一气，看起来污迹斑斑。

六个月之后，《通行权》面市，那是我们救赎自己的最后机会，尽管我们当时并不知情。这本书完全是维里克旅居海外的那段时间里写的，在一百来篇短评中备受赞扬，不外乎是那一套傻里傻气的陈词滥调。我弄来一本——自我标榜那是最早的一本，拿着书直接去找考威克夫人。这本书我也只能派到这点用场了，至于《中点》杂志难免要为这本书唱的赞歌，我就留给某个头脑更敏锐、脾性更温和的人去操心吧。“可是书我已经有了，”格温德琳说，“德雷顿·迪恩真是好心，昨天就给我带了一本，我刚读完。”

“昨天？他下手怎么能这么快？”

“他干什么都能这么快！他打算替《中点》写篇书评。”

“他——德雷顿·迪恩——评论维里克？”我没法相信我的耳朵。

“为什么不呢？反正一种无知跟另一种无知之间，并没有高下之分。”

我心生畏怯，不过还是马上说：“你应该自己评论他啊！”

“我才不评论别人呢，”她笑起来，“我是被人评论的！”

恰在此时，门被猛然推开。“啊，对，你的评论家来了！”德雷顿·迪恩赫然出现，两条长腿，高高的脑门。他来一是打听她对《通行权》有何评价，二是带来一个特别要紧的消息。几份晚报都登了一份关于本书作者的电报，说是他在罗马罹患疟疾。起初并不觉得严重，但是经过一系列并发症，如今病况急转直下，令人忧虑。

实际上，那种忧虑的情绪，我是直到最后一刻才渐渐有所感知的。面对这些消息，考威克太太显然是关切的，但这份关切并没能掩盖她骨子里的超然物外，这态度委实让我震撼——由此可见，她的独立精神之彻底到了怎样的程度。这种独立乃是基于她的知识，如今已经没有什么能摧毁这种知识了，也没有什么能改变它了。地毯上的花纹也许还得再添一两道螺旋，可是判词其实已经写好。作家也许将走向坟墓，她便成了这世上最不需要他继续存在的那个人——就好像她成了他最偏爱的继承人。这让我想起，在某个特定的时刻——考威克去世之后——我发现她原先想亲眼见到维里克的渴望是如何一落千丈。她不用见到他，就已经得到了她想要的东西。我认定，假如她没有得到它，那她就会不遗余力，非得亲自去试探他，她会提出种种高妙的见解，在这方面通常男人比女人更容易领会，而对我而言，这些见解则会构成某种威慑。然而，我得马上补一句，尽管有这样令人反感的对比，但这并不意味着，我自己的心思不够暧昧复杂。一想到维里克也许已处于弥留之际，我心里就碾过一阵痛楚——那感觉是如此

辛酸，我居然仍旧那么自相矛盾地依赖着他。我忍受着痛楚，仍然控制住自己，尽管如此矜持世故的姿态对我也算是种补偿，却毕竟使得我和他只能被阿尔卑斯山和亚平宁山脉隔开。然而，日渐衰微的情势又让我隐隐察觉，没准儿到最后我会陷入绝望，忍不住跑去见他。当然，实际上我决不应该做这样的事。就这样，我停了五分钟，而我那两位同伴还在谈论这本新书，当德雷顿·迪恩问我有什么看法时，我站起身，回答说讨厌休·维里克，根本读不下去。离去时我心里很有把握，只要门在我身后一关上，迪恩就会一口咬定我这人太过肤浅。至于他那位女主人，对这说法至少是不会反驳的。

以下我使用更为简明扼要的调子，追溯此后发生的一连串无比诡异之事。三周之后便传来了维里克的死讯，这一年将尽时他妻子又跟着去世。这位可怜的太太我从未见过，但我有过一个无聊的想法，假若她能在他之后活得更长——长到足以让旁人合乎礼仪地觐见她，那我没准儿就能接近她，提出我那点虚弱的、如火星般转瞬即逝的恳求。她是否知情？如果她知情，那会不会说出来？完全可以预见，她不止有一个理由保持沉默。可是，后来，与她天人永隔之后，我觉得放弃确实是我的宿命。我被永久地困在了我的迷思中——我的监狱看守们已经把钥匙带走了。我发觉自己就像关进地牢的囚犯一样迷迷糊糊，直到考威克太太成为德雷顿太太，也不知时光流逝了多久。透过铁窗，我早已预见了这个结局，不过此事的进程不失得体，并未操之过急，而我们的友谊也早已坠入谷底。他们俩都是那么“知书达理”，在别人眼里自然是天造地设的一对，但我比别人更能估算出新娘在这段联姻中奉献出多少财富。纵观种种“文学圈婚姻”——报纸就是这么描述的——还从来没有哪位女士拿出过如此华丽的嫁妆。我的反应足够迅速，马上开始寻找这桩婚事的果实——我是指那种你能在丈夫身上一眼看出“先兆症状”的果实。既然认定新娘的嫁妆光彩夺目，我便以为能看到他展现出与其增值的财富相匹配的风采来。我知道他的“财富”原先有多少——我显然能从他那篇评论《通行权》的文章里掂出分量来。如今他恰巧站在一个我恰巧（甚至更为恰巧）够不到的位置上，于是我月复一月地在各种可能相关的期刊上寻找可怜的考威克没能发布的重要信息，现在这份责任已经落到了他的继承者手里。那位如今已经再嫁的寡妇，终将在重燃烈焰的壁炉边打破唯有再嫁的寡妇才能打破的沉默，而迪恩便会像彼时彼刻的考威克那样，像彼时彼刻的格温德琳那样，被新添的知识熊熊燃烧。好吧，他无疑会熊熊燃烧，但那团火却不会成为公之于众的烈焰。我将那些期刊一一浏览，终究是徒劳：德雷顿·迪恩倒是洋洋洒洒地四处泼墨，却没有哪一页上有我日思夜想的那一篇。他下笔染指种种话题，却从未与维里克有关。他长于讲述别人或者“畏惧”或者“忽略”（如他所言）的真相，却从未讲述如今我唯一看重的真相。我在那些被报纸称为“文学圈”的场合里频频遇见这对夫妇——我已经暗示过多次，我们这些人生来唯

有在这样的圈子里才玩得转。正逢格温德琳第三部长篇出版，她越发专注于在圈里奔忙，而我自己则认为这部作品比不上前一部，持这样的看法当然会被圈里视为异己。作品逊色是因为她的伴侣比以前逊色吗？如果说，她的秘密（按照她的说法）便是她的生命——这一点，从她越来越容光焕发的样子就能窥见端倪，她那因为意识到自己享有特权而流露的优越感，被她优美而仁厚的举止巧妙化解，使得她的容貌教人过目难忘——那么，迄今为止，它并未对她的作品产生直接影响。那只是让人——一切都只不过让人——越发觊觎它，只是用某种更美好更微妙的神秘感将它打磨得圆润光亮。

十一

因此，我目不转睛地凝视着她丈夫：我对他的打扰也许让他颇为不安。我甚至缠着他跟我对话。难道他不知情？难道他没有理所当然地得到它？——这问题在我脑中盘旋。他当然知情，否则他就不会那么古怪地反过来也盯着我。他的妻子跟他说过我想要什么，于是，面对我的无能，他和蔼可亲地觉得这是一件好笑的事。他并没有笑出来——他不怎么爱笑：他的套路就是在言谈中以空洞茫然（就像他的大脑门一样空洞茫然）来应对我的恼怒，这样一来我便会粗率地暴露自己。事情总是这样：我怀着坚定的信念，毅然从那些杳无人烟的空旷地带转身离去，那些地方似乎在地理位置上互相补足，共同象征着德雷顿·迪恩在表达能力和风格气度上的匮乏。他根本就没有本事利用他已经知晓的秘密，他其实没有能力继承考威克留下的责任。于是我做出更进一步的假设——这是我唯一瞥见的开心事。我认定，这份责任对他而言并没有什么魅力。他不感兴趣，他不关心。没错，我相信他蠢得根本无法领会我所缺少的东西能带来怎样的快乐，想到这一点我不禁深感安慰。无论事前事后，他都是那么愚不可及，而这一点也使得环绕在那不解之谜周围的金色光泽愈显深邃。不过，我当然也考虑到，他妻子也许曾给他强加过几条清规戒律。我首先得提醒自己，既然维里克已经撒手人寰，那最要紧的动机便随之消散。他固然留名于世，能从那些可能实现的举措中获得赞誉——但毕竟肉身消逝，再也不能表态了。唉，除了他之外，谁还能有这个权威呢？

夫妻俩生了两个孩子，然而第二个让母亲送了命。打击过后，我似乎又看到了一丁点儿似有若无的机会。我心里几乎想猛扑过去，但出于礼貌还是等了一段时间，最后我的机会终于以某种看起来有利可图的方式降临了。德雷顿夫人死后一年左右，我在一家小俱乐部里的吸烟室里见到了德雷顿·迪恩，我们俩都是这家俱乐部的会员，但是我有好几个月——也许是因为我很少去——没见过他了。房间里空无一人，机会难得。为了一劳永逸地了结这件事，我故意提出要给他点好处，我觉得这是他一直都想要的。

“我甚至比你更早就认识了你已故的妻子，”我开口道，“你一定得让我把长久以来一直积压在心头的话说出来。我乐意接受任何你认为合适的条件，来换取你肯定已经从乔治·考威克那里得来的信息——你知道，这可怜的人儿在他平生最快乐的日子，从休·维里克那里直接得到了这条信息。”

他就像一尊黯淡无光的、具有颇相学特征的半身像那样看了我一眼。“信息——？”

“就是维里克的秘密啊，我的好人儿——他那些作品的整体意图：把珍珠穿起来的那根线，被掩埋的珍宝，地毯上的花纹。”

他开始脸红——脑袋上隆起的地方眼看着就要冒出一串数字来[15]。“维里克的书有整体意图？”

这下轮到我跳起来。“你的意思不是你不知道这件事吧？”一时间我还以为他在耍我。“迪恩太太知道这件事，按照她的说法，她是直接从考威克那里听来的，而考威克耗尽心力、苦苦追查，才终于找到了洞口，这让维里克本人也深感快慰。洞口究竟在哪里？他婚后便和盘托出——而且只告诉一个人——而这个人，当这样的境况再度重演时，一定告诉了你。我理所当然地认为，考威克去世之后她成了那个知识的唯一的托管人，一定会准许你分而享之，作为维系你们之间关系的最高特权之一，难道我想错了吗？我只知道那知识价值连城，我想要你理解的是：如果你也能恩准我得其门而入，那你真是对我做了莫大的善事，我将为此感激不尽。”

他的脸终于涨得通红，我敢说他已经开始琢磨我是不是神志不清了。渐渐地，他跟上了我的思路，至于我自己，瞪大眼睛盯着他，我的惊讶比先前更为鲜活。然后他开口说话：“我不知道我们在说些什么。”

他不是在演戏——这是荒诞的真相。“她没有告诉你——？”

“没说过什么关于休·维里克的话。”

我大吃一惊。房间在旋转。它是如此珍贵，连这样的关系都难以得到！“以你的名誉起誓？”

“以我的名誉起誓。你他妈的出什么问题了？”他吼道。

“我惊呆了——我很失望。我原本想从你那里打探到真相的。”

“不在我这里！”他尴尬地笑起来，“即使——”

“如果是的话，你就会让我得到它了——哦，是啊，毕竟是人之常情。不过我相信你。我懂——我懂了！”我继续说。眼看着轮子转了一整圈，我才意识到我那巨大的幻觉，关于这可怜的人儿的态度举

止，我原先的看法是错的。虽然我无法明说，但我看得真切：他太太并不觉得他值得被点醒。在我看来，这发生在一个认为他值得嫁的女人身上，真是件怪事。最终我找到了一点儿可以自圆其说的理由：她嫁给他，不可能是因为他悟性过人。她嫁给他，是出于别的考虑。

如今他倒是在某种程度上被点醒了，可这样一来，他越发惊讶、越发慌张了：他寻思了一会儿，把我的故事和他飞快的回顾做了一番比较。最终，尽管有气无力，他还是努力维持着体面，他说：“你提到的事情，我还是第一次听说。德雷顿·迪恩太太有什么未曾提及的——更不要说什么不能提及的——关于休·维里克的知识，我想你这么说是搞错了。假如这种知识与他的文学风格密切相关，她当然会希望它被善加利用。”

“它确实给用上了。她自己用的。她亲口告诉我，她就靠它‘活着’呢。”

我话一出口就后悔了，他的脸色骤然苍白，就好像刚刚挨了我的打似的。“啊，‘活着’——！”他喃喃地说，猛地转过脸不看我。

我的悔恨是真心的。我一只手搭在他肩膀上。

“请你原谅我——我错了。你其实并不知道那件我以为你知道的事情。如果我猜得对，那你本来是会帮我一把的。我也曾经自有一番理由，以为站在你的立场上，也可能会满足我的要求。”

“你的理由？”他重复了一遍，“你有什么理由？”

我注视着他，犹疑不定，思前想后。“你过来，坐在我身边，我来告诉你。”我拉着他坐上一张沙发，又点燃一支雪茄，开始讲述维里克那一回从云端倏然降落。我向他细细描述那一连串异乎寻常的意外事件，尽管它们起初也曾带来一道微光，但直到此时此刻，它们始终把我笼罩在一团黑暗中。总之，我把我在这里写下的事情，全都告诉了他。他听着，越听越入神，而我也渐渐惊讶地意识到，从他突然发出的惊叹看，从他提出的问题看，归根到底，他并不是那种不配得到他太太信任的人啊。他突然察觉到她并不信任他，这种感觉在那一刻让他好生烦恼。不过，我看到，起初那出于震惊的悸动先是渐渐消散，接着又再度聚拢，汇成一波波讶异而好奇的浪花——我完全可以断定，这些浪花最终会跟我自己内心中掀起的那股达到最高点的狂怒的潮水分道扬镳。不妨这么说吧，今时今日，作为欲望难以达成的受害者，我们俩之间并没有高下之分。这个可怜人的景况差不多成了我的安慰，时不时地，我觉得这完全可以算是我的报复。

[1] 即前文说到的“简恩斯太太”的昵称。（说明：书中脚注均为

译者注。)

[2] 引号中的原文为法语：raison d'être。

[3] 这是本篇中第一次出现直接对应标题的文字，原文是a complex figure in a Persian carpet，直译便是指波斯地毯上的复杂花纹。事实上，这种花纹通常因为烦琐而密集，并不能一眼就看清其纹理，因此a figure in the carpet如今也常用来比喻那些不是能马上判断清晰的事物。

[4] 指赌场。

[5] 原文为希腊语Eureka，即“我发现了”的意思。相传阿基米德根据比重原理测出金子纯度时曾说过这个词，从此成为典故，常用来表达对重大发现的惊叹。

[6] 原文为拉丁文Vera incessu patuit dea，引自古罗马诗人维吉尔叙述埃涅阿斯在特洛伊陷落之后经历的史诗《埃涅阿斯纪》。

[7] 印度教主神之一，守护之神。

[8] 原文为法语词secousse。

[9] 意大利风景区。

[10] 亚丁是也门首都，也是世界著名的港口。

[11] 此处的法语就是前面已经翻译成英文的电文的后半句：“真想看看你脸上会是什么表情！”作者在翻译之后又把原文列在这里，加以强调。从法语的原文看，这个句子的口吻比较随意、强烈、口语化，有比较明显的戏谑意味。

[12] 英国西南部原德文郡的南部海滨城市。

[13] 凡·戴克（1599-1641），佛兰德斯画家，英王查尔斯一世的宫廷画师，作品尤以贵族肖像画著称。

[14] 委拉斯开兹（1599-1660），按照发音又作贝拉斯克斯，但委拉斯开兹是他约定俗成的译名。委拉斯开兹出生于西班牙塞维利亚，是17世纪西班牙影响最大的现实主义画家，他同样以肖像画闻名于世。

[15] 颅相学家认为头盖骨上隆起的部分是才能的象征，此处显然是呼应前文的比喻——说迪恩就像一尊“具有颅相学特征”的半身像。

译后记

毫无疑问，亨利·詹姆斯是我的翻译生涯里遭遇的最难啃的骨头之一。《螺丝在拧紧》之后，我再次面对他的中篇小说《地毯上的花纹》，既跃跃欲试，又一筹莫展。

一筹莫展是因为，詹姆斯的文本，无论是对其语法的理解层面，还是对其意义的阐释层面，都有着让人深感受挫的难度。第一遍读下来，小说里的情节和人物都如鬼魅般忽明忽灭，躲开一切明确的结论——你横竖抓不住什么。十九世纪末英美文学圈的生态，隐约在小说中现出轮廓，有时细节纤毫毕现，有时又仿佛置身于半透明的罩子里，被看不见的手夸张而剧烈地摇晃。显然，这不是一部以古典现实主义准则构建的小说，它具有某种詹姆斯笔下特有的迂回而不安的现代性。

跃跃欲试是因为，这一篇虽然译成中文后仅三万字，却在詹姆斯的写作生涯中具有非常独特的风格和相当特殊的地位。小说首次发表于一八九六年一月号的《大都会》月刊（*Cosmopolis*），这本杂志虽然只存在了三年，却有过不小的排场：总部在伦敦，且在柏林、巴黎和圣彼得堡同时发行当地的版本，很吻合小说中描述的当时杂志期刊日益“国际化”的风潮。同年，这篇小说被收入詹姆斯的中短篇小说集《尴尬种种》（*Embarrassments*），英国版与美国版同时面市。回过头来看，《地毯上的花纹》是这本书里影响最大的篇目，而标题“地毯上的花纹”（*The Figure in the Carpet*）也渐渐成了一个被后世频繁引用的文学典故。英国小说家、评论家福特·马多克斯·福特（Ford Madox Ford）曾经说过，自从这篇小说出版之后，詹姆斯的同龄人就开始追求“地毯上的花纹”，希望能将原本复杂难辨的“花纹”变成清晰可鉴的物质实体。在发表于一九四一年的散文中，T.S.艾略特几乎把同样的话又说了一遍：“如今，我们都在寻找‘地毯上的花纹’。”

小说的第一人称叙述者，是个赚过一点儿稿费却苦于在圈里寂寂无名的写手。明显比他更为资深、主要以写评论为主的考威克因为来不及完成著名作家维里克的新作的书评，把这个机会转给了“我”。“我”以为抓到了在文学圈里进阶的机会，不料却像是一头撞进了一座迷宫。维里克对于这篇评论不屑一顾，并且抛出了一系列炫目的名词和意象，引诱“我”追逐对于其作品的终极破解：

在他本人看来，毫无疑问，那个让我们不胜迷惘的东西，明明是

清晰可见的。那玩意儿，我猜想，就藏在最初的规划中；宛若波斯地毯上的一个复杂的纹样。当我使用这个意象时，他表示高度赞赏，而他自己则用了另一种说法。“它就是那根线，”他说，“把我的珍珠穿起来的那根！”

此后的情节发展就进入了詹姆斯最善于营造的诡异疯狂的叙事链。“我”对于维里克（毋宁说是小说这种文体）的“整体意图”的追寻，注定要像《螺丝在拧紧》中那个关于“庄园里有没有鬼”的命题那样，经受百般折磨，经受“真谛”在眼前闪现又幻灭的海市蜃楼般的瞬间。洞悉维里克的秘密的人（或者说“我”以为洞悉秘密之人）一个接一个遭遇不测。詹姆斯得心应手地折磨着读者的耐心，在人物细节和对话里嵌入可以引发多重理解/误解的隐喻。熟悉詹姆斯套路的读者，几乎在小说写到一半时就能判断：直到结尾，我们也得不到答案。

但我们还是会一口气读完它。我们知道，像很多具有元小说特质的现代主义作品一样，这是一个用来阐述小说观念的小说。小说里的小说家和评论家的关系，是一种近乎猫捉老鼠的关系。小说文本的“整体意图”被层层包裹，被繁复衍生，被渐渐失去节制地神秘化。批评家疯狂地追逐它，而小说家则似乎一直在使用各种障眼法躲开这种追逐，这样的关系越来越具有奇特的仪式感。地毯上到底有没有花纹，这并不重要；重要的是，作者、批评家和读者的兴趣和精力，在这个过程中被刺激、被撩拨，同时也被消解，被损耗——像表演，像爱情，像生死。作为由古典主义向现代主义过渡的代表人物，詹姆斯对于时代风气的观察，对于小说作为一种叙事游戏的深层思考，都渗透在文本的肌理中。

在这篇小说里先后出现的几个命运多舛的人物，我们无法确认哪一个更能让詹姆斯产生代入感；我们同样无法确认詹姆斯是否要通过《地毯上的花纹》表达现代小说家和批评家的使命和宿命。（是使命多一点儿，还是宿命多一点儿？）可以确定的是，詹姆斯之后的写作者，越来越深切地体验到他在这篇小说里传达的那种时而狂喜、时而虚无的复杂感受。第二次世界大战结束之后陆续涌现的文学名词和小说流派，可能比此前的总和都更多。对于普通读者而言，弄清现代主义究竟在哪个时间点进入后现代主义，“后殖民”与“新历史”分别代表什么意思，或者推理小说究竟分出多少亚类型，并没有太明显的意义。社会现实的动荡和传播方式的剧变，使得小说作者与读者之间的信任感渐趋微妙。叙事套路仿佛已经穷尽，连“生活比小说更精彩”都成了老生常谈。小说家进退两难，时而希望勇往直前，沿着文体实验的道路越走越远；时而又希望重温现实主义的荣光，回归古老的故事传统。

在现代文学的语境中，小说家与批评家，作品的创造者和诠释者，他们之间究竟有没有可能实现真正意义上的默契，密码有没有可能被完美破解？我们从这个既抽象又具体甚至有时候颇具哥特风格的故事里，看不到詹姆斯对此有任何乐观的表示。故事的荒诞走向甚至让人联想到那个著名的思想实验：两位将军A和B各自盘踞在两座山顶，需要同时攻击山谷处的敌人，但他们之间的通信只能穿过敌方阵线进行。A给B发了个信息：“明天出击？”B回答：“可以。”但B不知道自己的回复有没有到达，而A必须给B发送另外一条信息来确认已经收到了B之前的信息，从而确保B会行动——实际上，为了达成完美的共识，他们需要发送无穷无尽的信息。

《地毯上的花纹》就在这种看不见尽头的努力沟通中戛然而止。然而，也许，无论是密码被（简化地）破解，还是因为无法破解而失去对破解的渴望，都会使小说的魔法黯然失色。这真是个绕不出去的悖论，但叙事艺术的奇迹和荣光，也恰恰蕴含在这悖论中。毕竟，詹姆斯狡黠地在绝境中也留着一星微暗的火：

如果说，她的秘密（按照她的说法）便是她的生命——这一点，从她越来越容光焕发的样子就能窥见端倪，她那因为意识到自己享有特权而流露的优越感，被她优美而仁厚的举止巧妙化解，使得她的容貌教人过目难忘——那么，迄今为止，它并未对她的作品产生直接影响。那只是让人——一切都只不过让人——越发觊觎它，只是用某种更美好更微妙的神秘感将它打磨得圆润光亮。

黄昱宁

2019年6月

‘Did she know
and if she knew
would she speak?’

The Figure in the Carpet

I

I had done a few things and earned a few pence – I had perhaps even had time to begin to think I was finer than was perceived by the patronising; but when I take the little measure of my course (a fidgety habit, for it's none of the longest yet) I count my real start from the evening George Corvick, breathless and worried, came in to ask me a service. He had done more things than I, and earned more pence, though there were chances for cleverness I thought he sometimes missed. I could only however that evening declare to him that he never missed one for kindness. There was almost rapture in hearing it proposed to me to prepare for *The Middle*, the organ of our lucubrations, so called from the position in the week of its day of appearance, an article for which he had made himself responsible, and of which, tied up with a stout string, he laid on my table the subject. I pounced upon my opportunity – that is on the first volume of it – and paid scant attention to my friend's explanation of his appeal. What explanation could be more to the point than my obvious fitness for the task? I had written on Hugh Vereker, but never a word in *The Middle*, where my dealings were mainly with the ladies and the minor poets. This was his new novel, an advance copy, and whatever much or little it should do for his reputation I was clear on the spot as to what it should do for mine. Moreover if I always read him as soon as I could get hold of him I had a particular reason for wishing to read him now: I had accepted an invitation to Bridges for the following Sunday, and it had been mentioned in Lady Jane's note that Mr Vereker was to be there. I was young enough for a flutter at meeting a man of his renown, and innocent enough to believe the occasion would demand the display of an acquaintance with his 'last'.

Corvick, who had promised a review of it, had not even had time to read it; he had gone to pieces in consequence of news requiring – as on precipitate reflection he judged – that he should catch the night-mail to Paris. He had had a telegram from

Gwendolen Erme in answer to his letter offering to fly to her aid. I knew already about Gwendolen Erme; I had never seen her, but I had my ideas, which were mainly to the effect that Corvick would marry her if her mother would only die. That lady seemed now in a fair way to oblige him; after some dreadful mistake about a climate or a 'cure' she had suddenly collapsed on the return from abroad. Her daughter, unsupported and alarmed, desiring to make a rush for home but hesitating at the risk, had accepted our friend's assistance, and it was my secret belief that at sight of him Mrs Erme would pull round. His own belief was scarcely to be called secret, it discernibly at any rate differed from mine. He had showed me Gwendolen's photograph with the remark that she wasn't pretty but was awfully interesting; she had published at the age of nineteen a novel in three volumes, 'Deep Down', about which, in *The Middle*, he had been really splendid. He appreciated my present eagerness and undertook that the periodical in question should do no less; then at the last, with his hand on the door, he said to me: 'Of course you'll be all right, you know.' Seeing I was a trifle vague he added: 'I mean you won't be silly.'

'Silly – about Vereker! Why what do I ever find him but awfully clever?'

'Well, what's that but silly? What on earth does "awfully clever" mean? For God's sake try to get at him. Don't let him suffer by our arrangement. Speak of him, you know, if you can, as I should have spoken of him.'

I wondered an instant. 'You mean as far and away the biggest of the lot – that sort of thing?'

Corvick almost groaned. 'Oh you know, I don't put them back to back that way; it's the infancy of art! But he gives me a pleasure so rare; the sense of – he mused a little – 'something or other.'

I wondered again. 'The sense, pray, of what?'

'My dear man, that's just what I want you to say!'

Even before he had banged the door I had begun, book in hand, to prepare myself to say it. I sat up with Vereker half the night; Corvick couldn't have done more than that. He was awfully clever – I stuck to that, but he wasn't a bit the biggest of the lot. I didn't allude to the lot, however; I flattered myself that I emerged on this

occasion from the infancy of art. 'It's all right,' they declared vividly at the office; and when the number appeared I felt there was a basis on which I could meet the great man. It gave me confidence for a day or two – then that confidence dropped. I had fancied him reading it with relish, but if Corvick wasn't satisfied how could Vereker himself be? I reflected indeed that the heat of the admirer was sometimes grosser even than the appetite of the scribe. Corvick at all events wrote me from Paris a little ill-humouredly. Mrs Erme was pulling round, and I hadn't at all said what Vereker gave him the sense of.

II

The effect of my visit to Bridges was to turn me out for more profundity. Hugh Vereker, as I saw him there, was of a contact so void of angles that I blushed for the poverty of imagination involved in my small precautions. If he was in spirits it wasn't because he had read my review; in fact on the Sunday morning I felt sure he hadn't read it, though *The Middle* had been out three days and bloomed, I assured myself, in the stiff garden of periodicals which gave one of the ormolu tables the air of a stand at a station. The impression he made on me personally was such that I wished him to read it, and I corrected to this end with a surreptitious hand what might be wanting in the careless conspicuity of the sheet. I'm afraid I even watched the result of my manoeuvre, but up to luncheon I watched in vain.

When afterwards, in the course of our gregarious walk, I found myself for half an hour, not perhaps without another manoeuvre, at the great man's side, the result of his affability was a still livelier desire that he shouldn't remain in ignorance of the peculiar justice I had done him. It wasn't that he seemed to thirst for justice; on the contrary I hadn't yet caught in his talk the faintest grunt of a grudge – a note for which my young experience had already given me an ear. Of late he had had more recognition, and it was pleasant, as we used to say in *The Middle*, to see how it drew him out. He wasn't of course popular, but I judged one of the sources of his good humour to be precisely that his success was independent of that. He had none the less become in a manner the fashion; the critics at least had put on a spurt and caught up with him. We had found out at last how clever he was, and he had had to make the best of the loss

of his mystery. I was strongly tempted, as I walked beside him, to let him know how much of that unveiling was my act; and there was a moment when I probably should have done so had not one of the ladies of our party, snatching a place at his other elbow, just then appealed to him in a spirit comparatively selfish. It was very discouraging: I almost felt the liberty had been taken with myself.

I had had on my tongue's end, for my own part, a phrase or two about the right word at the right time, but later on I was glad not to have spoken, for when on our return we clustered at tea I perceived Lady Jane, who had not been out with us, brandishing *The Middle* with her longest arm. She had taken it up at her leisure; she was delighted with what she had found, and I saw that, as a mistake in a man may often be a felicity in a woman, she would practically do for me what I hadn't been able to do for myself. 'Some sweet little truths that needed to be spoken,' I heard her declare, thrusting the paper at rather a bewildered couple by the fireplace. She grabbed it away from them again on the reappearance of Hugh Vereker, who after our walk had been upstairs to change something. 'I know you don't in general look at this kind of thing, but it's an occasion really for doing so. You *haven't* seen it? Then you must. The man has actually got *at* you, at what I always feel, you know.' Lady Jane threw into her eyes a look evidently intended to give an idea of what she always felt; but she added that she couldn't have expressed it. The man in the paper expressed it in a striking manner. 'Just see there, and there, where I've dashed it, how he brings it out.' She had literally marked for him the brightest patches of my prose, and if I was a little amused Vereker himself may well have been. He showed how much he was when before us all Lady Jane wanted to read something aloud. I liked at any rate the way he defeated her purpose by jerking the paper affectionately out of her clutch. He'd take it upstairs with him and look at it on going to dress. He did this half an hour later – I saw it in his hand when he repaired to his room. That was the moment at which, thinking to give her pleasure, I mentioned to Lady Jane that I was the author of the review. I did give her pleasure, I judged, but perhaps not quite so much as I had expected. If the author was 'only me' the thing didn't seem quite so remarkable. Hadn't I had the effect rather of diminishing the lustre of the article than of adding to my own? Her ladyship was subject to the most extraordinary drops. It didn't matter; the only effect I

cared about was the one it would have on Vereker up there by his bedroom fire.

At dinner I watched for the signs of this impression, tried to fancy some happier light in his eyes; but to my disappointment Lady Jane gave me no chance to make sure. I had hoped she'd call triumphantly down the table, publicly demand if she hadn't been right. The party was large – there were people from outside as well, but I had never seen a table long enough to deprive Lady Jane of a triumph. I was just reflecting in truth that this interminable board would deprive *me* of one when the guest next me, dear woman – she was Miss Poyle, the vicar's sister, a robust unmodulated person – had the happy inspiration and the unusual courage to address herself across it to Vereker, who was opposite, but not directly, so that when he replied they were both leaning forward. She enquired, artless body, what he thought of Lady Jane's 'panegyric', which she had read – not connecting it however with her right-hand neighbour; and while I strained my ear for his reply I heard him, to my stupefaction, call back gaily, his mouth full of bread: 'Oh it's all right – the usual twaddle!'

I had caught Vereker's glance as he spoke, but Miss Poyle's surprise was a fortunate cover for my own. 'You mean he doesn't do you justice?' said the excellent woman.

Vereker laughed out, and I was happy to be able to do the same. 'It's a charming article,' he tossed us.

Miss Poyle thrust her chin half across the cloth. 'Oh you're so deep!' she drove home.

'As deep as the ocean! All I pretend is that the author doesn't see –' But a dish was at this point passed over his shoulder, and we had to wait while he helped himself.

'Doesn't see what?' my neighbour continued.

'Doesn't see anything.'

'Dear me – how very stupid!'

'Not a bit,' Vereker laughed again. 'Nobody does.'

The lady on his further side appealed to him and Miss Poyle sank back to myself. 'Nobody sees anything!' she cheerfully announced; to which I replied that I had often thought so too, but

had somehow taken the thought for a proof on my own part of a tremendous eye. I didn't tell her the article was mine; and I observed that Lady Jane, occupied at the end of the table, had not caught Vereker's words.

I rather avoided him after dinner, for I confess he struck me as cruelly conceited, and the revelation was a pain. 'The usual twaddle' – my acute little study! That one's admiration should have had a reserve or two could gall him to that point? I had thought him placid, and he was placid enough; such a surface was the hard polished glass that encased the bauble of his vanity. I was really ruffled, and the only comfort was that if nobody saw anything George Corvick was quite as much out of it as I. This comfort however was not sufficient, after the ladies had dispersed, to carry me in the proper manner – I mean in a spotted jacket and humming an air – into the smoking-room. I took my way in some dejection to bed; but in the passage I encountered Mr Vereker, who had been up once more to change, coming out of his room. He was humming an air and had on a spotted jacket, and as soon as he saw me his gaiety gave a start.

'My dear young man,' he exclaimed, 'I'm so glad to lay hands on you! I'm afraid I most unwittingly wounded you by those words of mine at dinner to Miss Poyle. I learned but half an hour ago from Lady Jane that you're the author of the little notice in *The Middle*.'

I protested that no bones were broken; but he moved with me to my own door, his hand, on my shoulder, kindly feeling for a fracture; and on hearing that I had come up to bed he asked leave to cross my threshold and just tell me in three words what his qualification of my remarks had represented. It was plain he really feared I was hurt, and the sense of his solicitude suddenly made all the difference to me. My cheap review fluttered off into space, and the best things I had said in it became flat enough beside the brilliancy of his being there. I can see him there still, on my rug, in the firelight and his spotted jacket, his fine clear face all bright with the desire to be tender to my youth. I don't know what he had at first meant to say, but I think the sight of my relief touched him, excited him, brought up words to his lips from far within. It was so these words presently conveyed to me something that, as I afterwards knew, he had never uttered to anyone. I've always done justice to the generous impulse that made him speak; it was simply

compunction for a snub unconsciously administered to a man of letters in a position inferior to his own, a man of letters moreover in the very act of praising him. To make the thing right he talked to me exactly as an equal and on the ground of what we both loved best. The hour, the place, the unexpectedness deepened the impression: he couldn't have done anything more intensely effective.

III

'I don't quite know how to explain it to you,' he said, 'but it was the very fact that your notice of my book had a spice of intelligence, it was just your exceptional sharpness, that produced the feeling – a very old story with me, I beg you to believe – under the momentary influence of which I used in speaking to that good lady the words you so naturally resent. I don't read the things in the newspapers unless they're thrust upon me as that one was – it's always one's best friend who does it! But I used to read them sometimes – ten years ago. I dare say they were in general rather stupider then; at any rate it always struck me they missed my little point with a perfection exactly as admirable when they patted me on the back as when they kicked me in the shins. Whenever since I've happened to have a glimpse of them they were still blazing away – still missing it, I mean, deliciously. *You* miss it, my dear fellow, with inimitable assurance; the fact of your being awfully clever and your article's being awfully nice doesn't make a hair's breadth of difference. It's quite with you rising young men,' Vereker laughed, 'that I feel most what a failure I am!'

I listened with keen interest; it grew keener as he talked. '*You* a failure – heavens! What then may your "little point" happen to be?'

'Have I got to *tell* you, after all these years and labours?' There was something in the friendly reproach of this – jocosely exaggerated – that made me, as an ardent young seeker for truth, blush to the roots of my hair. I'm as much in the dark as ever, though I've grown used in a sense to my obtuseness; at that moment, however, Vereker's happy accent made me appear to myself, and probably to him, a rare dunce. I was on the point of exclaiming 'Ah yes, don't tell me: for my honour, for that of the craft, don't!' when he went on in a manner that showed he had read my thoughts and had his own idea of the probability of our some

day redeeming ourselves. 'By my little point I mean – what shall I call it? – the particular thing I've written my books most *for*. Isn't there for every writer a particular thing of that sort, the thing that most makes him apply himself, the thing without the effort to achieve which he wouldn't write at all, the very passion of his passion, the part of the business in which, for him, the flame of art burns most intensely? Well, it's *that* !'

I considered a moment – that is I followed at a respectful distance, rather gasping. I was fascinated – easily, you'll say; but I wasn't going after all to be put off my guard. 'Your description's certainly beautiful, but it doesn't make what you describe very distinct.'

'I promise you it would be distinct if it should dawn on you at all.' I saw that the charm of our topic overflowed for my companion into an emotion as lively as my own. 'At any rate,' he went on, 'I can speak for myself: there's an idea in my work without which I wouldn't have given a straw for the whole job. It's the finest fullest intention of the lot, and the application of it has been, I think, a triumph of patience, of ingenuity. I ought to leave that to somebody else to say; but that nobody does say it is precisely what we're talking about. It stretches, this little trick of mine, from book to book, and every thing else, comparatively, plays over the surface of it. The order, the form, the texture of my books will perhaps some day constitute for the initiated a complete representation of it. So it's naturally the thing for the critic to look for. It strikes me,' my visitor added, smiling, 'even as the thing for the critic to find.'

This seemed a responsibility indeed. 'You call it a little trick?'

'That's only my little modesty. It's really an exquisite scheme.'

'And you hold that you've carried the scheme out?'

'The way I've carried it out is the thing in life I think a bit well of myself for.'

I had a pause. 'Don't you think you ought – just a trifle – to assist the critic?'

'Assist him? What else have I done with every stroke of my pen? I've shouted my intention in his great blank face!' At this, laughing out again, Vereker laid his hand on my shoulder to show the allusion wasn't to my personal appearance.

‘But you talk about the initiated. There must therefore, you see, be initiation.’

‘What else in heaven’s name is criticism supposed to be?’ I’m afraid I coloured at this too; but I took refuge in repeating that his account of his silver lining was poor in something or other that a plain man knows things by. ‘That’s only because you’ve never had a glimpse of it,’ he returned. ‘If you had had one the element in question would soon have become practically all you’d see. To me it’s exactly as palpable as the marble of this chimney. Besides, the critic just isn’t a plain man: if he were, pray, what would he be doing in his neighbour’s garden? You’re anything but a plain man yourself, and the very *raison d’être* of you all is that you’re little demons of subtlety. If my great affair’s a secret, that’s only because it’s a secret in spite of itself – the amazing event has made it one. I not only never took the smallest precaution to keep it so, but never dreamed of any such accident. If I had I shouldn’t in advance have had the heart to go on. As it was, I only became aware little by little, and meanwhile I had done my work.’

‘And now you quite like it?’ I risked.

‘My work?’

‘Your secret. It’s the same thing.’

‘Your guessing that,’ Vereker replied, ‘is a proof that you’re as clever as I say!’ I was encouraged by this to remark that he would clearly be pained to part with it, and he confessed that it was indeed with him now the great amusement of life. ‘I live almost to see if it will ever be detected.’ He looked at me for a jesting challenge; something far within his eyes seemed to peep out. ‘But I needn’t worry – it won’t!’

‘You fire me as I’ve never been fired,’ I declared; ‘you make me determined to do or die.’ Then I asked: ‘Is it a kind of esoteric message?’

His countenance fell at this – he put out his hand as if to bid me good night. ‘Ah my dear fellow, it can’t be described in cheap journalese!’

I knew of course he’d be awfully fastidious, but our talk had made me feel how much his nerves were exposed. I was unsatisfied – I kept hold of his hand. ‘I won’t make use of the expression then,’

I said, 'in the article which I shall eventually announce my discovery, though I dare say I shall have hard work to do without it. But meanwhile, just to hasten that difficult birth, can't you give a fellow a clue?' I felt much more at my ease.

'My whole lucid effort gives him the clue – every page and line and letter. The thing's as concrete there as a bird in a cage, a bait on a hook, a piece of cheese in a mouse-trap. It's stuck into every volume as your foot is stuck into your shoe. It governs every line, it chooses every word, it dots every i, it places every comma.'

I scratched my head. 'Is it something in the style or something in the thought? An element of form or an element of feeling?'

He indulgently shook my hand again, and I felt my questions to be crude and my distinctions pitiful. 'Good night, my dear boy – don't bother about it. After all, you do like a fellow.'

'And a little intelligence might spoil it?' I still detained him.

He hesitated. 'Well, you've got a heart in your body. Is that an element of form or an element of feeling? What I contend that nobody has ever mentioned in my work is the organ of life.'

'I see – it's some idea *about* life, some sort of philosophy. Unless it be,' I added with the eagerness of a thought perhaps still happier, 'some kind of game you're up to with your style, something you're after in the language. Perhaps it's a preference for the letter P!' I ventured profanely to break out. 'Papa, potatoes, prunes – that sort of thing?' He was suitably indulgent: he only said I hadn't got the right letter. But his amusement was over; I could see he was bored. There was nevertheless something else I had absolutely to learn. 'Should you be able, pen in hand, to state it clearly yourself – to name it, phrase it, formulate, it?'

'Oh,' he almost passionately sighed, 'if I were only, pen in hand, one of *you* chaps!'

'That would be a great chance for you of course. But why should you despise us chaps for not doing what you can't do yourself?'

'Can't do?' He opened his eyes. 'Haven't I done it in twenty volumes? I do it in my way,' he continued. 'Go *you* and don't do it in yours.'

‘Ours is so devilish difficult,’ I weakly observed.

‘So’s mine! We each choose our own. There’s no compulsion. You won’t come down and smoke?’

‘No. I want to think this thing out.’

‘You’ll tell me then in the morning that you’ve laid me bare?’

‘I’ll see what I can do; I’ll sleep on it. But just one word more,’ I added. We had left the room – I walked again with him a few steps along the passage. ‘This extraordinary “general intention,” as you call it – for that’s the most vivid description I can induce you to make of it – is then, generally, a sort of buried treasure?’

His face lighted. ‘Yes, call it that, though it’s perhaps not for me to do so.’

‘Nonsense!’ I laughed. ‘You know you’re hugely proud of it.’

‘Well, I didn’t propose to tell you so; but it is the joy of my soul!’

‘You mean it’s a beauty so rare, so great?’

He waited a little again. ‘The loveliest thing in the world!’ We had stopped, and on these words he left me; but at the end of the corridor, while I looked after him rather yearningly, he turned and caught sight of my puzzled face. It made him earnestly, indeed I thought quite anxiously, shake his head and wave his finger. ‘Give it up – give it up!’

This wasn’t a challenge – it was fatherly advice. If I had had one of his books at hand I’d have repeated my recent act of faith – I’d have spent half the night with him. At three o’clock in the morning, not sleeping, remembering moreover how indispensable he was to Lady Jane, I stole down to the library with a candle. There wasn’t, so far as I could discover, a line of his writing in the house.

IV

Returning to town I feverishly collected them all; I picked out each in its order and held it up to the light. This gave me a maddening month, in the course of which several things took place. One of these, the last, I may as well immediately mention, was that

I acted on Vereker's advice: I renounced my ridiculous attempt. I could really make nothing of the business; it proved a dead loss. After all I had always, as he had himself noted, liked him; and what now occurred was simply that my new intelligence and vain preoccupation damaged my liking. I not only failed to run a general intention to earth, I found myself missing the subordinate intentions I had formerly enjoyed. His books didn't even remain the charming things they had been for me; the exasperation of my search put me out of conceit of them. Instead of being a pleasure the more they became a resource the less; for from the moment I was unable to follow up the author's hint I of course felt it a point of honour not to make use professionally of my knowledge of them. I *had* no knowledge – nobody had any. It was humiliating, but I could bear it – they only annoyed me now. At last they even bored me, and I accounted for my confusion – perversely, I allow – by the idea that Vereker had made a fool of me. The buried treasure was a bad joke, the general intention a monstrous *pose* .

The great point of it all is, however, that I told George Corvick what had befallen me and that my information had an immense effect on him. He had at last come back, but so, unfortunately, had Mrs Erme, and there was as yet, I could see, no question of his nuptials. He was immensely stirred up by the anecdote I had brought from Bridges; it fell in so completely with the sense he had had from the first that there was more in Vereker than met the eye. When I remarked that the eye seemed what the printed page had been expressly invented to meet he immediately accused me of being spiteful because I had been foiled.

Our commerce had always that pleasant latitude. The thing Vereker had mentioned to me was exactly the thing he, Corvick, had wanted me to speak of in my review. On my suggesting at last that with the assistance I had now given him he would doubtless be prepared to speak of it himself he admitted freely that before doing this there was more he must understand. What he would have said, had he reviewed the new book, was that there was evidently in the writer's inmost art something to *be* understood. I hadn't so much as hinted at that: no wonder the writer hadn't been flattered! I asked Corvick what he really considered he meant by his own supersubtlety, and, unmistakably kindled, he replied: 'It isn't for the vulgar – it isn't for the vulgar!' He had hold of the tail of something:

he would pull hard, pull it right out. He pumped me dry on Vereker's strange confidence and, pronouncing me the luckiest of mortals, mentioned half a dozen questions he wished to goodness I had had the gumption to put. Yet on the other hand he didn't want to be told too much – it would spoil the fun of seeing what would come. The failure of *my* fun was at the moment of our meeting not complete, but I saw it ahead, and Corvick saw that I saw it. I, on my side, saw likewise that one of the first things he would do would be to rush off with my story to Gwendolen.

On the very day after my talk with him I was surprised by the receipt of a note from Hugh Vereker, to whom our encounter at Bridges had been recalled, as he mentioned, by his falling, in a magazine, on some article to which my signature was attached. 'I read it with great pleasure,' he wrote, 'and remembered under its influence our lively conversation by your bedroom fire. The consequence of this has been that I begin to measure the temerity of my having saddled you with a knowledge that you may find something of a burden. Now that the fit's over I can't imagine how I came to be moved so much beyond my wont. I had never before mentioned, no matter in what state of expansion, the fact of my little secret, and I shall never speak of the mystery again. I was accidentally so much more explicit with you than it had ever entered into my game to be, that I find this game – I mean the pleasure of playing it – suffers considerably. In short, if you can understand it, I've rather spoiled my sport. I really don't want to give anybody what I believe you clever young men call the tip. That's of course a selfish solicitude, and I name it to you for what it may be worth to you. If you're disposed to humour me don't repeat my revelation. Think me demented – it's your right; but don't tell anybody why.'

The sequel to this communication was that as early on the morrow as I dared I drove straight to Mr Vereker's door. He occupied in those years one of the honest old houses in Kensington Square. He received me immediately, and as soon as I came in I saw I hadn't lost my power to minister to his mirth. He laughed out at sight of my face, which doubtless expressed my perturbation. I had been indiscreet – my compunction was great. 'I have told somebody,' I panted, 'and I'm sure that person will by this time have told somebody else! It's a woman, into the bargain.'

‘The person you’ve told?’

‘No, the other person. I’m quite sure he must have told her.’

‘For all the good it will do her – or do me! A woman will never find out.’

‘No, but she’ll talk all over the place: she’ll do just what you don’t want.’

Vereker thought a moment, but wasn’t so disconcerted as I had feared: he felt that if the harm was done it only served him right. ‘It doesn’t matter – don’t worry.’

‘I’ll do my best, I promise you, that your talk with me shall go no further.’

‘Very good; do what you can.’

‘In the meantime,’ I pursued, ‘George Corvick’s possession of the tip may, on his part, really lead to something.’

‘That will be a brave day.’

I told him about Corvick’s cleverness, his admiration, the intensity of his interest in my anecdote; and without making too much of the divergence of our respective estimates mentioned that my friend was already of opinion that he saw much further into a certain affair than most people. He was quite as fired as I had been at Bridges. He was moreover in love with the young lady: perhaps the two together would puzzle something out.

Vereker seemed struck with this. ‘Do you mean they’re to be married?’

‘I dare say that’s what it will come to.’

‘That may help them,’ he conceded, ‘but we must give them time!’

I spoke of my own renewed assault and confessed my difficulties; whereupon he repeated his former advice: ‘Give it up, give it up!’ He evidently didn’t think me intellectually equipped for the adventure. I stayed half an hour, and he was most good-natured, but I couldn’t help pronouncing him a man of unstable moods. He had been free with me in a mood, he had repented in a mood, and now in a mood he had turned indifferent. This general levity helped me to believe that, so far as the subject of the tip

went, there wasn't much in it. I contrived however to make him answer a few more questions about it, though he did so with visible impatience. For himself, beyond doubt, the thing we were all so blank about was vividly there. It was something, I guessed, in the primal plan; something like a complex figure in a Persian carpet. He highly approved of this image when I used it, and he used another himself. 'It's the very string,' he said, 'that my pearls are strung on!' The reason of his note to me had been that he really didn't want to give us a grain of succour – our density was a thing too perfect in its way to touch. He had formed the habit of depending on it, and if the spell was to break it must break by some force of its own. He comes back to me from that last occasion – for I was never to speak to him again – as a man with some safe preserve for sport. I wondered as I walked away where he had got *his* tip.

V

When I spoke to George Corvick of the caution I had received he made me feel that any doubt of his delicacy would be almost an insult. He had instantly told Gwendolen, but Gwendolen's ardent response was in itself a pledge of discretion. The question would now absorb them and would offer them a pastime too precious to be shared with the crowd. They appeared to have caught instinctively at Vereker's high idea of enjoyment. Their intellectual pride, however, was not such as to make them indifferent to any further light I might throw on the affair they had in hand. They were indeed of the 'artistic temperament', and I was freshly struck with my colleague's power to excite himself over a question of art. He'd call it letters, he'd call it life, but it was all one thing. In what he said I now seemed to understand that he spoke equally for Gwendolen, to whom, as soon as Mrs Erme was sufficiently better to allow her a little leisure, he made a point of introducing me. I remember our going together one Sunday in August to a huddled house in Chelsea, and my renewed envy of Corvick's possession of a friend who had some light to mingle with his own. He could say things to her that I could never say to him. She had indeed no sense of humour and, with her pretty way of holding her head on one side, was one of those persons whom you want, as the phrase is, to shake, but who have learnt Hungarian by themselves. She conversed perhaps in Hungarian with Corvick; she had remarkably little English for his friend. Corvick afterwards told me that I had

chilled her by my apparent indisposition to oblige them with the detail of what Vereker had said to me. I allowed that I felt I had given thought enough to that indication: hadn't I even made up my mind that it was vain and would lead nowhere? The importance they attached to it was irritating and quite envenomed my doubts.

That statement looks unamiable, and what probably happened was that I felt humiliated at seeing other persons deeply beguiled by an experiment that had brought me only chagrin. I was out in the cold while, by the evening fire, under the lamp, they followed the chase for which I myself had sounded the horn. They did as I had done, only more deliberately and sociably – they went over their author from the beginning. There was no hurry, Corvick said – the future was before them and the fascination could only grow; they would take him page by page, as they would take one of the classics, inhale him in slow draughts and let him sink all the way in. They would scarce have got so wound up, I think, if they hadn't been in love: poor Vereker's inner meaning gave them endless occasion to put and to keep their young heads together. None the less it represented the kind of problem for which Corvick had a special aptitude, drew out the particular pointed patience of which, had he lived, he would have given more striking and, it is to be hoped, more fruitful examples. He at least was, in Vereker's words, a little demon of subtlety. We had begun by disputing, but I soon saw that without my stirring a finger his infatuation would have its bad hours. He would bound off on false scents as I had done – he would clap his hands over new lights and see them blown out by the wind of the turned page. He was like nothing, I told him, but the maniacs who embrace some bedlamitical theory of the cryptic character of Shakespeare. To this he replied that if we had had Shakespeare's own word for his being cryptic he would at once have accepted it. The case there was altogether different – we had nothing but the word of Mr Snooks. I returned that I was stupefied to see him attach such importance even to the word of Mr Vereker. He wanted thereupon to know if I treated Mr Vereker's word as a lie. I wasn't perhaps prepared, in my unhappy rebound, to go so far as that, but I insisted that till the contrary was proved I should view it as too fond an imagination. I didn't, I confess, say – I didn't at that time quite know – all I felt. Deep down, as Miss Erme would have said, I was uneasy, I was expectant. At the core of my disconcerted state – for my wonted curiosity lived in its ashes – was

the sharpness of a sense that Corvick would at last probably come out somewhere. He made, in defence of his credulity, a great point of the fact that from of old, in his study of this genius, he had caught whiffs and hints of he didn't know what, faint wandering notes of a hidden music. That was just the rarity, that was the charm: it fitted so perfectly into what I reported.

If I returned on several occasions to the little house in Chelsea I dare say it was as much for news of Vereker as for news of Miss Erme's ailing parent. The hours spent there by Corvick were present to my fancy as those of a chessplayer bent with a silent scowl, all the lamplit winter, over his board and his moves. As my imagination filled it out the picture held me fast. On the other side of the table was a ghostlier form, the faint figure of an antagonist good-humouredly but a little wearily secure – an antagonist who leaned back in his chair with his hands in his pockets and a smile on his fine clear face. Close to Corvick, behind him, was a girl who had begun to strike me as pale and wasted and even, on more familiar view, as rather handsome, and who rested on his shoulder and hung on his moves. He would take up a chessman and hold it poised a while over one of the little squares, and then would put it back in its place with a long sigh of disappointment. The young lady, at this, would slightly but uneasily shift her position and look across, very hard, very long, very strangely, at their dim participant. I had asked them at an early stage of the business if it mightn't contribute to their success to have some closer communication with him. The special circumstances would surely be held to have given me a right to introduce them. Corvick immediately replied that he had no wish to approach the altar before he had prepared the sacrifice. He quite agreed with our friend both as to the delight and as to the honour of the chase – he would bring down the animal with his own rifle. When I asked him if Miss Erme were as keen a shot he said after thinking: 'No, I'm ashamed to say she wants to set a trap. She'd give anything to see him; she says she requires another tip. She's really quite morbid about it. But she must play fair – she *shan't* see him!' he emphatically added. I wondered if they hadn't even quarrelled a little on the subject – a suspicion not corrected by the way he more than once exclaimed to me: 'She's quite incredibly literary, you know – quite fantastically!' I remember his saying of her that she felt in italics and thought in capitals. 'Oh when I've run him to

earth,' he also said, 'then, you know, I shall knock at his door. Rather – I beg you to believe. I'll have it from his own lips: "Right you are, my boy; you've done it this time!" He shall crown me victor – with the critical laurel.'

Meanwhile he really avoided the chances London life might have given him of meeting the distinguished novelist; a danger, however, that disappeared with Vereker's leaving England for an indefinite absence, as the newspapers announced – going to the south for motives connected with the health of his wife, which had long kept her in retirement. A year – more than a year – had elapsed since the incident at Bridges, but I had had no further sight of him. I think I was at bottom rather ashamed – I hated to remind him that, though I had irremediably missed his point, a reputation for acuteness was rapidly overtaking me. This scruple led me a dance; kept me out of Lady Jane's house, made me even decline, when in spite of my bad manners she was a second time so good as to make me a sign, an invitation to her beautiful seat. I once became aware of her under Vereker's escort at a concert, and was sure I was seen by them, but I slipped out without being caught. I felt, as on that occasion I splashed along in the rain, that I couldn't have done anything else; and yet I remember saying to myself that it was hard, was even cruel. Not only had I lost the books, but I had lost the man himself: they and their author had been alike spoiled for me. I knew too which was the loss I most regretted. I had taken to the man still more than I had ever taken to the books.

VI

Six months after our friend had left England George Corvick, who made his living by his pen, contracted for a piece of work which imposed on him an absence of some length and a journey of some difficulty, and his undertaking of which was much of a surprise to me. His brother-in-law had become editor of a great provincial paper, and the great provincial paper, in a fine flight of fancy, had conceived the idea of sending a 'special commissioner' to India. Special commissioners had begun, in the 'metropolitan press,' to be the fashion, and the journal in question must have felt it had passed too long for a mere country cousin. Corvick had no hand, I knew, for the big brush of the correspondent, but that was his brother-in-law's affair, and the fact that a particular task was not

in his line was apt to be with himself exactly a reason for accepting it. He was prepared to out- Herod the metropolitan press; he took solemn precautions against priggishness, he exquisitely outraged taste. Nobody ever knew it – that offended principle was all his own. In addition to his expenses he was to be conveniently paid, and I found myself able to help him, for the usual fat book, to a plausible arrangement with the usual fat publisher. I naturally inferred that his obvious desire to make a little money was not unconnected with the prospect of a union with Gwendolen Erme. I was aware that her mother's opposition was largely addressed to his want of means and of lucrative abilities, but it so happened that, on my saying the last time I saw him something that bore on the question of his separation from our young lady, he brought out with an emphasis that startled me: 'Ah I'm not a bit engaged to her, you know!'

'Not overtly,' I answered, 'because her mother doesn't like you. But I've always taken for granted a private understanding.'

'Well, there was one. But there isn't now.' That was all he said save something about Mrs Erme's having got on her feet again in the most extraordinary way – a remark pointing, as I supposed, the moral that private understandings were of little use when the doctor didn't share them. What I took the liberty of more closely inferring was that the girl might in some way have estranged him. Well, if he had taken the turn of jealousy for instance it could scarcely be jealousy of me. In that case – over and above the absurdity of it – he wouldn't have gone away just to leave us together. For some time before his going we had indulged in no allusion to the buried treasure, and from his silence, which my reserve simply emulated, I had drawn a sharp conclusion. His courage had dropped, his ardour had gone the way of mine – this appearance at least he left me to scan. More than that he couldn't do; he couldn't face the triumph with which I might have greeted an explicit admission. He needn't have been afraid, poor dear, for I had by this time lost all need to triumph. In fact I considered I showed magnanimity in not reproaching him with his collapse, for the sense of his having thrown up the game made me feel more than ever how much I at last depended on him. If Corvick had broken down I should never know; no one would be of any use if he wasn't. It wasn't a bit true I had ceased to care for knowledge; little

by little my curiosity not only had begun to ache again, but had become the familiar torment of my days and my nights. There are doubtless people to whom torments of such an order appear hardly more natural than the contortions of disease; but I don't after all know why I should in this connection so much as mention them. For the few persons, at any rate, abnormal or not, with whom my anecdote is concerned, literature was a game of skill, and skill meant courage, and courage meant honour, and honour meant passion, meant life. The stake on the table was of a special substance and our roulette the revolving mind, but we sat round the green board as intently as the grim gamblers at Monte Carlo. Gwendolen Erme, for that matter, with her white face and her fixed eyes, was of the very type of the lean ladies one had met in the temples of chance. I recognised in Corvick's absence that she made this analogy vivid. It was extravagant, I admit, the way she lived for the art of the pen. Her passion visibly preyed on her, and in her presence I felt almost tepid. I got hold of 'Deep Down' again: it was a desert in which she had lost herself, but in which too she had dug a wonderful hole in the sand – a cavity out of which Corvick had still more remarkably pulled her.

Early in March I had a telegram from her, in consequence of which I repaired immediately to Chelsea, where the first thing she said to me was 'He has got it, he has got it!'

She was moved, as I could see, to such depths that she must mean the great thing. 'Vereker's idea?'

'His general intention. George has cabled from Bombay.'

She had the missive open there; it was emphatic though concise. 'Eureka. Immense.' That was all – he had saved the cost of the signature. I shared her emotion, but I was disappointed. 'He doesn't say what it is.'

'How could he – in a telegram? He'll write it.'

'But how does he know?'

'Know it's the real thing? Oh I'm sure that when you see it you do know. *Vera incessu patuit dea* !'

'It's you, Miss Erme, who are a "dear" for bringing me such news!' – I went all lengths in my high spirits. 'But fancy finding our goddess in the temple of Vishnu! How strange of George to have

been able to go into the thing again in the midst of such different and such powerful solicitations!’

‘He hasn’t gone into it, I know; it’s the thing itself, let severely alone for six months, that has simply sprung out at him like a tigress out of the jungle. He didn’t take a book with him – on purpose; indeed he wouldn’t have needed to – he knows every page, as I do, by heart. They all worked in him together, and some day somewhere, when he wasn’t thinking, they fell, in all their superb intricacy, into the one right combination. The figure in the carpet came out. That’s the way he knew it would come and the real reason – you didn’t in the least understand, but I suppose I may tell you now – why he went and why I consented to his going. We knew the change would do it – that the difference of thought, of scene, would give the needed touch, the magic shake. We had perfectly, we had admirably calculated. The elements were all in his mind, and in the secousse of a new and intense experience they just struck light.’ She positively struck light herself – she was literally, facially luminous. I stammered something about unconscious cerebration, and she continued: ‘He’ll come right home – this will bring him.’

‘To see Vereker, you mean?’

‘To see Vereker – and to see *me*. Think what he’ll have to tell me!’

I hesitated. ‘About India?’

‘About fiddlesticks! About Vereker – about the figure in the carpet.’

‘But, as you say, we shall surely have that in a letter.’

She thought like one inspired, and I remembered how Corvick had told me long before that her face was interesting. ‘Perhaps it can’t be got into a letter if it’s “immense”.’

‘Perhaps not if it’s immense bosh. If he has hold of something that can’t be got into a letter he hasn’t hold of the thing. Vereker’s own statement to me was exactly that the “figure” *would* fit into a letter.’

‘Well, I cabled to George an hour ago – two words,’ said Gwendolen.

‘Is it indiscreet of me to ask what they were?’

She hung fire, but at last brought them out. ‘“Angel, write.”’
‘Good!’ I cried. ‘I’ll make it sure – I’ll send him the same.’

VII

My words however were not absolutely the same – I put something instead of ‘angel’; and in the sequel my epithet seemed the more apt, for when eventually we heard from our traveller it was merely, it was thoroughly to be tantalised. He was magnificent in his triumph, he described his discovery as stupendous; but his ecstasy only obscured it – there were to be no particulars till he should have submitted his conception to the supreme authority. He had thrown up his commission, he had thrown up his book, he had thrown up everything but the instant need to hurry to Rapallo, on the Genoese shore, where Vereker was making a stay. I wrote him a letter which was to await him at Aden – I besought him to relieve my suspense. That he had found my letter was indicated by a telegram which, reaching me after weary days and in the absence of any answer to my laconic dispatch to him at Bombay, was evidently intended as a reply to both communications. Those few words were in familiar French, the French of the day, which Corvick often made use of to show he wasn’t a prig. It had for some persons the opposite effect, but his message may fairly be paraphrased. ‘Have patience; I want to see, as it breaks on you, the face you’ll make!’ ‘*Tellement envie de voir ta tête!*’ – that was what I had to sit down with. I can certainly not be said to have sat down, for I seem to remember myself at this time as rattling constantly between the little house in Chelsea and my own. Our impatience, Gwendolen’s and mine, was equal, but I kept hoping her light would be greater. We all spent during this episode, for people of our means, a great deal of money in telegrams and cabs, and I counted on the receipt of news from Rapallo immediately after the junction of the discoverer with the discovered. The interval seemed an age, but late one day I heard a hansom precipitated to my door with the crash engendered by a hint of liberality. I lived with my heart in my mouth and accordingly bounded to the window – a movement which gave me a view of a young lady erect on the footboard of the vehicle and eagerly looking up at my house. At sight of me she flourished a paper with a movement that brought me straight down, the movement with which, in melodramas, handkerchiefs and

reprieves are flourished at the foot of the scaffold.

‘Just seen Vereker – not a note wrong. Pressed me to bosom – keeps me a month.’ So much I read on her paper while the cabby dropped a grin from his perch. In my excitement I paid him profusely and in hers she suffered it; then as he drove away we started to walk about and talk. We had talked, heavens knows, enough before, but this was a wondrous lift. We pictured the whole scene at Rapallo, where he would have written, mentioning my name, for permission to call; that is *I* pictured it, having more material than my companion, whom I felt hang on my lips as we stopped on purpose before shop- windows we didn’t look into. About one thing we were clear: if he was staying on for fuller communication we should at least have a letter from him that would help us through the dregs of delay. We understood his staying on, and yet each of us saw, I think, that the other hated it. The letter we were clear about arrived; it was for Gwendolen, and I called on her in time to save her the trouble of bringing it to me. She didn’t read it out, as was natural enough; but she repeated to me what it chiefly embodied. This consisted of the remarkable statement that he’d tell her after they were married exactly what she wanted to know.

‘Only *then* , when I’m his wife – not before,’ she explained. ‘It’s tantamount to saying – isn’t it? – that I must marry him straight off!’ She smiled at me while I flushed with disappointment, a vision of fresh delay that made me at first unconscious of my surprise. It seemed more than a hint that on me as well he would impose some tiresome condition. Suddenly, while she reported several more things from his letter, I remembered what he had told me before going away. He had found Mr Vereker deliriously interesting and his own possession of the secret a real intoxication. The buried treasure was all gold and gems. Now that it was there it seemed to grow and grow before him; it would have been, through all time and taking all tongues, one of the most wonderful flowers of literary art. Nothing, in especial, once you were face to face with it, could show for more consummately *done* . When once it came out it came out, was there with a splendour that made you ashamed; and there hadn’t been, save in the bottomless vulgarity of the age, with every one tasteless and tainted, every sense stopped, the smallest reason why it should have been overlooked. It was great, yet so simple,

was simple, yet so great, and the final knowledge of it was an experience quite apart. He intimated that the charm of such an experience, the desire to drain it, in its freshness, to the last drop, was what kept him there close to the source. Gwendolen, frankly radiant as she tossed me these fragments, showed the elation of a prospect more assured than my own. That brought me back to the question of her marriage, prompted me to ask if what she meant by what she had just surprised me with was that she was under an engagement.

‘Of course I am!’ she answered. ‘Didn’t you know it?’ She seemed astonished, but I was still more so, for Corvick had told me the exact contrary. I didn’t mention this, however; I only reminded her how little I had been on that score in her confidence, or even in Corvick’s and that moreover I wasn’t in ignorance of her mother’s interdict. At bottom I was troubled by the disparity of the two accounts; but after a little I felt Corvick’s to be the one I least doubted. This simply reduced me to asking myself if the girl had on the spot improvised an engagement – vamped up an old one or dashed off a new – in order to arrive at the satisfaction she desired. She must have had resources of which I was destitute, but she made her case slightly more intelligible by returning presently: ‘What the state of things has been is that we felt of course bound to do nothing in mamma’s lifetime.’

‘But now you think you’ll just dispense with mamma’s consent?’

‘Ah it mayn’t come to that!’ I wondered what it might come to, and she went on: ‘Poor dear, she may swallow the dose. In fact, you know,’ she added with a laugh, ‘she really *must* !’ – a proposition of which, on behalf of every one concerned, I fully acknowledged the force.

VIII

Nothing more vexatious had ever happened to me than to become aware before Corvick’s arrival in England that I shouldn’t be there to put him through. I found myself abruptly called to Germany by the alarming illness of my younger brother, who, against my advice, had gone to Munich to study, at the feet indeed of a great master, the art of portraiture in oils. The near relative

who made him an allowance had threatened to withdraw it if he should, under specious pretexts, turn for superior truth to Paris – Paris being somehow, for a Cheltenham aunt, the school of evil, the abyss. I deplored this prejudice at the time, and the deep injury of it was now visible – first in the fact that it hadn't saved the poor boy, who was clever, frail and foolish, from congestion of the lungs, and second in the greater break with London to which the event condemned me. I'm afraid that what was uppermost in my mind during several anxious weeks was the sense that if we had only been in Paris I might have run over to see Corvick. This was actually out of the question from every point of view: my brother, whose recovery gave us both plenty to do, was ill for three months, during which I never left him and at the end of which we had to face the absolute prohibition of a return to England. The consideration of climate imposed itself, and he was in no state to meet it alone. I took him to Meran and there spent the summer with him, trying to show him by example how to get back to work and nursing a rage of another sort that I tried not to show him.

The whole business proved the first of a series of phenomena so strangely interlaced that, taken all together – which was how I had to take them – they form as good an illustration as I can recall of the manner in which, for the good of his soul doubtless, fate sometimes deals with a man's avidity. These incidents certainly had larger bearings than the comparatively meagre consequence we are here concerned with – though I feel that consequence also a thing to speak of with some respect. It's mainly in such a light, I confess, at any rate, that the ugly fruit of my exile is at this hour present to me. Even at first indeed the spirit in which my avidity, as I have called it, made me regard that term owed no element of ease to the fact that before coming back from Rapallo George Corvick addressed me in a way I objected to. His letter had none of the sedative action I must today profess myself sure he had wished to give it, and the march of occurrences was not so ordered as to make up for what it lacked. He had begun on the spot, for one of the quarterlies, a great last word on Vereker's writings, and this exhaustive study, the only one that would have counted, have existed, was to turn on the new light, to utter – oh so quietly! – the unimagined truth. It was in other words to trace the figure in the carpet through every convolution, to reproduce it in every tint. The result, according to my friend, would be the greatest literary

portrait ever painted, and what he asked of me was just to be so good as not to trouble him with questions till he should hang up his masterpiece before me. He did me the honour to declare that, putting aside the great sitter himself, all aloft in his indifference, I was individually the connoisseur he was most working for. I was therefore to be a good boy and not try to peep under the curtain before the show was ready: I should enjoy it all the more if I sat very still.

I did my best to sit very still, but I couldn't help giving a jump on seeing in *The Times*, after I had been a week or two in Munich and before, as I knew, Corvick had reached London, the announcement of the sudden death of poor Mrs Erme. I instantly, by letter, appealed to Gwendolen for particulars, and she wrote me that her mother had yielded to long- threatened failure of the heart. She didn't say, but I took the liberty of reading into her words, that from the point of view of her marriage and also of her eagerness, which was quite a match for mine, this was a solution more prompt than could have been expected and more radical than waiting for the old lady to swallow the dose. I candidly admit indeed that at the time – for I heard from her repeatedly – I read some singular things into Gwendolen's words and some still more extraordinary ones into her silences. Pen in hand, this way, I live the time over, and it brings back the oddest sense of my having been, both for months and in spite of myself, a kind of coerced spectator. All my life had taken refuge in my eyes, which the procession of events appeared to have committed itself to keep astare. There were days when I thought of writing to Hugh Vereker and simply throwing myself on his charity. But I felt more deeply that I hadn't fallen quite so low – besides which, quite properly, he would send me about my business. Mrs Erme's death brought Corvick straight home, and within the month he was united 'very quietly' – as quietly, I seemed to make out, as he meant in his article to bring out his *trouvaille* – to the young lady he had loved and quitted. I use this last term, I may parenthetically say, because I subsequently grew sure that at the time he went to India, at the time of his great news from Bombay, there had been no positive pledge between them whatever. There had been none at the moment she was affirming to me the very opposite. On the other hand he had certainly become engaged the day he returned. The happy pair went down to Torquay for their honeymoon, and there, in a reckless

hour, it occurred to poor Corvick to take his young bride for a drive. He had no command of that business: this had been brought home to me of old in a little tour we had once made together in a dog- cart. In a dog- cart he perched his companion for a rattle over Devonshire hills, on one of the likeliest of which he brought his horse, who, it was true, had bolted, down with such violence that the occupants of the cart were hurled forward and that he fell horribly on his head. He was killed on the spot; Gwendolen escaped unhurt.

I pass rapidly over the question of this unmitigated tragedy, of what the loss of my best friend meant for me, and I complete my little history of my patience and my pain by the frank statement of my having, in a postscript to my very first letter to her after the receipt of the hideous news, asked Mrs Corvick whether her husband mightn't at least have finished the great article on Vereker. Her answer was as prompt as my question: the article, which had been barely begun, was a mere heartbreaking scrap. She explained that our friend, abroad, had just settled down to it when interrupted by her mother's death, and that then, on his return, he had been kept from work by the engrossments into which that calamity was to plunge them. The opening pages were all that existed; they were striking, they were promising, but they didn't unveil the idol. That great intellectual feat was obviously to have formed his climax. She said nothing more, nothing to enlighten me as to the state of her own knowledge – the knowledge for the acquisition of which I had fancied her prodigiously acting. This was above all what I wanted to know: had she seen the idol unveiled? Had there been a private ceremony for a palpitating audience of one? For what else but that ceremony had the nuptials taken place? I didn't like as yet to press her, though when I thought of what had passed between us on the subject in Corvick's absence her reticence surprised me. It was therefore not till much later, from Meran, that I risked another appeal, risked it in some trepidation, for she continued to tell me nothing. 'Did you hear in those few days of your blighted bliss,' I wrote, 'what we desired so to hear?' I said 'we' as a little hint; and she showed me she could take a little hint. 'I heard everything,' she replied, 'and I mean to keep it to myself!'

It was impossible not to be moved with the strongest sympathy for her, and on my return to England I showed her every kindness in my power. Her mother's death had made her means sufficient, and she had gone to live in a more convenient quarter. But her loss had been great and her visitation cruel; it never would have occurred to me moreover to suppose she could come to feel the possession of a technical tip, of a piece of literary experience, a counterpoise to her grief. Strange to say, none the less, I couldn't help believing after I had seen her a few times that I caught a glimpse of some such oddity. I hasten to add that there had been other things I couldn't help believing, or at least imagining; and as I never felt I was really clear about these, so, as to the point I here touch on, I give her memory the benefit of the doubt. Stricken and solitary, highly accomplished and now, in her deep mourning, her maturer grace and her uncomplaining sorrow, incontestably handsome, she presented herself as leading a life of singular dignity and beauty. I had at first found a way to persuade myself that I should soon get the better of the reserve formulated, the week after the catastrophe, in her reply to an appeal as to which I was not unconscious that it might strike her as mistimed. Certainly that reserve was something of a shock to me – certainly it puzzled me the more I thought of it and even though I tried to explain it (with moments of success) by an imputation of exalted sentiments, of superstitious scruples, of a refinement of loyalty. Certainly it added at the same time hugely to the price of Vereker's secret, precious as this mystery already appeared. I may as well confess abjectly that Mrs Corvick's unexpected attitude was the final tap on the nail that was to fix fast my luckless idea, convert it into the obsession of which I'm for ever conscious.

But this only helped me the more to be artful, to be adroit, to allow time to elapse before renewing my suit. There were plenty of speculations for the interval, and one of them was deeply absorbing. Corvick had kept his information from his young friend till after the removal of the last barrier to their intimacy – then only had he let the cat out of the bag. Was it Gwendolen's idea, taking a hint from him, to liberate this animal only on the basis of the renewal of such a relation? Was the figure in the carpet traceable or describable only for husbands and wives – for lovers supremely united? It came back to me in a mystifying manner that in Kensington Square, when I mentioned that Corvick would have told the girl he loved, some

word had dropped from Vereker that gave colour to this possibility. There might be little in it, but there was enough to make me wonder if I should have to marry Mrs Corvick to get what I wanted. Was I prepared to offer her this price for the blessing of her knowledge? Ah that way madness lay! – so I at least said to myself in bewildered hours. I could see meanwhile the torch she refused to pass on flame away in her chamber of memory – pour through her eyes a light that shone in her lonely house. At the end of six months I was fully sure of what this warm presence made up to her for. We had talked again and again of the man who had brought us together – of his talent, his character, his personal charm, his certain career, his dreadful doom, and even of his clear purpose in that great study which was to have been a supreme literary portrait, a kind of critical Vandyke or Velasquez. She had conveyed to me in abundance that she was tongue-tied by her perversity, by her piety, that she would never break the silence it had not been given to the ‘right person,’ as she said, to break. The hour however finally arrived. One evening when I had been sitting with her longer than usual I laid my hand firmly on her arm. ‘Now at last what is it?’

She had been expecting me and was ready. She gave a long slow soundless headshake, merciful only in being inarticulate. This mercy didn’t prevent its hurling at me the largest finest coldest ‘Never!’ I had yet, in the course of a life that had known denials, had to take full in the face. I took it and was aware that with the hard blow the tears had come into my eyes. So for a while we sat and looked at each other; after which I slowly rose. I was wondering if some day she would accept me; but this was not what I brought out. I said as I smoothed down my hat: ‘I know what to think then. It’s nothing!’

A remote disdainful pity for me gathered in her dim smile; then she spoke in a voice that I hear at this hour. ‘It’s my *life* !’ As I stood at the door she added: ‘You’ve insulted him!’

‘Do you mean Vereker?’

‘I mean the Dead!’

I recognised when I reached the street the justice of her charge. Yes, it was her life – I recognised that too; but her life none the less made room with the lapse of time for another interest. A year and a half after Corvick’s death she published in a single volume her

second novel, 'Overmastered,' which I pounced on in the hope of finding in it some tell-tale echo or some peeping face. All I found was a much better book than her younger performance, showing I thought the better company she had kept. As a tissue tolerably intricate it was a carpet with a figure of its own; but the figure was not the figure I was looking for. On sending a review of it to *The Middle* I was surprised to learn from the office that a notice was already in type. When the paper came out I had no hesitation in attributing this article, which I thought rather vulgarly overdone, to Drayton Deane, who in the old days had been something of a friend of Corvick's, yet had only within a few weeks made the acquaintance of his widow. I had had an early copy of the book, but Deane had evidently had an earlier. He lacked all the same the light hand with which Corvick had gilded the gingerbread – he laid on the tinsel in splotches.

X

Six months later appeared 'The Right of Way', the last chance, though we didn't know it, that we were to have to redeem ourselves. Written wholly during Vereker's sojourn abroad, the book had been heralded, in a hundred paragraphs, by the usual ineptitudes. I carried it, as early a copy as any, I this time flattered myself, straightway to Mrs Corvick. This was the only use I had for it; I left the inevitable tribute of *The Middle* to some more ingenious mind and some less irritated temper. 'But I already have it,' Gwendolen said. 'Drayton Deane was so good as to bring it to me yesterday, and I've just finished it.'

'Yesterday? How did he get it so soon?'

'He gets everything so soon! He's to review it in *The Middle*.'

'He – Drayton Deane – review Vereker?' I couldn't believe my ears.

'Why not? One fine ignorance is as good as another.'

I winced but I presently said: 'You ought to review him yourself!'

'I don't "review,"' she laughed. 'I'm reviewed!'

Just then the door was thrown open. 'Ah yes, here's your reviewer!' Drayton Deane was there with his long legs and his tall

forehead: he had come to see what she thought of 'The Right of Way,' and to bring news that was singularly relevant. The evening papers were just out with a telegram on the author of that work, who, in Rome, had been ill for some days with an attack of malarial fever. It had at first not been thought grave, but had taken, in consequence of complications, a turn that might give rise to anxiety. Anxiety had indeed at the latest hour begun to be felt.

I was struck in the presence of these tidings with the fundamental detachment that Mrs Corvick's overt concern quite failed to hide: it gave me the measure of her consummate independence. That independence rested on her knowledge, the knowledge which nothing now could destroy and which nothing could make different. The figure in the carpet might take on another twist or two, but the sentence had virtually been written. The writer might go down to his grave: she was the person in the world to whom – as if she had been his favoured heir – his continued existence was least of a need. This reminded me how I had observed at a particular moment – after Corvick's death – the drop of her desire to see him face to face. She had got what she wanted without that. I had been sure that if she hadn't got it she wouldn't have been restrained from the endeavour to sound him personally by those superior reflections, more conceivable on a man's part than on a woman's, which in my case had served as a deterrent. It wasn't however, I hasten to add, that my case, in spite of this invidious comparison, wasn't ambiguous enough. At the thought that Vereker was perhaps at that moment dying there rolled over me a wave of anguish – a poignant sense of how inconsistently I still depended on him. A delicacy that it was my one compensation to suffer to rule me had left the Alps and the Apennines between us, but the sense of the waning occasion suggested that I might in my despair at last have gone to him. Of course I should really have done nothing of the sort. I remained five minutes, while my companions talked of the new book, and when Drayton Deane appealed to me for my opinion of it I made answer, getting up, that I detested Hugh Vereker and simply couldn't read him. I departed with the moral certainty that as the door closed behind me Deane would brand me for awfully superficial. His hostess wouldn't contradict *that* at least.

I continue to trace with a briefer touch our intensely odd

successions. Three weeks after this came Vereker's death, and before the year was out the death of his wife. That poor lady I had never seen, but I had had a futile theory that, should she survive him long enough to be decorously accessible, I might approach her with the feeble flicker of my plea. Did she know and if she knew would she speak? It was much to be presumed that for more reasons than one she would have nothing to say; but when she passed out of all reach I felt renouncement indeed my appointed lot. I was shut up in my obsession for ever – my gaolers had gone off with the key. I find myself quite as vague as a captive in a dungeon about the time that further elapsed before Mrs Corvick became the wife of Drayton Deane. I had foreseen, through my bars, this end of the business, though there was no indecent haste and our friendship had rather fallen off. They were both so 'awfully intellectual' that it struck people as a suitable match, but I had measured better than any one the wealth of understanding the bride would contribute to the union. Never, for a marriage in literary circles – so the newspapers described the alliance – had a lady been so bravely dowered. I began with due promptness to look for the fruit of the affair – that fruit, I mean, of which the premonitory symptoms would be peculiarly visible in the husband. Taking for granted the splendour of the other party's nuptial gift, I expected to see him make a show commensurate with his increase of means. I knew what his means had been – his article on 'The Right of Way' had distinctly given one the figure. As he was now exactly in the position in which still more exactly I was not I watched from month to month, in the likely periodicals, for the heavy message poor Corvick had been unable to deliver and the responsibility of which would have fallen on his successor. The widow and wife would have broken by the rekindled hearth the silence that only a widow and wife might break, and Deane would be as aflame with the knowledge as Corvick in his own hour, as Gwendolen in hers, had been. Well, he was aflame doubtless, but the fire was apparently not to become a public blaze. I scanned the periodicals in vain: Drayton Deane filled them with exuberant pages, but he withheld the page I most feverishly sought. He wrote on a thousand subjects, but never on the subject of Vereker. His special line was to tell truths that other people either 'funked,' as he said, or overlooked, but he never told the only truth that seemed to me in these days to signify. I met the couple in those literary circles referred to in the papers: I have

sufficiently intimated that it was only in such circles we were all constructed to revolve. Gwendolen was more than ever committed to them by the publication of her third novel, and I myself definitely classed by holding the opinion that this work was inferior to its immediate predecessor. Was it worse because she had been keeping worse company? If her secret was, as she had told me, her life – a fact discernible in her increasing bloom, an air of conscious privilege that, cleverly corrected by pretty charities, gave distinction to her appearance – it had yet not a direct influence on her work. That only made one – everything only made one – yearn the more for it; only rounded it off with a mystery finer and subtler.

XI

It was therefore from her husband I could never remove my eyes: I beset him in a manner that might have made him uneasy. I went even so far as to engage him in

conversation. *Didn't* he know, hadn't he come into it as a matter of course? – that question hummed in my brain. Of course he knew; otherwise he wouldn't return my stare so queerly. His wife had told him what I wanted and he was amiably amused at my impotence. He didn't laugh – he wasn't a laugher: his system was to present to my irritation, so that I should crudely expose myself, a conversational blank as vast as his big bare brow. It always happened that I turned away with a settled conviction from these unpeopled expanses, which seemed to complete each other geographically and to symbolise together Drayton Deane's want of voice, want of form. He simply hadn't the art to use what he knew, he literally was incompetent to take up the duty where Corvick had left it. I went still further – it was the only glimpse of happiness I had. I made up my mind that the duty didn't appeal to him. He wasn't interested, he didn't care. Yes, it quite comforted me to believe him too stupid to have joy of the thing I lacked. He was as stupid after as he had been before, and that deepened for me the golden glory in which the mystery was wrapped. I had of course none the less to recollect that his wife might have imposed her conditions and exactions. I had above all to remind myself that with Vereker's death the major incentive dropped. He was still there to be honoured by what might be done – he was no longer there to give it his sanction. Who alas but he had the authority?

Two children were born to the pair, but the second cost the mother her life. After this stroke I seemed to see another ghost of a chance. I jumped at it in thought, but I waited a certain time for manners, and at last my opportunity arrived in a remunerative way. His wife had been dead a year when I met Drayton Deane in the smokingroom of a small club of which we both were members, but where for months – perhaps because I rarely entered it – I hadn't seen him. The room was empty and the occasion propitious. I deliberately offered him, to have done with the matter for ever, that advantage for which I felt he had long been looking.

'As an older acquaintance of your late wife's than even you were,' I began, 'you must let me say to you something I have on my mind. I shall be glad to make any terms with you that you see fit to name for the information she must have had from George Corvick – the information, you know, that had come to *him*, poor chap, in one of the happiest hours of his life, straight from Hugh Vereker.'

He looked at me like a dim phrenological bust. 'The information –?'

'Vereker's secret, my dear man – the general intention of his books: the string the pearls were strung on, the buried treasure, the figure in the carpet.'

He began to flush – the numbers on his bumps to come out. 'Vereker's books had a general intention?'

I started in my turn. 'You don't mean to say you don't know it?' I thought for a moment he was playing with me. 'Mrs Deane knew it; she had it, as I say, straight from Corvick, who had, after infinite search and to Vereker's own delight, found the very mouth of the cave. Where is the mouth? He told after their marriage – and told alone – the person who, when the circumstances were reproduced, must have told you. Have I been wrong in taking for granted that she admitted you, as one of the highest privileges of the relation in which you stood to her, to the knowledge of which she was after Corvick's death the sole depositary? All I know is that that knowledge is infinitely precious, and what I want you to understand is that if you'll in your turn admit me to it you'll do me a kindness for which I shall be lastingly grateful.'

He had turned at last very red; I dare say he had begun by

thinking I had lost my wits. Little by little he followed me; on my own side I stared with a livelier surprise. Then he spoke. 'I don't know what you're talking about.'

He wasn't acting – it was the absurd truth. 'She *didn't* tell you –?'

'Nothing about Hugh Vereker.'

I was stupefied; the room went round. It had been too good even for that! 'Upon your honour?'

'Upon my honour. What the devil's the matter with you?' he growled.

'I'm astounded – I'm disappointed. I wanted to get it out of you.'

'It isn't *in* me!' he awkwardly laughed. 'And even if it were –'

'If it were you'd let me have it – oh yes, in common humanity. But I believe you. I see – I see!' I went on, conscious, with the full turn of the wheel, of my great delusion, my false view of the poor man's attitude. What I saw, though I couldn't say it, was that his wife hadn't thought him worth enlightening. This struck me as strange for a woman who had thought him worth marrying. At last I explained it by the reflection that she couldn't possibly have married him for his understanding. She had married him for something else.

He was to some extent enlightened now, but he was even more astonished, more disconcerted: he took a moment to compare my story with his quickened memories. The result of his meditation was his presently saying with a good deal of rather feeble form: 'This is the first I hear of what you allude to. I think you must be mistaken as to Mrs Drayton Deane's having had any unmentioned, and still less any unmentionable, knowledge of Hugh Vereker. She'd certainly have wished it – should it have borne on his literary character – to be used.'

'It *was* used. She used it herself. She told me with her own lips that she "lived" on it.'

I had no sooner spoken than I repented of my words; he grew so pale that I felt as if I had struck him. 'Ah "lived" –!' he murmured, turning short away from me.

My compunction was real; I laid my hand on his shoulder. 'I beg you to forgive me – I've made a mistake. You *don't* know what I thought you knew. You could, if I had been right, have rendered me a service; and I had my reasons for assuming that you'd be in a position to meet me.

'Your reasons?' he echoed. 'What were your reasons?'

I looked at him well; I hesitated; I considered. 'Come and sit down with me here and I'll tell you.' I drew him to a sofa, I lighted another cigar and, beginning with the anecdote of Vereker's one descent from the clouds, I recited to him the extraordinary chain of accidents that had, in spite of the original gleam, kept me till that hour in the dark. I told him in a word just what I've written out here. He listened with deepening attention, and I became aware, to my surprise, by his ejaculations, by his questions, that he would have been after all not unworthy to be trusted by his wife. So abrupt an experience of her want of trust had now a disturbing effect on him; but I saw the immediate shock throb away little by little and then gather again into waves of wonder and curiosity – waves that promised, I could perfectly judge, to break in the end with the fury of my own highest tides. I may say that today as victims of unappeased desire there isn't a pin to choose between us. The poor man's state is almost my consolation, there are really moments when I feel it to be quite my revenge.



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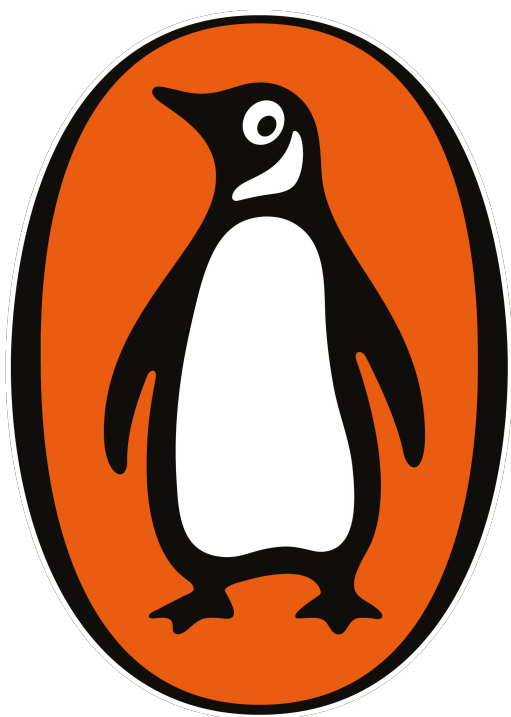
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灼烁的巨浪……”



PENGUIN
LITTLE BLACK
CLASSICS

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巴塔哥尼亚

火地岛

麦哲伦海峡

Patagonia

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Strait of Magellan

巴塔哥尼亚

1833年12月6日

小猎犬号航离拉普拉塔河，离开了它混浊的水道。我们将驶向位于巴塔哥尼亚的海岸线上的德西雷港。在深入航程以前，我必须先整理一下在海上的种种观察。

有几次是在小猎犬号距离拉普拉塔河口数英里 [1] 之处，另外几次则是在巴塔哥尼亚北部的海岸边，我们遇到了被昆虫团团包围的情况。有一天傍晚，在距离圣布拉斯湾大约10英里的地方，数量庞大的蝴蝶成群结队，覆盖了视线所及的全部天空。即使借助单筒望远镜，也看不见蝶群中有任何一丝缝隙。水手们大喊大叫：“下蝴蝶雪啦。”而这也确实是当时的景象。现场的蝴蝶种类并不单一，不过大多为同一物种，非常接近但区别于普通的英国红点豆粉蝶（*Colias edusa*）。其中夹杂着一些蛾类和蜂类与蝴蝶共舞；还有只漂亮的星步甲（*Calosoma*）飞上了船。有证据表明，有人曾在远海抓到过几次这种甲虫；然而眼前这情景可大为罕见，因为大多数步甲科（*Carabidae*）昆虫很少甚至从不飞行。那日的天气一直晴朗平静，前一天也同样如此，只有几丝轻盈而多变的微风。因此我们推测这些虫子不可能是从大陆吹来的，而是自行飞来的。起初，数量巨大、密密团团的豆粉蝶（*Colias*）似乎又一次证明了那些记录在册的小红蛱蝶（*Vanessa cardui*）的迁徙。但其他种类昆虫的出现使之非同寻常，并且很难解释。日落之前，从北面吹来了一阵强风，而这无疑会使数以万计的蝴蝶和其他昆虫就此毙命。

另有一回，在离科连特斯角17英里远的地方，我往水里抛了一张网，捕捞深海生物。收网后，我相当意外地发现里面有数量可观的甲虫，即使远在外海，咸水也没有对它们造成太多的伤害。我遗失了部分标本，但保存下来的则分别属于切眼龙虱（*Colymbetes*）、平基龙虱（*Hydroporus*）、毛跗牙甲（*Hydrobius*）（两个种）、锥须步甲（*Notaphus*）、黑步甲（*Cynucus*）、新麻萤叶甲（*Adimonia*）和圣蜚螂（*Scarabæus*）。起初，我以为这些虫子是被风从海岸边吹来的，但经过反复思考，鉴于这八个种类的甲虫里，有四种是水生，另外两种也有部分水栖习性，我觉得它们最有可能是随着一小股水流从科连特斯角附近的湖泊中一路漂流进入大海的。无论出于哪种假设，在距离最近陆地17英里的地方，发现昆虫在开阔的海面有活力地游动，都是非常有趣的现象。曾有几处记录显示有昆虫被风从巴塔哥尼

亚海岸吹来的现象。库克船长就观察到过，而最近一次，金船长在冒险号上也遇到了。昆虫被吹离海岸的原因极有可能是缺乏遮蔽，在既没有树又没有山的情况下，一只正在飞翔的昆虫很容易被吹向大海。在所有远离陆地观察到的昆虫中，最令我惊讶的是一只体形较大的蝗虫[飞蝗 (*Acrydium*) [2]]。它飞上小猎犬号时，我们正迎风驶向佛得角群岛，而离得最近的一块陆地，是不完全在季风风向上的布兰科角，位于非洲海岸线上，距我们有370英里之远。

有好几回，当船只位于拉普拉塔河口范围之内时，帆缆上便会结满飞航的蜘蛛的网。有一天（1832年11月1日）我特别留意了这一现象。那天天气晴朗无云，早晨的空气中满是一片片毛乎乎的网，就好像身处英格兰的秋天。船离陆地有60英里，一阵稳定而轻柔的微风顺着我们的航向吹拂。有无数的小蜘蛛，体长约1/10英寸 [3]，呈暗红色，黏着在一张张网上。我估计这艘船上一定有数千只小蜘蛛。它们刚接触帆索的时候，总是凭一根单独的蛛丝来固着，而不是停留在絮状的网上。这些网看起来就像是许多根单独的蛛丝纠缠在一起。这些蜘蛛都是同一个属种，有雌有雄，同时还有一些幼蛛，体形较小，颜色也更暗淡。对此我不再赘述，在我看来，它似乎并不属于拉特雷耶 [4] 分类系统中的任何一属。这小小的搭船客一落到船上就四处跑来跑去，异常活泼；有时会故意坠下来，然后再沿着同一根蛛丝往上爬；有时候则在角落的绳索间织一个小小的不规则的网。它在水面上相当灵活地移动，受到惊吓的时候会抬起前腿，摆出一副防御的姿态。这些蜘蛛最初抵达时似乎极为口渴，用一对突出的颚叶急切地喝着水；斯特拉克曾经观察到一模一样的情形：或许这是由于这些小小的虫子经过了一片干燥而稀薄的空气而来？它似乎能无穷无尽地吐丝。在观察某些悬垂在独根蛛丝上的小蜘蛛时，有好几回我都看到，哪怕是最轻微的一阵风也能把它们横吹出去，瞬间消失不见。另有一回（25日）环境情况类似，我反复观察到同一属种的小蜘蛛，不论是被放置还是自己爬行，只要到了一片微微隆起的高地，便会抬起腹部，往前射出一根蛛丝，然后沿侧面滑走，速度之快，令人百思不得其解。我以为我看到了小蜘蛛在做出上述准备动作之前，用最纤细的蛛丝把腿黏在了一起，然而我并不能确定这一观察是否正确。

有一天，就在圣菲，我得到一个更好的观察相似情形的机会。有一只身长约3/10英寸的蜘蛛，外形接近于游走蛛 (*Citigrade*)（因此与那些借助于风从远处来的飞航的蜘蛛截然不同），它落在一根木杆的顶端，从纺器里往前喷射出四五根蛛丝。这些在阳光中闪闪发光的丝，看上去有如一根根光线；它们不是笔直的，而是曲折起伏，像被风撩动的绸面。蛛丝长度超过1码 [5]，从吐丝口向上散射出去。紧接着，蜘蛛突然离开了木杆，迅速消失在我的视线中。那天热得很，显然也没有风，但即使在这样的天气里，气流也不可能让蛛丝这般纤弱

的风向标纹丝不动。如果在晴暖的日子里，我们观察物体投射到岸上的影子，或者眺望平原上距离较远的地标，热空气向上蒸腾的气流几乎是显而易见的。而这气流也足够吹起蛛丝上的小蜘蛛。在距离陆地数里格 [6] 之遥的很多海域上，都有人发现了不同性别不同年龄同一属种的蜘蛛大量依附在蛛丝上，这证明它们正是这些网的制造者，并且那乘风而行的习性，也极有可能是它们属种的特征，一如潜水之于水蛛（*Argyroneta*）。我们或许可以就此推翻拉特雷耶的设想，即这些蛛丝来自某些属种的幼蛛，比如球蛛（*Epeira*）或者蟹蛛（*Thomis*），然而，如同我们所观察到的，其他一些种类的幼蛛的确拥有随风远航的能力。

在拉普拉塔河以南不同的航段里，我常常在船尾拖一张旗布结成的网，因此捕捞到不少稀奇古怪的生物。栉水母（*Beroe*）（水母的一种）的结构最为奇特，有成排颤动的触手，以及复杂但并不规则的循环系统。甲壳动物（Crustacea）有许多新奇、未见描述的属。有一种，就某方面而言类似于某些十足目的蟹类 [7]（*Notopods*）（或是某种蟹，为了附着在暗礁的底部，这种蟹的后足指节几乎长到了背上），有着构造十分奇异的后足。它的倒数第二节关节，并非结束于单一的钳足，而是止于三个长度不一、刚毛样的附肢，最长的一节同整条足一样长。这些钳足非常细，锯齿状地分布着极其细密的齿，一直到基部。钳足弧形的顶端是扁平的，上面排列着五个极微小的杯状结构，其功能看起来类似于墨鱼触腕上的吸盘。鉴于这种生物生活在远海，大有可能需要歇脚之处，我猜测这一美丽的构造是为了能抓住水母以及其他海洋浮游生物球形的身体。

在远离大陆的深水区，生物的数量极其稀少：南纬35度以南，除了一些栉水母，以及切甲亚纲（Entomostraca）的几种丁点大的甲壳动物，我再也没有打捞到什么别的生物了。而在离岸数英里的稍浅一些的海里，有许多种甲壳类动物，以及众多其他动物，不过只在夜间出现。在南纬56度到57度之间，合恩角以南，我往船尾撒了好几回网，然而，除了零星捞到两种体形极小的切甲亚纲动物，简直一无所获。但这一片海域，却分布着数量极为可观的鲸鱼、海豹、圆尾鲣、信天翁。对此我总是疑惑不解，距离岸边如此之远，信天翁究竟是靠什么存活的。我推测信天翁有点儿像秃鹰，能够长时间地禁食，只要饱啖一顿腐烂的鲸鱼尸体便可抵挡长久的饥饿。然而并不能简单认定，它们以鱼为生，因为，那些鱼又以何为食呢？观察大西洋中部与南北回归线之间的水域里麇集的翼足目（Pteropoda）、甲壳纲和放射虫纲（Radiata）动物，以及吞食它们的飞鱼，再加上吞食飞鱼的鲣鱼和金枪鱼，我时常灵光一现地想到，那些处于最底端的远洋生物很有可能拥有分解二氧化碳的能力，一如植物王国的成员们。

船航行在这些纬度之间，每到黑夜，海洋就会呈现出一派壮丽的

景象，美不胜收。清风微拂，白天海面上铺天盖地的浮沫，这会儿闪动着淡淡的微光。船首破开两道磷光灼烁的巨浪，而船尾则拖曳着一条乳白色的航迹。目之所及，每一道浪尖都熠熠生光，地平线上方的天穹在这些青灰色光芒的映照下，不再像其余的夜空那般晦暗不明。

我们驶向更南方，大海中几乎看不到磷光了。离开合恩角之后，记忆中只见过一回，而且这磷光也远谈不上明亮。这种情形多半与这片海域生命的匮乏息息相关。关于海洋中的磷光，在埃伦伯格写过阐述详尽的论文之后，我再对此做出自己的考察大概有点儿多此一举。然而，我或许可以补充，埃伦伯格所形容的破碎的、不规则的凝胶状颗粒，似乎是引起南北半球磷光现象的共同原因。这种颗粒非常微小，能轻易地透过细纱布；然而多数仅凭肉眼就可以分辨。把这海水放在一个玻璃杯里搅动，它就会闪闪发光，但如果往表面皿里倒上些许，就很少见它发亮。埃伦伯格认为，这些颗粒都有一定程度的应激性。而我的观察，有一些是在刚取出海水后就直接进行的，得出了截然不同的结论。我还要指出，有一天夜间，在用过渔网后，我任其晾得半干，12个小时后再次使用它时，竟发现渔网的表面就和刚从海水里捞出来时一样闪着亮光。在这种情况下，颗粒是不太可能存活这么久的。我的笔记里还记录过我养的一只和平水母（*Dianæa*），在它死后，盛放它的水开始发光。当海浪闪耀着绿色的光亮时，我认为这大体上确实是由微小的甲壳动物发出的。而且，毫无疑问，仍然有许许多多的浮游生物会在活着的时候发出磷光。

有两回，我观察到在离水面相当远的深处海水在发着光。就在拉普拉塔河口附近，一片片地，呈圆形或卵形，直径在2到4码之间，轮廓清晰，散发着稳定、黯淡的光，而周围的海水只是偶尔闪烁一下。这些发光区看上去就像是月亮或者别的什么发光体的倒影，它们的边缘随着海面的起伏而曲折。我们这艘船吃水达13英尺 [8] 深，驶过这些发光区，却并没有搅散它们。由此我们可以推测，这些生物聚集在比船底还深得多的海里。

费尔南多·迪诺罗尼亚群岛附近的海水一阵一阵地闪着光，看上去很像是一条大鱼疾速地穿过一片发光的海水所造成。水手们也确实是这么认为的，可那个时候，基于闪光出现的频率及其迅疾的速度，我倒是对此持有几分怀疑。就观察到的现象总体而言，我早已说过，这一情形在温暖的区域比在寒冷的区域要更加常见。我有时候会设想，大气扰动的电磁状态极利于产生这种发光现象。当然，比起寻常天气，经过数天风平浪静的日子之后，这种发光现象最为强烈，因为此时的海水中聚集了各种各样的生物。我观察到充满凝胶颗粒的海水总是很混浊，而发光现象基本上都是由于和大气接触的海水被搅动而导致的，因此我一直倾向于认为磷光是源于有机颗粒的分解，在这一过程中（该过程差不多可以被称为呼吸作用）海洋得到了净化。

12月23日

我们抵达了德塞阿多港，就在南纬47度，巴塔哥尼亚海岸上。溪水深入内陆约20英里，时宽时窄。小猎犬号停泊在溪水入口内几英里之处，正对着古老的西班牙定居点的废墟。

我当晚就登上了岸。初次来到任何未知的土地总是令人兴奋的，尤其像这一回，风光景物都显得卓然殊异。在大约200到300英尺之间的高处，成片的斑岩之上，一块宽阔的台地延展开去，这正是典型的巴塔哥尼亚地貌。地面相当平坦，由浑圆的鹅卵石间杂着发白的泥土构成。瘦而坚韧如金属丝一般棕褐色的草，东一丛西一丛地散布着，间或夹有一些低矮多刺的灌木丛。天气干爽宜人，晴空如碧，少有云翳。站在任何一块荒凉台地的中央望出去，总有一边的视线为陡壁所阻挡，那是一块更高的台地，但同样地平缓、萧索；而另一边的景致则朦胧不定，地表受热蒸腾而起的气流让一切变得如海市蜃楼般缥缈。

有许多宽阔、底部平坦的山谷横穿台地，谷里的灌木丛尤为繁茂。如今这片土地的排水量显然不足以冲击出这般庞大的沟渠。在一些山谷里，一棵棵古老、矮小的树生长在干涸的河道正中，它们伫立在那里，仿佛为了证明自打洪水从此地奔流而去后，又有多少时间消逝如斯。地面上的贝壳表明，砾石台地是在最近一世 [9] 才上升到海平面之上的；而山谷也正是在那一时期由缓慢消退的水流冲击而成的。自从气候干旱以来，人们可能在这些台地之间走上几天，却看不见丝毫水的踪迹。即使在斑岩山脚下，也只有几口小小的水井，盛着少量半腐臭的咸水。

在这样一片土地上，西班牙定居点的命运很快就见分晓了。一年中大部分时间干旱的气候，以及游牧的印第安人时不时地怀有敌意的袭击，迫使殖民者废弃了尚未完工的建筑。不过，已见雏形的风格也显示出旧时期西班牙强烈而自由的气息。对于美洲南纬41度以南地区全部的殖民努力皆以悲剧告终。“饥荒港” [10] 这一名字透露出有数百个受难者在此苟延残喘、苦不堪言的种种，其中仅有一人幸存下来，讲述了这一苦难。在巴塔哥尼亚海岸的圣约瑟夫湾，西班牙人设了一个小小的定居点，印第安人在一个星期日袭击了他们，几乎屠戮了整支殖民队伍，只有两人幸免于难，并在游牧部落里做了多年的俘虏。我曾在内格罗河与其中一人交谈，彼时，他也已至耄耋之年。

巴塔哥尼亚的动物种群和它的植物种群一样寥落。在贫瘠的台地上，大致能看到有些黑色的甲虫[异跗节类 (Heteromera)]慢吞吞地爬来爬去，偶尔有一只蜥蜴飞快地从这一头蹿到另一头。至于鸟类，我们看到了三只吃腐肉的鹰，在山谷里则有几种雀鸟和以昆虫为食的鸟。黑脸鹮 (*Ibis malanops*) [11] (据说在非洲中部也有分布) 常见

于不毛之地。在它们的胃里我发现了蝗虫、蝉、蜥蜴甚至蝎子。一年里总有一段时间，它们成群生活，另一段时间里则成对出行；它们的叫声响亮而奇异，有点儿像原驼的嘶鸣声。

对于后者我将于此阐述一番，这一相当常见的物种，是巴塔哥尼亚台地上典型的四足动物。有些博物学家认为原驼与大羊驼是同一种动物，前者是后者的野生状态，是东方骆驼在南美洲的远亲。它的大小与驴子相仿，修长的四肢使得身形更高，而脖颈则极长。原驼遍布南美洲的整个温带地区，从林木葱茏的火地岛，到整个巴塔哥尼亚地区、拉普拉塔的山区，以及智利，甚至到秘鲁山脉。尽管偏爱在较高处生活，在这些地区它却不如它的近亲小羊驼一般繁盛。在南巴塔哥尼亚的台地上，它们的数量较其他地区要多得多。通常它们以小群生活，数量从6头到30头不等；但在圣克鲁斯的河岸边，我们看到一个原驼群，至少有500头之多。在麦哲伦海峡的北海岸，它们的数量也十分庞大。

总体而言，原驼野性十足，也异常警觉。斯托克斯先生曾经告诉我，有一天他透过单筒望远镜看到一群原驼，虽然距离遥远，单凭肉眼根本不可能准确辨认，但能看出它们显然已经受惊，正全速奔逃。猎手经常能第一时间捕捉到原驼的踪迹，他们隔着很远就能听见原驼奇异、尖厉而带有警戒意味的嘶鸣声。倘若猎手留心察看，极有可能会瞧见一群原驼在远处的山坡上站成一排。当猎手逐步接近，原驼会发出更多的嘶叫，然后沿着狭窄、被踩平的小径转移到邻近的一座山上，尽管看起来像是在慢慢跑动，实则速度飞快。倘若猎手碰巧撞见一头落单的原驼，或者只是几头在一起，它们多半会一动不动，专注地盯着猎人；接着或许会迈开几码，转过头来再度盯视。它们胆怯的表现何以如此不同？它们是不是错把远处的人当成了它们的主要天敌美洲狮？还是好奇战胜了胆怯？原驼很好奇这点确凿无疑，如果一个人躺在地上，做出滑稽的动作，像是双足在空中蹬踢，它们几乎总是会渐挪渐近，探个究竟。这个小招数被我们的猎手反复地成功实践，有时甚至还能开上几枪，因为这全都被当成了滑稽行径的一部分。在火地岛的山里，以及其他地区，我不止一次地瞧见原驼在有人靠近以后，嘶鸣吼叫，昂首腾跳，样子极其古怪，而这显然是故作姿态，以进为防。原驼相当容易驯养，我曾看见过一些养在房子附近被驯化的，不过也是和它们在野地里一样，处于放养状态。这种状态下的原驼十分勇猛，随时会以双膝从背后对人发起攻击。据说，这种攻击的动机源于对雌性的争风吃醋。尽管如此，野生的原驼却毫无防卫的意识；仅凭一条狗便能看住体形庞大的原驼，直到猎人赶来。从许多方面来看，它们的生物习性比较接近羊群中的羊。因此，当骑手从各个方向接近原驼的时候，它们会立刻陷入混乱，不晓得从哪个方位奔逃。这使得印第安人的狩猎变得轻而易举，因为它们很容易被驱赶到

一个中心点，被团团包围。

原驼很喜欢下水：在巴尔德斯港，好几次都有人目击到原驼从一个岛游向另一个岛。拜伦在他的游记里曾写道，他看到原驼在喝咸水。而我们的几位长官也同样瞧见，一群原驼似乎正从布兰科角附近的一个盐水湖里饮用咸水。我揣测，在这片土地的某些地方，如果它们不饮用咸水的话，就根本无水可喝。正午时分，它们常待在浅碟形的洼地里，在尘土中滚来滚去。雄性原驼总是打架，有一天，两头原驼和我擦身而过，它们尖声嘶叫，正在极力撕咬对方；有几头被射杀的原驼，兽皮上还有深深的咬痕。驼群有时候似乎会结队前去探险：在布兰卡港，距离海岸30英里的地区内，原驼是十分罕见的。有一天我观察到三四十头原驼的足迹，呈直线通往一条泥泞的咸水溪。随后，它们想必是察觉到了自己正在接近大海，于是便以一种骑兵队的规整步伐突然转了个方向，和它们来时一样笔直得像条线一般地往回走了。原驼有一个奇特的习性，令我相当费解：它们会连续若干日把粪便拉在同一个地方，形成明显的一堆。我曾见过其中的一堆，直径有8英尺，想必数量庞大。弗雷奇尔认为这一习性是原驼和美洲驼共有的；这对于使用粪便为燃料的印第安人极为有用，免去了收集的麻烦。

原驼似乎对于死亡的地点也有偏好。在圣克鲁斯河岸的一些特定区域内，地面上骨头累累，一片惨白，这些地点通常灌木丛生，全都靠近河边。在其中一处，我数到了约十几个头骨。我特意研究了这些骨头，它们看起来不像我以前见过的零星散落的骨头，那些骨头要么被啃噬过，要么就被折断了，似乎都是被猛兽拖到一起的。而这些骨头却不一样，从大多数骨头来看，这些原驼必定在死之前爬到了灌木底下，或者隐在灌木丛中。拜诺先生告诉我，在上一次旅程中，他在里奥加耶戈斯河岸注意到了一模一样的情形。我并不全然理解此中缘故，不过在圣克鲁斯，我观察到受伤的原驼无不走向了河边。在佛得角群岛的圣贾哥，我记得悬崖下面，一条与世隔绝幽深的沟壑里，集聚着数量可观的山羊骨头：当时我们都惊叫起来，认为这大概是岛上所有山羊的坟场了。我提及这些不足挂齿的事情，是因为在某些情况下，它们或许能解释数量不少、完好无损的骨头出现在山洞里或者河流冲积层中这一现象；同样地，也能说明何以在沉积矿床中一些哺乳动物比其他动物更为常见。圣克鲁斯任何一场大洪水都会冲刷出许多原驼的骨头，但大概连一根美洲狮、鸵鸟或狐狸的骨头都没有。我还观察到，几乎每一种水禽在受伤时都会到岸边等待死亡，也正是出于这一原因，在化石中很少见到鸟类的尸体。

1834年1月9日

天黑之前，小猎犬号停泊在圣胡利安港宽绰的港口里，距德西雷港南端约110英里。海港南边，一座高达90英尺的悬崖切断了上述构造的平原。它的表层散布着现代的海洋贝壳。与其他任何地区截然不同，这块地面被一层薄薄的、不平整的微红色淤泥所覆盖，包含一些小粒的钙质结核。这层淤泥有点儿类似于南美洲潘帕斯大草原上的那种，而且很有可能源于早先经此地入海的一条小溪流，还有点儿像如今还存在于港口前端的那种泥滩地。在某一处，这些淤泥填满了地面的空隙处及山谷，几乎蔓延至碎石层之下，而就在这层碎石中，也藏有很多大型的动物骨头。如同布兰卡港的情形，这些骨头所属的动物一定生活在贝壳出现很久以后的一段时期里，而这些贝壳至今还留存于该海岸。对于这一点我们基本可以确定，因为阶地或者台地较低的地质层的形成必然晚于它上面那几层，而在较高的两层地质层的表面，正散布着现代的海洋贝壳。从大陆最近一次抬升100英尺所产生的自然界的小小变化来看，在那些动物被埋藏的年代，气候以及巴塔哥尼亚总体环境，与今天相比几乎是一模一样的。根据这两个年代的贝壳种类来判断，关于这些动物出现时间的结论也站得住脚。难题紧随而来，在南纬49度15分这般恶劣的荒漠里，大型的四足动物是如何生存下来的呢？当时我对此一筹莫展，不清楚这些遗骸属于哪些动物。然而，当欧文先生察看这些骨头的时候，谜题却很快解开了：他判断这些骨头能拼出的动物的一部分，与原驼或者美洲驼是同一系的，但体形和真正的骆驼一样大。由于现存的所有骆驼科动物都生活在不毛之地，我们或许可以断定这是灭绝的一种。颈椎的结构，椎动脉所需的横突上未见穿孔，揭示了它与骆驼科的相关性；然而，该结构的另外一些部位，却是非常规的。

这一发现最重要的一个结果是，证实了一个原则，即现存动物与灭绝动物之间有亲缘关系。由于原驼是巴塔哥尼亚地区典型的四足动物，而小羊驼是白雪皑皑的科迪勒拉山脉最高峰的代表动物，所以在很久以前，与它们同属一科的这种体形庞大的动物也必定是南部平原上的主要动物。我们观察到了同样类型的关联，在现存栉鼠和栉鼠化石之间，在水豚和庞大的箭齿兽之间（欧文先生指出这两种间的关系并非那么明显），最后还有，在现生的贫齿类动物和灭绝的贫齿类动物之间。在今天的南美，至少有该目的19个物种间存在这种情形；而在世界其他的地区只发现了5种。那么，如果现生和灭绝的动物之间存有关联，我们当可期望发现数量庞大的贫齿类动物的化石。回答这个问题，我只需列举大地獭（*Megatherium*）以及在布兰卡港发现的三到四种大型的物种；在整个广袤的拉普拉塔地区也发掘出大量它们的遗骸。我早已指出犰狳和它们的祖先之间的奇特联系，这种联系甚至在它们外披的“铠甲”这样看似无关紧要的方面也存在着。

现今，存在于啮齿动物目的这种联系，在南美洲最为明显，这是由于该物种的数量庞大，物种多样化，加之个体数量繁多。根据同样的规律，我们应该能在化石中找到它们的代表。欧文先生揭示了谱系遥远的箭齿兽是怎样由这一规律联系起来的，所以，在另一种大型动物中，发现这种类似的亲缘关系，也并非不可能。

啮齿类动物与在布兰卡港附近被人发现的水豚有着几乎相同尺寸的牙齿，这也是值得记录的一点。

尽管难免遇见一些异常的例外，物种演变的法则，还是引起了一位爱好哲思的博物学家极为浓厚的兴趣。人们第一次明确观察到这一法则是在澳大利亚，在那里有一个山洞中，有人发现了各种已灭绝的大型袋鼠以及其他有袋目哺乳动物的化石遗迹。在美洲，哺乳动物中最显著的变化是几种乳齿象、一种大象以及某种马的消亡。这些厚皮兽早先似乎遍布全世界，就像今天的鹿和羚羊那样。如果布封知道这些巨大的犰狳、美洲驼、大型啮齿动物，以及灭绝的厚皮兽类动物，他的结论或许会更为准确，即美洲丧失了它的创造力，而不是美洲从未拥有过创造力。

对于这片大陆的更迭变化，我们不可能不感受到深深的惊讶。以前，这里和非洲南部一样，巨大的兽类来来往往，如今我们却只能看到獾、原驼、犰狳和水豚；这些动物同它们之前的物种相比，都只是一些小矮种。其中大多数已灭绝的四足动物，即使不是全部，大多也都生活在一个非常近的时期，与现存的软体动物是同时代的物种。自它们绝迹以来，这片土地的自然环境并没有发生什么大的变化。那又是何种因素让这么多的生灵灭绝了呢？在南美洲潘帕斯大草原上，这些遗骸集中的大坟场，并没有经受涂炭的痕迹，反而平缓安宁，少有可见的变化。在布兰卡港，我努力设想，早先的贫齿类动物和今天的亲缘种一样，生活在干旱的不毛之地，就像如今在周边环境。曾经，基于巴塔哥尼亚地区发现了大量美洲驼化石，我猜想这种和骆驼相似的动物曾经生活在巴塔哥尼亚地区。但由于该地区并没有发生过明显的气候变化，我曾对这一猜想感到疑惑。如今通过对美洲驼习性的揣摩，这种猜想奇异地得到了证实。不过，我们又该如何解释化石中出现的那种马的消亡呢？那些如今遍布了千万只西班牙殖民者所引进牲畜的平原曾经也经历过草场退化吗？在有些地区，我们可以认为，后来引进的一些物种吃光了以前动物的食物，这或许导致了它们的灭绝。但我们很难相信犰狳吃尽了巨大的大地獭的食物，水豚吃光了箭齿兽的食物，或者说原驼吃掉了那种很像骆驼的动物的食物。虽然从灭绝种群到现存动物发生的变化是微小的，但是鉴于我们对影响现存物种生存及健康（比如传染病之类的）的生理环境理解都相当有限，任何关于已灭绝物种的生存和灭亡原因的讨论都具有更大的不确定性。

人们倾向于相信物种的更替可以简单地归结为气候和食物的变化，天敌的引进以及其他物种数量的增长。但我们或许可以继续追问，这些变化是否在同一世内，席卷了整个北半球，以至于毁灭了西班牙海岸、西伯利亚平原以及北美洲的大象[真猛犸象（*Elephas primigenus*）]，同样地，还有分布范围几乎不亚于前者的野牛[原始牛（*Bos urus*）]？这样的变化能终结分布在欧洲和南美洲科迪勒拉山脉东坡的狭齿乳齿象（*Mastodon angustidens*）和化石中那种马的生命吗？如果答案是肯定的话，那这些变化就如同地球普遍降温一样具有全球性的影响，并且可以归结为地理环境的变化或者地球核心温度的降低。不过对于这些假设，我们还必须解决一个难题，即如何解释这些假想中的变化虽然不足以影响到在欧洲和南美洲的软体动物，却还是毁灭了多种分布于如今描述为寒冷、温和、热带气候地区的四足动物！这些灭绝的情形迫使我想起关于某些果树（我并不想做任何切近的类比），有人称，尽管这些果树嫁接在幼嫩的茎上，种植在不同的环境里，施以肥沃的养料，但还是在同一个时期全都枯萎凋零了。尽管是在不同时期萌发的，在这些例子里，成千上万的芽（或者说个体胚芽）都拥有一个相同的生命周期。对于大多数动物来说，每一种动物的个体看起来似乎是独立的，然而该种内的所有动物又遵循共同的法则，一如那些数量可观的单个的芽和树，或是植形动物（*Zoophyte*）中的珊瑚水螅。

在此还有另外一个观察需要补充。我们发现整个生物链都是以特殊的结构联结在一起的，隶属于一定的区域；但我们却很难认定这些架构只适用于某种特定的气候或者土地；否则，不同类型的动物被人类引进后，就不会繁衍得如此顺畅，甚至引起本土物种的灭绝。基于这些原因，我们认为，物种的灭绝，正如它们的诞生，并不完全取决于它们所处的地理环境（由物理条件变化而引起）。眼前我们能确定无疑的是，对于已经灭绝的生命个体及种群，它们的生命周期已经结束。

4月13日

小猎犬号停泊在圣克鲁斯河河口之内。这条河位于圣胡利安港以南约60英里处。在最近一次航行中，斯托克斯船长逆流而上30英里，但很快由于缺乏补给，被迫返航了。除了那趟航行时所发现的，我们对这条大河所知甚少。菲茨罗伊船长决心只要时间允许，就尽可能沿着河道而行。18日这天，三艘小艇起航，携带了三周的食品补给。船队有25人——这是一支足以抵挡一大群印第安人的力量。凭着强烈的涨潮，又加上天气晴好，我们的航行非常顺利，很快就喝到了新鲜的

淡水，并且在晚间摆脱了潮汐的影响。

河流在此处呈一片宽阔的景象，非常优美，即使到了我们最后抵达的最上游，河流的宽度也几乎没有缩小。它大约有300到400码宽，中间深及17英尺。流速很快，从头到尾保持了每小时4到6节（海里/小时）的速度，这或许是它最显著的特点了。河水湛蓝，但略带一丝混浊，并不像第一眼看上去那么澄澈透亮。河床上布满了鹅卵石，与海滩和周边平原上那些鹅卵石非常接近。尽管河道弯曲，它流经的一座山谷却笔直地往西延伸。这座山谷宽窄不一，从5到10英里不等；两旁是阶梯形的台地，在大部分地方以500英尺一层的高度往上递增，而对面的谷壁与之惊人地对称。

4月19日

激流湍湍，显然完全没可能划桨或者扬帆前行。因此三艘小艇被头尾相连地紧紧系在了一起，每艘船上留下两个人，其余的人则到岸上拉纤。菲茨罗伊船长的总体安排十分妥帖，人人都工作得更顺手，也人人都搭得上手，因此我要讲述一下其中门道。这支队伍的所有人被分成轮替的两班，每班人轮换着拉纤一个半小时。每艘船的长官都和船员生活在一起，吃同一种食物，也睡在同一顶帐篷里，因此船与船之间各自独立。日落之后，遇到的第一处长有灌木的平地，会被选为我们的过夜地。每一队的每个船员轮番做饭。船一拖上岸，伙夫就生起火来；另外两个人则搭建帐篷；舵手从船上递物品；其余的人则把这些东西运到帐篷里，收集柴火。就这般井然有序，不到一个半小时，便万事俱备，只等着过夜了。始终有两个船员和一位长官一起值夜，他们负责看管船只、维护篝火，以及防备印第安人。队伍中的每个人每晚轮值一小时。

这一天，我们只前行了一段很短的距离，因为航路上有许多荆棘丛生的小岛，其间的水道极浅。

4月20日

我们越过了多岛的河段，开始工作。我们的日常跋涉虽然十分艰苦，但每天大致能抵达平均直线距离在10英里的地方，总的来说可能有15到20英里。远离昨天过夜之处，我们面对的便是全然未知的土地了，因为斯托克斯船长就是自此返航的。我们瞧见远处有浓烟升起，发现了一匹马的尸骨，因此我们知道印第安人就在附近。第二天（21日）早上发现了一群马奔腾而过的足迹，也观察到许多长矛在地面上拖曳的印痕。基本上可以判断，他们一定在夜间来侦察过我们。没过多久，我们来到一处地方，那里大人、孩子和马匹的足迹犹新，显然这一队人马刚刚渡河而去。

4月29日

站在一处高地上，我们兴奋地看见科迪勒拉山脉那积雪皑皑的峰顶于晦暗不明的云雾中若隐若现。在接下来的几天里，我们行程迟缓，因为河道曲折，还散落着各种古老的板岩和花岗岩的巨大碎块。在此处，河谷周围的台地高度可达1100英尺，而且地貌特征发生了明显的改变。浑圆的斑岩鹅卵石中混杂了许多巨大、棱角分明的玄武岩和上述两种岩石的碎块。我注意到的第一块漂砾距离最近的山有67英里；另一块，漂移的距离相对较近，有5码见方，从砾石地上耸起5英尺高。它的边缘棱角突出，体积庞然，起先我还误以为这是一块未经漂移的巨石，拿出指南针来观测它的节理 [12] 走向。此处的台地不似靠近海边的平原那般平整，然而也几乎没有迹象表明它们曾遭遇过剧烈的变动。我认为，在这种情况下，冰川运动是唯一合理的结论，即当这片土地还在水下时，冰川的移动使岩石呈现出此种形态。但针对这一话题，我还将进行更详细的讨论。

在过去的两天里，我们看到了马匹的足迹，还有几样属于印第安人的小物件——像是斗篷的残片以及一束鸵鸟羽毛——不过它们似乎被遗弃在地上很久了。印第安人最近刚渡河的地方与这里相距遥远，其间的这一片土地似乎人迹罕至。起初，鉴于这里原驼数量颇丰，我对此感到相当讶异；但是我随后又想到这一片的地面多石，没有打过马掌的马会在追猎中迅速败下阵来，因此这一处少见印第安人也就没那么令人惊讶了。尽管如此，我还是在这片中心的两处地方发现了一些小石堆，在我看来它们不像是偶然落在那里堆成的。它们被摆放成尖尖的一堆，凸立于最高的火山岩悬崖边缘，与德西雷港附近的石堆很像，但规模要小一点儿。

5月4日

菲茨罗伊船长决定不再让船往上游航行了。河道曲折蜿蜒，水流汹涌湍急；这片土地的景观也不足以吸引人前行。到处都是同样的物产，到处都是同样单调的景致。这时我们距离大西洋140英里，离最近的太平洋臂弯约有60英里。河谷在这一段上游处扩展成一个宽阔的盆地，北面 and 南面以玄武岩台地为界，前方则是一列白雪覆盖的科迪勒拉山脉。然而，我们相当遗憾地望着这些宏伟的大山，因为我们只能去想象它们的景致和物候，而不能如愿地站在山顶，俯瞰底下的平原。要尝试继续溯游而上，不仅是对时间的一种浪费，我们的补给也难以支撑。我们已连续数日只能吃半份口粮。尽管这点粮食对于大多数人的确足矣，但在我们一天的艰苦跋涉后，实在难以果腹。那些从未经此饥饿的人，才会说什么食宜七分饱、食轻宜消化的好处，快算

了吧。

5月5日

我们在日出之前就起航下行了。我们顺流而下，航速迅疾，大致保持了每小时10节的速率。在这一天里我们走了相当于上行时耗费五天半艰苦跋涉的航程。8日，在经历了21天的探险后，我们抵达了小猪犬号。除我以外，人人都有这样那样的不满意；但于我而言，这一趟航程让我饱览了巴塔哥尼亚第三纪地质构造中最有趣的一部分。

[1] 1英里约等于1.61千米。（说明：书中脚注除特别标明之外，均为编者注。）

[2] 飞蝗原属名为Acrydium，现已改为Locusta。

[3] 1英寸约等于2.54厘米。

[4] 皮埃尔·安德烈·拉特雷耶（*Pierre André Latreille*），法国专门研究节肢类动物的动物学家，他在节肢动物分类学方面富有远见的工作为他赢得了尊重和赞誉，其中包括为乔治·居维叶（*Georges Cuvier*）《*勒涅动物*》写关于节肢动物的那一卷，那也是唯一一卷不是居维叶本人写的。

[5] 1码约等于0.91米。

[6] 1里格等于3.18海里。——译者注

[7] 在拉特雷耶系统中，Notopods为一种短肢十足类甲壳纲动物，通常包括人面蟹（*Homola*）、关公蟹（*Dorippe*）、绵蟹（*Dromia*）、贝绵蟹（*Dynomene*）、蛙蟹（*Ranina*）等。

[8] 1英尺约等于30.48厘米。

[9] 地质年代分期中的一级。“世”（Epoch）以上为“纪”（Period），“世”以下为“期”（Age）。全新世是地质时代最新阶段，第四纪二分的第二个世，开始于12,000至10,000年前，持续至今。

[10] Port Famine，即哈姆布雷港（*Puerto del Hambre*），是麦哲伦海峡北岸布埃纳湾的一个历史悠久的定居点。

[11] 现在的学名为*Theristicus melanopis*。

[12] 节理也称为裂隙，是一种常见的构造地质现象，是岩体受力断裂后两侧岩块没有显著位移的小型断裂构造。

火地岛

1832年12月17日

在结束了巴塔哥尼亚的考察之后，我打算说一说初抵火地岛的情形。正午刚过，我们绕过圣地亚哥角，进入了著名的勒梅尔海峡。我们紧靠火地岛航行，然而埃斯塔多斯岛 [13] 那怪石嶙峋、凶险的轮廓却在云雾中隐约可见。下午时分，我们在顺遂湾抛锚停泊。在驶入海湾时，我们便见到了这个蛮荒之地的典型居民。一群火地岛人停歇于突出在海里的尖岬上，身子半掩在枝蔓横生的密林里；当我们经过时，他们突然跳了出来，挥舞着破破烂烂的斗篷，向我们大声地喊叫。这些土著人追着船跑，刚到傍晚就见他们亮起了火把，接着又听见了他们狂野的呼喊声。港湾里的水相当澄澈，被一片低矮平缓的泥板岩山半围着，山上浓荫覆盖，幽林一直延伸到水边。只凭一瞥我就知道，眼前的风景与往日所见的其他景致截然不同。晚上刮起了一阵大风，从山顶刮来的风暴横扫过我们。这时候要还是在海上就糟糕透了，因此我们称这个给了我们庇护的港湾为“顺遂湾”。

清晨，船长派出了一个小队与火地岛人沟通。当我们迎着他们的欢呼声向前时，四个土著人代表中的一个上前迎向我们，极为热烈地对着我们大吼大叫，想要引导我们从哪里登陆。我们上岸后，他们看起来十分警戒，然而还是一边喋喋不休，一边快速地比画着手势。毫无疑问，这是我见识过的最稀奇、最有趣的情景了。我无法相信野蛮人和文明人之间的差距竟有这么大，它比野生动物和家养动物之间的差距要大得多，因为人的进化力要更强一些。领头说话的是一位老人，看起来像是一族之长；另外三位则是身强力壮的年轻人，约有6英尺高。妇人和孩子已经被送走了。这些火地岛人与更西边那些矮小、不幸的可怜人是完全不同的人种。他们在外貌上要出色得多，看起来更接近于麦哲伦海峡的巴塔哥尼亚人。他们唯一的衣服是一件原驼皮制成的披风，毛面朝外；他们就把披风挂在肩膀上，身子半遮挡半袒露着。他们的皮肤是乌沉沉的赤铜色。

老人头上缠着一圈白色羽毛的头带，略微拢住了他毛糙、纠结的黑发。他的脸上画着两道粗粗的横纹；一道鲜红色，从一只耳朵延伸到另一只耳朵，还覆盖了上嘴唇；另一道，像是白垩画的，在第一道的上方平行地展开，因此连眼睑也染成了白色。另外三个人中有两个的脸上装饰着木炭画的黑色粉状条纹。这几个人待在一起活像舞台上演出的魔鬼，诸如《魔弹射手》之类的。

他们的姿态卑微，脸上则带着狐疑、惊讶和恐惧的表情。我们赠送给他们几块红色的布匹，他们立刻就围在了脖子上，这才变得友好起来。这情谊是通过老人拍打我们的胸部来表达的，同时，他们还发出咯咯响的声音，就像人们在喂食小鸡。我和老人一道走路，这证明友谊的仪式重复了数次；最后以在我前胸后背同时重重地击打三下而告终。然后他向我袒露胸部，让我礼尚往来，待我做过这一套之后，他显得十分称心满意。这些人的语言，在我们听来根本不算是吐字。库克船长曾把它比作是一个人清嗓子发出的声音，然而毫无疑问，没有一个欧洲人会在清嗓子时发出这么多粗糙、刺耳、咯咯作响的声音。

他们是极为出色的模仿者：每当我们咳嗽，或者打哈欠，或者做出什么古怪动作，他们立刻就照样学起来。我们这边的人开始挤眉弄眼；然而一个年轻的火地岛人（整张脸都涂黑了，只在眼睛这里横抹了一道白色的带状纹）成功地做出了一个更骇人的鬼脸。他们能分毫不差地重复我们对他们说的一字一句，还能把这些单词记上好一阵子。可是我们欧洲人都知道，要分辨一门外语中不同的发音有多难。比如说，我们中有哪一位，能跟读一句美洲印第安人超过三个单词的句子呢？未开化的人似乎都拥有这种非凡的模仿能力。有人曾经跟我说过差不多同样的话，南非的卡非人有一模一样搞笑的模仿习惯；同样的，澳大利亚原住民很久以来都以擅于仿照、描绘别人的步态而闻名，并且以此来辨别外来者。这等天赋又该如何解释？这是否是由于与那些长期处于文明状态的人相比，所有那些未开化的人都有着更加熟练的洞察方式和更加灵敏的感官？

当我们这伙人唱起歌时，火地岛人惊讶得仿佛要跌坐在地。他们以同样惊诧的表情看着我们跳舞，不过有一个小伙子，在我们邀请他时，毫不抵触地跳了一小段华尔兹。虽然他们表面看起来并不适应欧洲文化，但他们还是知道并且害怕我们的火器；没有东西能诱惑他们用手去摸一把枪。他们十分渴求刀子，用西班牙语“库奇亚”来称呼这些刀子。他们还用动作来比画他们想要的东西，看起来就像嘴里叼着一块鲸脂，然后假装用刀去切，而不是用手撕扯。

观察这些人对待杰米·巴顿（一个火地岛人，在前一趟探险中被带到了英格兰）的举止十分有意思。他们立即意识到了杰米和我们的不同，并就此相互之间热烈地讨论起来。老人对杰米发表了长篇大论，似乎想要邀请他与他们生活在一起。可是杰米只听得懂一丁点儿他们的语言，此外，也根本看不上他的同胞们。当约克·明斯特（另一个到过英格兰的火地岛人）来到岸上时，他们同样注意到了他，并告诉他应该刮胡子了；尽管他脸上并没有多少胡楂，而我们则全都胡子拉碴。他们仔细察看他的肤色，还拿他和我们的做比较。我们中有一位的手臂露了出来，他们对白皙的肤色惊讶不已，十分艳羡。我们

认为他们误把两三位身材更矮小、长相更俊俏的长官错认为我们这伙人里的女士了，尽管他们也留着大胡子。火地岛人当中最高的一位对于有人注意到他的身高显然颇为自得。当他与船上个子最高的那位背对背站着的时候，还极力站在高一点儿的地方，拼命踮着脚。他张开嘴显露他的牙齿，偏过头展示他的侧颜；他乐意之至地做着这些事，我敢说，他一定以为自己是火地岛最俊俏的男子。等我们最初的大惊小怪过去之后，这些原住民每时每刻表现出来的混杂着惊讶和模仿的反应则成为最为搞笑、最为有意思的事。

第二天，我试图深入探索这一地区。火地岛或许称得上是多山地区，它的一部分沉在了海里，因此原本是山谷的地方，就变成了水深不见底的小洲和海湾。除了西海岸寸草不生的山坡，其余山坡从与水面相接的地方开始便被茫茫林海所覆盖。树木生长到1000至1500英尺的高度；随后是一条泥煤带，分布着矮小的高山植物；再往上则是终年不化的积雪了，按照金船长的记录，麦哲伦海峡的雪线高度为3000到4000英尺。想要在这片土地上找到哪怕是1英亩 [14] 平整的地都稀罕至极。我只记得在饥荒港附近有一小块平地，另一块面积大得多的则位于戈里路德附近。这两块平地以及其他平地上，地面全都覆盖着一层厚厚的沼泽泥煤。即使在森林里，地面也密覆着大量缓慢腐化的植被，浸透了水，脚一踏上去就会往下陷。

在密林中我几乎寸步难行，于是便改道，沿着一条山中径流探寻。起初，飞瀑横流，枯木倒地，简直举步维艰；不过水流冲刷两岸，溪床很快就变得宽一些了。我继续沿着崎岖、多石的岸边缓慢走了一个小时，壮丽的景色令我不虚此行。昏朦幽暗、深不见底的峡谷完美地呼应了无处不在的剧烈变动的痕迹。峡谷两侧尽是一些嶙峋的巨石和折断的树；而其余的树，虽然还直立着，但也已经从中间腐烂，随时可能倒下来。这种生机盎然的树和倒伏的枯树纠葛缠绕在一起的状态让我想起了热带雨林——然而还是有所不同，因为在这一片死寂的荒野之中，看起来是死亡主宰了一切，而非生机。我顺着水流的方向走，来到了一处地方，大滑坡给这里的山坡清出了一片直着向下的空地。沿着这条路，我攀登到相当高的地方，得以视角颇佳地一览周遭树林。这些树全都属于一个种类——桦状假水青冈木（*Fagus betuloides*），而其他种类的山毛榉和林仙树的数量简直可以忽略不计了。这种树的叶子终年不落，然而叶片的颜色呈一种颇为奇异的棕绿色，略微泛出一点儿黄色。由于这里的整个景观都是这个色调，便显得阴郁、沉闷，即使在阳光的映照下，也未见几多活力。

[13] 此处原文为Staten，翻译时选用了更通用的Isla de los Estados。——译者注

[14] 1英亩约等于4046.86平方米。

麦哲伦海峡

12月21日

小猎犬号再次起航。在接下来的几天里，受益于一阵难得的轻柔东风，航行异常顺利，我们离巴讷费尔茨越来越近了，船驶过欺骗角怪石嶙峋的海岬，又在3点钟绕过了风雨剥蚀的合恩角。当天夜里风平浪静，月色朗朗，宜于眺望远处，看山是如何在视线中越来越高。

火地岛人两度来袭，我们不胜其扰。由于岸上有不少器械、衣物，也不乏人手，我们觉得很有必要把他们吓走。头一回，在他们还离得相当远的时候，我们开了几炮。最滑稽可笑的是，我们从单筒望远镜里瞧见，每当炮弹落到水里，这些印第安人就捡起石块，勇敢地进行反击，朝我们的船投掷石头，尽管我们相隔约1.5英里！接着我们派出了一条小船，命令是用火枪横扫一气，但要避免射中。火地岛人藏身在树后面；对于我们的每一次射击，他们都会射箭回击，然而，所有的箭都不能到达船所在的范围之内，船上的长官指着他们哈哈大笑。这使得火地岛人怒火中烧，他们枉然地挥动着斗篷，恼怒不已。最后，他们看到枪弹击倒了树木，才落荒而逃；而我们也获得了和平与安宁。

上一回，当小猎犬号2月份泊在此地的时候，我在一个早晨4点钟出发去攀登塔恩山，这座山有2600英尺高，是邻近地区的最高点。我们划了一条小船到山脚下（不过并非最佳登山地点），然后开始了我们的登山之旅。森林从高水位线处开始生长，而在最初的两个钟头里，我几乎完全丧失了爬到山顶的希望。森林过于茂密，我们必须不断地求助于指南针；尽管是在山区，然而每一处地标都彻底地给遮蔽了。在一座座幽深的峡谷里，死亡一般的荒凉景象无法用言语来形容。峡谷外狂风大作，但在这些沟壑里，甚至没有一丝风来撩动最高的树木上的树叶。处处都阴暗、寒冷、潮湿，就算是真菌、苔藓和蕨类植物都不能生长。在这些山谷里几乎寸步难行，它们完全被巨大的、朽败的树干给横七竖八地堵住了。每当人们经过这些天然形成的木桥时，膝盖时常会陷入腐烂的木头里，行进的道路也会因此中断。而别的时候，当你想要倚上一棵牢靠的树时，却错愕地发现这树只是一堆摇摇欲坠的腐物，轻轻一碰便会散落。终于，我们置身于一片矮小的树丛中，接着很快就抵达了裸露的山脊处，顺着它，我们爬向了山顶。眼前是一派典型的火地岛风貌——不规则的山脉连绵起伏，间杂着斑驳的积雪，底下是黄绿色的幽深山谷，还有一道道海湾杂乱无

章地切断了陆地。风相当大，冷得刺骨，雾气弥漫不散，因此我们并没有在山顶上停留很久。下山的行程不像上山那般艰难，体重使我们不自觉地向下滑去，而所有的下滑和跌落都是向着下山的正确方向。

地质学中出现的最棘手的问题，起码是近几年来最棘手的问题，是如何解释西伯利亚动物标本的完好保存。一方面已确凿无疑的是，这些动物尸体并非被水流从远处携带而来，另一方面也被认为几乎无疑的是，这些动物生活的时代，气候与现在大相径庭，周围地区不可能出现冰雪，如同恒河绝无可能结冰一般。莱尔先生曾在《地质学原理》中就这一问题进行了大量的阐述：他指出现在那些向北流去的河流可能将动物尸体携带到了同一方向；他表示（引自洪堡）那些栖息于最炎热地区的动物有时候会漫游到相当远的地方；他同时提出，当动物分属不同种时，不可妄断同一属的动物就拥有同样的生活习性。而他的贡献最大的地方则体现在他清晰地指出了这一地的气候可能经历了由海岛性向极端气候的转变，这种转变是陆地抬升的结果，而最近新发掘的证据也证明了这种地质变化的存在。

在本书稍前一些的章节里，我曾竭力证明，就食物的数量而言，毫无疑问可以推断这些大型的四足动物可以生活在不毛之地，这些地区只稀稀落落地出产些植物。而大象和犀牛身上覆盖的皮毛，则证明了它们至少能够在寒冷的气候中生存（尽管这一点颇有争议，生活在最炎热地区的有些动物也身披厚厚的皮毛）。我认为难有证据可以证明，在之前的纪年里，当厚皮动物广泛地分布于世界大部分地区时，其中有些种类会不适应北部区域，这就像现在鹿和其他几种动物的分布一样离奇。如果我们认为在上述陆地抬升运动发生之前，西伯利亚的气候和如今南半球的气候相似（这一假设与其他的证据并不矛盾），那么当我们把如今北半球的现象放入相似的南半球的环境中思考时，我们可以得出以下结论：首先，早先的气候并不十分寒冷；其次，积雪并没有在一段很长的时期里不间断地覆盖地面（在南美55度到56度的极端地区情况并非如此）；再次，植物，与今天同纬度地区的植物相比，体现了更强烈的热带特征；最后，在具备如此条件的区域再向北一小段距离（甚至还未到帕拉斯发现完整犀牛尸体的地点），就可能出现永久冻土；因此，任何一种动物的尸体一旦埋在地表下几英尺之处，它都将被保存数个世纪之久。

洪堡和莱尔都曾提及，如今，永久冻土带延伸至北纬62度，任何动物漂流进冻土带内，万一凑巧被埋在地表数英尺底下，便会无限期地得以保存。同样的情形发生在被河流冲刷而来的尸体上；而那些灭绝的哺乳动物或许正是这样葬身的。对我来说，这一理论只差一步就能完成，并且能够以一种比几个早先提出的理论更简洁的方式来解释

这一现象。根据莱尔先生的描述，西伯利亚平原上堆积着来自世世代代动物的数不清的骨化石，毫无疑问这地层是从浅海或是河口堆积起来的。而正如比齐在埃舍尔茨湾的游记里曾描述的，这一过程也适用于美洲的西北海岸：那里的地质构造看起来与沿海常见的新近抬升的自然沉积相同，而我曾在同一片大陆的南部海岸见到过这种沉积。还有一点确定的是，西伯利亚遗骸只在河流截断平原之处暴露。这一事实，再加上全新世抬升的证据，说明这一过程似乎与发生在南美洲潘帕斯大草原的情形极其类似：也就是说，那些尸体是在早先漂流进入的大海，而遗骸是随后被逐步积累的沉积层包裹起来的。从那以后这些地层抬高；随着河流冲刷出它们的河道，掩埋的骨骼也就逐渐暴露。

那么这里，难点来了：尸体在海底是如何被保存的呢？值得引起充分注意的是，被保全的动物尸体并不常见，也并不会因为它们所处极北之地就变得容易保存。居维叶提到比林航海记中曾记载了在勒拿河以及茵迪吉尔卡河河口之间的岛屿上发现了大量的大象、野牛和犀牛的骨头，其数量是别处无可比拟的。甚至有这样的说法——除了一些由岩石组成的小山丘，整个地区都是由沙子、冰块和骨头构成的。这些岛屿位于亚当斯发现骨肉完好的猛犸象之处的北面，在维柳依河更向北10度的地方，而在维柳依河中也发现了保存完好的犀牛。对于发现的骨头，我们推测尸体漂浮到更深的大海，在那里它们停留在海底，肉身腐烂分解。但是针对第二种更为特殊的情形，腐败似乎被中止了，尸体很有可能迅速地被随之积累起来的沉积物覆盖住。或许有人会提出疑问，在那些底部终年冰冻的浅海，数英尺深的泥土温度是否高于华氏32度（零摄氏度）？但我们需要记住的是，要使盐水结冰，需要比零摄氏度更低的温度；而在海水深处的淤泥，温度一定相当之低，与那些夏天短暂但炎热地区的冰冻带底下的土层一模一样。如果这些条件得以满足，那么埋藏这些灭绝的四足动物就容易理解了，并且理解它们先前生存环境的主要难题也被解决了。

有一种海洋植物，因其十分重要，也值得被额外记录，它就是海带，或者说是巨岩藻（*Fucus giganteus*）。从低潮线到海底深处，这种植物生长在每一块岩石上，既分布于外海岸，也繁衍于海峡内。我相信，在冒险号和小猎犬号的航程里，近海面处发现的每一块礁石上，都有这种海藻，如浮标一样地漂荡着。因此，它给在这一带暴风骤雨的海域里行驶的船只所提供的巨大帮助是显而易见的；它确实拯救了很多轮船，使它们免于失事。看到这种植物在大洋西部的滔滔激浪中生长、繁盛，着实令人震惊。因为在海洋的这个部位，即使是那些巨大的礁石，无论有多么坚硬，都无法长久抵御波浪的侵蚀。它的

茎是圆的，黏糊、滑溜，直径很少能达到1英寸。数根海带合在一起，就强壮到足以支撑起几块分散的大石头了，在切入内陆的海峡里，它们正是依附在这样的石块上生长的。而这些石块有的非常沉重，它们被拉到水面后，几乎不可能凭一人之力把它们搬到船上去。

库克船长在他第二次探险中说过，在凯尔盖朗地区，“一部分这种海藻长度达到了不可思议的地步，尽管它的茎还没有人的拇指那么粗。我曾提到过，在它们生长的有些浅滩里，我们用一根24英寻 [15] 长的线都没有探到底。因此，水下的深度，一定超过了这个数字。由于这种海藻并不是垂直生长的，而是和海底形成了一个很小的锐角，并且它的主体随后在海面上大幅度地伸展开去，我可以很有把握地说其中有些的长度达到了60英寻以上。”虽然在福克兰群岛（马尔维纳斯群岛）以及火地岛周围，宽广无边的海藻常常从10到15英寻深的水里突然冒出，但我不认为任何植物的茎能像库克船长所记录的那样，长达360英尺。它分布的地理范围相当广大；从合恩角附近最南端的小群岛，到东海岸的最北边（据斯托克斯先生提供给我的信息）南纬43度都有所发现——而在西边，南纬42度的智鲁岛，它的数量也颇为可观，但还不到繁茂的程度。它可能还略微往北延伸了一点儿，但很快被别的物种所取代。因此我们认为它分布的范围南北延伸15度；而据对这一物种相当熟悉的库克记载，他在凯尔盖朗地区也发现了这种生物，因此它分布的经度范围横跨了至少140度。

而海藻也成为其他数量令人惊讶的物种赖以生存的植物。光是描述栖居在这种海藻群落里的动物，大约就能写成鸿篇大论。除了漂浮在海面上的以外，几乎每一片叶子上都厚厚地结了一层珊瑚虫的硬壳，叶子几乎变成了白色。我们发现了这些栖息着珊瑚虫的叶子构成异常精巧复杂，有一些栖息着简单的水螅一样的珊瑚虫，另外一些则寄居着器官更复杂的种类，以及漂亮的群居海鞘。在叶片平滑的表面上还黏附着各种各样的笠状螺、马蹄螺、无壳软体动物，以及一些蚌类。无数计的甲壳类动物时常出没于植株的各个部位。要是把庞大、纠缠在一起的根部摇晃一番，就会有一堆小鱼、贝类、墨鱼、各种螃蟹、海胆、海星、美丽的海参（有一些呈现为裸鳃亚目软体动物的外形）、三角涡虫，以及形状殊异的蠕动的沙蚕，纷纷披落。我再三碰到这种海藻，每一根枝叶上都会发现新的、奇特的动物组合。我曾提到过在智鲁岛，这种海藻并不十分繁茂，因此并不能见到数量庞大的贝类、珊瑚虫类，以及甲壳类动物，但仍然有一些板枝介类动物和数种群居的海鞘类动物，而后者，与火地岛的海鞘动物种类并不相同。在这里，我们发现石衣藻比起寄居在它那里的动物，分布的范围要广泛得多。

我只能把南半球这些繁茂的水中森林与热带地区的陆地森林做比较。如果后者在任何地方遭到毁灭，我相信，其动物的种类消失的数

量之巨，不会比在同样情况下，海藻灭绝引起的动物消亡更多。在这种植物的叶片之间生活着无数种鱼类，它们在别的地方找不到食物和庇护所。由于它们的灭亡，大量的鸬鹚、潜鸟，以及其他以鱼为食的鸟类、海獭、海豹和鼠海豚也会随即覆灭，那么最终，火地岛的野蛮人——这片悲惨土地的悲惨主人，同类相残的情形就会变本加厉，其人口会减少，或许也将绝种了。

6月8日

我们一大早就起了锚，离开了饥荒港。菲茨罗伊船长决定离开麦哲伦海峡，沿着前不久才发现的玛格达伦海峡而行。我们的航线设定为正南方，顺着我此前提到过的晦暗通道而下，仿佛要驶向另一个更糟糕的世界。一路顺风，但空气并不清明，因此我们错过了不少奇异的景观。群山间乌云滚滚，从山顶到山脚皆云倾雾缭。从团团浓云间瞥见的景致令人兴味盎然：参差起伏的山尖、形如圆锥的积雪、一碧如洗的冰川、苍白天空下分明的天际线，远近高低，各有不同。就在这一派风光中，我们在图恩角抛了锚，靠近当时正隐在云雾中的萨缅托峰。就在高耸、几近直立的山脚下，我们的小港湾这里，有一座废弃的棚屋，它形单影只，提醒我们曾经有人漫游到这一带荒无人烟的地区，而在这，他又是如何无可比拟地渺小、卑微。大自然所创造的没有生命的作品——石、冰、雪、风和水——彼此间相互争斗，但又联合起来与人为敌——在这里，它们拥有了绝对的权威。

6月9日

清晨，我们十分喜悦地看到一层薄雾从萨缅托峰冉冉升起，而山峰在我们眼前逐渐显露。这座山是火地岛最高的山峰之一，海拔6800英尺。山脚下，大约整个山体高度的1/8覆盖着幽暗的树林，再往上则是一片积雪，一直延伸到山顶。这铺天盖地的冰雪从不融化，仿佛命定要 and 这世界一起地久天长，呈现出一派崇高甚至超然卓异的光景。这座山峰的轮廓格外清晰、分明。由于雪白、闪耀的山表反射了十分充足的光线，山体上没有一处被阴影笼罩；而那些切断天际的雪线也明晰可辨：因此山体如同鲜明的浮雕般凸现出来。有好几条冰川蜿蜒而下，从积雪区绵延到海岸边：或许可以把它们比作冰封的尼亚加拉大瀑布；而这些凝结的蓝色瀑布也完全可以和湍湍而流的飞瀑媲美。夜晚，我们抵达海峡的西部；然而这里的水太深了，我们找不到可抛锚之处。因此我们不得不离岸前行，在大海的这条狭长的臂弯里，熬过长达14个小时的伸手不见五指的暗黑夜晚。

6月10日

黎明，我们竭力驶入了开阔的太平洋。这里的西海岸通常由低

矮、和缓、颇为贫瘠的花岗岩和绿岩小山丘构成。约翰·纳伯勒爵士把一处地方称为“南部废墟”，因为这“看起来是多么萧疏的一方土地”，恐怕他所言确实。数不清的礁石散布在主岛之外，壮阔的大海掀起长长的骇浪，永无停歇地冲击着它们。我们从东、西弗里斯岛之间驶出，从那里略微往北，碎浪飞珠溅玉，这一带的大海因此被称为“银河”。陆地上的人只消看一眼这里的海岸，就会在一整个礼拜里都陷入关于沉船、海难和死亡的噩梦；伴随着眼前的景象，我们就此与火地岛永远作别。

[15] 英寻是海洋测量中的深度单位，1英寻等于1.852米。

‘The vessel
drove before
her bows two
billows of liquid
phosphorus . . .’

Patagonia

December 6th, 1833 – The *Beagle* sailed from the Rio Plata, never again to enter its muddy stream. Our course was directed to Port Desire, on the coast of Patagonia. Before proceeding any further, I will here put together a few observations made at sea.

Several times when the ship has been some miles off the mouth of the Plata, and at other times when off the shores of Northern Patagonia, we have been surrounded by insects. One evening, when we were about ten miles from the Bay of San Blas, vast numbers of butterflies, in bands or flocks of countless myriads, extended as far as the eye could range. Even by the aid of a glass it was not possible to see a space free from butterflies. The seamen cried out ‘it was snowing butterflies’, and such in fact was the appearance. More species than one were present, but the main part belonged to a kind very similar to, but not identical with, the common English *Colias edusa*. Some moths and hymenoptera accompanied the butterflies; and a fine *Calosoma* flew on board. Other instances are known of this beetle having been caught far out at sea; and this is the more remarkable, as the greater number of the Carabidæ seldom or never take wing. The day had been fine and calm, and the one previous to it equally so, with light and variable airs. Hence we cannot suppose that the insects were blown off the land, but we must conclude that they voluntarily took flight. The great bands of the *Colias* seem at first to afford an instance like those on record of the migrations of *Vanessa cardui*; but the presence of other insects makes the case distinct, and not so easily intelligible. Before sunset, a strong breeze sprung up from the north, and this must have been the cause of tens of thousands of the butterflies and other insects having perished.

On another occasion, when 17 miles off Cape Corrientes, I had a net overboard to catch pelagic animals. Upon drawing it up, to my surprise I found a considerable number of beetles in it, and although in the open sea, they did not appear much injured by the salt water. I lost some of the specimens, but those which I preserved, belonged to the genera, colymbetes, hydroporus,

hydrobius (two species), notaphus, cynucus, adimonia, and scarabæus. At first, I thought that these insects had been blown from the shore; but upon reflecting that out of the eight species, four were aquatic, and two others partly so in their habits, it appeared to me most probable that they were floated into the sea, by a small stream which drains a lake near Cape Corrientes. On any supposition, it is an interesting circumstance to find insects, quite alive, swimming in the open ocean, 17 miles from the nearest point of land. There are several accounts of insects having been blown off the Patagonian shore. Captain Cook observed it, as did more lately Captain King in the *Adventure*. The cause probably is due to the want of shelter, both of trees and hills, so that an insect on the wing with an off- shore breeze, would be very apt to be blown out to sea. The most remarkable instance I ever knew of an insect being caught far from the land, was that of a large grasshopper (*Acrydium*), which flew on board, when the Beagle was to windward of the Cape de Verd Islands, and when the nearest point of land, not directly opposed to the trade- wind, was Cape Blanco on the coast of Africa, 370 miles distant.

On several occasions, when the vessel has been within the mouth of the Plata, the rigging has been coated with the web of the Gossamer Spider. One day (November 1st, 1832) I paid particular attention to the phenomenon. The weather had been fine and clear, and in the morning the air was full of patches of the flocculent web, as on an autumnal day in England. The ship was sixty miles distant from the land, in the direction of a steady though light breeze. Vast numbers of a small spider, about one- tenth of an inch in length, and of a dusky red colour were attached to the webs. There must have been, I should suppose, some thousands on the ship. The little spider when first coming in contact with the rigging, was always seated on a single thread, and not on the flocculent mass. This latter seems merely to be produced by the entanglement of the single threads. The spiders were all of one species, but of both sexes, together with young ones. These latter were distinguished by their smaller size, and more dusky colour. I will not give the description of this spider, but merely state that it does not appear to me to be included in any of Latreille's genera. The little aeronaut as soon as it arrived on board, was very active, running about; sometimes letting itself fall, and then reascending the same thread; sometimes employing itself in making a small and very irregular mesh in the

corners between the ropes. It could run with facility on the surface of water. When disturbed it lifted up its front legs, in the attitude of attention. On its first arrival it appeared very thirsty, and with exerted maxillæ drank eagerly of the fluid; this same circumstance has been observed by Strack: may it not be in consequence of the little insect having passed through a dry and rarefied atmosphere? Its stock of web seemed inexhaustible. While watching some that were suspended by a single thread, I several times observed that the slightest breath of air bore them away out of sight, in a horizontal line. On another occasion (25th) under similar circumstances, I repeatedly observed the same kind of small spider, either when placed, or having crawled, on some little eminence, elevate its abdomen, send forth a thread, and then sail away in a lateral course, but with a rapidity which was quite unaccountable. I thought I could perceive that the spider before performing the above preparatory steps, connected its legs together with the most delicate threads, but I am not sure, whether this observation is correct.

One day, at St Fe, I had a better opportunity of observing some similar facts. A spider which was about three- tenths of an inch in length, and which in its general appearance resembled a Citigrade (therefore quite different from the gossamer), while standing on the summit of a post, darted forth four or five threads from its spinners. These glittering in the sunshine, might be compared to rays of light; they were not, however, straight, but in undulations like a film of silk blown by the wind. They were more than a yard in length, and diverged in an ascending direction from the orifices. The spider then suddenly let go its hold, and was quickly borne out of sight. The day was hot and apparently quite calm; yet under such circumstances the atmosphere can never be so tranquil, as not to affect a vane so delicate as the thread of a spider's web. If during a warm day we look either at the shadow of any object cast on a bank, or over a level plain at a distant landmark, the effect of an ascending current of heated air will almost always be evident. And this probably would be sufficient to carry with it so light an object as the little spider on its thread. The circumstance of spiders of the same species but of different sexes and ages, being found on several occasions at the distance of many leagues from the land, attached in vast numbers to the lines, proves that they are the manufacturers of the mesh, and that the habit of sailing through the air, is probably

as characteristic of some tribe, as that of diving is of the *Argyroneta*. We may then reject Latreille's supposition, that the gossamer owes its origin to the webs of the young of several genera, as *Epeira* or *Thomisa*: although, as we have seen that the young of other spiders do possess the power of performing aerial voyages.

During our different passages south of the Plata, I often towed astern a net made of bunting, and thus caught many curious animals. The structure of the *Beroe* (a kind of jelly fish) is most extraordinary, with its rows of vibratory ciliæ, and complicated though irregular system of circulation. Of Crustacea, there were many strange and undescribed genera. One, which in some respects is allied to the Notopods (or those crabs which have their posterior legs placed almost on their backs, for the purpose of adhering to the under side of ledges), is very remarkable from the structure of its hind pair of legs. The penultimate joint, instead of being terminated by a simple claw, ends in three bristle-like appendages of dissimilar lengths, the longest equalling that of the entire leg. These claws are very thin, and are serrated with teeth of an excessive fineness, which are directed towards the base. The curved extremities are flattened, and on this part five most minute cups are placed, which seem to act in the same manner as the suckers on the arms of the cuttle-fish. As the animal lives in the open sea, and probably wants a place of rest, I suppose this beautiful structure is adapted to take hold of the globular bodies of the *Medusæ*, and other floating marine animals.

In deep water, far from the land, the number of living creatures is extremely small: south of the latitude 35° , I never succeeded in catching any thing besides some *beroe*, and a few species of minute crustacea belonging to the *Entomostraca*. In shoaler water, at the distance of a few miles from the coast, very many kinds of crustacea and some other animals were numerous, but only during the night. Between latitudes 56° and 57° south of Cape Horn the net was put astern several times; it never, however, brought up any thing besides a few of two extremely minute species of *Entomostraca*. Yet whales and seals, petrels and albatross, are exceedingly abundant throughout this part of the ocean. It has always been a source of mystery to me, on what the latter, which live far from the shore, can subsist. I presume the albatross, like the condor, is able to fast long; and that one good feast on the carcass of a putrid whale lasts

for a long siege of hunger. It does not lessen the difficulty to say, they feed on fish; for on what can the fish feed? It often occurred to me, when observing how the waters of the central and intertropical parts of the Atlantic, swarmed with Pteropoda, Crustacea, and Radiata, and with their devourers the flying- fish, and again with *their* devourers the bonitos and albigores, that the lowest of these pelagic animals perhaps possess the power of decomposing carbonic acid gas, like the members of the vegetable kingdom.

While sailing in these latitudes on one very dark night, the sea presented a wonderful and most beautiful spectacle. There was a fresh breeze, and every part of the surface, which during the day is seen as foam, now glowed with a pale light. The vessel drove before her bows two billows of liquid phosphorus, and in her wake she was followed by a milky train. As far as the eye reached, the crest of every wave was bright, and the sky above the horizon, from the reflected glare of these livid flames, was not so utterly obscure, as over the rest of the heavens.

As we proceed further southward, the sea is seldom phosphorescent; and off Cape Horn, I do not recollect more than once having seen it so, and then it was far from being brilliant. This circumstance probably has a close connexion with the scarcity of organic beings in that part of the ocean. After the elaborate paper by Ehrenberg, on the phosphorescence of the sea, it is almost superfluous on my part to make any observations on the subject. I may however add, that the same torn and irregular particles of gelatinous matter, described by Ehrenberg, seem in the southern as well as in the northern hemisphere, to be the common cause of this phenomenon. The particles were so minute as easily to pass through fine gauze; yet many were distinctly visible by the naked eye. The water when placed in a tumbler and agitated gave out sparks, but a small portion in a watch- glass, scarcely ever was luminous. Ehrenberg states, that these particles all retain a certain degree of irritability. My observations, some of which were made directly after taking up the water, would give a different result. I may also mention, that having used the net during one night I allowed it to become partially dry, and having occasion twelve hours afterwards, to employ it again, I found the whole surface sparkled as brightly as when first taken out of the water. It does not appear probable in this case, that the particles could have remained so long alive. I

remark also in my notes, that having kept a Medusa of the genus *Dianæa*, till it was dead, the water in which it was placed became luminous. When the waves scintillate with bright green sparks, I believe it is generally owing to minute crustacea. But there can be no doubt that very many other pelagic animals, when alive, are phosphorescent.

On two occasions I have observed the sea luminous at considerable depths beneath the surface. Near the mouth of the Plata some circular and oval patches, from 2 to 4 yards in diameter, and with defined outlines, shone with a steady, but pale light; while the surrounding water only gave out a few sparks. The appearance resembled the reflection of the moon, or some luminous body; for the edges were sinuous from the undulation of the surface. The ship, which drew thirteen feet water, passed over, without disturbing, these patches. Therefore we must suppose that some animals were congregated together at a greater depth than the bottom of the vessel.

Near Fernando Noronha the sea gave out light in flashes. The appearance was very similar to that which might be expected from a large fish moving rapidly through a luminous fluid. To this cause the sailors attributed it; at the time, however, I entertained some doubts, on account of the frequency and rapidity of the flashes. With respect to any general observations, I have already stated that the display is very much more common in warm than in cold countries. I have sometimes imagined that a disturbed electrical condition of the atmosphere was most favourable to its production. Certainly I think the sea is most luminous after a few days of more calm weather than ordinary, during which time it has swarmed with various animals. Observing that the water charged with gelatinous particles is in an impure state, and that the luminous appearance in all common cases is produced by the agitation of the fluid in contact with the atmosphere, I have always been inclined to consider that the phosphorescence was the result of the decomposition of the organic particles, by which process (one is tempted almost to call it a kind of respiration) the ocean becomes purified.

December 23rd – We arrived at Port Desire, situated in lat. 47°, on the coast of Patagonia. The creek runs for about twenty miles inland, with an irregular width. The Beagle anchored a few miles

within the entrance in front of the ruins of an old Spanish settlement.

The same evening I went on shore. The first landing in any new country is very interesting, and especially when, as in this case, the whole aspect bears the stamp of a marked and individual character. At the height of between 200 and 300 feet, above some masses of porphyry, a wide plain extends, which is truly characteristic of Patagonia. The surface is quite level, and is composed of well-rounded shingle mixed with a whitish earth. Here and there scattered tufts of brown wiry grass are supported, and still more rarely some low thorny bushes. The weather is dry and pleasant, for the fine blue sky is but seldom obscured. When standing in the middle of one of these desert plains, the view on one side is generally bounded by the escarpment of another plain, rather higher, but equally level and desolate; and on the other side it becomes indistinct from the trembling mirage which seems to rise from the heated surface.

The plains are traversed by many broad, flat-bottomed valleys, and in these the bushes grow rather more abundantly. The present drainage of the country is quite insufficient to excavate such large channels. In some of the valleys ancient stunted trees, growing in the very centre of the dry watercourse, seem as if placed to prove how long a time had elapsed, since any flood had passed that way. We have evidence, from shells lying on the surface, that the plains of gravel have been elevated within a recent epoch above the level of the sea; and we must look to that period for the excavation of the valleys by the slowly retiring waters. From the dryness of the climate, a man may walk for days together over these plains without finding a single drop of water. Even at the base of the porphyry hills, there are only a few small wells containing but little water, and that rather saline and half putrid.

In such a country the fate of the Spanish settlement was soon decided; the dryness of the climate during the greater part of the year, and the occasional hostile attacks of the wandering Indians, compelled the colonists to desert their half-finished buildings. The style, however, in which they were commenced, showed the strong and liberal hand of Spain in the old time. The end of all the attempts to colonize this side of America south of 41°, have been miserable. At Port Famine, the name expresses the lingering and

extreme sufferings of several hundred wretched people, of whom one alone survived to relate their misfortunes. At St Joseph's bay, on the coast of Patagonia, a small settlement was made; but during one Sunday the Indians made an attack and massacred the whole party, excepting two men, who were led captive many years among the wandering tribes. At the Rio Negro I conversed with one of these men, now in extreme old age.

The zoology of Patagonia is as limited as its Flora. On the arid plains a few black beetles (*Heteromera*) might be seen slowly crawling about, and occasionally a lizard darting from side to side. Of birds we have three carrion hawks, and in the valleys a few finches and insect feeders. The *Ibis malanops* (a species said to be found in central Africa) is not uncommon on the most desert parts. In the stomachs of these birds I found grasshoppers, cicadæ, small lizards, and even scorpions. At one time of the year they go in flocks, at another in pairs: their cry is very loud and singular, and resembles the neighing of the guanaco.

I will here give an account of this latter animal, which is very common, and is the characteristic quadruped of the plains of Patagonia. The Guanaco, which by some naturalists is considered as the same animal with the Llama, but in its wild state, is the South American representative of the camel of the East. In size it may be compared to an ass, mounted on taller legs, and with a very long neck. The guanaco abounds over the whole of the temperate parts of South America, from the wooded islands of Tierra del Fuego, through Patagonia, the hilly parts of La Plata, Chile, even to the Cordillera of Peru. Although preferring an elevated site, it yields in this respect to its near relative the Vicuna. On the plains of Southern Patagonia, we saw them in greater numbers than in any other part. Generally they go in small herds, from half a dozen to thirty together; but on the banks of the St Cruz we saw one herd which must have contained at least 500. On the northern shores of the Strait of Magellan they are also very numerous.

Generally the guanacoës are wild and extremely wary. Mr Stokes told me, that he one day saw through a glass a herd of these beasts, which evidently had been frightened, running away at full speed, although their distance was so great that they could not be distinguished by the naked eye. The sportsman frequently receives the first intimation of their presence, by hearing, from a long

distance, the peculiar shrill neighing note of alarm. If he then looks attentively, he will perhaps see the herd standing in a line on the side of some distant hill. On approaching them, a few more squeals are given, and then off they set at an apparently slow, but really quick canter, along some narrow beaten track to a neighbouring hill. If, however, by chance he should abruptly meet a single animal, or several together, they will generally stand motionless, and intently gaze at him; then perhaps move on a few yards, turn round, and look again. What is the cause of this difference in their shyness? Do they mistake a man in the distance for their chief enemy the puma? Or does curiosity overcome their timidity? That they are curious is certain; for if a person lies on the ground, and plays strange antics, such as throwing up his feet in the air, they will almost always approach by degrees to reconnoitre him. It was an artifice that was repeatedly practised by our sportsmen with success, and it had moreover the advantage of allowing several shots to be fired, which were all taken as parts of the performance. On the mountains of Tierra del Fuego, and in other places, I have more than once seen a guanaco, on being approached, not only neigh and squeal, but prance and leap about in the most ridiculous manner, apparently in defiance as a challenge. These animals are very easily domesticated, and I have seen some thus kept near the houses, although at large on their native plains. They are in this state very bold, and readily attack a man, by striking him from behind with both knees. It is asserted, that the motive for these attacks is jealousy on account of their females. The wild guanacoës, however, have no idea of defence; even a single dog will secure one of these large animals, till the huntsman can come up. In many of their habits they are like sheep in a flock. Thus when they see men approaching in several directions on horseback, they soon became bewildered and know not which way to run. This greatly facilitates the Indian method of hunting, for they are thus easily driven to a central point, and are encompassed.

The guanacoës readily take to the water: several times at Port Valdes they were seen swimming from island to island. Byron, in his voyage, says he saw them drinking salt water. Some of our officers likewise saw a herd apparently drinking the briny fluid from a salina near Cape Blanco. I imagine in several parts of the country, if they do not drink salt water, they drink none at all. In the middle of the day, they frequently roll in the dust, in saucer-

shaped hollows. The males fight together; two one day passed quite close to me, squealing and trying to bite each other; and several were shot with their hides deeply scored. Herds sometimes appear to set out on exploring- parties: at Bahia Blanca, where, within 30 miles of the coast, these animals are extremely unfrequent, I one day saw the tracks of thirty or forty, which had come in a direct line to a muddy salt- water creek. They then must have perceived that they were approaching the sea, for they had wheeled with the regularity of cavalry, and had returned back in as straight a line as they had advanced. The guanaco has one singular habit, which is to me quite inexplicable; namely, that on successive days they drop their dung in the same defined heap. I saw one of these heaps which was eight feet in diameter, and necessarily was composed of a large quantity. Frezier remarks on this habit as common to the guanaco as well as to the llama; he says it is very useful to the Indians, who use the dung for fuel, and are thus saved the trouble of collecting it.

The guanaco appears to have favourite spots for dying in. On the banks of the St Cruz, the ground was actually white with bones, in certain circumscribed spaces, which were generally bushy and all near the river. On one such spot I counted between ten and twenty heads. I particularly examined the bones; they did not appear, as some scattered ones which I had seen, gnawed or broken, as if dragged together by beasts of prey. The animals in most cases, must have crawled, before dying, beneath and amongst the bushes. Mr Bynoe informs me that during the last voyage, he observed the same circumstance on the banks of the Rio Gallegos. I do not at all understand the reason of this, but I may observe, that the wounded guanacos at the St Cruz, invariably walked towards the river. At St Jago in the Cape de Verd islands I remember having seen in a retired ravine a corner under a cliff, where numerous goats' bones were collected: we at the time exclaimed, that it was the burial-ground of all the goats in the island. I mention these trifling circumstances, because in certain cases they might explain the occurrence of a number of uninjured bones in a cave, or buried under alluvial accumulations; and likewise the cause, why certain mammalia are more commonly embedded than others in sedimentary deposits. Any great flood of the St Cruz, would wash down many bones of the guanaco, but probably not a single one of the puma, ostrich, or fox. I may also observe, that almost every kind

of waterfowl when wounded takes to the shore to die; so that the remains of birds, from this cause alone and independently of other reasons, would but rarely be preserved in a fossil state.

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january 9 th, 1834 – Before it was dark the *Beagle* anchored in the fine spacious harbour of Port St Julian, situated about 110 miles to the south of Port Desire. On the south side of the harbour, a cliff of about 90 feet in height intersects a plain constituted of the formations above described; and its surface is strewn over with recent marine shells. The gravel, however, differently from that in every other locality, is covered by a very irregular and thin bed of a reddish loam, containing a few small calcareous concretions. The matter somewhat resembles that of the Pampas, and probably owes its origin either to a small stream having formerly entered the sea at that spot, or to a mud- bank similar to those now existing at the head of the harbour. In one spot this earthy matter filled up a hollow, or gully, worn quite through the gravel, and in this mass a group of large bones was embedded. The animal to which they belonged, must have lived, as in the case at Bahia Blanca, at a period long subsequent to the existence of the shells now inhabiting the coast. We may feel sure of this, because the formation of the lower terrace or plain, must necessarily have been posterior to those above it, and on the surface of the two higher ones, sea- shells of recent species are scattered. From the small physical change, which the last 100 feet elevation of the continent could have produced, the climate, as well as the general condition of Patagonia, probably was nearly the same, at the time when the animal was embedded, as it now is. This conclusion is moreover supported by the identity of the shells belonging to the two ages. Then immediately occurred the difficulty, how could any large quadruped have subsisted on these wretched deserts in lat. 49° 15'? I had no idea at the time, to what kind of animal these remains belonged. The puzzle, however, was soon solved when Mr Owen examined them; for he considers that they formed part of an animal allied to the guanaco or llama, but fully as large as the true camel. As all the existing members of the family of Camelidæ are inhabitants of the most sterile countries, so may we suppose was this extinct kind. The structure of the cervical vertebræ, the transverse processes not being perforated for the vertebral artery, indicates its affinity: some other parts,

however, of its structure, probably are anomalous.

The most important result of this discovery, is the confirmation of the law that existing animals have a close relation in form with extinct species. As the guanaco is the characteristic quadruped of Patagonia, and the vicuna of the snow-clad summits of the Cordillera, so in bygone days, this gigantic species of the same family must have been conspicuous on the southern plains. We see this same relation of type between the existing and fossil *Ctenomys*, between the capybara (but less plainly, as shown by Mr Owen) and the gigantic *Toxodon*; and lastly, between the living and extinct *Edentata*. At the present day, in South America, there exist probably nineteen species of this order, distributed into several genera; while throughout the rest of the world there are but five. If, then, there is a relation between the living and the dead, we should expect that the *Edentata* would be numerous in the fossil state. I need only reply by enumerating the megatherium, and the three or four other great species, discovered at Bahia Blanca; the remains of some of which are also abundant over the whole immense territory of La Plata. I have already pointed out the singular relation between the armadilloes and their great prototypes, even in a point apparently of so little importance as their external covering.

The order of rodents at the present day, is most conspicuous in South America, on account of the vast number and size of the species, and the multitude of individuals: according to the same law, we should expect to find their representatives in a fossil state. Mr Owen has shown how far the *Toxodon* is thus related; and it is moreover not improbable that another large animal has likewise a similar affinity.

The teeth of the rodent nearly equalling in size those of the *Capybara*, which were discovered near Bahia Blanca, must also be remembered.

The law of the succession of types, although subject to some remarkable exceptions, must possess the highest interest to every philosophical naturalist, and was first clearly observed in regard to Australia, where fossil remains of a large and extinct species of Kangaroo and other marsupial animals were discovered buried in a cave. In America the most marked change among the mammalia has been the loss of several species of *Mastodon*, of an elephant, and of

the horse. These Pachydermata appear formerly to have had a range over the world, like that which deer and antelopes now hold. If Buffon had known of these gigantic armadilloes, llamas, great rodents, and lost pachydermata, he would have said with a greater semblance of truth, that the creative force in America had lost its vigour, rather than that it had never possessed such powers.

It is impossible to reflect without the deepest astonishment, on the changed state of this continent. Formerly it must have swarmed with great monsters, like the southern parts of Africa, but now we find only the tapir, guanaco, armadillo, and capybara; mere pigmies compared to the antecedent races. The greater number, if not all, of these extinct quadrupeds lived at a very recent period; and many of them were contemporaries of the existing molluscs. Since their loss, no very great physical changes can have taken place in the nature of the country. What then has exterminated so many living creatures? In the Pampas, the great sepulchre of such remains, there are no signs of violence, but on the contrary, of the most quiet and scarcely sensible changes. At Bahia Blanca I endeavoured to show the probability that the ancient Edentata, like the present species, lived in a dry and sterile country, such as now is found in that neighbourhood. With respect to the camel- like llama of Patagonia, the same grounds which, before knowing more than the size of the remains, perplexed me, by not allowing any great change of climate, now that we can guess the habits of the animal, are strangely confirmed. What shall we say of the death of the fossil horse? Did those plains fail in pasture, which afterwards were overrun by thousands and tens of thousands of the successors of the fresh stock introduced with the Spanish colonist? In some countries, we may believe, that a number of species subsequently introduced, by consuming the food of the antecedent races, may have caused their extermination; but we can scarcely credit that the armadillo has devoured the food of the immense Megatherium, the capybara of the Toxodon, or the guanaco of the camel- like kind. But granting that all such changes have been small, yet we are so profoundly ignorant concerning the physiological relations, on which the life, and even health (as shown by epidemics) of any existing species depends, that we argue with still less safety about either the life or death of any extinct kind.

One is tempted to believe in such simple relations, as variation

of climate and food, or introduction of enemies, or the increased numbers of other species, as the cause of the succession of races. But it may be asked whether it is probable that any such cause should have been in action during the same epoch over the whole northern hemisphere, so as to destroy the *Elephas primigenus* , on the shores of Spain, on the plains of Siberia, and in Northern America; and in a like manner, the *Bos urus* , over a range of scarcely less extent? Did such changes put a period to the life of *Mastodon angustidens* , and of the fossil horse, both in Europe and on the Eastern slope of the Cordillera in Southern America? If they did, they must have been changes common to the whole world; such as gradual refrigeration, whether from modifications of physical geography, or from central cooling. But on this assumption, we have to struggle with the difficulty that these supposed changes, although scarcely sufficient to affect molluscous animals either in Europe or South America, yet destroyed many quadrupeds in regions now characterized by *frigid*, *temperate* , and *warm* climates! These cases of extinction forcibly recall the idea (I do not wish to draw any close analogy) of certain fruit- trees, which, it has been asserted, though grafted on young stems, planted in varied situations, and fertilized by the richest manures, yet at one period, have all withered away and perished. A fixed and determined length of life has in such cases been given to thousands and thousands of buds (or individual germs), although produced in long succession. Among the greater number of animals, each individual appears nearly independent of its kind; yet all of one kind may be bound together by common laws, as well as a certain number of individual buds in the tree, or polypi in the Zoophyte.

I will add one other remark. We see that whole series of animals, which have been created with peculiar kinds of organization, are confined to certain areas; and we can hardly suppose these structures are only adaptations to peculiarities of climate or country; for otherwise, animals belonging to a distinct type, and introduced by man, would not succeed so admirably, even to the extermination of the aborigines. On such grounds it does not seem a necessary conclusion, that the extinction of species, more than their creation, should exclusively depend on the nature (altered by physical changes) of their country. All that at present can be said with certainty, is that, as with the individual, so with the species, the hour of life has run its course, and is spent.

april 13th – The *Beagle* anchored within the mouth of the Santa Cruz. This river is situated about 60 miles south of Port St Julian. During the last voyage, Captain Stokes proceeded 30 miles up, but then, from the want of provisions, was obliged to return. Excepting what was discovered at that time, scarcely any thing was known about this large river. Captain FitzRoy now determined to follow its course as far as time would allow. On the 18th, three whale- boats started, carrying three weeks' provisions; and the party consisted of twenty- five souls – a force which would have been sufficient to have defied a host of Indians. With a strong flood- tide, and a fine day, we made a good run, soon drank some of the fresh water, and were at night nearly above the tidal influence.

The river here assumed a size and appearance, which, even at the highest point we ultimately reached, was scarcely diminished. It was generally from 300 to 400 yards broad, and in the middle about 17 feet deep. The rapidity of the current, which in its whole course runs at the rate of from 4 to 6 knots an hour, is perhaps its most remarkable feature. The water is of a fine blue colour, but with a slight milky tinge, and not so transparent as at first sight would have been expected. It flows over a bed of pebbles, like those which compose the beach and surrounding plains. Although its course is winding, it runs through a valley which extends in a direct line to the westward. This valley varies from 5 to 10 miles in breadth; it is bounded by step- formed terraces, which rise in most parts one above the other to the height of 500 feet, and have on the opposite sides a remarkable correspondence.

april 19th – Against so strong a current, it was of course quite impossible to row or sail. Consequently the three boats were fastened together head and stern, two hands left in each, and the rest came on shore to track. As the general arrangements, made by Captain FitzRoy, were very good for facilitating the work of all, and as all had a share of it, I will describe the system. The party, including everyone, was divided into two spells, each of which hauled at the tracking line alternately for an hour and a half. The officers of each boat lived with, ate the same food, and slept in the same tent with their crew, so that each boat was quite independent of the others. After sunset, the first level spot where any bushes were growing, was chosen for our night's lodging. Each of the crew

took it in turns to be cook. Immediately the boat was hauled up, the cook made his fire; two others pitched the tent; the coxswain handed the things out of the boat; the rest carried them up to the tents, and collected firewood. By this order, in half an hour, every thing was ready for the night. A watch of two men and an officer was always kept, whose duty it was to look after the boats, keep up the fire, and guard against Indians. Each in the party had his one hour every night.

During this day we tracked but a short distance, for there were many islets, covered by thorny bushes, and the channels between them were shallow.

April 20th – We passed the islands and set to work. Our regular day's march, although it was hard enough, carried us on an average only 10 miles in a straight line, and perhaps 15 or 20 altogether. Beyond the place where we slept last night the country is completely terra *incognita*, for it was there that Captain Stokes turned back. We saw in the distance a great smoke, and found the skeleton of a horse, so we knew that Indians were in the neighbourhood. On the next morning (21st) tracks of a party of horse, and marks left by the trailing of the chuzos were observed on the ground. It was generally thought they must have reconnoitred us during the night. Shortly afterwards we came to a spot, where from the fresh footsteps of men, children, and horses, it was evident the party had crossed the river.

* * *

april 29th – From some high land we hailed with joy the white summits of the Cordillera, as they were seen occasionally peeping through their dusky envelope of clouds. During the few succeeding days, we continued to get on slowly, for we found the river- course very tortuous, and strewn with immense fragments of various ancient slaty rocks, and of granite. The plain bordering the valley had here attained an elevation of about 1,100 feet, and its character was much altered. The well- rounded pebbles of porphyry were in this part mingled with many immense angular fragments of basalt and of the rocks above mentioned. The first of these erratic blocks which I noticed, was 67 miles distant from the nearest mountain; another which had been transported to rather a less distance, measured 5 yards square, and projected 5 feet above the gravel. Its

edges were so angular, and its size so great, that I at first mistook it for a rock *in situ*, and took out my compass to observe the direction of its cleavage. The plains here were not quite so level as those nearer the coast, but yet, they betrayed little signs of any violent action. Under these circumstances, it would be difficult, as it appears to me, to explain this phenomenon on any theory, excepting through that of transport by ice while the country was under water. But this is a subject to which I shall again recur.

During the two last days we met with signs of horses, and with several small articles which had belonged to the Indians, – such as parts of a mantle and a bunch of ostrich feathers – but they appeared to have been lying long on the ground. Between the place where the Indians had so lately crossed the river and this neighbourhood, though so many miles apart, the country appears to be quite unfrequented. At first, considering the abundance of the guanacoës, I was surprised at this; but it is explained by the stony nature of the plains, which would soon disable an unshod horse from taking part in the chase. Nevertheless, in two places in this very central region, I found small heaps of stones, which I do not think could have been accidentally thrown together. They were placed on points, projecting over the edge of the highest lava cliff, and they resembled, but on a small scale, those near Port Desire.

May 4th – Captain FitzRoy determined to take the boats no higher. The river had a winding course, and was very rapid; and the appearance of the country offered no temptation to proceed any further. Every where we met with the same productions, and the same dreary landscape. We were now 140 miles distant from the Atlantic, and about 60 from the nearest arm of the Pacific. The valley in this upper part expanded into a wide basin, bounded on the north and south by the basaltic platforms, and fronted by the long range of the snow-clad Cordillera. But we viewed these grand mountains with regret, for we were obliged to imagine their form and nature, instead of standing, as we had hoped, on their crest, and looking down on the plain below. Besides the useless loss of time which an attempt to ascend any higher would have cost us, we had already been for some days on half allowance of bread. This, although really enough for any reasonable men, was, after our hard day's march, rather scanty food. Let those alone who have never tried it, exclaim about the comfort of a light stomach and an easy

digestion. 5th – Before sunrise we commenced our descent. We shot down the stream with great rapidity, generally at the rate of 10 knots an hour. In this one day we effected what had cost us five-and-a-half hard days' labour in ascending. On the 8th, we reached the *Beagle* after our twenty-one days' expedition. Every one excepting myself had cause to be dissatisfied; but to me the ascent afforded a most interesting section of the great tertiary formation of Patagonia.

Tierra del Fuego

December 17th, 1832 – Having now finished with Patagonia, I will describe our first arrival in Tierra del Fuego. A little after noon we doubled Cape St Diego, and entered the famous strait of Le Maire. We kept close to the Fuegian shore, but the outline of the rugged, inhospitable Staten land was visible amidst the clouds. In the afternoon we anchored in the Bay of Good Success. While entering we were saluted in a manner becoming the inhabitants of this savage land. A group of Fuegians partly concealed by the entangled forest, were perched on a wild point overhanging the sea; and as we passed by, they sprang up, and waving their tattered cloaks sent forth a loud and sonorous shout. The savages followed the ship, and just before dark we saw their fire, and again heard their wild cry. The harbour consists of a fine piece of water half surrounded by low rounded mountains of clay- slate, which are covered to the water's edge by one dense gloomy forest. A single glance at the landscape was sufficient to show me, how widely different it was from any thing I had ever beheld. At night it blew a gale of wind, and heavy squalls from the mountains swept past us. It would have been a bad time out at sea, and we, as well as others, may call this Good Success Bay.

In the morning, the Captain sent a party to communicate with the Fuegians. When we came within hail, one of the four natives who were present advanced to receive us, and began to shout most vehemently, wishing to direct us where to land. When we were on shore the party looked rather alarmed, but continued talking and making gestures with great rapidity. It was without exception the most curious and interesting spectacle I had ever beheld. I could not have believed how wide was the difference, between savage and civilized man. It is greater than between a wild and domesticated animal, in as much as in man there is a greater power of improvement. The chief spokesman was old, and appeared to be the head of the family; the three others were powerful young men, about 6 feet high. The women and children had been sent away. These Fuegians are a very different race from the stunted miserable

wretches further to the westward. They are much superior in person, and seem closely allied to the famous Patagonians of the Strait of Magellan. Their only garment consists of a mantle made of guanaco skin, with the wool outside; this they wear just thrown over their shoulders, as often leaving their persons exposed as covered. Their skin is of a dirty coppery red colour.

The old man had a fillet of white feathers tied round his head, which partly confined his black, coarse, and entangled hair. His face was crossed by two broad transverse bars; one painted bright red reached from ear to ear, and included the upper lip; the other, white like chalk, extended parallel and above the first, so that even his eyelids were thus coloured. Some of the other men were ornamented by streaks of black powder, made of charcoal. The party altogether closely resembled the devils which come on the stage in such plays as *Der Freischutz*.

Their very attitudes were abject, and the expression of their countenances distrustful, surprised, and startled. After we had presented them with some scarlet cloth, which they immediately tied round their necks, they became good friends. This was shown by the old man patting our breasts, and making a chuckling kind of noise, as people do when feeding chickens. I walked with the old man, and this demonstration of friendship was repeated several times; it was concluded by three hard slaps, which were given me on the breast and back at the same time. He then bared his bosom for me to return the compliment, which being done, he seemed highly pleased. The language of these people, according to our notions, scarcely deserves to be called articulate. Captain Cook has compared it to a man clearing his throat, but certainly no European ever cleared his throat with so many hoarse, guttural, and clicking sounds.

They are excellent mimics: as often as we coughed or yawned, or made any odd motion, they immediately Charles Darwin 32 imitated us. Some of our party began to squint and look awry; but one of the young Fuegians (whose whole face was painted black, excepting a white band across his eyes) succeeded in making far more hideous grimaces. They could repeat with perfect correctness, each word in any sentence we addressed them, and they remembered such words for some time. Yet we Europeans all know how difficult it is to distinguish apart the sounds in a foreign

language. Which of us, for instance, could follow an American Indian through a sentence of more than three words? All savages appear to possess, to an uncommon degree, this power of mimicry. I was told almost in the same words, of the same ludicrous habits among the Caffres: the Australians, likewise, have long been notorious for being able to imitate and describe the gait of any man, so that he may be recognized. How can this faculty be explained? is it a consequence of the more practised habits of perception and keener senses, common to all men in a savage state, as compared to those long civilized?

When a song was struck up by our party, I thought the Fuegians would have fallen down with astonishment. With equal surprise they viewed our dancing; but one of the young men, when asked, had no objection to a little waltzing. Little accustomed to Europeans as they appeared to be, yet they knew, and dreaded our fire-arms; nothing would tempt them to take a gun in their hands. They begged for knives, calling them by the Spanish word 'cuchilla'. They explained also what they wanted, by acting as if they had a piece of blubber in their mouth, and then pretending to cut instead of tear it.

It was interesting to watch the conduct of these people towards Jemmy Button (one of the Fuegians who had been taken, during the former voyage, to England): they immediately perceived the difference between him and the rest, and held much conversation between themselves on the subject. The old man addressed a long harangue to Jemmy, which it seems was to invite him to stay with them. But Jemmy understood very little of their language, and was, moreover, thoroughly ashamed of his countrymen. When York Minster (another of these men) came on shore, they noticed him in the same way, and told him he ought to shave; yet he had not twenty dwarf hairs on his face, whilst we all wore our untrimmed beards. They examined the colour of his skin, and compared it with ours. One of our arms being bared, they expressed the liveliest surprise and admiration at its whiteness. We thought that they mistook two or three of the officers, who were rather shorter and fairer (though adorned with large beards), for the ladies of our party. The tallest amongst the Fuegians was evidently much pleased at his height being noticed. When placed back to back with the tallest of the boat's crew, he tried his best to edge on higher ground,

and to stand on tiptoe. He opened his mouth to show his teeth, and turned his face for a side view; and all this was done with such alacrity, that I dare say he thought himself the handsomest man in Tierra del Fuego. After the first feeling on our part of grave astonishment was over, nothing could be more ludicrous or interesting than the odd mixture of surprise and imitation which these savages every moment exhibited.

The next day I attempted to penetrate some way into the country. Tierra del Fuego may be described as a mountainous country, partly submerged in the sea, so that deep islets and bays occupy the place where valleys should exist. The mountain sides (except on the exposed western coast) are covered from the water's edge upwards by one great forest. The trees reach to an elevation of between 1,000 and 1,500 feet; and are succeeded by a band of peat, with minute alpine plants; and this again is succeeded by the line of perpetual snow, which, according to Captain King, in the Strait of Magellan descends to between 3,000 and 4,000 feet. To find an acre of level land in any part of the country is most rare. I recollect only one little flat near Port Famine, and another of rather larger extent near Goeree Road. In both these cases, and in all others, the surface was covered by a thick bed of swampy peat. Even within the forest the ground is concealed by a mass of slowly putrefying vegetable matter, which, from being soaked with water, yields to the foot.

Finding it nearly hopeless to push my way through the wood, I followed the course of a mountain torrent. At first, from the waterfalls and number of dead trees, I could hardly crawl along; but the bed of the stream soon became a little more open, from the floods having swept the broken and rocky banks; and was amply repaid by the grandeur of the scene. The gloomy depth of the ravine well accorded with the universal signs of violence. On every side were lying irregular masses of rock and up- torn trees; other trees, though still erect, were decayed to the heart and ready to fall. The entangled mass of the thriving and the fallen reminded me of the forests within the tropics; – yet there was a difference; for in these still solitudes, Death, instead of Life, seemed the predominant spirit. I followed the water- course till I came to a spot where a great slip had cleared a straight space down the mountain side. By this road I ascended to a considerable elevation, and obtained a good view of the surrounding woods. The trees all belong to one kind, the *Fagus*

betuloides, for the number of the other species of beech, and of the Winter's bark, is quite inconsiderable. This tree keeps its leaves throughout the year; but its foliage is of a peculiar brownish- green colour, with a tinge of yellow. As the whole landscape is thus coloured, it has a sombre, dull appearance; nor is it often enlivened by the rays of the sun.

Strait of Magellan

December 21st – The *Beagle* got under way: and on the succeeding day, favoured to an uncommon degree by a fine easterly breeze, we closed in with the Barnevelts, and, running past Cape Deceit with its stony peaks, about three o'clock doubled the weather beaten Cape Horn! The evening was calm and bright and means of judging of the distance, how the mountain appeared to rise in height.

The Fuegians twice came and plagued us. As there were many instruments, clothes, and men on shore, it was thought necessary to frighten them away. The first time, a few great guns were fired, when they were far distant. It was most ludicrous to watch through a glass the Indians, as often as the shot struck the water, take up stones, and as a bold defiance, throw them towards the ship, though about a mile and a half distant! A boat was then sent with orders to fire a few musket- shot wide of them. The Fuegians hid themselves behind the trees; and for every discharge of the musket they fired their arrows: all, however, fell short of the boat, and the officer as he pointed at them laughed. This made the Fuegians frantic with passion, and they shook their mantles in vain rage. At last seeing the balls cut and strike the trees, they ran away; and we were left in peace and quietness.

On a former occasion, when the *Beagle* was here in the month of February, I started one morning at four o'clock to ascend Mount Tarn, which is 2,600 feet high, and is the most elevated point in this immediate neighbourhood. We went in a boat to the foot of the mountain (but not to the best part), and then began our ascent. The forest commences at the line of high- water mark, and during the two first hours I gave over all hopes of reaching the summit. So thick was the wood, that it was necessary to have constant recourse to the compass; for every landmark, though in a mountainous country, was completely shut out. In the deep ravines, the death-like scene of desolation exceeded all description; outside it was blowing a gale, but in these hollows, not even a breath of wind

stirred the leaves of the tallest trees. So gloomy, cold, and wet was every part, that not even the fungi, mosses, or ferns, could flourish. In the valleys it was scarcely possible to crawl along, they were so completely barricaded by the great mouldering trunks, which had fallen down in every direction. When passing over these natural bridges, one's course was often arrested by sinking knee deep into the rotten wood; at other times, when attempting to lean against a firm tree, one was startled by finding a mass of decayed matter ready to fall at the slightest touch. We at last found ourselves among the stunted trees, and then soon reached the bare ridge, which conducted us to the summit. Here was a view characteristic of Tierra del Fuego; – irregular chains of hills, mottled with patches of snow, deep yellowish- green valleys, and arms of the sea intersecting the land in many directions. The strong wind was piercingly cold, and the atmosphere rather hazy, so that we did not stay long on the top of the mountain. Our descent was not quite so laborious as our ascent; for the weight of the body forced a passage, and all the slips and falls were in the right direction.

* * *

The perfect preservation of the Siberian animals, perhaps presented, till within a few years, one of the most difficult problems which geology ever attempted to solve. On the one hand it was granted, that the carcasses had not been drifted from any great distance by any tumultuous deluge, and on the other it was assumed as certain, that when the animals lived, the climate must have been so totally different, that the presence of ice in the vicinity was as incredible, as would be the freezing of the Ganges. Mr Lyell in his *Principles of Geology* has thrown the greatest light on this subject, by indicating the northerly course of the existing rivers with the probability that they formerly carried carcasses in the same direction; by showing (from Humboldt) how far the inhabitants of the hottest countries sometimes wander; by insisting on the caution necessary in judging of habits between animals of the same genus, when the species are not identical; and especially by bringing forward in the clearest manner the probable change from an insular to an extreme climate, as the consequence of the elevation of the land, of which proofs have lately been brought to light.

In a former part of this volume, I have endeavoured to prove, that as far as regards the *quantity* of food, there is no difficulty in supposing that these large quadrupeds inhabited sterile regions, producing but a scanty vegetation. With respect to temperature, the woolly covering both of the elephant and the rhinoceros seems at once to render it at least probable (although it has been argued that some animals living in the hottest regions are thickly clothed) that they were fitted for a cold climate. I suppose no reason can be assigned why, during a former epoch, when the pachydermata abounded over the greater part of the world, some species should not have been fitted for the northern regions, precisely as now happens with deer and several other animals. If, then, we believe that the climate of Siberia, anteriorly to the physical changes above alluded to, had some resemblance with that of the southern hemisphere at the present day – a circumstance which harmonizes well with other facts, as I think has been shown by the imaginary case, when we transported existing phenomena from one to the other hemisphere – the following conclusions may be deduced as probable: first, that the degree of cold formerly was not excessive; secondly, that snow did not for a long time together cover the ground (such not being the case at the extreme parts 55° – 56° of S. America); thirdly, that the vegetation partook of a more tropical character than it now does in the same latitudes; and lastly, that at but a short distance to the northward of the country thus circumstanced (even not so far as where Pallas found the entire rhinoceros), the soil might be perpetually congealed: so that if the carcass of any animal should once be buried a few feet beneath the surface, it would be preserved for centuries.

Both Humboldt and Lyell have remarked, that at the present day, the bodies of any animals, wandering beyond the line of perpetual congelation which extends as far south as 62° , if once embedded by any accident a few feet beneath the surface, would be preserved for an indefinite length of time: the same would happen with carcasses drifted by the rivers; and by such means the extinct mammalia may have been entombed. There is only one small step wanting, as it appears to me, and the whole problem would be solved with a degree of simplicity very striking, compared with the several theories first invented. From the account given by Mr Lyell of the Siberian plains, with their innumerable fossil bones, the relics of many successive generations, there can be little doubt that the

beds were accumulated either in a shallow sea, or in an estuary. From the description given in Beechey's voyage of Eschscholtz Bay, the same remark is applicable to the north-west coast of America: the formation there appears identical with the common littoral deposits recently elevated, which I have seen on the shores of the southern part of the same continent. It seems also well established, that the Siberian remains are only exposed where the rivers intersect the plain. With this fact, and the proofs of recent elevation, the whole case appears to be precisely similar to that of the Pampas: namely, that the carcasses were formerly floated into the sea, and the remains covered up in the deposits which were then accumulating. These beds have since been elevated; and as the rivers excavate their channels the entombed skeletons are exposed.

Here then, is the difficulty: how were the carcasses preserved at the bottom of the sea? I do not think it has been sufficiently noticed, that the preservation of the animal with its flesh was an occasional event, and not directly consequent on its position far northward. Cuvier refers to the voyage of Billing as showing that the *bones* of the elephant, buffalo, and rhinoceros, are nowhere so abundant as on the islands between the mouths of the Lena and Indigirka. It is even said that excepting some hills of rock, the whole is composed of sand, ice, and bones. These islands lie to the northward of the place where Adams found the mammoth with its flesh preserved, and even 10° north of the Wiljui, where the rhinoceros was discovered in a like condition. In the case of the *bones* we may suppose that the carcasses were drifted into a deeper sea, and there remaining at the bottom, the flesh decomposed. But in the second and more extraordinary case, where putrefaction seems to have been arrested, the body probably was soon covered up by deposits which were then accumulating. It may be asked, whether the mud a few feet deep, at the bottom of a shallow sea which is annually frozen, has a temperature higher than 32°? It must be remembered how intense a degree of cold is required to freeze salt water; and that the mud at some depth below the surface, would have a low mean temperature, precisely in the same manner as the subsoil on the land is frozen in countries which enjoy a short but hot summer. If this be possible, the entombment of these extinct quadrupeds is rendered very simple; and with regard to the conditions of their former existence, the principal difficulties have, I think, already been removed.

There is one marine production, which from its importance is worthy of a particular history. It is the kelp or *Fucus giganteus* of Solander. This plant grows on every rock from low- water mark to a great depth, both on the outer coast and within the channels. I believe, during the voyages of the *Adventure* and *Beagle* , not one rock near the surface was discovered, which was not buoyed by this floating weed. The good service it thus affords to vessels navigating near this stormy land is evident; and it certainly has saved many a one from being wrecked. I know few things more surprising than to see this plant growing and flourishing amidst those great breakers of the western ocean, which no mass of rock, let it be ever so hard, can long resist. The stem is round, slimy, and smooth, and seldom has a diameter of so much as an inch. A few taken together are sufficiently strong to support the weight of the large loose stones to which in the inland channels they grow attached; and some of these stones are so heavy, that when drawn to the surface they can scarcely be lifted into a boat by one person.

Captain Cook, in his second voyage, says, that at Kerguelen Land 'some of this weed is of a most enormous length, though the stem is not much thicker than a man's thumb. I have mentioned, that on some of the shoals upon which it grows, we did not strike ground with a line of 24 fathoms. The depth of water, therefore, must have been greater. And as this weed does not grow in a perpendicular direction, but makes a very acute angle with the bottom, and much of it afterwards spreads many fathoms on the surface of the sea, I am well warranted to say that some of it grows to the length of sixty fathoms and upwards.' Certainly at the Falkland Islands, and about Tierra del Fuego, extensive beds frequently spring up from 10- and 15- fathom water. I do not suppose the stem of any other plant attains so great a length as 360 feet, as stated by Captain Cook. Its geographical range is very considerable; it is found from the extreme southern islets near Cape Horn, as far north, on the eastern coast (according to information given me by Mr Stokes), as lat. 43° – and on the western it was tolerably abundant, but far from luxuriant, at Chiloe, in lat. 42°. It may possibly extend a little further northward, but is soon succeeded by a different species. We thus have a range of 15° in latitude; and as Cook, who must have been well acquainted with

the species, found it at Kerguelen Land, no less than 140° in longitude.

The number of living creatures of all orders, whose existence intimately depends on the kelp, is wonderful. A great volume might be written, describing the inhabitants of one of these beds of seaweed. Almost every leaf, excepting those that float on the surface, is so thickly incrustated with coral- lines, as to be of a white colour. We find exquisitely- delicate structures, some inhabited by simple hydra- like polypi, others by more organized kinds, and beautiful compound Ascidiaë. On the flat surfaces of the leaves various patelliform shells, Trochi, uncovered molluscs, and some bivalves are attached. Innumerable crustacea frequent every part of the plant. On shaking the great entangled roots, a pile of small fish, shells, cuttle- fish, crabs of all orders, sea- eggs, star- fish, beautiful Holothuriæ (some taking the external form of the nudibranch molluscs), Planariæ, and crawling nereidous animals of a multitude of forms, all fall out together. Often as I recurred to a branch of the kelp, I never failed to discover animals of new and curious structures. In Chiloe, where, as I have said, the kelp did not thrive very well, the numerous shells, coral- lines, and crustacea were absent; but there yet remained a few of the flustraceæ, and some compound Ascidiaë; the latter, however, were of different species from those in Tierra del Fuego. We here see the fucus possessing a wider range than the animals which use it as an abode.

I can only compare these great aquatic forests of the southern hemisphere with the terrestrial ones in the intertropical regions. Yet if the latter should be destroyed in any country, I do not believe nearly so many species of animals would perish, as, under similar circumstances, would happen with the kelp. Amidst the leaves of this plant numerous species of fish live, which nowhere else would find food or shelter; with their destruction the many cormorants, divers, and other fishing birds, the otters, seals, and porpoises, would soon perish also; and lastly, the Fuegian savage, the miserable lord of this miserable land, would redouble his cannibal feast, decrease in numbers, and perhaps cease to exist.

June 8th – We weighed anchor early in the morning, and left Port Famine. Captain FitzRoy determined to leave the Strait of Magellan by the Magdalen channel, which had not long been discovered. Our course lay due south, down that gloomy passage

which I have before alluded to, as appearing to lead to another and worse world. The wind was fair, but the atmosphere was very thick; so that we missed much curious scenery. The dark ragged clouds were rapidly driven over the mountains, from their summits nearly to their bases. The glimpses which we caught through the dusky mass were highly interesting: jagged points, cones of snow, blue glaciers, strong outlines marked on a lurid sky, were seen at different distances and heights. In the midst of such scenery we anchored at Cape Turn, close to Mount Sarmiento, which was then hidden in the clouds. At the base of the lofty and almost perpendicular sides of our little cove, there was one deserted wigwam, and it alone reminded us that man sometimes wandered in these desolate regions. But it would be difficult to imagine a scene where he seemed to have less claims, or less authority. The inanimate works of nature – rock, ice, snow, wind, and water – all warring with each other, yet combined against man – here reigned in absolute sovereignty.

June 9th – In the morning we were delighted by seeing the veil of mist gradually rise from Sarmiento, and display it to our view. This mountain, which is one of the highest in Tierra del Fuego, has an elevation of 6,800 feet. Its base, for about an eighth of its total height, is clothed by dusky woods, and above this a field of snow extends to the summit. These vast piles of snow, which never melt, and seem destined to last as long as the world holds together, present a noble and even sublime spectacle. The outline of the mountain was admirably clear and defined. Owing to the abundance of light reflected from the white and glittering surface, no shadows are cast on any part; and those lines which intersect the sky can alone be distinguished: hence the mass stood out in the boldest relief. Several glaciers descended in a winding course, from the snow to the sea- coast: they may be likened to great frozen Niagaras; and perhaps these cataracts of blue ice are to the full as beautiful as the moving ones of water. By night we reached the western part of the channel; but the water was so deep that no anchorage could be found. We were in consequence obliged to stand off and on, in this narrow arm of the sea, during a pitch- dark night of fourteen hours long.

June 10th – In the morning we made the best of our way into the open Pacific. The Western coast generally consists of low,

rounded, quite barren, hills of granite and greenstone. Sir John Narborough called one part South Desolation, because it is 'so desolate a land to behold'; and well indeed might he say so. Outside the main islands there are numberless scattered rocks, on which the long swell of the open ocean incessantly rages. We passed out between the East and West Furies, and a little further northward there are so many breakers that the sea is called the Milky Way. One sight of such a coast is enough to make a landsman dream for a week about shipwreck, peril, and death; and with this sight, we bade farewell for ever to Tierra del Fuego.



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Eliot wrote the essay ‘Silly Novels by Lady Novelists’ for the Westminster Review in October

1856. She wrote ‘The Lifted Veil’ in early 1859 , while working on her novel The Mill on the

Floss. It was published in Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine in July of that year. This edition

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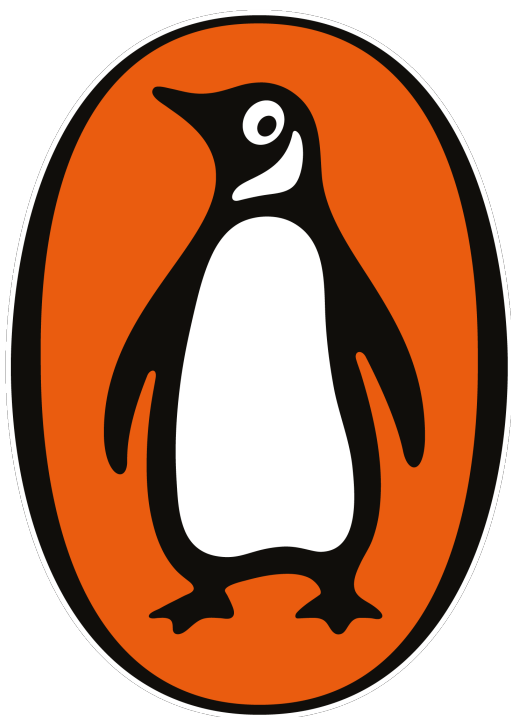
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“为什么她手里拿着蜡烛，
站在我面前，
用那冷酷而轻蔑的眼睛
盯着我看？
而她胸前那闪闪
发光的蛇，
像一个似曾相识的
魔鬼。”



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掀开的面纱

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第一章

我的末日就要来了。最近，我饱受心绞痛的折磨，医生告诉我，正常情况下，我的生命只剩下寥寥数月。除非，在被诅咒了拥有罕有的心智之外，我还不幸拥有了罕见的体质，不然我将在不久后摆脱这尘世生命的痛苦重担。不过要是我没能摆脱，要是我还可以活到大多数渴望并且能够活到的那个岁数，我就能一探究竟，看看希望的落空是否会比预言的实现让人更感痛苦。因为，我已经预见到了我何时死亡，预见到了我生命最后时刻发生的每一件事。

从现在开始一个月后的那一天，也就是1850年9月20日那天，我将会坐在这把椅子上，就在这间书房里，在夜晚十点整，渴望着死亡，不断袭来的洞察和预见将我折磨得疲惫不堪，幻觉和希望都不再出现。我看着壁炉里一条蓝色火舌正在升起，我的灯即将燃烧殆尽，就在那一刻，我的胸口会迎来可怕的收缩。窒息感来临之前，我的时间只够伸手猛烈地拉铃。没有人会回应我的铃声。我知道为什么。我的两个仆人是一对情人，那时他们刚刚争吵完。我拉铃的两个小时前，女管家怒气冲冲地跑出房子，她要佩里以为她去投水自尽了。佩里最终警觉了，为了找她也离开了房子。年轻的洗碗女工在一条长凳上睡着了，她从来不回应铃声，铃声叫不醒她。窒息的感觉加重了，我的灯熄灭了，带来一股难闻的味道，我费尽全身力气又一次扑向了铃铛。我渴望生命，但却无人来救。我曾经渴望未知的世界，但那股渴望已经消散了。上帝啊，让我继续活在这已知的世界，让我继续被已知的世界折磨吧，我会心满意足。绞痛和窒息给我带来痛苦□土地、田野、鸦巢下铺着鹅卵石的小溪、雨后的新鲜气息、早晨透过卧室窗户的阳光，还有霜降时屋内温暖的壁炉，难道这些也要永远被黑暗吞噬吗？

黑暗，还是黑暗，没有痛苦，只有黑暗。而在黑暗中我一直在向前穿梭□我的思绪一直处在黑暗中，但感觉在向前持续移动.....

在死亡降临前，我要用仅存的安宁和气力讲述我奇异的经历。我从未向任何人袒露过这一切，也从未对人们的同情心抱有太大期望。不过，死亡可能让世人在评价我们时带着几分同情、些许温柔和宽容

□活着的人不会得到宽恕，活着的人不会得到迁就和尊重，对于活人的所有温情都像雨点一样消散在了无情的东风中。留给你的机会只有一个，遇到那心灵善良的人，你该摧残他；遇到那眼睛仍温情脉脉、小心翼翼地望着你的人，你该以冷若冰霜的眼神回敬他；耳朵是通向灵魂这座神龛深处的柔弱信使，要是遇到那耳朵还能听得出善意语句的人，你就该摆出一副冰冷的礼仪规范，说上几句暗藏讥讽的赞美，或者端着艳羡的冷漠态度拒他于千里之外；要是遇到一个头脑仍热情地维持正义、期盼着兄弟般感情的人，你该抓紧用你不怀好意的评判、琐碎的对比、看似无心的信口雌黄打击他。这样，他的心灵会逐渐麻木，直到“激烈的愤怒再也无法伤害心灵”^[1]，眼睛再也不会流露满怀期待的神色，耳朵会听而不闻，头脑不再回应那些祈求，也不再思考。这样，你的话语才有了用武之地，你会记得并同情那些失败者付出的艰辛，你会尊敬那些已经完成的工作，你会原谅错误，你会心甘情愿地忘掉错误。

这些都是琐碎无用又幼稚的说辞，我为什么要思考这些？对我来说，这毫无意义，在我死后，我没有任何作品供人景仰；没有任何亲人会在我的墓前哭泣，懊悔在我生前给我造成的痛苦。我死后，恐怕只有我这一生的故事能在陌生人处换回一些同情，一些我生前从朋友处鲜少得到的同情。

和我后来不幸的人生相比，我的童年岁月还算过得不错，称得上幸福。那时的我和其他孩子一样，看不透未来。和那些孩子一样，我享受着当下时光的快乐，也享受着对未来无限憧憬的甜蜜。我那温柔的母亲还在我身边。即使是现在，岁月蹉跎，一想起她把我放在膝盖上温柔地抚摸我，我都可以朦胧地回忆起当时的感觉□她的双臂环抱着我，脸颊紧贴着我的脸颊。小时候，有段时间我患了眼疾，看不见东西，她就从早到晚地抱着我。母亲对我的爱无人能及，可她却过早地离开了我，还是孩子的我已感到生命被一股寒意侵蚀。和母亲去世前一样，我还是经常在马夫的照看下，骑着一匹白色的小马驹。可是，我上马时再也没有人热切地看着我，骑马回来时再也没有人等着拥抱我。其他孩子若是在七八岁时失去了母亲，他们的思念也许并不会像我这样强烈，因为他们生命中的其他乐趣还将继续，而我却是个异常敏感的孩子。我记得，我很容易被丁点儿声响弄得又焦虑又激动，马厩里马匹踏地板的回声、马夫们瓮声瓮气的说话声、父亲的马车一停到院子的拱门下就引来的阵阵犬吠声，以及提示午餐和晚餐的铃声，这些都会刺激到我。我父亲的房子毗邻一个有军营驻扎的乡村，军队操练时稳健的踏步声时而传来，让我颤抖着啜泣。可这声音一旦消失，我又盼望它再来。

我想，父亲大概认为我是个有些奇怪的孩子，所以不怎么喜欢我，尽管他完成一个父亲的责任时一丝不苟。就算如此，他也已经人

到中年，是两个孩子的父亲。我的母亲是他的继室，他们结婚时父亲已经四十五岁了。他是一个坚定不移、从不屈服又极度有纪律的人，是一个从里到外地地道道的银行家；又是一个活跃的地主，渴望在全郡获得影响力。他一成不变，从不受天气的影响，从来没经历过忧郁，也不知道什么叫作兴高采烈。我很敬畏他，只要他在身边，我就会变得更加懦弱敏感。这恰恰让他相信，必须用不同于教育我兄长的那套常规方式教育我。我兄长是个高个子的年轻人，当时已经进入了伊顿公学。他将成为我父亲的代言人和继承人，当然，为了结交权贵他必须上伊顿公学和牛津大学。我父亲并不否认阅读拉丁讽刺作家或希腊剧作家的作品有助于获取贵族地位，不过，他其实并不怎么尊重这些“已故的贵族幽灵”。在读过波特翻译的埃斯库罗斯，粗略看过弗朗西斯译成英文的贺拉斯后，他觉得他自己已经完全有资格对这些作品评论论足了。他不屑于这些，他欣赏的是另一类事物，他最近涉足矿产投资，因此便更觉得科学教育才是对次子最有用的教育。特别是对我这样一个又害羞又敏感的男孩儿来说，我根本不适合去读弱肉强食的公立学校。莱瑟尔先生坚信这一点。莱瑟尔先生是一个戴眼镜的肥胖男人。一天，他肥胖的双手夹住我瘦小的头颅，带着科学研究的怀疑态度在我头上这里敲敲那里按按，随后，他用肥大的手指按住我的太阳穴把我推开，透过那副亮闪闪的眼镜打量着我。他额头紧锁，看来对这番审视并不满意，一边用拇指扫着我的眉毛一边对我父亲说：“他的不足之处是这里，先生□那里，还有这里。”他扶住我头颅的上半部分补充道：“但这里又过度了。缺陷部分一定要激发出来，而过度的部分要给予压制。”

我瑟瑟发抖，一部分在于我模模糊糊地感到自己被当作批判的对象了；一部分在于我为自己第一次的愤怒感到坐立难安，我憎恨这个戴眼镜的硕大男人，他随意地拉拽我的头颅，好像在讨价还价中试图廉价买下它。

我不清楚莱瑟尔先生和后来父亲用在我身上的那套教育体系到底有多大关系，但有一件事儿是肯定的，那就是私人教师、历史、自然科学、现代语言都是用来修补我先天不足的工具。由于我对机械一窍不通，他们就安排我整日和机器相处；我的思维中没有清晰的分类，他们就认为我需要系统地学习动物学和植物学。我渴望了解人类行为和人类情感，他们却把我的生活中塞满机械能量、元素和电子、磁力现象。如果是先天健全的男孩儿，带着他们运行正常的器官，定能从这些睿智教师的辅导中受益匪浅，他们将毫无疑问地对电磁现象滋生无限的兴趣，就像每个周四晚上老师努力想让我感受到的一样。事实上，对于他们所教授的科学知识，我依旧保持着相当的无知，其程度甚至可以匹敌被古典学院驱逐的最差的学生。暗地里，我偷偷地阅读普鲁塔克、莎士比亚和堂吉珂德，一边读一边任由我的思绪飘荡。我

的教师告诉我，“一个受过教育的人与文盲的区别在于，他知道为什么水往低处流”。可我却无意成为这样一个受过教育的人，我喜欢流水，能够一连几个小时地观察它，听它从鹅卵石中蜿蜒流过的汨汨声，喜欢看它浇灌亮绿色的水草。我不想知道它流淌的原理，我所确信的是，如此美丽的事物背后一定有更深层次的原因。

还是不要再说这段往事了吧。我想我说的已足以证明，我的天性是敏感而不讲求实际的，我又是在这样一个对我天性不利的环境中成长，因此我不可能长成一个快乐健康的人。十六岁那年，我被送往日内瓦完成学业，这种改变为我带来了快乐。当我们从汝拉山上下来，第一次看到夕阳落在阿尔卑斯山脉的山顶，我觉得那里仿佛是天堂的入口。好似沉醉于甘甜的美酒中一般，那三年的时光在无尽的狂喜中度过，而大自然也向我展示了她百般的婀娜。也许你会以为，我如此年轻就能领略自然之美，我必定是个诗人。可惜，我的命运没有这般幸运。诗人会倾吐他的诗歌，而且他坚信他的诗歌会被那敏锐的耳朵采撷，得到灵魂的回应，迟早会在世间传诵。但是，敏感多情的诗人要是失去了声音，要是他的情感无法用语言表达出来，比如，阳光明媚的时候他在河岸看到水面波光粼粼之景只能默默流泪；或者，一旦有人说了几句难听的话、给了他一个坏脸色，他就寝食难安，内心的激情便无从释放，与人相处时，他便越发感到孤独。只有傍晚时分，行舟湖上，朝着中心泊去时，我的孤独感才有所减淡。那时，天空，闪着光辉的山峦，广阔的蓝色湖面，这一切景色将我环抱。自母亲过世，我就再也没能感受到这样的疼爱了。我会像让·雅克 [2] 一样，躺在小舟里，任凭它自由地漂荡。我看着天边褪去的霞光作别一座又一座的山巅，就像先知的烈火马车驶过，驶向光生出的地方。直到雪白的山顶变得灰暗，如同死尸，我才不得不起程返回，因为，我被看管得很严，他们不准许我晚上四处游荡。虽然在日内瓦求学的同龄人很多，但因为性情，大家在选择朋友时并不青睐我。不过，我还是结交了一个朋友，更让人想不到的是，他的志趣与我完全相反。我称呼他为查尔斯·麦尼埃，他的真实姓氏是一个后来颇有名气的英国姓，因为他拥有英国血统。他是个孤儿，在学医期间只能靠一点儿可怜的补贴过活，而他在医学上很有天赋。真是奇怪啊！我是个头脑糊涂、易受影响、不善观察、不求甚解又整日陷入沉思中的人，我居然会被这样一个对科学饱含激情的青年吸引。不过，我们之间的友谊并不是靠智力维系，这友谊的源泉能让愚钝的人和智慧的人结交，也能让异想天开的人和脚踏实地的人亲近，我们的友谊来源于共同的情感。查尔斯家境贫寒、相貌丑陋，只能招来日内瓦社会的嘲笑，被社交生活拒之门外。我看他和我一样被人孤立，当然，我们被孤立的原因不同，这使得我对他生出一种夹杂着同情的厌恶，受此驱使，我小心翼翼地接近他。可以这么说，在我们大相径庭的习惯差异所能允许的范围内，我们萌发了同志情谊。查尔斯很少休息，在他休息时，我们会

一起爬萨莱沃山，或者一起乘船去沃韦，我迷迷糊糊地听他讲他正在进行的各种大胆的实验和发现。一边听他讲，我一边看沿途蓝色的水面、天空优美的浮云，一边听鸟儿婉转鸣叫、远方冰川融化之声。他很清楚，我听得三心二意，但他喜欢这样和我交谈，即便是狗啊、鸟啊爱我们，我们不也愿意向它们抒发自己的愿景和雄心吗？而我之所以说起这段友情，是因为这与我后面要讲的那段离奇、恐怖的经历有关。

我的这段相对幸福的时光因为一场严重的疾病中断了，我几乎回忆不起生病时的情形，只能隐隐约约记得当时的痛苦，父亲时不时地会来床边陪伴我。随后就是单调乏味的疗养期。随着体力慢慢恢复，我的生活也逐渐有些变化，渐渐地我可以远游。在我记得比较清楚的日子里，有一天，父亲坐在我身边的沙发上，对我说：“等你身体好点儿的时候，拉蒂默，我要带你跟我回家。这趟旅行会让你轻松愉快，这对你有好处。我会带你去蒂罗尔和奥地利，你会游历很多地方。我们的邻居菲尔莫尔一家会一起去，艾尔弗雷德将在巴塞尔和我们会合，我们会一起去维也纳，回来的时候路过布拉格……”

话还没说完，父亲就被叫走了，我的思绪停留在布拉格上。我有一种莫名其妙的感觉，一幅新颖、奇妙的图景展现在眼前：一座城市沐浴在阳光中，好像是几个世纪之前的夏日阳光仍在这里徘徊。这阳光已经陈旧了，它长年累月承受着夜晚露水的洗涤或突降云雨的冲荡；它照耀着一个布满灰尘、疲惫不堪又历经沧桑的伟大民族，这民族注定要活在陈旧的记忆中，如同那些被废黜、抛弃的国王，他们的金缕玉衣已经变成破衣烂衫。这城市看上去如此干渴，那宽阔的河水在我看来也如同一条金属块儿。沿着那座望不到尽头的桥，我从那些雕塑空洞的眼神下走过。这些雕塑已经发黑，他们穿着古老的衣服，戴着神圣的王冠，在我眼中，他们才是这座城市真正的居民和真正的主人，而那些熙熙攘攘、微不足道的男男女女，他们忙进忙出，其实只是暂时来叨扰这座城的游客。这些表情严肃的石头人，我想，他们是已经故去的古人的祖先，他们矗立在饱受风霜的建筑里拜谒宫廷。这些宫殿曾经繁华却已失色彩，它们的屋顶连成一条单调的天际线。这些雕塑在空气陈旧的教堂里疲惫地做礼拜，他们没有恐惧也没有希望，等待他们的只有衰老却永生的命运。在永恒的白昼下，他们靠着刻板的习俗生活着，没有夜晚的休憩，亦无清晨的新生。

突然一阵金属碰撞的叮当声让我打了一个寒战，屋内的摆设重新出现在我的意识里，原来，皮埃尔开门给我药剂的时候一块火烙铁正好掉落，发出了那声响。我的心脏开始不规则地猛烈跳动，我让皮埃尔把药放在旁边，说我一会就喝。

留我只身一人的时候，我马上开始回想刚才是不是睡着了。这一

切是不是梦境？我对一个陌生城市的幻境竟会如此清晰，此前我从未想象过这样一个城市，幻境却清晰到我能看见一盏星星样式的多彩灯在人行道上洒下了一块彩虹色的光斑。我从未看过关于布拉格的绘画，它在我头脑里只是个名字，我隐隐约约记得一些和它有关的历史事件，一些说不清的帝国辉煌和宗教战争。

我从未做过这样的梦，以往我总是受噩梦侵扰，其他梦的内容杂乱无章，梦到的也是寻常的事物，我常常为此感到不安。但我不相信刚刚我只是睡着了，我清楚地记得那幻境如何一步步降临到我身上，像是在模糊的视线中形成了新的图景，又好似太阳升起时掀开了清晨雾水形成的面纱，大地的景色逐渐清晰。在我开始意识到这幻境的时候，我同时也能感知到，皮埃尔告诉我父亲菲尔莫尔先生正在等他，随后我父亲迅速离开了房间。不，这不是梦，一种让我颤抖的狂喜使我想到，这难道是我体内的诗人本性苏醒了？迄今为止，这诗人的本性只是让我受多愁善感的折磨，如今，它终于要显现为即兴的创造力了吗？是啊，一定是这样，凭着诗人的本性，荷马看到了特洛伊的平原，但丁看到了死者的炼狱，弥尔顿看到了摔向地面的撒旦。难道是疾病给我的体质带来了喜人的变化，让我的神经变得更稳定，带走了体内愚钝的杂质？我读到过这类效果，至少在小说里读过。不，在真实的传记里我也曾读过，某些疾病会让头脑更稳定专注，有些疾病则会升华头脑的活力。诺瓦利斯不是随着肺结核的加重，感到他的灵感也越来越强了吗？

这个幸福的想法一直萦绕在我心头，我觉得我可以通过延伸自己的思维测试一下这种新的能力。幻境出现的时候，我父亲正说到我们要去布拉格。我全然不信，这幻境会是那城市的真实呈现。我相信，或者说我希望，那是我新解放的天才在瞬间描摹出的景象，其中的色彩则来自以往的记忆。如果我让思绪停留在另一座城市上，比如威尼斯，我对它的熟悉远胜过布拉格，也许同样的事情会再次发生。我集中精力将思绪交会在威尼斯上，我调动那些诗意的记忆来激发想象力，努力让自己感到身在威尼斯，如我此前想象身在布拉格一样。然而，没有用。我的头脑只是在为卡纳莱托的版画上色，它们就挂在我那间旧卧室的墙壁上。我脑海中形成的图像并不稳定，而我的头脑不停地找寻更生动的形象，我必须动用必要的手段有意识地努力才能看到形象或光影。这只是我毫无想象力的主动努力，我并没有全神贯注地进入这幅画中，所有的形象也没有不自觉地向我涌来，和半个小时前的那次经历完全不同。我有些灰心，但同时我也知道灵感总是断断续续到来的。

一连几天，我处在兴奋的渴望中，渴望着我的新天赋能再发生一次。我让思绪飘荡在知识的海洋中，希望它能找到某个对象将我沉睡的天才重新唤醒。但是，不，我的世界和从前一样灰暗，那一束神奇

的光没有再来，尽管我怀着颤抖的渴望找寻着它。

每天，父亲都会陪我乘着车游览一段，散一段时间的步，并且随着我逐渐恢复，距离也越来越远。一天傍晚，他和我约好第二天中午十二点接我，我们可以一起去挑音乐盒和富裕的英国人在日内瓦常买的物品。他本就是十分守时的人，放在银行家里，他也算最守时的一个，为此，我总是紧张张张地准备好，在约定的时间等着他。但让我意外的是，到了十二点一刻钟的时候他仍未出现。作为一个正在恢复期的病人，我本就无所事事，而为了支撑自己应对这趟外出，我更是刚刚饮下了一些补药，这使得我越发地不耐烦。

我实在没法坐着保持体力，就在屋里来回踱步，看着窗外的罗纳河从深蓝色的湖水中流出来，脑子里想的是各种可能绊住父亲和我会面的原因。

突然我感觉到父亲到了房子里，但并非独自一人，他身边有两个人。奇怪！我没有听见脚步声，没有看到门打开，但我确实看到了父亲。在他右手边是我们的邻居菲尔莫尔夫人，虽然已经五年没见，我还记得很清楚。她是一个普通的中年女性，身着丝绸和开司米料子的衣服。父亲左手边的女士还不满二十岁，身材高挑、纤细，身姿如柳条一般，一头华丽的金色长发编成俏皮的样式。对那苗条的身材、瘦小的脸庞、薄薄的嘴唇来说，这一头发髻形成的王冠可能过于沉重了。但这脸庞的表情却不是女孩子会有的青涩神情，她棱角分明，暗灰色的眼睛目光锐利、不停地转动，又满是挖苦人的神情。这双眼睛带着几分笑意好奇地打量着我，我感到一种痛苦，好似一股冷风刮伤了我。那暗绿色的裙子、暗绿色的袖子好像在她的淡金色头发旁围成一个边界，让我想到女水妖 [3]，我脑子里满是德语诗歌，这个苍白、有着致命眼神的女人，穿着绿色的衣服，好像从长着莎草的冰冷河水中出生，是一条古老河流的女儿。

“啊，拉蒂默，你一定等我很久了……”父亲说。

在我听到这句话时，眼前所有的人都消失了，我面前除了那扇竖在门口的中国屏风外什么都没有。我感到寒冷，开始打战，只能向前踉跄几步栽进沙发里。这奇怪的新能力再次显现……但这究竟是不是一种能力？这难道不是一种病吗？一种间歇性的狂想症，让我的头脑陷入不健康的活跃状态，让我清醒的时光变得更加贫瘠？我的亲眼所见使我感到一种不真实的晕眩感，我痉挛般地扑向铃铛，好似那要挣脱噩梦的人。我摇了两次铃，皮埃尔一脸惊恐地赶来。

“先生，你不舒服吗？[4]”他焦虑不安地问。

“我不能再等了，皮埃尔。”我说。就像一个醉酒的人努力清醒一样，我用强调的语气尽力把话说得清楚：“我想父亲一定出事了，他

一向守时。快跑去贝尔格酒店看看他在不在那儿。”

皮埃尔立刻走出房间，走时安慰着说了一句“好的，先生 [5] ”。在这简短清醒的对话后，我立刻感觉好了一些。为了进一步安抚自己，我走进和客厅相连的卧室，打开盛放古龙香水的箱子，取出一瓶香水，非常小心地取下软木塞，然后将这提神的液体擦在双手、额头和鼻翼下。我从这香气中得到一种新的喜悦，因为我是用缓慢、细致的动作得到的它，而不是什么奇怪的、突发的疯狂。我已经感到一种恐惧，那种无法适应简单人类生活的人才会有恐惧。

我一边享受着香气，一边走回客厅。和我离开时不同的是，这时客厅里已有人在。在中国屏风前站着的是我父亲，他右手边是菲尔莫尔夫人，而左手边正是那纤瘦的金发女孩儿。女孩儿表情热切、眼神锐利地盯着我，带着几分笑意好奇地打量着我。

“啊，拉蒂默，你一定等我很久了……”父亲说。

我什么都听不见、什么都感觉不到了，直到我重新意识到自己低头躺在沙发上，皮埃尔和父亲在我身边。等我彻底恢复后，父亲走出房间，很快又折回来，说：“我去向女士们告知你的情况，拉蒂默。她们在隔壁屋里等着。今天我们要推迟采购活动了。”

一会儿他说：“那位年轻的女士是伯莎·格兰特，菲尔莫尔夫人的侄女，她是个孤儿。菲尔莫尔一家领养了她，他们住在一起。我们回家后她就是我们的邻居了，也许还能是更近一层的关系。我猜，她和艾尔弗雷德之间有些情愫，既然菲尔莫尔会像对待女儿一样为她提供一切，他们结合我会很高兴。我也是刚想到，你还不知道她和菲尔莫尔一家一起生活了。”

他没提我刚才见到她时晕倒的事儿，我也绝不会告诉他原因□我不愿意向任何人泄露原因，他们很可能把这当成可悲的怪癖，尤其不愿意告诉我父亲，他很可能以后会一直怀疑我精神不正常。

我不想再讲这些经历的细节了。我详细地描述了这两件事，因为这对我后来的人生有确定无疑、清晰可辨的影响。

这次经历之后，很快，我想就是在第二天，我意识到我那病态的敏感性进入了一个新阶段，在我和其他人那些慵懒琐碎的接触中还未曾遇到这种情况。那就是，我的头脑会被他人的大脑活动入侵，一个接一个，凡是我碰巧接触到的人无一例外。那些乏味的相识，比如菲尔莫尔夫人，他们游移不定、无关紧要的想法和情绪，会像一件跑调的乐器纠缠不休地发出怪音，或像一只被困住的昆虫一样弄出大噪声，强行压在我的意识上。不过，这让人不快的敏感只是偶尔发作，只要同伴的灵魂离开我，就能获得片刻安宁，那时，我疲惫的神经就会得到舒缓。如果不是我预见的语言和行动与他人的内心活动确有关

联，我会认为这只是我过于活跃的想象力的又一表现。这强加于我的意识要是来自我不关心的普通人，只会让我疲惫不堪、心烦意乱。可一旦来自与我关系亲密的身边人，这意识会带给我强烈的痛苦与悲伤，如同我撕开他们的灵魂，看到那些理智的谈论、优雅的关切、机智的话语，还有善良的行为——所有这一切构成人性格的网络被一种显微视野撕开——我看到网络背后，那些无聊透顶的愚蠢，那些强忍不发的自我主义，那些幼稚、卑鄙、模糊又反复无常的记忆之间的混乱战争，那些好逸恶劳、没有常性的思绪。在这网络之上，人的语言和行为如叶片一般，而藏在叶片之下的是一个发酵堆。

在巴塞尔，兄长艾尔弗雷德和我们会合了，他如今是一个英俊自信的二十六岁男人了，和虚弱、敏感又无所事事的我形成鲜明对比。我知道，人们眼中的我拥有着半女性化的、魅影般的美色，日内瓦多如牛毛的肖像画家常常请我当模特，在一幅糅合了想象和虚构的日常生活画中，他们还按照我的样子画了一位已故的吟游诗人。可是，我厌恶我的外貌，只有把它当作是诗性天才的一种展现，才能让我与之妥协。可是，如今我也不再怀有这种幻想，我在自己的脸上只能看到一种病态身体的印记，我这种身体生来就只能被动地受罪——一个人要写作诗歌、接受崇高感受必须体魄健壮，过于羸弱的身体是无法承担这一重任的。艾尔弗雷德几乎从小就和我分离，他现在的性格和外形，在我看来尤为陌生，但他尽力对我显出友善的样子，好似一个好兄长。他是一个幽默而自信的人，并且展现出这类性格典型的浮于表面的善意，因此他几乎没有敌人，也从未受到他人的挑战。我知道，以我的性格，即使我们的欲望没有重合，我也还免不了要嫉妒他。或者，假使我是一个健康的人，慷慨自信，又有乐善好施的好品德，我也还是要嫉妒他的。因为，我们天生就在性格上互相排斥。几周来，他成为我憎恨的对象，看到他走进房间，尤其是听到他讲话，我就仿佛听到了金属的摩擦声一般，忍不住地想要磨牙。和其他人相比，我病态的意识更加强烈地专注于他的思想和情绪。他的骄傲自负，他的居高临下，他自以为是地认为伯莎爱他，还有他半是可怜半是轻蔑地对待我，这些都让我恼火气愤。我对这些情绪的感知，不是来自语调、言辞和微小动作，不是心思敏感、天性多疑的人的捕风捉影，而是直接、赤裸裸地感受到了这一切。

我们是敌人，我们的欲望相撞了，尽管他对此还一无所知。我还没有讲过和伯莎·格兰特熟识一些后，她对我造成的影响。之所以如此，主要在于，她是我接触的所有人中唯一的例外，她游离在我那不幸的洞察力天赋之外。关于伯莎我总是处在一种不确信的状态，我可以观察她的面部表情，思考表情的意义；我可以怀着真实的无知询问她对一些事物的看法；我可以听她讲话，带着希冀或恐惧找寻她的微笑。对我来说，她具有一种无法被看透命运的魅力。我说过，伯莎对

我的影响主要源于她的这种例外，因为，抽象而言，对于一个羞怯、爱空想又情绪激动的年轻人而言，伯莎几乎能算得上最没有魅力的那一类女性。她头脑锐利，态度讥讽，缺乏想象力，过早地愤世嫉俗，对所有壮丽的场景都不为所动，始终保持批评态度。她喜欢肢解我钟爱的所有诗歌，对德国诗歌尤其轻蔑不屑，须知德国诗歌可是我那时的心头肉。当时，我还没办法弄清我对她是种什么样的感情。这不是一种普通的少年崇拜，因为她，包括她头发的颜色在内，她的一切都是我理想中美好女性的对立面。她无意追求崇高、实现美善，而这两点，即使是在我最迷恋她的时候，也始终是最看重的品格。但是，一个人要是有着病态敏感的天性，又无时无刻不渴望得到他人的同情和支持，那么，她这样一个自私自利、缺乏热情的人就能如暴君般控制这个人。在独立自信的人看来，一个人的沉默不语可以为他的意见增值。要是能征服一个吹毛求疵、讽刺挖苦的批评家，他就会感到额外的胜利感。这也无怪，在一位充满热情又深陷自我怀疑的青年眼中，坚守内心秘密的女性之脸就会变成神龛，他会观察、守候着这张脸，就像这神龛里供奉的是掌握他命运的善良神明。那激情澎湃的年轻人无法想象，引得自己热血沸腾的那个人居然内心毫无波澜，在感情上麻木不仁。他想，的确，她的情绪可能有些虚弱，若隐若现，也不大活跃，但她一定是具备这些情绪的，它们可以随时被调动起来。有时，在幸福的妄想中他甚至认为，既然他看不到丝毫的情绪表现，也许她内在的情绪力量更为强大。这种效果，如我所言，在我身上激起了最强烈的感受，伯莎是我唯一无法探究其秘密的人，我对她少年的幻想才得以维持。毫无疑问，我对她的痴迷也有另一些因素，那微妙的身体吸引会欺骗我们，让我们对她们产生错误的心理预期，让那些画精灵的画家爱上与精灵大相径庭的凶悍、肥胖且满脸雀斑的女人。

伯莎对我的举动，可以说是鼓励了我所有的幻想，增加了我孩子气的激情，也让我越发地迷恋她的一颦一笑。如今我饱经沧桑、阅历无数之后再回看那段时间，我认为，第一次相见时她对我造成的强烈印象使我晕厥，这极大地满足了她的虚荣心和权力欲。最干瘪无聊的女性也愿意相信，会有人把她奉为一个抒发强烈诗性情感的对象；而伯莎本人毫无浪漫色彩的性格，也为她未婚夫的弟弟爱她爱到垂死、为她嫉妒得发狂这一情节增添了更多的色彩。

当时，我并不相信她真的打算嫁给我兄长，因为尽管他百般殷勤地待她，尽管他和父亲已决定促成这段良缘，但毕竟两人之间还没有公开地谈及婚嫁，还没有明确地对外宣布。伯莎习惯性地和我的兄长打情骂俏，接受他的殷勤，这一举动透露出她知道他的心意。但是，她最微妙的表情与言辞□女性的一些无可指摘的小细节，却让我认为，其实她暗地里在取笑他，她认为他和我一样，也是一个花花公

子，她以令其扫兴为乐。当着我兄长的面，她会公开地爱抚我，仿佛我过于年轻、过于虚弱，根本不会被看成一位情人，这正符合兄长眼中我的形象。但我相信，每当她用玩笑的态度一边轻轻拍着我的卷发一边取笑我的引语，她的内心一定为她在她身上所激起的波澜感到快乐。只有当着朋友们的面她才会这样抚摸我，我们二人独处时，她反倒会与我离得远些。她还会时不时地抓住机会，在语言和行动上刺激我，让我愚蠢又怯懦地期待着，她对我怀有胜于兄长的感情。她为何不听从心意呢？和我兄长比，我的条件没有那么优越，不过，我也有一笔财富，比她年轻不到一岁，何况，她也能够继承财产，并且很快就将进入可以自己做选择的年龄。

我时而充满希望，时而充满恐惧，我被她如此控制，在她身边的每一天都是甜蜜的折磨。她干下的一件事尤其让我为她发狂。我们在维也纳的那段时间恰逢她二十岁生日，她非常喜欢首饰，我们大家都竭力在这座日耳曼巴黎城的珠宝商铺挑选珠宝，作为她的生日礼物。我准备的礼物自然不是最昂贵的，礼物是一枚蛋白石戒指。蛋白石是我最钟爱的宝石，它如同有灵魂一般，会害羞脸红，也会变得苍白。在把礼物送给伯莎时，我这样向她解释着，并且还告诉她蛋白石象征着诗人的天性，会随着天光的变化和女人眼波的流转而起伏。傍晚时，她着装典雅，招摇地穿戴上所有生日礼物，却唯独没有戴我赠予她的那份礼物。我满眼热切地盯着她的手指，却找不到那块蛋白石。那天晚上我没有机会问她，到了第二天，我看她早餐后独自坐在窗边，就对她说：“你不屑于戴我那可怜兮兮的蛋白石。我本该记得，你是看不起诗人天性的。我本该送你珊瑚或者绿松石的，或者其他什么不透明、不会变化的石头，那就好了。”“我看不起？”她一边答道，一边从胸口拉出那条她常戴在脖子上的细细的金链，项链的尾端挂着我送她的戒指。“说实在的，它有点儿弄疼我了，”她带着她常有的暧昧微笑说，“我把它戴在了那么隐秘的地方，不过，既然你诗人的天性如此愚钝，竟然希望我把它戴在外面，我可不受这份罪了。”

她把戒指从项链上取下，戴在手指上，仍旧挂着那种微笑。我顿时感到血涌上我的脸颊，想恳求她照原样戴它，可是一句话也讲不出来。

这件事彻底愚弄了我。两天来，只要伯莎不在，我就把自己锁在屋里反复回味这个让我痴迷的场景，回味它隐含的各种意义。

这里我要提一句，两个月来，我经历的快乐和痛苦是如此强烈、如此新奇，我感觉好像过了漫长的一生。这段时间，我病态地参与他人的头脑活动，持续地受此折磨，一会儿是我的父亲，一会儿是我兄长，一会儿是菲尔莫尔夫人或是她的丈夫，一会儿又是我们的德国向导，他们的意识流涌向我，如同无法摆脱的耳鸣声。不过，我自己的

冲动和思想是不受这些干扰的。这就好像我的听力得到超自然力量的加强，别人感觉寂静无声，在我听来却是震耳欲聋。我被迫卷入他人的灵魂，这给我带来的疲惫和恶心只有一种办法可以消除，那就是我对伯莎的无知，还有我对她日渐增长的激情——我对她的无知极大地助长了这激情，抑或是，这激情就源于我对她的无知。在可怕的已知沙漠中，她是我神秘的绿洲。我从不让自己的病态显露出来，也不会说反常的话、做反常的事，只有一次例外，那时我对兄长怀着尤其强烈的敌意，我聪明地预见到他准备好打算说的话，先他一步说了出来。有时，他说话会装腔作势地停顿一下，他刚说到第二个词就停下来，我对他既不耐烦又很嫉妒，就顺口说出他后面的话，好像我们两人都提前背好了词。转眼间，他的脸色就变了，看上去十分震惊，也很懊恼。我刚说完话就感到了警觉，这话出现在这个情境中绝非理所当然，不可能随意猜到，我唯恐对他语言的预测会暴露我是一个特殊的人，一个看似安静却被恶魔附体的人，这样的人会让所有人惊恐、避之不及，尤其是伯莎。不过，和往常一样，我还是高估了我的言行对他人的影响，所有人都把我的打断视为一次粗俗无礼的行为，看在我神经脆弱的面子上原谅了我。

对现实世界附加的意识几乎时时刻刻纠缠着我，不过，和伯莎第一次见面时的那种清晰的预见却没有再发生过，与此同时，我急不可耐地想知道我对布拉格的预见是否真实。在我送出蛋白石戒指之后不久，我们再一次游览了曾多次造访的利希滕山宫殿。我一向不能连续地欣赏多幅绘画，因为绘画，只要是有力量的绘画，一两幅作品就会耗尽我的精力，使我无法继续思考。这天早晨，我一直在欣赏乔尔乔内的那幅画，画中女人长着可怕的眼睛，人们说这是卢克雷齐娅·波吉亚的画像。我驻足在画作前，慢慢地欣赏它。画像中那张面孔狡黠、无情得过于真实，这让我着迷。突然，一种奇特而有害的感受向我袭来，好像长久以来我吸入了致命的毒气，毒气就要发作。也许当时若不是大家决定离开，我根本就不会从那张画像前抽身。艾尔弗雷德和菲尔莫尔先生为一幅肖像画打了赌，大家决定去贝尔维迪尔画廊看看究竟谁胜谁负。我迷迷糊糊地跟着大家，对周身的一切没有了知觉，直到大家都走去画廊，我就不再继续跟着了——我不愿再看画了。我走向大阳台，大家商量好，他们两人解决矛盾的时候其他人可以在花园里散步。我坐在这里小憩，对周围花园的意识已经模糊了，远处是城市和绿色的山丘。为了躲避走来的哨兵，我起身走到开阔的石头路上，想到花园的边上坐一坐。正当我走上沙砾小路的时候，我感到一只手臂挽着我的手臂，一只纤细小手轻轻搂着我的腰。同时，一种叫人痴醉的麻木感席卷我的全身，就像我在卢克雷齐娅·波吉亚的注视下所产生的那种感受的延续，或者说这正是那种感受的高潮。花园、夏日的天空，我对伯莎的手臂挽着我手臂的意识，所有这一切都消失了，我好像一下子掉入了黑暗，从中逐渐升起一个微小的火光，

我感觉，我身处家中的书房，正坐在父亲的皮椅上。有我熟悉的壁炉□旁边是喜欢看柴火燃烧的狗们□黑色大理石烟囱中间是白色大理石徽章，徽章中心描画的是垂死的克利奥佩特拉。强烈而无望的痛苦压迫着我的灵魂，这时火光更明亮了些，是伯莎持着一柄蜡烛走近我□伯莎，我的妻子，有着一双残酷冷漠的眼睛，戴着绿色的宝石，白色的礼服裙子也镶着绿色的边，她头脑里每一个憎恨的想法都呈现在我面前：“疯子，白痴！你怎么不自杀呢？……”那一刻我如同身在地狱。我看到她的灵魂毫无怜悯心，满是赤裸裸的恶俗和尖酸刻薄的仇恨，也感到这灵魂如空气般包裹着我，而我不得不呼吸这样的空气。为什么她手里拿着蜡烛，站在我面前，用那冷酷而轻蔑的眼睛盯着我看？而她胸前那闪闪发光的蛇，像一个似曾相识的魔鬼。我周身颤抖，我鄙视这个女人赤裸的灵魂、刻薄的思想。但我在她面前感到无力，滴血的心脏似乎被她紧紧攥着，她仿佛要一直攥着这心脏，直到它流尽最后一滴鲜血。她是我的妻子，可我们憎恨着彼此。渐渐地，壁炉、昏暗的藏书室、蜡烛的光亮都消失了，它们都淹没在背景的光亮中，留在视网膜上的黑色图像只有那条钻石眼睛的绿蛇。随后，我感到自己的眼睑在颤抖，白昼的光重新打亮我，我看到了花园，我听到了说话声，我坐在贝尔维迪尔的台阶上，我的朋友们就在身边。

这次丑陋的预见扰得我心绪不宁，我一连生病了好几天，让我们在维也纳多待了些时日。这次场景不断重现，让我惊恐万分，而且所有微小的细节也跟着不断重现，好像它们已经烙印在我的记忆里。然而，人类心灵的疯狂就在于它受短暂欲望的驱使，一想到伯莎就要属于我，我就感到一种疯狂的、地狱般的快乐，因为她第一次出现在我面前的那个预见已成现实，这让我确信，我对未来的可怕预见并非我病态头脑的游戏，与外在现实没有联系。只有一件事可能挑战我那可怕的预见力，那就是我对布拉格的预见是错误的，而布拉格就是我们下一站行程要去的城市，我对此十分期待。

直到我恢复了此前对伯莎的痴迷，我才重新与她接触。我害怕我会在她心里读到那个成熟的伯莎，那个作为我妻子的伯莎的想法。伯莎，这个年轻的女子，她的内心对我来说仍是秘密□我会在她的抚摸下颤抖，她在我身边我就着迷，我渴望能确认她对我的爱。在干渴的感受面前，毒药也变得不足为惧了。不，我和以前一样嫉妒我的兄长，和以前一样对他那种居高临下的做事方式感到不快，我的自尊心、我病态的敏感性和以前一样，对任何冒犯行为都无可救药地畏缩惧怕，即使是一粒灰尘掉入眼睛也会畏缩惧怕。未来，不过是一个想法，即使对未来的预见让我颤抖，和当下感情的力量□我对伯莎的爱，我对兄长的厌恶和嫉妒相比，也不足道。

老故事说，人们把自己卖给了古老的诱惑者撒旦，用血签订了契约，便冲向那杯满足他们灵魂饥渴的酒。他们认为后果只会发生在遥

远的将来。这种激情野蛮而强烈，并不因为一个黑暗的影子要从此跟随在他们身边而怯懦分毫。通向智慧的道路没有捷径，没有已经铺好的路，几百年来我们有无数的创造发明，但直到今天，我们的灵魂仍须走在满是荆棘的荒野之地，必须孤独地踩在这样的土地上，脚上鲜血淋漓，哭泣着喊着求救，正如我们的先辈所艰难探索的那样。

我头脑里琢磨着如何才能战胜我的情敌——我的兄长，我还是那么胆小，不知道伯莎真实的感受，不敢贸然采取行动，让她主动说明心意。我想，如果我对布拉格的预见是真的，我就会对伯莎对我的感情有更多的自信。然而，我又怕预见是真的！我仔细观察她的言辞、表情。她的抚摸是我的福音，但在这瘦弱的伯莎身后始终站着那个丰满些的伯莎，她有严苛的眼神、冷酷的嘴唇，我看透她赤裸裸的自私灵魂，她不再是那个迷人的秘密，而是一个看得清清楚楚的事实，这事实不断压迫着我的眼界。读到此处的读者，你难道不同情我吗？你难道想象不出，在我体内有两种意识同时存在，如同两条平行流淌的河流，永远不会融汇在一起，不会披上同一个色彩？不过，你一定理解，预见与激情相撞会产生的那种不祥感受，我的预见就如同这不祥预感一般，只是更为强烈而转变为了一种恐惧。你也一定理解，和冲动相比，思想是多么无力，一旦将预见储存为记忆，它们也就化为思想，如影子一般苍白无力，可我的手却由那些鲜活的、我所爱的人紧握着。

在后来的日子里，我怀着悔恨想，如果当初我预见的内容丰富些，或者预见到的是别的事物——如果当初我的预见没有那么丑陋，它毒化了激情却不足以杀死激情，又或者除了我所见的，我能预见到我和兄长生前最后一次相见的情景，一种柔和的力量就会改变我对他的感情——骄傲和憎恨就会转化为怜悯，我对他隐藏的罪恶也会减少。不过，这只是我们人类聊以自慰的东西。我们试图相信，我们内在的自我本可以轻易融化，只是自身知识的浅薄才会妨碍我们的慷慨、我们的敬畏、我们的虔诚，妨碍我们对同伴施以同情。一旦我们终结了自我主义，我们就会变得温柔，变得愿意为他人奉献。我身上的自我主义是以这种方式终结的，我对胜利的苦苦追求是由另一个人的失败促成的，这胜利来得突然，让我打冷战，因为它是死神冰冷的手带来的。

我们到达布拉格的时候正值夜晚时分，我很高兴，这意味着几个小时里我们都看不清这座城市，那个决定我命运的可怕时刻就会迟些到来。由于我们在布拉格不会久留，要很快赶去德累斯顿，大家提议第二天一早出发浏览一下城市全貌，赶在暑气上升前去看一些特别重要的景点，因为当时正值八月，天气又热又干。不过，到了那天早晨，女士们梳洗得很迟，我父亲压着火，尽量表现得客客气气，大家还是能看出他这份不满，直到上午晚些时候我们才上了马车。走进犹

太人区的时候，我的心情略感快慰。我们原计划参观那古老的犹太会堂，它位于城市中一个平整、封闭的地方，我原以为大家会在这里一直待到又累又热无法游览的时候，那样我们就会匆匆返回，就会错过沿途街道的景色。这样，我就又拥有一天的悬念□对一个充满恐惧的灵魂来说，只有悬念能带来一些慰藉的希望。不过，当我站在这座犹太会堂那些黑色带穹棱的拱顶下时，圣灯七柄瘦弱的蜡烛照出犹太会堂微弱的轮廓，我们的犹太导游伸手拿起律法书，用古老的语言读给我们听□我感到一阵颤抖，这座奇怪的建筑及其微弱的灯，这座中世纪犹太教幸存下来的有些凋敝的古迹，都与我之前的预见有着相同的特征。那些有点儿变黑的、布满尘土的基督教圣人像立在高大的穹顶之下，被硕大的蜡烛点亮，它们在人们心中激起一种带有宽慰的轻蔑，又带着这种轻蔑看向更加枯竭、地狱般的人间。

如我所料，我们一离开犹太人区，年长的人就要回酒店。但现在，和预想的不同，我没有为此高兴，相反，我有一种压倒一切的冲动要赶去看那座桥，立刻终结我一直想要推延的悬念。我异常坚定地告诉大家，我要下马车一个人走走，他们不必带我先回去。我父亲认为，这不过是我那“诗人胡闹”的又一例证，他反对我独自一人在暑天散步，这会伤害我的身体。见我坚持，他生气地说，我尽可以由着性子无理取闹，但施密特（我们的向导）必须跟着我。我同意这个安排，和施密特出发去看那座桥。我正穿过一座雄伟壮观的古老大门的拱道，这拱道直通那座桥，突然被一种颤抖附身，正午的炎炎烈日之下我感到一股冰冷。但我继续前行，我在找寻某样东西，一个能唤回那次预见景象的某样东西。就是它□一盏星星样式的多彩灯在人行道上洒下一块块彩虹色的光斑。

第二章

秋日结束之前，庄园里山毛榉的棕色树叶仍繁茂地挂在树梢上，兄长和伯莎订婚了，大家都觉得，来年春天早些时候他们会举行婚礼。除了在布拉格的那座桥上的一瞬间我确定伯莎有一天会成为我的妻子，其余时刻，我体质中的胆小多疑仍然使我不敢行动，我反复练习爱的表白，却一直说不出口。我内心深处的矛盾仍旧存在，我既渴求伯莎能亲口吐露对我的爱，又害怕她的蔑视和拒绝会像酸一样腐蚀我。即便对遥远的未来有十足的把握，又有什么用呢？我颤抖于当下的眼神，我饥渴于当下的快乐，我受制于当下的恐惧。就这样，日子一天天过去了：我目睹了伯莎的订婚，听人们谈论着她的婚事。仿佛我身处一个清醒的噩梦中，我知道这个梦会消失，可我像被他人扼住喉咙一般无法呼吸。

我经常和伯莎在一起，她带着几分戏谑对我屈尊降贵，我们在一

起也不会招致兄长的嫉妒。我不在她身边时，白天的时光都用来游荡、散步或远足，或者把自己和那些并没有在读的书关在一起□书已经无法吸引我的注意力了。我的自我意识已经到达无以复加的强度，我的情绪会上演戏剧，强迫进入我的思想，对痛苦的思考□而不是痛苦本身□令我落泪。我为自己命运的悲壮感到哀伤沉痛，这命运精心设计好如何让我痛苦，却没理清怎么让我快乐，对我来说，未来的罪恶剥夺了我此时此刻的欢愉，未来的美好却不能安抚我此时此刻的渴求与恐惧。在这苦行中，真正的诗人会感受到咏诵大量诗句带来的甜美，也会为他的种种悲伤塑造意象，但我却只是沉默地忍受着。

我如此醉生梦死地度日，却没有任何人来责备我，我知道父亲是怎么看我的：“那孩子终究一事无成，他会在无关紧要的事儿上浪费大把青春，靠着留给他的一点儿收入生活，我是不会操心为他谋一个职业的。”

十一月初的一个和煦的早晨，碰巧我站在门廊外轻抚那条懒散的老狗恺撒。这是一条老得几乎要瞎的纽芬兰狗，是唯一一条亲近我的狗□狗一般都会绕开我，到身边更快乐的人们那里摇尾乞怜。这时，马夫把兄长那匹狩猎时骑的马牵来。兄长也来到门口，他容光焕发、胸膛宽厚、自信十足，他自我感觉真是一个不错的人，他本可以靠着他的本钱更傲慢无礼地对待我们的。

“拉蒂默，老伙计，”他带着几分同情和热忱对我说，“真遗憾啊，你不经常带着猎狗跑一跑！对情绪低落的人来说，这可是世上最好的事儿！”

“情绪低落！”看着他走远，我愤怒地想，“这就是你这种粗俗狭隘的人会用的词儿，用来描述你理解不了的东西，你和你的马一样蠢。对你们这样的人而言，世上的好事便是心甘情愿的无聊、心智健康的自私以及伪装成好脾气的自满，而这些就是你们通向幸福的关键。”

很快我就想到，我比他更自私，只不过我的自私会带来痛苦，不会带来享受。但是，我恼怒地洞察到艾尔弗雷德那自负的灵魂，他没有怀疑也没有恐惧，没有未满足的渴望，亦无多愁善感导致的折磨，这些却构成了我生活的网络，这割断了我与他所有的感情纽带。这个男人无须怜悯，无须爱，他感受不到这些高尚的力量，如同岩石感受不到晶莹露水的轻抚。他不会遇到什么不幸的事情，要是他没有和伯莎结婚，也是因为他找到了更舒服的生活。

离我们的大门不足半里远就是菲尔莫尔先生的房子，每次我一得知兄长去了别处，就跑去看伯莎是否在家。那天晚些时候我走去那里。非常凑巧她独自一人在家，难得我们一起到开阔的场地上散步，而她平时则鲜少踏足整齐的碎石子路之外的地方。我记得，十一月份

低沉的阳光照在她金色的头发上，在我眼里她如同一个美丽的精灵，她轻快地边走边跳，和平时一样和我开玩笑，有时我听得很高兴，有时我听得很难过，这就是伯莎那谜一样的内在自我显露给我的样子。今天，难过的情绪占了上风，刚刚和兄长分开时他那颐指气使的劲儿让我嫉妒、憎恨。突然，我打断她，几乎用一种粗暴的态度对她说：“伯莎，你怎么可以爱艾尔弗雷德？”这话吓了她一跳。

她惊讶地看了我一会儿，很快恢复了淡淡的微笑，讥讽地回答：“为什么你会觉得我爱他？”

“你怎么能这么问，伯莎？”

“怎么？你的聪明才智告诉我我必须爱我未来的丈夫？那可是世上最难过的事。我可能会和他争吵，我可能会为他充满嫉妒，我可能会把家务弄得一团糟。轻微而默不作声的蔑视能让生活优雅许多。”

“伯莎，这不是你真实的感受。你为什么以欺骗我为乐，编造这愤世嫉俗的说辞？”

“我不需要费这个劲儿撒谎来骗你，我的小塔索 [6]（这是她取笑我时经常叫的名字）。欺骗一个诗人的最好办法是告诉他实话。”

她正十分大胆地测试这警句的真实性，有那么一瞬间，我预见的影子——那个我已经洞悉其灵魂的伯莎——出现在我和这个光彩照人的女孩儿之间，这嬉笑精灵的感情对我仍是个谜。我想我可能身体发抖了，或者用什么别的方式泄露了我这一瞬间的恐惧。

“塔索！”她说，抓住我的手臂，看着我的脸，“你真的开始觉察出我是一个铁石心肠的女孩儿了吗？我想，你连半个诗人都不配当，你居然会相信我说的实话。”

游荡在我们之间的那个影子离开了。面前的这个女孩儿纤细的手指握着我，她精灵般有魅力的脸庞望着我的脸庞——我想，她正对我流露出一种此前从未公开承认的兴趣——这个呼吸温暖的人又一次占据了感官和想象力，她犹如一段仙人的乐章，刚刚有那么一瞬，这乐章被汹涌的海浪声盖过，如今这乐章又回来了。这一瞬间甘之若饴，我仿佛是一个青年人，做了中年人的梦，醒来发现自己仍是青年人一样。我忘记了一切，只记得我的激情，我眼含热泪地说：“伯莎，你能在我们新婚时爱我吗？哪怕你的爱只是那么一会儿，我也会高兴的。”

她十分震惊，放开我的手离开了我，这让我马上意识到自己的古怪和罪恶的轻率。

“原谅我，”等我恢复了说话能力后，我马上说，“我不知道我在说什么。”

“啊，塔索疯狂的症状又开始了，我明白了，”她平静地答道□她比我恢复得快，“让他回家吧，让他头脑变得清醒吧。我必须回家了，太阳要落山了。”

我离开了她，对自己满是懊恼。如果她细想我的失言，可能认为我的精神状态不正常，这是我最怕的一种怀疑。除此之外，我为刚才明目张胆的卑鄙行径感到羞愧，我居然对兄长的未婚妻说出这样的话。我缓慢地游荡回家，没有从大门的门房走，而是通过一扇小门走进庄园。我走近房子的时候看到一个人全速从马厩跑出来穿过庄园。家里难道出事了吗？不，可能只是我父亲又蛮横地做了什么安排。尽管如此，我没有什么明确的目的，还是加快了脚步，很快我就到家了。我就不描述家里发生的事情了。我的兄长去世了□他从马上摔下来，当场死于脑震荡。

我走进他躺着的屋子，父亲坐在他身边，脸上是沉痛的绝望。自从我们回家后，我一直躲避着父亲，我们的天性存在着巨大差异，对他内心世界的窥视会给我带来持续的痛苦。但是眼下，我走近他，悲伤地站在他身边，一句话也没说，我感到一种全新的因素把我们融为一体，我们以前从未如此亲近。我的父亲在这巧取豪夺的金钱世界属于那种最成功的人士，他从未体验过多愁善感的痛苦，也不曾忍受疾病。他所经历过的最大的痛苦就是他第一位妻子的死亡。不过，他随后很快与我母亲结婚，据那时年幼的我的观察，小时候母亲去世后一周，他就恢复如常了。但眼下，终于，他也感到了悲痛□人老年时的悲剧尤其痛苦，骄傲与希望有多狭隘、有多单调，骄傲与希望的毁灭就会带来多大的打击。他的儿子马上就要结婚了，下次选举时还很有可能当选区代表。这样一个儿子本身就是他每年购买土地、壮大宅院的最大动力。要是没有个动力，失去了目的，年复一年做着同样的事就是苦差。也许，年迈时世俗中的悲剧要比青年时代失落的激情所带来的悲剧要更加痛苦。

我看到父亲心中的孤寂，对他产生了深切的同情，这引发了一种全新的感情。这段感情不断地成长壮大，尽管在兄长去世后的一两个月里他用一种怪异的憎恨表情看待我，也不曾阻碍我对他感情的日渐深厚。若不是因为我对他的同情软化了我□这是我第一次体会到深刻的同情□我就会被他的态度刺伤。他把长子的继承权移交给了我，仿佛忍受着命运的强迫，命运强迫他必须把我当作一个重要的人来照顾，这让他感到受辱不悦。他不是出于自愿，而是出于责任，开始为我忧虑。死亡空出了一个位子，让一个被父母忽视的孩子得到了垂爱，想必所有拥有类似经历的孩子都能理解我此时的处境。

出于同情我对他也很有耐心，这使得我处处遵从他的意愿，逐渐地赢得了他的青睐。虽然我比兄长的性格懦弱些，但他开始努力让我

尽量填补兄长的位置并以此为乐。而逐渐地，他也开始接受我成为伯莎的丈夫这一不断浮现的可能，他甚至想让我和他的儿媳伯莎同他一起生活，这是他不曾为我兄长考虑过的。我对父亲的温柔感情使得这段时光成为自我童年时代以来最快乐的时间。这也是最后的几个月里，我得以保留了对伯莎爱的甜美幻觉，我渴望，我怀疑，我希冀她能爱我。自我兄长去世后，她意识到了什么新的可能，和我保持着距离。同样，我也被一种双重的约束限制着，一方面我要小心处置跟兄长有关的记忆，另一方面我担忧她会怎么看待我说过的那些唐突话。但是，我们各自的缄默竖立起的额外屏障，反而让我更为她神魂颠倒。□无论人的内在如何贫瘠，只要这面纱足够厚实。我们的灵魂需要一些隐秘、不确定的东西来维持怀疑、维持希望、维持努力，这些就是生命的氧气。如果今天以后的整个未来都在我们面前展开，全人类的兴趣就会凝聚在明天到来之前的这几个小时，我们会拼命追逐这最后一个清晨、最后一个下午；我们会勇猛地冲进交易所做最后一次投机，以把握住最后一次胜利或最后一次失望；我们会在预言到来前拥有大量的政治先知，预测仅存的二十四小时中的一次危机或一次和平。想象一下，对人类头脑来说，如果一切命题都不证自明，只有一个例外，唯有等到夏日终结才能弄清这个命题，那么在等待的这段时间里，这唯一的命题就会成为所有疑问、所有假说、所有辩论的中心。艺术与哲学、文学与科学，都会如蜜蜂一般围绕这个命题，这命题包裹着如甘甜蜂蜜般的不确定性，而鉴于落日时分他们的快乐就要终结，他们对这一命题便更加热切。我们的动机、我们的精神活动不会因这一命题未来的虚无而休止，只要我们的心脏还在跳动，只要我们的肌肉还能感受刺激，这种精神活动就会延续。

伯莎，这纤瘦、浅色头发的女孩儿，在这一刻，她的思想和情绪对我而言都还是谜。对我这能看透身边人的头脑、疲惫不堪的人来说，她是那唯一有吸引力的“今日”，是日落之前都能保持神秘的“假想命题”，是我天性中所有的坚信和怀疑唯一而狭窄的出口，我的信赖和猜忌纷纷涌向她。

她使我相信她是爱我的。她没有改变之前打趣的语气和那半开玩笑、高人一等的态度，却能弄得我神魂颠倒，让我以为她离不开我，只要我不在身边她就寝食难安，我心甘情愿地臣服于她这戏谑的暴君。一个女人竟能如此轻易地迷惑我们！只要话说一半，来一次出人意外的沉默，甚至轻而易举地演一出无理取闹，就能让我们像服用了大麻一样飘飘然。除了微妙的、不易察觉的种种迹象外，她还为我编织出了一个幻想，那就是，一直以来在潜意识里她爱我胜于爱艾尔弗雷德。不过，像我兄长这样闯荡世界的男人的青睐，对于她这样一个无知又焦虑敏感的年轻女性而言，有着巨大的吸引力。她优雅地自嘲她的虚荣和野心。除了我兄长自身的优点，我现在占有了他一切的优

势，而即使我曾经在预见这一刻时怀有忧愁，又有什么关系呢？在我们甜美的幻觉中，我们不也没有忘记真实的残酷吗？就好像看着美妙的光影时，我们也没有忘记它们是由华而不实的玻璃碎屑发出的。

艾尔弗雷德去世十八个月后，四月一个寒冷萧瑟的早晨我们结婚了。那天既有冰雹也有阳光，伯莎穿着白色丝绸的衣裙，上面有着淡绿色边饰，她的头发和脸庞略显苍白，整个人看上去如同清晨的仙子。我父亲比他预想的还要高兴：他确信，婚礼会把我的性格最终改造成他想要的样子，让我学会务实，变得通人情，这样才能在心智正常的社会中立足。伯莎的世故圆滑、敏捷机智颇得他的欢心，他确信，我一定会受她约束，变成她想要的样子，因为我只有二十一岁，疯狂地爱着她。可怜的父亲！他的这些愿望仅仅维持到我们婚后一年，当时我们的感情还没有完全消散，而父亲在这时中风，也不会饱受失望之苦。

随后发生的故事我要快些讲了，不能如之前那般描述我的内心经验了。我们要像人们熟识后那样，只谈论外部发生了什么，内在的感受和情绪只留待推测。

我们回家后，每日宾客盈门、迎来送往，家里举办了许多奢华的晚宴，我们新置办的用具光鲜亮丽，引得邻居们十分艳羡。我父亲一直隐藏着他日益增长的财富，直到我的婚礼期间才展现出来。熟人们尽可以自由地品评，我这个继承人、新郎官身材过于弱不禁风。这样的日子使我精疲力竭，人们的虚情假意和陈词滥调我都得忍受两遍，内心世界和外在世界各自经历一遍，若不是我仍沉浸在初恋的甜美醉意中，这些事情都会令我抓狂。一对新郎和新娘，被象征财富的种种奢华包裹，整日在社交生活中忙碌，抓住仅有的独处时间仓促爱抚。他们如此为未来的婚姻生活做准备，如同即将进入修道院的新人在最后一刻花天酒地□体验着现在与未来极大的反差。

在这门庭若市令人兴奋的几个月里，伯莎的内在自我仍旧隐藏在我的洞察之外，我仍旧只能通过她的言谈举止推测她的思想，我仍旧十分好奇我的言语、行为是否取悦她，仍旧渴望听她讲一句亲密的话，仍旧夸张地解读她微笑背后的深意。不过，我已经觉察出她对我的态度变了。有时候，她的态度真是傲慢无礼、冰冷僵硬，如同我们婚礼那天上午穿透阳光的冰雹，她的寒冷刺骨伤透了我的心，这种变化只能从她巧妙地回避与我单独散步、单独共进晚餐中体会出来，而这些原本都是我所期盼的。这些深深地伤害了我，我的心灵从未遭受过如此打击，我预感到快乐的生活即将结束了。不过，我仍旧依靠着伯莎，渴望享受幸福的最后一缕光辉。尽管这光辉就要永远地消逝了，我仍旧渴望着、找寻着夕阳那因为降临的夜晚而更显魅力的余晖。

我记得，我怎么能忘呢？依赖与希望彻底摒弃我的那个时刻，伯莎对我日渐疏远。这原本造成了我的痛苦，在那一刻看来，却变成了快乐，如一个肢体瘫痪的人留恋最后一次感到疼痛一般。这一刻发生在父亲的最后一次病痛结束之后。父亲最后一次生病时，我们不得不远离社交生活，只剩下彼此相互依偎。一切都发生在父亲去世的那天傍晚。那天晚上，一直遮蔽伯莎灵魂的面纱第一次被掀开了。在我身边的所有人中，唯有这面纱被赋予了神秘、怀疑和期盼的可能性。也许，自我爱她以来，那天是第一次，我对她的爱恋被另外一种更深邃的感情冲淡了。父亲去世时，我一直守候在那张床前：我目睹了他的灵魂最后一次颤抖地回顾他一生挥霍的财富，我紧握住他的手让他最后一次体会到爱。当我们体会到了那极致的痛苦时，我们个人的恋爱又算些什么呢？而当我们再次从死亡面前走开，在我们的体验中，我们与每一个生者的关系就变成了整个自然和人类整体命运的一部分。

我抱着这种想法，走去伯莎的起居室找她。她背对着门，身体前倾靠在沙发椅上，从沙发椅的后面能看到她浓密的淡黄色卷发垂肩，衬出她纤细的脖子。我记得，我转身关门的一刹那，一股寒意侵袭了我，我开始颤抖，模模糊糊地感到我遭人怨恨、深陷孤独，这感受虽然模糊却很强烈，好像一种预兆。我知道那一刻我是什么神情，因为，伯莎抬起冷酷的灰色眼睛望着我时，我洞见到她如何看我：在她眼中，我是一个可怜的幽灵预见者，青天白日里我被鬼魂缠身，树叶纹丝不动时一阵阴风却让我战栗不止，我对人们寻常渴望的事物一概没有兴趣，却热切地追求那月光。我们面对面僵持着，审判着对方。可怕的光明终于降临到我身上，在这光明下我清楚地看到，遮蔽着我灵魂的那一团黑暗之后并没有一处田园风景，只有一堵空虚无聊的墙。那以后，在越发令人厌恶的岁月中，我彻底看清这个女人狭隘的灵魂，看清那些卑微的小诡计、无聊的小脾气。曾经，我愿意相信，这些都只是忸怩的多愁善感，是智慧和潜在的情感发生冲突时的表现。我看到，少女的那几许轻柔飘浮的虚荣心已转变为女人的伎俩，转变为精心设计的卖弄风情、诡计多端的自私自利。我看到，少女的厌恶和反感转变为女性的残忍憎恨，仅仅为了自己发脾气而给别人施加痛苦。

伯莎，按她自己的感受来说，也吃到了幻想破灭的苦头。她本以为，疯狂的诗人激情会让我成为她的奴隶，这样，作为她的奴隶我会按照她的心意办事。以她最为浅薄、缺乏想象力的本性，她不知道，多愁善感的人并非性格软弱。她本以为，我的无能会将我置于她的股掌之中，却发现我并不轻易顺从她。我们的位置调过来了。结婚前，她完全控制了我的想象力，那是因为她对我是个谜，我看不透她，我造出一种思想安在她身上当成是她的，并为此颤抖癫狂。现如今，她的灵魂一览无余，我被迫知道了她隐秘的动机，知道她说话办事前的

所有小伎俩，除了让我感到寒心、厌恶外，她对我无能为力。她无能为力，是因为她没有逼我就范的筹码。我没有野心在世俗中争得上游，无意于在社交生活中左右逢源，她那狭隘的头脑能想象到的所有诱惑我都无动于衷，因此，我究竟为什么而活，她根本想不出。

有这样一个丈夫，她真是可怜，全世界都这么想。一个像伯莎这样典雅、美妙的女人，她在清晨时对唤醒她的仆人报以微笑，在舞会上展现身姿风采，能够机敏地应答——这一点在外人看来是女人智慧的表现，她获得了所有人的同情。她的丈夫看上去病恹恹的，不务正业，一些人甚至揣测我精神错乱。甚至家里的仆人都向她投以尊重和怜悯。我们之间从来不争吵，我们的疏远、厌恶只藏在彼此心里。如果女主人经常出门，看上去不喜欢与男主人相处，这对于一个可怜人来说不是很正常吗？男主人是个怪人。我对仆人一向善良、公正，不过，他们对我有点儿畏惧，有点儿轻蔑地可怜我，因为，他们这个阶层的男男女女对人缺乏独立的判断，易受其他人所持观念的影响，而他们用经验分辨人的性格。他们看待人就像看待硬币，认为那些像流通货币一样被人们广泛称赞的人即是更好的个体。

一段时间后，我几乎从不干涉伯莎的生活习惯，可伯莎还是强烈地憎恨我。可能是我不自觉地泄露了什么，她开始怀疑我具有看穿人的病态能力——至少每隔一段时间我能神奇地看穿她的思想和意图——她开始惧怕我，时不时地，不是惧怕我就是蔑视我。她一直考虑如何摆脱我这梦魇，如何与我彻底斩断联系。我曾像一个白痴一般被她看不起，如今却像审判长一样让她恐惧，她恨我。很长一段时间里，她希望，我那可怜的性格有一天会逼我自杀。不过，我的天性是不会让我自杀的。我深信，我受不可见的力量控制，无法靠自己的力量求得解脱。我对自己的命运是完全被动的。我唯一的欲望已经耗尽，再没有冲动凌驾于理性之上了。因此，我从没想过要彻底和她分居，因为那样做就是把我们的疏远弄得世人皆知。我为什么要改弦更张呢？我眼下的痛苦就是我曾经强烈意愿的后果。一个仍有欲望要满足的人会寻求改变，可我已没有了欲望。不过，我和伯莎还是分离得越来越远。对于富人而言，在婚姻内分开生活并不是一件难事。

我的几句话就描述了我们几年来的生活。仇恨与罪恶缓慢却丑陋地积累出那么多苦难，最后居然囊括在一句话中！人们就是靠着这简短的一句话，总结评价彼此的人生。他们把同伴的经历浓缩，用干练的词句下了审判，这么做能让他们感到自己是多么智慧、多么善良，用几个精挑细选的谓语动词就说出了那些困扰他们的诱惑。一个人倘若从未体会过冰冷的失望，从未感受过头脑和心灵的悸动，没有时而惊恐不安、时而虚妄自负，不知何为后悔、何为绝望，才会一笔带过七年的蹉跎岁月。我们只是死记硬背下词语，并不熟谙词语的内涵，唯有经历过血的洗礼才能真的理解它们，把它们写入我们的神经。

不过，我要加快说完我的故事了。对那一点就通的人，我应该说得简洁些；对那永远也理解不了其中道理的人，我也该说得简洁些。

我父亲去世几年后，一月的一个傍晚，我在藏书室里挨着壁炉坐着，壁炉里的火光有些暗淡，我坐在父亲的那把皮椅上，这时伯莎出现在门口，手持一柄蜡烛，走向我。我认得她穿的这件礼服裙子，壁炉上的蜡烛光洒在她白色的裙子和绿色的珠宝首饰上，壁炉上的圆形装饰画内是垂死的克利奥佩特拉。外出前她为什么来找我呢？我从未在藏书室见过她，几个月来这是我的地盘。为什么她要拿着那柄蜡烛站在我面前，眼睛冷酷轻蔑地紧盯着我？她胸前那只闪耀的珠宝蛇如熟悉的魔鬼。有那么一刻，我觉得眼前的景象印证了我在维也纳的预见，它代表了我命运中的一个可怕危机，但在伯莎的头脑中我什么都没看见，她站在我面前，对坐在面前痛苦不堪的我投以最大的鄙视：“白痴，蠢货，你怎么不自杀呢？……”这就是她的想法。最后，她的想法回到她要办的事情上。她用语言把这些事项说出来。她要说的明显是件小事，与我的预见和紧张情绪完全不相称，滑稽可笑得令人扫兴。

“我雇了一个新女佣。弗莱彻要结婚了，她要我来找你吧莫尔顿的酒馆和农场给她丈夫。我也愿意如此。你现在就得答应，她明天一早就动身，快着点儿吧，我还得走呢。”

“很好，你答应她吧，”我无所谓地说。伯莎马上离开了藏书室。

我总是怕见新人，更怕见一个俗气、无知又琐碎的人，他的精神活动会消耗我的洞见，弄得我疲惫不堪。我尤其怕见这个新女仆，宣布她来的时机很特殊，我不禁把她和我的命运联系起来：我隐隐地害怕她会和我的人生戏剧有关，某种令人作呕的预见会让我将她视作邪恶的天才。最终，我不可避免地见到了她，隐隐的恐惧变为确定无疑的厌恶。这个阿切尔夫人，她是一个高个子、体型瘦长的黑眼睛女人，长着一张足够俊朗的脸，在她粗糙坚硬的秉性之上增加了一种令人作呕、明目张胆、自以为是的媚态。这足以让我躲着她，更何况她总是鄙视地琢磨我。我很少见到她，但我知道她很快成为她女主人的心腹。八九个月之后，我开始意识到，伯莎的头脑里对这个女人有一种混合着恐惧与依恋的复杂感情，这种感情与她梳妆室里那些烛光摇曳、难以名状的场景有关，与伯莎内室里那些翻箱倒柜的事情有关。我和我妻子的见面越发简短，而且很少能够单独见面，因此我无法更确切地知道她到底在想些什么。我们对过去的回忆因为思维的快速运动而变得简短，有时，这些回忆如此失真，与外部现实毫无相似性，就像形态各异的东方字母让人根本难以联想起它们所代表的物体。

此外，过去的一年多，我的头脑发生了一种越发明显的变化。我对周围人思想的洞察逐渐变得不清楚，断断续续的，那些拥堵在我头

脑中的双重意识也与我和接触到的周围的人变得无关了。我体内一切属于自己的部分都在慢慢走向死亡，因此，我也在逐渐失去能感受到个人激情和他人感情投影的感官。我虽从洞察人心的疲惫活动中解脱出来，但却越发能预测外在世界的发展了。这种感受就好像我与人类同伴的关系逐渐僵死，我与那无生命的世界的关系越发亲密一样。我的不幸逐渐平息，从悲壮的激情走向日常无聊的痛苦。与此相对，我越是远离人群，就越是频繁、生动地看到我曾经对布拉格的预见□怪异的都市；铺满沙子的平原；庞大的古迹；午夜天空中异常明亮的星辰；连绵的山脉；午后阳光穿过郁郁葱葱的树冠，在野草丛生的幽静处洒下一块块光斑。我置身于这些景色之中，在所有景色中有一样东西比其他任何东西都更重要，它是一样不可知又不值得怜悯的东西。不断的痛苦已经将我体内的宗教信仰消解了，对于最可悲的人而言，对于既无法爱人也得不到爱的人而言，没有任何宗教信仰的可能，我不可能崇拜什么，除非是崇拜邪恶。除此之外，不断闪现的是我对死亡的预见，疼痛、窒息、最后一搏时的情景不断闪现，我徒劳地想挽回生命。

到了第七年年底，我完全失去了洞察的能力，除了我自己的意识之外，再也不会病态地认知他人的意识了，再也不会被迫侵犯他人的内心世界，我转而沉浸在自己孤独的未来中。伯莎意识到我变了。出乎我的意料，她最近好像一直找机会与我相处，我们之间滋生出一种新的关系，可以冷淡地说说话，这是那些彼此礼貌相待却不可能挽回感情的夫妻常有的姿态。我疲惫地接受了这种关系，不想仔细探究她这么做的动机究竟是什么。不过，我还是忍不住感到她的举止仪态、面部表情都透露出一种胜利、兴奋的感情，这种感情难以言表，不过能让人感到她对什么事情充满期待，或者说她在充满希冀地等待着什么。我最为满意的是她的内在自我又一次遮蔽起来，有一次我几乎要欢喜地陶醉了，我低落的时候回了她的话却没说中她的所思所想，这泄露出我完全不知道她刚刚在说什么。有一天我犯了这样的错，我清楚地记得她的眼神和微笑，她说：“我原以为你长了透视眼，你为此很刻薄地对待其他长了透视眼的人，想要独占这能力，但现在我知道你比任何人都更愚蠢。”

我什么都没说。我突然想到，她近来对我的搅扰可能是想测验我是否能看透她的秘密，但我立刻停止了想这事，我对她的动机、行动毫不关心，她想找什么乐子都可以，我无意去干涉她。我灵魂的深处对人仍有怜悯，伯莎是个活生生的人，她也可能被什么痛苦缠身。

就在那段时间发生了一件改变我沉闷生活的事，给了我一种新的乐趣，而我原以为我不会在生活中找到任何乐趣了。查尔斯·麦尼埃要来看我了，他写信说工作过于繁重，要来英国放松，他想见我。麦尼埃在欧洲有了名气，不过，他给我的信说了许多我们早年的事儿，

他感激我的同情。他能记得这些，这和他高尚的性格分不开，我也感到他的到来会让我暂时重新回到旧时那快乐的时光。

他来了，我们又开始两人单独远游。不过，没有山脉、冰川和广阔的蓝色湖泊了，我们只能在山坡、池塘和人造园林中游玩，我们能走多远走多远。时光改变了我们，把我们塑造成完全不同的样子！麦尼埃如今是社会上显赫的人物，高贵的夫人会对他曲意逢迎，那些假意自夸对脑科学感兴趣的贵族会与他结交。我很清楚，我的变化让他震惊，他十分巧妙地强忍住，不探究我的身体情况和生活境况，而是用迷人的社交能力让我们的重逢欢欣愉悦。伯莎很惊讶，这位宾客会出人意料地有魅力，她原以为他只是名气大些罢了，于是使尽浑身解数卖弄她的风情和才华。显然，她成功赢得了他的仰慕，麦尼埃对她殷勤周到，赞美之词溢于言表。他的到来对我十分有益，尤其是我们又能一起单独地散步远足，他向我倾诉他的职业生涯。不止一次，他向我提到疾病对心理的影响，我突然想到，如果他住的时间够长，我很可能向他讲述我命运的秘密。难道他的科学就没有给我的解药吗？难道对我这种情况，他那博学洽闻的头脑就不会藏着某种理解和同情吗？不过，这种想法只是偶然闪现，在成为一种愿望前已经消失了。我惧怕让另外一个人知道我的秘密，我有一种不理性的本能，这本能要我用隐瞒这层外衣把自己裹得严严实实。看透他人的秘密后，我更觉得需要保守好自己的秘密。

麦尼埃的拜访接近尾声时发生了一件事，在我们家引起了不小的骚动，主要是这件事给伯莎很大的冲击。伯莎是个一向沉着冷静的人，她看上去不会有女性的焦虑不安，甚至她憎恨别人都是有度的，不会伤及身体。这件事就是她的女仆阿切尔夫人突然生了重病。这里我需要说一件事，在麦尼埃到访前不久发生了一件事，我注意到伯莎和这个女佣之间产生了一些不快，很可能在她们拜访一个远房亲戚时争吵了，当时这个佣人陪着她的女主人。我偶然听到阿切尔对伯莎傲慢无礼地说话，那语气在我看来应当立刻辞退她。但是伯莎没有辞退她，反而默默地忍受这个女人发脾气造成的不便。更令我惊讶的是，她的疾病反而使得伯莎对她更加地关切，伯莎夜以继日地守候在她床边，她不允许任何人照料她。正巧，我们的家庭医生外出度假，这让麦尼埃的到来更受欢迎。他接手了病人，并且，对这一病例展现出了正常职业反应之外的热情。那天，在看望过病人后，他陷入了沉思。我对他说：“这病例非常特别吗，麦尼埃？”

“不，”他回答，“她得的是腹膜炎，是致命的，和我诊治过的许多人情况差不多。但是，我要告诉你我在想什么。我想拿这个女人做一次实验，如果你允许的话。我不会伤害她，不会让她痛苦，我会等到她完全失去知觉的时候做实验。我想在她心脏停止跳动几分钟后，把血输入到她的动脉，看看有什么效果。这个实验我已经在患了同样病

症的动物身上做了一次又一次，结果十分令人震惊，我想在人类身上尝试。我带着必要的管子，装在我的箱子里，其他的设备都可以很快准备。我会用自己的血，从我的手臂上取出来。我确定这个女人不会活过今晚，我要你答应做我的实验助手。我没办法自己完成，但在乡下医生里找一个助手可能不合适。这件事可能被说得粗鄙荒唐，弄得沸沸扬扬到处传播。”

“你和我的妻子说过这事了吗？”我说，“她对这个女人看起来有一种特殊的感情，这是她最喜爱的女仆。”

“实话告诉你，”麦尼埃说，“我不想让她知道这件事。女人在这些事上是说不通的，何况，到时候这个女仆身体上可能会产生一些令人惊讶的反应。你和我要一起熬夜了，得时刻准备好。一旦出现某些症状我会带你进去，时机成熟的时候我们必须把其他所有人赶出房间。”

我不必再讲我们对这件事的对话了。他很详尽地说明了细节，克服了我对这些事的反感，让我对他实验的结果怀着一种敬畏、好奇的复杂心理。

我们准备好了一切，他指示我如何当一个助手。他没有告诉伯莎，他十分确定阿切尔熬不过这个晚上，他努力劝说她让病人自己好好休息一个晚上。但她很倔强，预感到死亡已经临近，她以为麦尼埃是为了保护她的神经让她离开。她拒绝离开病房。麦尼埃和我一起在藏书室等着，他不断地去病房，回来告诉我病情发展如他所料。有一次他对我说：“你知道这女人为什么令她的女主人心怀不满吗？女主人待她这么好。”

“我想她生病前，她们之间有什么误会。你为什么问这个？”

“因为在我过去观察的五六个小时里，我猜，她没有恢复的希望了。有一种奇怪的动机推着她要说什么，不过疼痛和虚弱让她说不出话。她的眼睛里有一种可怕的神情，她一直用那种眼神看着她的主人。而这种病的患者往往到最后一刻都保持着头脑清醒。”

“这女人会有恶毒的想法，我一点儿都不惊讶。”我说，“对她，我一向不信任也不喜欢，但她有办法赢得她主人的欢心。”这之后，他沉默了，看着壁炉里的火陷入沉思，随后起身又上楼去了。这次比平时待的时间久一些，他回来的时候，悄悄对我说：“现在来吧。”

我随他进入那间死神徘徊的屋子。我进屋的时候，在床四周的黑色幔布的映衬下，伯莎苍白的脸色缓和了一些。看我进来，她连忙身子向前，随后一脸愤怒、迷惑地看着麦尼埃。他一边抬起手示意安静，一边紧紧盯着这垂死的女人，测量她的脉搏。这张脸苍白瘦削、毛骨悚然，额头挂着冰冷的汗珠，眼睑下垂几乎盖住了她大而黑的眼

睛。一两分钟后，麦尼埃走向床的另一侧伯莎站的地方，用一贯温柔礼貌的语气请求她离开病人，交由我们照顾，一切都会为病人处理好，她如今已经不可能感受到周围人的温存了。伯莎在犹豫，显然她愿意相信他的保证，愿意听从他的安排。她看着那张可怕的、垂死的面容，好像要读出某种信息证实麦尼埃的保证。有那么一刻已经下垂的眼睑又抬了起来，好像，这双眼睛正看着伯莎，不过眼神茫然而空洞。伯莎全身战栗了一下，她又回到病人的枕边，巧妙地暗示她不会离开屋子。

眼睑再也没有抬起来。我看着伯莎，她正看着垂死之人的脸。她身着一件昂贵的睡衣，一顶蕾丝帽半遮着金色的头发，穿着这身衣服的她一如既往地优雅，宛如现代贵族生活画像中的人。我问我自己，为何我曾经会认为这样一个女人也是由母亲所生、拥有童年记忆、能够感受痛苦、需要人宠爱呢？那一刻，她的面貌表情异常地尖刻，她的眼睛异常地冷酷、焦虑，她看上去像一个残忍的神明，这个女仆和死亡的赛跑则是她的一场精神盛宴。而当女仆咽下最后一口气，当死亡的黑色头纱已经在这女人身上完全落下时，从伯莎尖刻的面容后闪耀出一丝光芒。伯莎和这个女人之间到底有什么秘密呢？我把眼睛从她身上转开，生怕我恢复了洞悉的能力，那样我就会被迫得知这两个没有爱意的女人到底在想什么。我感到，伯莎期待着死亡会守住她的秘密，我感谢上天，这秘密对我仍是个谜。

麦尼埃轻声说：“她死了。”他把胳膊伸向伯莎，她顺从地走出了屋子。

我想，是她命令了两个女随从到屋子来，让原来那个年轻的随从离开了。她们进来的时候，麦尼埃已经切开了枕头上那条瘦长、僵硬的脖子的动脉，我赶走了随从，让她们在远处等着我们摇铃，我说，医生要做个手术，他不确定病人是否死亡。在随后的二十分钟里我忘记了一切，只记得麦尼埃和让他专注的实验，我想，他的感官已经隔离了一切与实验无关的声音和图像。我的任务，首先是保持人工呼吸，直到完成输血。不过很快麦尼埃接替了我。我能看到生命神奇又缓慢地回来了，胸口开始起伏，吸气越来越强烈，眼睑在颤抖，灵魂好像也回来了。人工呼吸停止后，呼吸仍在继续，嘴唇开始运动。

就在那时，我听到门把手转动了。我猜，伯莎从那些被支走的女人那里听说了什么，可能她隐约感到了恐惧，因为，她神色警觉地进来。她走近床脚，发出了一声哀鸣。

死去女人的眼睛大睁着，眼看着她，她认出了她，带着仇恨地认出了她。突然一股强力让伯莎以为已经永远静止的手指指向了她。那张憔悴的脸动了，喘着粗气的声音急切地说□

“你计划毒杀你的丈夫……毒药放在黑色橱柜里……我为你弄到的……你嘲笑我，在背地里说我的坏话，让别人厌恶我……因为你嫉妒……你知道错了吗……现在？”

嘴唇仍在小声说着什么，但是已经听不出声音了。很快，什么声音都没有了，只有微小的动作：火焰跃升了起来，又更快地熄灭了。这可怜女人的心中满是憎恨和报复；生命的灵魂弹拨了一下和弦，就一去不复返了。上帝啊！这就是复活吗……就是为了醒来倾倒在未被平息的欲望，让双唇发泄未能说出的诅咒，让肌肉完成犯了一半的罪恶吗？

伯莎脸色苍白地站在床脚边，浑身颤抖、无能为力、无计可施，像狡猾野兽的藏身之处被迅猛的火焰围困了一般。麦尼埃也瘫在那里动不了，对他来说，那一刻生命不再是一个科学问题。而对我来说，这一幕和我生命里发生的其他事情基调一样，恐惧与我常相伴，而这一刻新的启示也不过是旧有的疼痛在新的场景中重新出现。

那以后伯莎和我分居了，她住在她自己的宅院里，掌管着我们一半的财富，我则游荡在海外，直到现在，我来到德文郡居住，等待死亡。伯莎接受人们的怜悯和仰慕；我能举出什么来反对这个有魅力的女人呢？除我以外所有人都喜欢和她相处，没有人看到那间屋子里发生的场景，除了麦尼埃，而麦尼埃答应我他活着就不会说出那个秘密。

有那么一两次，我疲于奔波了，驻足在一个喜爱的地方。我的心灵奔向男人、女人和孩子们，他们的面孔日渐熟悉起来，但我担心旧时的洞察力会回来，又急忙离开。我一直奔走，一直活在这种未知的存在之中，这种未知已经向我揭晓，但我却让它隐藏在天地之间那移动的幕布后。直到最后，疾病抓住了我，迫使我留在此处休息，迫使我依靠我的仆人。然后，洞察力的诅咒——我的双重意识回来了，而且再也没有离开过我。我知道仆人们所有狭隘的思想、他们微弱的尊敬和他们将要耗尽的怜悯。

今天是1850年9月20日。我知道我刚刚写下的这个日期，这串数字如同一个熟识很久的碑文。我无数次在书桌的这一页纸上见到它们，在我最后死亡前的挣扎开始的时候。

(1859)

(张欣 译)

[1] 原文为拉丁语ubi saeva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit，来自英国作家斯威夫特墓碑上的诗。——原文注

[2] 指的是让·雅克·卢梭。（说明：书中脚注除特别标明之外，均为译者注。）

[3] 女水妖，格林童话中的形象。

[4] 原文为法语。

[5] 原文为法语。

[6] 塔索，意大利诗人。

女作家写的蠢故事 [7]

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女作家写的蠢故事内容丰富，风格多样。按照愚蠢的不同特质，它包含了浅薄空洞型、单调涣散型、一片虔诚型、迂腐卖弄型等多种文风。然而，所有这些展示女性愚昧的作品中，有一个分支流派数量最为庞大，我们暂且管它叫女帽类小说 [8]。此类蠢故事往往是这样开始的：女主角是一位继承人或颇有家产的贵族夫人，与她交往甚密的几位情人包括一位桀骜不驯的准男爵，一位和善亲切的公爵，以及一位魅力四射的侯爵家骄子；牧师或诗人追求者在远处为她叹着气；当然，她身后还跟着一群各式各样的仰慕者，书里只是轻描淡写地带过。通常来说，这位女主角的眼睛闪耀着美丽的光泽，头脑机智非凡；她的鼻子挺拔，就像她的品性那样端庄；她有着宛如女低音的嗓子，思维敏捷；她穿戴讲究，笃信宗教。跳舞时，她宛如曼妙的西尔芙精灵；读起书来更是了不得，能读懂原版的《圣经》 [9]。另外一种女主角拥有所有这些美好品质，只不过她不是继承人，也没有万贯家财，但她总是有跻身上流社会的机缘，总是能毫无疏漏地在众多追求者中挑选出最优秀的结婚对象，并最终成为大家眼中正直不阿、极具传统家庭观念的贤良淑女。放荡男人面对她机智的言语常常无力还击，只好保持沉默，甚至因为她辞藻华丽的谴责而开始深深地自省；诚然，这些女主角都爱长篇大论、滔滔不绝，她们退回到自己卧室的那一刻便是她们高谈阔论的开始。人们能从她文章的字里行间看出她的伶牙俐齿，从她的谈吐中感受到她的诙谐和巧思。人们都知道她思想深刻洞察万物，能够看透浅薄哲学家提出的理论，而她那绝妙的直觉就像钟表，只需有人按下启动，便能自然而然地运行，参透万物。事实上，男人在她身边只是扮演了跑龙套的戏份。然而时不时地，你又能从书中某些暗示里感受到男女主人公之间的暧昧关系，这让你又欣慰了几分，重新确认了男人在现实世界中的重要作用。不过，在该女主角领衔主演的这部漫长人生影片中，男人存在的最终目的也只不过是扮演了女主角的护送者而已。男人们或是在舞会上看见她的身姿而目眩神迷，或是在某次花展上被她迷住，或是在一次骑行中被她高贵的驭马术所征服，或是在教堂瞥见她庄重又甜美的姿态。总之，她给人的感觉、她展现出来的才智以及她带有蕾丝花边的衣饰都全方位地符合了男性心中理想的女神形象。尽管如此，在故事的开头女主角也总是会错误地嫁给一个邪恶的准男爵，丈夫的阴谋诡计让她饱受情感折磨。但是，即使是死神也在心中为我们完美的女主角保留着柔

情，一定会在恰当的时候出面，用死亡解决她的困境。可怜的男爵一定会在某次决斗中战死，躺在床上的他奄奄一息，请求妻子一定要再嫁给自己最爱的人，就当是对将死的自己的一种恩赐，并且已经自作主张给她的情人派送了信件。在情节进展到这一步之前，我们也跟随高贵、可爱、有才的女主角一起体验了她之前诸多的糟糕时光。不过，我们最终也能获得满足感，毕竟看到她还是能够掩面在精致的刺绣镶边手绢中哭泣；能够晕倒在价值连城的高档坐垫上；乘着马车匆忙赶来，她也依旧容光焕发；因高烧剃去了头发，大病痊愈后，女主角的秀发也只会更加丰盈。

在淑女小说家笔下，有且仅有这高贵而时尚的社会，这倒是让我们免去了一个极为严重的担忧。我们曾经猜测，淑女小说家们都是穷困潦倒的女人，她们写作小说的原因与她们去应聘家庭女教师一样——她们实在找不到别的“女性化”生存之道了。基于这样的假设，我们即使发现小说语句啰唆、情节离奇，也会因为心中的同情而原谅这些瑕疵，就像看到盲人售卖的粗糙针垫和睡帽——我们会告诉自己，这些物品虽有缺陷，但是我们所付的钱却能解救那些穷苦女性。我们想象着那些寂寞的单身女性为了生存而苦苦写作，妻子们为了偿还丈夫的债务、女儿们为了给生病的父亲买件礼物而孜孜不倦地辛勤生产着“作品”，仿佛在进行某种伟大的英雄主义行动。在这样的印象下，我们对于淑女小说的评价就比较含蓄了：她的小说有语病，但她的写作动机却无可指责；她的想象力平庸无奇，但她坚持不懈的精神令人感动。似乎，我们因作者的困境而原谅了她们的白痴故事，因为眼泪而相信了那些废话。但事实并不是这样！我们的这种想法以及类似冠冕堂皇的观点都被新的发现所否定了。女作家的这些小说是在完全不同于我们想象的状态下写出来的。这些女作家出行都坐马车，只透过车窗和卖东西的小贩交谈；她们视工人阶级为自己的附属物；她们觉得五百英镑的年薪简直少得可怜；贝尔格莱维亚区和“豪华大别墅”的一切才是真实的生活；而男性若不是一位有身份地位的政治家，或者至少是个拥有大片土地的地主，那她们甚至连看都不愿看一眼。很显然，她们是坐在优雅的闺房里，用紫罗兰颜色的墨水和红宝石笔尖的钢笔写作的人；她们对出版商的评价完全不在乎，她们一点儿都不穷困潦倒，拮据的是她们的脑容量。她们所描绘的上流社会的确惟妙惟肖，令人羡慕，但同时，她们的文字却流露出对其他阶层的陌生。如果我们把她们对贵族老爷、太太的描绘称为不准确，那她们对文人、商贩和农民的描述简直就是荒谬了，但她们的聪明才智还是秉持着公平的原则，以同样的离谱描绘着她们确实听过、看过和未曾听过、看过的东西。

我们认为，应该很少有女性根本不曾见过五岁以下的小孩，但是最近有一部自称“源自真人真事”的女帽类小说《补偿》

(*Compensation*) 中，却有一个才四岁半的小女孩在以奥西恩风格 [10] 的口吻说话：

“我太开心了，亲爱的外婆！我遇到了一个如此令人心旷神怡的人，他就像所有美好的事物——像芬芳的花朵，像从本洛蒙德山上看到的景致——噢！不！比这还要美。我一想到他、见到他就感觉非常非常幸福。他唱歌时就像妈妈那样温柔。他的前额如同远方的大海一般，”小女孩手指向蔚蓝的地中海继续说道，“没有边际；又像温暖的夏夜里，我抬头仰望天空时最爱的那一丛星星……不要这样看着我啊，你现在的额头就像是被阳光照射、被风吹皱了的罗蒙湖面，我最喜欢平静湖面上的阳光了……就像现在，天上飘着些深色云朵，阳光冲破云层，瞬间就给旁边的丛林和紫色的岩石镀上了金色，它们倒映在湖面上，显得那么美丽。

文中的神童小女孩完全展现了一个成人在醉酒后才有的滔滔不绝，此时，就算我们被告知她是一个死而复生的人，生来就拥有一长段的记忆，我们也不会惊讶。故事一次次地告诉我们，文中的小女孩就是这样一个富有创造力并且自认为是天才的神童，而且她足够幸运，遇上了一个同样“最具独创性”的令她倾心的天才爱人。

按照书中所写，这位神童的爱人虽然与她“在权势和才智”上都惊人地相似，但“在宗教信仰和发育上”却更胜一筹。她把他当作自己的“挚爱”(Agape)——一个她从希腊文《圣经》中读到并一直喜爱的词。得益于她对学习语言的超常天赋，她用原版语言阅读了所有宗教经典”。当然，希腊语和希伯来语对于女主角来说易如反掌，要她讲梵语也不过是小菜一碟。事实上，除了说不好英语，她能准确无误地用其他任何语言交流。她不仅会跳波尔卡舞，还通晓数国语言，她简直就是一位穿着裙子的外交家。可怜的男人们！你们有几个看得懂希伯来文，你们恐怕和博林布鲁克一样，在“大致了解了一点儿那门语言，熟悉了由那门语言写成的重要作品的名称”后，就会开始吹嘘；而你们着迷的那些女人，却可以用每一种闪族语言在心里说你们的坏话呢。然而，我们都知道这样一个道理，故事中的女主角常常还拥有一个“美丽而小巧的脑袋”，也许正是这种对服装和仪态的关注启发了她们的早慧。因此，我们可以猜想，对于女主角而言，学习东方语言就如蝴蝶轻啜花蜜那样轻巧，更不用说学习和她们母语相近的其他欧洲语言了。另外，女主角的博学一定深不可测，虽然作者的头脑倒是能够一眼望到底。

在另外一本女帽类小说《劳拉·盖伊》(*Laura Gay*) 中，女主角并不精通希腊语和希伯来语，但她对拉丁古典文学的熟稔弥补了这一缺点。她熟读“亲爱的老维吉尔”、“优雅的贺拉斯”、“仁慈的西塞罗”，以及“令人愉悦的李维”，各种经典烂熟于心。旁征博引拉丁经典

对劳拉而言是如此理所当然的一件事，在与一群形形色色的男女出去野餐时，她心想：“我从来不知道高贵如男性也会在这件事情上产生嫉妒。”书中继续写道：“若在场的多数人是理智且高贵的绅士，他们必定不会对这种引用产生嫉妒感；但在场的若都是温德姆小姐和雷德福先生这种普通之流，那么就必须要牺牲一下自己引用的天性了。”但我想，无论是高贵的少数男性，还是无知又愚蠢的大多数人，都愿意谈话中少一些这种无聊又毫无关联的引用。在男女混合的聚会场所，有教养的男性和女性都很少谈论拉丁名著，他们即使熟读“仁慈的西塞罗”，即便是“令人愉悦的李维”几欲脱口而出，也能在平常的谈话交流中控制自己的学识。然而，对于书中的盖伊小姐来说，用西塞罗的拉丁经典讲话几乎是她最平易近人的交流方式了。一次在帕拉丁山上，她对一众观光客做出了如下脉络清晰、内容全面而丰富的评论：

真理只能是完全客观的，因为即使在宗教经典中，当真理偶尔通过主观方式被展现时，它都会多多少少沾染了些迷信的色彩；而在罗马天主教的教条中，这种无知、利益、古老偶像崇拜造成的偏见以及权威，都逐渐堆积在了真理之上，并把罗马天主教变成了一场拥有众多信徒的迷信。而又有多少人，能够拥有等量的热情、勇气和智慧去剖开这堆积在真相之上的垃圾，在一团废墟中找到藏身其中的珍珠呢。

如果仔细想想，我们或许见过很多比劳拉·盖伊更加清新脱俗、思维深刻的女性，但是肯定没遇见过如此不合时宜发表长篇大论的。有一位刚刚爱上她的贵族牧师正是因为听了以上那一段深沉的评论，开始有些怀疑她是不是个独立思考的女性，担心不好把控。但是他错了！当劳拉难过时，贵族牧师温柔地想“唤起她平时忘却了的记忆，一个她在痛苦时分力量和慰藉的储藏地，而这个储藏地，除非我们也被生活的苦难狠狠压榨，否则，也是同样会被我们所遗忘的”。我们在文中读到，她确实找到了这个神圣的储藏地，连同她的茶壶一起找到的。在《劳拉·盖伊》的珠光宝气、香车鬓影之外，的确还存在着一些正统的风味，但是这种正统却被她“仁慈的西塞罗”“热爱分析的性格”所破坏了。

相比之下，《补偿》一书更具教条主义风格，但是其中堆砌了更多势利世俗以及荒诞的插曲，以迎合虔诚但轻浮的读者的喜好。书中的女主角琳达比劳拉·盖伊更深思、更聪敏，她已经出入了社交场合，因此也有更多、地位更显赫的情人；书中还引入了各种邪恶但令人着迷的女人，甚至包括一个法国悍妇；作者不遗余力地为小说创作各种引人入胜的故事，其桥段堪比最为悖德伦理故事。事实上，这本书就是一个大杂烩：有舞会、有苏格兰人的预言、罗杰斯先生的早

餐、意大利强盗、临终时的皈依、聪明绝顶的女作家、意大利情人、毒杀老妇人，而这些情节描写又被佐以对“信仰和人类未来”的讨论，因“最为新颖的思想”而更具风味。书中的女作家苏珊·巴顿小姐是个天才，她提起笔“写小说时一挥而就”，而即使她已经拒绝了多桩好婚事，即使年纪大到已经足够当琳达的母亲（因为她曾拒绝了琳达的父亲），但她最终该是能够与一位年轻的伯爵喜结良缘，情定这位女主角曾拒绝过的情人。

当然，天才和道德高尚这两种品质只有在财富可观的人身上才不显得乏味；同样，虔诚，有时候为了显得有必要 [11] ，也必须融入“社会”，在最好的圈子里展示才能合乎礼仪。

《阶级与美女》（*Rank and Beauty*）是一本更加浅薄、宗教色彩相对较弱的女帽类小说。书中是这样写我们的女主角的：“即使她出身卑微，如果她继承了她父亲的风骨、她母亲的美貌，具有符合她年龄的奔放与热情，这些特质将最终升华成敢爱敢恨的勇气，她的后代会觉得这些是他们能够得到的最好的财富。”这位青春热血的年轻女士在读父亲的报纸时爱上了首相先生。通过头版新闻和“议会辩论概要”，首相先生在温德姆小姐的想象中就已经闪耀特异如一颗明星，然而这颗星星对于身居乡村无足轻重的温德姆小姐而言，自是可望而不可即的。但是，温德姆小姐迅速凭借自己的力量成为乌姆弗拉维尔女爵，当她搬进春日公园的豪宅之时，她的美貌和成就惊艳了世人，而正如你所想，她不久就将会碰到她的爱慕对象 [12] 了。可能“首相”一词总让你想起满脸皱纹、一身赘肉的六十多岁的老头儿，但是请赶紧摆脱这种印象吧，鲁伯特·康威勋爵“在他几乎还是青年时就被委以重任，处理全人类最为紧要的事务”，而他也符合我们的女主角在阅读了头版新闻和议会辩论概要后所产生的每一则幻想：

门又打开了，鲁伯特·康威走了进来。伊夫琳小姐抬头看了一眼，这一眼就足够了！他完全没让她失望。这一眼似乎就像是她之前一直盯着一幅画看，而现在画中人竟然从画中走了出来的感觉。他身姿挺拔，气度非凡，像凡·戴克画中的人物，像一位骑士——他高尚的骑士祖先们，和她幻想中的他形容相似的骑士们，曾在遥远的古时和乌姆弗拉维尔家族在远方的战场上并肩作战，讨伐异教徒。这些都是真实的吗？

当然不是。

渐渐地，书中越来越明显地展示，首相先生对她动心了。这发生在乌姆弗拉维尔小姐在温莎堡觐见女王的时候□

这是她在王宫的最后一晚了，骑马回来后，温德姆先生带着她和一群伙伴到围墙顶上看风景。她倚在城墙上，站在高处向下俯瞰风

景，鲁伯特正在她身边。她感叹道：“这风景真是无与伦比的美丽啊！”

“是很美！要是没有到这高处来就离开了应该会很遗憾！这次旅行觉得高兴吗？”

“简直令人陶醉！为女王而生，为女王而死，为女王尽忠！”

“哈！”他大声应道，情感突然激昂，脸上灵光一现，仿佛终遇知音。

这种“脸上灵光一现”为第三卷末尾他们最终结婚埋下了伏笔，但是在那美满的结局之前，勒特雷尔·威彻利先生恶毒的诡计在二人之间造成了许多复杂的误会。这位威彻利先生是一位天才诗人，在各方面都是个非凡的角色。他不仅是浪漫的诗人，潇洒的浪子，还是个愤世嫉俗的才子。他对乌姆弗拉维尔女士的极端爱慕穷尽了他辛辣的口才，使得他在谈话中显得极为愚笨。当她拒绝了他，这位先生竟然冲进灌木林在泥里打滚，并且开始了最为邪恶和煞费苦心的报复历程。他伪装成一位冒牌医师，并且成为家庭医生，他相信伊夫琳总有一天会生病，会召唤他需要他的照料。最终，他的计划泡汤，他写了一封长信跟她道别，信中洋溢着他的满腹才华：

噢，亲爱的小姐，当你沉浸在美好和喜悦中时，你能否想起，给你写信的我，这痛苦的灵魂？当你镀金的游轮在宽阔繁华的世界里顺流而下，你能否透过世界上最甜蜜的音乐——你的颂歌——听到来自远方的，我的叹息？

总之，虽然故事浅薄空洞，但是和其他两部小说比较起来，大家还是更喜欢这本《阶级与美女》。作者写的对话更加自然生动；她对于自己的无知十分坦诚，没有卖弄学问；我们只需要简单地相信女主角的惊人智慧，而不用被迫阅读她在谈话中对怀疑论者与哲学家的驳斥、她对宇宙谜题的解答。

女帽类小说的作者们在写作措辞上都十分雷同。在她们的小小说中，总有一位女士或者绅士反派像见血封喉树般阴险毒辣；爱人总有着富有男子气概的胸膛，大脑总是可以联想起许许多多；内心却总是空虚寂寞；所有的活动都别有目的；所有的伙伴都可以托付性命；所有的童年都将伴随终身；每一次西沉的太阳都被比作将军白头，每一次霁晴都是雨水被收纳进了太阳光辉的胸膛；所有人都视生命为一则伤感的恩惠；而人人也都在对话中使用阿尔比恩 [13] 和斯科舍 [14] 这种名称。这些人物的道德评价也惊人地相似，例如“所有人，无论贫富，都会被不好的榜样所影响，这是个令人忧伤的事实”；“读者在任

何一本不起眼的书中都能获取有用的信息”；“邪恶总是能打着美德的幌子横行”；“本性中的美好和高尚一定存在着，并且能够被赏识，因为小说写得再喧嚣浮夸，也没那么容易欺骗熟读何为人性的读者”；以及“我们只有被伤害过，才能学会原谅”等等。毫无疑问，这些评论在有一部分读者看来是犀利、辛辣的。我们常常看到一些读者手握铅笔一遍又一遍地在书上做标注，他们用精致的手写体在一旁写道：“太对了”，表达对勇敢直言的淑女作家坚定的赞成，并且加上许多的感叹号表示强调。这些小说对话的语言特点在于使用很多具有独创性的倒装句，并且刻意避免日常生活中的平凡用语。愤怒的年轻人这样惊呼：“就是这样，我认为！”；再听听晚餐前半小时，一位年轻女士和她的邻居谈论她第一次读莎士比亚的经历：“我偷偷溜进公园里，坐在绿色的树冠下，兴高采烈地阅读着这位如同魔术大师般的人所写的带给人无限惊喜的书页。”但是此类女帽类小说家最显著的贡献在于她们的哲学思考。例如《劳拉·盖伊》的女作者让女主和男主最终结婚，她进一步升华了他们的结合：“那些眼睛长期盯着物质，看不见人类身上其他方面的怀疑论者们，如果能够全心全意地投入到这样一场极乐中去，就会发现一个人的灵魂和肉体源自不同的起源，其本质也是不一样的。”淑女小说家似乎能看到除却物质层面的其他内容，她们不局限于观察现象，而是偶尔能透过现象洞察本体；自然，她们就比其他任何人更能反驳那些富有盛名的怀疑论者。不过，坚持人的灵魂和肉体是一致的这一怀疑论学派，我们倒也很少听说。

在淑女作家所写的愚蠢小说中，还有一种“神谕体”最令人惋惜叹气，这类小说致力于阐释作者自己的宗教观点、哲学见解和道德观念。类似于那种把愚蠢的言论和行为视为对上帝旨意的传达的迷信，在女性中似乎还广泛流传着这样一种认知，她们认为最无知、最缺乏常识的人却最能传达神的启示。通过她们的写作来判断，总有那么一些女作家认为，对科学和生活的完全无知，是认识复杂的道德及理论难题的最好途径。显然，她们解决类似难题的秘诀都像这样：准备一个女性角色空空的头脑，往里填充对哲学和文学零零碎碎的一知半解，佐以社会僵化而错误的认识把这颗头脑烘焙成型，淑女作家不时地把这颗头脑端上桌来暗示这其中的智慧，并在某些尴尬而不必要的时刻，用她们水平有限的英语把这其中的思想传达出来，装在盘中供读者享用。你很少能碰见一个“神谕体”的淑女小说家会质疑她自己对神学问题的判断能力，她从不会怀疑自己，自认为能极精确地分辨出不同教派间的善恶；她们能准确地指出人类何以堕落到了如今的境地，并且对所有哲学家表示遗憾，因为他们不曾有机会向她请教。当真正伟大的作家谦逊地将自己的经历写进小说，展示人和物最本真的样子时，神谕体女作家就会认为这种写作辜负了他们的才能：“他们并没有解决什么重大问题啊”□于是乎她时刻准备着，通过讲述一个爱情故事来弥补所谓的伟大作家们的缺陷，通过富裕家庭的女士先生们

经历上流社会特有的种种磨难，来传达一整套关于生命的理论和对于神学的完整指南；这故事对基督教独特的见解能使自然神论者、皮由兹 [15] 以及极端新教徒都晕头转向，这种新的理论被浓缩进字里行间，在三百三十页的书页中铺展开来。你会觉得，这些小说中的先生和女士们，与你曾经碰到过的人完全不一样。因为，在通常情况下，一个女作家描写她同胞和真实生活的能力，与她谈论上帝的能力成反比；而她把读者导向精神世界的方法则是向他们展现出一幅完全不符合实际的现实生活的图景。

《一个谜团：来自乌尔克里庄园档案中的一页》（*The Enigma: A Leaf from the Chronicles of Wolchorley House*，后文简称《谜团》）是我们能见到的最典型的“神谕体”小说。书中“谜团”的困难程度无异于解释邪恶的存在，而要解答这一谜团，也正需要我们淑女作家才有的超凡的才智。作者已经在小说的第一页提出了难题，答案也欲隐欲现。留着乌黑头发、生机勃勃的年轻女士说：“生命就是一团难以解开的谜团”；而顶着褐色头发的另一位温柔女士，对着自己正在临摹的圣母像说：“那儿似乎曾有解决这一难题的方法”。这种小说的风格 of 虚无缥缈自然适应了它目的的崇高，我们必须承认，有些段落我们可能花了很长时间研究却仍然不懂，即使作者加入了斜体小字的解说，或许，我们必须等到智力进一步开发才能理解书中的内容吧。书中写了一位年轻的模范牧师欧内斯特，无论在什么情况下，他都能使人们回到正轨，“在全社会都变得渎神后，他开始不赞成交易类型的婚姻”，在某个晚上，“睡眠没有造访他神圣的心灵，其中汹涌着聚集而混杂的悲伤和喜悦”，以及“他不能容忍任何为交易而写成的人类文章，无论它是何种类型，被认为拥有何种价值，无论是出于尊敬抑或是阶级需要写作，他正直的灵魂都对之深恶痛绝，自欺欺人者的最后结论对于他来说只是一个神圣的谎言，因为他们‘生活在一出虚无的演出中，欺骗别人并且被人欺骗’，而他觉得自己的护经匣以及衣服上夸张的下摆并不只是一种社交摆设”。（所有的特殊字体处理都是文章中原有的，我们希望它们能帮助读者进一步理解。）文中另一位莱昂内尔先生是个模范老绅士，“他除了不散漫不颓废，人们对中世纪人物的典型印象似乎在他身上都得到了体现，将人们团结在一起的正是一种英雄主义纽带。原始信仰和真理的色彩镌刻在普通人的内心，随着法律准则的出现和积累，融入到更加广泛的兄弟情谊中，并且互相依赖，越来越臻于完美”。是的，看了这句话，你一定明白这些色彩是如何铭刻在心中，又是怎样融合成一道情谊之桥——显然这是一条彩虹——准则的出现和积累又是如何使得这座情谊之桥越来越完美。看到这里，如果你还需要进一步认识莱昂内尔先生，我们会告诉你，他的灵魂深处，“浮漾在他灵魂周围的气氛里、隐藏在他灵魂原始的脉搏中，有一种比任何科学思想都能想象到的更为极致的善与真的结合。当他在封信时，“瞧！这位好人胸膛中跳动着一颗充满真与

善的心，如同他装满爱意的双眼，充盈着对祖先的崇敬和自豪，似乎在凝视着家族那清晰的箴言——忠诚 [16]”。

淑女作家也用同样崇高的风格剔除了生活中所有琐碎事物中的庸俗。普通人可能会说休息室的桌上摆着一本莎士比亚，可是《谜团》的女作者决心迂回地表现自己的文采，会这样描述桌上的书：“那人类思想和情感的宝库，用这样一个小小的名字‘莎士比亚’引导着人类的心灵。”又比如，一位夜巡人看到某扇窗户里的灯比平常亮久了一些，感慨这些熬夜的人为何傻到有机会早睡却不珍惜；但是，作者唯恐这些事实对于我们来说太过平淡无奇，于是采用了如下这种引人注目且形而上学的方式呈现在我们面前：“他惊叹——人们在思考他人的问题时 总会 站在旁观者的角度，因此（尽管他们不赞成这种错误）他们也会在脑海中错误地假想——要是他自己，他 一定会表现得大为不同，他 一定会满怀欣喜地珍惜在房间内根本没有被当回事所得来的休息。”一位普通侍从，他小腿粗壮，说话漏风，现在正开门去迎客，作者立即抓住了这样一个机会开始描写，他是“众多被宠坏了的奴仆中的一员，就像是中了该隐一样的诅咒□成为了世间的‘流浪者’，他把个人的财富和花销作为衡量人类的标尺……噢！英格兰！所有的这些都是你病态文明的错误启发而已！”我们听说过来自卡明博士 [17] 和罗伯特·欧文 [18] 的错误启发，从皮由兹到招魂者的误导，但是之前我们还从未听说过哪种错误启发能从文明的细枝末节，从仆人每日照料的绒毛粉末般的小事中产生。

正如生活中平常的事件被提升为了令人激动的紧急时刻，小说中身着伞裙和中国式长袖 [19] 的小姐们行事方式也颇具血腥闹剧女主角的风采。《谜团》中的珀西太太是一位肤浅且虚荣的妇人，她希望自己的儿子贺勒斯能娶一位富有的女继承人：褐色头发的格雷斯；然而，和所有类似的儿子角色一样，贺勒斯爱的却是女继承人的表妹：黑头发的凯特，即便她没有任何财产；此外，格雷斯对贺勒斯本来也没有展现出任何好感。在这种情景设定下，儿子一般要么阴沉忧郁，要么脾气暴躁，母亲则时而强势主动时而尖刻易怒，而那位没有财产的灰姑娘常常夜不能寐、以泪洗面。我们已经习惯了这些套路，就像我们已经习惯了月食，不会再在无月的夜晚大声号叫敲击作响。然而，即使是遍历故事如我们，对于书中珀西太太这位处在时尚“前沿”的夫人在这种情况下的反应，也不得不大感惊讶。有一天，珀西太太碰巧看到自己的儿子贺勒斯和格雷斯在窗前谈话，距离远到根本听不见他们在谈什么，而且众所周知，即使贺勒斯向她求婚，高贵的庄园继承人格雷斯小姐根本没有任何理由会接受，但是珀西太太就直冲冲地奔了过去，紧紧抱住他们俩，她的脸色因为激动和兴奋而泛红，说道：“幸福的一幕终于上演了啊！那我现在是不是能叫你格雷斯，我的格雷斯，贺勒斯的格雷斯！我亲爱的孩子们！”贺勒斯连忙

解释，指出这只是一个误会，自己已经和凯特订了婚，于是，我们就看到了以下场景和画面：

她（珀西太太）听到这个消息后，眼睛充满怒火，声音提到了前所未有的高度——

她用嘶哑和愤怒的语气吼道：“你这个不肖子！”她双拳紧握继续说：“你自食苦果吧！低下你的头，让一位母亲的……”

“不要再骂了！”此刻，从身后传来一句低低的反驳声。这一声就像是上天派来的天使，打断了珀西太太恶毒的语言；反正她是被吓住了，停止了讲话。

而与此同时，贺勒斯正双手捂脸，悲伤地跪在母亲的脚边。

母亲的那些可怕语言很过分，已深深刺伤了他，就像是挥之不去的魔咒，将一直留存在他的心间。那一声反驳是谁说的？是他真正的守护神发话了！

站在珀西太太身后的人正是凯特，她脸色苍白，站得笔直，全身笼罩着死寂一般的镇定——她是当下唯一一个冷静的人了，她抑扬顿挫地缓慢地讲着，语气中充满悲愤和哀伤，一字一句都像是敲在人心上。

“他是做了他的决定，但是我并没有接受！所以，你不能，你也没有权利诅咒他！我现在，”此时，凯特抬起又大又黑的双眼，那眸子里闪烁着柔和的光，这也是第一次，这热情的双眸被痛苦所点亮。她伸出一只手向天起誓，“在这里对天发誓，即使以幸福为饵，以悲伤相逼，如果没有贺勒斯母亲的同意和祝福，我绝不答应贺勒斯·乌尔克里先生的求婚！”

在此处，以及在整篇小说中，作者有意营造一种混杂、迷惑，而这也正是蠢故事的典型特征。《谜团》的故事本是关于一群现代“沙龙社团”的贵族年轻人，他们跳着波尔卡舞，谈论着皮由兹运动；但同时，故事里又混杂了各种各样的角色、突发事件以及行为礼仪，像是混杂了各种不同类型爱情小说的片段。书中写了一个爱尔兰竖琴家，“宛如古时眉目如画的吟游诗人”，他来到这个普通的英国小村庄，在教堂主日学校举办的茶点庆祝会上惊艳出场。另外有一个疯狂的吉卜赛人，她穿戴着鲜红的斗篷，爱唱浪漫的歌曲，在她临终的时候还揭露了一个秘密：年轻的模范牧师欧内斯特是凯特的哥哥。而这一秘密又由一个矮小、吝啬的商人做证，这个商人爱诅咒陌生人并且对着他们发出邪恶的笑声。作者还写了一位极其正直的爱尔兰人巴

尼，他通过比对一份文件的落款日期和签名的日期证实了它是一份假文件，尽管在此之前这份文件已经通过了法庭的审核并且已经生效。谈到莱昂内尔先生的住所，那是一个古老家族留下来的乡村别墅，我们猜想，这也使得女作者的想象力就此开始跳跃到城堡和城墙，“听啊，守卫吹响了号角”，据普利斯曼·X回忆，居民夜里都住在内屋卧室；一开始，外面的风很微弱，接着风渐渐变大，把香柏的枝杈吹到了草地上，于是女作者开始了中世纪式的描述：“旗面随着声音而展开，扬起它守卫的翅膀，猫头鹰受到惊吓后在常春藤丛中用翅膀拍打着她；而苍天正透过它的‘阿尔格斯之眼’^[20]俯瞰着这个世界□

掌管无声旋律的神。

噢，听吧！守卫塔的钟敲了两声，楼下回荡着报时人‘凌晨两点’的回音。”

《谜团》中的故事就是如此混搭，就像我们在观赏一幅完全源自小朋友想象力的画：右边画着一处时髦的别墅，中间却是两个穿着盔甲的骑士在搏斗，而左边竟然画着一只咧着嘴的老虎在丛林中趴着，这些没有联系的事物被混在了一起仅仅是因为作者觉得它们各自很有特色，或者真正的原因是她在其他的画中见过这些场景，所以全部拿来据为己用。

然而，这种做作的中世纪写作风格，比起女作家的神谕体写作而言，也根本不算什么。她的神谕体内容谈论“本我”^[21]“主观”“客观”，并且明确地划定了基督教真理的边界□“右侧过量，左侧不足”，对于所有不符合这一真理的人物，作者都会用居高临下的语气介绍他们。书中通过清晰的字体变化告诉我们一位名叫茵西奎林的小姐“在这个会幕时代，功能，而非形式——作为灵魂不可避免的外在表现——微弱地吸引着她”。另一位福音派的美嘉女士，过度热衷于讲述她探访病危女性的经历，并总是高谈阔论描述她们灵魂的状况；她告诉我们，那位模范牧师“并不反对人们在表层之下，主观上想着善良，而客观上追求真实的利益”。当她说到句中的变化字体的词时，我们可以想象着她加重了音调，并且略微点了点下巴。我们在这里就不引用她别的神谕教条式段落，因为她谈及的内容太过严肃，不适宜在这里讨论。

对于《谜团》这本显然源自作者大量阅读和思考的小说而言，我们说它“愚蠢”似乎太不合适。不过，“愚蠢”这个评论的确是经过我们深思熟虑才给出的。如果我们早已认识到，接受大量的教育并不能成就一个智慧的男人，那么我们也更应该认识到，接受过一定程度的教育也不意味着是一个智慧的女性。在女性所有的愚蠢中，影响最为恶劣的形式莫过于文学，因为它固化了人们对提高女性教育水平的偏

见。当男人看到淑女们耗费光阴谈论礼帽和舞会礼服时，看到姑娘们为了爱情时而傻笑、时而神伤时，或是看到中年妇女热衷于说长道短而管不好自家孩子时，他们禁不住感叹：“上帝啊！让女孩们多读些书吧！让她们的头脑里多些有价值的东西，让她们更有事可干好吗？！”但是，当他们与一位神谕体女作家谈论几个小时，或者读了一会儿她的书之后，男人们又会这样说：“算了吧，当女人有了学识，看看她们是怎么利用这些学识的！她的知识仅仅停留在一种外在的习得，而没有被内化为自身的文化；她没有更多地思考、接触事实，从而学会谦逊、朴素地使用自己的知识；她心怀激动感受着新获取的知识，好像脑袋里装了一面镜子，时不时地看向里面沉浸在自己的‘才华’里；她形而上学的问题破坏了人们品尝松饼的胃口；她无懈可击的知识在晚宴上“挫败”了男人；她抓住舞会的机会为我们讲授物质和意识关系中的关键点。然后，再看看她写的东西！她错把模糊当深邃，将夸张的言辞看作文采，把矫揉造作等同于创造力；她在这一页还在炫耀自己的学识，眼睛却瞟向下一页，对着第三页做鬼脸，却又在第四页里歇斯底里。她肯定是读过很多伟大的男性作家的作品，以及少许伟大的女性作家的作品，但是她根本就不能分辨他们的风格和自己的风格，就像一个约克郡人分不清自己的口音和伦敦音的区别，而大言不惭正是她天生的风格。天哪！所以，一般来说，女人的资质还是像贫瘠且脆弱的土壤，经受不住什么耕种，只能生长出最微不足道的作物。”

诚然，仅根据表面观察和片面推断就得出这一结论的男人也并不是最明智的人；但我们在此不是要反驳他们的观点□我们只是指出，有很大一部分自觉标榜为知识女性代表的人确实不自觉地助推了这种观点。如果一个男人和一位真正有修养的女人交谈过，真正有修养是指那种真正吸收了学识而不是被学识所淹没的女人，那么他就不会得出以上观点了。一个真正有修养的女人，和真正有修养的男人一样，能更加公正地认识自身和自己的观点，她朴素地展示自己的学识，且不让别人感到冒犯。她不会拿知识当垫脚的高台，扬扬自得地以为站在这里便可以一览人类和事物的全貌；但她会把知识当作一个观察点，由此可对自己形成正确的评价。她不会动不动就口喷诗句或引证西塞罗，这种沉默并不是担心男性的嫉妒而做出的牺牲，相反，她认为这种展现自己记忆力和拉丁语的方式并无意义也不甚优雅。她写书不是为了哲学家困惑，或许正因为她能写出让哲学家感到愉悦的书，在谈话中，她是最不难缠的对象，因为她了解你，而又不强加给你你并不了解她的印象。她不是在教化你，而是在给你赞同□这才是有教养的最高境界。

比起小众的神谕体小说（被少数高教会派 [22] 和超验基督徒推崇），还有一种数量比较庞大的愚蠢小说我们叫作“白色圣领体” [23]

，之所以叫这个名字，因为牧师脖子上佩戴的白色硬领能展示出福音派 [24] 的思想氛围和虔诚基调。这类小说就像是页数更多的宗教宣传册，为低教会派年轻女士提供的有蜜饯风味的药品；流行小说的福音派替代，就如人们把五月集会当作是歌剧的替代。我们认为，即使是贵格教派 [25] 的小朋友，在童年时也会沉迷于玩具娃娃，不过他们玩的娃娃穿的不是俗气的亮片薄纱裙，而是身着褐色长袍，头戴煤斗形的软帽。出于同样的原因，我们也认为爱情故事对于任何一位年轻女子而言都是不可或缺的，除非这位女子来自婚姻内也没有任何性交的基督教协基会。因此，福音派的年轻女士们拥有福音派爱情故事，这样的爱情经过各种磨难之后，因为重生和赎罪而变得神圣起来。这种小说不同于神谕体小说，就像低教会派女教徒不同于高教会派女教徒一样：她们不那么傲慢，却更加无知，句法更多错误，故事更加通俗。

福音派文学的主角一般都是年轻的牧师，从中产阶级的观点来看，牧师衣服上的亚麻带对年轻女士具有双重的吸引力，就如同一位军人的肩章在他的上级和下属心中激起的两种感受的混合。这类福音派小说的男主角无一例外地都是一个忧国忧民的年轻牧师，市井的老妇们对他可能是不屑一顾，但是她们年轻的女儿们“却再也不能忘怀他的布道”，轻易就被他获取芳心；温柔的一瞥总发生在讲道坛的阶梯上，而不是在话剧包厢里；二人间的亲密交谈时常引用圣经，而不是文学类诗集；他对女主角感情的怀疑常常还发展为对她灵魂的担忧。这位牧师的背景总是很好，要么是出身于上流社会，要么家庭富裕、衣着得体□其实，福音派小说也具备其他类别小说的愚蠢之处，作者在前一页还在跟你讲赎罪，下一页又开始描写贵族的礼仪和他们的高谈阔论了。作者所描绘的上流社会只不过是她的福音派想象力的奇怪彰显罢了；但是在众多“白色圣领”小说类别中有一点是值得称赞的真实□万年不变的男主角，传福音的年轻牧师，通常是极为枯燥乏味的。

最近刚巧有一本这种类型的小说面世：《古老的灰教堂》（*Old Grey Church*）。这本书完全平淡无味；在她笔下，每一个对象都被以同样的笔墨，平淡地描述；我们毫无头绪她的这些经验到底是来自生命的哪一个年龄阶段，但是，从她俗气的风格特点来看，她交往的人群主要还是那些行为举止没有被传统所蹂躏规训的男男女女，这能成为她写作小说的一大优势，但她也并没有成功地将它发挥出来。而对于福音派作家而言，如果她都仅仅只关注着权贵阶层，讲述着他们的故事，这一点则显得更加不可原谅。真正的福音派故事就应当存在于中低产阶级，这个阶层中存在着很多优质的素材，前提是你得有一双善于发现的眼睛并且能用文字重现这些剧情。而福音派的观点不正是要更多地关注世界上的弱势群体吗？为什么我们的福音派女作家就

不能在这些大多数普通人的故事中展现她们的宗教观点呢？这些“大多数”普通人没钱买马车，“更别说是镶黄铜的轻便型双轮马车了”，甚至在家吃饭的时候连银制的刀叉都用不起，而且女作家们蹩脚的英语在他们看来却是极其通顺的。我们为什么不能描绘一下英国工人阶层的宗教生活，就像斯托夫人描绘的黑人宗教生活那样，一定也会很有意思。然而，事实上是，这些虔敬的女作家却还是拿一些虚伪的故事恶心我们，这些故事令我们想到刚刚皈依的世俗妇女：虽然她还是那么喜欢晚宴，但是她不再宴请花花公子而是邀请牧师；她虽仍旧沉迷于服饰，但她挑选颜色和图案的品位却变得严肃和清醒；她的言语依旧琐碎，但琐碎的言论中却充斥着福音而不是小道传闻。在《古老的灰教堂》一书中，我们同样能看到与流行小说一致的滑稽片段，各种品性不端却魅力无边的准男爵也是不会缺席的。有必要引用小说中的一段话来证明，这种出身高贵的人与斯桂尔斯小姐是相配的。这类谈话中充斥着大量字体上的变化和显而易见的暗讽。在一个夜晚，年轻的尤斯塔斯牧师为了能和勒欣顿小姐单独谈话，于是带着她去参观罗马斗兽场遗址。准男爵对此很嫉妒，于是就有了以下这段对勒欣顿的气话：

毫无疑问，勒欣顿和他在一起是十分安全的，因为他有尤斯塔斯教皇一世般的神圣指引。

他会给勒欣顿小姐说教，告诉她很多年前，就在这里，在罗马斗兽场，邪恶的异教徒放出凶猛的野兽 袭击我们的门徒保罗——噢，不！顺便说一句，我觉得我错了，那并不是门徒保罗，也并不是在罗马斗兽场。但是内容的真假没关系，他依旧可以布道，从这些离谱的故事讲到那些堕落的异教徒，描述他们不恰当的行为，并且以这样的训词结尾：“醒来吧！不要和他们同流合污”——而且我确定，勒欣顿小姐，你十分虔诚地遵守了当晚的禁令，因为我们自从到达聚会就没有看见你。可是，大家都公认今晚是个快乐且有趣的聚会，而且我们都十分感激格雷先生关于举办这个聚会的提议，既然他是如此重要的一位活动向导，我希望他可以想出其他同样令所有人 都愉快的事情来。

这种口水话以及这种口水叙述就像一幅糟糕的画，什么都没呈现出来，也没能暗示作者的用意。但是毫无疑问的是我们和蔼可亲的女作者认为这是一本极具教育意义的小说，虔诚的基督徒妈妈肯定会把这本书塞到她们女儿的手中。但一切都只是相对的，我们可能会遇到这样的美国素食者，他们平常只吃干粮，如果他们想要刺激下胃口，便会想法子找点“湿粮”来刺激刺激。所以，我们权可以把《古老的灰教堂》看作福音派小说圈子里口味独特的一味菜品，或许有的人读起来还是会觉得富有趣味和冲击力呢。

然而，可能最不具有可读性的蠢故事要数“现代仿古类” [26] 小说了。这类小说给读者讲述雅尼和佯庇 [27] 的家庭生活、亚述王西拿基立 [28] 的个人感情经历或是银匠迪米特里厄斯的内心挣扎和最终皈依。其实别的大多数蠢故事至少能够博得读者一笑，但是现代仿古类简直就是给人完全呆板和沉重的感觉，其沉闷的愚昧让人禁不住呻吟。文学女性们常常自顾自地揽下一桩仅能由世界上最杰出的天才完成的任务，这无疑是对她们不自量力的最好证明。重现过去最好的办法只能是尽可能地模仿接近——而通过这种方式，我们也或多或少地把时代精神注入到了古典形式中□

时代精神是什么？

那就是做自我精神的主宰，

由此映射出的时代精神 [29]。

我们承认有些天才对过去任何一个时期都了如指掌，他们可以通过丰富的想象力弥补“人类历史之声”里缺失的音符，并且将这些碎片重构成一个整体，从而把久远的过去呈现在欣赏能力贫乏的我们面前。这种天才的想象力十分稀有，因为它不仅要求有准确和翔实知识，而且需要极其鲜活的创造力。然而，现代仿古类女性作家总有一些适得其反的写作技巧来暴露她们平庸的资质：她们借用古人的名字，把多愁善感用在罗马修女和埃及公主身上，并且借用大量犹太主教和希腊哲学家之口说出她们自己的修辞论证。这种极度愚昧的小说最近有《亚多尼雅：犹太人驱逐史》（*Adonijah, a Tale of the Jewish Dispersion*，后文简称《亚多尼雅》），它和其他小说组成了一系列“结合了品味、幽默和合理原则”的故事。我们猜想《亚多尼雅》展现的是合理的原则，而品味和幽默可能只在其余几本中得以体现。小说的封面上说此书故事的情节“非同寻常地有趣”，而且前言结尾这样写道：“如果你对被驱逐的以色列人和朱迪亚人感兴趣，本书会向你提供相关重大历史事件的信息并带来别样的阅读体验。”既然书所谓的“重大历史事件”并未详细说明，因此有很多深奥的意义我们根本读不懂；然而要说被驱逐的以色列人和朱迪亚人这段历史，任何一个爱读书的学生丫头知道的都比这本小说中提供的信息要多。至于《亚多尼雅》中的爱情故事可以算是最低能的了，然而我们假定它尚且具有一定的教育意义，一是因为小说的男主角是个犹太俘虏，女主角是个罗马修女，他俩以及他们的朋友在经过“促进犹太人改变信仰协会”最简单、最快速的感化之后都皈依了基督教；二是因为作者为了让小说看起来比较复古，于是并不是用普通语来写，而采用了夸张的书面语言，例如“尼罗大帝毋庸置疑拥有天下最杰出的头脑”“这一贵族气数将尽”“他忠贞不渝的床第伴侣”“啊！对维斯塔灶神起誓！”“罗马

人，尔等听着！”等。本册书的封面上有众多名人推荐和介绍，有一句来自辛克莱小姐□“理性、智慧、虔诚的人都会坦坦荡荡地选择读这本充满想象力的小说”，据此读者可以愉快地推理，无论是多贝尼医生、米勒先生还是莫里斯先生，都是公开地阅读《亚多尼雅》，而不是将其偷偷地藏沙发垫子底下或者在桌子下断断续续地读。

俗语说：“如果自己的脑袋都是黄油做的，就别去当面包师。”变通一下也可以说，如果没有准备好接受后果，女士们就不要投身于写作事业。我们意识到，我们的评论与别的评论者的语气完全不同。那些评论者常年怀着相似的感情，就像一位月嫂一样，对着一位又一位女性小说家说我们对你的作品“欣然致敬”。我们同样也意识到，我们所批评的那些女作家已经习惯了别人对她们的夸奖：小说的措辞十分考究，描写的生活十分生动，人物性格刻画突出，风格令人着迷，而且人物的精神高尚。但是如果她们怨恨我们直白的言论，我们则建议这些女作家应该好好审视一下她们的称颂者对其他作家吝啬的表扬和吹毛求疵的批评，因为这些作家的作品，正是在不久的将来可能成为经典的那一部分。一位女性作家的作品一旦受到了适度的赞扬和严厉的批评，则证明她的天赋或是影响力得到了认可。若是用一支温度计来度量女性的才华，那么，如果这位女作家的才华本身为零，那么媒体夸奖她作品的热度可能达到沸点；若是她的才华算得上平庸，外界的称赞则能达到酷暑的温度；但倘若是她才华横溢，外界的评价热情却会降到冰点。哈丽雅特·马蒂诺 [30]、柯勒·贝尔 [31] 以及加斯克尔夫人和男性一样，得到了骑士般的待遇。如果哪个评论家真正承认女性作者在文学中的地位，那么从原则上来说，他一定得是个中立者，并且不对文学女性的作品有特殊偏好。因为如果你曾大量且不带偏见地阅读过女性所著的文学作品，你就会发现这些作品中最大的缺陷不仅仅是智性上的不足，更是一种与文学造诣息息相关的道德品质的缺失□女性作者常常容易忽略耐心刻苦伏案写作的重要性，不了解出版作品所带来的责任，难以欣赏写作艺术的神圣性。在女性大部分的著作中，由于缺乏高标准的约束而存在着大量愚昧的拼接或是拙劣的模仿，其实一丁点的自我批评就能使其原形毕露；但是，就好像听歌的人若不能正确给出评价，唱歌的人就会跑调一样；倘若听歌的人有那么一些音乐细胞，就会让唱歌的人闭上嘴。单纯地想让文字变成出版物的虚荣心似乎鼓舞了很多女性，她们错误地认为只要会写作就好像高人一等了，可是写出来的作品却充满智力和道德的退化，毫无用处，她们就是没有这一点自知之明。在这样的前提下，我们认为女性的平均智力被大部分女性文学作品所错误地代表了；极少数写作水平很高的女作家远远超出普通水平，当然，还有多数女作家的写作能力远远低于平均水平。因此，严厉的书评肩负着一项十分具有骑士精神的任务，即剥夺女性作者的虚假威望，制止她们具有迷惑性的吸引力，并且劝阻那些资质平庸的女性□就不要写小说了□这是她们作

为女性对文坛能做的唯一贡献了。

女性不经任何特殊资格证明就成为作家，其根源在于社会上的其他职业长期将女性拒之门外。看来，社会真是个十恶不赦的存在，小到有毒的咸菜，大到糟糕的文学，社会都应当对这些有害身体的物品负责。然而，社会，就像“物质”、女王陛下的政府或者其他崇高的抽象概念一样褒贬参半。如果有一个女性是为了生计而写作，那么必定有三个女性是为了名利而写作；而为了生计工作又是如此圣洁，让所有烂俗的女性小说显得与它格格不入。虽然俗语说“一切劳动必有收益”，但是我们认为女性作家的这些蠢故事并非劳动的成果，而只是一种庸庸碌碌的游手好闲。

幸运的是，我们并不需要去论证、去证明在小说这个领域，女性就不如男性。我们可以轻而易举地列出一长串已去世和健在的女性小说家名字，她们不仅仅写作优秀的小说，有的作品还能被认为是顶级的，这些作品也具有女性小说宝贵的特征，区别男性的天性和阅历。即使没有受到完整的教育，女性仍然不会被挡在写小说的门外，而其他艺术形式则没有如此简单的入门原则。就好像在任何形态下都十分美丽的水晶石，小说能以多种方式呈现，而仍然保持其魅力，只要我们在写作小说时诚恳地观察，保持幽默及热情。可是，正是因为写小说的门槛太低，才使得很多能力不够的女性也加入了写作的队伍。女性若是琴技不佳，则很难蒙混过关，假装自己富有音乐才华，因为在弹奏的过程中她需要克服实际的困难，而这也让她成了一个合格的演奏家。在一定程度上，任何一种讲求绝对技巧的艺术，都会自动抵制能力不足引发的愚蠢行为。然而，在小说写作中，即使你能力不够，也没有什么外在的条件来约束你，也不会阻碍你把愚昧的能力当作写作天赋。于是我们一次又一次地见证了拉封丹寓言中驴子的故事：它将鼻孔对准长笛，发现竟然奏出了声音，于是它激动地大叫：“我！我能吹笛子了！”在最后，我们把这个寓言故事谨献给那些想加入“写蠢故事的女作家”行列的女性读者，你们还是好自为之吧。

（石伟东、孙平华 译）

[7] 《女作家写的蠢故事》是艾略特于1856年写给《威斯敏斯特评论》（*Westminster Review*）的一篇论文。

[8] 女帽类小说（mind-and-millinery species），作者借用英国女士们十分喜爱的帽子，暗讽女作家的作品虽然样式纷繁、精巧别致，但基本上虚有其表、华而不实。

[9] 用希伯来文和希腊文写的《圣经》。

[10] 奥西恩风格（Ossianic fashion）是指十分夸张的口吻，类似现在的琼瑶体。

[11] 原文为法语。

[12] 原文为法语。

[13] 阿尔比恩（Albion），英格兰或大不列颠的雅称。

[14] 斯科舍（Scotia），苏格兰的名字来源于拉丁语Scotia。

[15] 皮由兹运动（Puseyism），又称牛津运动，或书册派运动，19世纪中期由英国牛津大学部分教授发动的宗教复兴运动。该运动主张恢复教会昔日的权威和早期的传统，保留罗马天主教的礼仪。运动领导者纽曼、凯布勒、皮由兹等人发表了一系列书册或论文，为这些主张做了理论说明或论证。

[16] 原文为法语。

[17] 约翰·卡明，苏格兰教会牧师，曾在伦敦考文特花园的教堂讲经，本文作者乔治·艾略特曾反对过他推翻天主教的思想。

[18] 罗伯特·欧文（Robert Owen，1771-1858），英国的空想社会主义者、企业家、慈善家。代表作品有《新社会观》《新道德世界书》。

[19] 原文为法语。

[20] 阿尔格斯之眼（Argus eyes）。阿尔格斯是希腊神话中的百眼巨人。

[21] 原文为德语。

[22] 高教会派（High Churchmen），基督教新教圣公会派别之一。专指英格兰教会和英国国教会中的信徒，追随皮由兹运动。与“低教会派”对立。

[23] 白色圣领体（white neck-cloth），源自牧师的穿着，牧师一般穿黑色长袍，脖子上戴着白色硬领，习惯上被称作罗马领，牧师在不穿长衫的时候也会把罗马领戴在普通的衬衫上，白色的罗马领就成了他们身份的标签。

[24] 福音派（Evangelical），这一词始于16世纪，当时的宗教改革者以此名称呼表明反对罗马天主教的立场，凡接受基督教新教信仰的人都被称为福音派。福音派重视《圣经》权威和学术研究，较罗马天主教更注重直接与上帝建立信约而不通过耶稣以外的任何人作中保，因此更加恪守传统教义。

[25] 贵格会（Quaker），基督教新教的一个教派，又称教友派

或者公谊会。该派成立于17世纪，创始人为乔治·福克斯，因一名早期领袖的号诫“听到上帝的话而发抖”而得名Quaker，中文意译为“震颤者”（tremble），音译贵格会。该派反对任何形式的战争和暴力，不尊敬任何人也不要求别人尊敬自己，不起誓，主张任何人之间要像兄弟一样，主张和平主义和宗教自由。

[26] 现代仿古类小说的作者一般是胡乱设定某个历史场景作为故事背景，然后完全不考据，便将自己想写的东西套进该历史时代。

[27] 雅尼和佯庇（Jannes and Jambres），埃及国的术士，是法老用来与摩西斗法的。

[28] 西拿基立（Sennacherib），古亚述国的国王，公元前704年至前681年在位。

[29] 出自歌德的《浮士德》。原文为德语。

[30] 英国社会理论家，被视为第一位女性社会学家。

[31] 夏洛蒂·勃朗特在发表《简·爱》的时候所用的笔名。

‘Why did she
stand before me
with the candle
in her hand,
with her cruel
contemptuous
eyes fixed on me,
and the glittering
serpent, like a
familiar demon,
on her breast?’

THE LIFTED VEIL

Chapter 1

The time of my end approaches. I have lately been subject to attacks of *angina pectoris* ; and in the ordinary course of things, my physician tells me, I may fairly hope that my life will not be protracted many months. Unless, then, I am cursed with an exceptional physical constitution, as I am cursed with an exceptional mental character, I shall not much longer groan under the wearisome burthen of this earthly existence. If it were to be otherwise – if I were to live on to the age most men desire and provide for – I should for once have known whether the miseries of delusive expectation can outweigh the miseries of true prevision. For I foresee when I shall die, and everything that will happen in my last moments.

Just a month from this day, on the 20th of September 1850, I shall be sitting in this chair, in this study, at ten o'clock at night, longing to die, weary of incessant insight and foresight, without delusions and without hope. Just as I am watching a tongue of blue flame rising in the fire, and my lamp is burning low, the horrible contraction will begin at my chest. I shall only have time to reach the bell, and pull it violently, before the sense of suffocation will come. No one will answer my bell. I know why. My two servants are lovers, and will have quarrelled. My housekeeper will have rushed out of the house in a fury, two hours before, hoping that Perry will believe she has gone to drown herself. Perry is alarmed at last, and is gone out after her. The little scullery- maid is asleep on a bench: she never answers the bell; it does not wake her. The sense of suffocation increases: my lamp goes out with a horrible stench: I make a great effort, and snatch at the bell again. I long for life, and there is no help. I thirsted for the unknown: the thirst is gone. O God, let me stay with the known, and be weary of it: I am content. Agony of pain and suffocation – and all the while the earth, the fields, the pebbly brook at the bottom of the rookery, the fresh scent after the rain, the light of the morning through my chamber-

window, the warmth of the hearth after the frosty air – will darkness close over them for ever?

Darkness – darkness – no pain – nothing but darkness: but I am passing on and on through the darkness: my thought stays in the darkness, but always with a sense of moving onward . . . Before that time comes, I wish to use my last hours of ease and strength in telling the strange story of my experience. I have never fully unbosomed myself to any human being; I have never been encouraged to trust much in the sympathy of my fellow- men. But we have all a chance of meeting with some pity, some tenderness, some charity, when we are dead: it is the living only who indulgence and reverence are held off, like the rain by the hard east wind. While the heart beats, bruise it – it is your only opportunity; while the eye can still turn towards you with moist timid entreaty, freeze it with an icy unanswering gaze; while the ear, that delicate messenger to the inmost sanctuary of the soul, can still take in the tones of kindness, put it off with hard civility, or sneering compliment, or envious affectation of indifference; while the creative brain can still throb with the sense of injustice, with the yearning for brotherly recognition – make haste – oppress it with your illconsidered judgments, your trivial comparisons, your careless misrepresentations. The heart will by- and- by be still – *ubi sæva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit* ; [32] the eye will cease to entreat; the ear will be deaf; the brain will have ceased from all wants as well as from all work. Then your charitable speeches may find vent; then you may remember and pity the toil and the struggle and the failure; then you may give due honour to the work achieved; then you may find extenuation for errors, and may consent to bury them.

That is a trivial schoolboy text; why do I dwell on it? It has little reference to me, for I shall leave no works behind me for men to honour. I have no near relatives who will make up, by weeping over my grave, for the wounds they inflicted on me when I was among them. It is only the story of my life that will perhaps win a little more sympathy from strangers when I am dead, than I ever believed it would obtain from my friends while I was living.

My childhood perhaps seems happier to me than it really was, by contrast with all the after- years. For then the curtain of the future was as impenetrable to me as to other children: I had all

their delight in the present hour, their sweet indefinite hopes for the morrow; and I had a tender mother: even now, after the dreary lapse of long years, a slight trace of sensation accompanies the remembrance of her caress as she held me on her knee – her arms round my little body, her cheek pressed on mine. I had a complaint of the eyes that made me blind for a little while, and she kept me on her knee from morning till night. That unequalled love soon vanished out of my life, and even to my childish consciousness it was as if that life had become more chill. I rode my little white pony with the groom by my side as before, but there were no loving eyes looking at me as I mounted, no glad arms opened to me when I came back. Perhaps I missed my mother's love more than most children of seven or eight would have done, to whom the other pleasures of life remained as before; for I was certainly a very sensitive child. I remember still the mingled trepidation and delicious excitement with which I was affected by the tramping of the horses on the pavement in the echoing stables, by the loud resonance of the grooms' voices, by the booming bark of the dogs as my father's carriage thundered under the archway of the courtyard, by the din of the gong as it gave notice of luncheon and dinner. The measured tramp of soldiery which I sometimes heard – for my father's house lay near a county town where there were large barracks – made me sob and tremble; and yet when they were gone past, I longed for them to come back again.

I fancy my father thought me an odd child, and had little fondness for me; though he was very careful in fulfilling what he regarded as a parent's duties. But he was already past the middle of life, and I was not his only son. My mother had been his second wife, and he was five- and- forty when he married her. He was a firm, unbending, intensely orderly man, in root and stem a banker, but with a flourishing graft of the active landholder, aspiring to county influence: one of those people who are always like themselves from day to day, who are uninfluenced by the weather, and neither know melancholy nor high spirits. I held him in great awe, and appeared more timid and sensitive in his presence than at other times; a circumstance which, perhaps, helped to confirm him in the intention to educate me on a different plan from the prescriptive one with which he had complied in the case of my elder brother, already a tall youth at Eton. My brother was to be his representative and successor; he must go to Eton and Oxford, for

the sake of making connections, of course: my father was not a man to underrate the bearing of Latin satirists or Greek dramatists on the attainment of an aristocratic position. But, intrinsically, he had slight esteem for 'those dead but sceptred spirits;' having qualified himself for forming an independent opinion by reading Potter's 'Æschylus,' and dipping into Francis's 'Horace.' To this negative view he added a positive one, derived, from a recent connection with mining speculations; namely, that a scientific education was the really useful training for a younger son. Moreover, it was clear that a shy, sensitive boy like me was not fit to encounter the rough experience of a public school. Mr Letherall had said so very decidedly. Mr Letherall was a large man in spectacles, who one day took my small head between his large hands, and pressed it here and there in an exploratory, suspicious manner – then placed each of his great thumbs on my temples, and pushed me a little way from him, and stared at me with glittering spectacles. The contemplation appeared to displease him, for he frowned sternly, and said to my father, drawing his thumbs across my eyebrows –

'The deficiency is there, sir – there; and here,' he added, touching the upper sides of my head, 'here is the excess. That must be brought out, sir, and this must be laid to sleep.'

I was in a state of tremor, partly at the vague idea that I was the object of reprobation, partly in the agitation of my first hatred – hatred of this big, spectacled man, who pulled my head about as if he wanted to buy and cheapen it.

I am not aware how much Mr Letherall had to do with the system afterwards adopted towards me, but it was presently clear that private tutors, natural history, science, and the modern languages, were the appliances by which the defects of my organisation were to be remedied. I was very stupid about machines, so I was to be greatly occupied with them; I had no memory for classification, so it was particularly necessary that I should study systematic zoology and botany; I was hungry for human deeds and human emotions, so I was to be plentifully crammed with the mechanical powers, the elementary bodies, and the phenomena of electricity and magnetism. A better-constituted boy would certainly have profited under my intelligent tutors, with their scientific apparatus; and would, doubtless, have found the phenomena of electricity and magnetism as fascinating as I was,

every Thursday, assured they were. As it was, I could have paired off, for ignorance of whatever was taught me, with the worst Latin scholar that was ever turned out of a classical academy. I read Plutarch, and Shakspeare, and Don Quixote by the sly, and supplied myself in that way with wandering thoughts, while my tutor was assuring me that 'an improved man, as distinguished from an ignorant one, was a man who knew the reason why water ran down- hill.' I had no desire to be this improved man; I was glad of the running water; I could watch it and listen to it gurgling among the pebbles, and bathing the bright green water- plants, by the hour together. I did not want to know *why* it ran; I had perfect confidence that there were good reasons for what was so very beautiful.

There is no need to dwell on this part of my life. I have said enough to indicate that my nature was of the sensitive, unpractical order, and that it grew up in an uncongenial medium, which could never foster it into happy, healthy development. When I was sixteen I was sent to Geneva to complete my course of education; and the change was a very happy one to me, for the first sight of the Alps, with the setting sun on them, as we descended the Jura, seemed to me like an entrance into heaven; and the three years of my life there were spent in a perpetual sense of exaltation, as if from a draught of delicious wine, at the presence of Nature in all her awful loveliness. You will think, perhaps, that I must have been a poet, from this early sensibility to Nature. But my lot was not so happy as that. A poet pours forth his song and believes in the listening ear and answering soul, to which his song will be floated sooner or later. But the poet's sensibility without his voice – the poet's sensibility that finds no vent but in silent tears on the sunny bank, when the noonday light sparkles on the water, or in an inward shudder at the sound of harsh human tones, the sight of a cold human eye – this dumb passion brings with it a fatal solitude of soul in the society of one's fellow- men. My least solitary moments were those in which I pushed off in my boat, at evening, towards the centre of the lake; it seemed to me that the sky, and the glowing mountain- tops, and the wide blue water, surrounded me with a cherishing love such as no human face had shed on me since my mother's love had vanished out of my life. I used to do as Jean Jacques did – lie down in my boat and let it glide where it would, while I looked up at the departing glow leaving one mountain- top

after the other, as if the prophet's chariot of fire were passing over them on its way to the home of light. Then, when the white summits were all sad and corpse-like, I had to push homeward, for I was under careful surveillance, and was allowed no late wanderings. This disposition of mine was not favourable to the formation of intimate friendships among the numerous youths of my own age who are always to be found studying at Geneva. Yet I made *one* such friendship; and, singularly enough, it was with a youth whose intellectual tendencies were the very reverse of my own. I shall call him Charles Meunier; his real surname – an English one, for he was of English extraction – having since become celebrated. He was an orphan, who lived on a miserable pittance while he pursued the medical studies for which he had a special genius. Strange! that with my vague mind, susceptible and unobservant, hating inquiry and given up to contemplation, I should have been drawn towards a youth whose strongest passion was science. But the bond was not an intellectual one; it came from a source that can happily blend the stupid with the brilliant, the dreamy with the practical: it came from community of feeling. Charles was poor and ugly, derided by Genevese *gamins*, and not acceptable in drawing-rooms. I saw that he was isolated, as I was, though from a different cause, and, stimulated by a sympathetic resentment, I made timid advances towards him. It is enough to say that there sprang up as much comradeship between us as our different habits would allow; and in Charles's rare holidays we went up the Salève together, or took the boat to Vevay, while I listened dreamily to the monologues in which he unfolded his bold conceptions of future experiment and discovery. I mingled them confusedly in my thought with glimpses of blue water and delicate floating cloud, with the notes of birds and the distant glitter of the glacier. He knew quite well that my mind was half absent, yet he liked to talk to me in this way; for don't we talk of our hopes and our projects even to dogs and birds, when they love us? I have mentioned this one friendship because of its connection with a strange and terrible scene which I shall have to narrate in my subsequent life.

This happier life at Geneva was put an end to by a severe illness, which is partly a blank to me, partly a time of dimly-remembered suffering, with the presence of my father by my bed from time to time. Then came the languid monotony of

convalescence, the days gradually breaking into variety and distinctness as my strength enabled me to take longer and longer drives. On one of these more vividly remembered days, my father said to me, as he sat beside my sofa –

‘When you are quite well enough to travel, Latimer, I shall take you home with me. The journey will amuse you and do you good, for I shall go through the Tyrol and Austria, and you will see many new places. Our neighbours, the Filmores, are come; Alfred will join us at Basle, and we shall all go together to Vienna, and back by Prague’ . . .

My father was called away before he had finished his sentence, and he left my mind resting on the word *Prague*, with a strange sense that a new and wondrous scene was breaking upon me: a city under the broad sunshine, that seemed to me as if it were the summer sunshine of a long- past century arrested in its course – unrefreshed for ages by the dews of night, or the rushing rain-cloud; scorching the dusty, weary, time- eaten grandeur of a people doomed to live on in the stale repetition of memories, like deposed and superannuated kings in their regal gold- inwoven tatters. The city looked so thirsty that the broad river seemed to me a sheet of metal; and the blackened statues, as I passed under their blank gaze, along the unending bridge, with their ancient garments and their saintly crowns, seemed to me the real inhabitants and owners of this place, while the busy, trivial men and women, hurrying to and fro, were a swarm of ephemeral visitants infesting it for a day. It is such grim, stony beings as these, I thought, who are the fathers of ancient faded children, in those tanned time- fretted dwellings that crowd the steep before me; who pay their court in the worn and crumbling pomp of the palace which stretches its monotonous length on the height; who worship wearily in the stifling air of the churches, urged by no fear or hope, but compelled by their doom to be ever old and undying, to live on in the rigidity of habit, as they live on in perpetual mid- day, without the repose of night or the new birth of morning.

A stunning clang of metal suddenly thrilled through me, and I became conscious of the objects in my room again: one of the fire-irons had fallen as Pierre opened the door to bring me my draught. My heart was palpitating violently, and I begged Pierre to leave my draught beside me; I would take it presently.

As soon as I was alone again, I began to ask myself whether I had been sleeping. Was this a dream – this wonderfully distinct vision – minute in its distinctness down to a patch of rainbow light on the pavement, transmitted through a coloured lamp in the shape of a star – of a strange city, quite unfamiliar to my imagination? I had seen no picture of Prague: it lay in my mind as a mere name, with vaguely- remembered historical associations – ill- defined memories of imperial grandeur and religious wars.

Nothing of this sort had ever occurred in my dreaming experience before, for I had often been humiliated because my dreams were only saved from being utterly disjointed and commonplace by the frequent terrors of nightmare. But I could not believe that I had been asleep, for I remembered distinctly the gradual breaking- in of the vision upon me, like the new images in a dissolving view, or the growing distinctness of the landscape as the sun lifts up the veil of the morning mist. And while I was conscious of this incipient vision, I was also conscious that Pierre came to tell my father Mr Filmore was waiting for him, and that my father hurried out of the room. No, it was not a dream; was it – the thought was full of tremulous exultation – was it the poet's nature in me, hitherto only a troubled yearning sensibility, now manifesting itself suddenly as spontaneous creation? Surely it was in this way that Homer saw the plain of Troy, that Dante saw the abodes of the departed, that Milton saw the earthward flight of the Tempter. Was it that my illness had wrought some happy change in my organisation – given a firmer tension to my nerves – carried off some dull obstruction? I had often read of such effects – in works of fiction at least. Nay; in genuine biographies I had read of the subtilising or exalting influence of some diseases on the mental powers. Did not Novalis feel his inspiration intensified under the progress of consumption?

When my mind had dwelt for some time on this blissful idea, it seemed to me that I might perhaps test it by an exertion of my will. The vision had begun when my father was speaking of our going to Prague. I did not for a moment believe it was really a representation of that city; I believed – I hoped it was a picture that my newly- liberated genius had painted in fiery haste, with the colours snatched from lazy memory. Suppose I were to fix my mind on some other place – Venice, for example, which was far more

familiar to my imagination than Prague: perhaps the same sort of result would follow. I concentrated my thoughts on Venice; I stimulated my imagination with poetic memories, and strove to feel myself present in Venice, as I had felt myself present in Prague. But in vain. I was only colouring the Canaletto engravings that hung in my old bedroom at home; the picture was a shifting one, my mind wandering uncertainly in search of more vivid images; I could see no accident of form or shadow without conscious labour after the necessary conditions. It was all prosaic effort, not rapt passivity, such as I had experienced half an hour before. I was discouraged; but I remembered that inspiration was fitful.

For several days I was in a state of excited expectation, watching for a recurrence of my new gift. I sent my thoughts ranging over my world of knowledge, in the hope that they would find some object which would send a reawakening vibration through my slumbering genius. But no; my world remained as dim as ever, and that flash of strange light refused to come again, though I watched for it with palpitating eagerness.

My father accompanied me every day in a drive, and a gradually lengthening walk as my powers of walking increased; and one evening he had agreed to come and fetch me at twelve the next day, that we might go together to select a musical box, and other purchases rigorously demanded of a rich Englishman visiting Geneva. He was one of the most punctual of men and bankers, and I was always nervously anxious to be quite ready for him at the appointed time. But, to my surprise, at a quarter past twelve he had not appeared. I felt all the impatience of a convalescent who has nothing particular to do, and who has just taken a tonic in the prospect of immediate exercise that would carry off the stimulus.

Unable to sit still and reserve my strength, I walked up and down the room, looking out on the current of the Rhone, just where it leaves the dark- blue lake; but thinking all the while of the possible causes that could detain my father.

Suddenly I was conscious that my father was in the room, but not alone: there were two persons with him. Strange! I had heard no footstep, I had not seen the door open; but I saw my father, and at his right hand our neighbour Mrs Filmore, whom I remembered very well, though I had not seen her for five years. She was a

commonplace middle- aged woman, in silk and cashmere; but the lady on the left of my father was not more than twenty, a tall, slim, willowy figure, with luxuriant blond hair, arranged in cunning braids and folds that looked almost too massive for the slight figure and the small featured, thin- lipped face they crowned. But the face had not a girlish expression: the features were sharp, the pale grey eyes at once acute, restless, and sarcastic. They were fixed on me in half- smiling curiosity, and I felt a painful sensation as if a sharp wind were cutting me. The pale green dress, and the green leaves that seemed to form a border about her pale blond hair, made me think of a Water- Nixie, – for my mind was full of German lyrics, and this pale, fatal- eyed woman, with the green weeds, looked like a birth from some cold sedgy stream, the daughter of an aged river.

‘Well, Latimer, you thought me long,’ my father said . . .

But while the last word was in my ears, the whole group vanished, and there was nothing between me and the Chinese painted folding- screen that stood before the door. I was cold and trembling; I could only totter forward and throw myself on the sofa. This strange new power had manifested itself again . . . But was it a power? Might it not rather be a disease – a sort of intermittent delirium, concentrating my energy of brain into moments of unhealthy activity, and leaving my saner hours all the more barren? I felt a dizzy sense of unreality in what my eye rested on; I grasped the bell convulsively, like one trying to free himself from nightmare, and rang it twice. Pierre came with a look of alarm in his face.

‘Monsieur ne se trouve pas bien?’ he said, anxiously.

‘I’m tired of waiting, Pierre,’ I said, as distinctly and emphatically as I could, like a man determined to be sober in spite of wine; ‘I’m afraid something has happened to my father – he’s usually so punctual. Run to the Hôtel des Bergues and see if he is there.’

Pierre left the room at once, with a soothing ‘Bien, Monsieur;’ and I felt the better for this scene of simple, waking prose. Seeking to calm myself still further, I went into my bedroom, adjoining the *salon*, and opened a case of eau- de- Cologne; took out a bottle; went through the process of taking out the cork very neatly, and then rubbed the reviving spirit over my hands and forehead, and

under my nostrils, drawing a new delight from the scent because I had procured it by slow details of labour, and by no strange sudden madness. Already I had begun to taste something of the horror that belongs to the lot of a human being whose nature is not adjusted to simple human conditions.

Still enjoying the scent, I returned to the *salon*, but it was not unoccupied, as it had been before I left it. In front of the Chinese folding- screen there was my father, with Mrs Filmore on his right hand, and on his left— the slim blond- haired girl, with the keen face and the keen eyes fixed on me in half- smiling curiosity.

‘Well, Latimer, you thought me long,’ my father said . . .

I heard no more, felt no more, till I became conscious that I was lying with my head low on the sofa, Pierre and my father by my side. As soon as I was thoroughly revived, my father left the room, and presently returned, saying – ‘I’ve been to tell the ladies how you are, Latimer. They were waiting in the next room. We shall put off our shopping expedition to- day.’

Presently he said, ‘That young lady is Bertha Grant, Mrs Filmore’s orphan niece. Filmore has adopted her, and she lives with them, so you will have her for a neighbour when we go home – perhaps for a near relation; for there is a tenderness between her and Alfred, I suspect, and I should be gratified by the match, since Filmore means to provide for her in every way as if she were his daughter. It had not occurred to me that you knew nothing about her living with the Filmores.’

He made no further allusion to the fact of my having fainted at the moment of seeing her, and I would not for the world have told him the reason: I shrank from the idea of disclosing to any one what might be regarded as a pitiable peculiarity, most of all from betraying it to my father, who would have suspected my sanity ever after.

I do not mean to dwell with particularity on the details of my experience. I have described these two cases at length, because they had definite, clearly traceable results in my after- lot.

Shortly after this last occurrence – I think the very next day – I began to be aware of a phase in my abnormal sensibility, to which, from the languid and slight nature of my intercourse with others

since my illness, I had not been alive before. This was the obtrusion on my mind of the mental process going forward in first one person, and then another, with whom I happened to be in contact: the vagrant, frivolous ideas and emotions of some uninteresting acquaintance – Mrs Filmore, for example – would force themselves on my consciousness like an importunate, ill- played musical instrument, or the loud activity of an imprisoned insect. But this unpleasant sensibility was fitful, and left me moments of rest, when the souls of my companions were once more shut out from me, and I felt a relief such as silence brings to wearied nerves. I might have believed this importunate insight to be merely a diseased activity of the imagination, but that my prevision of incalculable words and actions proved it to have a fixed relation to the mental process in other minds. But this superadded consciousness, wearying and annoying enough when it urged on me the trivial experience of indifferent people, became an intense pain and grief when it seemed to be opening to me the souls of those who were in a close relation to me – when the rational talk, the graceful attentions, the wittily-turned phrases, and the kindly deeds, which used to make the web of their characters, were seen as if thrust asunder by a microscopic vision, that showed all the intermediate frivolities, all the suppressed egoism, all the struggling chaos of puerilities, meanness, vague capricious memories, and indolent make- shift thoughts, from which human words and deeds emerge like leaflets cover ing a fermenting heap.

At Basle we were joined by my brother Alfred, now a handsome self- confident man of six- and- twenty – a thorough contrast to my fragile, nervous, ineffectual self. I believe I was held to have a sort of half-womanish, half- ghostly beauty; for the portrait- painters, who are thick as weeds at Geneva, had often asked me to sit to them, and I had been the model of a dying minstrel in a fancy picture. But I thoroughly disliked my own *physique* , and nothing but the belief that it was a condition of poetic genius would have reconciled me to it. That brief hope was quite fled, and I saw in my face now nothing but the stamp of a morbid organisation, framed for passive suffering – too feeble for the sublime resistance of poetic production. Alfred, from whom I had been almost constantly separated, and who, in his present stage of character and appearance, came before me as a perfect stranger, was bent on being extremely friendly and brother- like to me. He

had the superficial kindness of a good- humoured, self- satisfied nature, that fears no rivalry, and has encountered no contrarities. I am not sure that my disposition was good enough for me to have been quite free from envy towards him, even if our desires had not clashed, and if I had been in the healthy human condition which admits of generous confidence and charitable construction. There must always have been an antipathy between our natures. As it was, he became in a few weeks an object of intense hatred to me; and when he entered the room, still more when he spoke, it was as if a sensation of grating metal had set my teeth on edge. My diseased consciousness was more intensely and continually occupied with his thoughts and emotions, than with those of any other person who came in my way. I was perpetually exasperated with the petty promptings of his conceit and his love of patronage, with his self-complacent belief in Bertha Grant's passion for him, with his half-pitying contempt for me – seen not in the ordinary indications of intonation and phrase and slight action, which an acute and suspicious mind is on the watch for, but in all their naked skinless complication.

For we were rivals, and our desires clashed, though he was not aware of it. I have said nothing yet of the effect Bertha Grant produced in me on a nearer acquaintance. That effect was chiefly determined by the fact that she made the only exception, among all the human beings about me, to my unhappy gift of insight. About Bertha I was always in a state of uncertainty: I could watch the expression of her face, and speculate on its meaning; I could ask for her opinion with the real interest of ignorance; I could listen for her words and watch for her smile with hope and fear: she had for me the fascination of an unravelled destiny. I say it was this fact that chiefly determined the strong effect she produced on me: for, in the abstract, no womanly character could seem to have less affinity for that of a shrinking, romantic, passionate youth than Bertha's. She was keen, sarcastic, unimaginative, prematurely cynical, remaining critical and unmoved in the most impressive scenes, inclined to dissect all my favourite poems, and especially contemptuous towards the German lyrics which were my pet literature at that time. To this moment I am unable to define my feeling towards her: it was not ordinary boyish admiration, for she was the very opposite, even to the colour of her hair, of the ideal woman who still remained to me the type of loveliness; and she was without that

enthusiasm for the great and good, which, even at the moment of her strongest dominion over me, I should have declared to be the highest element of character. But there is no tyranny more complete than that which a self- centred negative nature exercises over a morbidly sensitive nature perpetually craving sympathy and support. The most independent people feel the effect of a man's silence in heightening their value for his opinion – feel an additional triumph in conquering the reverence of a critic habitually captious and satirical: no wonder, then, that an enthusiastic self- distrusting youth should watch and wait before the closed secret of a sarcastic woman's face, as if it were the shrine of the doubtfully benignant deity who ruled his destiny. For a young enthusiast is unable to imagine the total negation in another mind of the emotions which are stirring his own: they may be feeble, latent, inactive, he thinks, but they are there – they may be called forth; sometimes, in moments of happy hallucination, he believes they may be there in all the greater strength because he sees no outward sign of them. And this effect, as I have intimated, was heightened to its utmost intensity in me, because Bertha was the only being who remained for me in the mysterious seclusion of soul that renders such youthful delusion possible. Doubtless there was another sort of fascination at work – that subtle physical attraction which delights in cheating our psychological predictions, and in compelling the men who paint sylphs, to fall in love with some *bonne et brave femme* , heavy- heeled and freckled.

Bertha's behaviour towards me was such as to encourage all my illusions, to heighten my boyish passion, and make me more and more dependent on her smiles. Looking back with my present wretched knowledge, I conclude that her vanity and love of power were intensely gratified by the belief that I had fainted on first seeing her purely from the strong impression her person had produced on me. The most prosaic woman likes to believe herself the object of a violent, a poetic passion; and without a grain of romance in her, Bertha had that spirit of intrigue which gave piquancy to the idea that the brother of the man she meant to marry was dying with love and jealousy for her sake. That she meant to marry my brother, was what at that time I did not believe; for though he was assiduous in his attentions to her, and I knew well enough that both he and my father had made up their minds to this result, there was not yet an understood engagement – there had

been no explicit declaration; and Bertha habitually, while she flirted with my brother, and accepted his homage in a way that implied to him a thorough recognition of its intention, made me believe, by the subtlest looks and phrases – feminine nothings which could never be quoted against her – that he was really the object of her secret ridicule; that she thought him, as I did, a coxcomb, whom she would have pleasure in disappointing. Me she openly petted in my brother's presence, as if I were too young and sickly ever to be thought of as a lover; and that was the view he took of me. But I believe she must inwardly have delighted in the tremors into which she threw me by the coaxing way in which she patted my curls, while she laughed at my quotations. Such caresses were always given in the presence of our friends; for when we were alone together, she affected a much greater distance towards me, and now and then took the opportunity, by words or slight actions, to stimulate my foolish timid hope that she really preferred me. And why should she not follow her inclination? I was not in so advantageous a position as my brother, but I had fortune, I was not a year younger than she was, and she was an heiress, who would soon be of age to decide for herself.

The fluctuations of hope and fear, confined to this one channel, made each day in her presence a delicious torment. There was one deliberate act of hers which especially helped to intoxicate me. When we were at Vienna her twentieth birthday occurred, and as she was very fond of ornaments, we all took the opportunity of the splendid jewellers' shops in that Teutonic Paris to purchase her a birthday present of jewellery. Mine, naturally, was the least expensive; it was an opal ring – the opal was my favourite stone, because it seems to blush and turn pale as if it had a soul. I told Bertha so when I gave it her, and said that it was an emblem of the poetic nature, changing with the changing light of heaven and of woman's eyes. In the evening she appeared elegantly dressed, and wearing conspicuously all the birthday presents except mine. I looked eagerly at her fingers, but saw no opal. I had no opportunity of noticing this to her during the evening; but the next day, when I found her seated near the window alone, after breakfast, I said, 'You scorn to wear my poor opal. I should have remembered that you despised poetic natures, and should have given you coral, or turquoise, or some other opaque unresponsive stone.' 'Do I despise it?' she answered, taking hold of a delicate gold chain which she

always wore round her neck and drawing out the end from her bosom with my ring hanging to it; 'it hurts me a little, I can tell you,' she said, with her usual dubious smile, 'to wear it in that secret place; and since your poetical nature is so stupid as to prefer a more public position, I shall not endure the pain any longer.'

She took off the ring from the chain and put it on her finger, smiling still, while the blood rushed to my cheeks, and I could not trust myself to say a word of entreaty that she would keep the ring where it was before.

I was completely fooled by this, and for two days shut myself up in my own room whenever Bertha was absent, that I might intoxicate myself afresh with the thought of this scene and all it implied. I should mention that during these two months – which seemed a long life to me from the novelty and intensity of the pleasures and pains I underwent – my diseased participation in other people's consciousness continued to torment me; now it was my father, and now my brother, now Mrs Filmore or her husband, and now our German courier, whose stream of thought rushed upon me like a ringing in the ears not to be got rid of, though it allowed my own impulses and ideas to continue their uninterrupted course. It was like a preternaturally heightened sense of hearing, making audible to one a roar of sound where others find perfect stillness. The weariness and disgust of this involuntary intrusion into other souls was counteracted only by my ignorance of Bertha, and my growing passion for her; a passion enormously stimulated, if not produced, by that ignorance. She was my oasis of mystery in the dreary desert of knowledge. I had never allowed my diseased condition to betray itself, or to drive me into any unusual speech or action, except once, when, in a moment of peculiar bitterness against my brother, I had forestalled some words which I knew he was going to utter – a clever observation, which he had prepared before hand. He had occasionally a slightly- affected hesitation in his speech, and when he paused an instant after the second word, my impatience and jealousy impelled me to continue the speech for him, as if it were something we had both learned by rote. He coloured and looked astonished, as well as annoyed; and the words had no sooner escaped my lips than I felt a shock of alarm lest such an anticipation of words – very far from being words of course, easy to divine – should have betrayed me as an exceptional being, a sort

of quiet energumen, whom every one, Bertha above all, would shudder at and avoid. But I magnified, as usual, the impression any word or deed of mine could produce on others; for no one gave any sign of having noticed my interruption as more than a rudeness, to be forgiven me on the score of my feeble nervous condition.

While this superadded consciousness of the actual was almost constant with me, I had never had a recurrence of that distinct prevision which I have described in relation to my first interview with Bertha; and I was waiting with eager curiosity to know whether or not my vision of Prague would prove to have been an instance of the same kind. A few days after the incident of the opal ring, we were paying one of our frequent visits to the Lichtenberg Palace. I could never look at many pictures in succession; for pictures, when they are at all powerful, affect me so strongly that one or two exhaust all my capability of contemplation. This morning I had been looking at Giorgione's picture of the cruel-eyed woman, said to be a likeness of Lucrezia Borgia. I had stood long alone before it, fascinated by the terrible reality of that cunning, relentless face, till I felt a strange poisoned sensation, as if I had long been inhaling a fatal odour, and was just beginning to be conscious of its effects. Perhaps even then I should not have moved away, if the rest of the party had not returned to this room, and announced that they were going to the Belvedere Gallery to settle a bet which had arisen between my brother and Mr Filmore about a portrait. I followed them dreamily, and was hardly alive to what occurred till they had all gone up to the gallery, leaving me below; for I refused to come within sight of another picture that day. I made my way to the Grand Terrace, since it was agreed that we should saunter in the gardens when the dispute had been decided. I had been sitting here a short space, vaguely conscious of trim gardens, with a city and green hills in the distance, when, wishing to avoid the proximity of the sentinel, I rose and walked down the broad stone steps, intending to seat myself farther on in the gardens. Just as I reached the gravel-walk, I felt an arm slipped within mine, and a light hand gently pressing my wrist. In the same instant a strange intoxicating numbness passed over me, like the continuance or climax of the sensation I was still feeling from the gaze of Lucrezia Borgia. The gardens, the summer sky, the consciousness of Bertha's arm being within mine, all vanished, and I seemed to be suddenly in darkness, out of which there gradually

broke a dim firelight, and I felt myself sitting in my father's leather chair in the library at home. I knew the fireplace – the dogs for the wood- fire – the black marble chimney- piece with the white marble medallion of the dying Cleopatra in the centre. Intense and hopeless misery was pressing on my soul; the light became stronger, for Bertha was entering with a candle in her hand – Bertha, my wife – with cruel eyes, with green jewels and green leaves on her white ball- dress; every hateful thought within her present to me . . . 'Madman, idiot! why don't you kill yourself, then?' It was a moment of hell. I saw into her pitiless soul – saw its barren worldliness, its scorching hate – and felt it clothe me round like an air I was obliged to breathe. She came with her candle and stood over me with a bitter smile of contempt; I saw the great emerald brooch on her bosom, a studded serpent with diamond eyes. I shuddered – I despised this woman with the barren soul and mean thoughts; but I felt helpless before her, as if she clutched my bleeding heart, and would clutch it till the last drop of life- blood ebbed away. She was my wife, and we hated each other. Gradually the hearth, the dim library, the candle- light disappeared – seemed to melt away into a background of light, the green serpent with the diamond eyes remaining a dark image on the retina. Then I had a sense of my eyelids quivering, and the living daylight broke in upon me; I saw gardens, and heard voices; I was seated on the steps of the Belvedere Terrace, and my friends were round me.

The tumult of mind into which I was thrown by this hideous vision made me ill for several days, and prolonged our stay at Vienna. I shuddered with horror as the scene recurred to me; and it recurred constantly, with all its minutiae, as if they had been burnt into my memory; and yet, such is the madness of the human heart under the influence of its immediate desires, I felt a wild hell-braving joy that Bertha was to be mine; for the fulfilment of my former prevision concerning her first appearance before me, left me little hope that this last hideous glimpse of the future was the mere diseased play of my own mind, and had no relation to external realities. One thing alone I looked towards as a possible means of casting doubt on my terrible conviction – the discovery that my vision of Prague had been false – and Prague was the next city on our route.

Meanwhile, I was no sooner in Bertha's society again, than I

was as completely under her sway as before. What if I saw into the heart of Bertha, the matured woman – Bertha, my wife? Bertha, the *girl*, was a fascinating secret to me still: I trembled under her touch; I felt the witchery of her presence; I yearned to be assured of her love. The fear of poison is feeble against the sense of thirst. Nay, I was just as jealous of my brother as before – just as much irritated by his small patronising ways; for my pride, my diseased sensibility, were there as they had always been, and winced as inevitably under every offence as my eye winced from an intruding mote. The future, even when brought within the compass of feeling by a vision that made me shudder, had still no more than the force of an idea, compared with the force of present emotion – of my love for Bertha, of my dislike and jealousy towards my brother.

It is an old story, that men sell themselves to the tempter, and sign a bond with their blood, because it is only to take effect at a distant day; then rush on to snatch the cup their souls thirst after with an impulse not the less savage because there is a dark shadow beside them for evermore. There is no short cut, no patent tram-road, to wisdom: after all the centuries of invention, the soul's path lies through the thorny wilderness which must be still trodden in solitude, with bleeding feet, with sobs for help, as it was trodden by them of old time.

My mind speculated eagerly on the means by which I should become my brother's successful rival, for I was still too timid, in my ignorance of Bertha's actual feeling, to venture on any step that would urge from her an avowal of it. I thought I should gain confidence even for this, if my vision of Prague proved to have been veracious; and yet, the horror of that certitude! Behind the slim girl Bertha, whose words and looks I watched for, whose touch was bliss, there stood continually that Bertha with the fuller form, the harder eyes, the more rigid mouth, – with the barren selfish soul laid bare; no longer a fascinating secret, but a measured fact, urging itself perpetually on my unwilling sight. Are you unable to give me your sympathy – you who read this? Are you unable to imagine this double consciousness at work within me, flowing on like two parallel streams which never mingle their waters and blend into a common hue? Yet you must have known something of the presentiments that spring from an insight at war with passion; and my visions were only like presentiments intensified to horror. You

have known the powerlessness of ideas before the might of impulse; and my visions, when once they had passed into memory, were mere ideas – pale shadows that beckoned in vain, while my hand was grasped by the living and the loved.

In after- days I thought with bitter regret that if I had foreseen something more or something different – if instead of that hideous vision which poisoned the passion it could not destroy, or if even along with it I could have had a foreshadowing of that moment when I looked on my brother's face for the last time, some softening influence would have been shed over my feeling towards him: pride and hatred would surely have been subdued into pity, and the record of those hidden sins would have been shortened. But this is one of the vain thoughts with which we men flatter ourselves. We try to believe that the egoism within us would have easily been melted, and that it was only the narrowness of our knowledge which hemmed in our generosity, our awe, our human piety, and hindered them from submerging our hard indifference to the sensations and emotions of our fellow. Our tenderness and self-renunciation seem strong when our egoism has had its day – when, after our mean striving for a triumph that is to be another's loss, the triumph comes suddenly, and we shudder at it, because it is held out by the chill hand of death.

Our arrival in Prague happened at night, and I was glad of this, for it seemed like a deferring of a terribly decisive moment, to be in the city for hours without seeing it. As we were not to remain long in Prague, but to go on speedily to Dresden, it was proposed that we should drive out the next morning and take a general view of the place, as well as visit some of its specially interesting spots, before the heat became oppressive – for we were in August, and the season was hot and dry. But it happened that the ladies were rather late at their morning toilet, and to my father's politely- repressed but perceptible annoyance, we were not in the carriage till the morning was far advanced. I thought with a sense of relief, as we entered the Jews' quarter, where we were to visit the old synagogue, that we should be kept in this flat, shut- up part of the city, until we should all be too tired and too warm to go farther, and so we should return without seeing more than the streets through which we had already passed. That would give me another day's suspense – suspense, the only form in which a fearful spirit knows the solace of hope. But, as

I stood under the blackened, groined arches of that old synagogue, made dimly visible by the seven thin candles in the sacred lamp, while our Jewish cicerone reached down the Book of the Law, and read to us in its ancient tongue, – I felt a shuddering impression that this strange building, with its shrunken lights, this surviving withered remnant of medieval Judaism, was of a piece with my vision. Those darkened dusty Christian saints, with their loftier arches and their larger candles, needed the consolatory scorn with which they might point to a more shrivelled death- in- life than their own.

As I expected, when we left the Jews' quarter the elders of our party wished to return to the hotel. But now, instead of rejoicing in this, as I had done beforehand, I felt a sudden overpowering impulse to go on at once to the bridge, and put an end to the suspense I had been wishing to protract. I declared, with unusual decision, that I would get out of the carriage and walk on alone; they might return without me. My father, thinking this merely a sample of my usual 'poetic nonsense,' objected that I should only do myself harm by walking in the heat; but when I persisted, he said angrily that I might follow my own absurd devices, but that Schmidt (our courier) must go with me. I assented to this, and set off with Schmidt towards the bridge. I had no sooner passed from under the archway of the grand old gate leading on to the bridge, than a trembling seized me, and I turned cold under the mid- day sun; yet I went on; I was in search of something – a small detail which I remembered with special intensity as part of my vision. There it was – the patch of rainbow light on the pavement transmitted through a lamp in the shape of a star.

Chapter 2

Before the autumn was at an end, and while the brown leaves still stood thick on the beeches in our park, my brother and Bertha were engaged to each other, and it was understood that their marriage was to take place early in the next spring. In spite of the certainty I had felt from that moment on the bridge at Prague, that Bertha would one day be my wife, my constitutional timidity and distrust had continued to benumb me, and the words in which I had sometimes premeditated a confession of my love, had died away unuttered. The same conflict had gone on within me as before – the

longing for an assurance of love from Bertha's lips, the dread lest a word of contempt and denial should fall upon me like a corrosive acid. What was the conviction of a distant necessity to me? I trembled under a present glance, I hungered after a present joy, I was clogged and chilled by a present fear. And so the days passed on: I witnessed Bertha's engagement and heard her marriage discussed as if I were under a conscious nightmare – knowing it was a dream that would vanish, but feeling stifled under the grasp of hard- clutching fingers.

When I was not in Bertha's presence – and I was with her very often, for she continued to treat me with a playful patronage that wakened no jealousy in my brother – I spent my time chiefly in wandering, in strolling, or taking long rides while the daylight lasted, and then shutting myself up with my unread books; for books had lost the power of chaining my attention. My self-consciousness was heightened to that pitch of intensity in which our own emotions take the form of a drama which urges itself imperatively on our contemplation, and we begin to weep, less under the sense of our suffering than at the thought of it. I felt a sort of pitying anguish over the pathos of my own lot: the lot of a being finely organised for pain, but with hardly any fibres that responded to pleasure – to whom the idea of future evil robbed the present of its joy, and for whom the idea of future good did not still the uneasiness of a present yearning or a present dread. I went dumbly through that stage of the poet's suffering, in which he feels the delicious pang of utterance, and makes an image of his sorrows.

I was left entirely without remonstrance concerning this dreamy wayward life: I knew my father's thought about me: 'That lad will never be good for anything in life: he may waste his years in an insignificant way on the income that falls to him: I shall not trouble myself about a career for him.'

One mild morning in the beginning of November, it happened that I was standing outside the portico patting lazy old Cæsar, a Newfoundland almost blind with age, the only dog that ever took any notice of me – for the very dogs shunned me, and fawned on the happier people about me – when the groom brought up my brother's horse which was to carry him to the hunt, and my brother himself appeared at the door, florid, broad- chested, and self-complacent, feeling what a good- natured fellow he was not to

behave insolently to us all on the strength of his great advantages.

‘Latimer, old boy,’ he said to me in a tone of compassionate cordiality, ‘what a pity it is you don’t have a run with the hounds now and then! The finest thing in the world for low spirits!’

‘Low spirits!’ I thought bitterly, as he rode away; ‘that is the sort of phrase with which coarse, narrow natures like yours think to describe experience of which you can know no more than your horse knows. It is to such as you that the good of this world falls: ready dulness, healthy selfishness, good-tempered conceit – these are the keys to happiness.’

The quick thought came, that my selfishness was even stronger than his – it was only a suffering selfishness instead of an enjoying one. But then, again, my exasperating insight into Alfred’s self-complacent soul, his freedom from all the doubts and fears, the unsatisfied yearnings, the exquisite tortures of sensitiveness, that had made the web of my life, seemed to absolve me from all bonds towards him. This man needed no pity, no love; those fine influences would have been as little felt by him as the delicate white mist is felt by the rock it caresses. There was no evil in store for *him* : if he was not to marry Bertha, it would be because he had found a lot pleasanter to himself.

Mr Filmore’s house lay not more than half a mile beyond our own gates, and whenever I knew my brother was gone in another direction, I went there for the chance of finding Bertha at home. Later on in the day I walked thither. By a rare accident she was alone, and we walked out in the grounds together, for she seldom went on foot beyond the trimly-swept gravel-walks. I remember what a beautiful sylph she looked to me as the low November sun shone on her blond hair, and she tripped along teasing me with her usual light banter, to which I listened half fondly, half moodily; it was all the sign Bertha’s mysterious inner self ever made to me. To-day perhaps the moodiness predominated, for I had not yet shaken off the access of jealous hate which my brother had raised in me by his parting patronage. Suddenly I interrupted and startled her by saying, almost fiercely, ‘Bertha, how can you love Alfred?’

She looked at me with surprise for a moment, but soon her light smile came again, and she answered sarcastically, ‘Why do you suppose I love him?’

‘How can you ask that, Bertha?’

‘What! your wisdom thinks I must love the man I’m going to marry? The most unpleasant thing in the world. I should quarrel with him; I should be jealous of him; our *ménage* would be conducted in a very ill- bred manner. A little quiet contempt contributes greatly to the elegance of life.’

‘Bertha, that is not your real feeling. Why do you delight in trying to deceive me by inventing such cynical speeches?’

‘I need never take the trouble of invention in order to deceive you, my small Tasso’ – (that was the mocking name she usually gave me). ‘The easiest way to deceive a poet is to tell him the truth.’

She was testing the validity of her epigram in a daring way, and for a moment the shadow of my vision – the Bertha whose soul was no secret to me – passed between me and the radiant girl, the playful sylph whose feelings were a fascinating mystery. I suppose I must have shuddered, or betrayed in some other way my momentary chill of horror.

‘Tasso !’ she said, seizing my wrist, and peeping round into my face, ‘are you really beginning to discern what a heartless girl I am? Why, you are not half the poet I thought you were; you are actually capable of believing the truth about me.’

The shadow passed from between us, and was no longer the object nearest to me. The girl whose light fingers grasped me, whose elfish charming face looked into mine – who, I thought, was betraying an interest in my feelings that she would not have directly avowed, – this warm- breathing presence again possessed my senses and imagination like a returning syren melody which had been overpowered for an instant by the roar of threatening waves. It was a moment as delicious to me as the waking up to a consciousness of youth after a dream of middle age. I forgot everything but my passion, and said with swimming eyes –

‘Bertha, shall you love me when we are first married? I wouldn’t mind if you really loved me only for a little while.’

Her look of astonishment, as she loosed my hand and started away from me recalled me to a sense of my strange, my criminal indiscretion.

‘Forgive me,’ I said, hurriedly, as soon as I could speak again; ‘I did not know what I was saying.’

‘Ah, Tasso’s mad fit has come on, I see,’ she answered quietly, for she had recovered herself sooner than I had. ‘Let him go home and keep his head cool. I must go in, for the sun is setting.’

I left her – full of indignation against myself. I had let slip words which, if she reflected on them, might rouse in her a suspicion of my abnormal mental condition – a suspicion which of all things I dreaded. And besides that, I was ashamed of the apparent baseness I had committed in uttering them to my brother’s betrothed wife. I wandered home slowly, entering our park through a private gate instead of by the lodges. As I approached the house, I saw a man dashing off at full speed from the stable- yard across the park. Had any accident happened at home? No; perhaps it was only one of my father’s peremptory business errands that required this headlong haste. Nevertheless I quickened my pace without any distinct motive, and was soon at the house. I will not dwell on the scene I found there. My brother was dead – had been pitched from his horse, and killed on the spot by a concussion of the brain.

I went up to the room where he lay, and where my father was seated beside him with a look of rigid despair. I had shunned my father more than any one since our return home, for the radical antipathy between our natures made my insight into his inner self a constant affliction to me. But now, as I went up to him, and stood beside him in sad silence, I felt the presence of a new element that blended us as we had never been blent before. My father had been one of the most successful men in the money- getting world: he had had no sentimental sufferings, no illness. The heaviest trouble that had befallen him was the death of his first wife. But he married my mother soon after; and I remember he seemed exactly the same, to my keen childish observation, the week after her death as before. But now, at last, a sorrow had come – the sorrow of old age, which suffers the more from the crushing of its pride and its hopes, in proportion as the pride and hope are narrow and prosaic. His son was to have been married soon – would probably have stood for the borough at the next election. That son’s existence was the best motive that could be alleged for making new purchases of land every year to round off the estate. It is a dreary thing to live on doing the same things year after year, without knowing why we do

them. Perhaps the tragedy of disappointed youth and passion is less piteous than the tragedy of disappointed age and worldliness.

As I saw into the desolation of my father's heart, I felt a movement of deep pity towards him, which was the beginning of a new affection – an affection that grew and strengthened in spite of the strange bitterness with which he regarded me in the first month or two after my brother's death. If it had not been for the softening influence of my compassion for him – the first deep compassion I had ever felt – I should have been stung by the perception that my father transferred the inheritance of an eldest son to me with a mortified sense that fate had compelled him to the unwelcome course of caring for me as an important being. It was only in spite of himself that he began to think of me with anxious regard. There is hardly any neglected child for whom death has made vacant a more favoured place, who will not understand what I mean.

Gradually, however, my new deference to his wishes, the effect of that patience which was born of my pity for him, won upon his affection, and he began to please himself with the endeavour to make me fill my brother's place as fully as my feebler personality would admit. I saw that the prospect which by- and- by presented itself of my becoming Bertha's husband was welcome to him, and he even contemplated in my case what he had not intended in my brother's – that his son and daughter- in- law should make one household with him. My softened feeling towards my father made this the happiest time I had known since childhood; – these last months in which I retained the delicious illusion of loving Bertha, of longing and doubting and hoping that she might love me. She behaved with a certain new consciousness and distance towards me after my brother's death; and I too was under a double constraint – that of delicacy towards my brother's memory, and of anxiety as to the impression my abrupt words had left on her mind. But the additional screen this mutual reserve erected between us only brought me more completely under her power: no matter how empty the adytum, so that the veil be thick enough. So absolute is our soul's need of something hidden and uncertain for the maintenance of that doubt and hope and effort which are the breath of its life, that if the whole future were laid bare to us beyond to-day, the interest of all mankind would be bent on the hours that lie between; we should pant after the uncertainties of our one morning

and our one afternoon; we should rush fiercely to the Exchange for our last possibility of speculation, of success, of disappointment; we should have a glut of political prophets foretelling a crisis or a no-crisis within the only twenty- four hours left open to prophecy. Conceive the condition of the human mind if all propositions whatsoever were self- evident except one, which was to become self- evident at the close of a summer's day, but in the meantime might be the subject of question, of hypothesis, of debate. Art and philosophy, literature and science, would fasten like bees on that one proposition which had the honey of probability in it, and be the more eager because their enjoyment would end with sunset. Our impulses, our spiritual activities, no more adjust themselves to the idea of their future nullity, than the beating of our heart, or the irritability of our muscles.

Bertha, the slim, fair- haired girl, whose present thoughts and emotions were an enigma to me amidst the fatiguing obviousness of the other minds around me, was as absorbing to me as a single unknown to- day – as a single hypothetic proposition to remain problematic till sunset; and all the cramped, hemmed- in belief and disbelief, trust and distrust, of my nature, welled out in this one narrow channel.

And she made me believe that she loved me. Without ever quitting her tone of *badinage* and playful superiority, she intoxicated me with the sense that I was necessary to her, that she was never at ease unless I was near her, submitting to her playful tyranny. It costs a woman so little effort to besot us in this way! A half-repressed word, a moment's unexpected silence, even an easy fit of petulance on our account, will serve us as hashish for a long while. Out of the subtlest web of scarcely perceptible signs, she set me weaving the fancy that she had always unconsciously loved me better than Alfred, but that, with the ignorant fluttered sensibility of a young girl, she had been imposed on by the charm that lay for her in the distinction of being admired and chosen by a man who made so brilliant a figure in the world as my brother. She satirised herself in a very graceful way for her vanity and ambition. What was it to me that I had the light of my wretched prevision on the fact that now it was I who possessed at least all but the personal part of my brother's advantages? Our sweet illusions are half of them conscious illusions, like effects of colour that we know to be

made up of tinsel, broken glass, and rags.

We were married eighteen months after Alfred's death, one cold, clear morning in April, when there came hail and sunshine both together; and Bertha, in her white silk and pale- green leaves, and the pale hues of her hair and face, looked like the spirit of the morning. My father was happier than he had thought of being again: my marriage, he felt sure, would complete the desirable modification of my character, and make me practical and worldly enough to take my place in society among sane men. For he delighted in Bertha's tact and acuteness, and felt sure she would be mistress of me, and make me what she chose: I was only twenty-one, and madly in love with her. Poor father! He kept that hope a little while after our first year of marriage, and it was not quite extinct when paralysis came and saved him from utter disappointment.

I shall hurry through the rest of my story, not dwelling so much as I have hitherto done on my inward experience. When people are well known to each other, they talk rather of what befalls them externally, leaving their feelings and sentiments to be inferred.

We lived in a round of visits for some time after our return home, giving splendid dinner- parties, and making a sensation in our neighbourhood by the new lustre of our equipage, for my father had reserved this display of his increased wealth for the period of his son's marriage; and we gave our acquaintances liberal opportunity for remarking that it was a pity I made so poor a figure as an heir and a bridegroom. The nervous fatigue of this existence, the insincerities and platitudes which I had to live through twice over – through my inner and outward sense – would have been maddening to me, if I had not had that sort of intoxicated callousness which came from the delights of a first passion. A bride and bridegroom, surrounded by all the appliances of wealth, hurried through the day by the whirl of society, filling their solitary moments with hastily- snatched caresses, are prepared for their future life together as the novice is prepared for the cloister – by experiencing its utmost contrast.

Through all these crowded excited months, Bertha's inward self remained shrouded from me, and I still read her thoughts only through the language of her lips and demeanour: I had still the

human interest of wondering whether what I did and said pleased her, of longing to hear a word of affection, of giving a delicious exaggeration of meaning to her smile. But I was conscious of a growing difference in her manner towards me; sometimes strong enough to be called haughty coldness, cutting and chilling me as the hail had done that came across the sunshine on our marriage morning; sometimes only perceptible in the dexterous avoidance of a *tête-à-tête* walk or dinner to which I had been looking forward. I had been deeply pained by this – had even felt a sort of crushing of the heart, from the sense that my brief day of happiness was near its setting; but still I remained dependent on Bertha, eager for the last rays of a bliss that would soon be gone for ever, hoping and watching for some after-glow more beautiful from the impending night.

I remember – how should I not remember? – the time when that dependence and hope utterly left me, when the sadness I had felt in Bertha's growing estrangement became a joy that I looked back upon with longing, as a man might look back on the last pains in a paralysed limb. It was just after the close of my father's last illness, which had necessarily withdrawn us from society and thrown us more upon each other. It was the evening of my father's death. On that evening the veil which had shrouded Bertha's soul from me – had made me find in her alone among my fellow-beings the blessed possibility of mystery, and doubt, and expectation – was first withdrawn. Perhaps it was the first day since the beginning of my passion for her, in which that passion was completely neutralised by the presence of an absorbing feeling of another kind. I had been watching by my father's deathbed: I had been witnessing the last fitful yearning glance his soul had cast back on the spent inheritance of life – the last faint consciousness of love he had gathered from the pressure of my hand. What are all our personal loves when we have been sharing in that supreme agony? In the first moments when we come away from the presence of death, every other relation to the living is merged, to our feeling, in the great relation of a common nature and a common destiny.

In that state of mind I joined Bertha in her private sitting-room. She was seated in a leaning posture on a settee, with her back towards the door; the great rich coils of her pale blond hair surmounting her small neck, visible above the back of the settee. I

remember, as I closed the door behind me, a cold tremulousness seizing me, and a vague sense of being hated and lonely – vague and strong, like a presentiment. I know how I looked at that moment, for I saw myself in Bertha's thought as she lifted her cutting grey eyes, and looked at me: a miserable ghost-seer, surrounded by phantoms in the noonday, trembling under a breeze when the leaves were still, without appetite for the common objects of human desire, but pining after the moonbeams. We were front to front with each other, and judged each other. The terrible moment of complete illumination had come to me, and I saw that the darkness had hidden no landscape from me, but only a blank prosaic wall: from that evening forth, through the sickening years which followed, I saw all round the narrow room of this woman's soul – saw petty artifice and mere negation where I had delighted to believe in coy sensibilities and in wit at war with latent feeling – saw the light floating vanities of the girl defining themselves into the systematic coquetry, the scheming selfishness, of the woman – saw repulsion and antipathy harden into cruel hatred, giving pain only for the sake of wreaking itself.

For Bertha too, after her kind, felt the bitterness of disillusion. She had believed that my wild poet's passion for her would make me her slave; and that, being her slave, I should execute her will in all things. With the essential shallowness of a negative, unimaginative nature, she was unable to conceive the fact that sensibilities were anything else than weaknesses. She had thought my weaknesses would put me in her power, and she found them unmanageable forces. Our positions were reversed. Before marriage she had completely mastered my imagination, for she was a secret to me; and I created the unknown thought before which I trembled as if it were hers. But now that her soul was laid open to me, now that I was compelled to share the privacy of her motives, to follow all the petty devices that preceded her words and acts, she found herself powerless with me, except to produce in me the chill shudder of repulsion – powerless, because I could be acted on by no lever within her reach. I was dead to worldly ambitions, to social vanities, to all the incentives within the compass of her narrow imagination, and I lived under influences utterly invisible to her.

She was really pitiable to have such a husband, and so all the world thought. A graceful, brilliant woman, like Bertha, who smiled

on morning callers, made a figure in ball-rooms, and was capable of that light repartee which, from such a woman, is accepted as wit, was secure of carrying off all sympathy from a husband who was sickly, abstracted, and, as some suspected, crack-brained. Even the servants in our house gave her the balance of their regard and pity. For there were no audible quarrels between us; our alienation, our repulsion from each other, lay within the silence of our own hearts; and if the mistress went out a great deal, and seemed to dislike the master's society, was it not natural, poor thing? The master was odd. I was kind and just to my dependants, but I excited in them a shrinking, half-contemptuous pity; for this class of men and women are but slightly determined in their estimate of others by general considerations, or even experience, of character. They judge of persons as they judge of coins, and value those who pass current at a high rate.

After a time I interfered so little with Bertha's habits, that it might seem wonderful how her hatred towards me could grow so intense and active as it did. But she had begun to suspect, by some involuntary betrayals of mine, that there was an abnormal power of penetration in me – that fitfully, at least, I was strangely cognisant of her thoughts and intentions, and she began to be haunted by a terror of me, which alternated every now and then with defiance. She meditated continually how the incubus could be shaken off her life – how she could be freed from this hateful bond to a being whom she at once despised as an imbecile, and dreaded as an inquisitor. For a long while she lived in the hope that my evident wretchedness would drive me to the commission of suicide; but suicide was not in my nature. I was too completely swayed by the sense that I was in the grasp of unknown forces, to believe in my power of self-release. Towards my own destiny I had become entirely passive; for my one ardent desire had spent itself, and impulse no longer predominated over knowledge. For this reason I never thought of taking any steps towards a complete separation, which would have made our alienation evident to the world. Why should I rush for help to a new course, when I was only suffering from the consequences of a deed which had been the act of my intensest will? That would have been the logic of one who had desires to gratify, and I had no desires. But Bertha and I lived more and more aloof from each other. The rich find it easy to live married and apart.

That course of our life which I have indicated in a few sentences filled the space of years. So much misery – so slow and hideous a growth of hatred and sin, may be compressed into a sentence! And men judge of each other's lives through this summary medium. They epitomise the experience of their fellow-mortal, and pronounce judgment on him in neat syntax, and feel themselves wise and virtuous – conquerors over the temptations they define in well- selected predicates. Seven years of wretchedness glide glibly over the lips of the man who has never counted them out in moments of chill disappointment, of head and heart throbbings, of dread and vain wrestling, of remorse and despair. We learn *words* by rote, but not their meaning; *that* must be paid for with our life- blood, and printed in the subtle fibres of our nerves. But I will hasten to finish my story. Brevity is justified at once to those who readily understand, and to those who will never understand.

Some years after my father's death, I was sitting by the dim firelight in my library one January evening – sitting in the leather chair that used to be my father's – when Bertha appeared at the door, with a candle in her hand, and advanced towards me. I knew the ball- dress she had on – the white ball- dress, with the green jewels, shone upon by the light of the wax candle which lit up the medallion of the dying Cleopatra on the mantelpiece. Why did she come to me before going out? I had not seen her in the library, which was my habitual place, for months. Why did she stand before me with the candle in her hand, with her cruel contemptuous eyes fixed on me, and the glittering serpent, like a familiar demon, on her breast? For a moment I thought this fulfilment of my vision at Vienna marked some dreadful crisis in my fate, but I saw nothing in Bertha's mind, as she stood before me, except scorn for the look of overwhelming misery with which I sat before her . . . 'Fool, idiot, why don't you kill yourself, then?' – that was her thought. But at length her thoughts reverted to her errand, and she spoke aloud. The apparently indifferent nature of the errand seemed to make a ridiculous anticlimax to my prevision and my agitation.

'I have had to hire a new maid. Fletcher is going to be married, and she wants me to ask you to let her husband have the public-house and farm at Molton. I wish him to have it. You must give the promise now, because Fletcher is going to- morrow morning – and

quickly, because I'm in a hurry.'

'Very well; you may promise her,' I said, indifferently, and Bertha swept out of the library again.

I always shrank from the sight of a new person, and all the more when it was a person whose mental life was likely to weary my reluctant insight with worldly ignorant trivialities. But I shrank especially from the sight of this new maid, because her advent had been announced to me at a moment to which I could not cease to attach some fatality: I had a vague dread that I should find her mixed up with the dreary drama of my life – that some new sickening vision would reveal her to me as an evil genius. When at last I did unavoidably meet her, the vague dread was changed into definite disgust. She was a tall, wiry, dark-eyed woman, this Mrs Archer, with a face handsome enough to give her coarse hard nature the odious finish of bold, self-confident coquetry. That was enough to make me avoid her, quite apart from the contemptuous feeling with which she contemplated me. I seldom saw her; but I perceived that she rapidly became a favourite with her mistress, and, after the lapse of eight or nine months, I began to be aware that there had arisen in Bertha's mind towards this woman a mingled feeling of fear and dependence, and that this feeling was associated with ill-defined images of candle-light scenes in her dressing-room, and the looking-up of something in Bertha's cabinet. My interviews with my wife had become so brief and so rarely solitary, that I had no opportunity of perceiving these images in her mind with more definiteness. The recollections of the past become contracted in the rapidity of thought till they sometimes bear hardly a more distinct resemblance to the external reality than the forms of an oriental alphabet to the objects that suggested them.

Besides, for the last year or more a modification had been going forward in my mental condition, and was growing more and more marked. My insight into the minds of those around me was becoming dimmer and more fitful, and the ideas that crowded my double consciousness became less and less dependent on any personal contact. All that was personal in me seemed to be suffering a gradual death, so that I was losing the organ through which the personal agitations and projects of others could affect me. But along with this relief from wearisome insight, there was a new development of what I concluded – as I have since found rightly –

to be a prevision of external scenes. It was as if the relation between me and my fellow- men was more and more deadened, and my relation to what we call the inanimate was quickened into new life. The more I lived apart from society, and in proportion as my wretchedness subsided from the violent throb of agonised passion into the dulness of habitual pain, the more frequent and vivid became such visions as that I had had of Prague – of strange cities, of sandy plains, of gigantic ruins, of midnight skies with strange bright constellations, of mountain- passes, of grassy nooks flecked with the afternoon sunshine through the boughs: I was in the midst of such scenes, and in all of them one presence seemed to weigh on me in all these mighty shapes – the presence of something unknown and pitiless. For continual suffering had an nihilated religious faith within me: to the utterly miserable – the unloving and the unloved – there is no religion possible, no worship but a worship of devils. And beyond all these, and continually recurring, was the vision of my death – the pangs, the suffocation, the last struggle, when life would be grasped at in vain.

Things were in this state near the end of the seventh year. I had become entirely free from insight, from my abnormal cognisance of any other consciousness than my own, and instead of intruding involuntarily into the world of other minds, was living continually in my own solitary future. Bertha was aware that I was greatly changed. To my surprise she had of late seemed to seek opportunities of remaining in my society, and had cultivated that kind of distant yet familiar talk which is customary between a husband and wife who live in polite and irrevocable alienation. I bore this with languid submission, and without feeling enough interest in her motives to be roused into keen observation; yet I could not help perceiving something triumphant and excited in her carriage and the expression of her face – something too subtle to express itself in words or tones, but giving one the idea that she lived in a state of expectation or hopeful suspense. My chief feeling was satisfaction that her inner self was once more shut out from me; and I almost revelled for the moment in the absent melancholy that made me answer her at cross purposes, and betray utter ignorance of what she had been saying. I remember well the look and the smile with which she one day said, after a mistake of this kind on my part: ‘I used to think you were a clairvoyant and that was the reason why you were so bitter against other clairvoyants, wanting

to keep your monopoly; but I see now you have become rather duller than the rest of the world.'

I said nothing in reply. It occurred to me that her recent obtrusion of herself upon me might have been prompted by the wish to test my power of detecting some of her secrets; but I let the thought drop again at once: her motives and her deeds had no interest for me, and whatever pleasures she might be seeking, I had no wish to balk her. There was still pity in my soul for every living thing, and Bertha was living – was surrounded with possibilities of misery.

Just at this time there occurred an event which roused me somewhat from my inertia, and gave me an interest in the passing moment that I had thought impossible for me. It was a visit from Charles Meunier, who had written me word that he was coming to England for relaxation from too strenuous labour, and would like to see me. Meunier had now a European reputation; but his letter to me expressed that keen remembrance of an early regard, an early debt of sympathy, which is inseparable from nobility of character: and I too felt as if his presence would be to me like a transient resurrection into a happier pre-existence.

He came, and as far as possible, I renewed our old pleasure of making *tête-à-tête* excursions, though, instead of mountains and glaciers and the wide blue lake, we had to content ourselves with mere slopes and ponds and artificial plantations. The years had changed us both, but with what different result! Meunier was now a brilliant figure in society, to whom elegant women pretended to listen, and whose acquaintance was boasted of by noblemen ambitious of brains. He repressed with the utmost delicacy all betrayal of the shock which I am sure he must have received from our meeting, or of a desire to penetrate into my condition and circumstances, and sought by the utmost exertion of his charming social powers to make our reunion agreeable. Bertha was much struck by the unexpected fascinations of a visitor whom she had expected to find presentable only on the score of his celebrity, and put forth all her coquetries and accomplishments. Apparently she succeeded in attracting his admiration, for his manner towards her was attentive and flattering. The effect of his presence on me was so benignant, especially in those renewals of our old *tête-à-tête* wanderings, when he poured forth to me wonderful narratives of

his professional experience, that more than once, when his talk turned on the psychological relations of disease, the thought crossed my mind that, if his stay with me were long enough, I might possibly bring myself to tell this man the secrets of my lot. Might there not lie some remedy for *me*, too, in his science? Might there not at least lie some comprehension and sympathy ready for me in his large and susceptible mind? But the thought only flickered feebly now and then, and died out before it could become a wish. The horror I had of again breaking in on the privacy of another soul, made me, by an irrational instinct, draw the shroud of concealment more closely around my own, as we automatically perform the gesture we feel to be wanting in another.

When Meunier's visit was approaching its conclusion, there happened an event which caused some excitement in our household, owing to the surprisingly strong effect it appeared to produce on Bertha – on Bertha, the selfpossessed, who usually seemed inaccessible to feminine agitations, and did even her hate in a self- restrained hygienic manner. This event was the sudden severe illness of her maid, Mrs Archer. I have reserved to this moment the mention of a circumstance which had forced itself on my notice shortly before Meunier's arrival, namely, that there had been some quarrel between Bertha and this maid, apparently during a visit to a distant family, in which she had accompanied her mistress. I had overheard Archer speaking in a tone of bitter insolence, which I should have thought an adequate reason for immediate dismissal. No dismissal followed; on the contrary, Bertha seemed to be silently putting up with personal inconveniences from the exhibitions of this woman's temper. I was the more astonished to observe that her illness seemed a cause of strong solicitude to Bertha; that she was at the bedside night and day, and would allow no one else to officiate as head- nurse. It happened that our family doctor was out on a holiday, an accident which made Meunier's presence in the house doubly welcome, and he apparently entered into the case with an interest which seemed so much stronger than the ordinary professional feeling, that one day when he had fallen into a long fit of silence after visiting her, I said to him –

'Is this a very peculiar case of disease, Meunier?'

'No,' he answered, 'it is an attack of peritonitis, which will be fatal, but which does not differ physically from many other cases

that have come under my observation. But I'll tell you what I have on my mind. I want to make an experiment on this woman, if you will give me permission. It can do her no harm – will give her no pain – for I shall not make it until life is extinct to all purposes of sensation. I want to try the effect of transfusing blood into her arteries after the heart has ceased to beat for some minutes. I have tried the experiment again and again with animals that have died of this disease, with astounding results, and I want to try it on a human subject. I have the small tubes necessary, in a case I have with me, and the rest of the apparatus could be prepared readily. I should use my own blood – take it from my own arm. This woman won't live through the night, I'm convinced, and I want you to promise me your assistance in making the experiment. I can't do without another hand, but it would perhaps not be well to call in a medical assistant from among your provincial doctors. A disagreeable foolish version of the thing might get abroad.'

'Have you spoken to my wife on the subject?' I said, 'because she appears to be peculiarly sensitive about this woman: she has been a favourite maid.'

'To tell you the truth,' said Meunier, 'I don't want her to know about it. There are always insuperable difficulties with women in these matters, and the effect on the supposed dead body may be startling. You and I will sit up together, and be in readiness. When certain symptoms appear I shall take you in, and at the right moment we must manage to get every one else out of the room.'

I need not give our farther conversation on the subject. He entered very fully into the details, and overcame my repulsion from them, by exciting in me a mingled awe and curiosity concerning the possible results of his experiment.

We prepared everything, and he instructed me in my part as assistant. He had not told Bertha of his absolute conviction that Arthur would not survive through the night, and endeavoured to persuade her to leave the patient and take a night's rest. But she was obstinate, suspecting the fact that death was at hand, and supposing that he wished merely to save her nerves. She refused to leave the sick-room. Meunier and I sat up together in the library, he making frequent visits to the sick-room, and returning with the information that the case was taking precisely the course he

expected. Once he said to me, 'Can you imagine any cause of ill feeling this woman has against her mistress, who is so devoted to her?'

'I think there was some misunderstanding between them before her illness. Why do you ask?'

'Because I have observed for the last five or six hours – since, I fancy, she has lost all hope of recovery – there seems a strange prompting in her to say something which pain and failing strength forbid her to utter; and there is a look of hideous meaning in her eyes, which she turns continually towards her mistress. In this disease the mind often remains singularly clear to the last.'

'I am not surprised at an indication of malevolent feeling in her,' I said. 'She is a woman who has always inspired me with distrust and dislike, but she managed to insinuate herself into her mistress's favour.' He was silent after this, looking at the fire with an air of absorption, till he went up- stairs again. He stayed away longer than usual, and on returning, said to me quietly, 'Come now.'

I followed him to the chamber where death was hovering. The dark hangings of the large bed made a background that gave a strong relief to Bertha's pale face as I entered. She started forward as she saw me enter, and then looked at Meunier with an expression of angry inquiry; but he lifted up his hand as if to impose silence, while he fixed his glance on the dying woman and felt her pulse. The face was pinched and ghastly, a cold perspiration was on the forehead, and the eyelids were lowered so as almost to conceal the large dark eyes. After a minute or two, Meunier walked round to the other side of the bed where Bertha stood, and with his usual air of gentle politeness towards her begged her to leave the patient under our care – everything should be done for her – she was no longer in a state to be conscious of an affectionate presence. Bertha was hesitating, apparently almost willing to believe his assurance and to comply. She looked round at the ghastly dying face, as if to read the confirmation of that assurance, when for a moment the lowered eyelids were raised again, and it seemed as if the eyes were looking towards Bertha, but blankly. A shudder passed through Bertha's frame, and she returned to her station near the pillow, tacitly implying that she would not leave the room.

The eyelids were lifted no more. Once I looked at Bertha as she

watched the face of the dying one. She wore a rich *peignoir* , and her blond hair was half covered by a lace cap: in her attire she was, as always, an elegant woman, fit to figure in a picture of modern aristocratic life: but I asked myself how that face of hers could ever have seemed to me the face of a woman born of woman, with memories of childhood, capable of pain, needing to be fondled? The features at that moment seemed so preternaturally sharp, the eyes were so hard and eager – she looked like a cruel immortal, finding her spiritual feast in the agonies of a dying race. For across those hard features there came something like a flash when the last hour had been breathed out, and we all felt that the dark veil had completely fallen. What secret was there between Bertha and this woman? I turned my eyes from her with a horrible dread lest my insight should return, and I should be obliged to see what had been breeding about two unloving women's hearts. I felt that Bertha had been watching for the moment of death as the sealing of her secret: I thanked Heaven it could remain sealed for me.

Meunier said quietly, 'She is gone.' He then gave his arm to Bertha, and she submitted to be led out of the room.

I suppose it was at her order that two female attendants came into the room, and dismissed the younger one who had been present before. When they entered, Meunier had already opened the artery in the long thin neck that lay rigid on the pillow, and I dismissed them, ordering them to remain at a distance till we rang: the doctor, I said, had an operation to perform – he was not sure about the death. For the next twenty minutes I forgot everything but Meunier and the experiment in which he was so absorbed, that I think his senses would have been closed against all sounds or sights which had no relation to it. It was my task at first to keep up the artificial respiration in the body after the transfusion had been effected, but presently Meunier relieved me, and I could see the wondrous slow return of life; the breast began to heave, the inspirations became stronger, the eyelids quivered, and the soul seemed to have returned beneath them. The artificial respiration was withdrawn: still the breathing continued, and there was a movement of the lips.

Just then I heard the handle of the door moving: I suppose Bertha had heard from the women that they had been dismissed: probably a vague fear had arisen in her mind, for she entered with a

look of alarm. She came to the foot of the bed and gave a stifled cry.

The dead woman's eyes were wide open, and met hers in full recognition – the recognition of hate. With a sudden strong effort, the hand that Bertha had thought for ever still was pointed towards her, and the haggard face moved. The gasping eager voice said –

‘You mean to poison your husband . . . the poison is in the black cabinet . . . I got it for you . . . you laughed at me, and told lies about me behind my back, to make me disgusting . . . because you were jealous . . . are you sorry . . . now?’

The lips continued to murmur, but the sounds were no longer distinct. Soon there was no sound – only a slight movement: the flame had leaped out, and was being extinguished the faster. The wretched woman's heartstrings had been set to hatred and vengeance; the spirit of life had swept the chords for an instant, and was gone again for ever. Great God! Is this what it is to live again . . . to wake up with our unstilled thirst upon us, with our unuttered curses rising to our lips, with our muscles ready to act out their half-committed sins?

Bertha stood pale at the foot of the bed, quivering and helpless, despairing of devices, like a cunning animal whose hiding-places are surrounded by swift-advancing flame. Even Meunier looked paralysed; life for that moment ceased to be a scientific problem to him. As for me, this scene seemed of one texture with the rest of my existence: horror was my familiar, and this new revelation was only like an old pain recurring with new circumstances.

Since then Bertha and I have lived apart – she in her own neighbourhood, the mistress of half our wealth, I as a wanderer in foreign countries, until I came to this Devonshire nest to die. Bertha lives pitied and admired; for what had I against that charming woman, whom every one but myself could have been happy with? There had been no witness of the scene in the dying room except Meunier, and while Meunier lived his lips were sealed by a promise to me.

Once or twice, weary of wandering, I rested in a favourite spot, and my heart went out towards the men and women and children whose faces were becoming familiar to me: but I was driven away

a gain i n t error a t t he approach of my old insight – driven away to live continually with the one Unknown Presence revealed and yet hidden by the moving curtain of the earth and sky. Till at last disease took hold of me and forced me to rest here – forced me to live in dependence on my servants. And then the curse of insight – of my double consciousness, came again, and has never left me. I know all their narrow thoughts, their feeble regard, their half-wearied pity.

It is the 20th of September 1850. I know these figures I have just written, as if they were a long familiar inscription. I have seen them on this page in my desk unnumbered times, when the scene of my dying struggle has opened upon me . . .

(1859.)

[32] Inscription on Swift's tombstone.

SILLY NOVELS BY LADY NOVELISTS

Silly novels by Lady Novelists are a genus with many species, determined by the particular quality of silliness that predominates in them – the frothy, the prosy, the pious, or the pedantic. But it is a mixture of all these – a composite order of feminine fatuity, that produces the largest class of such novels, which we shall distinguish as the *mind-and-millinery* species. The heroine is usually an heiress, probably a peeress in her own right, with perhaps a vicious baronet, an amiable duke, and an irresistible younger son of a marquis as lovers in the foreground, a clergyman and a poet sighing for her in the middle distance, and a crowd of undefined adorers dimly indicated beyond. Her eyes and her wit are both dazzling; her nose and her morals are alike free from any tendency to irregularity; she has a superb *contralto* and a superb intellect; she is perfectly well-dressed and perfectly religious; she dances like a sylph, and reads the Bible in the original tongues. Or it may be that the heroine is not an heiress – that rank and wealth are the only things in which she is deficient; but she infallibly gets into high society, she has the triumph of refusing many matches and securing the best, and she wears some family jewels or other as a sort of crown of righteousness at the end. Rakish men either bite their lips in impotent confusion at her repartees, or are touched to penitence by her reproofs, which, on appropriate occasions, rise to a lofty strain of rhetoric; indeed, there is a general propensity in her to make speeches, and to rhapsodize at some length when she retires to her bedroom. In her recorded conversations she is amazingly eloquent, and in her unrecorded conversations, amazingly witty. She is understood to have a depth of insight that looks through and through the shallow theories of philosophers, and her superior instincts are a sort of dial by which men have only to set their clocks and watches, and all will go well. The men play a very subordinate part by her side. You are consoled now and then by a hint that they have affairs, which keeps you in mind that the working-day business of the world is somehow being carried on, but ostensibly the final cause of their existence is that they may

accompany the heroine on her 'starring' expedition through life. They see her at a ball, and are dazzled; at a flower-show, and they are fascinated; on a riding excursion, and they are witched by her noble horsemanship; at church, and they are awed by the sweet solemnity of her demeanour. She is the ideal woman in feelings, faculties, and flounces. For all this, she as often as not marries the wrong person to begin with, and she suffers terribly from the plots and intrigues of the vicious baronet; but even death has a soft place in his heart for such a paragon, and remedies all mistakes for her just at the right moment. The vicious baronet is sure to be killed in a duel, and the tedious husband dies in his bed, requesting his wife, as a particular favour to him, to marry the man she loves best, and having already dispatched a note to the lover informing him of the comfortable arrangement. Before matters arrive at this desirable issue our feelings are tried by seeing the noble, lovely, and gifted heroine pass through many *mauvais moments*, but we have the satisfaction of knowing that her sorrows are wept into embroidered pocket-handkerchiefs, that her fainting form reclines on the very best upholstery, and that whatever vicissitudes she may undergo, from being dashed out of her carriage to having her head shaved in a fever, she comes out of them all with a complexion more blooming and locks more redundant than ever.

We may remark, by the way, that we have been relieved from a serious scruple by discovering that silly novels by lady novelists rarely introduce us into any other than very lofty and fashionable society. We had imagined that destitute women turned novelists, as they turned governesses, because they had no other 'lady-like' means of getting their bread. On this supposition, vacillating syntax and improbable incident had a certain pathos for us, like the extremely supererogatory pincushions and ill-devised nightcaps that are offered for sale by a blind man. We felt the commodity to be a nuisance, but we were glad to think that the money went to relieve the necessitous, and we pictured to ourselves lonely women struggling for a maintenance, or wives and daughters devoting themselves to the production of 'copy' out of pure heroism, – perhaps to pay their husband's debts, or to purchase luxuries for a sick father. Under these impressions we shrank from criticizing a lady's novel: her English might be faulty, but, we said to ourselves, her motives are irreproachable; her imagination may be uninventive, but her patience is untiring. Empty writing was

excused by an empty stomach, and twaddle was consecrated by tears. But no! This theory of ours, like many other pretty theories, has had to give way before observation. Women's silly novels, we are now convinced, are written under totally different circumstances. The fair writers have evidently never talked to a tradesman except from a carriage window; they have no notion of the working classes except as 'dependants'; they think £500 a year a miserable pittance; Belgravia and 'baronial halls' are their primary truths; and they have no idea of feeling interest in any man who is not at least a great landed proprietor, if not a prime minister. It is clear that they write in elegant boudoirs, with violet-coloured ink and a ruby pen; that they must be entirely indifferent to publishers' accounts, and inexperienced in every form of poverty except poverty of brains. It is true that we are constantly struck with the want of verisimilitude in their representations of the high society in which they seem to live; but then they betray no closer acquaintance with any other form of life. If their peers and peeresses are improbable, their literary men, tradespeople, and cottagers are impossible; and their intellect seems to have the peculiar impartiality of reproducing both what they *have* seen and heard, and what they have *not* seen and heard, with equal unfaithfulness.

There are few women, we suppose, who have not seen something of children under five years of age, yet in *Compensation*, a recent novel of the mind-and-millinery species, which calls itself a 'story of real life', we have a child of four and a half years old talking in this Ossianic fashion: –

'Oh, I am so happy, dear gran'mamma; – I have seen, – I have seen such a delightful person: he is like everything beautiful, – like the smell of sweet flowers, and the view from Ben Lomond; – or no, *better than that* – he is like what I think of and see when I am very, very happy; and he is really like mamma, too, when she sings; and his forehead is like *that distant sea*, ' she continued, pointing to the blue Mediterranean; 'there seems no end – no end; or like the clusters of stars I like best to look at on a warm fine night . . . Don't look so . . . your forehead is like Loch Lomond, when the wind is blowing and the sun is gone in; I like the sunshine best when the lake is smooth . . . So now – I like it better than ever . . . it is more beautiful still from the dark cloud that has gone over it, *when the*

sun suddenly lights up all the colours of the forests and shining purple rocks, and it is all reflected in the waters below .’

We are not surprised to learn that the mother of this infant phenomenon, who exhibits symptoms so alarmingly like those of adolescence repressed by gin, is herself a phoenix. We are assured, again and again, that she had a remarkably original mind, that she was a genius, and ‘conscious of her originality’, and she was fortunate enough to have a lover who was also a genius, and a man of ‘most original mind’.

This lover, we read, though ‘wonderfully similar’ to her ‘in powers and capacity’, was ‘infinitely superior to her in faith and development’, and she saw in him the ‘ “Agape” – so rare to find – of which she had read and admired the meaning in her Greek Testament; having, *from her great facility in learning languages* , read the Scriptures in their original *tongues* .’ Of course! Greek and Hebrew are mere play to a heroine; Sanscrit is no more than *a b c* to her; and she can talk with perfect correctness in any language except English. She is a polking polyglot, a Creuzer in crinoline. Poor men! There are so few of you who know even Hebrew; you think it something to boast of if, like Bolingbroke, you only ‘understand that sort of learning, and what is writ about it’; and you are perhaps adoring women who can think slightly of you in all the Semitic languages successively. But, then, as we are almost invariably told, that a heroine has a ‘beautifully small head’, and as her intellect has probably been early invigorated by an attention to costume and deportment, we may conclude that she can pick up the Oriental tongues, to say nothing of their dialects, with the same aërial facility that the butterfly sips nectar. Besides, there can be no difficulty in conceiving the depth of the heroine’s erudition, when that of the authoress is so evident.

In *Laura Gay* , another novel of the same school, the heroine seems less at home in Greek and Hebrew, but she makes up for the deficiency by a quite playful familiarity with the Latin classics – with the ‘dear old Virgil’, ‘the graceful Horace, the humane Cicero, and the pleasant Livy’; indeed, it is such a matter of course with her to quote Latin, that she does it at a picnic in a very mixed company of ladies and gentlemen, having, we are told, ‘no conception that the nobler sex were capable of jealousy on this subject. And if, indeed,’ continues the biographer of Laura Gay, ‘the wisest and

noblest portion of that sex were in the majority, no such sentiment would exist; but while Miss Wyndhams and Mr Redfords abound, great sacrifices must be made to their existence.' Such sacrifices, we presume, as abstaining from Latin quotations, of extremely moderate interest and applicability, which the wise and noble minority of the other sex would be quite as willing to dispense with as the foolish and ignoble majority. It is as little the custom of well-bred men as of well-bred women to quote Latin in mixed parties; they can contain their familiarity with 'the humane Cicero' without allowing it to boil over in ordinary conversation, and even references to 'the pleasant Livy' are not absolutely irrepressible. But Ciceronian Latin is the mildest form of Miss Gay's conversational power. Being on the Palatine with a party of sightseers, she falls into the following vein of well-rounded remark: –

Truth can only be pure objectively, for even in the creeds where it predominates, being subjective, and parcelled out into portions, each of these necessarily receives a hue of idiosyncrasy, that is, a taint of superstition more or less strong; while in such creeds as the Roman Catholic, ignorance, interest, the bias of ancient idolatries, and the force of authority, have gradually accumulated on the pure truth, and transformed it, at last, into a mass of superstition for the majority of its votaries; and how few are there, alas! whose zeal, courage, and intellectual energy are equal to the analysis of this accumulation, and to the discovery of the pearl of great price which lies hidden beneath this heap of rubbish.

We have often met with women much more novel and profound in their observations than Laura Gay, but rarely with any so inopportunately long-winded. A clerical lord, who is half in love with her, is alarmed by the daring remarks just quoted, and begins to suspect that she is inclined to free-thinking. But he is mistaken; when in a moment of sorrow he delicately begs leave to 'recall to her memory, a *dépôt* of strength and consolation under affliction, which, until we are hard pressed by the trials of life, we are too apt to forget', we learn that she really has 'recurrence to that sacred *dépôt*', together with the teapot. There is a certain flavour of orthodoxy mixed with the parade of fortunes and fine carriages in Laura Gay, but it is an orthodoxy mitigated by study of 'the humane Cicero', and by an 'intellectual disposition to analyse'.

Compensation is much more heavily dosed with doctrine, but then it has a treble amount of snobbish worldliness and absurd incident to tickle the palate of pious frivolity. Linda, the heroine, is still more speculative and spiritual than Laura Gay, but she has been 'presented', and has more, and far grander, lovers; very wicked and fascinating women are introduced – even a French *lionne* ; and no expense is spared to get up as exciting a story as you will find in the most immoral novels. In fact, it is a wonderful *pot pourri* of Almack's, Scotch second-sight, Mr Rogers's breakfasts, Italian brigands, death-bed conversions, superior authoresses, Italian mistresses, and attempts at poisoning old ladies, the whole served up with a garnish of talk about 'faith and development', and 'most original minds'. Even Miss Susan Barton, the superior authoress, whose pen moves in a 'quick decided manner when she is composing', declines the finest opportunities of marriage; and though old enough to be Linda's mother (since we are told that she refused Linda's father), has her hand sought by a young earl, the heroine's rejected lover. Of course, genius and morality must be backed by eligible offers, or they would seem rather a dull affair; and piety, like other things, in order to be *comme il faut* , must be in 'society', and have admittance to the best circles.

Rank and Beauty is a more frothy and less religious variety of the mind-and-millinery species. The heroine, we are told, 'if she inherited her father's pride of birth and her mother's beauty of person, had in herself a tone of enthusiastic feeling that perhaps belongs to her age even in the lowly born, but which is refined into the high spirit of wild romance only in the far descended, who feel that it is their best inheritance'. This enthusiastic young lady, by dint of reading the newspaper to her father, falls in love with the *prime minister* , who, through the medium of leading articles and 'the *résumé* of the debates', shines upon her imagination as a bright particular star, which has no parallax for her, living in the country as simple Miss Wyndham. But she forthwith becomes Baroness Umfraville in her own right, astonishes the world with her beauty and accomplishments when she bursts upon it from her mansion in Spring Gardens, and, as you foresee, will presently come into contact with the unseen *objet aimé* . Perhaps the words 'prime minister' suggest to you a wrinkled or obese sexagenarian; but pray dismiss the image. Lord Rupert Conway has been 'called while still almost a youth to the first situation which a subject can hold in the

universe ', and even leading articles and a *résumé* of the debates have not conjured up a dream that surpasses the fact.

The door opened again, and Lord Rupert Conway entered. Evelyn gave one glance. It was enough; she was not disappointed. It seemed as if a picture on which she had long gazed was suddenly instinct with life, and had stepped from its frame before her. His tall figure, the distinguished simplicity of his air – it was a living Vandyke, a cavalier, one of his noble cavalier ancestors, or one to whom her fancy had always likened him, who long of yore had, with an Umfraville, fought the Paynim far beyond sea. Was this reality?

Very little like it, certainly. By and by, it becomes evident that the ministerial heart is touched. Lady Umfraville is on a visit to the Queen at Windsor, and, –

The last evening of her stay, when they returned from riding, Mr Wyndham took her and a large party to the top of the Keep, to see the view. She was leaning on the battlements, gazing from that 'stately height' at the prospect beneath her, when Lord Rupert was by her side. 'What an unrivalled view!' exclaimed she.

'Yes, it would have been wrong to go without having been up here. You are pleased with your visit?'

'Enchanted! "A Queen to live and die under", to live and die for!'

'Ha!' cried he, with sudden emotion, and with a *eureka* expression of countenance, as if he had *indeed found a heart in unison with his own* .

The '*eureka* expression of countenance', you see at once to be prophetic of marriage at the end of the third volume; but before that desirable consummation, there are very complicated misunderstandings, arising chiefly from the vindictive plotting of Sir Luttrell Wycherley, who is a genius, a poet, and in every way a most remarkable character indeed. He is not only a romantic poet, but a hardened rake and a cynical wit; yet his deep passion for Lady Umfraville has so impoverished his epigrammatic talent, that he cuts an extremely poor figure in conversation. When she rejects him, he rushes into the shrubbery, and rolls himself in the dirt; and on recovering, devotes himself to the most diabolical and laborious

schemes of vengeance, in the course of which he disguises himself as a quack physician, and enters into general practice, foreseeing that Evelyn will fall ill, and that he shall be called in to attend her. At last, when all his schemes are frustrated, he takes leave of her in a long letter, written, as you will perceive from the following passage, entirely in the style of an eminent literary man: –

Oh, lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure, will you ever cast one thought upon the miserable being who addresses you? Will you ever, as your gilded galley is floating down the unruffled stream of prosperity, will you ever, while lulled by the sweetest music – thine own praises, – hear the far-off sigh from that world to which I am going?

On the whole, however, frothy as it is, we rather prefer Rank and Beauty to the two other novels we have mentioned. The dialogue is more natural and spirited; there is some frank ignorance, and no pedantry; and you are allowed to take the heroine's astounding intellect upon trust, without being called on to read her conversational refutations of sceptics and philosophers, or her rhetorical solutions of the mysteries of the universe.

Writers of the mind-and-millinery school are remarkably unanimous in their choice of diction. In their novels, there is usually a lady or gentleman who is more or less of a upas tree: the lover has a manly breast; minds are redolent of various things; hearts are hollow; events are utilized; friends are consigned to the tomb; infancy is an engaging period; the sun is a luminary that goes to his western couch, or gathers the rain-drops into his refulgent bosom; life is a melancholy boon; Albion and Scotia are conversational epithets. There is a striking resemblance, too, in the character of their moral comments, such, for instance, as that 'It is a fact, no less true than melancholy, that all people, more or less, richer or poorer, are swayed by bad example'; that 'Books, however trivial, contain some subjects from which useful information may be drawn'; that 'Vice can too often borrow the language of virtue'; that 'Merit and nobility of nature must exist, to be accepted, for clamour and pretension cannot impose upon those too well read in human nature to be easily deceived'; and that, 'In order to forgive, we must have been injured'. There is, doubtless, a class of readers to whom these remarks appear peculiarly pointed and pungent; for we often find them doubly and trebly scored with the pencil, and delicate

hands giving in their determined adhesion to these hardy novelties by a distinct *très vrai* , emphasized by many notes of exclamation. The colloquial style of these novels is often marked by much ingenious inversion, and a careful avoidance of such cheap phraseology as can be heard every day. Angry young gentlemen exclaim – ‘Tis ever thus, methinks’; and in the half hour before dinner a young lady informs her next neighbour that the first day she read Shakspeare she ‘stole away into the park, and beneath the shadow of the greenwood tree, devoured with rapture the inspired page of the great magician’. But the most remarkable efforts of the mind-and-millinery writers lie in their philosophic reflections. The authoress of *Laura Gay* , for example, having married her hero and heroine, improves the event by observing that ‘if those sceptics, whose eyes have so long gazed on matter that they can no longer see aught else in man, could once enter with heart and soul into such bliss as this, they would come to say that the soul of man and the polypus are not of common origin, or of the same texture’. Lady novelists, it appears, can see something else besides matter; they are not limited to phenomena, but can relieve their eyesight by occasional glimpses of the *noumenon* , and are, therefore, naturally better able than any one else to confound sceptics, even of that remarkable, but to us unknown school, which maintains that the soul of man is of the same texture as the polypus.

The most pitiable of all silly novels by lady novelists are what we may call the *oracular* species – novels intended to expound the writer’s religious, philosophical, or moral theories. There seems to be a notion abroad among women, rather akin to the superstition that the speech and actions of idiots are inspired, and that the human being most entirely exhausted of common sense is the fittest vehicle of revelation. To judge from their writings, there are certain ladies who think that an amazing ignorance, both of science and of life, is the best possible qualification for forming an opinion on the knottiest moral and speculative questions. Apparently, their recipe for solving all such difficulties is something like this: – Take a woman’s head, stuff it with a smattering of philosophy and literature chopped small, and with false notions of society baked hard, let it hang over a desk a few hours every day, and serve up hot in feeble English, when not required. You will rarely meet with a lady novelist of the oracular class who is diffident of her ability to decide on theological questions, – who has any suspicion that she is

not capable of discriminating with the nicest accuracy between the good and evil in all church parties, – who does not see precisely how it is that men have gone wrong hitherto, – and pity philosophers in general that they have not had the opportunity of consulting her. Great writers, who have modestly contented themselves with putting their experience into fiction, and have thought it quite a sufficient task to exhibit men and things as they are, she sighs over as deplorably deficient in the application of their powers. ‘They have solved no great questions’ – and she is ready to remedy their omission by setting before you a complete theory of life and manual of divinity, in a love story, where ladies and gentlemen of good family go through genteel vicissitudes, to the utter confusion of Deists, Puseyites, and ultra-Protestants, and to the perfect establishment of that particular view of Christianity which either condenses itself into a sentence of small caps, or explodes into a cluster of stars on the three hundred and thirtieth page. It is true, the ladies and gentlemen will probably seem to you remarkably little like any you have had the fortune or misfortune to meet with, for, as a general rule, the ability of a lady novelist to describe actual life and her fellow-men, is in inverse proportion to her confident eloquence about God and the other world, and the means by which she usually chooses to conduct you to true ideas of the invisible is a totally false picture of the visible.

As typical a novel of the oracular kind as we can hope to meet with, is *The Enigma : A Leaf from the Chronicles of Wolchorley House*. The ‘enigma’ which this novel is to solve, is certainly one that demands powers no less gigantic than those of a lady novelist, being neither more nor less than the existence of evil. The problem is stated, and the answer dimly foreshadowed on the very first page. The spirited young lady, with raven hair, says, ‘All life is an inextricable confusion’; and the meek young lady, with auburn hair, looks at the picture of the Madonna which she is copying, and – ‘There seemed the solution of that mighty enigma.’ The style of this novel is quite as lofty as its purpose; indeed, some passages on which we have spent much patient study are quite beyond our reach, in spite of the illustrative aid of italics and small caps; and we must await further ‘development’ in order to understand them. Of Ernest, the model young clergyman, who sets every one right on all occasions, we read, that ‘he held not of marriage in the marketable kind, after a social desecration’; that, on one eventful

night, 'sleep had not visited his divided heart, where tumultuated, in varied type and combination, the aggregate feelings of grief and joy'; and that, 'for the *marketable* human article he had no toleration, be it of what sort, or set for what value it might, whether for worship or class, his upright soul abhorred it, whose ultimatum, the self-deceiver, was to him THE *great spiritual lie* , "living in a vain show, deceiving and being deceived"; since he did not suppose the phylactery and enlarged border on the garment to be *merely* a social trick.' (The italics and small caps are the author's, and we hope they assist the reader's comprehension.) Of Sir Lionel, the model old gentleman, we are told that 'the simple ideal of the middle age, apart from its anarchy and decadence, in him most truly seemed to live again, when the ties which knit men together were of heroic cast. The first-born colours of pristine faith and truth engraven on the common soul of man, and blent into the wide arch of brotherhood, where the primæval law of *order* grew and multiplied, each perfect after his kind, and mutually interdependent.' You see clearly, of course, how colours are first engraven on a soul, and then blent into a wide arch, on which arch of colours – apparently a rainbow – the law of order grew and multiplied, each – apparently the arch and the law – perfect after his kind? If, after this, you can possibly want any further aid towards knowing what Sir Lionel was, we can tell you, that in his soul 'the scientific combinations of thought could educe no fuller harmonies of the good and the true, than lay in the primæval pulses which floated as an atmosphere around it!' and that, when he was sealing a letter, 'Lo! the responsive throb in that good man's bosom echoed back in simple truth the honest witness of a heart that condemned him not, as his eye, bedewed with love, rested, too, with something of ancestral pride, on the undimmed motto of the family – loIAUTÉ.'

The slightest matters have their vulgarity fumigated out of them by the same elevated style. Commonplace people would say that a copy of Shakspeare lay on a drawingroom table; but the authoress of *The Enigma* , bent on edifying periphrasis, tells you that there lay on the table, 'that fund of human thought and feeling, which teaches the heart through the little name, "Shakspeare" '. A watchman sees a light burning in an upper window rather longer than usual, and thinks that people are foolish to sit up late when they have an opportunity of going to bed; but, lest this fact should seem too low and common, it is presented to us in the following

striking and metaphysical manner: 'He marvelled – as man *will* think for others in a necessarily separate personality, consequently (though disallowing it) in false mental premise, – how differently he should act, how gladly *he* should prize the rest so lightly held of within.' A footman – an ordinary Jeames, with large calves and aspirated vowels – answers the door-bell, and the opportunity is seized to tell you that he was a 'type of the large class of pampered menials, who follow the curse of Cain – "vagabonds" on the face of the earth, and whose estimate of the human class varies in the graduated scale of money and expenditure . . . These, and such as these, O England, be the false lights of thy morbid civilization!' We have heard of various 'false lights', from Dr Cumming to Robert Owen, from Dr Pusey to the Spirit-rappers, but we never before heard of the false light that emanates from plush and powder.

In the same way very ordinary events of civilized life are exalted into the most awful crises, and ladies in full skirts and *manches à la chinoise*, conduct themselves not unlike the heroines of sanguinary melodramas. Mrs Percy, a shallow woman of the world, wishes her son Horace to marry the auburn-haired Grace, she being an heiress; but he, after the manner of sons, falls in love with the raven-haired Kate, the heiress's portionless cousin; and, moreover, Grace herself shows every symptom of perfect indifference to Horace. In such cases, sons are often sulky or fiery, mothers are alternately manoeuvring and waspish, and the portionless young lady often lies awake at night and cries a good deal. We are getting used to these things now, just as we are used to eclipses of the moon, which no longer set us howling and beating tin kettles. We never heard of a lady in a fashionable 'front' behaving like Mrs Percy under these circumstances. Happening one day to see Horace talking to Grace at a window, without in the least knowing what they are talking about, or having the least reason to believe that Grace, who is mistress of the house and a person of dignity, would accept her son if he were to offer himself, she suddenly rushes up to them and clasps them both, saying, 'with a flushed countenance and in an excited manner' – 'This is indeed happiness; for, may I not call you so, Grace? – my Grace – my Horace's Grace! – my dear children!' Her son tells her she is mistaken, and that he is engaged to Kate, whereupon we have the following scene and tableau: –

Gathering herself up to an unprecedented height, (!) her eyes

lightning forth the fire of her anger: – ‘Wretched boy!’ she said, hoarsely and scornfully, and clenching her hand. ‘Take then the doom of your own choice! Bow down your miserable head and let a mother’s –’

‘Curse not!’ spake a deep low voice from behind, and Mrs Percy started, scared, as though she had seen a heavenly visitant appear, to break upon her in the midst of her sin.

Meantime, Horace had fallen on his knees at her feet, and hid his face in his hands.

Who, then, is she – who! Truly his ‘guardian spirit’ hath stepped between him and the fearful words, which, however unmerited, must have hung as a pall over his future existence; – a spell which could not be unbound – which could not be unsaid.

Of an earthly paleness, but calm with the still, iron-bound calmness of death – the only calm one there, – Katherine stood; and her words smote on the ear in tones whose appallingly slow and separate intonation rung on the heart like the chill, isolated tolling of some fatal knell.

‘He would have plighted me his faith, but I did not accept it; you cannot, therefore – you *dare* not curse him. And here,’ she continued, raising her hand to heaven, whither her large dark eyes also rose with a chastened glow, which, for the first time, *suffering* had lighted in those passionate orbs, – ‘here I promise, come weal, come woe, that Horace Wolchorley and I do never interchange vows without his mother’s sanction – without his mother’s blessing!’

Here, and throughout the story, we see that confusion of purpose which is so characteristic of silly novels written by women. It is a story of quite modern drawing-room society – a society in which polkas are played and Puseyism discussed; yet we have characters, and incidents, and traits of manner introduced, which are mere shreds from the most heterogeneous romances. We have a blind Irish harper, ‘relic of the picturesque bards of yore’, startling us at a Sunday-school festival of tea and cake in an English village; we have a crazy gypsy, in a scarlet cloak, singing snatches of romantic song, and revealing a secret on her death-bed which, with the testimony of a dwarfish miserly merchant, who salutes strangers with a curse and a devilish laugh, goes to prove that Ernest, the

model young clergyman, is Kate's brother; and we have an ultravirtuous Irish Barney, discovering that a document is forged, by comparing the date of the paper with the date of the alleged signature, although the same document has passed through a court of law, and occasioned a fatal decision. The 'Hall' in which Sir Lionel lives is the venerable country-seat of an old family, and this, we suppose, sets the imagination of the authoress flying to donjons and battlements, where 'lo! the warder blows his horn'; for, as the inhabitants are in their bedrooms on a night certainly within the recollection of Pleaceman X., and a breeze springs up, which we are at first told was faint, and then that it made the old cedars bow their branches to the greensward, she falls into this mediæval vein of description (the italics are ours): 'The banner unfurled it at the sound, and shook its guardian wing above, while the startled owl *flapped her* in the ivy; the firmament looking down through her "argus eyes" –

Ministers of heaven's mute melodies.

And lo! two strokes tolled from out the warder tower, and "Two o'clock" re-echoed its interpreter below.'

Such stories as this of *The Enigma* remind us of the pictures clever children sometimes draw 'out of their own head', where you will see a modern villa on the right, two knights in helmets fighting in the foreground, and a tiger grinning in a jungle on the left, the several objects being brought together because the artist thinks each pretty, and perhaps still more because he remembers seeing them in other pictures.

But we like the authoress much better on her mediæval stilts than on her oracular ones, – when she talks of the *Ich* and of 'subjective' and 'objective', and lays down the exact line of Christian verity, between 'right-hand excesses and left-hand declensions'. Persons who deviate from this line are introduced with a patronizing air of charity. Of a certain Miss Inshquine she informs us, with all the lucidity of italics and small caps, that '*function*, not *form*, AS THE INEVITABLE OUTER EXPRESSION OF THE SPIRIT IN THIS TABERNACLED AGE, weakly engrossed her'. And à *propos* of Miss Mayjar, an evangelical lady who is a little too apt to talk of her visits to sick women and the state of their souls, we are told that the model clergyman is 'not one to disallow, through the super crust,

the undercurrent towards good in the *subject* , or the positive benefits, nevertheless, to the *object* '. We imagine the double-refined accent and protrusion of chin which are feebly represented by the italics in this lady's sentences. We abstain from quoting any of her oracular doctrinal passages, because they refer to matters too serious for our pages just now.

The epithet 'silly' may seem impertinent, applied to a novel which indicates so much reading and intellectual activity as *The Enigma* ; but we use this epithet advisedly. If, as the world has long agreed, a very great amount of instruction will not make a wise man, still less will a very mediocre amount of instruction make a wise woman. And the most mischievous form of feminine silliness is the literary form, because it tends to confirm the popular prejudice against the more solid education of women. When men see girls wasting their time in consultations about bonnets and ball dresses, and in giggling or sentimental love-confidences, or middle-aged women mismanaging their children, and solacing themselves with acrid gossip, they can hardly help saying, 'For Heaven's sake, let girls be better educated; let them have some better objects of thought – some more solid occupations.' But after a few hours' conversation with an oracular literary woman, or a few hours' reading of her books, they are likely enough to say, 'After all, when a woman gets some knowledge, see what use she makes of it! Her knowledge remains acquisition, instead of passing into culture; instead of being subdued into modesty and simplicity by a larger acquaintance with thought and fact, she has a feverish consciousness of her attainments; she keeps a sort of mental pocket-mirror, and is continually looking in it at her own 'intellectuality'; she spoils the taste of one's muffin by questions of metaphysics; 'puts down' men at a dinner-table with her superior information; and seizes the opportunity of a *soirée* to catechize us on the vital question of the relation between mind and matter. And then, look at her writings! She mistakes vagueness for depth, bombast for eloquence, and affectation for originality; she struts on one page, rolls her eyes on another, grimaces in a third, and is hysterical in a fourth. She may have read many writings of great men, and a few writings of great women; but she is as unable to discern the difference between her own style and theirs as a Yorkshireman is to discern the difference between his own English and a Londoner's: rhodomontade is the native accent of her intellect. No – the average

nature of women is too shallow and feeble a soil to bear much tillage; it is only fit for the very lightest crops.’

It is true that the men who come to such a decision on such very superficial and imperfect observation may not be among the wisest in the world; but we have not now to contest their opinion – we are only pointing out how it is unconsciously encouraged by many women who have volunteered themselves as representatives of the feminine intellect. We do not believe that a man was ever strengthened in such an opinion by associating with a woman of true culture, whose mind had absorbed her knowledge instead of being absorbed by it. A really cultured woman, like a really cultured man, is all the simpler and the less obtrusive for her knowledge; it has made her see herself and her opinions in something like just proportions; she does not make it a pedestal from which she flatters herself that she commands a complete view of men and things, but makes it a point of observation from which to form a right estimate of herself. She neither spouts poetry nor quotes Cicero on slight provocation; not because she thinks that a sacrifice must be made to the prejudices of men, but because that mode of exhibiting her memory and Latinity does not present itself to her as edifying or graceful. She does not write books to confound philosophers, perhaps because she is able to write books that delight them. In conversation she is the least formidable of women, because she understands you, without wanting to make you aware that you can’t understand her. She does not give you information, which is the raw material of culture, – she gives you sympathy, which is its subtlest essence.

A more numerous class of silly novels than the oracular, (which are generally inspired by some form of High Church, or transcendental Christianity,) is what we may call the *white neck-cloth* species, which represent the tone of thought and feeling in the Evangelical party. This species is a kind of genteel tract on a large scale, intended as a sort of medicinal sweetmeat for Low Church young ladies; an Evangelical substitute for the fashionable novel, as the May Meetings are a substitute for the Opera. Even Quaker children, one would think, can hardly have been denied the indulgence of a doll; but it must be a doll dressed in a drab gown and a coal-scuttle bonnet – not a worldly doll, in gauze and spangles. And there are no young ladies, we imagine, – unless they

belong to the Church of the United Brethren, in which people are married without any love-making – who can dispense with love stories. Thus, for Evangelical young ladies there are Evangelical love stories, in which the vicissitudes of the tender passion are sanctified by saving views of Regeneration and the Atonement. These novels differ from the oracular ones, as a Low Churchwoman often differs from a High Churchwoman: they are a little less supercilious, and a great deal more ignorant, a little less correct in their syntax, and a great deal more vulgar.

The Orlando of Evangelical literature is the young curate, looked at from the point of view of the middle class, where cambric bands are understood to have as thrilling an effect on the hearts of young ladies as epaulettes have in the classes above and below it. In the ordinary type of these novels, the hero is almost sure to be a young curate, frowned upon, perhaps, by worldly mammas, but carrying captive the hearts of their daughters, who can ‘never forget *that sermon*’; tender glances are seized from the pulpit stairs instead of the opera-box; *tête-à-têtes* are seasoned with quotations from Scripture, instead of quotations from the poets; and questions as to the state of the heroine’s affections are mingled with anxieties as to the state of her soul. The young curate always has a background of well-dressed and wealthy, if not fashionable society; – for Evangelical silliness is as snobbish as any other kind of silliness; and the Evangelical lady novelist, while she explains to you the type of the scapegoat on one page, is ambitious on another to represent the manners and conversation of aristocratic people. Her pictures of fashionable society are often curious studies considered as efforts of the Evangelical imagination; but in one particular the novels of the White Neck-cloth School are meritoriously realistic, – their favourite hero, the Evangelical young curate, is always rather an insipid personage.

The most recent novel of this species that we happen to have before us, is *The Old Grey Church*. It is utterly tame and feeble; there is no one set of objects on which the writer seems to have a stronger grasp than on any other; and we should be entirely at a loss to conjecture among what phases of life her experience has been gained, but for certain vulgarisms of style which sufficiently indicate that she has had the advantage, though she has been unable to use it, of mingling chiefly with men and women whose

manners and characters have not had all their bosses and angles rubbed down by refined conventionalism. It is less excusable in an Evangelical novelist, than in any other, gratuitously to seek her subjects among titles and carriages. The real drama of Evangelicalism – and it has abundance of fine drama for any one who has genius enough to discern and reproduce it – lies among the middle and lower classes; and are not Evangelical opinions understood to give an especial interest in the weak things of the earth, rather than in the mighty? Why then, cannot our Evangelical lady novelists show us the operation of their religious views among people (there really are many such in the world) who keep no carriage, ‘not so much as a brass-bound gig’, who even manage to eat their dinner without a silver fork, and in whose mouths the authoress’s questionable English would be strictly consistent? Why can we not have pictures of religious life among the industrial classes in England, as interesting as Mrs Stowe’s pictures of religious life among the negroes? Instead of this, pious ladies nauseate us with novels which remind us of what we sometimes see in a worldly woman recently ‘converted’; – she is as fond of a fine dinner table as before, but she invites clergymen instead of beaux; she thinks as much of her dress as before, but she adopts a more sober choice of colours and patterns; her conversation is as trivial as before, but the triviality is flavoured with Gospel instead of gossip. In *The Old Grey Church*, we have the same sort of Evangelical travesty of the fashionable novel, and of course the vicious, intriguing baronet is not wanting.

It is worth while to give a sample of the style of conversation attributed to this high-born rake – a style that in its profuse italics and palpable innuendoes, is worthy of Miss Squeers. In an evening visit to the ruins of the Colosseum, Eustace, the young clergyman, has been withdrawing the heroine, Miss Lushington, from the rest of the party, for the sake of a *tête-à-tête*. The baronet is jealous, and vents his pique in this way: –

There they are, and Miss Lushington, no doubt, quite safe; for she is under the holy guidance of Pope Eustace the First, who has, of course, been delivering to her an edifying homily on the wickedness of the heathens of yore, who, as tradition tells us, in this very place let loose the wild beasts on poor Saint Paul! – Oh, no! by the bye, I believe I am wrong, and betraying my want of clergy,

and that it was not at all Saint Paul, nor was it here. But no matter, it would equally serve as a text to preach from, and from which to diverge to the degenerate *heathen* Christians of the present day, and all their naughty practices, and so end with an exhortation to ‘come out from among them, and be separate’; – and I am sure, Miss Lushington, you have most scrupulously conformed to that injunction this evening, for we have seen nothing of you since our arrival. But every one seems agreed it has been a *charming party of pleasure*, and I am sure we all feel much indebted to Mr Grey for having *suggested* it; and as he seems so capital a cicerone, I hope he will think of something else equally agreeable to *all*.

This drivelling kind of dialogue, and equally drivelling narrative, which, like a bad drawing, represents nothing, and barely indicates what is meant to be represented, runs through the book; and we have no doubt is considered by the amiable authoress to constitute an improving novel, which Christian mothers will do well to put into the hands of their daughters. But everything is relative; we have met with American vegetarians whose normal diet was dry meal, and who, when their appetite wanted stimulating, tickled it with *wet* meal; and so, we can imagine that there are Evangelical circles in which *The Old Grey Church* is devoured as a powerful and interesting fiction.

But, perhaps, the least readable of silly women’s novels, are the *modern-antique* species, which unfold to us the domestic life of Jannes and Jambres, the private love affairs of Sennacherib, or the mental struggles and ultimate conversion of Demetrius the silversmith. From most silly novels we can at least extract a laugh; but those of the modern-antique school have a ponderous, a leaden kind of fatuity, under which we groan. What can be more demonstrative of the inability of literary women to measure their own powers, than their frequent assumption of a task which can only be justified by the rarest concurrence of acquirement with genius? The finest effort to reanimate the past is of course only approximative – is always more or less an infusion of the modern spirit into the ancient form, –

Was ihr den Geist der Zeiten heisst,

Das ist im Grund der Herren eigner Geist,

In dem die Zeiten sich bespiegeln. [33]

Admitting that genius which has familiarized itself with all the relics of an ancient period can sometimes, by the force of its sympathetic divination, restore the missing notes in the ‘music of humanity’, and reconstruct the fragments into a whole which will really bring the remote past nearer to us, and interpret it to our duller apprehension, – this form of imaginative power must always be among the very rarest, because it demands as much accurate and minute knowledge as creative vigour. Yet we find ladies constantly choosing to make their mental mediocrity more conspicuous, by clothing it in a masquerade of ancient names; by putting their feeble sentimentality into the mouths of Roman vestals or Egyptian princesses, and attributing their rhetorical arguments to Jewish highpriests and Greek philosophers. A recent example of this heavy imbecility is *Adonijah*, a *Tale of the Jewish Dispersion*, which forms part of a series, ‘uniting,’ we are told, ‘taste, humour, and sound principles’. *Adonijah*, we presume, exemplifies the tale of ‘sound principles’; the taste and humour are to be found in other members of the series. We are told on the cover, that the incidents of this tale are ‘fraught with unusual interest’, and the preface winds up thus: ‘To those who feel interested in the dispersed of Israel and Judea, these pages may afford, perhaps, information on an important subject, as well as amusement’. Since the ‘important subject’ on which this book is to afford information is not specified, it may possibly lie in some esoteric meaning to which we have no key; but if it has relation to the dispersed of Israel and Judea at any period of their history, we believe a tolerably wellinformed school-girl already knows much more of it than she will find in this ‘Tale of the Jewish Dispersion’. *Adonijah* is simply the feeblest kind of love story, supposed to be instructive, we presume, because the hero is a Jewish captive, and the heroine a Roman vestal; because they and their friends are converted to Christianity after the shortest and easiest method approved by the ‘Society for Promoting the Conversion of the Jews’; and because, instead of being written in plain language, it is adorned with that peculiar style of grandiloquence which is held by some lady novelists to give an antique colouring; and which we recognize at once in such phrases as these: – ‘the splendid regnal talents undoubtedly possessed by the Emperor Nero’ – ‘the expiring scion of a lofty stem’ – ‘the virtuous

partner of his couch' – 'ah, by Vesta!' – and 'I tell thee, Roman'. Among the quotations which serve at once for instruction and ornament on the cover of this volume, there is one from Miss Sinclair, which informs us that 'Works of imagination are *avowedly* read by men of science, wisdom, and piety'; from which we suppose the reader is to gather the cheering inference that Dr Daubeney, Mr Mill, or Mr Maurice, may openly indulge himself with the perusal of *Adonijah*, without being obliged to secrete it among the sofa cushions, or read it by snatches under the dinner-table.

'Be not a baker if your head be made of butter,' says a homely proverb, which, being interpreted, may mean, let no woman rush into print who is not prepared for the consequences. We are aware that our remarks are in a very different tone from that of the reviewers who, with a perennial recurrence of precisely similar emotions, only paralleled, we imagine, in the experience of monthly nurses, tell one lady novelist after another that they 'hail' her productions 'with delight'. We are aware that the ladies at whom our criticism is pointed are accustomed to be told, in the choicest phraseology of puffery, that their pictures of life are brilliant, their characters well-drawn, their style fascinating, and their sentiments lofty. But if they are inclined to resent our plainness of speech, we ask them to reflect for a moment on the chary praise, and often captious blame, which their panegyrists give to writers whose works are on the way to become classics.

No sooner does a woman show that she has genius or effective talent, than she receives the tribute of being moderately praised and severely criticized. By a peculiar thermometric adjustment, when a woman's talent is at zero, journalistic approbation is at the boiling pitch; when she attains mediocrity, it is already at no more than summer heat; and if ever she reaches excellence, critical enthusiasm drops to the freezing point. Harriet Martineau, Currer Bell, and Mrs Gaskell have been treated as cavalierly as if they had been men. And every critic who forms a high estimate of the share women may ultimately take in literature, will, on principle, abstain from any exceptional indulgence towards the productions of literary women. For it must be plain to every one who looks impartially and extensively into feminine literature, that its greatest deficiencies are due hardly more to the want of intellectual power than to the want of those moral qualities that contribute to literary excellence –

patient diligence, a sense of the responsibility involved in publication, and an appreciation of the sacredness of the writer's art. In the majority of women's books you see that kind of facility which springs from the absence of any high standard; that fertility in imbecile combination or feeble imitation which a little self-criticism would check and reduce to barrenness; just as with a total want of musical ear people will sing out of tune, while a degree more melodic sensibility would suffice to render them silent. The foolish vanity of wishing to appear in print, instead of being counterbalanced by any consciousness of the intellectual or moral derogation implied in futile authorship, seems to be encouraged by the extremely false impression that to write *at all* is a proof of superiority in a woman. On this ground, we believe that the average intellect of women is unfairly represented by the mass of feminine literature, and that while the few women who write well are very far above the ordinary intellectual level of their sex, the many women who write ill are very far below it. So that, after all, the severer critics are fulfilling a chivalrous duty in depriving the mere fact of feminine authorship of any false prestige which may give it a delusive attraction, and in recommending women of mediocre faculties – as at least a negative service they can render their sex – to abstain from writing.

The standing apology for women who become writers without any special qualification is, that society shuts them out from other spheres of occupation. Society is a very culpable entity, and has to answer for the manufacture of many unwholesome commodities, from bad pickles to bad poetry. But society, like 'matter', and Her Majesty's Government, and other lofty abstractions, has its share of excessive blame as well as excessive praise. Where there is one woman who writes from necessity, we believe there are three women who write from vanity; and, besides, there is something so antiseptic in the mere healthy fact of working for one's bread, that the most trashy and rotten kind of feminine literature is not likely to have been produced under such circumstances. 'In all labour there is profit'; but ladies' silly novels, we imagine, are less the result of labour than of busy idleness.

Happily, we are not dependent on argument to prove that Fiction is a department of literature in which women can, after their kind, fully equal men. A cluster of great names, both living

and dead, rush to our memories in evidence that women can produce novels not only fine, but among the very finest; – novels, too, that have a precious speciality, lying quite apart from masculine aptitudes and experience. No educational restrictions can shut women out from the materials of fiction, and there is no species of art which is so free from rigid requirements. Like crystalline masses, it may take any form, and yet be beautiful; we have only to pour in the right elements – genuine observation, humour, and passion. But it is precisely this absence of rigid requirement which constitutes the fatal seduction of novel-writing to incompetent women. Ladies are not wont to be very grossly deceived as to their power of playing on the piano; here certain positive difficulties of execution have to be conquered, and incompetence inevitably breaks down. Every art which has its absolute *technique* is, to a certain extent, guarded from the intrusions of mere left-handed imbecility. But in novel-writing there are no barriers for incapacity to stumble against, no external criteria to prevent a writer from mistaking foolish facility for mastery. And so we have again and again the old story of La Fontaine's ass, who puts his nose to the flute, and, finding that he elicits some sound, exclaims, 'Moi, aussi, je joue de la flute'; – a fable which we commend, at parting, to the consideration of any feminine reader who is in danger of adding to the number of 'silly novels by lady novelists'.

[33] 'What you call the spirit of the age Is but the critic's spirit, in whose page The age itself is darkly glassed.'



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Miss Brill

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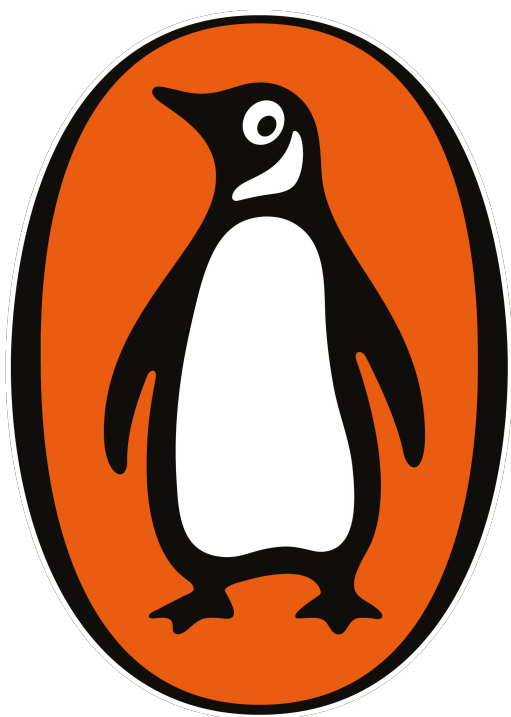
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“一如既往，
他再次觉得自己搂住了
某样永远也不会属于
自己的东西。
她太脆弱、
太珍贵，
一旦放手，
就会飞走。”



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时髦婚姻 [1]

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去车站的路上，威廉突然失望地想起，自己没给孩子们带任何东西。可怜的孩子！他们向来不依不饶，跑出来迎接他时，总是一样的话：“爸爸，你给我带什么啦？”他什么也没带，又不得不去火车站给他们买些糖果了。但之前的四个周六，他带的都是糖果。上周看见拿出来的又是一样的旧盒子，孩子们的脸都垮了下来。

帕迪说：“我之……之前就拿到过有红丝带的盒子了。”

约翰尼说：“我总是拿到粉色的。我讨厌粉色。”

那威廉该怎么办？这事似乎并不容易解决。从前，他可以叫辆出租车，去体面的玩具店，用五分钟为他们选点儿东西。但现在，他们已经有俄国玩具、法国玩具、塞尔维亚玩具，还有天知道哪儿来的玩具。一年多以前，伊莎贝尔就把老驴和机车之类的玩具拆烂了。因为，它们实在太“多愁善感”，“无益于培养孩子对形状的感知”。

“这点非常重要，”焕然一新的伊莎贝尔解释道，“小孩应该一开始就喜爱正确的东西，这样，今后才能节省不少时间。说真的，可怜的孩子如果得从小盯着这些可怕的东西，长大后多半会要求大人把自己送进皇家艺术学院吧。”

听她的口气，似乎对任何人来说，去皇家艺术学院一游，都肯定会立刻丧命……

“呃，我不知道，”威廉缓慢地说，“我像他们那么大时，常常拥着一块打了个结的旧毛巾入睡。”

焕然一新的伊莎贝尔看着他，眯起眼睛，微张着嘴。

“亲爱的威廉！我相信，你的确干得出这种事！”她换了种方式，哈哈大笑说。

不过，还是只能买糖果吧。威廉郁闷地想着，在兜里摸索零钱，付出租车费。他见过孩子们传递盒子分享——他们都是相当慷慨的小孩。然而伊莎贝尔珍视的朋友们则一点儿也不客气……

水果怎么样？威廉在车站里的一个水果摊前徘徊。给每人买个甜瓜如何？总不会甜瓜都得分着吃吧？或者给帕迪买个菠萝，给约翰尼

买个甜瓜？孩子们进餐时，伊莎贝尔的那些朋友几乎不可能溜进儿童室。尽管如此，威廉还是边买甜瓜，边厌恶地想象着：伊莎贝尔认识的某个年轻诗人肯定会找理由顺走一块儿，躲在儿童房门后吃。

他拎着两个笨重的包，大步朝他的那趟车走去。月台上很拥挤，列车已经进站。车门砰砰地开了又关，机车发出一声响亮的轰鸣，让匆忙来去的人们一脸茫然。威廉径直走向头等座的吸烟室，放好行李箱和包，从内袋掏出一大沓报纸，一屁股坐进角落，读了起来。

“再者，我们的客户还是很积极的……我们倾向于重新考虑……倘若……”啊，那样就好多了。威廉把扁塌的头发往后梳，腿伸过车厢地板。心中那种熟悉的啃噬感平息了。“至于我们的决定……”他拿出一支蓝色铅笔，慢慢在一段话下画线。

两个男人上车，经过他身边，朝较远的一个角落走去。一个年轻人把高尔夫球杆放在架子上，坐到他对面。列车轻轻一晃，启动了。威廉抬眼一瞥，看到炎热而明亮的车站渐行渐远。一个满脸通红的女孩追着车厢跑，一边挥手一边大喊，透着某种紧张又几近绝望的意味。“歇斯底里！”威廉没精打采地想。随后，他看见一个工人站在月台尽头，冲经过的列车咧嘴而笑，那张黑脸上满是油污。威廉想：“肮脏的生活！”然后，他便继续看起报纸来。

等再抬起头，窗外已是一片又一片田野，牲畜躲在幽暗的树下。一条宽阔的河流映入眼帘，光着身子的小孩在浅滩上泼水玩。随后，这一幕也溜走了。天空亮得苍白，一只鸟在高处滑翔，仿佛宝石上的一粒微尘。

“我们已经审查过客户的信函……”最后一句在他脑海中回荡，“我们已经审查过……”威廉把那句话读了一遍又一遍，还是徒劳无益。它似乎断在中间，田野、天空、飞翔的鸟、河水，一切都在说：“伊莎贝尔。”每周六下午，都会上演同样的场景。去见伊莎贝尔的途中，他总会展开无数想象：她在车站上，站得离其他人稍微远了一些。她坐在外面敞着门的出租车里，她在花园门边，她走过干枯的草坪，她站在门口，或门厅里。

她清透温柔的声音说：“是威廉啊。”“你好，威廉！”或“威廉来了呀！”他会碰触她冰冰的手和凉凉的脸颊。

多么精致又清凉的伊莎贝尔啊！还是个小男孩时，他就很喜欢跑进刚刚下过雨的花园，摇晃头顶的玫瑰花丛。伊莎贝尔就是那玫瑰花丛，花瓣柔软，闪闪发亮，清透凉爽。他仍是那个小男孩，如今却不再跑进花园，也不会欢笑着摇晃花丛。胸中又升起那种钝钝的、持续不断的啃噬感。他收回双腿，把报纸扔到一边，闭上了眼。

“那是什么，伊莎贝尔？是什么？”他柔声问道。他们在新房子的

卧室里，伊莎贝尔坐在梳妆台前的一张彩绘凳上，台面上堆满了黑色和绿色的小盒子。

“什么是什么，威廉？”她倾身向前，漂亮的浅色头发垂到脸上。

“啊，你知道！”站在陌生房间的中央，他觉得自己也像个陌生人。伊莎贝尔飞快地转过身面向他。

“噢，威廉！”她拿起梳子，哀求地大声说，“求你了！求你别这么一本正经、满脸悲痛的样子。你说的话、露出的表情或给出的暗示，总是在控诉我变了。就因为我开始结识志趣相投的人，出去得勤了些，真正开始热爱每样东西，你就表现得我好似——”伊莎贝尔把头发甩到身后，笑了，“好似扼杀了我们的爱情之类的。真是太荒谬！”她咬着唇，“而且，这太疯狂了，威廉。甚至这座新房子和你硬塞给我的那些仆人，也太疯狂。”

“伊莎贝尔！”

“没错，没错，从某种程度上来说，这些都是事实。”伊莎贝尔飞快地说，“你认为它们是坏兆头。噢，我知道你是这么认为的，我能感觉到！”她轻声说，“每次你上楼来，我都能感觉到。但我们不能在那个逼仄的小窝里生活了，威廉。至少现实一点儿吧！唉，孩子们待在那儿，甚至没有足够的活动空间。”

对，这话没错。每天早晨，他从卧室回来，都发现伊莎贝尔和孩子们待在后面的客厅里，不是在骑着铺在沙发后背上的豹皮，就是把伊莎贝尔的桌子当柜台，玩着商店游戏。要么，就是帕迪坐在壁炉前的地毯上，把铜质的小火铲当成船桨，划船试图逃命；与此同时，约翰尼则拿着火钳射杀海盗。每天晚上，都得把他们一个接一个地背上狭窄的楼梯，送到又胖又老的保姆那儿去。

没错，他想，那的确是座逼仄的小房子。一座有蓝色窗帘的小白房子，窗台上的花盆箱里种着矮牵牛花。威廉会在门口跟朋友们打招呼：“瞧见我们的矮牵牛花了吗？非常适合伦敦，不是吗？”

但最愚蠢、最不可思议的是：他压根没想到伊莎贝尔竟然不像自己一样开心。天哪，多蠢呀！在那些日子里，他一点儿也不知道，她其实非常讨厌那座不方便的小房子，并认为那个胖保姆在宠坏孩子们。她十分孤独，渴望结识新朋友，接触新的音乐和画作之类的东西。他们要是没去参加莫伊拉·莫里森工作室的聚会；要是离开时，莫伊拉·莫里森没说“自私的男人，我要拯救你的妻子，她就像是高雅小巧的缇坦妮雅 [2]”；如果伊莎贝尔没有跟莫伊拉去巴黎……如果……如果……

列车停在另一站——贝汀福德到了。天哪！还有十分钟他就要到

站了。威廉把报纸塞回内袋。对面的年轻人早就不见了，这会儿，另外两个也下了车。傍晚的阳光照在身着棉裙的女人和光着脚丫、微微有些晒黑的孩子身上，同时也照耀着一朵柔软光洁的黄花：花儿粗糙的叶片四处蔓延，已经爬上一片石壁。微风拂过窗口，带来大海的味道。威廉想：伊莎贝尔这周末也还是和同一群人一起吗？

他想起从前一家四口去度假的日子。为了照顾小孩，他们还带上了一个名叫罗丝的农场小姑娘。伊莎贝尔穿紧身运动套衫，头发编成辫子，看起来就跟十四岁一样。天哪！当时，他的鼻子被晒到脱皮！他们吃得真多，睡得也多，双腿交缠着，睡在那么大一一张羽毛褥子上……想到伊莎贝尔若是知道自己的这番多愁善感会有多惊恐，威廉不由得冷冷一笑。

“喂，威廉！”她果然在车站，正如他料想的那样，站得稍微离其他人远一些。威廉的心怦怦直跳——她是一个人。

“哎，伊莎贝尔！”威廉盯着她，觉得她看起来真漂亮。他得说点儿什么，“你真好看。”

“是吗？”伊莎贝尔说，“我倒不怎么觉得。快点，你那趟讨厌的列车晚点。出租车都在外面等着啦。”经过检票员身边时，她把手轻轻放在他胳膊上，“我们都来接你了，”她说，“不过，得去糖果店接博比·凯恩，我们把他留在那儿了。”

“哦！”威廉说。目前，他也只能说出这么多了。

等候的出租车开着灯。炫目的强光中，比尔·亨特和丹尼斯·格林伸开四肢摊在一边，帽子歪扣在脸上。另一边，莫伊拉·莫里森戴着顶活像巨大草莓的软帽，上蹿下跳。

“没有冰！没有冰！没有冰！”她快活地叫道。

丹尼斯附和的声音从帽子下传来：“只有鱼贩子那里能搞到冰。”

比尔·亨特冒出头，补充道：“里头还有一整条鱼呢。”

“噢，真讨厌！”伊莎贝尔哀号道。她跟威廉解释，说等待期间，几人如何如何满城找冰，“就是从黄油开始，一切都走起了下坡路。”

“我们将来得用黄油给自己行涂油礼了。”丹尼斯说，“威廉，愿汝之头，不会缺少油膏。”

“嗨，”威廉说，“我们怎么坐？我最好还是坐司机旁边吧。”

“不，博比·凯恩坐司机旁边，”伊莎贝尔说，“你坐莫伊拉和我中间。”出租车启动了，“那些神秘包裹里装的什么？”

“被砍——下——的人头！”比尔·亨特边说，边在帽子下瑟瑟发

抖。

“噢，是水果！”伊莎贝尔听起来很高兴，“明智的威廉！一个甜瓜和一个菠萝，真是太棒啦！”

“别，等一会儿，”威廉笑着说。不过，他其实很紧张，“这是我给孩子们买的。”

“噢，亲爱的！”伊莎贝尔哈哈大笑，伸手挽住他的胳膊，“不行，如果吃掉这些，他们肯定会痛苦得打滚。”她拍拍他的手，“下次你给他们带点儿别的。我拒绝与我的菠萝分开！”

“无情的伊莎贝尔！快让我闻闻它的味儿！”莫伊拉说，一把抱住威廉，哀哀地唤了声“噢！”，草莓女帽朝前掉下去，让她的声音也变得模糊不清。

“一位爱上了菠萝的夫人。”丹尼斯说。出租车停在一家带条纹遮帘的小店前。博比·凯恩抱着满怀小包裹走出来。

“真希望这些都不错，我是按颜色挑的。有些圆圆的东西看起来棒极了。瞧瞧这牛轧糖！”他欣喜若狂地嚷道，“快瞧瞧！优雅得跟芭蕾舞似的！”

可就在这时，店员走了出来。“噢！我忘了！这些都还没付钱。”博比说，一副挺害怕的样子。伊莎贝尔给了店员一张钞票，博比又喜笑颜开起来，“你好，威廉！我坐司机旁边。”于是，一身白衣，光着脑袋的他把袖子卷到肩膀上，一下子跳进座位，大喊道：“前进 [3] ！”

茶点后，趁其他人去游泳，威廉留下来跟孩子们讲和。不过，约翰尼和帕迪已经睡着了，天光那玫瑰般的红色渐暗，蝙蝠也已经出洞，游泳的人们尚未归来。威廉溜达到楼下时，女仆正拿着一盏灯穿过门厅。他跟着她进了客厅。客厅很长，漆成了黄色。威廉对面的墙上有人画了个比真人还大的年轻人：那人颤着双腿，正向一位年轻女士献上一朵大眼菊。那女人一只胳膊很短，另一只却又细又长。椅子和沙发上挂了很多黑色的布条，上面溅满了碎鸡蛋似的痕迹。无论往哪儿看，似乎都能看到装满烟蒂的烟灰缸。威廉在其中的一张扶手椅里坐下。如今，即便伸手探向身侧，似乎也不会从这个“诺亚方舟”上触碰到一只三条腿的羊、少了一边犄角的牛抑或是肥鸽子；只可能是再捞起一本看起来满是污秽诗歌的平装小书……他想起内袋里的那沓报纸，但饥饿和疲惫让他无心去读。门开了，声音从厨房传出。仆人们旁若无人地说着话，仿佛整座房子里只有他们。突然，传来一阵刺耳的大笑，接着是同样大声的嘘，仆人们终于想起他也在。威廉起身，经过落地窗，走进花园。站在阴影里，他听见去游泳的几人走上沙土路，他们的说话声打破了沉寂。

“我想，得靠莫伊拉耍耍小聪明啦。”

莫伊拉哀叹一声。

“我们周末应该搞台能放《群山少女》的留声机。”

“噢，不！噢，不！”伊莎贝尔嚷道，“那对威廉不公平。伙计们，对他好点儿！他就待到明天傍晚。”

“把他交给我吧，”博比·凯恩大声说，“我特别擅长照顾人。”

门开了又关。威廉走上阳台，几人看见了他。“你好啊，威廉！”博比·凯恩甩着毛巾，在干枯的草坪上跳跃、踮着脚尖旋转，“威廉，你没来真遗憾。那水真是棒极啦！之后我们又去了一家小酒吧，喝黑刺李金酒。”

其他人都走到房子跟前。“喂，伊莎贝尔，”博比大声说，“我今晚穿尼金斯基裙怎么样？”

“不，”伊莎贝尔说，“没人需要盛装打扮。我们快饿死啦。威廉也饿了。来吧，朋友们 [4]，去吃沙丁鱼。”

“沙丁鱼是我找到的！”莫伊拉高举着一个盒子，冲进门厅。

“一位拿着盒沙丁鱼的夫人。”丹尼斯严肃地说。

“威廉，伦敦怎么样？”比尔·亨特问。他正在拔一瓶威士忌的软木塞。

“噢，伦敦没多大变化。”威廉回答。

“美好的老伦敦。”博比边戳沙丁鱼，边十分真诚地说。

但不一会儿，大家便把威廉抛到了脑后。莫伊拉·莫里森开始琢磨一个人的腿在水下到底是什么颜色。

“我的是最浅、最浅的蘑菇色。”

比尔和丹尼斯只顾大口大口地狼吞虎咽。伊莎贝尔替大家斟满酒杯、更换盘子、寻找火柴，笑得非常开心。有一次，她说：“比尔，我真心希望你能把它画下来。”

“把什么画下来？”比尔大声问，满嘴都是面包。

“我们呀，”伊莎贝尔说，“围坐一桌的样子。再过二十年来看，一定非常迷人。”

比尔眯起眼，边嚼东西边粗鲁地说：“灯光不对，太黄了。”说完，他便继续大吃起来。可就是这副样子，伊莎贝尔似乎也很着迷。

但晚饭后，大家累得除了打哈欠，其他什么也没做。等天色足够

晚，他们便上床睡觉了……

第二天下午，威廉直到等出租车时，才得以跟伊莎贝尔独处。他把行李箱搬进门厅，伊莎贝尔离开其他人，走到他面前。她俯身提起行李箱。“真够沉的呀！”她有些尴尬地笑了笑，“我来拿吧！我帮你提到门口。”

“不用了，怎么能让你提呢？”威廉说，“怎么也不该你来提，快给我。”

“噢，请让我提吧，”伊莎贝尔说，“我想提，真的。”两人默默地朝前走，威廉觉得这会儿没什么好说的。

“到啦。”伊莎贝尔洋洋得意地说，放下手提箱，焦急地望向沙土路，“这次我似乎都没怎么见到你。”她喘着气说，“真是太短了，不是吗？我觉得你才刚来。下次——”出租车开进了视野，“希望伦敦的那些人能好好照顾你。抱歉孩子们整天都在外面，但那是尼尔小姐早就安排好的。他们肯定会特别遗憾没有见到你。可怜的威廉，这就要回伦敦了。”出租车掉了个头，“再见！”她匆匆吻了他一下，便离开了。

田野、树木和篱笆不断闪过。他们摇摇晃晃地穿过空旷晦暗的小镇，开上车站所在的陡坡。列车已经进站。威廉径直走向头等座的吸烟室，一屁股坐进角落。不过，这次他没去管那些报纸。他交叠双臂，用以抵抗那钝钝的、持续不断的啃噬感，开始在脑中给伊莎贝尔写信。

和往常一样，邮件又晚了。他们坐在屋外彩色阳伞下的长椅里。只有博比·凯恩躺在伊莎贝尔脚边的草坪上。空气沉闷又压抑，这天就如一面低垂的旗帜，丧失了活力。

“你们觉得，天堂里会有周一吗？”博比孩子气地问道。

丹尼斯嘀咕道：“天堂就是漫长的周一。”

但伊莎贝尔忍不住琢磨：昨天晚上大家吃的鲑鱼到底去哪儿了。她本想午餐吃蛋黄酱鱼，可现在……

莫伊拉已经睡着。睡觉是她的最新发现。“真是太棒了。只需闭上眼睛就行。无比美妙。”

当面色红润的邮差骑着三轮车，沿沙土路有节奏地驶来时，让人觉得那车把手真该变成船桨。

比尔·亨特放下书。“信来了。”他殷勤地说。然而，没心肝的邮差，噢，多恶毒的世界呀！只有一封信，一封厚厚的、寄给伊莎贝尔的信。此外连份报纸都没有。

“只有威廉会给我写信。”伊莎贝尔悲伤地说。

“威廉……这么快？”

“他是把结婚证书作为委婉的提醒，寄回来了吧。”

“每个人都有结婚证书吗？我还以为只有仆人们才有。”

“一页又一页！瞧瞧她！一位读信的夫人。”丹尼斯说。

亲爱的、珍贵的伊莎贝尔。威廉的信写了一页又一页。伊莎贝尔读着读着，惊讶渐渐变成窒息。到底是什么引得威廉……这封信可太奇特了……是什么让他……她觉得困惑，也越来越激动，甚至感到害怕。威廉就是这样，不是吗？真荒谬，这当然很荒谬，太可笑了。“哈哈！噢，天哪！”她在干什么呀？伊莎贝尔猛地靠回到椅子上，哈哈大笑，一直笑到不得不停下来为止。

“快，告诉我们。”其他人说，“你一定要告诉我们。”

“我正准备说呢。”伊莎贝尔咯咯笑着说。她坐直身子，拿起信，冲他们挥了挥，“快过来，”她说，“听着，它棒极了，是封情书！”

“一封情书！多棒呀！”亲爱的伊莎贝尔。可她刚开始，就被他们的笑声打断了。

“继续，伊莎贝尔，它非常完美。”

“简直是最了不起的发现。”

“噢，伊莎贝尔，一定要念下去！”

上帝保佑，亲爱的，你追求快乐时，我应该成了你的累赘吧。

“噢！噢！噢！”

“嘘！嘘！嘘！”

伊莎贝尔继续念着。等她念完，所有人都几近疯狂：博比在草地上滚来滚去，几乎啜泣起来。

“你一定得让我把它原封不动地写进新书，整篇都要写进去，”丹尼斯坚定地说，“我可以给它整整一章。”

“噢，伊莎贝尔，”莫伊拉呻吟道，“他把你搂在怀中那段，真是妙极了。”

“我一直以为，离婚案子里提到的这种信件都是瞎编的。但在这封信面前，它们简直都显得苍白无力啦。”

“给我。让我瞧瞧，我亲自读一读。”博比·凯恩说。

然而，让他们吃惊的是，伊莎贝尔把信揉成了一团。她不再大笑，反而飞快地瞥了一眼所有人，显得非常疲惫。“不，现在还不

行，现在还不行。”她结结巴巴地说。

没等他们反应过来，她已经穿过门厅冲进屋子，爬上楼梯，回到自己的卧室。她坐在床边。“真恶毒、真可憎、太糟糕、太粗鲁了。”伊莎贝尔嘟囔道。她用指关节按了按眼睛，前后晃动着身子。然后，她又看见了他们，但并非四个，更像是四十个，在她读威廉来信时，伸出双手，一脸讥讽、嘲笑和奚落。噢，她做了件多么令人憎恶的事！她怎么能做这种事！上帝保佑，亲爱的，你追求快乐时，我应该成了你的累赘吧。威廉！伊莎贝尔把脸埋进枕头。可她觉得，甚至沉重的卧室都知道，她是一个多么肤浅、虚荣的无用之人……

这时，楼下花园传来呼喊声。

“伊莎贝尔，我们要去游泳了。快来！”

“威廉之妻，快来呀！”

“走之前再叫她一次，再叫一次！”

伊莎贝尔坐起身。就是现在，现在她必须做出决定。是跟他们去，还是留在这儿给威廉写信？应该做哪样？“我得做决定了。”噢，但怎么可能还有任何疑问？她当然要留在这儿写信。

“缇坦妮雅！”莫伊拉尖声叫道。

“伊莎——贝尔？”

不，这事太难了。“我……我要跟他们去，待会儿再给威廉写信吧。另外找时间写。待会儿。现在不写。不过，我肯定会写的。”伊莎贝尔匆匆想。

于是，她用自己那焕然一新的方式，哈哈大笑着跑下楼去。

[1] Marriage à-la-mode作为本篇的题目，源自威廉·贺加斯（英国著名画家、版画家、讽刺画家和欧洲连环漫画的先驱）一组以讽刺为主旨的油画的名字。油画主要探讨了关于婚姻与道德、爱情与金钱的关系。——编者注

[2] Titania，最早出现于古罗马诗人奥维德的《变形记》中，作为女神戴安娜的别称，后出现于莎士比亚的《仲夏夜之梦》，以妖精王后的身份登场。此名多被文学创作所沿用，代表美丽的女性。——编者注

[3] 原文为意大利语。（说明：书中脚注除特别标明之外，均为译者注。）

[4] 原文为法语。

布里尔小姐

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蓝天上铺散着金色，大片的光斑落在市政公园，像白葡萄酒溅在地上。虽然天气这么好，布里尔小姐还是很高兴戴上了毛皮围脖。尽管空气里一丝风也没有，但一张开嘴，便能感觉到淡淡的凉意——好似啜饮冰水前，会感觉到的那种凉意。而且，天上时不时就不知从哪儿飘下来一片树叶。布里尔小姐抬起手，摸了摸毛皮围脖。多可爱的小东西呀！再次摸到它的感觉真棒。这天下午，她才从盒子里把它拿出来，抖掉防蛀粉，好好地刷了一番，让那双昏暗的小眼睛重新焕发生气。那双忧伤的小眼睛仿佛在问：“我怎么了？”噢，又看到那双眼睛从红鸭绒垫中冲自己眨动，真是太甜美了！但那个用某种黑色材料做的鼻子，却不怎么牢固了。一定是不知怎的，被撞了一下。没关系，到时候……等非修补不可的时候，用一点儿黑色封蜡就行……小淘气鬼！没错，她真觉得这东西是个小淘气鬼。它正在她左耳旁咬自己的尾巴呢。她可以把它取下来，放在膝上抚摸。她感觉双手和胳膊一阵刺痛，但她想多半是走路的缘故。呼吸间，某种轻柔伤感——不，不能说伤感——是某种柔和的东西，似乎在胸中游走。

今天下午出来的人，比上周日多得多。乐队的声音也更大、更欢快。因为，演出季开始了。虽然一年到头，每周日乐队都会演奏，但非演出季期间，乐音绝对跟现在不同。那时，乐队仿佛只演奏给自家听。也就是说，没有外人在场的情况下，它才不在乎到底演奏得如何。指挥似乎也换了件新外套，不是吗？布里尔小姐非常肯定，那衣服就是新的。指挥脚擦着地面，挥舞着双臂，活像一只即将打鸣的大公鸡。乐队成员坐在绿色的圆形乐池里，鼓着腮帮，目光炯炯地瞪着乐谱。听，现在开始了柔和和清亮的一段——真美呀！一小串明亮欢快的调子。布里尔小姐觉得，这段肯定还会再奏一次。果不其然。她扬起头，笑了。

只有两个人跟她分享“专座”：一个是穿天鹅绒外套、双手紧紧攥着根大雕花手杖的和善老头；还有一个是坐得笔直、绣花围裙上放了团毛线的大个子老太太。他们都不说话。真扫兴！因为布里尔小姐向来期望交谈。她觉得，自己真的已经成为这方面的专家：坐在交谈的人们中间，若无其事地偷听，融入他们的生活，哪怕只是一会儿也行。

她斜瞥了一眼那对老人。或许，他们很快就会离开。上周日也不像平常一样有趣。那天，旁边是个英国人和他的妻子。男的戴了顶非常难看的巴拿马帽，女的则穿了双带扣长筒靴。其间她一直在不停地该戴眼镜，说尽管知道需要眼镜，但不管买哪种，肯定都会摔碎，也多半戴不了多久，所以买了也不会有什么好处。男人始终都很有耐心，提出各种建议：金边的、镜腿弯曲，能挂在耳朵上的，或鼻梁架内侧带小衬垫的。不，任何一款都无法让她满意。“眼镜总会从我鼻子上滑下去！”布里尔小姐真想使劲摇她几下。

那对老人仍像雕塑一样坐在长凳上。没关系，总有人群可以观察。花坛和乐队所在的圆形乐池前，一对对情侣和三五成群的人来来往往，或驻足交谈，或互相问候，要么就是从老乞丐手中买一把花。乞丐行乞的浅盘固定在栏杆上。小孩嬉笑着，在人群中蹿来蹿去。小男孩脖子上系着大大的丝绸领结，法国洋娃娃般的小女孩们则穿着天鹅绒和蕾丝衣服。有时，一个蹒跚学步的小家伙突然从树下摇摇摆摆地走出来，又突然停住脚步，瞪着眼睛，啪的一声坐到地上，直到娇小的妈妈迈开大步，如小母鸡般冲出来，骂骂咧咧地去救他。其他人则坐在长凳或绿椅上，一个又一个周日过去，几乎总是老样子。布里尔小姐常常发现，差不多所有人都有些可笑之处。他们古怪、沉默，几乎都是老人。那副凝望着某处的神情，仿佛他们刚从某个幽暗的小房间出来，或者……甚至刚从壁橱里出来。

圆形乐池后，纤长的树枝叶低垂。透过那些黄叶，能看到一线大海。海的后面是蓝色的天幕，隐约透着金光的云朵飘散其上。

当当当，嘀嗒！嘀嗒！嗒嘀嗒嘀嗒！乐队开始演奏。

两位红衣女郎走过，迎向两个穿蓝军装的小伙。四人欢笑着，凑成对儿，手挽手地走了。两个戴着滑稽草帽的农妇牵着漂亮的烟灰色毛驴，神色凝重地走了过去。一个面色苍白、神情冰冷的修女匆匆而过。一位漂亮女士走来，掉了一束紫罗兰，一个小男孩追上去，把花捡起来递给她。她接过花，却又扔掉了，仿佛它们已经被下了毒。天哪！布里尔小姐真不知道该不该欣赏这种行为！这时，在她面前，一位戴白鼬皮无檐帽的女士跟一位穿灰衣的绅士碰了头。绅士个头很高，行为拘谨，面色庄严。而那位夫人戴的白鼬皮无檐帽，是她在头发曾经金黄时买的。现在，她的头发、脸，甚至眼睛，一切都跟那顶破旧的白鼬皮帽一样，变成了灰色。她抬起戴着干净手套的手，轻轻拍了下嘴唇。如今，那只手也变成细小的黄爪了。噢，见到他，她真高兴，简直太高兴了！她就知道下午会碰上他。她绘声绘色地讲述自己去过哪儿，每一处都讲，这儿，那儿，还有沿着海边走的情景。今天天气可真不错啊，对吧？或许，他不这样认为？……可他摇摇头，点燃一支烟，慢悠悠地朝她的脸深深喷了一大口。而在她说笑着

时，他就把火柴棒一弹，继续朝前走了。只剩下戴白鼬皮无檐帽的夫人。她的笑容比任何时候都灿烂，但即便乐队，似乎也知道她是什么感觉，乐音变得更加轻柔舒缓。只有大鼓一遍又一遍地敲出：“狠心的人！狠心的人！”她要怎么做？接下来会发生什么？然而，布里尔小姐正在纳闷时，戴白鼬皮无檐帽的夫人已经抬起手，仿佛见到了什么更有趣的人；就这样，她脚步轻快地走开了。乐音再次改变，变得前所未有的快，也更活泼了。跟布里尔小姐同坐的那对老人站起身，大步离开了。那长胡子老头真好笑，虽走得一瘸一拐，却正好和上节拍，还差点儿被并排走来的四个女孩撞倒。

噢，这一切真迷人！她好享受呀！她喜欢坐在这儿，观察周遭的一切！多像一出戏剧。这就是一出戏剧。谁能相信后面的天空不是画出来的？但直到一只棕色小狗隆重地快步跑来，接着又如“剧场”小狗，一只仿佛被下了药的小家伙般，慢悠悠地跑开，布里尔小姐才恍然大悟，到底是什么让这一切如此激动人心——他们都在舞台上。他们不仅是观众，不但在看戏，也在演戏。即便她，也扮演了其中的一个角色，每周日都来。毫无疑问，她要是没来，肯定会有人注意到。终究，她也是剧中的一员。真奇怪，以前怎么没注意到这点？难怪她每周都要同一时间从家里出发——演出不能迟到啊！难怪跟她的英国小孩们讲起自己周日下午如何度过时，她会生出那般古怪又羞涩的感觉。难怪呀！布里尔小姐差点儿大笑出声。她在舞台上。她想起自己每周都花四个下午，给一位躺在花园里的病弱老绅士读报。她已经相当习惯那颗躺在棉枕上的虚弱脑袋、那双凹陷的眼睛、张开的嘴和高挺清瘦的鼻子。他如果死了，她或许好几个星期都不会注意到，也不会在意。但突然间，他知道是个女演员在给自己读报。“女演员！”苍老的头抬起，年迈的眼中两点光芒闪动，“你是——一个女演员吗？”布里尔小姐抚平报纸，仿佛那是她的台词本。然后，她温柔地说：“嗯，我当女演员已经很久啦。”

乐队已经停了一会儿，此刻又开始演奏，声音听上去温暖、和煦，却透着一丝凉意——那是什么呢？不是忧伤，不，不是忧伤，而是某种让人想放声歌唱的东西。调子越来越高，越来越高，灯亮了。布里尔小姐觉得，下一刻，所有人，整个剧团，都会开始歌唱。年轻人、欢笑着的同行之人会首先唱起来，男士们勇敢坚定的声音也会加入其中。然后，她，她也会，以及其他坐在长椅上的人，都会以伴唱的形式加入。那声音低低的，几乎没有高低起伏，那么美……那么动人……布里尔小姐热泪盈眶，微笑着看向剧团的其他成员。是的，我们理解，我们明白。她这么想着——尽管她并不知道大家究竟明白了什么。

就在这时，一个姑娘和一个小伙子走过来，坐在刚才那对老人的位置上。他们穿得很漂亮，显然正在热恋中。当然，这就是男女主人

公。他们刚刚走下男方父亲的游艇。布里尔小姐仍在无声地歌唱，也仍挂着颤抖的笑容，准备倾听他们的谈话。

“不，现在不行，”姑娘说，“别在这儿，我不行。”

“为什么不行？因为那边那个愚蠢的老家伙吗？”小伙问，“她干吗到这儿来？谁会想让她来啊？这愚蠢的老太太干吗不留在家里？”

“她的毛……毛皮围脖真滑稽，”女孩咯咯笑着说，“简直像条炸牙鳕。”

“嘿，赶紧滚吧！”小伙子气鼓鼓地嘀咕道，然后又说，“告诉我吧，亲爱的小——”

“不，这儿不行。”女孩接着说，“现在还不行。”

回家的路上，她通常会在面包店买一片蜂蜜蛋糕，作为周日对自己的特别款待。有时，这片面包里会有一颗杏仁，有时没有。有或没有，差别可大了。这样一颗杏仁，就像带回家的一份小礼物、一个惊喜，是某种完全有可能不出现的东西。有杏仁的周日，她都会匆匆赶回家，精力充沛地划燃火柴，烧好茶水。

今天，她却没去面包店，反而爬上楼梯，走进又黑又小的房间——一个壁橱一般的房间。她坐在红鸭绒垫上，坐了很长时间。放毛皮围脖的盒子就在床上。她飞快地解下围脖，看也没看，就放进盒里。然而，关上盖子时，她觉得，自己听见什么东西在哭。

陌生人

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码头上的那一小群人觉得，它似乎永远都不会动了。它静静地躺在涟漪阵阵的灰色水面，那般庞大，一动不动。一圈烟雾在它上空缭绕不去，一大群海鸥尖叫着，冲向船尾排出的厨房残渣。你只能看见船上的人们走来走去，像一群苍蝇围着灰色桌布上的菜肴上下飞动。其他苍蝇则聚集在栏杆边。下层甲板闪过一道白光，可能是厨师或女服务员的围裙。某位乘客像一只黑色小蜘蛛，顺着梯子，飞快地朝驾驶台走去。

人群前方，有个看上去很壮实的中年男子。他穿着不凡，一身灰色大衣，围着灰色丝绸围巾，戴着厚厚的手套和深色软帽。他转着一把折叠起来的雨伞，大踏步地走来走去。看起来，他似乎是码头上这一小群人的首领，起到了将众人聚集起来的作用，效果介乎牧羊犬和牧羊人之间。

但他多傻啊，真是个大傻瓜，居然没有带望远镜！而且，这一群人里，竟然找不出一副望远镜。

“真奇怪，斯科特先生，我们竟然谁都没想到要带副望远镜。原本可以激起一点儿船上的反应，想办法给他们点儿信号也行啊。说‘别迟疑，请靠岸，当地人并无恶意’或者‘大伙正在欢迎你们。全部赦免！’怎样？呃？”

哈蒙德先生急切地瞥了一眼，眼神虽然十分紧张，却也非常友善、充满信任。他的眼神扫过码头上的每一个人，甚至包括懒懒靠在舷梯上的那几个老伙计。他们知道，每个人都知道，哈蒙德太太也在那艘船上。他如此激动，以至于从未怀疑：这个惊人的事实对码头上的每个人也意义非凡。这个事实温暖了他的心，让他更贴近他们。他断定，他们就是一群体面的人。舷梯旁那几个老伙计也是善良、可靠的人。天哪，那是怎样的胸膛啊！他挺起胸膛，把戴着厚手套的双手插进衣兜，掂着脚跟来回晃悠。

“是啊，过去的十个月，我太太一直待在欧洲。我们的大女儿去年结婚，她去探望她。当时，我亲自把她送到克劳福德这么远的地方。所以，我想，我最好还是到这儿来接她回去。嗯，是啊，没错。”精明的灰眸再次眯起，焦急又快速地搜寻那艘一动不动的班轮。他的大衣又没扣扣子。那块细小的奶油黄色的怀表再次被掏出

来。他第二十次……第五十次……第一百次地计算起来。

“让我想想……医生的汽艇两点十五分出发。现在刚好四点二十八分。那就是说，医生已经离开两小时十三分钟了。两小时又十三分钟呀！哟嗬！”他发出一声类似口哨的奇怪嘘声，啪地再次合上表盖，“但我认为，如果发生了什么事，应该会告诉我们的。你说对吗，加文先生。”

“噢，是呀，哈蒙德先生！我不觉得有什么……有什么值得担心的，”加文先生说着，在鞋跟上敲熄了烟斗，“与此同时——”

“的确如此！一点儿没错！”哈蒙德先生大声说，“真烦人！”他快速地走来走去，又在斯科特夫妇和加文先生间停了下来，“而且，天色越来越黑了。”他挥舞着那把折叠起来的伞，仿佛黄昏至少可以礼貌地回避一下。然而，暮色仍旧缓缓降临，如一块污渍，在水面缓缓晕开。小琼·斯科特拉了拉妈妈的手。

“我要喝茶，妈妈！”她哭喊道。

“我就知道你喝茶了，”哈蒙德先生说，“我看，所有女士都想喝茶了吧。”他友善、热切、几近慈悲的一瞥再次扫过众人。他想知道，珍妮是否正在那边客轮的交谊厅喝最后一杯茶。尽管希望如此，但他知道她不会。以她的性格，她不会离开甲板。那样的话，船上的服务员或许会给她送去一杯。不管怎样，他要是在那儿，一定设法亲自给她弄一杯。一时间，他仿佛已经上了甲板，站在她身边，以自己特有的方式俯视她，伸出小手握住杯子，喝着船上最后一杯茶……但此时此刻，他却在这儿。天知道那个该死的船长要在水中徘徊到什么时候。他又转过身，前前后后地走来走去。他一直走到出租车停车场，确定自己的车夫还在，才猛一转身，走向人群中。那些人在一箱箱的香蕉下挤作一团。小琼·斯科特仍吵着要喝茶。可怜的小家伙！他希望他身上揣了一块巧克力。

“过来，琼！”他说，“想举高高吗？”他温柔又轻巧地举起小女孩，放在一个高一些的木桶上。抱起她，把她扶稳的过程，竟奇妙地让他轻松了不少。

“坐稳啦！”他说，伸出一只胳膊稳住她。

“噢，不用担心琼，哈蒙德先生！”斯科特太太说。

“没关系，斯科特太太，一点儿也不麻烦。我很乐意。琼是我的小伙伴，是吗，琼？”

“嗯，哈蒙德先生。”琼边说边伸出手指，在他帽檐的凹陷处游走。

她却突然抓住他的耳朵，大声叫着：“看，哈蒙德先生！它动了！看，它进港了！”

天哪！真的动了。终于动了！它慢慢地、慢慢地掉转头。水面上远远传来铃声，一大股蒸汽冲入空中。海鸥拍打着翅膀，如一张张白纸屑般飞了起来。那低沉的震动究竟是来自引擎的轰鸣，还是他的心，哈蒙德先生已经说不清。不管那是什么，他都得鼓起勇气，才能承受住。这时，老船长——如今的港务长约翰逊先生胳膊下夹着个皮公文包，沿着码头大步走来。

“琼没事的，”斯科特先生说，“我来扶住她。”他来得正是时候。哈蒙德先生彻底忘了琼，快步冲上前，去迎接约翰逊老船长。

“呀，船长！”紧张又热切的声音再次响起，“你终于对我们开恩了呀。”

“哈蒙德先生，怪我可没用，”约翰逊老船长喘着气，盯着班轮说，“哈蒙德太太在船上，是吧？”

“是啊，是啊！”哈蒙德说。他始终站在港务长身边，“哈蒙德太太在那儿。哈——喽！我们现在不用等太久啦！”

巨大的班轮，在船上的叮零零响个不停的电话声中，在水拍击船体的海浪声中，重重地向他们压过来。船头劈开幽暗的水面，海水在两侧卷起大片大片的白色浪花。哈蒙德和港务长始终站在众人前头。哈蒙德摘下帽子，目光在甲板上来回搜寻——那儿挤满乘客。他挥舞着帽子，朝着对面大声呼喊“哈——喽！”，他转过身来，放声大笑，对着约翰逊老船长说着——不，什么也没说。

“看见她了吗？”港务长问。

“不，还没。冷静——等一等！”突然，在两个傻大个中间——“喂，走开，别挡道！”他用雨伞示意。然后，他看见一只手举了起来——那是一只戴着白手套的手，正在挥舞一块手帕。又过了一会儿……谢天谢地，谢天谢地！她在那儿！那就是珍妮，是哈蒙德太太，没错，是她，就是她！正站在栏杆边，微笑点头，挥舞着她的手帕。

“呀，那是头等舱——头等舱！哎呀呀！”他肯定地跺了跺脚，闪电般抽出雪茄盒，递给约翰逊老船长，“船长，来根雪茄！相当不错呢！来两根！给！”他把所有雪茄都塞进港务长的烟盒，“我旅馆还有几盒。”

“谢谢，哈蒙德先生！”约翰逊老船长喘着气说。

哈蒙德把烟盒塞回去，虽然手抖个不停，他还是稳住了自己。他

可以看向珍妮了！她就在那儿，倚在栏杆上，边跟一位女士说话，边看着他，随时准备迎接他。看着水面上的鸿沟合拢，他突然觉得站在那样巨大的船上，她显得多么娇小。他的心一阵绞痛，差点儿喊出声来。如此娇小的她，竟千里迢迢地独自来回！不过，她就是这样的人。这样才像她。她的勇气就像——此刻，船员已经上前，他们和乘客告别，降低栏杆，放下舷梯。

岸上的声音和船上的声音响起，互相问候。

“一切还好吗？”

“一切都好！”

“妈妈怎么样？”

“好多了！”

“你好，珍妮！”

“你好，埃米莉姨妈！”

“旅途还愉快吧？”

“棒极了！”

“现在用不了多久啦！”

“现在快了。”

引擎停了。船身缓缓靠近码头侧边。

“让一让，让一让，让一让！”码头工人扛着沉重的舷梯，飞快地跑了过来。哈蒙德示意珍妮待在原地。老港务长走上前，他跟在后面，完全忽略了“女士优先”之类的废话。

“您先请，船长！”他亲切地大声说道。然后，紧跟在老人身后，他顺着舷梯，大步跨上甲板，径直奔向珍妮，将她紧紧揽入怀中。

“呀，呀，呀！嗯，是呀！我们终于见面了！”他结结巴巴地念叨着，到头来也只说得出了这些话了。珍妮抬起头。用她冷淡细弱的声音，这世界上于他唯一的声响，对他说：“呀，亲爱的！你等很久了吧？”

不，没多久。或者说，不管等多久都没关系。反正，现在也等到你啦。但问题是，他还让一辆马车等在码头。她准备好出发了吗？行李到了吗？如果都准备好了，他们可以直接带着她的随身行李先走，剩下的行李丢到明天再说。他低头看向她，她仰头看他，脸上仍是熟悉的微笑。她还跟从前一样，一点儿也没变，完全是他熟悉的样子。她把小手放到他衣袖上。

“约翰，孩子们怎么样？”她问。

（去他的孩子们！）“好极了。好得不能再好了。”

“他们没给我写信吗？”

“写了，写了，当然写了！我把信留在旅馆了，你待会儿再细看吧。”

“我们不能这么快就走，”她说，“我还得跟几个人道别……最后跟船长道别。”见他沉下脸来，她了然地轻轻拧了他胳膊一把，“船长要是从驾驶台出来，希望你好好感谢人家，把你妻子照顾得如此周到。”好吧，他已经接到她。如果她想再等十分钟……他让步后，她立刻就被包围了。似乎整个头等舱的人，都想跟珍妮道别。

“再见，哈蒙德太太！我可盼着你下次来悉尼做客哦！”

“亲爱的哈蒙德太太！你不会忘了给我写信，是吧？”

“噢，哈蒙德太太，少了你，真不知道这艘船会怎么样！”

显而易见，她是船上最受欢迎的女人。她也一如既往地接受了这一切，沉着冷静，丝毫不乱。这就是小小的珍妮，真真切切的珍妮——掀开面纱，站在那里。哈蒙德从未注意过妻子的穿着。他觉得，她无论穿什么都一样。今天，他却注意到她穿了一身黑“套装”——他们是这么叫的吧？领口和袖口有白色褶边，他想，那些多半叫“饰边”。这期间，珍妮已经领着他转了一圈。

“约翰，亲爱的！”她接着说，“我来给你介绍一下……”

最后，他们终于逃离。她领着他一路去了自己的包厢。跟着珍妮走在这些她如此熟悉，他却非常陌生的走廊上，又跟着她挑开绿门帘，踏进她的舱房，感觉真快活呀。可是——真讨厌！女乘务员正蹲在地上滚地毯。

“这是最后一块了，哈蒙德太太。”女乘务员边说，边站起身，扯下袖口。

他又被介绍了一遍。珍妮和女乘务员没入过道。他听见耳语声。他想，她估计在结小费。他坐在条纹沙发上，摘掉帽子。那些是她随身带的小地毯，看起来都跟新的一样。她的所有行李都干净整洁。标签上是她清晰漂亮的小字“约翰·哈蒙德太太”。

“约翰·哈蒙德太太！”他长长地舒了口气，双臂交叉，满足地往后靠去。终于不再紧张。他觉得，自己可以永远这么坐下去，在摆脱了心上那种可怕的拉扯感之后，如释重负地叹息。危险已经过去。就是这感觉。他们又踏上了陆地。

可就在这时，珍妮的头从屋角探进来。

“亲爱的，我想去跟医生道个别，你不会介意吧？”

哈蒙德一下子跳起来。“我跟你一起去。”

“不，不，”她说，“不用麻烦。我想自己去，用不了多久。”

他还没来得及回答，她已经走了。他有点儿想追上去，但还是坐了回来。

她真的去不了多久吗？现在几点了？他掏出怀表，却什么也没看进去。珍妮这举动很奇怪，不是吗？干吗不让女乘务员代为告别呢？干吗非要自己追着船上的医生跑？就算事情要紧，她也可以从旅馆寄张便条过去。要紧？这是说——这是说她在旅途中病了？她是不是有事瞒着他？原来如此！他抓起帽子，决定立马去找那家伙。要不惜一切代价，逼问出真相！他觉得，自己刚才应该已经注意到什么了，她太冷静、太沉着。从一开始——

门帘响动。珍妮回来了。他立马站了起来。

“珍妮，你在途中病了？是吗！”

“病了？”她轻飘飘的声音嘲笑着他。她跨过地毯，走到他跟前，伸手碰着他的胸口，抬头看向他。

“亲爱的，”她说，“别吓我，我当然没生病。你为何会这么想？我看起来不健康吗？”

但哈蒙德并未看她。只要感觉到她在看自己，他就觉得没什么可担忧的。她在这儿料理事情。没关系。一切正常。

她的手轻轻按在他身上，感觉那般平静。他也把手放上去，将她的手握在自己心口。她说：“站着别动。我想看看你。我还没好好看过你呢。你的胡子刮得真漂亮，看起来——更年轻了。明显瘦了不少！单身汉生活很适合你呀。”

“很适合我！”他充满爱意地感叹道，又紧紧拥住她。一如既往，他再次觉得自己搂住了某样永远也不会属于自己的东西。她太脆弱、太珍贵，一旦放手，就会飞走。

“看在上帝的分儿上，我们赶紧出发去旅馆吧。这样，咱俩才能单独在一起呀！”他用力摇铃，叫人快点儿来看行李。

她挽着他的胳膊，跟他一起走过码头。他又可以让她挽着自己了。跟着珍妮上车，感觉都不一样了。他用红黄条纹的毯子把两人裹住，催促车夫加快速度，因为他们都还没喝茶。再也不用过没茶喝，或者得自己给自己倒茶喝的日子了。她回来了。他转向她，紧紧握着

她的手，温柔地打趣，仍是面对她才会用的那种“特别”声音：“回家很开心吧，亲爱的？”她笑了，没有费心回答，而是在马车行驶到更明亮的街后，轻轻推开了他的手。

“我们已经订下旅馆最好的房间。”他说，“用别的房间敷衍我可不行。我已经叫女服务员送了一小盆火进去，以免你觉得冷。她是个殷勤的好姑娘。我想，既然已经到这儿，不必急着明天回家，可以花一天时间四处转转，后天早晨再走。你觉得怎么样？没必要太赶，对吧？孩子们很快就能见到你……我想，花一天时间观光，也算是在一趟旅程后好好休息一下。对吧，珍妮？”

“你买后天的车票了吗？”她问。

“应该买了吧！”他解开大衣扣子，取出鼓鼓囊囊的随身笔记本，“在这儿！我订了去索尔兹伯里的头等车厢。这儿写着呢——‘约翰·哈蒙德夫妇’。我想，咱们应该坐得舒服些，不要让别人来打扰，不是吗？还是你想在这儿多待几天……”

“噢，不！”珍妮飞快地说，“千万别！就后天走吧。孩子们——”

可是，他们抵达旅馆了。经理原本站在灯火通明的门廊，这会儿也走下来迎接他们。一个搬运工从门厅跑出来，替他们拎箱子。

“呀，哈蒙德先生，哈蒙德太太终于来啦！”

经理亲自领着他们穿过门厅，并按了电梯的铃。哈蒙德知道，几个生意伙伴正在门厅的小桌上餐前小酌。可他不想被打断，所以目不斜视。他们爱怎么想就怎么想好了。如果无法理解，那只能说他们是傻瓜。他走出电梯，打开房间门，护送珍妮进去。门关上了。现在，终于只剩他俩。他打开灯。窗帘已经拉上，炉火燃得正旺。他把帽子扔到那张巨大的床上，朝她走去。

然而——难以置信！他们竟然又被打断。这次，是搬运工送行李来了。他跑了两趟，其间并未关门。那家伙从牙缝里吹着口哨，慢悠悠地穿过走廊。哈蒙德在房间里来回踱步，扯掉手套，又扯掉围巾。最后，他一把将大衣扔到床边。

那蠢货终于走了。门咔哒一声关上。这下，只剩他俩独处了。哈蒙德说：“珍妮，这些该死的家伙，让我觉得似乎永远也无法再拥有你了一样。”他双眼晶亮，目光热切地俯视着她：“我们就在上面吃晚饭吧。如果下去餐厅，肯定会被打扰。而且，那儿的音乐也很讨厌，（昨晚他还盛赞餐厅里的音乐，报以十分响亮的掌声！）想聊聊天都不行。就待楼上，在炉火前吃点什么吧。现在吃下午茶太晚，我订点儿晚餐，好吗？你觉得这主意怎么样？”

“点吧，亲爱的！”珍妮说，“你离开期间……孩子们的信……”

“噢，等会儿看也行。”哈蒙德说。

“那就得等到我们吃完饭，”珍妮说，“我想，首先有空——”

“噢，我不用下楼！”哈蒙德解释道，“按铃就能点菜……你也不想我走开，对吧？”

珍妮摇摇头，笑了。

“可你在想别的事。你在担心。”哈蒙德说，“什么事？过来，坐在这儿。过来坐我腿上，到炉火前待着。”

“我得先取下帽子。”说完，珍妮便朝梳妆台走去，“啊呀！”她轻呼一声。

“怎么了？”

“没什么，亲爱的。我就是找到了孩子们的信。没关系。等会儿再看吧。现在不着急！”她转向他，把攥在手里的信塞进带褶边的衬衫，突然快活地大声说道，“噢，这个梳妆台真是你喜欢的类型！”

“何以见得？它怎么了？”哈蒙德问。

“如果它哪天也开始不断地漂泊，我定要喊它‘约翰！’”珍妮哈哈大笑，盯着一大瓶生发水、柳条筐里的古龙水、两把毛刷、一打粉红色带子捆起来的新领圈，“这就是你全部的行李？”

“别管我的行李啦！”哈蒙德说。但尽管如此，他还是喜欢被珍妮取笑，“我们聊聊吧，坐下来好好聊。告诉我——”珍妮坐到他腿上，他往后一靠，把她拉进那张又深又丑的椅子，“珍妮，告诉我，回来真的让你很高兴。”

“嗯，亲爱的，我很高兴。”她说。

可正如抱着她时觉得她仿佛要飞走一般，哈蒙德从来不知道——始终无法确定，她是否跟自己一样高兴。他怎么知道？他真的会有知道的那天吗？这种渴望、这种不知怎的，类似饥饿的痛感，这种就想让珍妮成为自己的一部分，再也无法逃开的感觉，真的会一直伴随着他吗？他想抹掉所有人、所有事，真希望此时此刻已经关了灯。那样，或许就能将她拉得更近些。此时此刻，孩子们的信在她的衬衫里窸窣作响，真恨不得把它们扔进火里。

“珍妮。”他轻声唤道。

“嗯，亲爱的？”她躺在他胸口，却感觉那么轻、那么遥远。两人的呼吸一起一伏，十分同步。

“珍妮！”

“怎么了？”

“转过来，对着我。”他轻声说，额头缓缓变得绯红，“珍妮，吻我！你吻吻我！”

她的唇坚定而轻柔地落到他唇上前，他似乎感到片刻停顿。对他来说，这短短的一刻已经长得足以成为一种折磨。她像往常那样吻他，可这个吻——该如何形容呢？这个吻进一步确定了他们正在说的话，犹如签订了合同一般。可那不是他想要的，完全不是他心心念念之物。他突然觉得万分疲惫。

“如果你知道，”他睁开眼睛，说，“今天这种等待……是何等滋味。我还以为，船永远不会开进来了。我们不得不一直在那儿徘徊。什么事让你们耽误了那么久？”

她没回答，也没看他，而是盯着炉火。火苗急匆匆地、急匆匆地从煤块间冲出来，摇曳、闪烁，然后坠落。

“你没睡着吧，睡着了吗？”哈蒙德上上下下地摇晃着她，说道。

“没有，”她回答，接着又说，“别这样，亲爱的。我没睡着，事实上，我在思考。”她说，“昨晚，有个乘客死了。一个男人。我们就是被这事耽误了。得把他带回来呀——我的意思是说，没有对他进行海葬。所以，船上的医生和岸上的医生当然都会——”

“什么病？”哈蒙德不自在地问。他讨厌听到死亡，讨厌发生这样的事。这事……听起来真有点儿怪，仿佛他和珍妮在去旅馆的途中遇到一场葬礼似的。

“噢，一点儿都不会传染！”珍妮说，声音几不可闻，“是心脏病。”她顿了顿，接着说，“可怜的人！还相当年轻！”她看着火苗亮起又坠落，“他死在了我怀里。”

这打击如此突然，哈蒙德差点儿晕过去。他无法动弹，不能呼吸，觉得全身的力量正在流逝，流进那张深色的大椅子里。这张深色大椅紧紧抓住他、攥着他，强迫他接受这个事实。

“什么？”他低沉地说，“你说什么？”

“最后相当平静，”那细小的声音说，“他只是——”哈蒙德看见她举起一只温柔的手，“静静地呼吸，直到生命终结。”她的手垂了下去。

“还……还有谁在那儿？”哈蒙德艰难地问出了口。

“没有人。只有我跟他在一起。”

噢，天哪，她在说什么！她对他做了什么！这会杀了他！可是，

她仍一刻不停地讲着：“我发现情况有异，派乘务员去叫医生，医生却来得太迟。不管怎样，他本来也做不了什么。”

“可——为什么是你，怎么是你？”哈蒙德呻吟着。

听到他的声音，珍妮飞快地转过头，在他脸上迅速搜寻起来。

“你不会介意吧，约翰，你介意吗？”她问，“你不会——这跟你我无关啊。”

他设法冲她露出某种笑容，设法结结巴巴地说：“不——继——继续说！我想让你告诉我。”

“可是，约翰，亲爱的——”

“告诉我，珍妮！”

“没什么可说的啊，”她纳闷，“他就是头等舱的一位乘客。我见他上船时就病得厉害……但到昨天那时之前，他看起来都好多了。下午，他的病突然剧烈发作。我想，是因为即将抵岸的兴奋……或紧张吧。那之后，他就再没恢复过来。”

“可女乘务员为什么——”

“噢，天哪，女乘务员！”珍妮说，“那他会作何感想？况且……也或许还想留点遗言给……”

“他没留吗？”哈蒙德嘟囔道，“难道他没说什么？”

“没有，亲爱的，一个字也没说！”她轻轻摇摇头，“我陪着他的时候，他都太虚弱……虚弱得连一根手指头都动不了……”

珍妮沉默了。可她说过话，虽然那般轻柔、那般冰冷，却仿佛始终在空中徘徊，如雪花般落到他胸口。

火已经烧红，尖锐地响了一声后，垮了下去。房间渐渐变冷。凉意爬上他的胳膊。这个房间很大，好似无边无际，还闪闪发光，填满了他的整个世界。这儿有一张挂着帘子的大床。随意丢弃的大衣仿佛一个正在祈祷的无头人，横亘在床上。行李就在那儿，随时可以再次出发。去往任何地方，抛进火车，运上轮船，去哪儿都行。

“他太虚弱……虚弱得连一根手指头都动不了……”他却死在珍妮的怀里。她——这么多年，她……她从没有……一次都没有……

不，他不能这么想。想这些会发疯的。不，他无法面对这种事，无法忍受，完全无法忍受！

这时，珍妮伸出手指，碰到他的领带，把边缘捏到一起。

“你没有……对不起我不该告诉你的，亲爱的约翰？这事没让你

难过吧？它没有破坏我们的夜晚，我们独处的时光吧？”

但此时此刻，他只能藏起脸。他把脸埋进她的胸口，伸手抱住了她。

破坏了他们的夜晚！破坏了他们独处的时光！他们再也没有独处的时光了。

‘And again, as
always, he had the
feeling he
was holding
something that
never was quite
his — his.

Something too
delicate, too
precious, that
would fly away
once he let go.’

Marriage à la Mode

On his way to the station William remembered with a fresh pang of disappointment that he was taking nothing down to the kiddies. Poor little chaps! It was hard lines on them. Their first words always were as they ran to greet him, 'What have you got for me, daddy?' and he had nothing. He would have to buy them some sweets at the station. But that was what he had done for the past four Saturdays; their faces had fallen last time when they saw the same old boxes produced again.

And Paddy had said, 'I had red ribbing on mine **】** *bee- fore* !'

And Johnny had said, 'It's always pink on mine. I hate pink.'

But what was William to do? The affair wasn't so easily settled. In the old days, of course, he would have taken a taxi off to a decent toyshop and chose them something in five minutes. But nowadays they had Russian toys, French toys, Serbian toys – toys from God knows where. It was over a year since Isabel had scrapped the old donkeys and engines and so on because they were so 'dreadfully sentimental' and 'so appallingly bad for the babies' sense of form.'

'It's so important,' the new Isabel had explained, 'that they should like the right things from the very beginning. It saves so much time later on. Really, if the poor pets have to spend their infant years staring at these horrors, one can imagine them growing up and asking to be taken to the Royal Academy.'

And she spoke as though a visit to the Royal Academy was certain immediate death to anyone ...

'Well, I don't know,' said William slowly. 'When I was their age I used to go to bed hugging an old towel with a knot in it.'

The new Isabel looked at him, her eyes narrowed, her lips apart.

'Dear William! I'm sure you did!' She laughed in the new way.

Sweets it would have to be, however, thought William gloomily, fishing in his pocket for change for the taxi- man. And he saw the kiddies handing the boxes round – they were awfully generous little chaps – while Isabel's precious friends didn't hesitate to help themselves ...

What about fruit? William hovered before a stall just inside the station. What about a melon each? Would they have to share that, too? Or a pineapple for Pad, and a melon for Johnny? Isabel's friends could hardly go sneaking up to the nursery at the children's meal- times. All the same, as he bought the melon William had a horrible vision of one of Isabel's young poets lapping up a slice, for some reason, behind the nursery door.

With his two very awkward parcels he strode off to his train. The platform was crowded, the train was in. Doors banged open and shut. There came such a loud hissing from the engine that people looked dazed as they scurried to and fro. William made straight for a first- class smoker, stowed away his suitcase and parcels, and taking a huge wad of papers out of his inner pocket, he flung down in the corner and began to read

'Our client moreover is positive ... We are inclined to reconsider ... in the event of –' Ah, that was better. William pressed back his flattened hair and stretched his legs across the carriage floor. The familiar dull gnawing in his breast quietened down. 'With regard to our decision –' He took out a blue pencil and scored a paragraph slowly.

Two men came in, stepped across him, and made for the farther corner. A young fellow swung his golf clubs into the rack and sat down opposite. The train gave a gentle lurch, they were off. William glanced up and saw the hot, bright station slipping away. A red- faced girl raced along by the carriages, there was something strained and almost desperate in the way she waved and called. 'Hysterical!' thought William dully. Then a greasy, black- faced workman at the end of the platform grinned at the passing train. And William thought, 'A filthy life!' and went back to his papers.

When he looked up again there were fields, and beasts standing for shelter under the dark trees. A wide river, with naked children splashing in the shallows, glided into sight and was gone again. The sky shone pale, and one bird drifted high like a dark fleck in a

jewel.

'We have examined our client's correspondence files ... ' The last sentence he had read echoed in his mind. 'We have examined ... ' William hung on to that sentence, but it was no good; it snapped in the middle, and the fields, the sky, the sailing bird, the water, all said, 'Isabel.' The same thing happened every Saturday afternoon. When he was on his way to meet Isabel there began those countless imaginary meetings. She was at the station, standing just a little apart from everybody else; she was sitting in the open taxi outside; she was at the garden gate; walking across the parched grass; at the door, or just inside the hall.

And her clear, light voice said, 'It's William,' or 'Hillo, William!' or 'So William has come!' He touched her cool hand, her cool cheek.

The exquisite freshness of Isabel! When he had been a little boy, it was his delight to run into the garden after a shower of rain and shake the rose- bush over him. Isabel was that rose- bush, petal-soft, sparkling and cool. And he was still that little boy. But there was no running into the garden now, no laughing and shaking. The dull, persistent gnawing in his breast started again. He drew up his legs, tossed the papers aside, and shut his eyes.

'What is it, Isabel? What is it?' he said tenderly. They were in their bedroom in the new house. Isabel sat on a painted stool before the dressing- table that was strewn with little black and green boxes.

'What is what, William?' And she bent forward, and her fine light hair fell over her cheeks.

'Ah, you know!' He stood in the middle of the strange room and he felt a stranger. At that Isabel wheeled round quickly and faced him.

'Oh, William!' she cried imploringly, and she held up the hairbrush. 'Please! Please don't be so dreadfully stuffy and – tragic. You're always saying or looking or hinting that I've changed. Just because I've got to know really congenial people, and go about more, and am frightfully keen on – on everything, you behave as though I'd –' Isabel tossed back her hair and laughed – 'killed our love or something. It's so awfully absurd' – she bit her lip – 'and it's so maddening, William. Even this new house and the servants you

grudge me.'

'Isabel!'

'Yes, yes, it's true in a way,' said Isabel quickly. 'You think they are another bad sign. Oh, I know you do. I feel it,' she said softly, 'every time you come up the stairs. But we couldn't have gone on living in that other poky little hole, William. Be practical, at least! Why, there wasn't enough room for the babies even.'

No, it was true. Every morning when he came back from chambers it was to find the babies with Isabel in the back drawing-room. They were having rides on the leopard skin thrown over the sofa back, or they were playing shops with Isabel's desk for a counter, or Pad was sitting on the hearthrug rowing away for dear life with a little brass fire-shovel, while Johnny shot at pirates with the tongs. Every evening they each had a pick-a-back up the narrow stairs to their fat old Nanny.

Yes, he supposed it was a poky little house. A little white house with blue curtains and a window-box of petunias. William met their friends at the door with 'Seen our petunias? Pretty terrific for London, don't you think?'

But the imbecile thing, the absolutely extraordinary thing was that he hadn't the slightest idea that Isabel wasn't as happy as he. God, what blindness! He hadn't the remotest notion in those days that she really hated that inconvenient little house, that she thought the fat Nanny was ruining the babies, that she was desperately lonely, pining for new people and new music and pictures and so on. If they hadn't gone to that studio party at Moira Morrison's – If Moira Morrison hadn't said as they were leaving, 'I'm going to rescue your wife, selfish man. She's like an exquisite little Titania' – if Isabel hadn't gone with Moira to Paris – if – if ...

The train stopped at another station. Bettingford. Good heavens! They'd be there in ten minutes. William stuffed the papers back into his pockets; the young man opposite had long since disappeared. Now the other two got out. The late afternoon sun shone on women in cotton frocks and little sunburnt, barefoot children. It blazed on a silky yellow flower with coarse leaves which sprawled over a bank of rock. The air ruffling through the window smelled of the sea. Had Isabel the same crowd with her this

weekend, wondered William?

And he remembered the holidays they used to have, the four of them, with a little farm girl, Rose, to look after the babies. Isabel wore a jersey and her hair in a plait; she looked about fourteen. Lord! how his nose used to peel! And the amount they ate, and the amount they slept in that immense feather bed with their feet locked together ... William couldn't help a grim smile as he thought of Isabel's horror if she knew the full extent of his sentimentality.

'Hillo, William!' She was at the station after all, standing just as he had imagined, apart from the others, and – William's heart leapt – she was alone.

'Hallo, Isabel!' William stared. He thought she looked so beautiful that he had to say something, 'You look very cool.'

'Do I?' said Isabel. 'I don't feel very cool. Come along, your horrid old train is late. The taxi's outside.' She put her hand lightly on his arm as they passed the ticket collector. 'We've all come to meet you,' she said. 'But we've left Bobby Kane at the sweet shop, to be called for.'

'Oh!' said William. It was all he could say for the moment.

There in the glare waited the taxi, with Bill Hunt and Dennis Green sprawling on one side, their hats tilted over their faces, while on the other, Moira Morrison, in a bonnet like a huge strawberry, jumped up and down.

'No ice! No ice! No ice!' she shouted gaily.

And Dennis chimed in from under his hat. 'Only to be had from the fishmonger's.'

And Bill Hunt, emerging, added, 'With *whole* fish in it.'

'Oh, what a bore!' wailed Isabel. And she explained to William how they had been chasing round the town for ice while she waited for him. 'Simply everything is running down the steep cliffs into the sea, beginning with the butter.'

'We shall have to anoint ourselves with the butter,' said Dennis. 'May thy head, William, lack not ointment.'

'Look here,' said William, 'how are we going to sit? I'd better get up by the driver.'

'No, Bobby Kane's by the driver,' said Isabel. 'You're to sit between Moira and me.' The taxi started. 'What have you got in those mysterious parcels?'

'De- cap- it- ated heads!' said Bill Hunt, shuddering beneath his hat.

'Oh, fruit!' Isabel sounded very pleased. 'Wise William! A melon and a pineapple. How too nice!'

'No, wait a bit,' said William, smiling. But he really was anxious. 'I brought them down for the kiddies.'

'Oh, my dear!' Isabel laughed, and slipped her hand through his arm. 'They'd be rolling in agonies if they were to eat them. No' – she patted his hand – 'you must bring them something next time. I refuse to part with my pineapple.'

'Cruel Isabel! Do let me smell it!' said Moira. She flung her arms across William appealingly. 'Oh!' The strawberry bonnet fell forward: she sounded quite faint.

'A Lady in Love with a Pineapple,' said Dennis, as the taxi drew up before a little shop with a striped blind. Out came Bobby Kane, his arms full of little packets.

'I do hope they'll be good. I've chosen them because of the colours. There are some round things which really look too divine. And just look at this nougat,' he cried ecstatically, 'just look at it! It's a perfect little ballet!'

But at that moment the shopman appeared. 'Oh, I forgot. They're none of them paid for,' said Bobby, looking frightened. Isabel gave the shopman a note, and Bobby was radiant again. 'Hallo, William! I'm sitting by the driver.' And bare- headed, all in white, with his sleeves rolled up to the shoulders, he leapt into his place. 'Avanti!' he cried ...

After tea the others went off to bathe, while William stayed and made his peace with the kiddies. But Johnny and Paddy were asleep, the rose- red glow had paled, bats were flying, and still the bathers had not returned. As William wandered downstairs, the maid crossed the hall carrying a lamp. He followed her into the sitting- room. It was a long room, coloured yellow. On the wall opposite William someone had painted a young man, over life- size,

with very wobbly legs, offering a wide- eyed daisy to a young woman who had one very short arm and one very long, thin one. Over the chairs and sofa there hung strips of black material, covered with big splashes like broken eggs, and everywhere one looked there seemed to be an ashtray full of cigarette ends. William sat down in one of the armchairs. Nowadays, when one felt with one hand down the sides, it wasn't to come upon a sheep with three legs or a cow that had lost one horn, or a very fat dove out of the Noah's Ark. One fished up yet another little paper- covered book of smudged- looking poems ... He thought of the wad of papers in his pocket, but he was too hungry and tired to read. The door was open; sounds came from the kitchen. The servants were talking as if they were alone in the house. Suddenly there came a loud screech of laughter and an equally loud 'Sh!' They had remembered him. William got up and went through the french windows into the garden, and as he stood there in the shadow he heard the bathers coming up the sandy road; their voices rang through the quiet.

'I think it's up to Moira to use her little arts and wiles.'

A tragic moan from Moira.

'We ought to have a gramophone for the weekends that played "The Maid of the Mountains." '

'Oh no! Oh no!' cried Isabel's voice. 'That's not fair to William. Be nice to him, my children! He's only staying until tomorrow evening.'

'Leave him to me,' cried Bobby Kane. 'I'm awfully good at looking after people.'

The gate swung open and shut. William moved on the terrace; they had seen him. 'Hallo, William!' And Bobby Kane, flapping his towel, began to leap and pirouette on the parched lawn. 'Pity you didn't come, William. The water was divine. And we all went to a little pub afterwards and had sloe gin.'

The others had reached the house. 'I say, Isabel,' called Bobby, 'would you like me to wear my Nijinsky dress tonight?'

'No,' said Isabel, 'nobody's going to dress. We're all starving. William's starving, too. Come along, *mes amis*, let's begin with sardines.'

'I've found the sardines,' said Moira, and she ran into the hall, holding a box high in the air.

'A Lady with a Box of Sardines,' said Dennis gravely.

'Well, William, and how's London?' asked Bill Hunt, drawing the cork out of a bottle of whisky.

'Oh, London's not much changed,' answered William.

'Good old London,' said Bobby, very hearty, spearing a sardine.

But a moment later William was forgotten. Moira Morrison began wondering what colour one's legs really were under water.

'Mine are the palest, palest mushroom colour.'

Bill and Dennis ate enormously. And Isabel filled glasses, and changed plates, and found matches, smiling blissfully. At one moment she said, 'I do wish, Bill, you'd paint it.'

'Paint what?' said Bill loudly, stuffing his mouth with bread.

'Us,' said Isabel, 'round the table. It would be so fascinating in twenty years' time.'

Bill screwed up his eyes and chewed. 'Light's wrong,' he said rudely, 'far too much yellow'; and went on eating. And that seemed to charm Isabel, too.

But after supper they were all so tired they could do nothing but yawn until it was late enough to go to bed ...

It was not until William was waiting for his taxi the next afternoon that he found himself alone with Isabel. When he brought his suitcase down into the hall, Isabel left the others and went over to him. She stooped down and picked up the suitcase. 'What a weight!' she said, and she gave a little awkward laugh. 'Let me carry it! To the gate.'

'No, why should you?' said William. 'Of course not. Give it to me.'

'Oh, please do let me,' said Isabel. 'I want to, really.' They walked together silently. William felt there was nothing to say now.

'There,' said Isabel triumphantly, setting the suitcase down, and she looked anxiously along the sandy road. 'I hardly seem to have seen you this time,' she said breathlessly. 'It's so short, isn't it? I feel

you've only just come. Next time –' The taxi came into sight. 'I hope they look after you properly in London. I'm so sorry the babies have been out all day, but Miss Neil had arranged it. They'll hate missing you. Poor William, going back to London.' The taxi turned. 'Goodbye!' She gave him a little hurried kiss; she was gone.

Fields, trees, hedges streamed by. They shook through the empty, blind- looking little town, ground up the steep pull to the station. The train was in. William made straight for a first- class smoker, flung back into the corner, but this time he let the papers alone. He folded his arms against the dull, persistent gnawing, and began in his mind to write a letter to Isabel.

The post was late as usual. They sat outside the house in long chairs under coloured parasols. Only Bobby Kane lay on the turf at Isabel's feet. It was dull, stifling; the day drooped like a flag.

'Do you think there will be Mondays in Heaven?' asked Bobby childishly.

And Dennis murmured, 'Heaven will be one long Monday.'

But Isabel couldn't help wondering what had happened to the salmon they had for supper last night. She had meant to have fish mayonnaise for lunch and now ...

Moira was asleep. Sleeping was her latest discovery. 'It's so wonderful. One simply shuts one's eyes, that's all. It's so delicious.'

When the old ruddy postman came beating along the sandy road on his tricycle one felt the handle- bars ought to have been oars.

Bill Hunt put down his book. 'Letters,' he said complacently, and they all waited. But, heartless postman ... alignant world! There was only one, a fat one for Isabel. Not even a paper.

'And mine's only from William,' said Isabel mournfully.

'From William – already?'

'He's sending you back your marriage lines as a gentle reminder.'

'Does everybody have marriage lines? I thought they were only for servants.'

'Pages and pages! Look at her! A Lady reading a Letter,' said

Dennis.

My darling, precious Isabel . Pages and pages there were. As Isabel read on her feeling of astonishment changed to a stifled feeling. What on earth had induced William ... ? How extraordinary it was ... What could have made him ... ? She felt confused, more and more excited, even frightened. It was just like William. Was it? It was absurd, of course, it must be absurd, ridiculous. 'Ha, ha, ha! Oh dear!' What was she to do? Isabel flung back in her chair and laughed till she couldn't stop laughing.

'Do, do tell us,' said the others. 'You must tell us.'

'I'm longing to,' gurgled Isabel. She sat up, gathered the letter, and waved it at them. 'Gather round,' she said. 'Listen, it's too marvellous. A love- letter!'

'A love- letter! But how divine!' Darling precious *Isabel* . But she had hardly begun before their laughter interrupted her.

'Go on, Isabel, it's perfect.'

'It's the most marvellous find.'

'Oh, do go on, Isabel!'

God forbid , my darling , that I should be a drag on your happiness .

'Oh! oh! oh!'

'Sh! sh! sh!'

And Isabel went on. When she reached the end they were hysterical: Bobby rolled on the turf and almost sobbed.

'You must let me have it just as it is, entire, for my new book,' said Dennis firmly. 'I shall give it a whole chapter.'

'Oh, Isabel,' moaned Moira, 'that wonderful bit about holding you in his arms!'

'I always thought those letters in divorce cases were made up. But they pale before this.'

'Let me hold it. Let me read it, mine own self,' said Bobby Kane.

But, to their surprise, Isabel crushed the letter in her hand. She was laughing no longer. She glanced quickly at them all; she looked

exhausted. 'No, not just now. Not just now,' she stammered.

And before they could recover she had run into the house, through the hall, up the stairs into her bedroom. Down she sat on the side of the bed. 'How vile, odious, abominable, vulgar,' muttered Isabel. She pressed her eyes with her knuckles, and rocked to and fro. And again she saw them, but not four, more like forty, laughing, sneering, jeering, stretching out their hands while she read them William's letter. Oh, what a loathsome thing to have done. How could she have done it! *God forbid , my darling , that I should be a drag on your happiness* . William! Isabel pressed her face into the pillow. But she felt that even the grave bedroom knew her for what she was, shallow, tinkling, vain ...

Presently from the garden below there came voices.

'Isabel, we're all going for a bathe. Do come!'

'Come, thou wife of William!'

'Call her once before you go, call once yet!'

Isabel sat up. Now was the moment, now she must decide. Would she go with them, or stay here and write to William. Which, which should it be? 'I must make up my mind.' Oh, but how could there be any question? Of course she would stay here and write.

'Titania!' piped Moira.

'Isa- bel?'

No, it was too difficult. 'I'll – I'll go with them, and write to William later. Some other time. Later. Not now. But I shall *certainly* write,' thought Isabel hurriedly.

And, laughing in the new way, she ran down the stairs.

Miss Brill

Although it was so brilliantly fine – the blue sky powdered with gold and great spots of light like white wine splashed over the Jardins Publiques ... ss Brill was glad that she had decided on her fur. The air was motionless, but when you opened your mouth there was just a faint chill, like a chill from a glass of iced water before you sip, and now and again a leaf came drifting – from nowhere, from the sky. Miss Brill put up her hand and touched her fur. Dear little thing! It was nice to feel it again. She had taken it out of its box that afternoon, shaken out the moth- powder, given it a good brush, and rubbed the life back into the dim little eyes. ‘What has been happening to me?’ said the sad little eyes. Oh, how sweet it was to see them snap at her again from the red eiderdown! ... But the nose, which was of some black composition, wasn't at all firm. It must have had a knock, somehow. Never mind ... ittle dab of black sealing- wax when the time came – when it was absolutely necessary ... Little rogue! Yes, she really felt like that about it. Little rogue biting its tail just by her left ear. She could have taken it off and laid it on her lap and stroked it. She felt a tingling in her hands and arms, but that came from walking, she supposed. And when she breathed, something light and sad – no, not sad, exactly – something gentle seemed to move in her bosom.

There were a number of people out this afternoon, far more than last Sunday. And the band sounded louder and gayer. That was because the Season had begun. For although the band played all the year round on Sundays, out of season it was never the same. It was like someone playing with only the family to listen; it didn't care how it played if there weren't any strangers present. Wasn't the conductor wearing a new coat, too? She was sure it was new. He scraped with his foot and flapped his arms like a rooster about to crow, and the bandsmen sitting in the green rotunda blew out their cheeks and glared at the music. Now there came a little ‘flutey’ bit – very pretty! ... ittle chain of bright drops. She was sure it would be repeated. It was; she lifted her head and smiled.

Only two people shared her 'special' seat: a fine old man in a velvet coat, his hands clasped over a huge carved walking- stick, and a big old woman, sitting upright, with a roll of knitting on her embroidered apron. They did not speak. This was disappointing, for Miss Brill always looked forward to the conversation. She had become really quite expert, she thought, at listening as though she didn't listen, at sitting in other people's lives for just a minute while they talked round her.

She glanced, sideways, at the old couple. Perhaps they would go soon. Last Sunday, too, hadn't been as interesting as usual. An Englishman and his wife, he wearing a dreadful Panama hat and she button boots. And she'd gone on the whole time about how she ought to wear spectacles; she knew she needed them; but that it was no good getting any; they'd be sure to break and they'd never keep on. And he'd been so patient. He'd suggested everything – gold rims, the kind that curved round your ears, little pads inside the bridge. No, nothing would please her. 'They'll always be sliding down my nose!' Miss Brill had wanted to shake her.

The old people sat on the bench, still as statues. Never mind, there was always the crowd to watch. To and fro, in front of the flower- beds and the band rotunda, the couples and groups paraded, stopped to talk, to greet, to buy a handful of flowers from the old beggar who had his tray fixed to the railings. Little children ran among them, swooping and laughing; little boys with big white silk bows under their chins, little girls, little French dolls, dressed up in velvet and lace. And sometimes a tiny staggerer came suddenly rocking into the open from under the trees, stopped, stared, as suddenly sat down 'flop,' until its small high- stepping mother, like a young hen, rushed scolding to its rescue. Other people sat on the benches and green chairs, but they were nearly always the same, Sunday after Sunday, and – Miss Brill had often noticed – there was something funny about nearly all of them. They were odd, silent, nearly all old, and from the way they stared they looked as though they'd just come from dark little rooms or even – even cupboards!

Behind the rotunda the slender trees with yellow leaves down drooping, and through them just a line of sea, and beyond the blue sky with gold- veined clouds.

Tum- tum- tum tiddle- um! tiddle- um! tum tiddley- um tum ta!

blew the band.

Two young girls in red came by and two young soldiers in blue met them, and they laughed and paired and went off arm- in- arm. Two peasant women with funny straw hats passed, gravely, leading beautiful smoke- coloured donkeys. A cold, pale nun hurried by. A beautiful woman came along and dropped her bunch of violets, and a little boy ran after to hand them to her, and she took them and threw them away as if they'd been poisoned. Dear me! Miss Brill didn't know whether to admire that or not! And now an ermine toque and a gentleman in grey met just in front of her. He was tall, stiff, dignified, and she was wearing the ermine toque she'd bought when her hair was yellow. Now everything, her hair, her face, even her eyes, was the same colour as the shabby ermine, and her hand, in its cleaned glove, lifted to dab her lips, was a tiny yellowish paw. Oh, she was so pleased to see him – delighted! She rather thought they were going to meet that afternoon. She described where she'd been – everywhere, here, there, along by the sea. The day was so charming – didn't he agree? And wouldn't he, perhaps? ... But he shook his head, lighted a cigarette, slowly breathed a great deep puff into her face, and, even while she was still talking and laughing, flicked the match away and walked on. The ermine toque was alone; she smiled more brightly than ever. But even the band seemed to know what she was feeling and played more softly, played tenderly, and the drum beat, 'The Brute! The Brute!' over and over. What would she do? What was going to happen now? But as Miss Brill wondered, the ermine toque turned, raised her hand as though she'd seen someone else, much nicer, just over there, and pattered away. And the band changed again and played more quickly, more gaily than ever, and the old couple on Miss Brill's seat got up and marched away, and such a funny old man with long whiskers hobbled along in time to the music and was nearly knocked over by four girls walking abreast.

Oh, how fascinating it was! How she enjoyed it! How she loved sitting here, watching it all! It was like a play. It was exactly like a play. Who could believe the sky at the back wasn't painted? But it wasn't till a little brown dog trotted on solemn and then slowly trotted off, like a little 'theatre' dog, a little dog that had been drugged, that Miss Brill discovered what it was that made it so exciting. They were all on the stage. They weren't only the

audience, not only looking on; they were acting. Even she had a part and came every Sunday. No doubt somebody would have noticed if she hadn't been there; she was part of the performance after all. How strange she'd never thought of it like that before! And yet it explained why she made such a point of starting from home at just the same time each week – so as not to be late for the performance – and it also explained why she had quite a queer, shy feeling at telling her English pupils how she spent her Sunday afternoons. No wonder! Miss Brill nearly laughed out loud. She was on the stage. She thought of the old invalid gentleman to whom she read the newspaper four afternoons a week while he slept in the garden. She had got quite used to the frail head on the cotton pillow, the hollowed eyes, the open mouth and the high pinched nose. If he'd been dead she mightn't have noticed for weeks; she wouldn't have minded. But suddenly he knew he was having the paper read to him by an actress! 'An actress!' The old head lifted; two points of light quivered in the old eyes. 'An actress – are ye?' And Miss Brill smoothed the newspaper as though it was the manuscript of her part and said gently: 'Yes, I have been an actress for a long time.'

The band had been having a rest. Now they started again. And what they played was warm, sunny, yet there was just a faint chill ... omething what was it? – not sadness – no, not sadness ... omething that made you want to sing. The tune lifted, lifted, the light shone; and it seemed to Miss Brill that in another moment all of them, all the whole company, would begin singing. The young ones, the laughing ones who were moving together, they would begin, and the men's voices, very resolute and brave, would join them. And then she too, she too, and the others on the benches – they would come in with a kind of accompaniment – something low, that scarcely rose or fell, something so beautiful – moving ... And Miss Brill's eyes filled with tears and she looked smiling at all the other members of the company. Yes, we understand, we understand, she thought – though what they understood she didn't know.

Just at that moment a boy and a girl came and sat down where the old couple had been. They were beautifully dressed; they were in love. The hero and heroine, of course, just arrived from his father's yacht. And still soundlessly singing, still with that trembling

smile, Miss Brill prepared to listen.

'No, not now,' said the girl. 'Not here, I can't.'

'But why? Because of that stupid old thing at the end there?' asked the boy. 'Why does she come here at all – who wants her? Why doesn't she keep her silly old mug at home?'

'It's her fu- fur which is so funny,' giggled the girl. 'It's exactly like a fried whiting.'

'Ah, be off with you!' said the boy in an angry whisper. Then: 'Tell me, ma petite chère –'

'No, not here,' said the girl. 'Not yet.'

On her way home she usually bought a slice of honey- cake at the baker's. It was her Sunday treat. Sometimes there was an almond in her slice, sometimes not. It made a great difference. If there was an almond it was like carrying home a tiny present ... urprise – something that might very well not have been there. She hurried on the almond Sundays and struck the match for the kettle in quite a dashing way.

But today she passed the baker's by, climbed the stairs, went into the little dark room – her room like a cupboard – and sat down on the red eiderdown. She sat there for a long time. The box that the fur came out of was on the bed. She unclasped the necklet quickly; quickly, without looking, laid it inside. But when she put the lid on she thought she heard something crying.

The Stranger

It seemed to the little crowd on the wharf that she was never going to move again. There she lay, immense, motionless on the grey crinkled water, a loop of smoke above her, an immense flock of gulls screaming and diving after the galley droppings at the stern. You could just see little couples parading – little flies walking up and down the dish on the grey crinkled tablecloth. Other flies clustered and swarmed at the edge. Now there was a gleam of white on the lower deck – the cook's apron or the stewardess perhaps. Now a tiny black spider raced up the ladder on to the bridge.

In the front of the crowd a strong- looking, middle- aged man, dressed very well, very snugly in a grey overcoat, grey silk scarf, thick gloves and dark felt hat, marched up and down, twirling his folded umbrella. He seemed to be the leader of the little crowd on the wharf and at the same time to keep them together. He was something between the sheep- dog and the shepherd.

But what a fool – what a fool he had been not to bring any glasses! There wasn't a pair of glasses between the whole lot of them.

'Curious thing, Mr Scott, that none of us thought of glasses. We might have been able to stir 'em up a bit. We might have managed a little signalling. *Don't hesitate to land . Natives harmless . Or: A welcome awaits you . All is forgiven .* What? Eh?'

Mr Hammond's quick, eager glance, so nervous and yet so friendly and confiding, took in everybody on the wharf, roped in even those old chaps lounging against the gangways. They knew, every man- jack of them, that Mrs Hammond was on that boat, and he was so tremendously excited it never entered his head not to believe that this marvellous fact meant something to them too. It warmed his heart towards them. They were, he decided, as decent a crowd of people – those old chaps over by the gangways, too – fine, solid old chaps. What chests – by Jove! And he squared his own, plunged his thick- gloved hands into his pockets, rocked from heel

to toe.

'Yes, my wife's been in Europe for the last ten months. On a visit to our eldest girl, who was married last year. I brought her up here, as far as Crawford, myself. So I thought I'd better come and fetch her back. Yes, yes, yes.' The shrewd grey eyes narrowed again and searched anxiously, quickly, the motionless liner. Again his overcoat was unbuttoned. Out came the thin, butter- yellow watch again, and for the twentieth – fiftieth – hundredth time he made the calculation.

'Let me see, now. It was two fifteen when the doctor's launch went off. Two fifteen. It is now exactly twenty- eight minutes past four. That is to say, the doctor's been gone two hours and thirteen minutes. Two hours and thirteen minutes! Whee- ooh!' He gave a queer little half- whistle and snapped his watch to again. 'But I think we should have been told if there was anything up – don't you, Mr Gaven?'

'Oh, yes, Mr Hammond! I don't think there's anything to – anything to worry about,' said Mr Gaven, knocking out his pipe against the heel of his shoe. 'At the same time –'

'Quite so! Quite so!' cried Mr Hammond. 'Dashed annoying!' He paced quickly up and down and came back again to his stand between Mr and Mrs Scott and Mr Gaven. 'It's getting quite dark, too,' and he waved his folded umbrella as though the dusk at least might have had the decency to keep off for a bit. But the dusk came slowly, spreading like a slow stain over the water. Little Jean Scott dragged at her mother's hand.

'I wan' my tea, mammy!' she wailed.

'I expect you do,' said Mr Hammond. 'I expect all these ladies want their tea.' And his kind, flushed, almost pitiful glance roped them all in again. He wondered whether Janey was having a final cup of tea in the saloon out there. He hoped so; he thought not. It would be just like her not to leave the deck. In that case perhaps the deck steward would bring her up a cup. If he'd been there he'd have got it for her – somehow. And for a moment he was on deck, standing over her, watching her little hand fold round the cup in the way she had, while she drank the only cup of tea to be got on board ... But now he was back here, and the Lord only knew when

that cursed Captain would stop hanging about in the stream. He took another turn, up and down, up and down. He walked as far as the cab-stand to make sure his driver hadn't disappeared; back he swerved again to the little flock huddled in the shelter of the banana crates. Little Jean Scott was still wanting her tea. Poor little beggar! He wished he had a bit of chocolate on him.

'Here, Jean!' he said. 'Like a lift up?' And easily, gently, he swung the little girl on to a higher barrel. The movement of holding her, steadying her, relieved him wonderfully, lightened his heart.

'Hold on,' he said, keeping an arm round her.

'Oh, don't worry about *Jean*, Mr Hammond!' said Mrs Scott.

'That's all right, Mrs Scott. No trouble. It's a pleasure. Jean's a little pal of mine, aren't you, Jean?'

'Yes, Mr Hammond,' said Jean, and she ran her finger down the dent of his felt hat.

But suddenly she caught him by the ear and gave a loud scream. 'Lo- ok, Mr Hammond! She's moving! Look, she's coming in!'

By Jove! So she was. At last! She was slowly, slowly turning round. A bell sounded far over the water and a great spout of steam gushed into the air. The gulls rose; they fluttered away like bits of white paper. And whether that deep throbbing was her engines or his heart Mr Hammond couldn't say. He had to nerve himself to bear it, whatever it was. At that moment old Captain Johnson, the harbour- master, came striding down the wharf, a leather portfolio under his arm.

'Jean'll be all right,' said Mr Scott. 'I'll hold her.' He was just in time. Mr Hammond had forgotten about Jean. He sprang away to greet old Captain Johnson.

'Well, Captain,' the eager, nervous voice rang out again, 'you've taken pity on us at last.'

'It's no good blaming me, Mr Hammond,' wheezed old Captain Johnson, staring at the liner. 'You got Mrs Hammond on board, ain't yer?'

'Yes, yes!' said Hammond, and he kept by the harbour- master's

side. 'Mrs Hammond's there. Hul- lo! We shan't be long now!'

With her telephone ring- ringing, the thrum of her screw filling the air, the big liner bore down on them, cutting sharp through the dark water so that big white shavings curled to either side. Hammond and the harbour- master kept in front of the rest. Hammond took off his hat; he raked the decks – they were crammed with passengers; he waved his hat and bawled a loud, strange ' Hul- lo!' across the water, and then turned round and burst out laughing and said something – nothing – to old Captain Johnson.

'Seen her?' asked the harbour- master.

'No, not yet. Steady – wait a bit!' And suddenly, between two great clumsy idiots – 'Get out of the way there!' he signed with his umbrella – he saw a hand raised ... hite glove shaking a handkerchief. Another moment, and – thank God, thank God! – there she was. There was Janey. There was Mrs Hammond, yes, yes, yes – standing by the rail and smiling and nodding and waving her handkerchief.

'Well, that's first class – first class! Well, well, well!' He positively stamped. Like lightning he drew out his cigar- case and offered it to old Captain Johnson. 'Have a cigar, Captain! They're pretty good. Have a couple! Here' – and he pressed all the cigars in the case on the harbour- master – 'I've a couple of boxes up at the hotel.'

'Thenks, Mr Hammond!' wheezed old Captain Johnson.

Hammond stuffed the cigar- case back. His hands were shaking, but he'd got hold of himself again. He was able to face Janey. There she was, leaning on the rail, talking to some woman and at the same time watching him, ready for him. It struck him, as the gulf of water closed, how small she looked on that huge ship. His heart was wrung with such a spasm that he could have cried out. How little she looked to have come all that long way and back by herself! Just like her, though. Just like Janey. She had the courage of ... nd now the crew had come forward and parted the passengers; they had lowered the rails for the gangways.

The voices on shore and the voices on board flew to greet each other.

'All well?'

'All well.'

'How's mother?'

'Much better.'

'Hullo, Jean!'

'Hillo, Aun' Emily!'

'Had a good voyage?'

'Splendid!'

'Shan't be long now!'

'Not long now.'

The engines stopped. Slowly she edged to the wharf- side.

'Make way there – make way – make way!' And the wharf hands brought the heavy gangways along at a sweeping run. Hammond signed to Janey to stay where she was. The old harbour-master stepped forward; he followed. As to 'ladies first,' or any rot like that, it never entered his head.

'After you, Captain!' he cried genially. And, treading on the old man's heels, he strode up the gangway on to the deck in a bee- line to Janey, and Janey was clasped in his arms.

'Well, well, well! Yes, yes! Here we are at last!' he stammered. It was all he could say. And Janey emerged, and her cool little voice – the only voice in the world for him – said,

'Well, darling! Have you been waiting long?'

No; not long. Or, at any rate, it didn't matter. It was over now. But the point was, he had a cab waiting at the end of the wharf. Was she ready to go off? Was her luggage ready? In that case they could cut off sharp with her cabin luggage and let the rest go hang until tomorrow. He bent over her and she looked up with her familiar half- smile. She was just the same. Not a day changed. Just as he'd always known her. She laid her small hand on his sleeve.

'How are the children, John?' she asked.

(Hang the children!) 'Perfectly well. Never better in their lives.'

'Haven't they sent me letters?'

'Yes, yes – of course! I've left them at the hotel for you to digest later on.'

'We can't go quite so fast,' said she. 'I've got people to say goodbye to – and then there's the Captain.' As his face fell she gave his arm a small understanding squeeze. 'If the Captain comes off the bridge I want you to thank him for having looked after your wife so beautifully.' Well, he'd got her. If she wanted another ten minutes – As he gave way she was surrounded. The whole first- class seemed to want to say goodbye to Janey.

'Goodbye, *dear* Mrs Hammond! And next time you're in Sydney I'll *expect* you.'

'Darling Mrs Hammond! You won't forget to write to me, will you?'

'Well, Mrs Hammond, what this boat would have been without you!'

It was as plain as a pikestaff that she was by far the most popular woman on board. And she took it all – just as usual. Absolutely composed. Just her little self – just Janey all over; standing there with her v thrown back. Hammond never noticed what his wife had on. It was all the same to him whatever she wore. But today he did notice that she wore a black 'costume' – didn't they call it? – with white frills, trimmings he supposed they were, at the neck and sleeves. All this while Janey handed him round.

'John, dear!' And then: 'I want to introduce you to –'

Finally they did escape, and she led the way to her state- room. To follow Janey down the passage that she knew so well – that was so strange to him; to part the green curtains after her and to step into the cabin that had been hers gave him exquisite happiness. But – confound it! – the stewardess was there on the floor, strapping up the rugs.

'That's the last, Mrs Hammond,' said the stewardess, rising and pulling down her cuffs.

He was introduced again, and then Janey and the stewardess disappeared into the passage. He heard whisperings. She was getting the tipping business over, he supposed. He sat down on the

striped sofa and took his hat off. There were the rugs she had taken with her; they looked good as new. All her luggage looked fresh, perfect. The labels were written in her beautiful little clear hand – 'Mrs John Hammond.'

'Mrs John Hammond!' He gave a long sigh of content and leaned back, crossing his arms. The strain was over. He felt he could have sat there for ever sighing his relief – the relief at being rid of that horrible tug, pull, grip on his heart. The danger was over. That was the feeling. They were on dry land again.

But at that moment Janey's head came round the corner.

'Darling – do you mind? I just want to go and say goodbye to the doctor.'

Hammond started up. 'I'll come with you.'

'No, no!' she said. 'Don't bother. I'd rather not. I'll not be a minute.'

And before he could answer she was gone. He had half a mind to run after her; but instead he sat down again.

Would she really not be long? What was the time now? Out came the watch; he stared at nothing. That was rather queer of Janey, wasn't it? Why couldn't she have told the stewardess to say goodbye for her? Why did she have to go chasing after the ship's doctor? She could have sent a note from the hotel even if the affair had been urgent. Urgent? Did it – could it mean that she had been ill on the voyage – she was keeping something from him? That was it! He seized his hat. He was going off to find that fellow and to wring the truth out of him at all costs. He thought he'd noticed just something. She was just a touch too calm – too steady. From the very first moment –

The curtains rang. Janey was back. He jumped to his feet.

'Janey, have you been ill on this voyage? You have!'

'Ill?' Her airy little voice mocked him. She stepped over the rugs, came up close, touched his breast, and looked up at him.

'Darling,' she said, 'don't frighten me. Of course I haven't! Whatever makes you think I have? Do I look ill?'

But Hammond didn't see her. He only felt that she was looking

at him and that there was no need to worry about anything. She was here to look after things. It was all right. Everything was.

The gentle pressure of her hand was so calming that he put his over hers to hold it there. And she said:

'Stand still. I want to look at you. I haven't seen you yet. You've had your beard beautifully trimmed, and you look – younger, I think, and decidedly thinner! Bachelor life agrees with you.'

'Agrees with me!' He groaned for love and caught her close again. And again, as always, he had the feeling he was holding something that never was quite his – his. Something too delicate, too precious, that would fly away once he let go.

'For God's sake let's get off to the hotel so that we can be by ourselves!' And he rang the bell hard for some one to look sharp with the luggage.

Walking down the wharf together she took his arm. He had her on his arm again. And the difference it made to get into the cab after Janey – to throw the red- and- yellow striped blanket round them both – to tell the driver to hurry because neither of them had had any tea. No more going without his tea or pouring out his own. She was back. He turned to her, squeezed her hand, and said gently, teasingly, in the 'special' voice he had for her: 'Glad to be home again, dearie?' She smiled; she didn't even bother to answer, but gently she drew his hand away as they came to the brighter streets.

'We've got the best room in the hotel,' he said. 'I wouldn't be put off with another. And I asked the chambermaid to put in a bit of a fire in case you felt chilly. She's a nice, attentive girl. And I thought now we were here we wouldn't bother to go home tomorrow, but spend the day looking round and leave the morning after. Does that suit you? There's no hurry, is there? The children will have you soon enough ... I thought a day's sightseeing might make a nice break in your journey – eh, Janey?'

'Have you taken the tickets for the day after?' she asked.

'I should think I have!' He unbuttoned his overcoat and took out his bulging pocket- book. 'Here we are! I reserved a first- class carriage to Salisbury. There it is – "*Mr and Mrs John Hammond.*" I thought we might as well do ourselves comfortably, and we don't want other people butting in, do we? But if you'd like to stop here a

bit longer –?’

‘Oh, no!’ said Janey quickly. ‘Not for the world! The day after tomorrow, then. And the children –’

But they had reached the hotel. The manager was standing in the broad, brilliantly- lighted porch. He came down to greet them. A porter ran from the hall for their boxes.

‘Well, Mr Arnold, here’s Mrs Hammond at last!’

The manager led them through the hall himself and pressed the elevator- bell. Hammond knew there were business pals of his sitting at the little hall tables having a drink before dinner. But he wasn’t going to risk interruption; he looked neither to the right nor the left. They could think what they pleased. If they didn’t understand, the more fools they – and he stepped out of the lift, unlocked the door of their room, and shepherded Janey in. The door shut. Now, at last, they were alone together. He turned up the light. The curtains were drawn; the fire blazed. He flung his hat on to the huge bed and went towards her.

But – would you believe it! – again they were interrupted. This time it was the porter with the luggage. He made two journeys of it, leaving the door open in between, taking his time, whistling through his teeth in the corridor. Hammond paced up and down the room, tearing off his gloves, tearing off his scarf. Finally he flung his overcoat on the bedside.

At last the fool was gone. The door clicked. Now they *were* alone. Said Hammond: ‘I feel I’ll never have you to myself again. These cursed people! Janey’ – and he bent his flushed, eager gaze upon her – ‘let’s have dinner up here. If we go down to the restaurant we’ll be interrupted, and then there’s the confounded music’ (the music he’d praised so highly, applauded so loudly last night!). ‘We shan’t be able to hear each other speak. Let’s have something up here in front of the fire. It’s too late for tea. I’ll order a little supper, shall I? How does the idea strike you?’

‘Do, darling!’ said Janey. ‘And while you’re away – the children’s letters –’

‘Oh, later on will do!’ said Hammond.

‘But then we’d get it over,’ said Janey. ‘And I’d first have time

to –'

'Oh, I needn't go down!' explained Hammond. 'I'll just ring and give the order ... you don't want to send me away, do you?'

Janey shook her head and smiled.

'But you're thinking of something else. You're worrying about something,' said Hammond. 'What is it? Come and sit here – come and sit on my knee before the fire.'

'I'll just unpin my hat,' said Janey, and she went over to the dressing- table. 'A- ah!' She gave a little cry.

'What is it?'

'Nothing, darling. I've just found the children's letters. That's all right! They will keep. No hurry now!' She turned to him, clasping them. She tucked them into her frilled blouse. She cried quickly, gaily: 'Oh, how typical this dressing- table is of you!'

'Why? What's the matter with it?' said Hammond.

'If it were floating in eternity I should say "John!" ' laughed Janey, staring at the big bottle of hair tonic, the wicker bottle of eau- de- Cologne, the two hairbrushes, and a dozen new collars tied with pink tape. 'Is this all your luggage?'

'Hang my luggage!' said Hammond; but all the same he liked being laughed at by Janey. 'Let's talk. Let's get down to things. Tell me' – and as Janey perched on his knees he leaned back and drew her into the deep, ugly chair – 'tell me you're really glad to be back, Janey.'

'Yes, darling, I am glad,' she said.

But just as when he embraced her he felt she would fly away, so Hammond never knew – never knew for dead certain that she was as glad as he was. How could he know? Would he ever know? Would he always have this craving – this pang like hunger somehow, to make Janey so much part of him that there wasn't any of her to escape? He wanted to blot out everybody, everything. He wished now he'd turned off the light. That might have brought her nearer. And now those letters from the children rustled in her blouse. He could have chucked them into the fire.

'Janey,' he whispered.

'Yes, dear?' She lay on his breast, but so lightly, so remotely. Their breathing rose and fell together.

'Janey!'

'What is it?'

'Turn to me,' he whispered. A slow, deep flush flowed into his forehead. 'Kiss me, Janey! You kiss me!'

It seemed to him there was a tiny pause – but long enough for him to suffer torture – before her lips touched his, firmly, lightly – kissing them as she always kissed him, as though the kiss – how could he describe it? – confirmed what they were saying, signed the contract. But that wasn't what he wanted; that wasn't at all what he thirsted for. He felt suddenly horribly tired.

'If you knew,' he said, opening his eyes, 'what it's been like – waiting today. I thought the boat never would come in. There we were, hanging about. What kept you so long?'

She made no answer. She was looking away from him at the fire. The flames hurried – hurried over the coals, flickered, fell.

'Not asleep, are you?' said Hammond, and he jumped her up and down.

'No,' she said. And then: 'Don't do that, dear. No, I was thinking. As a matter of fact,' she said, 'one of the passengers died last night ... an. That's what held us up. We brought him in ... ean, he wasn't buried at sea. So, of course, the ship's doctor and the shore doctor –'

'What was it?' asked Hammond uneasily. He hated to hear of death. He hated this to have happened. It was, in some queer way, as though he and Janey had met a funeral on their way to the hotel.

'Oh, it wasn't anything in the least infectious!' said Janey. She was speaking scarcely above her breath. 'It was *heart* .' A pause. 'Poor fellow!' she said. 'Quite young.' And she watched the fire flicker and fall. 'He died in my arms,' said Janey.

The blow was so sudden that Hammond thought he would faint. He couldn't move; he couldn't breathe. He felt all his strength flowing – flowing into the big dark chair, and the big dark chair held him fast, gripped him, forced him to bear it.

'What?' he said dully. 'What's that you say?'

'The end was quite peaceful,' said the small voice. 'He just' – and Hammond saw her lift her gentle hand – 'breathed his life away at the end.' And her hand fell.

'Who – else was there?' Hammond managed to ask.

'Nobody. I was alone with him.'

Ah, my God, what was she saying! What was she doing to him! This would kill him! And all the while she spoke:

'I saw the change coming and I sent the steward for the doctor, but the doctor was too late. He couldn't have done anything, anyway.'

'But – why *you* , *why you* ?' moaned Hammond.

At that Janey turned quickly, quickly searched his face.

'You don't *mind* , John, do you?' she asked. 'You don't – It's nothing to do with you and me.'

Somehow or other he managed to shake some sort of smile at her. Somehow or other he stammered: 'No – go – on, go on! I want you to tell me.'

'But, John darling. –'

'Tell me, Janey!'

'There's nothing to tell,' she said, wondering. 'He was one of the first- class passengers. I saw he was very ill when he came on board ... But he seemed to be so much better until yesterday. He had a severe attack in the afternoon – excitement – nervousness, I think, about arriving. And after that he never recovered.'

'But why didn't the stewardess –'

'Oh, my dear – the stewardess!' said Janey. 'What would he have felt? And besides ... he might have wanted to leave a message ... to –'

'Didn't he?' muttered Hammond. 'Didn't he say anything?'

'No, darling, not a word!' She shook her head softly. 'All the time I was with him he was too weak ... he was too weak even to move a finger ... '

Janey was silent. But her words, so light, so soft, so chill, seemed to hover in the air, to rain into his breast like snow.

The fire had gone red. Now it fell in with a sharp sound and the room was colder. Cold crept up his arms. The room was huge, immense, glittering. It filled his whole world. There was the great blind bed, with his coat flung across it like some headless man saying his prayers. There was the luggage, ready to be carried away again, anywhere, tossed into trains, carted on to boats.

... . He was too weak. He was too weak to move a finger.' And yet he died in Janey's arms. She – who'd never – never once in all these years – never on one single solitary occasion –

No; he mustn't think of it. Madness lay in thinking of it. No, he wouldn't face it. He couldn't stand it. It was too much to bear!

And now Janey touched his tie with her fingers. She pinched the edges of the tie together.

'You're not – sorry I told you, John darling? It hasn't made you sad? It hasn't spoilt our evening – our being alone together?'

But at that he had to hide his face. He put his face into her bosom and his arms enfolded her.

Spoilt their evening! Spoilt their being alone together! They would never be alone together again.



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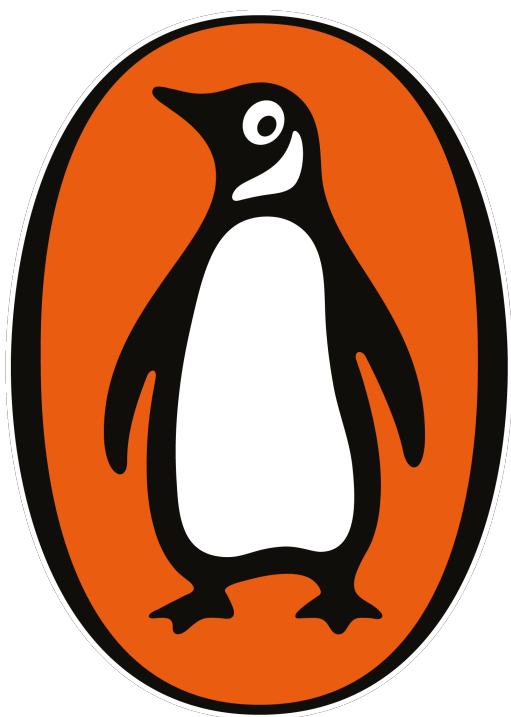
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“仿佛他自己正在窄窄的、
刀锋般的高山
绝壁上行走。

他看到的是一幅全景图，
往这边看到的是生，
而往另一边看到的
则是死，
恰如两片深不可测、
美不胜收、
波光粼粼的大海……”



PENGUIN
LITTLE BLACK
CLASSICS

* 此中文译本译自俄语原文

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1.“是下午一点，大人！”

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因为部长是一个大胖子，且有中风的可能，因此，在通报一桩针对他的严重预谋犯罪的时候，警务处长小心翼翼，以避免引起不必要的激动而导致危险情况发生。看到部长听到他这消息还算平静，甚至还面带微笑，他便又进一步汇报了一些细节：犯罪预计在明天白天部长出发进宫觐见时实施；几个恐怖分子下午一点会持枪弹埋伏在大门口等他出现，但这伙人已经被奸细出卖。目前正密切监视其动向，在这里将会把他们一网打尽。

“等一下，”部长觉得奇怪，“他们从哪儿得到消息说我要在下午一点出门？我自己都是两天前才知道要去觐见！”

警务处长也满是困惑地双手一摊：

“是下午一点，大人。”

部长摇了摇头，不知道是觉得奇怪，还是对警方周密的部署表示赞赏，他肥厚的红嘴唇上浮起一丝忧郁的微笑，这笑容一直停留在脸上。为了不干涉警方接下来的工作，他很快就收拾好了东西，带着妻子和两个孩子一同离开了宅邸。他们借住到一位殷勤好客的皇亲府上，空留一座明天暴徒会聚集的危险房子。

在灯火通明的皇亲家里，熟识的客人们彬彬有礼，不断向部长致意，微笑着表示出他们对此事的愤慨，部长感到了愉悦的亢奋——就仿佛他已经得到或者就要被授予一枚不期而至的硕大勋章。但在客人们均已离开，灯火已息的子夜时分，街灯透过镜子般的玻璃反射到天花板上，光怪陆离的影子愈显周围的寂然，这位高官睡在满是绘画和雕像的陌生房子里，形影相吊，自己无事也无聊，不安的思绪便泛滥开来，觉得门闩、警卫和墙壁都不可靠。他睡在冷清、寂寞的别人卧室里，难以抑制的恐惧袭上心头。

他有严重的肾病，一旦过于激动，脸、手和脚就会出现水肿，使他看起来更加肥胖和臃肿。此时，他浑身肥胖的肉犹如小山一般沉甸甸地压在弹簧床上，他满怀着病人的郁闷，感觉着这张肿得面目全非的脸，并且一直在不停地想别人给自己预备的残酷结局。他接二连三地回想起不久前发生的恐怖事件，都是往显贵们身上扔炸弹，有的还是比他级别还高的大臣。他们被炸得血肉横飞，脑浆迸出并飞溅

到肮脏的砖墙上，连牙齿都炸脱落了。由于这些接二连三的回亿，他觉得这瘫在床上的肥胖病躯已经不是自己的了，似乎已经遭受了炸弹的袭击；他觉得，肩膀上的双臂已经被炸离躯干，牙齿都进出牙床，脑浆也进得星星点点到处都是，双腿僵直伸着，脚趾朝上，跟一具死尸一样。为了显示自己还活着，并非一具死尸，他使劲翻身，大声喘气，咳嗽几声，用力压得弹簧床吱嘎作响，不停地把被子弄出窸窣窸窣的声音。为了显示自己还活得很好，根本没死，离死还大老远呢，他在寂静无人的卧室里用低沉的嗓音大喊：

“好样的！好样的！好样的！”

他这是在夸赞密探、警察和卫兵们，他们保卫着他的生命安全，那么及时、那么巧妙地提前告知了他有关暗杀的情报。但是，在他晃动着身体、称赞安保人员并撇着嘴巴勉强挤出笑容嘲讽不走运的恐怖分子时，他仍然不相信自己会获救，不相信生命猝然离去只是假设。别人想要杀死他，尽管那只是想法、只是预谋，但仿佛死亡已经站在这屋子里，在歹徒没有抓到前、在他们手上的炸弹没有被夺下来之前，在他们没有被关进坚固的大牢之前，死亡会一直盘踞此地不会离开。瞧，死亡就站在那个角落里，没有走，也不会走掉——它就像一个服从命令的哨兵，绝不会擅离岗位。

“是下午一点，大人。”这句话以不同语调在他的脑海中时起时落：一会儿是幸灾乐祸的嘲笑，一会儿是怒气冲冲的大叫，一会儿是固执的警告和死板的重复。就好像卧室里摆上了几百台上足了发条的唱机，它们一台接一台地以白痴才有的那种勤奋的傻劲儿，叫喊着预先灌制的这句话：

“是下午一点，大人。”

明天的这个“下午一点”，不久前还和其他钟点没有任何区别，无非就是表盘上的指针沿着刻度盘平缓移动而表示的一个时刻而已，而现在它突然就变成了必然会应验的一个凶兆，它跳出了刻度盘，单独存在，身子竖直，像一根巨大的黑色界标，把全部生活一分为二。仿佛在它之前或者在它之后，世界上从未存在过其他的钟点，只有它这一个钟点，可以放肆和自命不凡地拥有特别存在的权利。

“怎么？你想干什么？”部长气呼呼地小声问。

所有唱机一起大声吼叫：

“是下午一点，大人。”而且，好像屋角的那根黑色界标还冷笑着给他鞠了一个躬。

部长咬牙撑着从床上坐了起来，手掌捂着脸，在这个该死的夜晚，他是不能睡着觉了。

他用肿胀得厉害的手掌捂着脸，特别清晰地想象着一幅画面，即明天早晨他一起床，什么也不知道，就喝上了咖啡，什么也不知道，就在门厅里穿上了外衣。无论是他，还是递给他大衣的看门人，还是给他端咖啡的听差都不知道即将发生的事，他们一千人完全没有料到喝咖啡、穿大衣这等事情都毫无意义，因为就只过了几秒钟，大衣，他的身体，喝进肚里的咖啡，都会被炸弹毁灭、被死神带走。瞧，这个看门人正在打开玻璃大门……他长得可爱、善良又和气，这位长着一双宝蓝色眼睛的士兵，胸前佩戴着一大排军功章，他亲手打开了那扇恐怖的大门，因为他对即将发生的事情一无所知。所有人都微笑着，因为所有人都对即将发生的事情一无所知。

“啊！”他突然大叫一声，把两个手掌从脸上放了下来。他面前是一片黑暗，他紧张地盯着这片黑暗，慢慢地伸出手，摸索到电灯开关，把灯拧亮。然后他站起来，也不穿鞋，光着脚走过地毯，在陌生卧室里走了一圈，找到了壁灯开关，也拧开了壁灯。屋子里亮了，看起来很舒适，只有乱糟糟的床铺摊着一堆被子直拖到地上，表明某种恐惧还未走远。

部长就这样穿着睡衣，胡子也因刚才的辗转反侧而弄得乱蓬蓬的，他的双眼满是愤怒，那模样跟任何一个因失眠和气喘而大动肝火的老头儿毫无二致。好像人们为他准备的死亡把他剥得一丝不挂一样，一下子就失去了原先举手投足间的器宇轩昂和威风凛凛——让人很难相信，现在这样一个人会拥有那样大的权力，这样一个普普通通的人的躯体竟会死得这么惨，会在威力惊人的炸弹的爆炸声中和火光中血肉横飞。他没有穿好衣服，也感觉不到冷，就坐到离自己最近的一把扶手椅上，手捻着蓬乱的胡子，直愣愣地盯着别人家的雕花天花板，陷入了无边的沉思中。

原来是这么回事！原来令他这么害怕、这么激动不安的是这个原因！原来是这个原因令死亡盘踞在屋角不肯离去，也不能离去！

“一群蠢货！”他轻蔑地狠狠骂道。

“一群蠢货！”他把头转向门口，又大声地骂了一句，让那些被骂的人听见好了。就在刚才他还称赞那些家伙呢，现在他骂他们为了多余的献殷勤而把密谋行刺的事详细地汇报给他。

“当然就是这么回事啦！”他的思路突然变得顺畅了，“就是他们告诉我暗杀的事了，我知道了，现在才这么害怕，要是我什么都不知道，我不就能安稳地喝咖啡了吗？当然了，喝了咖啡后死神还会来——但难道我这么怕死吗？对，我有肾病，总有一天会死，但什么也不知道的话就不会这么害怕。这帮蠢货非要说，是下午一点，大人。这帮蠢货还以为我听了会高兴，高兴什么呀，倒把死神弄墙角来了，

还怎么都轰不走。它不走，是因为我一直在想它。其实可怕的不是死亡本身，而是你知道自己的死期，如果一个人要是准确无误地知道自己的死亡日期和时辰，那他就完全没法儿活了。而这帮蠢货却提前告知说：“是下午一点，大人！””

这么一想，他心情立刻轻松愉快了，好像是有谁说他长生不老了一样。他重新觉得自己在那帮蠢货中间是一个强大又聪明的人，不像他们那样毫无意义地窥探未来的秘密，他陷入了饱经沧桑的老人和病后余生之人的那类思绪中，即什么都不知道最好。不要让任何有生命的东西，包括任何人、任何禽兽知道自己的死亡日期和时辰。前不久他病了一场，医生说，他快要死了，应当安排一下后事，他根本不相信，这不也活下来了。年轻时候也有过类似事情：他曾误入歧途，想以自杀结束自己生命。他准备了一把左轮手枪，连遗书都写好了，甚至自杀时间就定在下午一点——但就在最后那一刻，不知为什么他突然改变主意了。总是这样，总是在最后的时刻会有突如其来的、意想不到的情况出现，正因为如此，谁也不能轻易断言自己什么时候会死。

“是下午一点，大人”，那些蠢货讨好地来告知他，是因为死亡的威胁会被排除，然而，他却因为知道了可能的死亡时间而惊恐不已。完全有可能，他某一天会被人杀死，但不会是明天——明天不会发生这一幕、明天不会发生这一幕——要是这样，他就能像一个长生不老的人一样放心上床去睡觉了。可是，这帮蠢货，他们不知道，他们推翻了一个多么伟大的铁律，当他们说出了那句白痴一样的呓语“是下午一点，大人”的时候，他们捅下了一个多大的娄子。

“不，不是下午一点，大人，不知道是什么时候。不知道是什么时候。你说什么？”

“没说什么，”黑暗中有个声音回答，“没说什么。”

“不，你说了。”

“没说什么，小事一桩。我说的是：明天，下午一点。”

顿时一种猝不及防的极度惊恐掠过心头，他明白了，只要这个该死的、跳出了表盘的时辰不过去，他就绝无任何美梦可做了，也不会有什么安宁，更谈不上什么高兴。只要那桩任何有生命的东西都不该提前知道的事还在墙角暗影幢幢，那就足以让人看不见一丝光亮，永远处于恐怖的黑暗中。死亡的恐惧一旦袭来，就会弥漫全身，渗入骨髓，令人失魂落魄，寝食难安。

此刻他害怕的已经不是明天的那些杀人犯了，他们连同他周围数不清的，充满敌意的人和事混在一起，被他忘却了。现在需要担心的是某些遽然来临的和不可避免发生的事情：中风、心力衰竭、某根纤

细的血管栓塞溢血导致动脉破裂，就像紧紧绷在肿胀粗大手指上的手套突然绽裂开了一样。

他开始担心自己又短又肥的脖子，看自己肿胀且汗津津的短手指，觉得自己的手难看得要命。如果说，刚才他还在黑暗中不停地翻身以便不像个死尸，那么现在，在明晃晃的、充满冷淡敌意的灯光下，他倒害怕得一动也不敢动了——连按铃叫人给拿支香烟都不敢了。他的神经处于极度紧张之中。每根神经都像是一根金属导线，上方弯曲成一个小脑袋，脑袋上的眼睛惊恐万分地凸鼓出来，口不出声，气喘吁吁，但呼吸不到一点儿空气。

突然间，在天花板布满灰尘和蜘蛛网的昏暗之处，铃声骤然响起。电铃盒里的金属舌片在恐惧氛围中痉挛般地敲击盒壁，停了一小会儿，接着又开始可怕地持续不断地颤动着敲击起来。这是部长大人在他住的卧室里按的电铃。

外面开始有人忙乱地奔跑。各处的枝形吊灯和墙上的壁灯都打开了几盏——照明足够了，但还不是灯火通明，阴影随之投射下来。一时间，天花板上、角落里，都布满了拉得长长的影子，它们闪闪缩缩地掠过每一处隆起的家具，紧贴到墙壁上去。真弄不明白，这些数不清的无声而丑陋的阴影、这些无声无息的幽灵一样的东西，在未开灯前到底所居何处呢。

有人用战战兢兢的声音说了句话，然后就打电话叫医生了：部长病情危笃，已经昏迷，部长的夫人也被请了过来。

2.判处绞刑

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结果和警方预料的一样。在部长家大门口，四个恐怖分子，三男一女携带定时炸弹和手枪一出现就被当场逮捕，第五个也在租住房子里被抓获，就是这个秘密住所的女主人。在这里还起获了不少的炸药、半成品炸弹和武器。所有嫌疑犯都很年轻：男犯中最大的二十八岁，女犯中最小那个是十九岁。就在关押他们的监狱进行了审判，在那个残酷的年代，这种事总是迅速而草率。

五个人在法庭上都很镇定，面容肃穆，十分沉静，他们对法官的蔑视是如此之深，以至于没有人愿意用不必要的微笑或假装的喜悦来强调他们的勇气。他们的镇定自如隔绝了法庭上其他人凶狠的、充满敌意的目光，使自己的心灵和临死前的痛苦不被任何人窥探到。有时他们拒绝回答问题，有时回答——但都很简短、直白、准确，就好像不是在回答法官的提问，而是在回应统计师要求填写的某种特殊表格一样。有三个人，一个女的和两个男的，说出了自己的真实姓名，另外两个人则拒绝招供自己的真名实姓，所以法官最后也不知道他们姓甚名谁。他们对法庭上所进行的一切都抱有一种病人或者身临大事之人才有的好奇心，既心不在焉又思绪潮涌。如果法庭上有人讲了一句比较有趣的话，那他们就会张望一下，认真听进去，随即就会继续以沉思状回到自己的思绪中。

离法官最近的位置坐着那位报出了自己真实姓名的年轻人——谢尔盖·戈洛温，他是退伍上校的儿子，自己也曾是军官。他还相当年轻，头发浅黄，宽肩膀，身体强壮结实，以至于无论是监禁还是即将来临的死刑都未能抹去他脸颊上的红晕和蓝眼睛里孩子般天真的幸福表情。他一直不停地抚弄自己那两撇小胡子——他对自己的小胡子还不太习惯呢，同时眯着双眼，一直盯着窗外看。

时值暮冬，在暴风雪和阴冷天气交替的时段，春天早已经别奏先声，有时一天都会是阳光灿烂的日子，有时这种好天气也就仅有一小时，但即使短暂，它生机勃勃的气息也令街道上的麻雀快活得发疯，路上行人也十分沉醉。此刻，窗户上落满了去夏以来不曾擦拭的灰尘，透过上端的玻璃可以看到出奇的美丽：乍一看，天空似薄雾朦胧，可往远处看的话，天空开始变蓝，而且越远越蓝、越晶莹、越辽阔。正因为天空并不是全然的一览无余，所以，在透明青烟般的云霭

中，它就显得像你爱上的姑娘一样，含羞而立，楚楚动人。谢尔盖·戈洛温仰望着这一小片晴空，轻抚着小胡子，左右变换着眯缝着双眼，若有所思。有那么一小会儿，他甚至弹拨起手指来，高兴而天真地做了一个鬼脸——但环顾了一下四周，刚才高兴的表情就消失得无影无踪了，就像上去一脚踩灭了一点儿火星。几乎就是在瞬间，他的脸色由鲜红变得煞白，露出了死灰色。他从头上狠狠地拔下一根又细又软的头发，用两根没有血色的手指紧紧拈着。但，生命和春天的喜悦是更强大的——只过了几分钟，他那天真无邪的脸庞又恢复了原来生机勃勃的天真表情，他又开始仰望天空了。

同时仰望天空的还有那个不肯供出自己真名实姓的姑娘，她化名叫穆夏。这是一个比戈洛温还年轻的姑娘，有着白皙的皮肤，举止老成持重，一双黑眼睛直率而骄傲。但她那细嫩的脖子和少女的手臂，以及浑身上下同样不可捉摸的青春活力，还有古典乐器般令人惊叹的纯净悦耳的嗓音，都说明着她的年龄。她肤色很白，但不是那种死尸般的惨白，而是一种特别热烈的洁白，就好比是一个人体内燃烧着熊熊烈火，身体发出透明的光亮，像法国的塞夫勒瓷器一样。她几乎一动也不动地坐着，只是偶尔难以察觉地用手指抚摸一下右手中指上深凹的一小圈，这是不久前刚摘下戒指所留的痕迹。她仰望天空时毫无温情，也没有陷入某种愉快的回忆之中，她之所以只望着那里，完全是因为在整个肮脏的监狱法庭里，唯有这一小块蓝色的天空是美丽、干净和真实的——她的眼睛里什么表情也没有。

法官们可怜谢尔盖·戈洛温，却讨厌这姑娘。

穆夏身旁的男子也一动不动地坐着，双手夹在膝盖中间，他也没有报出真名实姓，他的化名是维尔纳。如果假设一个人的脸可以像道大门一样，关紧时可以密不透风的话，那么现在这个无名氏的脸就像是一道关严的大门，还有铁将军把门。他一直盯着脚下肮脏的地板，谁也猜不透他是平静还是一直在激动，是在想心事还是在倾听法庭上密探的陈词。他个子不高，容貌清秀而高贵。一副温文尔雅的长相令人很容易想到南方月夜海边婆娑柏树的身影，但同时，他又会使人觉察到一种巨大的沉着冷静的力量，浑身散发出不可战胜的坚强、冷静和刚毅的英雄气概。他彬彬有礼地回答问题，总是简明扼要，并微微欠身向前，他有一种震撼人心的力量。如果说，囚衣穿在别人身上多少有那么一点儿荒唐的话——这根本不是人穿的——穿在他身上则完全不一样了。从恐怖分子身上搜到了武器和定时炸弹，但在维尔纳的身上只搜到了一把黑色手枪，法官据此就认定他是首犯，对他的态度相当恭敬，规规矩矩地公事公办。

在维尔纳之后受审的是瓦西里·卡希林，他呢，浑身上下充满了难以克制的死亡恐惧，并且无望地竭力控制着自己，不想在法官面前

流露出自己的恐惧。从一大早把他们这些人提审到法庭上来时，他就开始心跳加速喘不上气来，他的额头上一直冷汗不断，手上也浸透了冷汗，身上的冷汗更是已经湿透了衬衫，使他难以动弹。他正在以非凡的力量竭力控制手指不哆嗦，抑制说话的声音，让它更坚定、明确，让自己的眼神显得镇静。他看不清自己周围的东西，法官的问话像是从雾霭中穿过似的缥缈，他尽力回答得大声而坚决。但一回答完毕，他就忘记了法官的问话，也忘了自己回答的内容，重新回到与恐惧的默默搏斗中。死亡在他的身上表现得如此明显，以至于法官都刻意不去看他，也很难确定他的年龄，就像无法确定一具死尸的准确年龄一样。根据身份证，他才二十三岁。维尔纳几次用手触碰他的膝盖，他总是回答同一个词：

“没事儿。”

瓦西里·卡希林最怕自己会突然大喊大叫起来，没有话语——而是像野兽一样嚎叫。那时他就会轻轻地碰一下身旁的维尔纳，而这位连眼睛也没抬一下，低声回答：

“没事儿的，瓦夏 [1]。很快就结束了。”

一直在为同伴们担惊受怕的是第五位恐怖分子，用她那充满母爱的眼神不住地望着所有同道，她叫丹妮雅·科瓦利丘克。她还没有生过孩子，同谢尔盖·戈洛温一样，年轻的脸蛋绯红，可她却像是这些人的母亲一样：微笑里、眼神中、害怕的表情里，满是关切，满是慈爱。她对法庭视若无睹，就好像与己毫不相干，只是在倾听同伴们对质询的回答：声音是否颤抖、是否过于害怕、是否需要喝水。

在瓦夏受审时，她难过得不敢看他，只是悄悄地捏自己的胖手指。而在穆夏和维尔纳受审时，她就骄傲地钦佩不已地注视着他们，脸色严肃专注，不时地向谢尔盖·戈洛温报以微笑。

“可爱的孩子，正在仰望这天空呢。看吧，看吧，可爱的小鸽子，”她就这样心里想着戈洛温，“哎呀，瓦夏呀？我的天哪，他怎么会这样子呢？我的天哪……我能拿他怎么办呢？说什么呢？说了会更糟糕：万一他哭起来可如何是好呢？”

就像日光潋潋的池塘，能够映射出所有流云的倒影一样，她那丰腴、可爱、善良的脸上反映出另外四个人情感的瞬息万变，思虑的上下浮动。她完全将自己也在受审，将被判处绞刑的这些事置于一边，连想都不去想，漠然处之。就是在她的家里搜查出来的武器和炸药，而且，说起来也奇怪——正是她开枪拒捕并打伤了一个密探。

审讯在八点钟结束，天已经完全黑下来了。穆夏和谢尔盖眼前的蓝色天空暗淡了，但不像夏天天空那样，红霞尽染，笑意迭出，而是渐渐暗下来，渐渐发灰，又突然变成了一副寒冷的冬夜模样。戈洛温

叹了一口气，伸了伸腰，又看了两眼窗外，外面已经是漆黑夜色。他抚弄着小胡子，以一种小孩般的好奇心打量起法庭和荷枪的法警，对着丹妮雅·科瓦利丘克微笑了一下。穆夏呢，在天空变暗后，就将目光转到角落里，不是看地下，而是观察被供暖的气流冲压得不停摇曳的一张蜘蛛网，目不转睛直到宣判。

宣判后，被告们就和辩护律师告别，竭力回避律师们因无能为力而深感歉意的怜悯目光，被告们也在门口碰头简单交谈了几句。

“没事的，瓦夏。一切很快都会结束的。”维尔纳说道。

“是啊，老弟，我没事的。”卡希林大声回答，嗓音坚决甚至还挺愉快。

确实，他的脸已经泛起红晕，不再像一具死尸了。

“见他妈的鬼去吧！这帮浑蛋竟敢判我们绞刑。”戈洛温毫无顾忌地大骂起来。

“这是早就应该预料到的。”维尔纳倒是平静。

“明天宣布终审判决，这以后我们就会关押在一起了。”科瓦利丘克安慰大家，“直到行刑前，我们都将在一起。”

穆夏一直没有说话。后来她挺直身体，果断地走到最前面去了。

[1] 瓦西里的小名。（说明：书中脚注除特别标明之外，均为译者注。）

3.“不该绞死我”

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在审讯恐怖分子的半个月前，在同一个地方的军事法庭，由另一批法官，把一个名叫伊万·扬松的农民判处了绞刑。

这个扬松原本是一个富裕农场主家里的长工，同所有孤苦伶仃的穷雇工没什么区别。他是爱沙尼亚人，出生在维森别格，长大后四处漂泊，从一个农场到另一个农场，靠打短工过活，几年之后来到了首都附近。他俄语说得不好，但雇他的主人却是一个名叫拉扎列夫的俄罗斯人，住处附近没有爱沙尼亚人，所以两年多的时间里，他几乎没怎么说过话。看来，他也是一个不怎么爱说话的人，不仅对人不爱说话，而且对牲口也吝于开口：他就默然无声地饮马、套马，整天无精打采地、慢腾腾地在马棚周围挪着小碎步，要是马都腻烦了他的沉默寡言、跳起来尥蹶子的时候，他就扬起长鞭子默默地、狠狠地抽打它。他一旦打起牲口来就毫不手软，残忍、凶狠、冷酷，而且这种事要是发生在他正好喝得酩酊大醉的时候，那就会下死手猛抽牲口。那时，就是在正屋都能听到呼呼的鞭子声和因剧痛而跺得凌乱的马蹄子声。因为扬松打马，雇主曾打过他，但什么也改变不了，扬松依然故我，无奈只好随他去了。每个月扬松都会大醉那么一两回，通常都是在他送雇主去车站后。那个车站比较大，有一家餐馆，把雇主送到后，他就赶车到离车站半俄里 [2] 远的地方，把马和雪橇赶进远离路边的雪地里，雪橇和马斜倒在雪堆中，等着火车开走。雪橇歪在路边，而马陷进齐肚子深的雪里，支棱着腿，不时地伸长脖子来舔几口松软的浮雪，而扬松就歪躺在雪橇上，好像是在打盹儿。他头上扣着一顶破皮帽子，上面的毛快掉光了，帽耳没有系好，像猎犬的两只耳朵一般向下耷拉着，冻得通红的小鼻子下淌着湿漉漉的鼻涕。

紧接着，扬松便返回车站的餐馆，喝个大醉而归。

从车站回到农场总共有十俄里路，他简直是策马疾驰。由于不停地被鞭打，马惊恐地扬起四蹄飞奔，扬松连缰绳也不握，雪橇忽左忽右，老是撞上路旁的界碑，人也处于随时要飞出去的危险中。但扬松不以为意，似唱非唱地哼唧着某种爱沙尼亚小曲儿，既不连贯也不清晰。有的路段里扬松就不唱了，而是咬紧牙关，一声不响，怀着一种莫名的痛苦、愤怒和亢奋，瞎子一般抽打着马向前飞奔，看不见迎面走过来的人，看见了也不管，拐弯和下坡时也不放慢疯狂飞驰的速度。

度。在野蛮的驾驶中，他没轧着别人，自己也没摔死——这真是不可思议。

很早就应该把他解雇，就像他在别的地方被撵走一样，但他要的工钱便宜，别的雇工也好不到哪儿去，所以他在这里干了两年。扬松的生活里没有什么大事。有一次他收到一封信，是用爱沙尼亚文写的，可他一个大字不识，别人也不懂爱沙尼亚文，所以这封信一直没读过。扬松弄不懂这封信给他带来了家乡的什么消息，就像没开化的野蛮人那样，冷漠地把信扔到粪堆里去了。扬松试着对厨娘献过殷勤，看得出来，他想女人了，但没得手，只招来了粗暴的拒绝和一顿奚落：嫌他个子小，身子骨弱，还一脸雀斑，说他总是睡眠惺忪的小绿眼睛浑浊得啥也看不清。扬松对这次碰钉子倒不大在乎，后来也就不再去纠缠厨娘了。

扬松虽然不怎么说话，却时刻在倾听着什么。他听白雪覆盖在荒凉的田野上的动静，听白雪覆盖着的鼓得像坟包一样的粪堆的动静，听着柔和的蓝色的远方的动静，听着风声掠过电线杆，听人们的谈话声。田野和电线杆子能告诉他什么，只有他一个人知道，而人们的谈话则令人不安，充斥着凶杀、抢劫和纵火等流言。有一天夜里，他听到邻村小教堂的钟声像小铃铛一样叮当地响个不停，接着火焰就冲上了天：原来不知从哪里来了一伙人抢劫了一家富户，打死了主人和他的妻子，把他们家放火烧了。

于是这边农场里的人也都惶惶不安起来：不仅是在夜里，就是白天也把狗放出来看家，夜里主人枪不离身。他本来想把一支旧的单筒猎枪交到扬松手上以备不时之需，但扬松掂了掂枪，摇了摇头，不知为什么拒绝了。主人不明白他为什么不要，就骂了他一顿，而扬松拒绝的原因，是他认为自己那把芬兰刀比这生锈了的旧家伙好使多了。

“我拿它只会把自己打死。”扬松还是用他那睡眠惺忪的目光望着主人说。

主人只好无可奈何地挥了挥手：“伊万，你这家伙真是个傻瓜蛋。跟这样的雇工过日子也真糟心。”

就是这个连枪都不相信的伊万·扬松在一个冬天的夜晚，在另一个雇工被派到车站去的时候，犯下了一桩集持刀抢劫、凶杀和强奸的极其复杂的刑事罪。他倒是做得干脆利落：先是把厨娘反锁在厨房，然后装出一副睡眠惺忪、困倦已极的样子，走到男主人背后，特别迅速地在背上猛戳了两刀，男主人立刻失去了知觉，倒在了地上，女主人方寸大乱，尖叫不已，扬松龇牙咧嘴地举着刀开始翻箱倒柜。出乎了他自己的预料，在找到钱后，就像是突然发现了团团乱转的女主人一样，他猛地扑向女主人，想要强奸她。但是因为他把刀子放到一旁

了，女主人力气比他大，反倒差点把他掐死。这时昏倒在地的主人醒过来了，厨娘也抄了炉钩子开始拼命地砸厨房的门，扬松就跑到外面去了。过了一小时，正当扬松蹲在仓房角落里一根接一根地划火柴意欲纵火时，他被当场抓住。

过了几天，男主人因伤口感染破伤风死了，而扬松和其他一批抢劫犯、杀人犯一起受审，并且被判处绞刑。在法庭上他还是依然故我的样子：又瘦又小，满脸雀斑，永远睡眠惺忪，好像完全不明白所发生事情的严重性，所以也满不在乎：扑闪着白睫毛，傻呆呆地张望着从没来过的庄严大堂，用粗糙、僵直的手指抠着鼻屎。只有每逢礼拜天在教堂见过他的人才知道，他也多少拾掇了一下：脖子上围了一条脏兮兮的红围巾，头发用水抿了抿；用水抿到的头发黑且平整，没有抿到的头发就稀稀拉拉地翘着，就像冰雹砸过的地里面仅剩的几根麦秸秆。

当宣布判决结果为绞刑的时候，扬松突然激动起来。他的脸涨得通红，来来回回地撕扯红围巾，就像围巾勒得他上不来气一样。然后他又无措地挥舞着双手，用手指头指着那个刚才宣读判决的法官，对没有宣读判决的另一个法官说：

“她说，她要把我绞死。”

“‘她’是谁？”刚读完判决的法官用浑厚的低音问道。

法庭上所有人都笑了，有人低头笑，有人用卷宗掩住嘴，而扬松伸出食指对着问话的法官，生气地说：

“就是你！”

“啊？”

扬松又把目光投向另一个竭力忍住笑的法官，他觉得这个人是他的朋友，和判决毫不相干，就对着这个人又说了一遍：

“她说的，要绞死我。不该绞死我。”

“把被告带下去。”

可扬松还是明确地、大声地重复了一遍：

“不该绞死我。”

他那想装成庄重的样子和他的愤怒小脸、伸得僵直的手指更显其愚不可言，以至于连押送他的士兵都忍不住违反了规则，小声对他说：

“唉，你这小伙儿，真是个傻瓜！”

“不该绞死我。”扬松固执地重复着。

“要是我有幸去吊死你，保管教你连腿都来不及蹬一下。”

“好了好了，少说两句！”另一个押送士兵生气地嚷嚷起来。但他自己也憋不住说，“谁让你当强盗了！你这傻瓜，你没弄死人吗？现在只能给你上绞索了。”

“你说，会赦免他吗？”第一个押送士兵有点儿可怜扬松了。

“怎么可能！怎么会赦免这种人呢……算了，说太多了。”

这时候扬松倒不说话了。他又被押回坐了一个多月的牢房，他对这间牢房已经习惯了，就像习惯所有事情一样：习惯挨打、习惯喝酒、习惯白雪覆盖的田野、习惯那上面满是圆圆坟包一样的粪堆。现在看到自己的床、自己的栅栏小窗和送来的囚饭——从早上起他还粒米未进，他甚至感到有点儿快乐。只有刚才在法庭上发生的一幕让他不太高兴，但他不懂得应该怎么去想，也不会去思考这些。至于用绞刑把人吊死，他完全不能想象。

尽管扬松被判处绞刑，但像他这样的犯人很多，他都算不上是监狱里的要犯，因此别人跟他谈话都没什么禁忌，也不会像对那些未定死罪的犯人一样有敌意。大家好像没有把他的死当成一回事。看守得知已经对他进行了判决，就用教训的口气跟他说话：

“怎么样？老弟，到底还是给你判了绞刑吧！”

“那啥时候绞死我呢？”扬松半信半疑地问人家。

看守想了一下。

“老弟呀，这你可得等等呢。怎么也得凑成一批才行。哪能光为你一个人行刑，况且你又是个糊涂蛋，哪里值得兴师动众。这种事可需要场面。”

“到底啥时候呢？”扬松固执地问。

对光为他一个人连个绞刑都不能办理这说法，扬松没感到屈辱，他也不相信这种说法有道理，而且，认定这只是一个拖延刑期的借口，最后应该会取消对他的判决。他立刻高兴起来：那个既模糊又可怕的时刻，那个想都不能想的时刻被推得远远的了，就像任何一种死法一样，变得神秘而不用去想了。

“老问啥时候，啥时候！”看守生气了，这是个古板、阴郁的老头子，“这可不是绞死一条狗，拉到棚子外面，找绳子一勒就得了。傻蛋，你就巴不得像狗一样报销掉吧！”

“我可不愿意那样！”扬松做了一个鬼脸，挺高兴地说，“这是她说的，应该把我绞死，我可不愿意！”

可能这是有生以来第一次，扬松大笑起来，笑声怪里怪气，愚蠢至极，但却相当快活和高兴。就像一只大鹅在“嘎——嘎——嘎”地叫着。看守吃惊地望着他，然后严厉地皱起了眉头：在他看来，一个被判处了绞刑的人开心大笑是荒唐的，是对监狱和死刑的极大不敬，把监狱和死刑都变成荒诞不经的事情了。于是，出现了那么一个瞬间，一个很短的瞬间，这个在监狱里度过了全部人生的老看守，这个默认监狱法则为自然法则的老看守，突然就觉得这里像是一个疯人院，而且，他，这个看守，才是这里的头号老疯子。

“呸，你这死鬼！”他吐了口唾沫，“干吗张牙舞爪地号叫，这又不是酒馆！”

“我可不愿意死啊！嘎——嘎——嘎！”扬松大笑不已。

“你这魔鬼！”看守一边骂，一边画着十字。

其实这个长了一张松弛小脸的人最不像魔鬼了，但是在他的嘎嘎怪笑声中有某种对监狱的牢固性和神圣性危害不已的东西。他再这么笑下去，这监狱的烂墙就会坍塌，潮湿的铁栅栏就会脱落，看守就会自动把囚犯送出大铁门……“先生们，请去城里溜达一圈吧，你们有人想去乡下兜个风吗？”真是个魔鬼呀！

但这会儿扬松已经不再笑了，只是恶魔一般地眯着眼睛。

“瞧，难怪会这样！”看守没有再威胁他，转身走了，一边走还一边回头看他。

整个晚上扬松都很平静、愉快。他自言自语、反复说他已经说过的话，“我不该被绞死”。在他看来，这句话是令人信服的、有智慧的、不容辩驳的，根本不值得去担心任何事了。他早就忘了自己犯罪这件事了，只是有时会遗憾没能强奸成女主人。不过，这事也很快就被忘得一干二净了。

每天早上扬松都要问，什么时候把他绞死；每天早上看守都没好气地回答：“你这魔鬼，别急，老实等着吧！”

由于天天都重复这个对话，由于每天的开始、经过和结束与寻常的日子毫无两样，扬松就更加确信，不会有把他绞死这个事了。他很快就忘记了法庭上的判决，开始整天在床上大睡特睡，迷迷糊糊地做着白日梦，梦到荒凉的有粪堆的田野覆盖着白雪，梦到火车站前的酒馆，还有许许多多更遥远更开心的事情。监狱里伙食尚可，很快，就几天的工夫，他就胖了，看上去气色不错。

“要是搁到现在，她说不定会爱上我呢，”他想起了女主人，“现在我胖了，不比主人差啥。”

只是他太想喝伏特加了，就想猛喝猛喝然后赶着马飞奔。

当一批恐怖分子被逮捕的消息传到监狱后，看守再回答扬松的问题就相当粗野并且完全出乎扬松的意料了：

“这下可快了。”

看守一字一顿地、居高临下地说：

“这下可快了。我觉得，也就一个星期的事儿啦。”

扬松的脸立刻就白了，两只浑浊的眼睛目光呆滞，一副失神的样子，他问道：

“你开玩笑吧？”

“你不是都等不及了吗，还开啥玩笑。我们这里可不兴开这种玩笑。你喜欢开玩笑，我们可不兴开玩笑。”看守一本正经地说完就走了。

一天下来扬松就瘦脱了人形。入狱这一段时间以来他胖了，皮肤光滑了，现在突然间有了很多皱纹，有的地方皮肤也下垂了。眼睛更浑浊了，行动起来呆板迟缓，好像动一动头部，动一动手指，迈一迈步子，都成了相当复杂的需要深思熟虑的头等大事。夜里，他躺在床上，合不上眼睛，直到早上仍然睡眠惺忪地睁着。

“啊哈！”看守早上一看到他就得意地说，“我说得对吧，老弟，这可不是小酒馆。”

看守这得意仿佛就像是一个学者再次验证了自己的实验结果一样，他从头到脚再次认真仔细地打量了犯人一番：现在一切都进入正轨了。魔鬼的报应来了，监狱和死刑的正当性再度确立，为了表示宽容，这老看守探问起犯人：

“有没有想会见的什么人呢？”

“为什么要会见？”

“嗨，告别呀。比如见一见母亲或者兄弟。”

“不应该绞死我，”扬松小声说，也斜着眼睛看了看守一眼，“我可不想被绞死。”

看守看了看他，啥也没说，挥了挥手走掉了。

傍晚，扬松的心情平静一些了。这一天相当平常，冬天的天空里云雾缭绕，走廊里仍然充斥着脚步声和例行公事的谈话声，酸白菜汤像以往一样散发出怪味，这一天太平常，以至于扬松又停止相信面临死刑这回事了。但一到了夜里，扬松又开始害怕了。从前他觉得夜里

就是黑暗而已，上床睡觉就行了。但现在他却感到夜晚有一种既神秘又令人恐惧的本质。为了不去相信面临的死亡，就需要听到和看到周围寻常的东西：比如脚步声、谈话声、光亮、酸白菜汤，而现在一切都不同寻常，这种寂静、这种黑暗，这本身就已经是死亡了。

而且夜越是深沉，恐惧就越是强烈。扬松像原始人或者小孩子一样天真，总是认为一切都是人力可为的，他特别想对太阳大叫一声：你快天亮吧！他心里恳求、哀告太阳快点升起来，但黑夜还在大地上拖延自己那黑暗的时刻，没有什么力量能够阻止它的蔓延。扬松笨拙的大脑第一次意识到了这个不可能，他感到了巨大的恐惧。尽管他还不敢明确地这样想，但他已经感到面临的死亡不可避免了，他的一只将死的脚已经踏上了断头台的第一级台阶。

白天的到来又安慰了他，他不去想死亡的事了，可一到夜晚，他又怕得要死，就这样，直到行刑的前三天夜里，他终于意识到和感觉到，死亡是不可避免的了，再过三天，一过黎明，太阳一升起来，他就要被绞死了。

他从未想过死亡这回事，也不知道死亡是咋回事——但现在他明确地感觉到、看到、触摸到了，死亡正在走进他的牢房，正在用手摩挲他。为了逃命，他在牢房里拼命跑了起来。

可是，牢房相当狭小，四个角落都不是直角，而是钝角，他就总是好像被推到屋子中央一样，无处可藏。门是上了锁的。天又亮了。有好几次他用身体去撞墙壁，又一次撞到了门上——那声音喑哑又空洞。后来不知又撞到了哪里，他就脸朝下跌倒了，顿时感到被死神抓住了。他趴在地上，肚子紧紧地贴在地上，一边使劲把脸往又黑又脏的沥青地面里藏，一边惊骇地号叫起来。他就趴在那里拼命地号哭，直到有人进来。大家把他拖起来，放到床上，劈头给他浇上凉水，可是扬松仍然紧闭双眼，一直不敢睁开。刚睁开一只眼，看到空荡荡有光亮的角落或者是看到了一只空靴子，他就又大声号叫起来。

但是，凉水开始起作用了。再加上看守就是那个老头子，为了让他清醒过来，照他头上就敲了几下子。于是，活人才有的感觉赶跑了死神，扬松睁开了眼睛，剩下来的后半夜他也就昏头涨脑地睡过去了。他仰着脸，大张着嘴，忽高忽低地打着很响的呼噜。微微张着的眼睛的缝隙中不见瞳孔，只有眼白，特别像死人的眼睛。

自这以后，无论是白天还是黑夜，无论是脚步声还是谈话声，无论是酸白菜汤味还是别的，都让他感到无所不在的恐怖，把他逼进了一种无可比拟的原始人状态中。他贫乏的思想力使其无法连接两种对立的矛盾概念：一种是普通的白天，散发着酸白菜汤的气味，一种是再过那么一两天他必须去死。他什么也不想，甚至也不去算时间，只

是惊恐地默默站在这一对矛盾面前，任凭这矛盾把他的脑子分成两半。他脸色变白了，但没有失去血色，也没有潮红，就是一副平静的样子。但不吃什么饭了，也不睡觉了，整夜都缩着双腿，坐在凳子上，或者悄无声息地东张西望，在牢房里环视左右地走来走去。

看到他变成这副样子，从牢房的监视小窗往里面看的看守们都兴味索然，不再注意他了。这是死囚正常的状态，据看守说——当然啦，他本人也从来没有这方面的经验——一头牲口在被人用斧子劈开头部进行宰杀前都是这副样子。

“现在他已经吓傻了，从现在起一直到死他什么感觉也都没有了。”看守用有经验者的眼光盯着他，喊他，“喂！伊万，你听得到我在叫你吗？啊，伊万？”

“不应该绞死我。”扬松无精打采，答非所问地说了这么一句，下颌又耷拉下来，没声了。

“你要是不杀人就不会绞死你了。”监狱长不忘教训他，虽然这人很年轻，但胸前却佩戴着勋章，很神气，“你杀了人，还想不上绞架啊。”

“想杀人不偿命？真是蠢到家了，还挺狡猾。”

“我不想被绞死。”扬松说。

“你不想就不想呗，亲爱的，咋想是你自己的事，”监狱长冷酷地说，“最好少说点蠢话，处理一下自己的财物。不管怎么说，总还有点什么要收拾的吧。”

“他啥也没有。他只有一件衬衫外加一条裤衩，还有一顶破皮帽子。就是个败家子！”

时间就这样过去了，已经到了星期四。这天午夜十二点钟，许多人拥进了扬松的牢房，其中一个戴肩章的人开口说道：“喂，收拾东西，该上路了。”

扬松的动作还是那么慢慢腾腾、无精打采，把他所有的衣服都穿上了，围上了那条脏兮兮的红围巾。戴肩章的先生抽着烟，一边看着他穿衣服，一边对身旁的人说：

“今天天儿不错，很暖和。完全到了春天了。”

扬松仍然一副睡眼惺忪的样子，他像睡着了一样，动作迟缓，看守就朝他吼叫：

“喂，快点，你睡着了吗！”

“我不想死。”他有气无力地说。

这些人抓住他的肩膀，架着他就走了，他耸着双肩，顺从地挪动着脚步。进到院子里后，一股潮湿空气袭来，他鼻子下边又湿漉漉的了。虽然是在半夜里，冰雪解冻得更快，附近有水滴不断落下来，滴在石头上，声音清晰可闻。卫兵们先是弯腰进入暗黑的囚车里，佩刀发出叮当的响声，扬松等着上车，懒洋洋地用手指去蹭鼻子下边滑溜溜的鼻涕，还拉了拉没有系好的围巾。

[2] 1俄里约等于1千米。——编者注

4.我们，奥勒尔省人

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也是在同个地方军事法庭，同一批法官还审理了另一个案子，将一名奥勒尔省叶列茨县的农民判处了绞刑。他叫米哈伊尔·戈卢别茨，他是鞑靼人，有个外号叫米什卡·茨冈诺克。经查明，他最后一次作案是打死三人和持枪抢劫，而他的黑暗过去简直是一个谜团。有迹象表明，他曾经卷入了一系列抢劫和杀人案，一看他就是一个杀人放火、酗酒滋事的惯犯。他倒坦诚，直截了当地管自己叫强盗，对那些明明就是打劫却还时髦地打着“杀富济贫”旗号的土匪不屑一顾。他的最后一次犯罪，由于铁证如山无法抵赖，他也就痛快地承认了所有细节，但一问到他的行径，他就龇着牙吹口哨：

“都是些没影儿的事！”

当审讯人员步步紧逼的时候，茨冈诺克就会摆出一本正经的样子，大言不惭：

“我们所有奥勒尔省的人都是提着头闯荡出来的爷们儿，”他慢条斯理，不卑不亢地说，“奥勒尔人和科罗马人是头号窃贼。卡拉乔夫人和里文人让所有小偷甘拜下风。叶列茨人呢，那就是各路小偷的鼻祖。这还有什么弄不明白的呢！”

他就是因为长相和窃贼的好手法才被叫茨冈诺克 [3]。他身材瘦小，顶着一头黑得出奇的密发，脸上是鞑靼人特有的高颧骨，两块烧伤的黄疸痕像是装饰物。眼睛像是马眼睛一样总是翻着眼白，显出一副急不可耐的样子。他看人的时候目光停留时间很短，但毫无顾忌，充满好奇心，他看任何东西都像是把那东西的某一部分弄走了，把它变成了另外一件东西一样。他要是看一眼香烟，香烟就仿佛被别人放在嘴唇之间抽过一样，谁也不愿意再拿起来抽了。在他的身体里好像有某种永不安宁的东西，一会儿像火一样需要藏匿起来，一会儿像一捆向四处迸发火星的柴捆。倒也是，他口渴的时候，像一匹马一样，能喝好几桶水呢。

对法庭上向他提出的问题，他都跳起来，回答得简洁、坚决，很配合的样子：

“是的！”

有时候他还会强调一下：

“是的，没错！”

法庭上一提到别的案子，他就会出乎意料地站起来请求审判长：

“请让我吹个口哨再说！”

“这又是为什么？”庭长惊讶地问。

“他们不是招供说，是我给同伙打了暗号嘛，那就来一下，很好玩。”

庭长也有点儿疑惑，就同意了。茨冈诺克立刻将左右手各两根手指一起放进嘴里，双眼暴凸。死气沉沉的审判大厅里响起了野蛮的、真正强盗才有的呼哨声，这一声呼哨能立刻让马后腿直立、人脸失色。这是人之将死的哀愁，这是杀人者野蛮的狂喜，这是恐怖的警告，这是呼号，这是阴雨之夜的黑暗，这是孤独。这声尖锐的、非人非兽的号叫里包含着一切。

庭长大叫一声，抬手制止了茨冈诺克，他也就顺从地停下来了。这时他像一个刚刚唱完拿手咏叹调的演员一样，坐下来，开始用衣服擦那四根湿漉漉的手指，还颇为自得地环顾审判大厅里别人的反应。

“真是强盗！”一个法官揉着耳朵说道。

但另一个法官却笑着，不以为意，他眼睛和茨冈诺克的鞑靼人眼睛一样，却留着俄式的大胡子，一直越过茨冈诺克的头部，出神望着厅堂的高处。

“确实挺有趣。”

就这样，法官们冷静地、毫无怜悯之心地、深觉良心无愧地判了茨冈诺克死刑。

“判得好！”法官刚一读完判决书，茨冈诺克就说，“在旷野摆上一副绞刑架，判得好！”

说完，就转过身，对押解他的士兵来了一句：

“喂，窝囊废，咱们走吧。枪可抓紧点——小心我把它夺下来！”

士兵大气不敢出，提心吊胆地看着他，和同伴交换了一下眼色，手放在扳机上。另一个士兵也同样戒备起来。回监狱这一路上，两个士兵简直不是在走路，而是如履薄冰，穿云踏雾。他们全神贯注地监视犯人，丝毫感觉不到他们脚下踩的土地，既忘了时间，也忘了自己。

和扬松一样，米什卡·茨冈诺克死刑前也不得不在监狱度过十七天。这十七天对他来说，快得就像是一天——因为他想的都是怎么越狱逃跑，怎么自由自在，怎么活着。茨冈诺克天性不安宁，现在被禁

锢在高墙之内，坐在铁栅栏里，在不见天日的小窗下幽闭，使他愤懑不已，怒火中烧，像一块煤被扔在了旺火上。像极了喝醉了酒的时刻，许许多多迷乱的想法和鲜明的印象混合在一起，像不可遏制的旋风，忽明忽暗地从心底刮过，汇聚成一个念头——越狱逃跑，出去自在，好好活着。茨冈诺克有时候一连几小时，都像一匹马那样伸长脖子，翕动着鼻孔闻来嗅去——他觉得空气里有一股大麻的味道，有失火时的呛人的烟味，还有刺鼻的糊味；有时候，他像陀螺一样在牢房里打转，快速地用手摸一摸墙壁，敲几下，用目光打量和估测天花板和栅栏，想着把这些一股脑儿锯断。在监视孔里一直监视他的士兵，看他一刻不得安宁地折腾，有好几次威胁他说再不老实要开枪了。茨冈诺克可不害怕，总是反唇相讥。事情之所以没闹大，到头来相安无事，就是因为这种拌嘴很快能变成普通庄稼汉们满嘴脏话却并不伤人的常见阵势，为这种事就开枪既荒谬又没必要。

夜里茨冈诺克睡得很沉，几乎都不翻身，就保持一个不变的姿势，但也算睡姿生动，犹如一根暂时不动的弹簧。但只要一起床，他就立即开始满屋子打转，思来想去，摸来摸去。他的双手又干又热，但心里却不时生出凉意，就像胸口被塞进去了一块硬冰块，把他激得浑身上下打冷战。原本就皮肤黝黑的茨冈诺克现在更黑了，身上出现了铸铁才有的青黑色。现在他有了一个奇怪的习惯：就像吃了特别多的甜腻食物一样，他不停地舔嘴唇，吧嗒嘴，吐唾沫，总是一口就啐到地上。说话也不连贯起来，想法接二连三，舌头跟不上趟儿了。

有一次，白天的时候，监狱长在卫兵的陪同下进到了他的囚室。见到满地吐得脏乱不堪，就板着脸说：

“瞧你把这里吐得这么脏！”

茨冈诺克立刻反唇相讥：

“你这头肥猪把地球都弄脏了，我还没有骂你呢。你钻到这里来干吗？”

监狱长依然板着脸，提出让他当刽子手。茨冈诺克齙着牙，哈哈大笑起来。

“嗯哼，找不到人了？太好玩了！你们判绞刑，判绞刑，哈哈！脖子在、绳子有，没人帮你们吊起来。我的天啊，太好玩了！”

“你干了就能活命。”

“哼，那还用你说。我成了死人还哪能帮你绞死别人。你这傻瓜，净瞎说！”

“你怎么想的？对你来说，现在干什么不都一样吗？”

“你们这里怎么把人绞死？大概就悄悄弄死拉倒吧。”

“才不是，还奏乐呢。”监狱长没好气地说。

“还真是头蠢猪。当然，应当奏乐。那就来吧。”茨冈诺克开始唱一支雄壮的曲子。

“那么，亲爱的，你答应了？”监狱长说，“爽快点说吧。”

茨冈诺克龇了龇牙，说道：

“瞧把你急的！你下次来时，我再告诉你吧。”

在茨冈诺克许许多多迷乱的想法和鲜明的印象混合的大脑中，终于出现了一个新想法：当个穿大红袍子的刽子手也挺不错的呀。在他的头脑中越来越清晰地闪现出一个人头攒动的广场，断头台已经高高竖起，他，茨冈诺克，身穿大红袍子，手执一柄大斧子，逍遥地在周围踱步。太阳照射着人们的脑袋，日光在铮亮的大斧子上闪烁，一切都令人心满意足，连那个就要被砍头的家伙都在微笑。人群之后有许多四轮大车和马脸——那是从乡下进城的庄稼汉在看热闹，远处就是田野。

“呸！”茨冈诺克抿了抿嘴唇，把满口唾沫啐到地上。

突然间，就像是有人把他的皮帽子一把拉到嘴边一样，他感到又黑又闷，那块不化的冰又开始让他浑身打起冷战。

监狱长又来过两次，茨冈诺克也总是龇着牙说：

“瞧把你急的。下次来再说。”

终于有一天，看守对着监视小窗，匆匆地对他大声喊道：

“你错过了大好机会了，装腔的家伙！人家找到别人了！”

“那去你妈的吧！你自己去绞吧。”茨冈诺克回骂了一句，也就断了当刽子手的念想。

后来，离行刑时间越近，茨冈诺克的脑子就越乱，那些迷乱想法和鲜明印象令他难以忍受。他已经不想走来走去了，他想就叉开双腿，停止活动。但脑子里的想法就像极速流淌的激流一样推动着他，他抓不住任何东西，眼前的一切都在动态地流淌。他也开始睡不好觉了，总是做梦。这些梦就犹如乡下涂满色彩的短木头，既清晰又沉重，这些梦境比他的思想转换得还快。这已经不是一股激流，而是从万丈高山上倾泻而下的瀑布，掠过整个万花筒般的世界。在没被逮捕前，茨冈诺克蓄着相当时髦的小胡子，入狱后，却长出了又黑又硬的络腮胡子，这使他看上去特别吓人，好像是一个疯子。有的时候，他也确实疯疯癫癫地在牢房里转圈，一副神志不清的样子，但即使这

样，茨冈诺克也不忘去摸摸粗糙的泥灰墙。当然喝起水来还是像马一样狂饮。

有一天，已是黄昏时分，茨冈诺克趴在牢房的地上，像狼一样地哀嚎起来，声音令人胆寒。他特别起劲地嚎叫，就像在干一件必须完成的大事。他先是提一口气，然后慢慢地把这种特别发颤的嚎叫持续下来，他一边嚎叫，一边眯着眼睛调整气息。那来自嗓子眼的颤声似乎是精心设计出来的：他不是胡乱地叫喊，而是仔细地发出这野兽嚎哭的每个声调，令其有说不出的恐怖和哀伤。

后来，嚎哭突然停下了，他就趴在地上也没动弹，沉默了有几分钟。蓦然间，他对着地面慢声细语地喃喃起来：

“老兄们哪，亲爱的老兄们……可怜可怜我吧……老兄们！可爱的老兄们哪！”

而且就好像要倾听一下效果如何一样，每说一个词，就停顿一下。

后来，他就跳起来了——脏话连篇地骂了整整一个钟头，气都不喘一下。

“你们这帮浑蛋，都他妈的给我滚！”他两眼充血，大声咆哮，“绞死就绞死，别他妈的这样拖着……哼，你们都他妈的是浑蛋……”

看守他的士兵吓得够呛，脸色发白，又难过又害怕，就用枪戳牢门，无助地往里喊话：

“我要开枪了！天哪，再喊我真开枪了！你听见了没有！”

但是他不敢开枪，除非发生真正的暴动，是不允许对判死刑的犯人开枪的。茨冈诺克咬牙切齿地痛骂着，唾沫星子横飞——他的大脑被放在荒谬的生与死的尖锐的分界线上，像一块风干的泥巴，被分割得七零八落。

当夜幕降临时，许多人来到牢房，准备押他去行刑。这时他好像活过来了，又忙碌起来。他觉得嘴里更腥甜了，唾沫越来越多，但面颊变得红润了，眼睛里又出现了以前那种狡黠的神情。穿好衣服后，他就问提刑官：

“那么，是谁来绞死我呢？是个新手吗？手脚不利索可不行。”

“这事可不用你来操心。”提刑官面无表情地说。

“大人，我怎么能不操心呢，要被绞死的是我，而不是您。您别心疼，可得往绞索上多抹点肥皂哇。”

“行了，行了，你可别说话了。”

“不然的话，所有的肥皂都得被他贪了，”茨冈诺克指着监狱长说，“你看他肥头大耳的。”

“住嘴！”

“这下不心疼肥皂了吧！”

茨冈诺克哈哈大笑起来，但嘴里更甜了，突然就觉得腿部很奇怪地僵硬了。尽管如此，走到院子里时，他还是大声地喊了一嗓子：

“快把孟加拉伯爵的马车赶过来，接我上阵！”

[3] 即茨冈人（吉卜赛人）的意思。

5.吻一下就行——别说话

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对五名恐怖分子的终审判决在宣判当天就获得核准。虽然没有通知被告行刑的时间，但按照惯例，他们也知道，当天夜里，或最迟第二天夜里，他们就会被绞死。当他们被告知，第二天，也就是周四可以会见亲属的时候，他们明白了，绞刑将在星期五的黎明时分进行。

丹妮雅·科瓦利丘克没什么近亲，远亲都住在偏僻的小俄罗斯[4]，也未必知道她受审和即将被处以绞刑的事；穆夏和维尔纳连自己的真名实姓都不说，当然也就更不会通知哪些亲属前来；只有谢尔盖·戈洛温和瓦西里·卡希林有可以会见的亲属。然而，他们两个一想到这次会面，就感到十分害怕，特别伤心难过，但还是不能狠下心来拒绝见自家老人最后一面，与他们做最后的道别，最后的拥吻。

谢尔盖·戈洛温为即将到来的会见痛苦不已。他很爱自己的父母亲，就在不久前还和他们朝夕相处，而现在却害怕见他们——天知道事情是怎样走到这一步的。绞刑本身不寻常且荒谬，会使人受到惊吓且失去理智，但只是想象它，就要来得容易些，它也就不见得有那么可怕，但与亲属会见的几分钟是短暂且混沌的，是完全超出时间，超出生活本身。看什么、想什么、说什么，人类的大脑无法想象这一切。平常最普通的也最常见的动作——拉起父亲的手，亲吻，说一句“你好哇，父亲”——在这个时刻简直是不可思议的荒唐行为，是极不人道和虚伪做作的表现了。

丹妮雅·科瓦利丘克以为判决后他们会被关在一起，实则不然，他们都被单独关押了。整个上午，直到十一点父母到来前，谢尔盖·戈洛温都在单人牢房里烦躁不安地走来走去，把小胡子揪得一缕缕，皱着眉头自言自语。有时会猛地站住，深深地吸上一口气，就像一个在深海里潜水的人需要换气一样。然而，他是一个十分健康的人，年轻的生命包含精力，即使这一刻心灵饱受折磨，他的脸颊仍是红润的，一双淡蓝色的眼睛仍然是明亮和纯洁的。

会见的过程比谢尔盖想象的要好得多。

最先走进会见室的是谢尔盖的父亲，尼古拉·谢尔盖耶维奇·戈洛温，他是一位已退休的上校。他浑身上下皆白，脸，胡子，头发，手，都是雪白的，就像穿衣服的雪人一样。他还穿着制服，是旧的，但熨烫得很平整，散发出汽油味，双肩上佩戴着肩章。父亲坚定、庄

重、步履矫健地走进来。他把白皙但干瘦的手伸出来，声音洪亮地说：

“你好哇，谢尔盖！”

母亲迈着碎步子跟着进来，特别不自然地微笑着。但也握了儿子的手，同样大声说：

“你好，谢廖扎 [5] ！”

母亲吻了吻儿子的嘴唇，就默默地坐了下来。出乎谢尔盖预料，母亲既没有悲伤地扑上来拥抱，也没有撕心裂肺地大哭大叫，更没有什么可怕的举动，只是那么亲了一下就默默地坐下了。甚至还用那双哆嗦的双手整理了一下穿的黑色丝绸连衣裙。

谢尔盖根本不知道，昨天一整夜，上校把自己关在书房里，苦思冥想才确定了这么个仪式。“我们在这最后的时刻，不应该增加儿子的精神痛苦，而是要尽量减轻他的心理负担。”上校定下了这个方案，并仔细斟酌了明天交谈时可能说的每句话、每个动作。但有时弄混了或者漏说了想说的某一句，上校就倒在书房一角的长沙发上伤心地啜泣好一会儿。第二天一大早，他就向老伴讲了一遍，在会见中应该注意哪些举止。

“最要紧的在于一开始，吻一下就行——别说话！”他教了老伴儿一遍，“然后，过一会儿你再说话，但吻儿子的时候，先别说话。不要在吻了后立刻说话，明白了吗？否则会很不得体。”

“我明白的，尼古拉·谢尔盖耶维奇。”老伴儿哭着回答他。

“而且你一定不要哭。千万不能哭哇！老太婆，你要是一哭，就等于要了他的命啊！”

“那你自己不是也在哭吗？”

“这不陪你哭吗！见面时不要哭，听见了吗？”

“好的，尼古拉·谢尔盖耶维奇。”

上校本来想着在马车上他再叮嘱一遍老伴儿，但自己却忘记了。就这样，他们一路沉默着，两个白发苍苍的老人，弯腰驼背地想着心事，而身外的整个城市都在喧嚣着，一片祥和气氛。时值谢肉节 [6]，街上熙熙攘攘，人来人往。

三口人都坐下了。上校以惯常的姿势，左手按住制服的前襟，准备说话。谢尔盖刚一坐下，抬眼看到对面母亲那张满是皱纹的脸，立即又站起来了。

“坐下吧，谢廖扎。”母亲恳求他。

“你坐下，谢尔盖。”父亲也附和母亲道。

大家都默不作声。母亲不自然地微笑了一下。

“我们一直在努力营救你，谢廖扎。”

“好妈妈，那不可能了……”

上校坚决地说：

“这是我们应该做的，谢尔盖，这样你会知道，父母不会抛下你。”

又是一阵沉默。三个人都害怕说话，仿佛话一到嘴边就会失去该有的意义，而变成死亡的同义词了。谢尔盖瞥了一眼父亲身上穿的旧制服干干净净，仍旧散发出汽油味，心想：“现在他也没有勤务兵了，肯定是他自己熨烫干净的。怎么以前我从没有发现他能做这种事？大概，一早起来就干这事了。”所以下意识地，突然他就开口了：

“妹妹怎么样？她还好吗？”

“尼诺奇卡到现在还什么也不知道呢。”母亲赶紧接上话。

但上校严厉地制止了这个话头：

“为什么撒谎？小姑娘都在报纸上读到了这个消息。要让谢尔盖知道，所有的亲人，在这种时候……也都挂念着……”

他说不下去了，就立刻停住了。母亲的脸色立时皱成一团，悲苦地颤动起来，泪水瞬间也流了下来。她失神地瞪着双眼，呼吸越来越急促，声音也提高了。

“谢……谢廖……谢……”她重复着单音，哆嗦着嘴唇怎么也张不开口了。

“好妈妈！”

上校朝前走了一步，他全身，包括制服上的饰物、脸上的皱纹，都在颤抖，他自己都未必知道，他的脸有多么惨白，他以一种绝望的镇定对妻子说：

“别说话！不要折磨他！不要折磨！不要折磨！他都要死了！不要折磨！”

妻子吓得不再作声了，而他却还紧握着拳头，一字一句地说：

“不要折磨！”

然后，后退了一步，把胸口紧攥着的手放下，竭力以一副镇静的

样子，翕动着两片惨白的嘴唇，大声地问儿子：

“什么时候？”

“明天早上。”儿子也咬着惨白的双唇回答。

母亲眼睛朝下，努着嘴，仿佛什么也没听见。就这样努着嘴，后来，脱口说了一句既简单又和儿子那句一样奇怪的话：

“尼诺奇卡让我代她吻你一下，谢廖扎。”

“你也代我吻她。”谢尔盖回答道。

“好的。还有赫斯托夫一家都问你好。”

“哪个赫斯托夫家？啊，知道了。”

上校打断了他们：

“好了，该走了。起来吧，他母亲，走吧。”

两个人一起把瘫软无力的母亲扶起来了。

“告别吧！”上校命令道，“画个十字给儿子祝福。”

她照做了。但是，在画十字和吻儿子这会儿，她又摇着头，语无伦次地说道：

“不是的，不该这样。不对呀，不该这样。叫我今后怎么办？我该怎么说？不对，不该这样。”

“再见，谢尔盖！”父亲说。

两个人用力地握手并互相亲吻了一下。

“你……”谢尔盖欲说什么。

“什么？”父亲问不成句了。

“不是的，不该这样。不对呀，不该这样。我该怎么说？”母亲一直摇着头，执拗地重复着。她已经又坐下了，全身不住地抖。

“你……”谢尔盖又开口道。

突然间，谢尔盖像小孩子一样，皱着眉头，眼里全是泪水。他站得很近，就透过眼帘的泪珠，看到父亲惨白的脸上也挂满了泪水。

“你，父亲，你是个好人。”

“你这孩子！说这些干什么呀！”上校惊诧不已。

就这样猛然地，他瘫倒在儿子的肩上。本来他比谢尔盖个头高，现在却变矮了，哽咽着把他那干枯蓬乱的头靠在儿子肩膀上。两个人

互相亲吻起来，谢尔盖亲吻的是父亲乱蓬蓬的白发，而父亲则亲吻着儿子的囚服。

“那我呢？”突然一个特别大的声音响了起来。

他们就转过头，发现母亲昂头站着，气愤地，甚至有点恨恨地望着他俩。

“你怎么啦？母亲？”

“我怎么啦？”她摇着头，任性地，说，“你们男人倒亲上了，啊？那我呢？我呢？”

“好妈妈！”谢尔盖就转身扑向了母亲怀抱。

此情此景无须任何，也没有任何语言能够传达。

上校最后说的是：

“谢廖扎，祝你慷慨赴死！要像一个军官那样无畏！”

他们就这样走了。最终只能走了。就在刚才还站在这里，说着话——突然就走了。母亲刚刚就坐在这里，父亲站在那里——突然间就都走了。回到牢房的谢尔盖，倒在床上，脸朝里，不让看守士兵发现他一直在哭。哭累了就面带泪痕地沉睡过去了。

来看望瓦西里·卡希林的只有母亲一人——他的父亲是一名富商，不愿意来。瓦西里将母亲迎进来后，就一直在地上踱步，尽管天气暖和，甚至有点儿热，但他一直冷得直打战。他们的交谈既简短又令人心情沉重。

“妈妈，您其实不该来的。这只能让您和我难受呀。”

“瓦夏，怎么这样说！你为何要干出这种事呢！天哪！”

老太太大声哭了起来，不时用羊毛头巾边来擦拭眼泪。瓦西里和几个兄弟经常对什么都不懂的母亲大喊大叫，养成了习惯，所以现在，他就停住了脚步，打着寒战，生气地大叫起来：

“又来了！我早就知道会这样！妈妈，你啥也不懂！啥也不懂还非要说什么！”

“行了，行了。好吧，不说。你怎么啦，冷吗？”

“是冷……”瓦西里打断了她，又开始踱步，不高兴地看着妈妈。

“是不是感冒了？”

“哎呀，妈妈，都这时候了，还什么感不感冒……”

他绝望地挥了挥手。老太太本来想说“家里的老头子让我周一就

开始做馅儿饼”，但被儿子的话吓到，赶紧改口说：

“我和你爸说了，怎么说也是自己儿子，去看一眼，就当宽恕了。他不干哪，这个倔老头子！”

“见他的鬼去吧！对我来说他算什么父亲！他一辈子都是个恶棍，现在也是。”

“瓦夏呀！不能这样说自己父亲呀！”老太太责备儿子。

“就要说他！”

“他可是你亲生父亲！”

“我才不认他。”

这一幕没什么亲情也相当荒唐。死亡近在眼前，但说的都是空洞无聊的小事，说出来的话就像脚下踩着空的核桃壳一样，毫无意义。整个一生中，瓦西里和自己的亲人都不能互相理解，就像他们之间有一堵墙那样厚的隔阂，所以现在，在死亡即将来临的时刻，他伤心、郁闷地几乎要哭出声了，他蛮横地瞪着一双小眼睛，冲着母亲大喊大叫：

“我都要被绞死了，你懂不懂！绞死！懂没懂？要被绞死了！”

“你要是没去惹这些人，能这样吗……”老太太也喊道。

“天哪！这话说的！简直连禽兽都不如了！我还是你们儿子吗？”

他大哭起来，一屁股坐在了墙角。老太太也坐在自己这一头哭。就是在这刻，两个无助的人也无法互相交融爱的情感，也无法对抗即将到来的死亡的恐怖。他们各自冰冷地孤独地哭着，心里没有感到一点儿温暖。母亲哭着抢白儿子：

“你倒是说说，我还是不是你的母亲，你就知道说我。这些天我头发都愁白了，变成老太婆了。你还是说我、埋怨我！”

“哎呀，好了，好了，妈妈，原谅我吧。你该走了，代我亲吻兄弟们。”

“难道我不是你母亲？难道我不难过吗？”

老太太终于走了。她伤心不已地哭着走了，不停地用头巾一角擦着眼泪，但她泪眼模糊，根本看不清路。离开监狱越远，她的眼泪就越灼热。她想返回监狱去，但是却糊里糊涂地在这座自己出生、长大乃至老去的城市里迷了路。她误入了一个只有几棵枯树的小破公园，坐到融有雪水的长凳上。如梦方醒地意识到：明天儿子要被绞死了。

老太太一下子跳起来，想跑出去，可突如其来的头晕使她滑倒了。小路上冰雪交融，特别滑，老太太怎么也爬不起来。先是用胳膊肘支着，又双腿跪下，结果又摔了个仰面朝天。黑头巾从头上滑落，露出沾满污泥的后脑勺。她忽然觉得，这是在给儿子娶亲的婚礼上，她在喝酒，而且已经完全喝醉了。

“我不能再喝了。快别倒了，我不能再喝了！”她一边不停地说，一边摇晃着头。她在冰雪泥泞的路面上爬，而大家还在给她斟酒，所有人都来斟酒。

由于喝多了蜂蜜酒，吃了太多的好东西，看跳舞也看累了，她的心痛了起来。而大家也还一个劲儿地给她倒酒。所有人都来倒酒。

[4] 指乌克兰。

[5] 谢尔盖的小名。——编者注

[6] 又称“送冬节”，俄罗斯族的传统节日。在东正教大斋期即将到来之前的一周尽情吃肉喝酒，“谢肉节”也因此而得名。——编者注

6.时间在流逝

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被宣判的恐怖分子都被关押在一座城堡里，那里的钟楼上有一座年代久远的自鸣钟。每隔十五分钟、半小时，以及一小时，一种单调且凄凉的钟声就回荡在高空，像是南迁的候鸟离开时那既遥远又悲伤的鸣叫声。白天，这古怪又悲伤的音乐湮没在城市的喧嚣声里，无闻于监狱外人来人往的街巷中。电车驶过，叮当作响，马车驶来，蹄声嘚嘚，汽车行驶在不平的路上，老远就开始鸣笛，尤其是正赶上过谢肉节的时候，农民们陆续从郊外赶车过来，他们那些小马驹的脖子上都挂着铛铛作响的小铃铛。四处人声鼎沸，开心过节的人多少都有点儿微醺，大声喧哗着。早春里融化的雪水滴答不停，街道的积水被踩得啪啪作响，街心公园里突然变绿的树木好像也在那里拔节歌唱。海上吹来阵阵湿润温暖的劲风，似乎用眼睛就可以看到它们卷着一团团的水汽飞舞向前，向无垠的自由的远方飘飞而去。

入夜，街道上沉寂下来了，瓦数颇大的街灯闪耀着孤寂光线。于是，这座极大的监狱连同它那平滑的外墙就陷入了毫无光亮、毫无声响的一片黑暗和寂静之中，它盘踞于此，黑暗将它和生机一片、流动不息的城市截然分割开来。只有这时，自鸣钟的报时声才清晰可闻，那与尘世完全格格不入的缓慢而悲伤的旋律开始不断地响起和湮灭。当它再度响起的时候，就不像是准确报时，而是以前的回声，悲伤迟缓，中断了一小会儿，再度响起。就像是大颗透明的玻璃珠子，从高处落入刻有时间标记的金属刻度盘里。犹如南迁的鸟儿在啼鸣。

关押在单身牢房里的犯人，无论白天还是黑夜，能听到的只有这个报时钟的声音。这种声响穿透了牢狱的屋顶和厚厚的石墙，打破了寂静，泯然消失，然后再悄然而至。有时候，犯人们忘了这声响，以至于充耳不闻；有时候，却又受不了牢房里的寂然无声，焦急地盼着有个声响，希望它一声接一声地响下去。这座监狱是用来关押重刑犯的，这里的狱规特别严厉、冷酷和死板，跟这城堡钝厚的墙角是一个样子的。若要说到这种冷酷之中还有什么宽容的话，那就无疑是死一般的无边寂静了，它庄严不已，能衬托出衣物的窸窣声和人轻微的呼吸声。

就是在这种庄严的与世隔绝的寂静中，在悲伤的钟声里，在流逝的时光中，五个人，两女三男，在等待着黑夜的降临、黎明的到来，

等待着死刑的临近。他们每个人都按各自的方式有所准备。

7.死亡是不存在的

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丹妮雅·科瓦利丘克生来就只关心别人，从不想着自己，即使到了现在也是如此，她仍在为别人难过，为别人而倍加痛苦。她越是对面临的死亡毫无痛苦之感，就越能感受到死亡对谢尔盖·戈洛温，对穆夏，对其他人来说，有多么地残忍，至于她自己，则仿佛和死亡毫无关系一样。

在法庭上，她不得不表现得异常坚定，但就像是一种补偿一样，回到牢房，她能一连哭上好几个小时，就像那些饱受苦痛的老年妇女和充满同情心的少女一样大放悲声。她一想到，谢尔盖可能弄不到烟抽，维尔纳可能喝不到习以为常的浓茶，而这些事都发生在他们行将赴死的时候，这就让她更加难过，可能，这比死刑本身更让她痛不欲生。死刑——这已经是某种不可避免之事了，是一件不值得再去想的身外之事了，而一个坐牢的人，在死刑之前弄不到一根烟抽抽的话，简直是不可忍受的。她逐一回忆起他们共同生活时的种种细节，一想到谢尔盖即将和父母见面的情形，她惊骇得几乎无法呼吸。

她特别怜惜穆夏。她早就觉得，穆夏爱上了维尔纳，尽管实际上并非如此，她还是希望他们两个人最终会幸福美满。入狱前，穆夏手上戴着一枚银戒指，上面刻有骷髅头，下面交叉着两根骨头和一顶环绕着的受难荆冠 [7]，这是必然遭难的象征，丹妮雅·科瓦利丘克经常揪心地看着这枚戒指，经常半真半假地请求穆夏别戴了。

“把它送给我吧。”她请求穆夏。

“不，丹涅琪卡 [8]，我不送给你。你手指上会戴上另一枚戒指的。”

不知为什么，大家都一致认定，她很快会嫁人，这使她生气，她可不要什么丈夫。现在一想起和穆夏说的那些半真半假的玩笑，想到穆夏现在真的要蒙难牺牲了，她心头就涌上一种母性的怜悯，不禁失声痛哭起来。只有听到钟鸣声，她才会抬起满是泪痕的脸，倾听起来，心里想着牢房里的那几个人，想他们是如何忍受这近似于死亡一般沉重的固执的呼号声。

可在这个时候穆夏却感到很幸福。

她背着双手，不紧不慢地在牢房里踱步，囚服穿在她身上，让她

看上去完全像一个男人，像一个穿了别人衣服的半大小子那样奇怪。囚服的袖子太长，她卷起了袖子，这样她那细瘦得像小孩子似的胳膊，麻秆一样露在袖筒外，像一茎单花插在粗陋、肮脏的水罐里。细嫩的白脖子被粗硬的囚服摩擦得生疼，她总不时地拉一拉领口，轻轻地摩挲一下红肿发痒部位的皮肤。

穆夏踱来踱去——她在想象中向众人表白自己的心迹，激动得涨红了脸。她想表白的是：她是一个渺小的年轻姑娘，所做的事情很少，完全不是什么英雄，配不上这种光荣和美好的死法，在她之前，只有英雄和真正的受难者才有资格被判绞刑。她坚信，人们都是善良的，富有同情心的，有爱的，她认为现在大家都在为她的遭遇而激动不安，为她难过痛心，惋惜不已，当然，她也感到羞愧不已，脸都红了。就是，她怎么能担得起死在绞刑架上的荣誉呢。

在最后一次会面时，她向自己的辩护人要求给她弄些毒药来，但突然间醒悟过来了：如果他和其他人认为她出于卖弄或者怯懦呢？如果本来想谦逊地不引人注目地死去却招来更大轰动，怎么办？所以，她说完就赶紧改口：

“算了，其实，也用不上。”

此时，她只想一件事：要向人们讲清楚并证明给他们看，她不是英雄，死亡根本不可怕，大家不用可怜她，也不用为她操心。要给大家解释，她完全没有想过作为一个年轻姑娘会这样去死，没想到，因为她会引起这样大的轰动，这完全不是她的错。

作为一个被控有罪的人，穆夏也想找一个理由，证明她的牺牲是物有所值，提升自己牺牲的意义，她这样想道：

“当然，像我这样的年纪很轻的姑娘是应该活很久的。可是……”

她的青春时代和生活就像是晴空万里的太阳所遇到的烛光，微不足道，暗淡不已，应该是伟大的、辉煌的东升之旭日照亮了她这颗平庸的头脑。她本人哪能配得上这英雄般的荣耀呢。

但，也许她心里一直有一种特别的东西——无限的爱、无限的建功立业的决心、无限的自我献身精神也配得上这种荣耀？毕竟她没有做到她想做的一切，就将被绞死在神圣的殿堂之外的祭坛上，这不是她的错。

可是，事情如果是这样的，即一个人的价值不在于他做成了什么，而在于他想做什么的话，那么……那么，她是有资格得到这顶受难者的荆冠的。

“真是这样吗？”穆夏羞愧地想着，“我真的有资格吗？我真的有资格让人们为我哭泣和难受吗？就为我这样一个年纪轻轻微不足道的女

孩子？”

想到这里，她浑身充满喜悦之情。毫不怀疑、毫无迟疑地，她就这样进入了一个自由的国度，她合理地被接纳为圣人——那些自古以来经历了火刑柱、酷刑和死刑的升天者的行列中的一员。他们的面前是清明的世界，充满了宁静无边的、流光溢彩的幸福。她已经完全从尘世飞升至包含了真理和生命的神秘的太阳国度，沐浴在其熠熠华光之中。

“这就已经是死了。死有什么了不得的呢？”穆夏怡然自得地想着。

要是全世界的学者、哲学家和刽子手在这个时候都能汇聚到穆夏的牢房里面来，在她的面前摆上书籍、手术刀、斧子和绞索，开始向她证明，死亡是存在的，人是会死的，也能够被打死，永生不死是不可能的，那么，他们的话肯定会让她吃惊的。她明明是没有死的，怎么还会死呢？现在谈论死亡已经毫无意义了，谈论不死也同样丧失了意义，因为她现在的状态是虽死犹生，虽生犹死，还有什么可谈的呢？

要是这时候，有人把装殓着她腐烂尸体的棺材抬进她的牢房，让整个牢房臭气熏天，并且对她说：

“快看吧，这就是你！”

她会看一眼就回答：

“不，这不是我。”

要是人们向她证明，这散发着腐臭味的尸体就是她的话——就是她！穆夏也准会笑着回答：

“不是。你们认为这是我，但这可不是。我是正在和你们说话的人哪，这怎么可能是我呢？”

“但是你就要死了，就要变成这个样子了。”

“不，我是不会死的。”

“会把你绞死的。你看，绞索就在这里。”

“他们会绞死我，但我不会死。我已经获得了永生，怎么还有死呢？”

于是，学者、哲学家和刽子手都认输了，他们颤抖着说：

“不要碰这个地方，这个地方是一块神圣之地。”

穆夏还幻想了一些什么呢？她想了很多——对她来说，死亡还没有

割断她的生命之线，这根线还在平静缓慢地缠绕着她。她想到了自己的同志们，想到了那些为他们即将被绞死而痛苦不堪的远方的同志，也想到了和自己同赴断头台的同伴们。最让她吃惊的是瓦西里竟然会怕得要命——从前他可是很勇敢的，还老是拿死亡开玩笑。就在星期二的早晨，同志们一起往瓦西里的腰上捆绑爆破炸弹，预计会在几小时之后，连同他们一起炸死，丹妮雅·科瓦利丘克紧张得双手一直在颤抖，只好让她退到一旁去，而瓦西里就在这个时候还开玩笑，像小丑一样耍活宝呢，他那满不在乎的样子使维尔纳不得不严肃地提醒他：

“可不能拿死亡当儿戏呢。”

为什么他现在害怕起来了呢？这种莫名的害怕对穆夏来说太难以理解了，所以她很快就不再去想瓦西里了，不愿再去探究他害怕的原因。这会儿，她突然非常想见谢尔盖·戈洛温，想和他谈笑风生。她还特别强烈地想见到维尔纳，想说服他某一件事呢。于是，她想象着，维尔纳和她正在并肩行走的情景，他的步伐均匀，稳当，每走一步鞋都陷在泥土里，而自己正在滔滔不绝地跟他说话呢：

“不，维尔纳，亲爱的，你行刺的行动成功与否，都无所谓，根本是不值一提的。你是一个聪明人，但是，你只是把行刺当成是下棋，你吃掉了一个棋子，然后再吃掉另一个，就赢了这盘棋。维尔纳，这里最重要的事情是我们一心赴死。你明白吗？你知道那些老爷们儿在想什么吗？他们认为没有比死更可怕的事情了。他们自己想出来了死亡这档子事。他们自己害怕死亡，也拿死亡吓唬我们。我甚至想这样去死：一个人站到一个团的士兵面前，举起勃朗宁手枪向他们开火。我只有一个人，他们却有上千人，我可能连一个都不会打死的。这件事的重要性在于，他们有几千人，人多势众。当几千人要打死一个人的时候，那么，胜利的是这一个人。这是真理，维尔纳，亲爱的。”

这样一个观点是如此清晰，以至于她不想再进一步论证了，可能现在维尔纳自己也明白了。也许，她并不愿意让她的思想只停留在这件事情上——她的思绪就像是轻盈翱翔的小鸟，瞭望着广袤的地平线，巡视着整个四通八达的空间，享受着其间所有的深奥、所有的喜悦、所有的亲切和温柔。钟声不间断地鸣响着，不时地打破清冷的寂静，她的思绪与这个和谐、悠长而美好的声响融汇在一起，也在她的头脑中开始鸣响，那些轻盈的小鸟形象都变成了音乐。穆夏仿佛在暗夜里驾着马车，沿着宽阔平坦的大道驶向某地，坐垫上柔软的弹簧上下颤动，铃铛一路高歌响个不停。所有的激动和不安都烟消云散了，倦怠的身体也仿佛在黑暗中融化，懒洋洋的思绪平静地创造出了一系列的形象，她就陶醉在这些形象的绚烂的色彩和安宁的形态之中。穆

夏还想到了不久以前被处以绞刑的三位同志，回想起他们开朗的脸庞，以前见到他们时的喜悦——甚至比与他们生前的见面更觉亲切。就像一个人早上就高兴地想着，晚上要到自己朋友家去，想着怎样向朋友问好，怎样笑咪咪地跨进门去。

穆夏走得已经很累了。她小心翼翼地躺倒在床上，继续微合双眼，继续自己的幻想和憧憬。钟声不间断地鸣响着，不时地打破清冷的寂静，就在这鸣响的波段中，一群欢乐地歌唱的形象在游动。穆夏想：

“难道这就是死吗？我的天哪，死亡真是太美了！也许，这是生吧？我不知道，我不知道。我再看一看，再听一听……”

已经很久了，从被捕的第一天起，穆夏就开始幻听。她的耳朵对音乐很敏感，由于寂静这个听觉就更敏锐了。监狱中声音原本不多，走廊看守的脚步声、钟声、风过屋顶的簌簌声、路灯的晃动声对她来说构成了完整的乐章。一开始，穆夏害怕这些声响，病态般地极力避免去听它们，后来，她明白了，她自己很健康，也没有什么病，所以开始平静地沉浸在这些声响中了。

现在，她突然清楚无误地听到了军乐声。她惊讶地睁开了双眼，抬起头——窗外依然黑夜沉沉，报时的钟声在鸣响。“又是钟声在响啊！”这样想着就平静地又合上了双眼。可是，刚合上眼皮，军乐声又响了。她清楚地听到，从大楼的右侧拐角处，整整一个团的士兵正在从窗户旁走过去。脚步整齐划一地按着“一——二！一——二！”的口令踩在了冰的硬地上，甚至还能听到皮鞋吱吱的声音，其中夹杂着有人突然脚下一滑，又赶紧跟上大家步伐的忙乱声。音乐越来越近了：这是一首从未听过的乐曲，但是非常洪亮，是一首异常欢乐的节日进行曲。看样子，监狱里有什么庆典仪式吧。

军乐队正好走到窗下了，整个牢房里充满了节奏明快的、和谐激昂的乐曲声。一个大铜号明显是吹跑调了，没跟上整个乐队的节拍，一会儿超前，一会儿落后——穆夏就像看到了吹号的士兵那紧张地调整节奏时的面部表情，直想笑。

乐队和音乐声都渐渐走远了。听不见“一——二！一——二！”的口令声和脚步声了。远远地听着那军乐声更觉悠扬和激昂。大铜号又跑了一两次调，后来就什么也听不见了。只有钟楼上传来的缓慢而悲伤的钟声勉强打破了再度降临的寂静。

“都走了。”穆夏怀着淡淡的哀愁想道。她还对那远去的乐曲声有点儿不舍，那军乐声听上去那么欢乐，还滑稽可笑，她甚至舍不得那个走远的使劲吹大铜号的士兵，那些大头皮鞋吱吱的声音。他们是完全另外一些人，不同于她想用勃朗宁手枪打死的那些人。

“啊，回来吧！”她温柔地恳求。那些幻像又回来了。它们向她俯下身，像透明的云彩一样围绕着她，托着她直上云霄，那里鸟儿们盘旋着，啼鸣着，就像是天庭里的传令使者。它们上下翻飞，左右盘旋，像传令使者那样口吐莲花。它们的鸣叫声是对她的欢迎，也是向远处宣布她的到来。它们挥动着宽阔的翅膀，能接住黑暗，也能托起光明。它们前凸的胸脯划破了空气，以一片蓝色之光映照出地面上的城市。穆夏的心跳越来越均匀，呼吸也越来越平静和安宁。她睡着了。脸色苍白，略显疲倦，眼睛下方的眼袋已经很明显，少女的手臂纤细而瘦弱，嘴唇上还挂着微笑。明天，太阳升起的时候，这张人脸就会变成丑陋的死人脸，脑子就会浸泡在黏稠的黑血之中，眼球会突出眼眶，但今天，她睡得很安静，面带微笑，就睡在自己伟大的永生中。

穆夏睡着了。

监狱生活有自己的那一套，这种生活死气沉沉，毫无目的，却又是十分警觉的，它本身对人来说，就是一种永恒的不安。有的地方，犯人在走动；有的地方，看守们窃窃私语；有的地方，武器叮当作响。似乎有人在竭力呼喊，又仿佛并没有人叫喊——只不过是寂静引起的幻听而已。

这时门上的监视孔无声无息地被打开了——黑洞的小口里出现了一张黧黑的、胡子拉碴的脸。这个人瞪大了眼睛惊奇地看了穆夏好一会儿，然后又像出现时一样，无声地消失不见了。

报时钟铛铛地鸣响着——缓慢而悲伤。这疲倦的钟声犹如正在深更半夜爬向一座高山一般，越爬越艰难，越爬越沉重吃力。突然，钟声断掉了，就像从半山间滑脱下来，呻吟着一路向下而来，重新艰难地爬回自己黑暗的钟楼里。

有的地方，犯人在走动；有的地方，守卫们窃窃私语，有人把马套在黑黧黧没点上车灯的马车上了。

[7] 荆冠是基督教徒纪念耶稣苦难的标记。——编者注

[8] 丹妮雅的呢称。

8.有死，也有生

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谢尔盖·戈洛温从未想到过死，这仿佛就像是别人的事，与他自己毫不相干，无须去想一样。他是一个强壮、健康、快乐的小伙子，生就一副安然且活泼的脾气，一切与生活有害和无益的思想及类似感觉在他身上都不会停留，会很快消失殆尽。在他的身上，任何割开的小口子及针孔，都会很快愈合，所有伤心难过的事情他都很少外露，他很快就会整理好心情。无论做什么事，他都会以这种安然且活泼的认真劲儿来做：一切都是兴致勃勃地做，一切都认真地做，一切都需要做到更好，娱乐消遣如此，照相如此，学骑自行车如此，准备恐怖暗杀行动也如此。

他也确实一切都做得很好：划船很会掌舵，射击特别有准头，对待友情敦厚，对待爱情忠贞，对别人的“保证”抱以诚信的态度。自己人都笑话他，说如果一个一望即知的密探，或者一个明显是间谍的人赌咒发誓说，他不是密探，谢尔盖也会相信人家，与人家同志般地握手。他只有一个缺点：认为自己唱歌好听，但是实际上，他一点儿乐感也没有，他唱歌难听得要命，一唱就跑调，唱革命歌曲也是如此。大家要是笑话他的歌声，他还觉得委屈呢。

“要么你们全是叫驴，要么只有我是一头叫驴。”他较真儿了，特别委屈地说。大家也较真儿了，考虑了一下，一起坚定地表态：

“从听到的噪音来看，只有你是一头叫驴。”

但因为这个缺点，他更招大家的喜欢，因为有时候和相当不错的人交往，比起所谓优点，人们更喜欢他的缺点。

他就因为不怕死，所以根本就不去想死亡这回事，在那个致命的早晨，在离开丹妮雅·科瓦利丘克家的时候，只有他一个人像往常一样，胃口奇好地吃着早餐，喝了两杯兑了牛奶的浓茶，吃了一个大面包，五个戈比才能买一个呢。然后，忧心忡忡地看了一眼维尔纳根本没动的面包，说：

“你怎么不吃呢？吃吧，吃了才有劲儿呢。”

“吃不下。”

“那我可吃了，行不？”

“嗯，吃吧，谢尔盖，你的胃口真好。”

谢尔盖顾不上说话，一口吞下面包，一边嚼，一边呜啦呜啦跑着调，又唱上了：

“在我们的头上敌人的仇恨在飘荡……”

被捕后，他有点儿沮丧——任务完成得不好，失败了。但他是这样想的：“现在已经有了另外一件事，需要做得更好——那就是去死。”他又振奋起来。所以，看起来很奇怪，被押到古堡监狱的第二天早上，他就开始做体操了，那体操是一个叫穆勒的德国人发明的，编排十分合理，谢尔盖相当喜欢这套体操。他脱光衣服，做完了整套规定的十八个动作，这让不安监视着他的看守大为惊奇。看得出来，发现看守在监视他的时候，谢尔盖特别高兴，就像他是一个穆勒体操理念的宣传者一样。尽管也知道得不到回应，他还是对着门上监视孔里的那只眼睛说道：

“老弟，这套体操可好呢。你们团里要是引进这体操就好了。”他觉得，看守肯定以为他是个疯子，所以为了不吓到看守，他说得恳切又温和。

他是逐渐地感到对死亡的恐惧的，而且这种感觉具有阵发性的特点，就像是有人从下面抓住了他的心脏，用拳头使劲地往上面击打。比起恐惧害怕，他更能感觉到心痛。然后这种感觉会消失——但过几小时之后，又会重新出现，每一次再出现，都会比先前那一阵的感觉更持久，也更强烈。他就这样开始明显地感觉到某种说不清道不明但又巨大且难以忍受的恐惧。

“难道我害怕了吗？”谢尔盖吃惊地想道，“这可真是太愚蠢了！”

不是他害怕了，而是他的肉体害怕了，无论是做德国人穆勒发明的体操，还是用冷水擦洗身体，他那年轻、强壮、精力充沛的躯体是任何细微的东西也无法隐瞒住的。每次冷水浴后，他越是感到强壮、精力充沛，就越能感受到那瞬间出现的恐惧是多么地剧烈，多么地不可忍受。也正是每当早晨来临，当他感受到浑身元气满满、精力充沛的时候，在睡了一个好觉、做了早操的时候，这种刺心的、对他来说十分陌生的恐惧感就出现了。他发现了这一情况，不由得想道：

“谢尔盖老弟，这可太愚蠢了。为了死得轻松一点儿，应该弱化它，不应该强化它呀。太愚蠢了吧！”

所以，他停止了做操，也不用冷水擦拭身体，他还向卫兵解释，为这套体操说好话：

“你别看我不再做操了。老弟，这套体操是相当好的东西呢。就是对被判了绞刑的人已经不太适合了，对别的其他人呢，是非常有好

处的。”

不做那些令身体知觉常新的事情之后，果然感觉轻松了一些。他又尝试着减少进食量，以便进一步让身体弱下来，但是，这可不太容易做到，尽管牢房里缺乏新鲜空气，他也不再做操耗费体力，但胃口仍然好得出奇，他总是把送来的东西全部吃得精光。后来他开始尝试其他办法：在开始吃饭前，他就把一半的饭菜倒进马桶。这倒是挺有效果。其后他的症状就只剩下无精打采、昏昏欲睡了。

“我要让你尝尝我的厉害！”他警告自己的身体，却忧心忡忡地用手摩挲日渐无力且变软的肌肉。

但是身体很快就适应了这一变化，死亡的恐惧再度出现了。确实，不那么强烈，也不那么难以忍受了，但是更缠磨人，更让人恶心，总是让人想要呕吐。“可能这是死刑拖得太久的缘故，”谢尔盖想，“要是在死刑执行之前一直都是睡着的状态就好了。”于是，他就尽可能地尽情地睡觉。一开始嘛，效果不错，但是后来，也许是睡多了，也许是由于别的原因，他开始失眠。这一失眠，想的就更多，那些想法既强烈又敏锐，使得他更加留恋起生命来了。

“难道我还怕这个魔鬼不成？”他想的是死亡，“我是舍不得生命啊。生命是那么美好的东西，管他悲观主义者说什么呢。如果把一个悲观主义者送上绞刑架呢？哎呀，就是生命太可惜了，太可惜了呀。我为什么不停地长胡子呢？以前一直不长，怎么也不长，却这时候突然长成大胡子了。这是为什么呢？”

他面色忧郁地摇了摇头，心情沉重地长长地叹息了几声。接着沉默了一会儿，然后又开始长时间地、沉重地叹息，再接下来还是沉默不语——之后重新开始更长时间的、更沉重的叹息。

就这样，直到庭审之前，直到和父母亲那次可怕的见面之前，他都是在唉声叹气中度过的。当他在牢房中醒来，清楚地意识到生命就要终结，再过毫无意义的几小时，死亡就会到来的时候，他开始感到恐惧了。他觉得就像是有人把他的一切都拿走了，不仅是扒光了他的衣服，而且还挪走了太阳、空气、声响、亮光，以至于他的行为和语言都丧失殆尽了。还没有死呢，但是命已经没了，还有的只是一种新的东西，一种令人震惊的、难以理解的东西，这种东西既不能说没有意义，也不好说其有什么意义，但，这是一种深奥的、神秘的、非人的东西，想弄明白它是不可能的。

“呸，真是见鬼了！”谢尔盖备受折磨又十分疑惑，“这到底是怎么回事呢？我到底是在什么地方呀？我……怎么变成这样子了呢？”

他开始饶有兴致地认真打量起自己了，先是看脚上那双大号的囚靴，再看鼓鼓囊囊的肚子，囚服被撑得贴在肚皮上面。然后一边在牢

房里穿行，一边张开双手，继续观察自己，就像是一个刚穿上一件下摆过长的新连衣裙的女人一样。因为谢尔盖不停地摆动脑袋，所以很快就转得头晕目眩了。不知道为什么，他感到十分恐惧，因为这个不停地转来转去的人就是他，谢尔盖·戈洛温，而且这个人很快就会死了。一切都变得那么奇怪，不可思议了。

他尝试着在牢房里走动——连走路也变得奇怪了。他又坐下——坐着也变得奇怪了。他又试着去喝了一口水——喝水也变得奇怪，水就莫名其妙地被吞下去了。手里还拿着杯子——拿着杯子的手指更奇怪了，还在微微地颤抖。想到这里，他被呛着了，咳嗽起来，一边咳嗽，一边想：“多奇怪呀，我怎么还咳嗽？”

“我这是怎么了，难道是疯了吗？”谢尔盖想到这里，浑身都凉了，“真是见鬼了，判了个绞刑还不够惨吗！”

他抬手擦了擦额头的汗水，但觉得擦汗这个动作也令他奇怪不已。因此，他屏住呼吸，几乎感觉过了有好几小时，就那么呆若木鸡地一动不动，什么都不去想，大气也不喘一口，没有任何的动作——因为任何想法都会是不理智的，任何动作都会使他陷入疯狂。时间已经不复存在了，时间已经进入到空间之中，变成一座透明的真空广场，巨大而广阔，所有的土地、所有的生物都聚集于此，一切都尽收眼底，一切都能一眼望到头，只因到了最后的断头路——那就是死亡。令他备受折磨的，不是能够一眼就看见死亡，而是一下子同时看到生与死。自古以来，遮住了生死真相的大幕一直紧闭着，现在这层幕布被一只亵渎神明的大手打开了，生与死就不再是秘密了——但是，它们仍是混沌不明的，不可理喻的，就像用晦涩难懂的语言描绘的真理一样。在他那人类的头脑中还没有一种概念来解释这景象，他所使用的人类语言也不足以表达他的所思所见。他只会说“我感到害怕”这样的话——因为在他心里或者头脑中还没有，也不可能有哪一句话或哪一个概念，比这句话更能够契合他现在的非人状态和所见景象。一个人，或者说，像他这样的人，要是不能脱离于人类的理智、经验和情感的范畴，即使是见到了上帝本人，也理解不了上帝的含义，尽管知道这就是那个叫上帝的人，却会因为难以理解的巨大痛苦而浑身战栗不已。

“现在还是让穆勒出场吧！”谢尔盖忽然特别自信地大叫了一声，摇了摇头。他像一个正常人常有的情况一样，毫无预料地转变了心情，愉快且发自内心地大笑起来。“啊呀，你呀，穆勒！哎呀，你这个亲爱的穆勒老兄！啊呀，你这个德国妙人啊！好穆勒，到头来呀——最终你是对的，我呢，就是一头愚蠢的驴呀。”

他又特别快地在牢房里走了几趟，在监视孔监视他的看守又一次大吃一惊——谢尔盖飞快地把衣服脱了个精光，高高兴兴且十分卖力

地做着全套十八个体操动作。他不断伸展自己年轻却已经消瘦了的身体，下蹲、吸气、呼气、踮起脚、踢腿、摆臂。每完成一个动作，他都满意地说：

“就这么做！这才是真正的体操，穆勒老兄！”

谢尔盖的脸颊变得通红了，令人舒服的热汗大滴大滴地渗出皮肤，心脏也跳得有力而且相当平稳。

“问题在于，穆勒，”谢尔盖挺起胸膛，皮肤下面的条条肋骨清晰可见，“问题在于，穆勒，还有第十九节体操——它的动作为保持不动，笔直地将脖子吊起来。这一节称为绞刑。你明白吗，穆勒？抓住一个活人——比方说吧，抓住了谢尔盖·戈洛温，把他像一个洋娃娃裹在襁褓里一样绑起来，然后用绳子吊住脖子，吊死拉倒。穆勒啊，这事儿是很愚蠢，但是毫无办法了，不得不如此了。”

他向右边做体侧运动，并且重复了一遍说：

“不得不如此了，穆勒老兄。”

9.可怕的孤独

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此刻，在同样的钟声里，在远离谢尔盖和穆夏的几间空牢房之外，不幸的瓦西里·卡希林感受到了沉重的孤独，仿佛宇宙间只剩下了他一个人，正在恐怖和忧伤中挨过他生命的最后时光。

瓦西里·卡希林大汗淋漓，衬衫湿答答地粘在身上，原本卷曲的头发现在都松垮地粘在头皮上，他像一个患了剧烈牙疼的人，浑身痉挛着，无可忍受地在牢房里走过来踱过去。他一会儿坐下，一会儿又跑开，一会儿把头抵住墙，一会儿又直愣愣地眼睛盯着某处不动——就好像要找一种医牙疼的药一样。他入狱后容貌大变，以至于他仿佛有过两张不同的脸，一张从前的脸，年轻却杳然无迹；取代这张脸的是一张新的脸孔，它苍老难看、憔悴不已。

对死亡的恐惧猝然到来，而且一下子就把他紧紧地攫住，他再也无法挣脱了。决定行动的那天早晨，他还毫无畏惧地走向死亡，还轻松地调侃死亡，而到了晚上，在被关进单人牢房之后，极度的恐惧像大浪一样席卷身心，彻底吞没了他。当他还凭借自己的自由意志，去面对危险和死亡的时候，在他还能用自己的双手去解决问题的时候，无论死亡看起来有多么可怕，他都可以轻松地，甚至乐观地对待，这是因为，以前他感觉自己是无限自由的，是无比勇敢的，是信念坚定的，是大胆无畏的，是毫不怯懦的，即使害怕什么，也像小老太太满脸细小的皱纹一样，无迹可寻，毫不显眼。当炸弹被绑在他腰上的时候，他自己仿佛也变成了一颗炸弹，就像头脑中嵌入了烈性炸药的冷酷理智，赋予了他致命的可怕能量。每当走在街道上，跻身于熙熙攘攘的人流中，看到街巷里凡夫俗子们只关心自己的事情，谨小慎微地躲避着马车和电车，他就更觉得自己是一个不同凡响的人，完全来自不知何为死亡、何谓害怕的神秘国度。

可是，剧烈反转的变化骤然来临，荒唐至极。人们偏要押送他去那个他本人不愿意去的地方。他已经不能够选择待在什么地方，而是被人押着关进石头牢房，像什么东西一样，扔进去锁起来。他已经不能像所有自由人一样选择生或者是死，他必定会无可避免地要被杀死。只是一瞬间，他这位原先为自由意志、生命和力量的化身，就立刻变成了待宰的牲畜，变成了无声无息的东西，变成了可以被任意摆布、随意烧毁和随便折损的任何东西。他现在无论说什么，都没有人

愿意倾听他说的话。而如果他敢喊叫起来，那么，就会有人来用抹布塞住他的嘴，无论他挪不挪动他的双腿，反正人们是要把他押走去绞死的。他反抗也好，挣扎也罢，躺在地上撒泼打滚也是一样的——人们照样还会制服他，拖他起来，捆绑他，把他反绑押至绞刑架下。完成这种机械性杀人事务的，是和他一样的人，而这就使得他们看上去好像有一种完全不同于常人的凶狠样子，既像是一种故意变形的幽灵，又像是装上了发条的机械玩偶——他们抓人、逮人、押送人、吊死人，顺着脚把人拉下来。他们割断绳索之后，就把尸首装车运走，扔到乱坟岗上一埋了事。

从入狱的第一天起，对他来说，人们和生活都变成了不可思议的满是幽灵和机械玩偶的可怕世界。他恐惧得几乎发疯，竭力想象人们长了舌头，应该是会说话，但却说不出来——好像全是哑巴一样；他又竭力回忆人们之间有过谈话，他们在交际时说过的有含义的句子，结果也是徒劳。人们的嘴都张着，发出了某种声音，后来就四散开来，只能看见脚在移动，其他什么也看不见、听不见。

如果深夜里一个人孤零零地被留在房子里，他就会感到屋子里的东西都活了过来，能四处走动，凌驾于孤独的人之上，获得了无限的权力。这些东西——桌子、椅子、写字台和沙发可能会突然来审判他。他会喊叫，会四处奔突，会寻求帮助。但是，这些东西——桌子、椅子、写字台和沙发会用它们才懂的语言和方式来商量。然后这些东西——桌子、椅子、写字台就下令立刻把人绞死。其他的东西嘛，就只能冷眼旁观。

在被判处绞刑以后，瓦西里·卡希林觉得一切都变成了玩偶：他的单人牢房，带有监视孔的牢门，准点报时的钟声，砌得结结实实的城堡监狱，还有那个挎着枪，鞋跟在走廊里磕打作响的看守，他更像机械玩偶，以及在监视孔先是可怕地瞪他一眼，然后一言不发再把牢饭递进来的家伙也是。他有这样的体验并不是真的怕死，他甚至希望快点死去。在所有神秘莫测、难以解释的事物中，相对于变得野蛮和无序的世界，死亡是理智可以解释的。在这个幽灵遍地的疯狂的机械玩偶世界里，死亡早已经完全失去了它那伟大而神秘的含义，变成了某种机械的，因而十分可怕的东西。他们抓人、逮人、押送人、吊死人，顺着脚把人拉下来。他们割断绳索之后，就把尸首装车运走，扔到乱坟岗上一埋了事。

一个人就会因此从世界上销声匿迹。

瓦西里·卡希林最为清醒的瞬间就是在法庭上受审的时候，因为和同志们站在一起，他又重新看见了人：他们坐在那里审判他，用人类话语商量事务，倾听别人的话，也明白其他人在说什么。但是，在与母亲会面的时候，他所熟知的那种出离了人类理智的恐惧感再度袭

来，他感觉这个戴着黑头巾的老太婆——完全是一个被人操控的机械玩偶，就像那些也会说“爸爸”“妈妈”的人一样，只不过制作得精致些罢了。他极力想好好与她交谈，但就是浑身颤抖，不由自主地想道：

“老天啊！你跟一个玩偶谈什么呀。这就是一个玩偶妈妈。那便是一个玩偶卫兵，家里还有个玩偶父亲，而我呢，玩偶瓦西里·卡希林在此。”

好像只过了一会儿，他就听到了某种机械装置破裂开的声响和转轮缺少润滑油的嘎吱声。当他的母亲开始哭泣的时候，有那么一瞬间，人的理智有所回归，但是在母亲开始说话的时候，这种感觉立刻就烟消云散了，他开始恍惚而又好奇地观察，眼泪是如何从玩偶的眼睛里流出的。

后来，就在自己的牢房里，当恐惧变得无可忍受时，瓦西里·卡希林尝试着去祈祷。尽管他的少年时代是在父亲的商人之家度过的，一直沉浸于宗教的氛围中，但是他厌烦那种形式，为那种氛围痛苦过，并且完全痛恨宗教，没有在身心中形成任何信仰。但，也许是在童年的某个时刻，他听到过一句话，这句话一下子打动了，令他战栗不安，给他留下了终生的安宁诗意，即：“上帝是一切苦难之人的喜乐。”

每当生活中出现痛苦的时候，他就对自己默默诵读这句话，不算祈祷，也不是有意为之：“上帝是一切苦难之人的喜乐。”说完呢，他就会感到轻松，想找个亲近的人去倾诉心事，悄悄地诉点苦：

“我们的生活啊……还算是生活吗！哎呀，我亲爱的，你说，这叫什么生活呀！”

然后，他突然就会特别想整理好头发，跪在地上，敞开胸脯，任凭别人来击打：“来吧，朝这里打吧！”

他对任何人都没有说过“上帝是一切苦难之人的喜乐”这句话，对自己最亲近的同志也丝毫未露半点儿口风，甚至就好像自己都从来不知道有这么一句话一样——这句话就这样深深地埋藏在他的心底。他并不经常回忆起这句话，每次回忆起来都是小心翼翼地，非常谨慎。

于是，现在，当恐惧显而易见、无可掩饰，就像决堤的洪水淹没了沿岸的蒲柳一样，彻底地吞没了他的全部身心的时候，他想要祈祷了。他想跪下来，但怕看守窥到就太难为情了，所以就只把双手交叉到胸前，小声默念：

“上帝是一切苦难之人的喜乐！”

然后再一次面带忧愁地重复祷告：

“上帝是一切苦难之人的喜乐，降福于我吧，拯救罪人瓦西里·卡希林吧。”

很久以前，还是在上大学一年级的時候，在认识维尔纳并参加到组织中之前，他的生活完全是吃喝玩乐，说话也随便，那时管自己叫“罪人瓦西里·卡希林”——现在，不知为什么又想这样称呼自己了。就这样死气沉沉地重复着这句话，得不到任何的回应：

“上帝是一切苦难之人的喜乐！”

这时，好像有某种东西闪过。仿佛是某人安宁且悲苦的形象在向远方飘浮，还未来得及照亮死亡之前的黑暗，就消失得无声无息了。钟楼上的报时钟声铛铛地响起来了。看守的枪还是刺刀什么的，不知碰到哪里，也响了一下，接着他打了一个哈欠，开始来回走动。

“上帝是一切苦难之人的喜乐！你为什么还默不作声？你什么话也不想对罪人瓦西里·卡希林说吗？”

他就这样温柔地诉说并等待着。然而，无论是他的心里还是身外，都并无一人，虚空不已。那个安宁且悲苦的形象并没有返回或者再度出现。这时儿时的场景，诸如滚烫的蜡烛、穿着长袍的神父、画在墙上的圣像、不停地跪下又站起来的父亲都涌进了他痛苦而不情愿的回忆中，父亲一边祈祷，一边鞠躬，还时不时地皱眉观察，瓦西里是否在好好祈祷，是不是在调皮捣蛋。想到这些，他简直比祈祷之前更觉恐怖了。

一切都烟消云散了。

疯狂的感觉特别压抑地传导到他的全身。他的意识熄灭了，就犹如一堆被人为熄灭拨散的篝火，就犹如一具行将就木的尸体，心脏处的体温尚存，手脚却早已经冰凉僵硬了。他那行将熄灭、尚存一息的思想又说了一次话，即他，罪人瓦西里·卡希林，有可能在这里发疯，体验到那些无名的苦难，忍受还未有任何生物体验过的无边的疼痛与痛苦。他可能会把头死命地往墙上撞，可能会用手指抠出自己的双眼，很可能会歇斯底里地大喊大叫，很可能会痛哭流涕地哭诉，他再也受不了了——希望这种事不会出现。肯定不会出现的。

果然什么事也没有发生。双腿还没有失去自己的知觉和生命，继续行走并且承载着他那不停抖动、汗津津的身体。双手也还有知觉，总是徒劳地要把前胸敞开的囚服衣襟拉紧，好让冷得发抖的身体稍微暖和一点儿。他的身体打着寒战，简直透心凉了。他的眼睛一直在直勾勾盯着某处看。这种姿势已经持续不动很久了，称得上宁静不已。

然而，极端可怕的时刻还是到来了：这就是一帮人拥进牢房的时刻。他甚至没有想到，这就意味着——该去刑场行刑了。只是看着这

些人，自己就已经像一个小孩子一样感到害怕。

“我再也不敢了！我再也不敢了！”他惊骇地躲到牢房的角落里，翕动着干硬的嘴唇，用几乎听不见的小声喃喃自语，像极了小时候父亲抬手要揍他时的样子。

“该走了。”

这帮人跟他说话，在他身旁走动，递给他某个东西。他闭着眼睛，身体一直摇摆——后来就心情沉重地开始收拾东西。看起来，他的神志清醒过来了，因为他突然张口向那个官员要一根香烟来吸。后者殷勤地打开了绘有颓废派画风图案的银质烟盒。

10.墙在倒塌

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维尔纳只是化名，没人知道他的真名实姓，他呢，是一个对生活和斗争都厌倦了的人。原先有过一段时期，他非常热爱生活，酷爱戏剧和文学，喜欢交友，常常呼朋唤友。他记忆力惊人，意志相当顽强，学习并精通好几种欧洲语言，能够流利地和德国人、法国人或英国人交谈。他说德语时还带一点儿巴伐利亚口音，但必要时，他会像一个地道的土生土长的柏林人那样说话。他穿戴十分讲究，总是风度翩翩，在自己的同志中，他是唯一一个敢出现在上流社会的各种场合而不担心被识破的人。

但他的同志们长久以来并不知道，在维尔纳的心里早就形成了对人的蔑视，不仅如此，他心底也不断堆积沉重的绝望情绪和厌倦心理。从天性上来说，维尔纳更像是一个数学家，而不是一个诗人，因为他至今不知道何为写作灵感，何为文艺移情，却在很长一段时间里感觉自己是一个狂人，立志要在人类的血泊中解决化圆为方 [9] 的问题。他不尊敬与自己每日缠斗的敌人，因为这些都是由愚蠢、背叛和谎言甚至肮脏的口水和无耻的欺骗编织成的一张密实的大网。最终让他永远地丧失了生活愿望的原因，似乎是组织交给他的一项清除奸细的任务。他按组织要求完成了，在老练地打死奸细之后，看了一眼死去的人，生前是那么可恶虚伪的一张脸，现在已经变得安详，完全是一张令人怜悯的脸——他突然不再尊敬自己和自己的事业了。并不是感到了什么悔恨，只不过是突然不再自视甚高了。他开始觉得自己是一个无趣的人，一个无足轻重的人，一个乏味的局外人。不过，作为一个高度自律的人，他遵规守纪，并没有脱离组织，表面上和以前毫无二致——只是眼神变了，冷冰冰的，看上去很可怕。他没有与任何人交流过这些心理活动。

他还拥有一个罕见的特点：就像很多人从来不知道头疼是怎么回事一样，他呢，从来不知道什么叫害怕。每当别人感到害怕的时候，他对此既不加以谴责，也不特别同情，就像感冒是如此普及的一种疾病，但他本人却从未得过一样。他也怜悯自己的同志，尤其是像瓦西里·卡希林这样的。但是，他的可怜是冷冰冰的，居高临下的，几乎并不是真情实意的流露。这种怜悯，可能连法庭上的一些法官都会有。

维尔纳清楚，绞刑并不仅仅是死刑，它还含有某种别的含义——但是，他决定，无论出现任何情况，都要平静地去迎接死亡，就像对待任何身外之事一样，就像什么也没发生，什么也不会发生一样，活到生命的最后一刻。他只能以此种方式来表明他对死刑的最高轻蔑，捍卫自己不可剥夺的精神自由。所以，在法庭上，他想的既不是死的问题，也不是如何活下去的问题，他专心致志地、聚精会神地、心无旁骛地在思考一盘难解的棋局，这一点，就连十分了解他那平时遇事冷静和大无畏性格的同志们也未必能想得到。维尔纳是一位国际象棋高手，从被捕的第一天起，他就开始下这盘棋了，一直持续不断地在棋盘上厮杀。就连对他的绞刑判决也未能干扰到他，他在意念中的棋盘上还未输掉一子呢。

甚至，明摆着他是不完这盘棋了，这一点也没能让他放弃继续排兵布阵。他停留在人世间最后一天的那个早晨，是从他修正昨天走得太睿智的随手棋开始的。他把双手放在两个膝盖中间，一动也不动地坐了好久，然后，站起身来，开始一边走动，一边思考。他的步态很特别，他上半身的躯干微微向前倾，而厚鞋跟则重重地磕在地上，叩地有响，以至于在干硬的地上留下了十分明显的脚印。他轻轻地用口哨声吹了一曲轻快的意大利咏叹调——这有助于他的思考。

但是，不知为什么，这天早上，棋下得不顺利。他感觉不好，觉得是走了一步昏着儿，而且是相当愚蠢的大败着儿。他几次从开局起，复盘所走的每一步棋。始终没有发现走错的那一步棋究竟落子何处了，但是，走错了一步棋的感觉如影随形，而且越来越强烈，越来越令他沮丧。但是一个突如其来的想法使他非常难堪：事情不在于他是否走了一步昏着儿，而在于他是否想用下棋来转移自己对于死刑这件事的注意力，逃避他对死亡的恐惧，逃避那对于每个犯人来说都无可逃避的死亡的恐惧？

“不！我才不会呢！”他冷冰冰地回答自己的这个疑惑，平静地合上了意念中的棋盘。于是，开始像下棋一样，专心致志地、聚精会神地、心无旁骛地思考起自己毫无出路的可怕的处境，就像是要为一场十分苛刻的考试做出标准答案。他环视了一遍单人牢房，尽量不漏掉任何东西，计算了一下到受刑之前还有多长的时间，在心里画了一幅大致的受绞刑时的场景图，画得相当准确，细节毕现，随即自己就耸了耸肩。

“那又能怎样呢？”他反诘式地回答，“不就是这些嘛。有什么可怕的呢？”

确实没有什么好怕的。不仅没什么可怕的，而且他心里还有一种与之相反的感觉——一种混沌不清的，但是巨大的、豪迈的、欢乐的感觉。于是，那遍寻不得的昏着儿已经引不起他的沮丧、他的愤怒，

却带来了某种巨大的意想不到的好事，就好比他以为一位好朋友已经死了，结果是朋友出乎意料地毫发无损地回来了，且正在冲他微笑。

维尔纳重新又耸了耸肩膀，摸了一下自己的脉搏，心跳虽然很快，但脉搏有力、平稳、匀速，带着特有的怦怦的节奏感。他再一次像一个新来的犯人一样仔细打量了一遍墙壁、门上的插销以及固定在地上的椅子，心里想道：

“为什么我会感到这么轻松愉快、自由自在呢？尤其是自由自在？我想到明天的绞刑——就好像这件事根本不存在一样。我看着这堵墙——就好像墙也不存在一样。就这样自由自在，就好像我不是正在坐牢，而是刚刚从坐了一辈子的监狱里被刑满释放了一样。这是怎么回事呢？”

维尔纳的双手开始颤抖——这对他来说可算是从未有过的现象。一时间，他的思绪越来越汹涌，就像有无数条火舌在头脑中舔噬——这些火舌竭力要冲出头脑，照亮远方黑沉沉的夜色。它们终于冲了出来，把远方照得一片光明。

近两年来困扰维尔纳的混沌的厌倦感消失了，那条盘踞在他心口的冷冰冰的、紧闭口眼的、沉重的大蛇突然就不复存在了——代之返回的，是美妙的活生生的青春，就在临死前。而且，在神清志明的同时，随之而来的还有一种罕见的现象，即一个人精神上的觉悟能够使其进入到人生的巅峰时刻，维尔纳就是突然处于此种境界之中，同一时间内，既看到了生，也看到了死，他被这种罕有的、空前壮观的现象所震惊。仿佛他自己正在窄窄的、刀锋般的高山绝壁上行走。他看到的是一幅全景图，往这边看到的是生，而往另一边看到的则是死，恰如两片深不可测、美不胜收、波光粼粼的大海，在地平线处汇合为海天一色的无边无际的广阔海洋。

“太壮观了！竟有这么绝妙的景象！”他拉长声音说道，慢慢地欠起身，挺直后背，就像在面君朝圣一样。于是，在维尔纳那专注的、洞察一切的目光扫视下，墙壁、空间、时间都消失了，他极目远眺，一览无余地看到了即将与之告别的生活的最深处。

于是，生活变成了崭新的。但是，维尔纳并不想像以前那样，用语言来描述所见所闻，而且就是穷尽人类的语言，对于这般景象的描写也是苍白无力的，也是微乎其微的，也是词汇贫乏的。人们的脸上有过的渺小、肮脏和凶狠的样子，曾经让他轻蔑，甚至有时特别憎恶的表情，现在都彻底消失了。这情景就犹如一个乘坐高空中的热气球正在离开自己城市的人，在他看来，拥挤不堪的街道上那些争吵谩骂和污泥浊水都统统消失不见了，所有丑陋、破败的景象都变得美不胜收。

维尔纳下意识地走到桌子旁边，用他的右手掌撑住桌面。他生性高傲，威严，但还从来没有像现在这样摆出如此高傲、如此自由自在、如此威严的姿势。他连脖子也不转动一下，他的眼神从未如此的犀利——他从来没有像现在这样自由自在，这样威仪整肃，就在监狱里，就在离执行死刑不足几个钟头的时间里。

而且，在他清醒的目光扫视下，人，都变成了新人，都变成了可亲可爱的新人。他像一个穿越了时间的年轻小伙子，清楚地看见了，昨天还犹如森林间嚎叫的野兽一般的人类焕发了青春。原先人身上可怕的、不可饶恕的和令人憎恶的缺点突然间就变得可亲可爱了——就像刚刚学着走路的孩童，尽管不会像大人那样大步流星，但是，他的咿呀学语、他的蹒跚学步、他的天资聪颖、他的呆萌、跌跤、磕头碰脚都令人忍俊不禁。

“我可亲可爱的人们啊！”维尔纳突然情不自禁地笑了，保持了半天的姿势一下子就变形了，重新又像一个犯人那样，被牢牢地禁锢在方寸监舍中，因为厌恶贴在那门上的那双监视的眼睛而感到心烦意乱，无所适从。说来也怪，他几乎是陡然间就忘记了刚才清清楚楚所看到的一切；甚至更可怕的是，他连回想一下的愿望都没有。他只是坐姿稍稍随便了一点儿，不像平时那么身正背直了，神情完全变成了非维尔纳式的样子，脸上带着一抹松弛的、温柔的微笑看着牢房四周的墙壁和铁栅栏。接下来就发生了更不像维尔纳以往行为处事的一幕：他突然放声痛哭起来。

“我亲爱的同志们啊！”他一边大哭，一边声泪俱下地低声诉说。

他的情感由高高在上的傲气和无限的自由自在一下子过渡到温柔和怜悯的激情中，这究竟是经由了怎样神秘的心路历程呢？对这一切，他不知道，也没有去想。至于他是否怜悯自己亲爱的同志们，抑或他的眼泪中是否还饱含着更为伟大崇高或者更为炙热的情感呢？他那颗重新复活和重返青春的心恐怕对此也一无所知。他就只管放声痛哭：

“我亲爱的同志们啊！我亲爱的同志们啊！”

谁也不会在这个痛哭流涕的人身上认出以前那个冷冰冰的、傲慢的维尔纳，谁也不会把这个含泪微笑的人等同于以前厌倦一切、无所畏惧的维尔纳——法官们不会认出他来，同志们不会相信自己的眼睛，就连他自己也不会认同的。

[9] 指代无法解决的问题。

11.押解上路

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在分别被押上各自的囚车前，五名死囚被集中在一间阴冷的大房间里，那里拱形的天花板使其显得更加空旷，像是一间废弃已久的办公场所，也可能，以前是被用作宽敞的接待室的。他们被允许相互交谈。

可是，只有丹妮雅·科瓦利丘克立即就开始使用这项许可。其他人都默不作声，只是紧紧地握手。有人的手凉冷如冰，有人的手热如火炭——他们不想说话，也不互相凝望，他们很不自然地围成一个松散的小圈。现在，他们大家聚在一起了，这当中的每个人似乎都为自己单独囚禁时的想法感到羞愧。他们不敢互相凝望，这是因为怕看到别人，或者向别人展示出自入狱以来每个人都曾想到过和怀疑过的东西，那些新的、很特别的但说出来有点儿令人羞愧的想法。

但是，一两次对视之后，他们立刻都释然了，仍然像以前一样，微笑着开始无拘无束地交谈起来，仿佛没有什么变故一样；要是说有什么已经发生，那对大家也是一样的，每个人身上的变化是同等的，所以对个人来说也就不明显了。所有人都开始说话了，而且言谈举止都特别奇怪。大家的谈话不是断断续续，就是滔滔不绝，不是抢着说，就是谁也不说。有时候大家抢着说，同样的话会被重复几遍；有时候，有人一句话只说了半截，也以为自己已经说完了，停下来也没人注意到。大家都在好奇地互相打量，就像是戴眼镜的人突然摘掉了眼镜，仔细地观察那些以前视为寻常的东西一样。他们所有人都几次突然转身向后张望，仿佛恍惚间有人在背后吼叫和下了什么指示。不过，他们都对自己的反常表现并未察觉。两位女士穆夏和丹妮雅的脸颊和耳朵都烧得绯红，谢尔盖一开始脸还发白，但很快就恢复原样，和平时毫无二致了。

只有瓦西里一人引起了大家的注意。即使在他的同志们中间，他也不能恢复常态，仍然是一副害怕的样子。维尔纳还是十分担忧，小声和穆夏说了自己的不安：

“他这是怎么搞的呢，穆夏琪卡 [10] ？难道他真的怕成那个样子吗？怎么办？应该和他谈谈。”

瓦西里站得稍远一点儿，向维尔纳望了一眼，就好像不认识他一样，垂下了自己的目光。

“瓦夏，你的头发是怎么弄的呀，啊？你是怎么啦？没什么大不了的，老弟，没什么大不了的，没什么大不了的，这马上就结束了。应当坚持住啊，要坚持，要坚持。”

瓦西里默不作声，似乎无话可说。当维尔纳已经觉得，瓦西里不会再开口说点什么了的时候，他却给了一句闷声闷气的回答。这回答给所有人的问候听上去并不能让人安心，反倒像是从遥远的坟墓里发出的哀鸣：

“我可没什么好害怕的。我能坚持住。”

他又重复了一遍：

“我能坚持住。”

维尔纳一下子就高兴起来了。

“我说你没事的嘛，对。真是好样的。就该这样，就该这样。”

但是，当维尔纳与瓦西里的目光相遇时，他发现瓦西里眼神十分呆滞、暗淡，像是从一个遥远的深处递出来的茫然失措的目光，这使他在那一瞬间痛心不已：“他这是从哪里看过来、从哪里说的话呢？”他立即就用恋人们才有的温柔劲儿，像是对还未醒的人说：

“瓦夏，你能听见吗？我非常爱你。”

“我也非常爱你。”他吞吞吐吐地回答说。

忽然，穆夏抓住维尔纳的一只手，像站在舞台上的演员一样，语句清晰地表达了自己的惊讶，她说：

“维尔纳，你怎么啦？你刚才当真说了‘我爱你’？你可是个从来不说‘我爱你’的人。你怎么突然变得这么温柔，这么和蔼可亲了啊……？哎，你这是怎么啦？”

“哎，你这是怎么啦？”

于是，维尔纳也像一个演员一样，紧握着穆夏的手，同样语句清晰地表达了自己的感受：

“是的，我现在非常爱大家。请不要告诉别人，不要告诉他们。挺难为情的，但是，我确实非常爱大家。”

他们两个人的目光碰到一起，电光石火般燃烧起来，周围的一切都黯淡无光了，犹如瞬间的闪电使一切光源都熄灭了，只有闪电那黄色且沉重的影子掠过大地。

“是的。”穆夏说，“维尔纳，是的。”

“是的。”他回答，“是的，穆夏，是的。”

某种东西在两个人之间已经心领神会，并由他们两人坚定地将其确定下来了。于是，维尔纳的目光不再犹疑，他重新振作了一下，又走向了谢尔盖。

“谢廖扎！”

但是，回答他的是丹妮雅·科瓦利丘克。她拽着谢尔盖的衣服袖子，特别兴奋，几乎有一种母亲般的自豪感，都快落泪了。

“维尔纳，你听我说！我这阵子一直担心他，几乎一直在哭，都要伤心死了，可他倒好——人家在做体操！”

“穆勒那套？”维尔纳笑了笑。

谢尔盖挺腼腆地皱了皱眉头，说道：

“维尔纳，你还真别笑，我已经完全确信它有益……”

大家都笑了起来。大家从互相交谈中汲取了坚强的精神，获得了力量。渐渐地，他们又变成了从前的样子，但他们没有察觉的也正是这一点，他们还认为，他们和从前是一样的。突然，维尔纳止住了笑声，特别严肃地对谢尔盖说：

“你是对的，谢廖扎。你是完全正确的。”

“不，你要明白……”戈洛温挺高兴，“当然，我们……”

但这时候，卫兵已经开始催促他们上车了。押解他们的人这时候都十分和蔼，允许他们三两结伴坐同一辆车，或随意同车乘坐。总之，押送人员非常和善可亲，甚至过于和善了。也许是想尽量展示他们的人道态度，也许是想竭力表明，这一切自有其规律，与他们全无任何关系。不过，这些人的脸色都不好，很苍白。

“穆夏，你和他坐一起吧。”维尔纳示意她和站着不动的瓦西里同坐一辆车。

“明白。”穆夏立即点头，“那你呢？”

“我吗？丹妮雅和谢尔盖坐一辆车，你去和瓦夏坐一辆车……剩我一个人了。这没关系，你知道，我是能行的。”

当大家走到院子里来的时候，夜色黑暗，空气湿润，暖风强劲地扑面而来，使人睁不开眼，呼吸都不畅了。有什么东西突如其来地一下子就穿透了犯人们颤抖的身体，令他们感到清新和惬意。以前很难相信，这令人惊奇的东西，不过就是春风而已，是温暖湿润的春风。正是这个真正的、令人惊奇的春天的夜晚，辽阔无边的大地正在散发着冬雪融化的气息，四处都是融化了的水滴在嗒嗒作响。水滴嗒嗒不断线地散落，一滴接着一滴，极速而又和谐地演奏出欢快的曲目。但

也有突然哑然的时候，整个欢快的曲目就出现了混乱的无序状态。直到后来有一大滴水珠慨然落下，这一组欢快的曲目才得以准确地、和谐地继续叮咚演奏下去。在城市的上空，在监狱的楼顶上，泛着电灯反射过来的白光。

“啊哈……”谢尔盖·戈洛温深深地呼出了一口气，然后屏住呼吸，仿佛不愿意把这么清新、这么美妙的空气从肺部呼出体外。

“天气早就这样了吗？”维尔纳不敢相信，“这已经完全是春天了呀。”

“这才是第二个暖和天，”旁边有一个机警但礼貌的声音回答道，“这里以前一直相当冷呢。”

乌黑的囚车一辆接一辆慢慢地驶过来，每辆车带走两名犯人，驶入黑暗之中，向大门口驶去，那门上挂着一盏不停摇晃的电灯。那些灰色的影子是负责此次押解任务的骑兵团卫兵，他们紧紧地围住每一辆囚车，他们所骑的马匹踩在石板上便发出嘚嘚的清脆蹄声，踩在融化的湿漉漉的雪上就发出闷闷的啪啪声。

当维尔纳弯腰俯身准备钻进囚车时，一个卫兵语焉不详地说：

“里面还有一个犯人要和你同乘一辆走。”

维尔纳显然吃了一惊：

“上哪里去？他要去哪里？啊，怎么可能呢？还有一个？这又是谁？”

卫兵不作声了。确实，这辆囚车的里头，一个个头不大但却一动也不动的人——当然不是动物——畏缩在黑洞洞的角落里，大门口那盏摇晃的灯射过来的光线就照在他那只睁开的眼睛上。维尔纳坐下的时候，碰到了这个人的膝盖。

“对不起，同志。”

那个人没有回答。只是在车辆向外走动的时候，那个人才突然用根本不地道的俄语讷讷地问维尔纳：

“您是什么人？”

“我是维尔纳，因预谋行刺要员被判处绞刑。您是谁？”

“我——是扬松。不该绞死我。”

他们一起坐车走，为的是在两小时以后去面对那个无法破解的伟大秘密，在从生走向死的路上，他们就这样互相认识了。生与死——这两者同时并行着。生，是有始有终的，有最可笑的阶段，也有毫无意义的琐碎，但是，生活毕竟是生活。

“扬松，你干了什么事？”

“我拿刀把主人给捅啦，还偷拿了他的钱。”

听那声音，扬松好像要睡着了。维尔纳在黑暗中摸到了扬松的一只手，软塌塌的一只手，握了握，扬松萎靡不振地缩回了手。

“你害怕吗？”维尔纳问他。

“我不情愿被绞死。”

他们两个都不说话了。维尔纳重新把这个爱沙尼亚人的手拉过来，紧紧地握在自己那两个干燥、滚烫的手掌中。这只手就像一块小木板一样立在维尔纳的两个手掌之间，但是扬松再也没有把手缩回去。

囚车里又拥挤又闷不透气，散发出卫兵身上制服的汗味、霉味、马粪味和湿漉漉的皮靴味道。坐在维尔纳对面的小个子卫兵还不断朝他呼出一阵阵的大蒜和廉价烟草混合的气味。幸好不断有清冽、馥郁的空气从囚车的缝隙中钻进来。所以，在这个行驶中的小盒子里，在这个狭小的、闷罐一般的囚车里，比在车外面更能感受到强烈的春天的气息。囚车一路颠簸摇晃，一会儿向左倾斜过去，一会儿又倒向车体右侧，有时候感觉囚车是在往回走，有时又觉得已经过了几小时囚车还在原地打转转。一开始，路灯的光线还透过囚车的厚实的小窗帘照进来，后来囚车拐了一个弯之后，突然就没有任何光亮了，外面漆黑一片，伸手不见五指了，他们只能据此猜到，自己已经被带到了比较偏僻的街巷——接近C火车站的地方。维尔纳坐在晃来晃去的囚车里，只要一拐弯，弯曲的双膝不由自主地就会碰到对面坐的卫兵的双膝，他们都是生机勃勃的躯体，所以，简直令人难以置信，他竟然是去赴死。

“我们这是去哪儿呀？”扬松突然就发问了。

因为在黑洞洞且狭小的车厢里闷着，又颠簸得过久，他有点儿头晕和恶心了。

维尔纳回答了他，并更紧地握住了这个爱沙尼亚人的手。他想对这个个子小且老是睡眼惺忪的人说点特别友好、特别亲切的话，他爱这个人，胜过以往生活中遇到的任何一个人。

“亲爱的！看样子，你坐得很不舒服。过来，靠在我身上好了。”

扬松好一会儿不作声，后来回答说：

“不用了，谢谢！我还行，坐着没事。那，你也要被绞死吗？”

“对呀！”出乎意料，维尔纳一听这话立即高兴起来，赶紧回答他，特别轻松，满不在乎地挥了挥手。仿佛他们交谈的内容是自己那

些爱好恶作剧的好朋友开的一个无伤大雅的玩笑，只是想捉弄他一下而已的玩笑。

“你有老婆吗？”扬松问。

“没呢。哪有什么老婆！我是一个单身汉呢。”

“我也是个光棍。一个人过。”扬松说完，想了一下，又改口说道。

维尔纳的头也开始晕乎乎的了。竟然不时出现一种幻觉，仿佛他们这是去参加某种盛大的节日。这听起来很奇怪，但是，几乎所有被押赴死刑场的人都会有这种感觉，与痛苦和恐惧伴生相随的是不同寻常的狂喜，这是一种对从未体验过的事物混沌的期待。在死刑犯人的认知中，现实沉湎于他们的非理智状态，和生活交织在一起的死亡使他们产生出各种幻觉。很有可能，是房屋上迎风招展的旗帜诱发了这种感觉。

“看哪，我们到了！”囚车一停下来，还有点儿晃动时，维尔纳就既好奇又快活地说。可是，扬松却失神了：整个人都蔫蔫的，一言不发，赖在车里根本就不想下车。他抓住车门的把手不放，他的手也没啥劲了，押解的卫兵过去把他的手一下子就掰开了；他又赶紧抓住囚车一角、门边和高高的车轱辘，可是卫兵稍一松手，他就整个人瘫软下来，他完全不像是抓住什么东西抵抗下车，而是睡眼惺忪的，像是要倚靠个东西就瞌睡过去了——所以卫兵只是那么轻轻一提，他就松了手。终于下了囚车。

房屋上也没有什么飘飘彩旗。这时仍旧是夜间，车站周围笼罩在一片黑暗之中，空旷无人，无声无息。这个时候已经不再发送普通的旅客列车，只有一节静候这批旅客的列车，无声地在轨道上等候发车，没有明亮的灯光，也没有旅客候车时的人声嘈杂。突然，维尔纳感到了无聊——不是恐惧，也不是感伤，而是一种突如其来的、巨大的、持续了好一会儿的无聊感，他因此只想找一个地方，躺下来，紧闭上的自己的双眼。维尔纳就这样先是打了一个大呵欠，然后连着又打了几次呵欠，呵欠连天。

“但愿一切快一点儿过去吧！”维尔纳完全倦怠了。

扬松一直没话，就是全身都蜷缩着。

被士兵们封锁的站台上没有任何闲杂人等，犯人们有序地朝着一节灯光暗淡的车厢走过去，维尔纳挨着谢尔盖·戈洛温。谢尔盖抬手指着别的地方，开始说话，但是，维尔纳听清楚的只有“灯笼”一个词，后面的话都被他那连天的呵欠给吞没了，什么也没听清楚。

“你说什么？”维尔纳打着呵欠问道。

“我说灯笼。里面的灯泡把灯罩都熏黑了。”

维尔纳这才扭身看了一下：确实，灯泡烤炙得厉害，外面的透明玻璃罩都已经是暗黑色的了。

“可不是嘛，都熏黑了。”

突然间，他意识到：“都这个时候了，灯罩是否被熏黑还与我有关系呢……”很显然，谢尔盖也同时想到了一样的问题，所以他飞快地看了一眼维尔纳就把身子转过去了，但是，两个人都不再打呵欠了。

所有的人都是自行向车厢里走过去，只有扬松需要人搀扶。一开始他的脚底板像是被站台上的木板给粘上了一样，根本就抬不起脚来，后来两个卫兵架起他的胳膊，拖着他走，他的两条腿弯曲着耷拉在地上，像是一个酩酊大醉的人一样，靴子的尖头从站台的木板上吱嘎作响地划过。卫兵们折腾好半天才把他塞入车厢里，倒也没废什么话。

瓦西里·卡希林也是自己走过去的。他就是迷迷糊糊地模仿着同志们的动作，大家做什么，他就做什么，亦步亦趋而已。但是，在来到站台上，往车厢里走的时候，他脚下滑了一下，一个卫兵及时地抓住了他的一只手肘，扶住了他，瓦西里却浑身颤抖，缩回自己的手臂，大声尖叫起来：

“哎呀！”

“瓦夏，你怎么啦？”维尔纳立即跑到了他身边。

瓦西里也不说话了，身体颤抖得更剧烈了。卫兵有点儿尴尬，甚至有点儿委屈地解释说：

“我想扶他一下，可是……”

“来，瓦夏，我们走，我扶着你。”维尔纳说着，就去搀扶瓦西里的胳膊，但是瓦西里推开他的手，又一次大声尖叫起来：

“哎呀！”

“瓦夏，是我呀，维尔纳。”

“我知道是你。别碰我，让我自己走。”

于是，他就这样，浑身颤抖着，自己走进了车厢，坐到角落里去了。维尔纳则转身对着穆夏，用目光指着瓦西里，示意穆夏并小声地问她：

“他这是怎么啦？”

“他的状态很糟糕。”穆夏小声地回答，“他已经算是死了。维尔纳，你告诉我，难道真有什么死亡吗？”

“我不知道，穆夏，但我认为，死亡不存在。”维尔纳回答得既相当认真，又若有所思。

“我也是这样想的。可是他呢？刚才和他坐在同一辆囚车里可真够我受的，我就像是和一具死尸一起过来的。”

“我真的弄不懂，穆夏。也许，对某些人来说，死亡可能真的存在。那也是暂时的，时过境迁就不会存在了。譬如，对我来说，死亡存在过，但是现在它已经不存在了。”

穆夏那苍白的脸颊泛起了红晕。

“死亡曾在你头脑中出现过？真的出现过吗？”

“出现过了。现在没有了。就像对你来说一样，已经不存在了。”

车厢门口传来一阵嘈杂声。米什卡·茨冈诺克踏着铛铛作响的鞋后跟，喘着粗气，呸呸地吐着唾沫，走进了车厢。他用眼睛四下张望了一会儿，就站住不动了。

“卫兵！这里没有地方了！”他气呼呼地冲着那个看他的卫兵嚷嚷，显然后者已经很疲倦了。“你得给我找一个宽敞的地方坐着，不然的话，我可可不走了，你就在外面的路灯上吊死我得了。还弄个马来送站，狗娘养的，那个也能叫马车吗？鬼知道来了一辆啥玩意儿，反正他妈的不是马车！”

突然，他不喊了，低下头，就伸长脖子一直朝前面走去，径直走到其他囚犯跟前。他带着几分狂野的表情，头发和胡子都乱蓬蓬的，黑色的眼睛看起人来还是那么粗野和犀利。

“啊！先生们！”他拉长声音说道，“原来是你们呢。你好哇，老爷。”

他碰了碰维尔纳的手臂，坐到了他的对面。一面俯身凑近维尔纳，一面眯起一只眼，用手挠了挠脖子。

“也是去刑场？啊？”

“也是！”维尔纳笑着回答他。

“难道这些人全都是？”

“全是。”

“嗯哼！”茨冈诺克龇牙大笑，很快就将所有人扫视了一番，在穆夏和扬松的身上稍微多停留了一会儿。又转过头来，朝维尔纳做了个

鬼脸：

“这次是把部长干掉了？”

“是部长。那你呢？”

“我嘛，老爷，是因为别的案子。我们这种人可够不上部长！我是啥人呢，老爷，我可是个强盗。杀人越货的主儿！没什么，老爷，我也没想到，挤到这里来了，要和你们大家一起上路。那个世界里，地方够大，肯定咱们大伙儿都有地方坐的。”

他顶着一头乱蓬蓬的头发，瞪着一双粗野的大眼睛，眼珠骨碌碌，打量着所有人，目光中满是不信任。但所有人都默不作声地看着他，甚至大家看他的目光中倒是带着明显的关切。他齙着牙，在维尔纳的膝盖上拍了几下。

“老爷，这也有趣！这挺像一首歌里唱的那样：请你不要大声说话呀，那青翠的橡树呀，我的母亲。”

“都这时候了，你干吗还管我叫老爷……”

“你说得对呀，”茨冈诺克满意地随声附和，“都要和我一块儿被吊死啦，你还当啥老爷呢！瞧哇，这家伙才是个老爷呢。”他就用手指头指着那个默不作声的卫兵，然后说，“哎，你们的那一位，不比我们差呀，”他用眼睛示意瓦西里，“老爷，这位老爷，你是有点儿害怕了还是怎的？”

“没什么。”瓦西里费劲地转动舌头嘟囔了一句。

“哎呀，还说没什么呢。你可不用感到害臊，这也没什么可害臊的。只有狗才会在人家吊死它的时候齙牙咧嘴、摇尾乞怜呢，可你是个人呢。这个，这个垂头耷耳的又是谁？跟你们不是一伙的吗？”

茨冈诺克飞快地骨碌碌地转动着他的眼珠，不停地把嘴里腥甜的唾沫啐到地上。扬松龟缩在角落里，头上那顶脱了毛的破皮帽子不停地微微地抖动着，听到了他的话但是什么也没有回答。维尔纳替他回答说：

“他把主人给宰了。”

“我的天哪，”茨冈诺克大为吃惊，“他这个熊样还能杀人啊！”

茨冈诺克早就也斜着眼睛，瞟了穆夏好几眼了。这时，他很快地转过身来，直勾勾地盯着她看，冲着她说话。

“大小姐啊，你这大小姐！您干吗要干这种事！红红的脸蛋，还总在笑。瞧哇，她还真的在笑哇！”他用干硬的大手抓住维尔纳的膝盖，“你瞧，你瞧哇！”

穆夏的脸一下子就涨得通红了，有点儿羞怯地微笑着。她并不躲避，同样直视茨冈诺克那张脸，看着他那有点儿疯狂、粗野却也沉重的眼睛和那副探寻的眼神。

大家都沉默了。

为数不多的几节车厢哐当哐当地行进在窄轨上，以连续而细碎的节奏不停地飞奔。每当进入拐弯处或者是到了十字路口，火车的汽笛声就不失时机地、呜呜地不停地鸣叫起来——司机最怕轧死人了。这样一想也怪荒谬的，为了把人送去绞死，人们还要在火车上费这么多的事，地球上最疯狂的事就是用最普通的方式，一丝不苟地，按部就班地，理智地去完成毫无理智的事情。列车在飞奔，车厢里坐着的人们，和他们平时坐火车时毫无二致。而火车行驶着，也像平时的火车那样运行着，然后到了一个车站，就像平时一样，“停车五分钟”。

于是，死亡即刻就降临了——永恒来临了——这就是那个伟大的秘密。

[10] 穆夏的小名。——编者注

12.他们被带走了

/

小专列在风驰电掣地行驶中。

谢尔盖·戈洛温曾经连续几年都和亲人们一起到这条线路附近的别墅度假，他白天和夜里都乘坐过这条线路上的火车，对这附近相当熟悉。此刻如果双目微合，他会觉得这是回家的路程——也许只不过是城里的朋友家里逗留过久，只好乘坐夜班车赶回家而已。

“现在快到了。”他睁开眼睛说道，看了一眼被铁栏杆钉死的窗户，黑洞洞的毫无任何光亮，对他的话也无任何的反应。

没有任何人动一下，也没有人对他的下意识反应做出回答，只有茨冈诺克一次又一次快速地吐着他那腥甜的唾沫。并且他的眼睛又开始重新骨碌碌地在车厢里逡巡，目光依次扫过列车的窗子、车厢的门以及站着的卫兵。

“真冷啊。”瓦西里·卡希林确实冻得嘴唇已经僵硬了，在说出这个词的时候，只能翕动上下唇打战，以至于把“冷”这个字说得更形象了。

丹妮雅·科瓦利丘克立刻就觉得“英雄有用武之地”了。

“把我的头巾给你吧，把头巾围在脖子上。头巾很暖和的。”

“脖子？”谢尔盖突如其来地问了一句，并被自己的问题吓了一跳。

但是，因为大家都很冷，都想的是同一个问题，所以，没人听到他的这句问话，就好像没人说过任何话一样，或者也非常可能，所有人在同一瞬间说出了同样一个词。

“没关系的，瓦夏，你就围上这头巾吧，快围上吧，会暖和的。”维尔纳劝了瓦西里几句。然后，他转过身，对着扬松，亲切地问道：

“亲爱的，你觉不觉得冷啊？”

“维尔纳，可能，他更想抽支烟。同志，你是不是想抽烟？”穆夏问道，“我们有烟。”

“想抽呢！”

“谢廖扎，给他一支烟。”维尔纳高兴地说。

但谢尔盖早就把烟递给了扬松。于是，所有人都爱怜地看着扬松用手指夹住香烟，点燃了火柴，从嘴里徐徐地喷出了蓝色的烟雾圈。

“哎，谢谢啦。”扬松说，“不错。”

“真奇怪呀！”谢尔盖说。

“有什么可奇怪的？”维尔纳转过身来，“什么事奇怪？”

“这香烟啊。”

他手里拿着一支香烟，就是普普通通的香烟，夹在他虽有点儿苍白但还是活人的手指之间，他惊奇地，甚至有点儿害怕地看着这支香烟。于是大家的目光都集中到这支精细的香烟上，看着它的一端袅袅地冒出丝带一样的青烟，被吸烟者呼出的气息吹散开，而剩下的那一段就是黑如焦炭般的灰烬。最终熄灭了。

“烟灭了。”丹妮雅说。

“是啊，熄灭了。”

“那就去他的吧！”维尔纳说，他皱起眉头，不安地看着扬松，而后者还夹着香烟的手像是死人的手一样僵住了。倒是茨冈诺克，突然转身，几乎把脸凑到维尔纳的脸上，瞪着像马眼一样的眼睛，小声说：

“老爷，要不，咱把看守的卫兵干掉……咋样？试一下子？”

“用不着啦，”维尔纳也小声说，“咱就干了死亡这杯酒吧。”

“为啥呀？打一架再去死不是更开心点吗？我揍他，他揍我，不知不觉就完事了。就不像是去送死嘛。”

“不，这可不用啦。”维尔纳说着，然后又转身对着扬松说，“亲爱的，你怎么不抽烟了？”

扬松的脸原本很松弛，突然间就好像被人用一根线拉紧了一样，脸上的褶子全都皱巴巴地挤在一起，那些皱纹都不停地抽搐起来。扬松像如梦初醒一样，放生哀号起来，就是用假嗓子干号，没有一滴眼泪那种：

“我不要抽烟啊！啊——呜！啊——呜！啊——呜！不该绞死我啊！啊——呜！啊——哼！啊——哼！”

大家都围着他，乱成一团。

丹妮雅·科瓦利丘克一边失声痛哭，一边替扬松拉拉衣服袖子，又把他那脱了毛的帽子拉一拉，使其戴得端正一点儿，嘴上还念叨：

“你可是我们的亲人呢！亲爱的，别哭啦，我们的亲人啊！我的苦命不幸的亲人啊！”

穆夏把目光转到别处。茨冈诺克捕捉到了她的目光，龇牙笑了。

“这位先生是个怪人！嘴上喝着热茶，却一肚子冰凉啊。”他讥讽地说，笑了一下。但是，他自己的脸色也变得铁青了，嘴里的两排大黄牙咬得咯咯直响。

突然间，小专列抖动了一下，明显地放慢了速度。除了扬松和瓦西里·卡希林，大家一下子都站起身来，旋即又坐了下来。

“到站啦！”谢尔盖说。

就仿佛有谁从车厢里抽取了所有可供呼吸的空气一般，喘气都变得困难起来。心脏仿佛也开始扩张膨胀，撑满了胸腔，快提到嗓子眼儿一般，疯狂地跳动起来——仿佛这鲜血，成了心脏的喉咙，不断发出喊声。大家的眼睛都盯着抖动的地板，耳朵则竖起来倾听火车车轮越来越慢的滚动声，滚动——滑行——再滚动——突然就刹车不动了。

火车停了。

自此，梦境开始了。这不只是因为害怕，而是害怕引起了幻觉，造成了失去记忆状态。所有这一切，对不得不面对的人们来说，都是陌生的：做梦者自身已经退避三舍，只有他的幻觉在毫无意识地四处走动，毫无声音地在诉说，毫无痛感地在体验痛苦。大家梦游一般地走出车厢，两人一排，贪婪地嗅着早春时节森林中特别新鲜的空气。扬松仍然是睡眼惺忪、快睡着了一样地抗拒下车，但毕竟从来都是缩手缩脚、软弱无力，到底还是被不出一声的卫兵拖出了车厢。

大家一起走下了站台的石阶。

“难道就这么步行过去吗？”不知是谁还挺高兴地问了一句。

“离这里不远呗。”不知是谁也挺高兴地回答了一句。

然后这一大群黑压压的人，默然无声地向森林中穿行。正值春天，林中的道路坎坷不平，潮湿泥泞。从森林中，从雪地里散发出十分新鲜的、春天特有的气息。有时候，脚下一滑，就会陷进雪地里去，双手就会不由自主地伸手去抓同伴以撑住不倒。押送人员在道路两边没有踩实的雪地里深一脚浅一脚地行进，呼呼地喘着粗气。不知是谁，生气地来了一句：

“连路也不给扫干净。跑来在雪里翻跟头玩呢。”

“大人，扫是扫过了。现在是解冻天气，也没有什么办法呀。”

犯人们的知觉意识稍稍清醒了一些，但还没有完全回归正常，只是不连贯地、片段式地小范围有感觉了。蓦然间，又有人意识到了这个十分确定的想法：

“的确，他们连路都不给清扫一下呀。”

但是，这感觉只有一小会儿，随即一切就都变得模糊不清了，只有嗅觉还是灵敏的，可以尽情地呼吸清新的空气、森林中的清香、雪在融化的气息。过了一会儿呢，一切又都清晰得不同寻常，所有的一切——森林、夜晚、路途，以及他们再过几分钟就要被送上绞刑架这事——都变得清晰可见。犯人们之间的零星的低声交谈也相当克制：

“快四点了。”

“我就说嘛，出来得太早了。”

“到五点天才会亮呢。”

“可不嘛，得五点。就是应该晚一点儿出来……”

在一片黑暗的林中空地旁边，犯人的队伍停住了。就在离此不远处，有几棵树，因冬季里已经掉光了叶子，显得枝丫稀疏，依稀可见两盏马灯无声无息地摇来晃去，在向前方移动：绞刑架就是设置在那里。

“套鞋走丢了。”谢尔盖·戈洛温说。

“什么？”维尔纳没明白他说的话。

“套鞋走丢了。好冷。”

“瓦西里在哪儿？”

“不清楚。呃，在那里站着哪。”

瓦西里站在那里，像一个黑影，一动也不动。

“穆夏在哪儿呢？”

“我在这里呢。是你吗，维尔纳？”

犯人们都开始环顾四周，但是竭力避免往马灯径直移动的方向看，大家心里清楚，马灯所在就是那无声而可怕之地所在。在左边，掉光树叶的枝丫使得树木看上去更加稀疏，能看见一大片盖了雪的白色而空旷的大地。森林里湿润的风就是从那里吹过来的。

“是海。”谢尔盖·戈洛温说，他张开嘴巴使劲地吸吮潮湿的空气，“那里是大海。”

穆夏欢快地回应他：

“我的爱情像大海一样宽广！”

“穆夏，你在说什么？”

“我的爱情像大海一样宽广，生活的堤岸无法容纳它。” [11]

“我的爱情像大海一样宽广。”谢尔盖若有所思，用穆夏的语调又重复了一遍这个诗句。

“我的爱情像大海一样宽广……”维尔纳也重复了一遍诗句，忽然他十分惊喜地说：

“穆希卡 [12]！你可真够年轻的呀！”

突然，就在维尔纳的耳旁，传来了一个急切的声音，气喘吁吁的茨冈诺克正在向他耳语：

“老爷，哎，老爷，这是树林子吧，啊？我的天哪，这是怎么回事！亮灯的地方有绞刑架啊？这是怎么回事，啊？”

维尔纳看了他一眼，这位茨冈诺克正在被临死前的痛苦折磨呢。

“该告别啦……”丹妮雅·科瓦利丘克说。

“再等一会儿，临行前还要宣读判决书的。”维尔纳说，“扬松在哪儿？”

扬松瘫倒在雪地里了，周围有几个人拿着东西在忙活。突然大家都闻到了一股刺鼻的氨水味。

“医生，怎么样？你们快弄好了吧？”有人不耐烦地问了一句。

“没什么，就是昏厥了。抓点雪擦擦他的耳朵就好了。他会醒过来的，可以宣读判决书了。”

就这样，一抹神秘的马灯的光亮照在那张致命的纸和一双摘了手套的苍白的手上。这张纸在抖动，这双手也在抖动，连说出话来的嗓音也在发抖：

“诸位，也许，不用读判决书了吧，你们不是都已经知道了吗？你们觉得呢？”

“不用读了。”维尔纳代替所有人回答道。照着判决书的马灯就立即熄灭了。

所有人都拒绝了让神父来为他们作终傅 [13]。茨冈诺克说：

“我说呀，神父，就别来糊弄傻瓜了，这时候你倒是想宽恕我了，他们还不是照样得把我绞死。快走吧，滚一边去得啦。”

马上，一个巨大的黑影默默无言地退到树林的深处，消失不见

了。看来，天色已经破晓：雪已经泛白，人影的暗色依稀可辨，森林里稀疏的树木都显露出来了，周围的氛围也愈发地悲伤和无聊。

“诸位，要两个一组过去。哪两个人一起，你们自行选择，但请动作快一点儿。”

维尔纳指着被两个卫兵架着才勉强站着的扬松，说：

“我和他一起吧。谢尔盖，你就带着瓦西里。你们先往前走。”

“好。”

“穆夏琪卡，我们就一起吧？”丹妮雅·科瓦利丘克说，“来吧，咱们就此吻别。”

大家就迅速地互相亲吻了。茨冈诺克亲吻得很用力，所以被他亲吻到的人都能感觉到他的牙齿。扬松的亲吻软绵绵的，还是无精打采的，只是半张着嘴，而且，他好像也不明就里，这时候为啥要亲吻。当谢尔盖·戈洛温和卡希林已经向前走出了几步的时候，卡希林突然站住了，用特别大的声音清楚地说了一句话，但完全是和以前判若两人的嗓音：

“永别了，同志们！”

“永别了，同志！”大家都异口同声地回答他。

他们离去了。此刻周围寂静无声。树上挂着的马灯已经不再左摇右晃。大家肃穆静候，以为那个方向会传来叫声、呻吟声、某种不期而至的声音。但那里却和这里一样寂然无声，不再晃动的马灯射出了昏黄的灯光。

“哎，我的上帝啊！”不知道是谁突然哑着嗓子冒失地来了一句。大家转头一看，原来是茨冈诺克正在饱受死前的折磨，“这两个人被绞死了！”

大家重又转过身来，一切又归于寂静。茨冈诺克忍不住难受，两手不断地在脸前扇风：

“这算怎么回事呀，啊！先生们，啊？我就只能一个人去死啦，啊？怎么也是有个伴儿才好吧。先生们呢！怎么办才好呀？”

他用灵敏的手指抓住维尔纳的一只手，一会儿握得紧紧的，一会儿又松开：

“老爷，我的好老爷，你就和我一起吧，啊？发发善心吧，别扔下我一个人呀！”

维尔纳十分痛苦地回答茨冈诺克，说：

“不行啊，亲爱的，我得和他一起呀。”

“哎呀，你这个人哪，我的上帝呀！这么说，我就只能一个人去死啦。这怎么办呢？天哪！”

穆夏往前走了一步并轻声说：

“我和你一起去吧。”

“和你？”

“是的。”

“你可拉倒吧。你可太小了点！你就不害怕吗？我看我还是一个人去死要好点。又能怎么样呢！”

“不，我才不害怕呢。”

茨冈诺克龇出了大板牙。

“你可拉倒吧。怎么说我也是个绿林强盗。你不厌恶我呀？要不最好别这么办啦，我还是一个人去死得了。我可不会生你的气。”

穆夏没有说话，在黎明微弱的光晕中，她的脸庞显得苍白，有一种神秘的美感。后来，她就一个箭步走到茨冈诺克跟前，用手搂住了他的脖子，用力亲吻了他的双唇。他呢，两只手放在她的肩上，稍稍把她推开一点儿距离，摇了摇她的身子，开始出声地亲吻她，亲她的双唇，亲她的鼻子，亲她的眼睛。

“咱们走吧！”

一个站得很近的看守不知道是怎么弄的，身子一晃，手就松开了，握着的枪直接掉到了地上。但是，他也没有弯腰去捡枪，而是愣愣地站着片刻没动，然后就转过身，像个瞎子一样，走到没人踏过的雪地里去了。

“你去哪儿？”另一个看守惊慌失措地小声喊他，“站住！”

但是，那个看守依旧没有说话，就踩着积雪，深一脚浅一脚地走进雪里。脚底下可能被什么东西绊了一下，就张着双手扑倒在雪地上。他就脸朝下，一动也不动地趴在那里。

“快把武器捡起来！你这个没用的废物！不然的话，我可要捡起来啦！”茨冈诺克冲着他们咆哮如雷，“连自己的职责都忘了！”

有人又摇晃着那两盏马灯过来了。这次轮到维尔纳和扬松了。

“永别了，老爷！”茨冈诺克大声地说，“到了那个世界，我们还做朋友，到那时，你见到了我，可千万别不理我呀。给我赏碗水就行——我在那里会热死的。”

“永别了。”

“我不情愿被绞死。”扬松还是有气无力地说。

但是，维尔纳已经挽起了他的手，这个爱沙尼亚人自己倒也走了几步。然后，大家都看到了，他站住不动了，后来就倒在雪地上了。押解的卫兵俯身过去，把他拉起来，把他拖出雪地，他还手脚乱动，试图挣脱拉他的卫兵。他为什么一声不吭？大概，他早已经忘了自己还有嗓子。

终于，那两盏马灯又重新在那个方向不再晃动了。

“这么说来，就只剩我一个人了，穆夏琪卡，”丹妮雅·科瓦利丘克伤心地说，“过去我们都是一起生活，到头来……”

“丹涅琪卡，亲爱的……”

可茨冈诺克马上过来干涉她俩说话。他抓住穆夏的手臂，好像害怕她被夺走一样，快速而认真地长篇大论了一通：

“哎呀，小姐！你是可以一个人的，你心地纯洁，所以，你去哪里，一个人都可以。你明白吗？我可不行啊。我可是一个货真价实的强盗哇，你明白了吗？我一个人可不行。我一个人，大家就会说，你又想往哪里钻，你这个江洋大盗？我还偷过马，这都是真的呀！我和她一起吧，就像……就像带着一个婴儿，懂了吧。还没弄明白？”

“我明白了。好哇，你们俩就一起去吧。让我再吻你一下吧，穆夏琪卡。”

“亲亲吧，好好亲亲吧。”茨冈诺克大度地鼓励两个女人，“事到如今，是需要好好告别一下的。”

穆夏和茨冈诺克向前走了。穆夏走路很小心，地上很滑，她习惯性地吧裙子稍稍拎起来一点儿；茨冈诺克则用力挽住她的胳膊，每一步都十分小心地踩实在路面上，把和他一起的女士领到死亡跟前。

马灯挂在那里一动也不动。丹妮雅·科瓦利丘克的周围，寂静而空旷。卫兵们都沉默不语，在一天初始的宁静的晨光中，颜色还不能分辨得十分清楚，他们就是一群灰色的影子。

“就剩下我一个人了。”丹妮雅·科瓦利丘克突然开口说道，而且还叹了一口气，“谢廖扎死了，维尔纳和瓦夏也死了。只剩我一个人啦。当兵的，哎！当兵的，哎！只剩我一个人啦。一个人……”

太阳跃出了海面。

死刑犯人们的尸体被放入棺材。随后，就被运走了。这些尸体的脖子都被抻得老长，眼睛暴凸在眼眶之外，肿胀发暗的舌头，犹如一

朵不知名的可怕的鲜花一样，在双唇之间，浸泡在口腔里的血沫中。这些尸体重新又沿着他们活着时来的路游荡回去。春天的雪还是那么地柔软，那么地清新，同样清新和馥郁的还有春天的气息。谢尔盖弄丢了的那只破套鞋湿漉漉、黑乎乎的，陷在雪地里。

人们就这样迎着冉冉升起的太阳。

[11] 引自俄国小说家、诗人阿列克赛·康斯坦丁诺维奇·托尔斯泰的诗篇。——编者注

[12] 穆夏的小名。

[13] 宗教用语。天主教圣事之一，即教徒病重垂危时，由神父傅圣油并为之祝祷，则可有助于赦免罪恶，获得善终。——编者注

‘It was like
walking along the
knife-edge of the
highest possible
mountain range,
seeing life on one
side and death on
the other in the
form of two
deep, gorgeous
and gleaming
seascapes . . .’

1. At One O'Clock, Sir

The minister was a big fat man prone to apoplexy, so, to avoid unhealthy excitement, all possible precautions were taken before he was warned of a very serious attempt on his life that was being planned. Once the minister had been seen to take this news in his stride, even managing a smile, they gave him the details. The attempt was scheduled for the following morning, when he would be going out in his carriage to deliver his report: a number of terrorists, denounced by an informer and now under roundtheclock police surveillance, were due to meet up at one o'clock, armed with bombs and revolvers, and to wait for him to come out of the front entrance. That was where they would be arrested.

'Hang on,' said the minister in some surprise. 'How could they know that I'll be going out with my report at one o'clock, when I didn't know about it until just the other day?'

The Chief of Police spread his hands in bemusement. 'It's at *one o'clock*, sir.'

The minister shook his head, partly nonplussed, partly to acknowledge the good police work, and his dark, thick lips twisted into a sardonic smile, a smile that stayed on his face as he hurried to get out of the way of the police by following their instructions, which were to pack a few things and go off and spend the night in some hospitable mansion away from home. His wife and two children were also relocated away from the dangerous house where the bombthrowers were due to meet up the next day.

With the lights burning in the borrowed mansion and welcoming familiar faces all around him, with much bowing and scraping, accompanied by smiles and expressions of indignation, the mandarin experienced a pleasant feeling of uplift, as if he had just received, or was about to receive, a great honour that had not been anticipated. But soon the people drove away to their various destinations, the lamps were put out and a stream of bright light flowed in from the electric streetlights through the plateglass

windows, looking lacy and spooky as it settled on the walls and ceiling. Penetrating intrusively into a house filled with pictures, statues and a silence also brought in from outside, this light, although gentle and hazy in itself, gave rise to uneasy feelings about the futility of bolts, fences and walls. And then, in the nighttime stillness and solitude, in an unfamiliar bedroom, the mandarin was overcome by an unbearable feeling of dread.

A martyr to kidney trouble, he had found that any sudden agitation soon had his face, hands and feet bloated with water, the effect of which was to make him seem bigger,

fatter and bulkier than ever. And now, lying there, a heap of swollen flesh weighing down the squashed bedsprings, he felt like a suffering patient, hurting all over, with a swollen face that didn't seem to belong to him, and he couldn't stop thinking about the cruel fate that some people had had in store for him. One after another he recalled all the recent atrocities when people of his standing, or even higher rank, had had bombs thrown at them, bombs that had torn bodies to shreds, splattered brains down dirty brick walls, and torn out teeth by the roots. And these memories had made his own fat and sickly body, now stretched out across the bed, seem like someone else's, having taken the full blazing impact of the explosion. His arms seemed to have been torn out at the shoulders, his teeth had been scattered, his brain tissue atomized, while his legs had gone numb and he lay there, toes up, like a corpse. He made a huge effort to stir himself, gasped out loud, and gave a good cough to make himself as uncorpse-like as possible. Snuggling down into the rustling bedclothes, vibrating with jangling springs, and determined to show the world that he was very much alive - nowhere near dead, miles away from death just like anyone else - he spoke out into the silence and loneliness of the bedroom with a deep staccato growl. 'Good lads! Well done, lads! Well done!'

It was his way of praising the detectives, policemen, soldiers and other men guarding his life, who had so cleverly prevented his assassination with their timely intervention. But, however much he stirred himself, praised his men, skewed his mouth into a forced grin of contempt for the stupid terrorists - miserable failures! - he still couldn't quite believe in his salvation. He wasn't sure that life wouldn't slip away from him, suddenly, any minute now. The death that those people had planned for him, which existed only in

thought and intention, seemed to be still there, and it was going to stay there, it wouldn't go away until they were caught, stripped of their bombs and dumped in a dungeon.

There it was, death, lurking in the corner, not going away, not allowed to go away, like a soldier placed on guard duty under orders from above.

‘At one o'clock, sir.’

The familiar phrase rang out in a deluge of different voices, voices of gleeful contempt, rage, pigheadedness, meaningless noise. It was as if hundreds of windup gramophones had been installed in the bedroom, and all of them, one after another, were belting out what they had been programmed to say, with the singleminded stupidity of a machine.

‘At one o'clock, sir.’

And that time, tomorrow's ‘one o'clock’, which until recently had been no different from any other time, nothing more than hands gliding around the dial of a gold watch, had now assumed an ominous authority, hopped off the dial and taken on a life of its own, growing into a great black partition which had divided his entire life in two. It was as if there had been no other time before or after, just this one time, strutting with barefaced arrogance, the only time that had any right to a special existence of its own.

‘What's that? What do you want?’ raged the minister through clenched teeth.

A roar came from the gramophones.

‘At one o'clock, sir.’ And the black partition gave a grin and a bow.

Gritting his teeth, the minister sat up in bed with his head in his hands. He wasn't going to get to sleep, for sure, not on a ghastly night like this.

With a rising sense of clarity and horror, burying his face in his podgy, perfumed hands, he imagined himself getting up in the morning, in complete ignorance, having a cup of coffee, still in ignorance, and then putting on his outdoor things in the hall. Neither he, nor the porter handing him his fur coat, nor the servant still serving coffee, none of them would be aware that there was no

point in drinking coffee or putting a coat on when in a few seconds all of this - the coat, his body and the coffee inside it - would be blasted to bits, taken away by death. Look, there's the porter opening the glass door . . . And that man, the nice, kind, polite porter, with his bright blue soldier's eyes and a chest full of medals, he, with his own hands is opening the terrible door, opening it because he is still in ignorance. And all of them smiling because of their ignorance.

'Oho!' he boomed suddenly, taking his hands from his face.

And then, peering ahead into the deep darkness with a firm, fixed stare, he reached forward, found a switch and put the light on. Then he got to his feet and, ignoring his slippers, walked barefoot across the carpet, taking in the unfamiliar bedroom until he found another knob and switched on a walllight. It was now nice and light, only the rumpled bed with a blanket fallen to the floor bearing witness to a horror that had still not quite run its course.

In his nightclothes,

with his beard all matted from the tossing and turning and his eyes full of anger, the mandarin looked like any other angry old man kept awake by insomnia and asthma. He had been stripped naked by the death that those people had planned for him; this had torn away the magnificence and imposing splendour which normally enveloped him. It was hard to believe that he wielded so much authority, and that this body of his, such a straightforward, run-of-the-mill human body, was destined for a horrible death, to be destroyed in the bang and blaze of a monstrous explosion. Without getting dressed and impervious to the cold, he sat down in the first armchair that came to hand, rested his tangled beard on one hand, and stared up at the decorated plaster on the unfamiliar ceiling with a look of deep concentration and gentle wistfulness.

So, that's it then! That's what made him so scared and worried! That's why that thing lurks in the corner, and won't, can't, go away! 'Stupid fools!' he said, with contempt and strong feeling. 'Stupid fools!' he repeated in a louder tone, turning slightly towards the door so that he could be heard by anyone whom it might concern. Yes, the involvement was shared by the very people he had just referred to as good lads, the ones who, in their boundless

enthusiasm, had told him every last detail of the assassination attempt.

‘Of course!’ he thought, suddenly struck by a strong idea that had come effortlessly into his mind. ‘Now that I know about it - because they’ve told me everything - I feel terrified. But for them I would have been kept in ignorance, and I would have drunk my coffee with an easy mind. Of course, there’s still death to deal with - but am I all that scared of death? I do have this kidney problem, and I’ll have to die one day, but I’m not terrified, because my life goes on in ignorance. And those idiots kept saying, “At one o’clock, sir.” Stupid fools! They thought I would be delighted, whereas That Thing lurks in the corner and won’t go away. It won’t go away because it’s me thinking. And it’s not death that is terrifying, only my knowing about it. And it would be totally impossible to live if a man were to know with complete certainty the date and time when he was sure to die. And all I get from those idiots is that warning: “At one o’clock, sir.” ’

He was suddenly aware of a nice sensation, a pleasant uplift, as if someone had told him he was immortal in every way, and was never going to die. And, with a renewed sense of himself as a man of strength and intelligence standing out from that herd of stupid fools who were making such a senseless and brazen incursion into the mystery of the future, he found himself contemplating the bliss of not knowing things, though he did so with the weary thought processes of a sickly old man who has seen it all. Nothing that lives, neither man nor beast, is allowed to know the date and time of his death. Only recently he had been ill; the doctors had told him he was going to die and he ought to make his final arrangements. But he didn’t believe them, and, sure enough, he had remained alive. And something similar had happened when he had been young: his life was going nowhere, and he decided to commit suicide. He got a revolver ready, wrote his last letters, and even fixed the time of his death - but at the last moment he had thought better of it. At the last moment, anything can change, something completely unexpected can turn up, and this means that no one can ever tell himself when he is going to die.

‘At one o’clock, sir.’ That’s what those kindhearted asses had told him, and although they only told him because the death had already been prevented, the knowledge of its possible timing had

been enough to fill him with horror. It was quite feasible that he could be killed one day, but it wouldn't happen tomorrow - no, not tomorrow - he was immortal, and he could sleep easy. Stupid fools, they had no idea of the great law they had subverted, of the abyss they had opened up, by saying, with such idiotic kindheartedness, 'At one o'clock, sir.'

'No, not at one o'clock, sir; we don't know when. No, we don't know when. What's that?'

'Nothing.' An answer from the darkness. 'Nothing.'

'No. You were saying something.'

'Nothing. Nothing that matters. What I say is - tomorrow at one o'clock.'

And with a sharp sinking feeling, he realized there would be no sleep, rest or joy for him until that damned dark hour filched from the watchface had gone by. Of the knowledge to be gleaned by no living creature only a shadow remained, standing in the corner, but it was enough to blot out the light and swamp a man with the impenetrable darkness of horror. The fear of death, once aroused, had spread all over his body, got into his bones, and it peeped out, palefaced, at every pore.

Now it wasn't tomorrow's assassins that scared him - they had gone, disappeared into oblivion, merging into the host of enemies and hostile forces besetting his human existence - what he feared was something swift and inexorable: an apoplectic fit, a heart attack, a silly, skinny artery like the aorta suddenly giving way to bloodpressure and rupturing like a tightly stretched glove on bloated fingers.

He was horrified by his own short, fat neck, and he couldn't stand the sight of his stubby, podgy fingers or the shock of realizing how short they were and how they were filled with deadly moisture. And if, earlier on in the darkness, he had felt the need to stir himself in order to seem uncorpselike, now, in this horribly cold and hostile brightness, it seemed terrifyingly impossible to move a muscle and reach for a cigarette or ring for assistance. His nerves were on edge, and every nerve seemed like a taut wire standing on end, topped by a tiny head with eyes staring in horror and a gaping mouth twitching in spasms and soundlessly gasping. He had no

means of breathing.

And suddenly, down below in the darkness, in all the dust and cobwebs, an electric bell came to life somewhere up on the ceiling. A little metal clapper whirled in a spasm of horror against the rim of an echoing cup; then it stopped, then it rang again in a solid stream of jangling horror. It was Sir, ringing from his room.

Servants ran in. In some places among the chandeliers and on the walls some of the lamps lit up, not enough to provide light, but enough to allow shadows. They spread themselves everywhere, rising up in corners and crawling out across the ceiling, clinging tenuously to every protuberance and sticking to the walls. You couldn't tell where they had been before, these silent shadows, ugly and uncountable, the voiceless souls of voiceless objects.

A deeply resonating bass voice spoke out loud and clear. Then they telephoned for a doctor. Sir was feeling poorly. Sir's wife was also sent for.

2. Sentence: Death By hanging

It all worked out as the police had anticipated. Four terrorists - three men and one woman - armed with bombs, infernal machines and revolvers, were seized outside the entrance, and a fifth was discovered and arrested in the conspirators' flat, she being the landlady. They also seized a large quantity of dynamite, some semicharged bombs and other weapons. All those arrested were very young; the eldest of the men was twentyeight years old, the younger woman was only nineteen. Their trial took place in the same fortress where they had been imprisoned after arrest; it was summary justice conducted in secret, the way they did things in those merciless times.

In court, all five behaved calmly; they were very seriousminded and very thoughtful. So great was their contempt for the judges that none of them wanted to put on a show of heroics with an uncalledfor smile or a false display of triumphalism. Their calmness was balanced against a need to shield their souls, and the great darkness about to descend upon them in death, from the vile, intrusive gaze of outsiders.

Sometimes they refused to answer; on other occasions their answers were laconic, matteroffact and strictly relevant, as if directed not at the judges but at the keepers of statistics so that special forms could be filled in. Three of them, one woman and two men, gave their real names, and two refused to name themselves, thus remaining unknown to the judges. And towards everything that went on in the court they displayed the kind of curiosity that is diluted by emerging through a misty haze typical of people who are either seriously ill or obsessed by one huge, allconsuming idea. They would look up suddenly to catch an unusually interesting word as it flew past, and then go back to where their thoughts had been interrupted.

Nearest to the judges stood one of the accused who had given his name as Sergey Golovin, the son of a retired colonel, himself a former officer. He was still a young man, blond and stocky, so full

of good health that neither imprisonment nor the prospect of imminent death could wipe the bloom off his cheeks or take the youthful expression of naïve happiness out of his lightblue eyes. He never stopped plucking at his scruffy blond beard, which he had not yet grown used to, and he stared fixedly out of the window, narrowing his eyes and blinking. This was taking place at the end of winter, when, between the snowy blasts and the days of fog and frost, the approaching spring was sending out a herald in the form of a clear, warm, sunny day, or even a single hour, so springlike and radiant with the greedy passion of young life that the sparrows in the street went wild with joy, and people seemed almost intoxicated. And today, through the top window, uncleaned and accumulating dust since last summer, an unusually beautiful sky could be seen. At first glance it seemed to consist of a milkygrey, smoky haze, but on closer examination the eye could make out a brighter blue beginning to shine through, deeper, sharper and ever more boundless. And by revealing itself gradually, with its purity veiled in a cloud of mist, it seemed as winsome as a young girl and as easy to fall in love with. And Sergey Golovin squinted up at that sky through his long, fluffy eyelashes, first with one eye then the other, while pulling at his little beard and looking deeply preoccupied. On one occasion, his fingers jerked and his face screwed itself into a spasm of childish delight, but a glance around the court was enough to extinguish this like a spark underfoot. Almost immediately a change came over the redness in his cheeks; without really turning pale, they took on an earthy, deathly shade of grey and his whitetipped fingers twisted bits of his fluffy hair, painfully torn out by the roots, in a vicelike grip. Nevertheless, the joy of living and of springtime won through, and within minutes his young, ingenuous face was turned up again towards the spring sky.

It was in the same direction, up at the sky, that the anonymous pale young girl with the petname of Musya also turned her eyes. She was younger than Golovin, but the severity of her manner and the black gleam in her proudly focused eyes gave her an older look. Only her soft and very slender neck and her no less slender girlish arms bore witness to her age, though there was also an indefinable something about her, to do with youth itself, that rang out in her voice with true clarity of tone and the purest harmony, like a wellloved musical instrument tuned to perfection, adding musicality to the simplest of her words and exclamations. She looked pale, but

it was not the pallor of death, it was that special flaming white heat that occurs when a huge great fire seems to have been lit inside a person so that their body glows with light from within as if it was shining through the finest Sèvres porcelain. She sat there scarcely moving a muscle; only now and then did a surreptitious movement betray the fingering of a circular mark on the third finger of her right hand, the trace of a ring recently removed. And she stared at the sky not from any tender feelings or happy memories but because, in this dingy hall of officialdom, that patch of blue sky was the most beautiful place, a realm of purity and truth that was not trying to winkle secrets out of her eyes.

Sergey Golovin had won the sympathy of the court; she was the one they hated.

Alongside her, the unidentified man known as Werner sat there equally unmoving, in a rather affected pose, hands folded between his knees. If you can slam a face like a thick door, the unidentified man had banged shut the iron door of his face and secured it with an iron padlock. He looked down at the dirty floorboards without stirring, and you couldn't tell whether he was calm or intensely agitated, whether his thoughts were miles away or he was concentrating on the police giving their evidence. He was a small man with noble features finely drawn. His winsome appearance and sensitivity brought to mind a moonlit night in some southern clime under shadowy cypresses at the seaside, yet he also evoked a sense of formidable inner strength, indomitable selfassurance, cold control and heroic will. On his lips the very politeness with which he gave his terse, measured responses, accompanied by a slight bow, had an ominous ring, and if the prison smock looked like a ludicrous joke on the other prisoners, on this man it was such an alien form of dress that it went completely unnoticed. And although the other terrorists had been caught in possession of bombs and infernal machines, Werner was seized with nothing more than a black revolver; for some reason the judges took him to be the leader and when they addressed him, they did so with a touch of deference, in a laconic, businesslike manner.

The next one along was Vassily Kashirin, a man totally obsessed by an excruciating fear of death, accompanied by an equally desperate desire to suppress this dread and keep it from the judges. Since early morning, when they had been brought before

the court, his galloping heartbeat had left him scarcely able to breathe, permanent beads of sweat stood out on his forehead, his hands were just as sweaty yet also cold, and a cold, sweaty shirt stuck to his body, hampering his movements. With a supreme effort of will, he stopped his fingers from trembling, his voice remained firm and clear, and his eyes kept steady. He took in nothing of his surroundings, voices seemed to come at him through a fog, and back into the same fog he dispatched his desperate responses in an attempt to reply in strong, loud tones. But once he had responded, he immediately forgot what had been asked and how he had answered, and relapsed into a terrible, wordless struggle with himself. And death emanated from him so obviously that the judges avoided looking at him, and his age was as hard to guess as that of a dead body well into decay. According to his papers he was only twentythree years old. Once or twice Werner gently nudged him on the knee, and each time he responded with a simple phrase. 'It's all right.'

The most terrible moments were when he felt a sudden urge to scream, to yell out with the desperate wordless cry of a wild beast. When this happened, he nudged up against Werner, who responded to him without looking up. 'It's all right, Vasya. Won't be long.'

Then came the fifth terrorist, Tanya Kovalchuk, who, despite her own agonizing despair, enfolded the others with a watching maternal eye. She had not yet had any children, being as young and rosycheeked as Sergey Golovin, but she seemed like a mother to them all; there was so much concern and limitless affection in her every glance, every smile and all her terror. She completely ignored the court as if it were a kind of sideshow; all she took in was the way they answered the questions - was that a tremor in the voice, is that a show of fear, does that one need a drink of water?

She was too anguished to look at Vasya; all she could do was wring her chubby fingers. She watched Musya and Werner with pride, admiration and a look of serious concentration on her face. She did her best to pass a smile over to Sergey Golovin.

'Dear boy, he's looking up at the sky. Go on, keep on looking up there, my darling boy,' she thought as she watched him. 'But, oh dear, Vasya. What is it, what's wrong with him? What can I do about him? I can't say anything. That would make things worse. It

might make him cry.'

And like a still pond at dawn reflecting every passing cloud, her sweet, kind, chubby face reflected every quick movement and every thought coming from the four of them. The idea that she was also being judged and would also be hanged never crossed her mind, such was her profound indifference. It was in her rooms that the supply of bombs and dynamite has been discovered and, oddly enough, she had been the one to fire at the policemen, wounding one of them in the head.

It was getting on for eight o'clock when the court proceedings came to an end. The sky had gradually turned dark blue and faded before the eyes of Musya and Sergey Golovin, but instead of radiating the pink hue and gentle smile of a summer's evening, it just clouded over, getting greyer and greyer, and then suddenly it was all cold and wintry. Golovin heaved a sigh, stretched himself and glanced up at the window a couple of times, but there was nothing to be seen beyond the cold, dark night, so, still fingering his little beard, he turned like a curious child to have a good look at the judges and the soldiers with their guns, and he smiled across at Tanya Kovalchuk. As for Musya, when the sky faded, she avoided looking down at the floor and calmly transferred her gaze to a little cobweb in one corner that gently wobbled as warm air rose invisibly from the steamheating system. She stayed like that until sentence was pronounced.

After the sentencing, the condemned men and women took leave of their frockcoated lawyers, avoiding eye contact with these pitifully distraught and guilt-ridden people before coming together briefly in the doorway to exchange a few remarks.

'It's all right, Vasya. Won't be long now,' said Werner.

'Yes, brother, I'm all right,' said Kashirin in a loud, calm voice, almost enjoying himself.

And indeed, his face took on a pinkish hue, no longer like that of a decaying corpse.

'Bugger them all, they've hanged the lot of us,' said Golovin, reduced to a simple curse.

'We had it coming to us,' came Werner's calm reply.

‘Tomorrow they’ll give formal pronouncement of the sentence, and we’ll all be locked up together,’ said Kovalchuk, reassuringly. ‘We’ll be together right up to the execution.’

Musya said nothing. Then she took a firm step forward.

3. Not Hang Me

Two weeks before the terrorists' trial, different officials from the same regional military court had tried a peasant, Ivan Yanson, and sentenced him to death.

This man, Ivan Yanson, was a labourer employed by a wealthy farmer, virtually indistinguishable from all the other workmen in the local peasantry. He was Estonian by birth, from Wesenberg, and, after moving on from farm to farm over the years, he had ended up near the capital. He spoke very poor Russian, and since his master was a Russian, Lazarev by name, and there were no Estonians in the locality, he had hardly spoken a word for pretty well the past two years. Not that he seemed to have any desire for conversation. He didn't talk to people, but he didn't talk to the animals either; he kept quiet while watering or harnessing a horse, slowly and tentatively shuffling around it, and when the horse, disconcerted by the silence, started to play up and jump about, he would lay into it with a big whip, not saying a word. He would beat him viciously, with a cold and bitter determination, and if this was happening when he was roaring drunk, he would work himself up into a frenzy. Way back at the house you could hear the lashing whip and the staccato clatter of hooves from the scared and suffering animal as they echoed on the floorboards of the barn. The master would give Yanson a beating for having whipped the horse, but the Estonian proved incorrigible, so he gave up on him.

Once or twice a month Yanson got drunk, and this usually occurred on days when he drove the master to the big railway station, which had a bar. Having dropped the master off, he would drive out half a mile or so from the station, park the horse and sledge in some deep snow off the road, and wait patiently for the train to depart. The sledge would stand there, leaning to one side, almost recumbent, with the horse up to his belly in a snowdrift, legs splayed, occasionally nuzzling the soft, crunchy snow and licking at it, while Yanson sprawled awkwardly across the sledge, apparently dozing. The drooping earflaps of his tatty cap dangled down

impotently like a setter's ears, and his little buttonnose looked red and runny.

Then Yanson would go back to the station and lose no time in getting himself drunk. He completed the return trip to the farm, a good seven miles, galloping flatout. The shattered and terrified little horse ran itself into the ground, the sledge rocked all over the place, banking, bending and crashing against posts, while Yanson, who had dropped the reins and was in danger of flying out onto the road with every minute that passed, halfsang and halfyelled incoherently obscure bits of Estonian. But more often than not, he didn't sing, he kept silent, gritting his teeth against an inscrutable upsurge of rage, pain and exuberance, and barrelled on, blind to oncoming traffic, without shouting out warnings or slowing down as he careered around bends or down slopes. How he avoided running somebody down or smashing himself to death during one of these mad chases is anybody's guess.

He should have been sacked long ago, as he had been from other jobs, but he came cheap and the other workers weren't much better, so he stayed on for two years. Yanson's life was one in which nothing ever happened. One day he received a letter written in Estonian, but, since he was illiterate and there weren't any other Estonianspeakers, the letter went unread, and in a spasm of savage, fanatical indifference, as if he had no idea that the letter might contain news from home, Yanson chucked it onto the manure heap. On one occasion, apparently lusting for a woman, Yanson tried it on with the cook, but he got nowhere; he was turned down and laughed at. He was a little runt of a chap with a sickly, spotty face and muddycoloured eyes that looked sleepy and boozy. But Yanson took this setback on the chin, and made no more approaches to the cook.

But, although he didn't speak much, Yanson was always listening. He listened to the dreary snowcovered countryside with small pats of frozen manure looking like rows of little snowy graves, and the darkblue distant haze and the humming telegraph poles and people talking to each other. What the countryside and telegraph poles spoke about was known only to him, but what people were saying to each other worried him: nothing but rumours - of murder, robbery and arson. And one night a special sound had been heard: in the next village a little church bell rang out with a thin,

helplessly tinkling noise like that of a carriagebell. Strangers had ridden up, pillaged the wealthy farm, murdered the owner and his wife, and set fire to the house.

And now anxiety was the rule, even on Yanson's farm.

The dogs were allowed to run free not just at nighttime but also by day, and at night the master slept with a gun at his side. He wanted to give Yanson the same kind of gun, an older version with only one barrel, but the Estonian twisted it in his hands and refused inexplicably to accept it. The master, at a loss to understand the reason for his refusal, cursed him up hill and down dale, but the reason was simple: Yanson had more faith in his Finnish knife than this rusty old thing.

'Be the death of me,' said Yanson with a sleepy look in his beady, glassy eyes.

The master threw up his hands in desperation. 'You're a stupid fool, Ivan. Can't do a damn thing with farmhands like you.'

And one winter night, when the other farmhand had been dispatched to the station, that same Ivan Yanson who didn't believe in having a gun had carried out a very complex attempt at armed robbery, murder and rape. The way he did it was surprisingly simple: he locked the cook in her kitchen and then, at his leisure, with the air of a man dead on his feet for lack of sleep, he approached the master from behind and stabbed him repeatedly in the back. The master collapsed unconscious, and the mistress ran around the room screaming, while Yanson, baring his teeth and brandishing his knife, began ransacking the trunks and chests of drawers. He found some money, and then, apparently noticing the mistress for the first time, he surprised even himself by making advances with every intention of raping her. But by now he had dropped the knife, and when the mistress turned out to be stronger than him, not only did she decline to be raped, she came near to throttling the life out of him. At this point, the master showed signs of stirring, the cook was banging away with the ovenfork in an effort to break the kitchen door down, and Yanson ran outside. He was caught within the hour, squatting in a corner of the barn and striking match after dead match in an attempt at arson.

A few days later the master died from bloodpoisoning, and

Yanson took his place in a queue of other robbers and murderers waiting to be tried and sentenced to death. In court he was the same as always: a puny little man with a spotty face and a sleepy look in his beady, glassy eyes. Somehow he didn't seem to fully grasp what was going on, and he looked totally indifferent; his white eyelashes blinked as his lifeless eyes took in the unfamiliar courtroom in all its pomp without registering any curiosity, and he picked his nose crudely with a stiff, horny finger. Only those who might have seen him in church of a Sunday could have guessed that he had made an attempt at smartening up for the occasion; he wore a dirty, red knitted scarf around his neck and he had dampened his hair down in a few places that looked smoother and lay down flatter than on the other side, where it curled up in thin, blond tufts like wisps of straw left behind on a scanty hailblown meadow.

When the sentence was pronounced: 'Death by Hanging',

Yanson was shaken. He blushed to the roots of his hair and began twisting the scarf off and on, as if it was throttling him. Then he waved his hands about crazily, pointed to the judge who had read out the sentence, and spoke to the judge who had not.

'She said to hang me.'

'Who is "she"?' came the deep voice of the presiding judge, who had read out the sentence.

There were smiles all round, hidden behind moustaches and court papers, but Yanson levelled his forefinger at the president, and scowled at him in an angry response.

'You!'

'Well?'

Yanson turned his eyes back to the unspeaking judge, who was struggling not to smile, in whom he sensed an ally, someone not party to the sentence, and he said again, 'She said to hang me. Not hang me.'

'Take the prisoner away.'

But Yanson had time to repeat what he had said, with grim determination. 'Not hang me.'

He looked so stupid, with anger written all over his little face,

as he strove vainly to invest it with gravitas, and with his finger still pointing, that even the soldier escorting him broke the rules by speaking to him in a low voice as he walked him away. 'You're a stupid fool, laddie.'

'Not hang me,' Yanson persisted.

'Sorry, chum. You're getting strung up. No time to kick.'

'Hey, that's enough!' cried the other escort, incensed by this. But he gave in and couldn't help adding, 'You went out robbing. Why did you have to take a human life? Now you're going to hang.'

'Any chance of a pardon?' asked the first guard, beginning to feel sorry for Yanson.

'You what? Pardon the likes of 'im? Anyway, that's enough talking.'

But Yanson had already stopped talking. He was locked up in the same cell he had been in for the past month and had got used to, as before he had got used to getting beaten, drinking vodka and looking at the snowy fields with round hillocks like a cemetery. He even felt a surge of happiness when he saw his bed and his window grille, and when they gave him some food - not having eaten anything all day. The only nasty thing was what had gone on in court, but he couldn't think about that, he didn't know how to. Death by hanging was beyond his imagination.

Even though Yanson had been given a death sentence, there were lots of others like him; in that prison he wasn't seen as a special criminal. This meant that the staff talked to him without fear or respect, the way they talked to all the prisoners who hadn't been sentenced to death. It seemed as if his death wasn't really death at all. The head guard, when he heard what the sentence was, spoke as if he was teaching him a lesson.

'Well, brother. They've gone and hung you then!'

'When will they hang me?' asked Yanson cautiously.

The guard gave it a moment's thought. 'Well, brother, it's like this. You're going to have to wait while they gets a party of you together. They won't do it for one - especially one like you. They wants the numbers up.'

‘But when ? ’ Yanson insisted. It didn’t offend him in the slightest that he wasn’t worth hanging on his own, and he didn’t believe it anyway. He thought it was a pretext for delaying the execution and then cancelling it altogether. He felt bucked by this. The uncertain and terrible moment that he couldn’t begin to think about was moving steadily away into the distance, becoming as unlikely as a fairytale, no different from any other death.

‘You go on and on about when,’ said the guard in exasperation (he was a stupid and gloomy old man). ‘It’s not like hanging a dog. You don’t just nip round the back of the shed, and that’s it. Stupid fool, is that what you want?’

‘I don’t want at all!’ Yanson scowled with pleasure. ‘It was her what said to hang me. I don’t want!’

And he gave a little laugh, perhaps for the first time in his life, a jarring, idiotic laugh that was strangely cheerful and enjoyable. Like a goose honking, ‘haw, haw, haw!’ The guard looked at him in amazement, then gave a grim scowl; this absurd display of cheeriness from a man who was due to be executed was an insult to the prison and to execution itself, and it turned them both into something weird. Suddenly, for one moment, a split second, the old guard who had spent all his life in that prison, for whom its laws were the laws of nature, saw that place, and life itself, revealed as a madhouse, with himself, the head guard, as the chief madman.

‘Damn you! Fuck you!’ said the guard. ‘What are you grinning at? You’re not in the pub now.’

‘I don’t want! Haw, haw, haw!’ said Yanson, still laughing.

‘Satan!’ said the head guard, feeling the need to cross himself.

No one could have looked less like Satan than this man with his flabby little face, but there was something in his goosey honking that undermined the sanctity and strength of the prison. Let him go on honking a bit longer and you could see the walls crumbling away and the rusty grilles collapsing, and the chief guard leading the prisoners out through the gate . . . ‘There you are, gentlemen, have a stroll around town, or maybe some of you would like to see the countryside?’ Satan!

But by now Yanson had stopped laughing. He was left with a sly scowl on his face.

‘All right. Watch it, then!’ said the chief, with the vaguest of threats, and off he went, looking back over his shoulder.

All that evening Yanson was calm and you might even say cheerful. He kept on repeating the same phrase under his breath, ‘Not hang me,’ and it was so convincing, so full of wisdom, so incontrovertible, that there was nothing to worry about. His crime was long forgotten, except for the odd pang of regret for not having managed to rape the mistress. Soon he even forgot about that.

Every morning Yanson asked when he was going to be hanged, and every morning the chief gave the same angry response.

‘It’ll come, Satan, just you wait.’ And off he would go as fast as he could before Yanson could burst out laughing again.

And because of these identically repeated words, plus the fact that each day got off to a start, proceeded on its way and came to an end like every other ordinary day, Yanson became totally convinced there wouldn’t be an execution. It didn’t take him long to put the court right out of his mind and for days on end he lay sprawling on his bed, his head full of vague but joyful dreams about the gloomy, snowy fields with their little hillocks, the station bar, and something beyond that, gleaming in the distance. In the jail he was well fed, and quicker than you might think, within only a few days, he had put on weight and begun to strut about the place.

‘By now she would have been in love with me like this,’ he thought, with the mistress in mind, ‘I’m fattened out now, no worse than the master.’

What he did miss was a drink of vodka - a quick drink followed by a mad charge with the horse.

When the terrorists had been arrested, news of them reached the prison, and when Yanson asked his usual question, the chief gave a new response, sharp and unexpected. ‘Won’t be long now.’

His look was calm, and his speech heavy with meaning. ‘Won’t be long now. About a week, I’d say.’

Yanson’s face paled, and his glassy eyes went cloudy as if he was nodding off as he spoke. ‘You’re joking?’

‘You were the one who couldn’t wait, and you’re the joker. We are not allowed jokes. You like joking, but we are not allowed

jokes,' said the chief guard in a lofty tone before walking away.

By the evening Yanson had shrunk down a little. His skin, which had been stretched and temporarily smoothed down, had now shrivelled into a mass of tiny wrinkles, and in some places it looked quite droopy. His eyes had become shrouded with sleep, and his every movement was slow and sluggish, as if each turn of the head, fingermovement or footstep was a complex and cumbersome procedure requiring a lot of careful forethought. At bedtime he lay down on his bunk without closing his eyes, and they stayed like that, open but sleepy, all night long.

'Aha!' said the chief with some satisfaction when he saw him next morning. 'See, me old darlin'. This ain't no pub.'

It was with the satisfied feeling of a scientist whose experiment has come out right again that he scrutinized the condemned man from head to toe. Now things would go the way they should. Satan had been put to shame, the sanctity of the prison and execution had been reestablished, and now there was sympathy, even some genuine pity, in the way that the old man asked his questions.

'Do you want to see anybody? No?'

'What is this "see anybody"?'

'Well, just to say goodbye. Maybe your mother, or a brother?'

'Not hang me,' said Yanson in a soft voice, glancing sideways at the chief guard. 'I don't want.'

The guard took a look at him, and flung up a hand without saying another word.

By evening Yanson was a little calmer. The day had been such an ordinary one, the light from the cloudy winter sky had been so ordinary, the footsteps in the corridor and the animated talk had been so ordinary, and the sour smell of the cabbage soup had been so ordinary and so normal that once again he had ceased to believe in the execution. But as night came on, he began to feel terribly scared. Earlier on Yanson had treated night as nothing more than darkness, a particular period of blackness which you have to sleep through, but now he was aware of its essentially mysterious and ominous character. To avoid believing in death you must see and

hear ordinary things around you: footsteps, voices, light, sour cabbage soup, and now everything was out of the ordinary. This silence and this darkness were in themselves akin to death.

And the more night dragged on, the more terrifying it became. With the naivety of a primitive creature or a child, who thinks all things are possible, Yanson felt like telling the sun to start shining. He begged and entreated the sun to do that, but night went on remorselessly, stretching its black hours out over the earth, and there was no force that could stop it in its course. And this impossibility, which had never before penetrated Yanson's feeble brain with such clarity, filled him with terror; without yet being fully aware of it, he was now sensing the proximity of death, and had placed one dying foot on the first step of the scaffold.

Daylight calmed him down again, but then the night filled him with horror, and things went along like this until the night when he saw sense and admitted the inevitability of death - in three days' time, in the early morning, at sunrise.

He had never thought about what it would be like to die, and he had no image of death, though now he could clearly sense - see and feel - that it had come into his cell to feel its way around and seek him out. And in an effort to save himself, he began running around the cell.

But the cell was so small it seemed to have no acute angles, only obtuse ones, and he kept on being bounced back into the middle. And there was nothing to hide behind. The door was locked, and there was light. He said nothing as his upper body bumped into the wall several times and once banged against the door with a hollow clang.

He crashed into something, and fell to the floor facedown.

It was now that he felt he was in its grasp. And as he lay there on his belly, clinging to the hard surface of the dark and dirty floor, Yanson gave a wail of terror. He lay there yelling at the top of his voice until they came to see to him. And even when they had picked him up, put him back on his bunk and poured cold water over his head, he still refused to open his rigidly closed eyes. When he halfopened one eye, all he saw was light in an empty corner and somebody's boot in the open space, and this set him off wailing

again.

But the cold water began to do its work. He was also helped by the fact that the duty officer was the same old man as before, and he gave him a few medicinal slaps around the head. And this sensation of being alive did manage to dispel death, Yanson did open his eyes, and then he slept soundly through the rest of the night with his brain greatly befogged. He lay on his back with his mouth open and a lot of loud, melodious snoring. And the whites of his eyes shone with the smoothness of a deathly pallor through his partly closed eyelids.

And from now on everything in the world - day and night, footsteps, voices and sour cabbage soup - blurred into a single shock of horror, plunging him into a state of primitive bewilderment beyond comprehension. His feeble mind could not reconcile the two monstrous contradictions: the normality of daylight and cabbage soup versus the idea that tomorrow, or the day after, he was going to die. He thought of nothing, had no sense of time passing; he just stood there facing this contradiction in silent horror, with his brain split in two. And, because his face was its normal colour, neither paler nor redder than usual, he seemed to be at peace. Except that he had stopped eating and didn't sleep a wink. No, he spent the whole night either curled up on a stool, with his legs tucked timorously away, or creeping quietly around the room, with his sleepy eyes darting everywhere. His mouth hung halfopen all the time, as if he was in a permanent state of extreme shock, and before picking up the simplest everyday object, he would give it a close, dullwitted scrutiny and accept it only with great reluctance.

And once he had become like this, the guard and the soldier deputed to watch him through the little grille began to ignore him. His behaviour seemed normal for a condemned man, and the chief guard likened it (without ever having had the experience himself) to the stunning of cattle by the butt of an axe prior to slaughter.

'He's been stunned. From now on until he dies, he won't feel a thing,' he would say, observing him with a seasoned eye. 'Can you hear me, Ivan? Eh? Ivan!'

'Not hang me,' came the lacklustre response from Yanson, again with a drooping jaw.

'If you hadn't murdered somebody, they wouldn't be hanging you,' said the chief guard, still a young man, but an imposing figure with a chestful of medals. 'You did the killing - now you don't want to be hung.'

'You wanted to kill, and get away with it. Stupid as hell, but damned clever.'

'I don't want,' said Yanson.

'All right, my friend. You carry on not wanting. It's up to you,' said the senior man indifferently. 'But you might be better off not talking nonsense, and sorting out your effects. Still things to be done.'

'He hasn't got any. Shirt and trousers, that's it. Oh, plus the fur cap. Quite a dandy with that!'

And so the time passed until Thursday. And then, at midnight on Thursday, a lot of people walked into Yanson's cell, and a gentleman wearing epaulettes spoke to him. 'Right. Get yourself ready. Time to go.'

Yanson, moving at his usual slow and weary pace, got dressed in everything he had, and finished by tying the dirty red scarf around his neck. As he watched him getting dressed, the same gentleman, cigarette in hand, said to somebody, 'Nice warm day, today. Real touch of spring.'

Yanson's tiny eyes were glued up, he was full of sleep and his footsteps dragged so stiffly that the guard spoke to him. 'Come on, get a move on. He's gone to sleep!'

Suddenly Yanson came to a halt. 'I don't want,' he said, weakly.

They grabbed him under the armpits and got him going; he took an obedient step forward, lifting his shoulders. Outside he was assailed by a springtime breath of moist air, and his little nose began to run. Although it was nighttime, the thaw was underway and drops of water cascaded merrily from above, tinkling on the stones below. And as he waited for the policemen to get into the black, unlit carriage, stooping and jingling their swords, Yanson wiped his runny nose lazily with one finger and straightened his badly tied scarf.

4. Us Lads From Oryol

The same regional military court judges that had tried Yanson also sentenced another man to death by hanging, a peasant from Yeléts in the province of Orlov, by the name of Mikhail Golubets, better known as Gypsy Mike, and a Tartar by birth. His latest crime, proven beyond doubt, was the murder of three people in an armed robbery, but his murky career went far back into the mysterious depths of time. There were vague rumours of his implication in any number of other robberies and murders, and he had left behind him in his wake much blood and drunken depravity. He described himself as a villain quite openly and sincerely, though he could also be ironical, as when he claimed allegiance to those who called themselves, using the latest catchphrase, 'expropriators'. Seeing that denial would get him nowhere with his latest crime, he willingly confessed in detail, though when he was asked about his earlier career, he would do no more than bare his teeth, give a little whistle, and say, 'Look for the wind in the fields!'

But when they put him under pressure, Gypsy Mike struck an attitude of stolid and dignified concentration.

'Us lads from Oryol, we're all nutcases,' he would say in thoughtfully measured tones. 'Oryol lads is best. We can outthieve the rest . . . We're fathers and mothers - of all thieving brothers. But thieves from Yeléts - is the finest and best! Can't say fairer than that.'

He was called Gypsy Mike because of the way he looked and his constant thieving. He was ridiculously darkhaired and skinny, with spots of yellow sunburn on his high Tartar cheekbones; he had the look of a horse when he rolled the whites of his eyes, and he galloped around everywhere. His eyes didn't settle easily, but when they did, they were terrifyingly direct and eager to take things in; objects that he had glanced at seemed to lose something, transferring part of themselves to him and taking on a different character. A cigarette that had been no more than looked at by him became as repellent and disgusting to pick up as one that had been

in somebody's mouth. A kind of permanent fretfulness lived inside him, twisting him like braided rope or sending him flying all over the place in a shower of whirling sparks. Even when he needed water, he drank it like a horse, almost by the bucketful.

In court he answered all questions by jumping to his feet and giving a straight response in the tersest terms.

'Right!'

Sometimes he added emphasis: 'Rrright!'

And once, quite unexpectedly, when the subject had moved on, he jumped up and addressed the president.

'Permission to whistle, sir!'

'What on earth for?' said the judge in surprise.

'They was giving evidence how I used to signal to my mates. This is how. Highly interesting.'

The president had his doubts, but permission was given. Gypsy Mike lost no time in sticking four fingers in his mouth, two from each hand, and rolling his eyes in a frenzied glare. The lifeless atmosphere of the courtroom was pierced by a true wildman banditwhistle fit to deafen a horse, make it rear up on its haunches, and drain the colour from any human face. The desperate agony of a man being murdered, the savage thrill of a killer, a terrible pang of foreboding, a call for help, the darkness of foul weather in an autumn night, a sense of solitude - all of these things were there, in that shrieking, wailing sound, which belonged to neither man nor beast.

The president called out, and waved at Gypsy Mike, who obediently stopped his whistling. And like a solo singer who has triumphantly performed a difficult operatic aria which was always going to succeed, he took his seat, wiped his wet fingers down his smock and regarded his audience with an air of satisfaction.

'True villain!' said one of the judges, rubbing an ear.

But the other one, with a wide Russian beard and eyes no less Tartarlike than those of the defendant, cast a dreamy look into space above the gypsy's head, then gave a grin and a different response: 'That really was most interesting.'

And with easy hearts, without pity or any feelings of remorse, the judges sentenced Gypsy Mike to death.

‘Right!’ said Gypsy Mike when the sentence had been pronounced. ‘Out in the open on a crossbeam. That’s right!’

And, turning to his escort, he said with a young blade’s bravado, ‘Right. Let’s go, miseryguts. Hang onto your gun, or I’ll have it!’

The soldier glared, keeping a wary eye on him, exchanged glances with his comrade and fingered the bolt on his gun.

His opposite number did the same. And all the way back to the prison the soldiers seemed to be walking on air; totally absorbed in the criminal, they couldn’t feel the ground under their feet, and they were oblivious to the passage of time or any sense of themselves.

Like Yanson, Gypsy Mike was to spend seventeen days in prison before execution. All seventeen passed so quickly - like a single day - in an inextinguishable dream of escape, freedom and life. The restless spirit that had taken over Gypsy Mike’s personality was now contained within walls, grilles and a blank window, with nothing visible, and it had turned all its furious energy in on itself, burning his ideas away to nothing, like coals scattered across the floor. It was as if he was in a drunken stupor: a cloud of brilliant but halfformed images swarmed through his mind, jostling and blurring as they whirled past in a dazzling, unstoppable rush, all of them going in the same direction - towards escape, freedom and life. Some days Gypsy Mike would flare his nostrils like a horse and spend hours sniffing the air, imagining the smell of hemp and something burning with colourless, acrid smoke; sometimes he would spin around the cell like a top, feeling along the walls and tiptapping with a finger, his eyes measuring distances, studying the ceiling, sawing through the bars. His jumpy behaviour worried the soldier on peephole duty, and several times, in despair, he threatened to shoot Gypsy Mike, who rounded on him with filthy words and jeering taunts. All this wrangling was settled peacefully only because it gradually degenerated into the kind of inoffensive roughstuff between peasants in which any shooting would have been absurd and impossible.

Gypsy Mike got through his nights fast asleep, almost without stirring, in an ongoing state of dynamic immobility like a spring temporarily uncoiled. But once he was up on his feet he resumed the business of spinning around, weighing things up and groping about. His hands were invariably dry and hot, but sometimes his heart felt a flood of cold, as if an unmelting block of ice had been packed into his chest, giving him the dry shivers all over his body. At times like this, Gypsy Mike, already swarthy, turned black and took on the darkbluish hue of castiron. And he formed a strange habit: as if he had eaten something excessively sweet and indigestible, he began licking his lips all the time, champing and spewing out the flow of saliva through his clenched teeth all over the floor. And he didn't finish what he was trying to say; his thoughts flashed past so quickly that his tongue couldn't keep up with them.

One afternoon the prison chief dropped in on him, accompanied by an escort. He took one look at the floor covered in spit, and spoke in gloomy tones. 'Huh. You've made a mess here.'

Gypsy Mike was quick to respond. 'You've messed up the whole world, and I've said nothing. What have you skulked in here for?'

The chief's gloomy tone did not change as he offered him the job of executioner.

Gypsy Mike grinned and laughed at him. 'Haven't you got one? Bloody marvellous! You do it. Ha, ha, ha! You've got necks and ropes, and nobody to do the hanging? By God, that's bloody marvellous!'

'You wouldn't have to die.'

'You bet I wouldn't. Dead men don't hang nobody. Stupid fool.'

'What about it? No difference to you one way or the other.'

'Anyway, how do you lot go about hanging people? I bet you smothers 'em on the quiet.'

'No, we do it to music,' snarled the chief.

'Stupid fool, course you got to have music. Like this?' And he let go with a rollicking song.

'Seem to have made your mind up,' said the chief. 'What's it to

be? Let's have some sense out of you.'

Gypsy gave a grin. 'Hang on a minute! Go away, and come back. Then I'll tell you.'

At this point a new idea burst into the maelstrom of brilliant, though halfformed and dispiriting images that had flooded through Gypsy Mike's mind. Wouldn't it be nice to be an executioner dressed in a red shirt? He could see a vivid picture: a square thronged with people, a high scaffold and himself, Gypsy Mike, strolling up and down, complete with red shirt and axe. The sun cast its light on every head, giving the axe a cheerful glint, and radiating such richness and good cheer that even those who were having their heads chopped off had a smile on their faces. Just behind the people you could see carts and horses' muzzles - peasants in from the countryside - and, further away, the fields.

'Pfwah!' snorted the gypsy, slobbering and licking at his lips as he gobbled out a new stream of saliva.

But suddenly he felt as if a fur hat had been pulled over his head and yanked down right over his mouth. His eyes were going dim, he could hardly breathe and he felt that flood of cold in his heart, as if an unmelting block of ice had been packed into his chest, giving him the dry shivers again.

The chief called in a couple more times, but Gypsy Mike just grinned at him and said, 'Too soon. Come back again.'

Then, eventually, the chief flashed open the peephole and shouted in. 'You've had it now, dumbcluck! Got somebody else.'

'Sod you. You hang 'em!' snapped the gypsy. And he put the idea of executing people out of his mind.

But towards the end, with the execution getting nearer, the rushing flood of broken images became too much to bear. The gypsy wanted to stop, he wanted to plant his feet wide apart and stop there, but the swirling maelstrom swept him away and, with everything swimming past, he had nothing to hold onto. And he was too upset to get any sleep; his dreams were different now, sharpened and bulking like coloured wooden blocks, still hurtling past faster than he could think. This was no longer a flow of water but a measureless torrent descending from a measureless height, swirling its way through the visible world of colour. When he had

been free, Gypsy Mike had sported rather stylish moustaches and no other facial hair, but now he had grown a short, black, prickly beard which gave him a terrifyingly crazy look. Sometimes he would go berserk, wheeling right around his room without rhyme or reason, but still feeling his way over the roughcast walls. And he still drank his water like a horse.

One evening, when the lights had been put on, he got down on all fours in midcell, and came out with a quavering howl like a wolf. As he did so, he looked deadly serious, as if his howling was a thing of vital importance. He would take in a good chestful of air and release it slowly in a long drawnout quavering howl. He did this with his eyes screwed up tight and listening carefully to what was coming out. Even the trembling quality of his voice seemed rather calculated, and he seemed not to be making a senseless noise, but to be carefully composing every note of his wild animal howl and filling it with unspeakable terror and anguish.

Then, suddenly, he stopped howling and stayed where he was on all fours, without making another sound. Minutes passed, and then he started mumbling, breathing his words into the ground. 'My little chickens, lovely sweeties . . . My little chickens, lovely sweeties, let me off . . . Little chickens! Lovely sweeties!...

And again he seemed to be listening carefully to the sounds as they came out. Saying a word and listening to it.

Then he jumped up and spent the next hour, without stopping for a breather, cursing and swearing in the filthiest language. 'Aargh! You lousy lot!' he yelled out, rolling his bloodshot eyes. 'Hanging's hanging, but not like . . . Aargh! You lousy lot!'

And the soldier, chalkwhite and weeping with anguish and terror, banged on the door with his riflebarrel and screamed out helplessly. 'I'll shoot! By God, I'll shoot. Hear me?'

But he didn't dare shoot. Condemned prisoners were never shot at, unless there was a proper riot going on. Gypsy Mike gnashed his teeth and carried on swearing and spewing. His human brain, suddenly stuck on a razorsharp lifeanddeath borderline, was crumbling like a lump of driedout, weathering clay.

When they turned up in his cell during the night to take Gypsy Mike off to be executed, he shook himself and seemed to come back

to life. He had a sweeter taste in his mouth and an unstoppable flow of saliva had welled up, but his cheeks took on a pinker tinge and his eyes sparkled with some of their old slyness and wild cunning. As he got dressed, he spoke to the official. 'Who's doin' the 'angin'? That new bloke? Won't have got his hand in yet, will 'e?'

'No need to worry about that,' said the official in a dry voice.

'Course I'm worried, your honour. It's me they're hangin', not you. Got plenty of government soap to hang us with?'

'All right. All right. That's enough from you.'

'You can see who's eaten all the soap,' said the gypsy to the superintendent. 'Look at his face. All shiny!'

'That's enough!'

'Give it plenty of soap!'

Gypsy Mike laughed at them, but the sweet taste in his mouth was building up, and suddenly his legs went all funny and numb. Still, he managed to call out as they walked outside. 'Carriage, please, for the Count of Bengal!'

5. Kiss And Keep Quiet

The sentence passed on the five terrorists was pronounced in its final form and ratified on the same day. The condemned prisoners were not told when the execution would take place, but, judging by the way things usually went, they knew they would be hanged that night, or the next night at the latest. And when a meeting with relatives was proposed for the following day, Thursday, they knew that the execution was scheduled for Friday morning at dawn.

Tanya Kovalchuk had no relatives, and any that she did have lived miles away in the sticks, somewhere in Little Russia; they would be unlikely to know about the trial or the impending execution. Relatives were unthinkable for the unidentified Musya and Werner, which meant that only two of them, Sergey Golovin and Vassily Kashirin, were due for a family meeting. And both of them anticipated that gettogether with a mixture of anguish and dread, though they could not refuse the old folk a final conversation and one last kiss.

Sergey Golovin was especially anguished by the prospect of meeting them. He loved his mother and father very dearly, he had spent time with them only recently, and now he was horrified that it had come to this. Execution itself, such an outrageous perversion with its demented potential to crush the human brain, was easier for his imagination to assimilate, and it seemed less terrifying, than those few short, incomprehensible minutes, which seemed to stand beyond time, beyond life itself. How to look at them, what to think, what to say - was more than his human brain could grasp. The simplest, everyday things - taking them by the hand, kissing them, saying, 'Hello, Dad . . .' - seemed unbelievably horrible because of the monstrous inhumanity, craziness and falsity of it all.

After being sentenced, the condemned prisoners were not sent together to one cell as Kovalchuk had assumed, but were returned to solitary confinement, and all morning, right up to eleven o'clock, when his parents arrived, Sergey Golovin walked furiously up and down his cell, plucking at his little beard, scowling pathetically and

muttering to himself. Now and then he would stop in midstride, take in a chestful of air and blow it back out like someone who has been too long underwater. But he was so fit, so full of life and youth, that even in these moments of the utmost cruelty and suffering the blood surged strongly under his skin, giving his cheeks a rosy glow, and his blue eyes were radiant with innocence.

However, things turned out much better than expected for Sergey. First into the meeting room was Nikolay Sergeyevich Golovin, a retired colonel. He was white all over - face, beard, hair and hands - like a marble statue in men's clothing, and he was wearing the same old short coat, showing its age a bit but nicely cleaned, smelling of benzine and sporting some nice new transverse epaulettes. He marched in decisively with the firm tread of a military man, extended a dry white hand and spoke in a loud voice. 'Hello, Sergey.'

He was followed by Sergey's mother, mincing in with an awkward smile on her face. But she too shook hands and spoke in a loud voice. 'Hello, darling.'

She kissed him on the lips and sat down without saying anything more. She had not rushed in, cried out or made any kind of scene, as Sergey had feared. She had simply kissed him and sat down. And she had even begun to straighten her black silk dress with trembling hands.

What Sergey did not know was that all the previous night the colonel had locked himself away in his small study, summoned all his strength and worked on this ritual occasion. 'We must lighten our son's burden, not add to it in his last minutes' was the colonel's firm conclusion, and he carefully weighed every possible phrase, every gesture, that might come into tomorrow's conversation. But he kept losing his way, forgetting the few bits he had managed to prepare, and he wept bitter tears as he sat there tucked into a corner of the oilcloth divan. And in the morning he outlined for his wife's benefit how they were to conduct themselves at the meeting.

'The main thing is - kiss and keep quiet,' was his instruction. 'You can say something a bit later on, but when you kiss him you mustn't say anything. Don't speak when you've just kissed him. Do you understand? If you do, it will come out all wrong.'

‘Yes, Nikolay.’

‘And don’t cry. For God’s sake, don’t start crying. You’ll be the death of him if you do, woman!’

‘Why are you crying then?’

‘You’d bring anybody to tears. But you mustn’t cry. Do you hear what I say?’

‘You’d bring anybody to tears. But you mustn’t cry. Do you hear what I say?’

He had intended to run through his instructions once again in the cab, but he forgot. So there they had been, driving along in silence, two bent figures, grey and old both of them, lost in thought, while the city was enjoying itself in noisy celebrations. It was Shrovetide and everyone was out on the noisy streets.

Now, they had sat down. The colonel assumed his wellrehearsed attitude, with his right hand tucked under his coat lapel. Sergey had been sitting down for no more than a moment when he caught sight of his mother’s wrinkled face close to and leapt up.

‘Don’t get up, Seryozha, darling,’ his mother implored.

‘Sit down, Sergey,’ said his father.

None of them spoke. His mother still had an awkward smile on her face. ‘We did what we could to help you, Seryozha, darling.’

‘Didn’t do any good, Mamma . . .’

The colonel’s response was firm. ‘We had to do it, Sergey, so you wouldn’t think your parents had abandoned you.’

There was another short silence. They were too scared to pronounce any word; it was as if every word on their tongues lost its meaning, and there was only one meaning: death. Sergey took a look at his father’s nicely cleaned coat, still smelling of benzine, and thought. ‘There’s no servant now, so he must have cleaned it himself. Why did I never notice him cleaning that coat before? Must have done it early morning.’ Then suddenly he asked a question. ‘How’s my sister getting on? Is she all right?’

‘Ninotchka doesn’t know.’ His mother was quick to respond.

But the colonel cut in sharply. 'What's the point in lying about it? She read about it in the papers, poor girl. Let Sergey know that we all . . . his nearest and dearest . . . at the right time . . . were thinking about . . .'

He stopped, unable to carry on. Suddenly his wife's face crumpled all at once, swimming with tears, convulsing, wild and wet. Her lacklustre eyes darted around crazily; her breathing became more hurried, rushed and noisy.

'Se— Ser— Se— Se— ' she kept on repeating without moving her lips. 'Se— '

'Mamma!'

The colonel took a step forward and, shaking all over in every fold of his coat and every line on his face, unaware of how terrifying he looked in his deathly whiteness and desperately agonizing determination, spoke to his wife. 'Stop that! Stop tormenting him! Don't! Don't torment him! He's going to die! Don't torment him!'

She had been intimidated into silence, but he was still shaking his clenched fists in front of his chest, striving for selfcontrol. 'Don't torment him!'

Then he stepped back, tucked a trembling hand under his coat lapel, and with an expression of grimly forced calm, he asked a question, whitelipped. 'When?'

'Tomorrow morning,' replied Sergey, equally whitelipped.

His mother looked down, her lips champing; she seemed not to be taking anything in.

Still champing, she seemed to be pouring out words that were primitive and unnatural. 'Ninotchka sends you a kiss, Seryozhenka.'

'Send one back from me,' said Sergey.

'Right. And the Khvostovs want to be remembered to you.'

'Who? Oh, yes, the Khvostovs.'

The colonel cut across them. 'Well, we'd better be off. On your feet, Mother. It's time.'

The two of them assisted the sagging woman to her feet.

‘Say goodbye,’ ordered the colonel. ‘Sign of the Cross.’

She did what she was told. But as she crossed herself and gave her son the lightest of kisses, she shook her head and her speech became incoherent. ‘No, not like that. No, no. Not like that. No, no. Me . . . after . . . What can I say? No, not like that.’

‘Goodbye, Sergey,’ said his father.

They shook hands, and held each other in a close but shortlived embrace.

‘You . . .’ began Sergey.

‘What?’ snapped his father.

‘No, not like that. No, no. Not like that. What can I say?’ His mother was still rambling and shaking her head. She had managed to get herself seated again, and she was shaking all over.

‘You . . .’ Sergey began again.

Suddenly his face was that of a pitiful child; it crumpled, and his eyes flooded with tears. Through their sparkling mist he could see his father’s white face close to, with tears like his own.

‘You’re a noble man, Father.’

‘What? What are you saying?’ said the colonel, horrified.

And suddenly, like a broken man, he let his head fall across his son’s shoulder. He had once been taller than Sergey, but now he had shrunk down to a smaller height, and his dry, fluffy head lay like a little white ball on his son’s shoulder. And they were both silently but warmly embracing; Sergey kissed the fluffy white hair, his father the prison smock.

What about *me* ? ’ came a sudden loud voice.

They turned to look. Sergey’s mother was standing there with her head thrown back, watching in fury, almost hatred.

‘What is it, Mother?’ cried the colonel.

‘What about *me* ?’ she said, shaking her head, with the intensity of a demented mind. ‘You can kiss goodbye, but what about *me* ? It’s all right for you *men* . But *what about me* ? Eh?’

‘Mamma, darling!’ Sergey threw himself at her.

What followed cannot and need not be conveyed.

The colonel's last words were: 'I give you my blessing as you go to your death, Seryozha. Die with courage, an officer's death.'

Then they left. Left, but didn't leave. They stayed on,

stood around, spoke - then they were gone. Mamma had been sitting there, Papa had been there, standing, and suddenly, somehow, they were gone. Back in his cell, Sergey lay down on his bunk, turned to face the wall to shield himself from the guards, and wept and wept. Then, weary from weeping, he fell into a deep sleep.

Only one person, his mother, came to see Vassily Kashirin; his father hadn't wanted to come. When his mother arrived, Vassily was pacing up and down his room, shivering with cold even though it was a warm day, almost hot. Their conversation was brief and grim.

'You shouldn't have come, Mamma darling. It's an ordeal for you and for me.'

'Why, Vasya? Why did you do it? God in heaven!'

The old woman broke down in tears, wiping them away with the fringe of black wool on her scarf.

Doing what he and his brothers always did, he bawled at his mother, who was completely at a loss, and then suddenly stopped, shivering with cold, and snapped at her angrily. 'Look at this! I knew it! Mamma, you just don't understand - anything at all!'

'All right. All right. What's wrong with you? Are you cold?'

'Yes,' he said, cutting in, and off he went pacing around the room, scowling angrily at her in sideways glances.

'Happen you've caught cold?'

'Mamma, it's got nothing to do with catching cold. It's . . .' And he gave up on her with a wave of despair.

The old woman was intending to say, 'And our old man wants pancakes on Monday,' but she lost her nerve and wailed at him. 'It's our son, I said. You must come . . . Forgive him his sins . . . Old goat wouldn't listen . . .'

‘To hell with him. He’s no father of mine. Been a swine all his life, and he still is!’

‘Vasya, darling, he is your father!’ The old woman recoiled in disapproval.

‘My father, huh!’

‘Your own father!’

‘Oh yes?’

It was all frantic and absurd. Death lay ahead, yet this trivial, unnecessary, futile bit of nonsense was building up, and their words were crunching like empty nutshells underfoot. Almost in tears - tears of anguish caused by the perpetual failure to communicate that had walled him off throughout his life from friends and family and even now, in the hour of his death itself, stared him in the face with all its meanness and stupidity - Vassily cried out. ‘Can’t you see they’re going to hang me? *Hang* me. Can you see it, yes or no? Hang me!’

‘Well, if you hadn’t done things to people, maybe they wouldn’t ...’

‘For the love of God! What are you on about? Wild animals don’t behave like this. Am I your son, or *not*?’

He burst into tears and sat down in one corner. The old lady wept too, in her own corner. Incapable of joining for a single minute in a bond of love and setting that against the horror of impending death, they wept cold tears of solitude that brought no warmth to the heart.

His mother spoke. ‘You’re asking me whether I’m a mother or not. You’re blaming me. But these last few days I’ve gone grey with worry. I’m an old woman now. And you keep on blaming me.’

‘All right, Mamma. It’s all right. I’m sorry. It’s time you went. Kiss my brothers for me.’

‘Am I really not a mother to you? Don’t I show any pity?’

Then at last she was gone. She had walked away weeping bitterly, wiping her eyes on the fringes of her scarf, and not seeing where she was going. And the further she got from the prison, the more she wept her scalding tears. She turned around and walked

back towards the prison, only to get completely lost in the town where she had been born, raised and lived through to old age. She fetched up in a kind of rundown patch of garden under a few old trees with snappedoff branches, where she sat down on a bench wet from the thaw. And suddenly it came to her: they were going to hang him tomorrow.

The old woman leapt to her feet with every intention of running away, but suddenly her head spun violently and she collapsed. The little path was slippery, swimming with ice and, try as she might, she couldn't get to her feet. She kept on spinning round, and when she tried to raise herself on her elbows and knees, she slipped back down on her side. The black scarf slithered off her head, exposing a bald patch among the dirtygrey hair at the back. For some reason she felt as if she was at a wedding, enjoying the celebrations - her son was getting married. She had had more than a glass or two of wine and was getting very drunk.

'No more,' she cried, turning it away. 'For the love of God, I can't take any more.' Her head was reeling as she slithered over the thin crust of ice covering the snow, but still it came - more and more wine, poured out for her.

And her heart began to ache from the drunken laughter, the rich spread of food and the crazy dancing - but they went on pouring out more wine for her. More and more wine.

6. The Hours Fly By

In the fortress where the condemned terrorists were imprisoned, there was a belltower with an ancient clock. Every hour, every halfhour, every quarter of an hour, a chime rang out in a long, slow toll, a sound of sadness high overhead that gradually ebbed away, like the distant, plaintive call of passing birds. During the day this strange sad music was lost in the sounds of the wide and bustling city street that ran past the fortress. Trams rattled up and down, horses clipclopped, automobiles bounced and swooped, announcing their presence well in advance. It was Shrovetide, and some peasant drivers had come in specially from the city outskirts in carnival mood, and the little bells strung around the necks of their diminutive horses filled the air with a steady jingle. And there was a murmur of speaking voices, the slightly intoxicated and cheery tones of people on holiday. The discordant bustle was in tune with the early spring thaw with its dirty puddles on the pavements and the trees all around the square that had gone black overnight. A warm breeze wafted in from the sea in wide, wet flurries. It was almost as if the watching eye could observe tiny particles of fresh air being borne away in a cloud of goodwill, off into the freedom of infinite distance, laughing as they went.

At night the street lapsed into repose under the lonely glow of large electric suns. Now the huge fortress, its flat walls showing no spark of light, withdrew steadily into darkness and quietude, cutting itself off beyond a cordon of silence and stillness from the living and everactive city. At this time the chiming asserted itself again, its weird, unearthly tune slowly and sadly proceeding overhead from birth to death. It was born and reborn, its false message for the ears ringing out in soft and sombre tones and a dying fall, only to ring out anew. It was like big, limpid droplets of glass tinkling out a muted chime as they fell from ineffable heights into a metal bowl filled with hours and minutes. Or like birds of passage flying by.

By day and by night this chime was the only sound to penetrate

the separate cells where the condemned criminals were held in solitary confinement. It came in through the roof and through the thick stone walls, shivering the silence, and it went away imperceptibly, only to return no less imperceptibly. Sometimes they didn't hear it, and forgot about it; sometimes they waited for it in despair, living from chime to chime, no longer trusting the silence. Only the most serious criminals were assigned to this prison, which lived by its own rules - strict, harsh rules, as rough as a corner wall of the fortress itself - and if there could be nobility in a ruthless regime, it was the nobility of dead silence, hollow and soundlessly solemn, picking up whispers and the slightest breath.

And amidst this solemn silence, disrupted only by a lugubrious chime marking the fleeting minutes, five people - two women and three men - cut off from every living thing, awaited the onset of night, dawn and execution, each preparing for it in his or her own way.

7. There Is No Death

Tanya Kovalchuk behaved as she had done throughout her whole life in thinking only of other people and never about herself; here and now, suffering only on behalf of the others, she was most upset. She could imagine imminent death presenting itself as an agonizing reality for Seryozha Golovin, for Musya and the rest of them, but it did not seem to concern her at all.

And, as if to reward herself for her own muchneeded selfcontrol in court, she now wept for hours on end, in the way you would expect from old women who have known much sorrow, or young ones full of compassion, people of exceptional kindness. And the idea that Seryozha might not get his tobacco, or Werner might be deprived of his strong tea, together with the thought of them all inevitably dying, seemed to cause her more anguish than the idea of execution itself. Execution is something inexorable, even incidental, not worth thinking about, but for a man in prison, waiting for execution, the loss of his tobacco is intolerable. She started to reminisce, running through lovely details of their lives together, and she died a thousand deaths, terrified by the idea of Seryozha meeting his parents.

It was for Musya that she felt sorriest of all. For some time now she had been under the impression that Musya was in love with Werner, and although there was no truth in this, Tanya had persisted in dreaming up something nice and bright for the two of them. When they were still free, Musya had worn a little silver ring decorated with a skull and crossbones within a crown of thorns. Tanya Kovalchuk had often looked at this ring with an aching heart, seeing it as a symbol of doom, and she had begged Musya, half jokingly, half seriously, to take it off.

‘Give it to me,’ she had begged.

‘No, Tanya, I’m not doing that. You’ll soon have a different kind of ring on your finger.’

For some reason the others in their turn had assumed she was

bound to get married very soon, and this annoyed her because she had no desire for a husband. And so, as she recalled that halfhumorous banter with Musya, and the fact that she was now definitely doomed, she found herself choking on tears of motherly compassion. And every time the clock chimed, she looked up with a tearstained face and listened to it, wondering how the others were reacting in their cells to the steadily insistent summons of death.

But Musya herself felt happy.

With her hands behind her back, tucked into the illfitting prison smock that made her look rather odd, like a man or a young lad dressed in someone else's clothes, she paced the floor, up and down, tirelessly. The sleeves of the smock were too long for her, and she had rolled them up, with her thin, scrawny arms, almost those of a child, poking out from gaping holes like the stalks of flowers sticking out of a cheap and dirty old pot. The rough material had been rubbing and chafing her delicate white neck, and from time to time she would reach up with both hands to free her throat and finger the sore places on her livid skin.

Musya paced the floor, to and fro, her features flushing with the effort of vindicating herself in the eyes of the world. She wanted vindication because she was only a slip of a girl with nothing special about her, nothing heroic, not much in the way of achievement, and yet she was going to be subjected to the same kind of gloriously honourable death visited upon true heroes and martyrs before her time. With her unshakeable faith in human kindness, compassion and love, she could imagine people worrying about her at this moment, suffering with pain and pity, and the shame of it flooded her face red. It was as if she was doing something thoroughly disgraceful by going to the scaffold.

At the last meeting with the defence lawyer, she had asked him to get some poison for her, but she had thought better of it: what might he and the others think - that she was showing off or chickening out, and instead of dying a quiet, inconspicuous death she was making a song and dance about it? So she added hastily, 'No, no, don't bother.'

Now there was only one thing she wanted: to make people understand that she was not being at all heroic, that dying isn't all that terrible and people shouldn't feel sorry or worry about her. To

let them see that it wasn't her fault they were making such a meal of putting her to death like that when she was so young and insignificant.

Like someone charged with a real offence, Musya was looking for exoneration, for anything at all that would enhance her sacrifice and give it real value. This was her line of thinking: 'Yes, I'm still young and I might have lived a long life, but still . . .'

It was like a candle fading in the bright light of the rising sun: her young age and life itself came out dark and dismal against the glorious radiance about to shine upon her modest head. There was no exoneration.

But what about that special spirit within her - limitless love, limitless readiness to take on big things, an unlimited capacity for selflessness? It really wasn't her fault she had not been given the opportunity to do everything she had wanted and intended to do - that she had been killed on the temple threshold, at the foot of the sacrificial altar.

But if that's how things go, if a person is to be judged not by what he has done, but by what he intended to do, well then . . . then she was worthy of a martyr's crown.

'Am I?' thought Musya sheepishly. 'Am I really worthy of that? Worthy enough for people to weep and grieve over me when I am so small and insignificant?'

And a feeling of indescribable joy came over her. There was no doubt about it, not a moment's hesitation; she had been taken to their bosom, she had every right to stand alongside those noble souls who from time immemorial had attained the highest heaven by going to the stake, suffering under torture and submitting to execution. This was peace, resplendent and restful, a gentle glow of infinite happiness. It was as if she had already gone from the earth, soaring bodiless into the sunshine realm of truth and life.

'So that's death, is it? How can you call it death?' thought Musya in her blissful state.

And if all the world's scientists, philosophers and executioners had come together in her cell and laid before her their books, scalpels, axes and nooses to demonstrate that death exists, that man dies and gets killed, and that there is no immortality - she would

have been bemused. What do you mean there is no immortality, when here she is, now, immortal? What price immortality, what price death, when, here and now, she is already dead and already immortal, as alive in death as she has been alive in life?

And if they had carried a foulstinking coffin into her cell, containing her own decomposing body, and said, 'Look, that's you,' she would have taken one glance and told them, 'No, that's not me.'

And if they had tried to show her the menacing sight of decomposition, and scare into believing it was her - *really her!* - Musya would have responded with a smile, and said, 'No. You *think* that is me, but it isn't. I'm the person you are talking to. How could I be *that* ? '

'No, but you are going to die, and that's what you'll become.'

'No. I'm not going to die.'

'You're going to be executed. Look, there's the noose.'

'I'm going to be executed, but I shan't die. How can I die when I'm already immortal, here and now?'

And the scientists, philosophers and executioners would step back, and say in quavering tones, 'Do not touch this place. It is holy ground.'

What did Musya have in mind? Many things - for her the thread of life, far from being broken by death, would go on spinning out smoothly and evenly. She thought of her comrades, both the faraway people who would be painfully hurt by their execution and those close to her who would mount the same scaffold. She was taken aback by Vassily's terrible fear - he had always been so brave, even enjoying a joke with death. Take that Tuesday morning when they were tying the explosives onto their belts which would blow them to pieces in a few hours' time. Tanya Kovalchuk's hands were shaking so much from anxiety that she had to be taken away, but Vassily was in a jokey mood, clowning about and spinning round without a care in the world, and Werner had to take him to task: 'Don't mess about with death.'

So what was he now so afraid of?

But this incomprehensible fear was so alien to Musya's spirit that she soon stopped worrying about him and trying to fathom its

cause. Suddenly she felt a sharp urge to see Seryozha Golovin and have a laugh with him. After a few moments' thought, she felt an even more desperate urge to see Werner and chew the fat with him. And, imagining that Werner was walking alongside her with his measured stride and his heels digging into the ground, Musya spoke to him. 'No, Werner, my dear, that's nonsense. It doesn't matter whether you killed N.N. or not. You're a clever man, but this is like one of your games of chess. You take one piece, then another, and eventually you win. The only thing that matters is that you and I are ready to die. Can't you see that? Those gentlemen, what do they think? That there's nothing more horrible than death? They have invented death, they're scared of it, and they want us to be scared. I'll tell you what I'd like to do - walk out on my own with a Browning in front of a whole regiment and shoot at them all. As long as there are thousands of them and I am alone, I won't kill anybody. That's the only thing - there must be thousands of them. When thousands kill one person, that person is the one who wins. That's how it is, Werner, my dear.'

But this was so clear she felt there was no point in arguing any further. Werner must have seen it himself by now. Or maybe her thoughts simply didn't want to settle in one place - they were like a blithely cruising bird with a view of limitless horizons, and a grasp of infinite space, ultimate depths and the serenity of blue skies, tender and caressing. The clock chimed incessantly, shocking the deadly silence, and her thoughts blended with the lovely harmony of that distant sound, which set them ringing too and turned all her fluid and fleeting impressions into music. For Musya, it was like going for a carriage drive in the tender darkness of the night, down a smooth, wide highway, with the springs rocking gently and the little bells tinkling. All her cares and worries had gone, her weary body had melted away in the darkness, and her serenely sleepy mind formed the brightest of silent images for her to wallow in, revelling in their colours and the perfect rest that came with them. Musya brought to mind her three colleagues, recently hanged; their bright and joyful faces seemed so close to her - closer than anyone still living. She felt like a man looking forward happily in the morning to walking in that evening and greeting old friends at home with a smile upon his lips.

Musya felt very tired from so much walking. She lay down

cautiously on the bunk, and carried on daydreaming with her eyes lightly closed. The clock chimed incessantly, shocking the unbroken silence, and bright images floated softly within its singing bounds. Musya was thinking: 'Is this really death? Heavens, how beautiful it is! Or is it life? I don't know. I really don't know. I shall go on watching and listening.'

For some time now, ever since the first days of incarceration, her hearing had been playing tricks with her. Well attuned to music, it had been whetted by the silence, against which it turned tiny particles of reality - guards walking down the corridor, the chiming of the clock, the wind rustling over the iron roof, a creaking lantern - into musical patterns. To begin with, Musya was afraid of them, and she chased them away like morbid hallucinations, but then she saw that she was fine and there was nothing at all morbid about them. She began to relax and give in to them. And now, suddenly, she could definitely make out the clear strains of military music. She opened her eyes in astonishment and looked up. It was night outside, and the clock was chiming. That's it again, she thought calmly, and closed her eyes. The moment they were closed, the music came again - clearly audible music from around the corner, with soldiers, a whole regiment, marching up the righthand side and going past her window. Their feet were beating out the time on the frozen ground - left, right, left, right - and you could even hear the creaking of a leather boot now and then, or a foot slipping somewhere and then picking up its stride. Nearer and nearer came the music, something completely unfamiliar - but a loud and cheery festival march. Some celebration was clearly underway in the fortress.

Now the band was outside her window, and the whole cell was filled with happy sounds and cheerful harmonies in different registers. One big brass instrument was painfully out, lagging behind the beat one minute, then ridiculously galloping ahead. Musya could see the diminutive soldier playing this instrument, and the effort on his face made her laugh.

They're going now. Their steps trail away - left, right, left, right. From far away the music sounds even better, jollier.

One or two departing false notes from the cheerily booming brass, and they've gone. And now the clock chimes again from the

belltower, with its slow, sad tones barely troubling the stillness.

‘They’ve gone,’ thought Musya with a touch of regret. She misses the cheery, funny sounds, now they are lost. She even misses the lost soldiers, because those men with their squeaky boots, struggling so hard with their brass instruments, are not the same people, they are a completely different lot from the ones she wanted to shoot at with her Browning.

‘Please come back,’ she begged plaintively. And back they came. Here they are, bending over her, enveloping her in a limpid cloud, raising her up to where birds of passage soar on high, calling out like town criers. They swoop right and left, up and down, calling out like towncriers. They voice their cries, their proclamations, announcing their flight from afar. They spread their wings wide open, the darkness bears them up like the daylight, and the swell of their breasts, scything the air, radiates a blue reflection of the resplendent city below. Her heartbeat slows to a steady pace; her breathing is now gentle and easy. She is falling asleep. Her face is weary and pale, there are circles under her eyes, and her young girl’s arms look skinny and emaciated. There is a smile on her lips. Tomorrow at sunrise this human face will be contorted into an inhuman grimace, the brain will be clogged with thickened blood and glassy eyes will bulge from their sockets - but today she sleeps in peace, smiling in her splendid immortality.

Musya is asleep.

And prisonlife goes on, a life of deafness and hearing, of blindness and sight, a kind of unending angst. Someone, somewhere, is walking about. Someone, somewhere, is whispering. Somewhere, someone rattles a gun. Was that a scream? Maybe not - just a noise in the stillness.

The peephole in the door opens noiselessly. A dark, whiskered face appears in the dark aperture, stares in at Musya, watching her for some time in amazement, and disappears as softly as it came.

The chimes ring out with agonizing slowness, as if the weary hours are climbing the steep slope to midnight, and the upward movement gets heavier and harder. Then they slip and slide back down, moaning, only to crawl up again, agonizingly, towards their black summit.

Someone, somewhere, is walking about. Someone, somewhere, is whispering. And now horses are being harnessed to black carriages which carry no lights.

8. Death Exists. So Does Life

Sergey Golovin had given no thought to death, which had seemed so irrelevant, of no concern to him. He was a fit, strong and buoyant young man, endowed with a happygolucky attitude and sheer joie de vivre that allowed him to cope with any unpleasant or lifethreatening thoughts and feelings by absorbing them into his system quickly and without trace. In the same way that his cuts, wounds and grazes soon healed up, anything painful, wounding his spirit, worked its way out of him and gradually disappeared. And to everything, business or pleasure - photography, cycling or planning terrorism - he brought the same easygoing and lifeaffirming sense of application. Everything in life was good fun, everything in life was important, everything must be done well.

And everything he did was done well; he could manage a sail marvellously, he was very good with a pistol, devoted in friendship and in love, and he had a fanatical belief in one's 'word of honour'. His friends laughed at him; they said that if a police agent, a snout, a notorious spy, swore on his 'word of honour' that he wasn't a spy, Sergey would believe him and shake him by the hand like a friend. If he had a fault, it was only that he fancied himself as a singer, when he had no ear for music: his singing was appalling. He couldn't hold a tune, even in songs of revolution, and he wasn't best pleased when they laughed at him.

'You're all stupid asses. Either that, or I'm one,' he would say to them, looking serious and obviously offended. People would match his serious manner, but they were of one accord, and they came to the same considered opinion: 'You're the ass. You sound like one.'

Yet for this fault of character - as often happens with nice people - he was loved perhaps as much as he was for his virtues.

He was so unafraid of death, so uninterested in it, that before they left Tanya Kovalchuk's flat on the fateful morning, he was the only one who had a good breakfast, putting away two glasses of tea, half full of milk, and a decentsized roll. Then he looked ruefully at

Werner's untouched roll, and said, 'Why don't you eat something? You should. You need building up.'

'Don't feel like it.'

'You're a good trencherman, Seryozha.'

Instead of replying, Sergey burst into song, with his mouth still full. His singing was raucous and tuneless: '*Dark whirling winds swirl overhead . . .*'

After his arrest, he could have been depressed: it had not been done well, they had failed, but now he thought, 'Here's something else that must be done well. We have to die well,' and this cheered him up. And, strange to relate, from the second morning in the fortress, he had started doing exercises prescribed in an extraordinary 'rationalized' programme created by some German by the name of Müller, which had caught his imagination. He would strip naked and, to the amazement and alarm of the watching sentry, he would work his way steadily through all eighteen set exercises. The fact that there was a sentry observing this with obvious surprise, delighted him, as a disciple of the Müller method, and, although he knew there would be no response, he would talk to the eye that was peering in through the little window.

'Don't worry, my friend. It's building me up. You could do with this in your regiment,' he would call out persuasively, keeping it short to avoid frightening anyone, without ever suspecting that the soldier simply thought he was mad.

The fear of death started to come over him bit by bit, in a kind of series of sudden shocks. It was like an uppercut, a fist smashing up into his heart, hard. More like a sharp pain than fear. Then the sensation would be forgotten, only for it to return a few hours later, lasting longer and hurting more every time it came. And it was clearly beginning to take on the rough outline of a ghastly, unbearable terror.

'What - me scared?' thought Sergey. 'Stupid idea!'

It wasn't him being scared, it was his young body, fit and strong, which he had been unable to fool despite the German's physical exercises or any amount of rubbing down with a cold, wet towel. And as it gained strength and freshness from the application of cold water, it suffered all the more unbearably from fleeting

shocks of dread. And it was during the very moments when he experienced a lift of the spirit from sheer *joie de vivre* and bodily strength, in the morning, after a good night's sleep and a stiff workout, that he felt a sharp stab of terror that seemed to come from outside. He took note of this, and thought to himself: 'Don't be stupid, brother Sergey. To make death easier you have to weaken the body, not build it up. Don't be so stupid!'

And he stopped doing the exercises and towelling down. For the benefit of the soldier, he shouted out, by way of explanation and justification: 'I'm packing it in, but don't get me wrong, brother. It is the right thing to do. It's no good for anybody who's going to get hanged. It's still all right for everybody else.'

And it really did seem to make a difference. He also tried eating less to make himself feel weaker, but despite the lack of fresh air and exercise, he couldn't stop feeling hungry. This was difficult to deal with, and he gobbled up everything they put before him. Then he tried something different: before starting his meal he would scrape half the hot food off into a pail. It seemed to help. He began to feel weary and drowsy.

'I'll show you what's what!' he warned his body, gently running saddened fingers over his feeble, rundown muscles. But it wasn't long before his body got used to this new regime, and the dread of death came back. Admittedly the pain wasn't quite as fierce or fiery, but it nagged at him and made him feel sick. 'It's because of all the waiting,' thought Sergey. 'Best thing would be to sleep right through to the hanging.' And he tried that, trying to sleep as long as he could. At first it worked, but soon, either because he had slept too much or for some other reason, he began suffering from insomnia. And along with that came clear, sharp thinking and a longing for life.

'What - me scared? To hell with that for an idea.' He was obsessed with death. 'It's such a pity about life. It's a wonderful thing, whatever the pessimists say about it. What happens when they hang a pessimist? *He* thinks it's a pity about life. A real pity. And what's this - why has my beard grown? For ages and ages it wouldn't grow at all, and now it has. What for?'

And he would shake his head at the sadness of it all, heaving his heart out in great, long sighs. Silence - then a deep, long sigh.

More silence - and another sigh, longer and heavier.

That was how things stood right up to the trial and that last ghastly encounter with the old men. He woke up in his cell acutely aware that everything to do with living was over, and that ahead lay nothing but a few hours of waiting in emptiness, and then death - and it all seemed very strange. He felt as if he had been completely stripped in a most unusual way - stripped not only of his clothes, but also robbed of the sun, the air, sound and light, action and speech. As yet there was no death, but life had gone, already replaced by something new, something impenetrably obscure, either without any meaning or possessed of a meaning that was so profound, so mysterious and inhuman, that it could never be grasped.

‘Hell’s teeth!’ said Sergey in anguished amazement. ‘What is all this? Where do I come into it? What’s left of *me* ? ’

He took stock of himself closely, all over, fascinated by what he saw, from the baggy prison slippers to his own belly sticking out from his prison smock. He walked around his cell with his arms stretched out, still absorbed in himself like a woman trying on a new dress which is too long for her. He willed his head to turn, and it did turn. And this . . . this thing that somehow seemed rather frightening . . . this was *him* , Sergey Golovin, and this is what would cease to be.

And everything had become unreal.

He tried walking around his cell - and walking seemed unreal. He tried sitting down - and sitting seemed unreal. He tried taking a drink of water - and it seemed unreal that he was drinking, swallowing, holding a mug, using fingers, trembling fingers. He choked on the water, and as he cleared his throat and gave a cough, he thought to himself, ‘I’m coughing. It’s not real.’

‘Am I going round the bend, damn it?’ thought Sergey with a chilly feeling. ‘Bloody hell, that’s all I need!’

He rubbed his forehead with one hand, and even that seemed unreal. Then, holding his breath, he froze and stayed motionless for what seemed hours on end, extinguishing all thought, suppressing his deep breathing and avoiding any kind of movement - because the slightest thought meant madness, the slightest movement meant

madness. Time had gone, it seemed to have been converted into space - translucent and airless - a vast physical area with everything there upon it, the earth, life and people, and all of it could be absorbed at a single glance, all of it right up to the end, to the very edge of mystery, to death itself. Some sacrilegious hand had drawn aside the ageold curtain hiding the mystery of life and the mystery of death, rendering them no longer mysterious, though still incomprehensible. It was like a truth engraved in a foreign language. His human brain had no access to the concepts, and his human speech had no access to the words, needed to capture what he had seen. And if the words 'I'm dead scared' had any meaning, it was only because there were no other words available, no other concepts that corresponded to this new, inhuman condition - their existence was impossible. It would be like this if a human being, with only his human capacity for understanding, his experience and his feelings to go on, were suddenly to get a glimpse of God himself, seeing without understanding, even though he knew this thing was called God. He would be left shuddering with the unimaginable agony of unimaginable incomprehension.

'That's what Müller does for you!' he shouted out loud with incredible passion, shaking his head. And with that sudden change of feeling that the human spirit is so prone to, he laughed with genuine delight. 'Oh Müller! My dear old Müller! My truly wonderful German friend! But you are quite right, brother Müller. I'm the ass here.'

He walked around his cell a few times and then amazed the soldier observing him through the peephole by stripping himself naked and applying himself diligently to a performance of all eighteen exercises. He stretched his young, rather slimmeddown body upwards and outwards, squatted on his heels and strained up on tiptoes, inhaling and exhaling, flinging his arms and legs out wide. And after each exercise he spoke out smugly. 'That's the way to do it! That's the real thing, brother Müller!'

His cheeks glowed, and droplets of lovely, hot sweat emerged from every pore; his heartbeat was steady and strong.

'The thing is, Müller,' thought Sergey, expanding his chest so that his ribs were clearly outlined under the taut, thin skin. 'The thing is this. There is a nineteenth exercise: hanging by the neck

from a fixed position. It's called execution. Do you get that, Müller? They take a living being - say Sergey Golovin - they wrap him up like a doll, and hang him by the neck until he is dead. It's a stupid thing to do, Müller, but it can't be helped. It's got to happen.'

9. Horror In Solitary

To the same chimes, only a few empty cells along from Sergey and Musya, though as desperately lonely as if he was the only living creature in the universe, the miserable Vassily Kashirin was ending his life in anguish and terror. Covered in sweat, with his wet shirt clinging to his body and his once curly hair all over the place, he rushed around his cell frantic with despair like a man with unbearable toothache. He would sit down for a while, then get up and run or press his forehead against the wall or search for something with his eyes, as if he was looking for medicine. He had changed so much that he seemed to have had two different faces: his earlier face, a young one, had gone away to be replaced by a new one, a terrible face emerging from darkness.

He had been suddenly overwhelmed by a fear of death, which had seized him completely and now held him in its grip. Only that morning, while staring death in the face, he had been ‘messaging about’ with it, but by evening, in the solitary confinement of his cell, he had been engulfed and flattened by an inexorable tide of terror. While he had always been risking danger and death on his own terms, and had kept control over his own death, however terrible it might be, he had carried on flippantly, even enjoying himself. Any suggestion of a wrinkled, oldwomanish fear was submerged in a spirit of absolute freedom and the need to prove his daring and fearless character through sheer strength of will. Fastening the belt which carried the infernal machine, he seemed to *become* the infernal machine, assuming the ruthless reasoning of dynamite as he acquired its firepower and deathdealing energy. And as he made his way along the street through the busy throng of people absorbed in their own workaday concerns, skipping out of the way of cabhorses and trams, he felt like a new arrival from an unknown alien realm where there was no knowledge of death or fear.

Then suddenly - a sharp, savage, shattering change. He was no longer going where *he* wanted to go; he was being taken where

other people wanted him to go. He could no longer choose a place to be; they were putting him into a stone cage and locking him up like an inanimate object. He was no longer free to make his own decisions about living or dying like everybody else; they were definitely and inevitably going to put him to death. In a splitsecond he, the incarnation of strong will, life and strength, had come to be a pathetic example of helplessness unique in all the world, newly transformed into an animal lined up for slaughter, an empty thing incapable of speech that could be moved around, set fire to, broken up. Not a word of anything he said would ever be heard, and if he started screaming they would gag him. If he moved his legs, they would take him away and hang him, and if he showed any resistance, put up a struggle or lay down on the ground, they would force him to his feet, tie him up and take him away, bound hand and foot to the gallows. And the fact that the mechanical procedure being thrust upon him was being carried out by people just like him made them seem weird, unreal and sinister, either phantoms, creatures of pretence intent on deception, or mechanized marionettes worked by springs: designed to fetch and grab, take away, hang, pull down on his legs. To cut through rope, haul down, cart away and bury. And from the very first day of his imprisonment, people and life became for him an unbelievably horrific world consisting of these phantoms and mechanized marionettes.

All but speechless from terror, he tried to convince himself that they did have tongues and the power of speech, but he couldn't bring himself to believe it: they seemed unable to talk. He tried to remember them speaking and what their words had meant when they were in communication, but he couldn't. Their mouths gaped open, sounds came out, they walked around, and that's all they did.

This is what you would feel like if, one night when you were at home alone, all the pieces of furniture came to life, moved about and took complete control of you. Suddenly they would have you up before the court - cupboard, chair, desk and sofa. You could remonstrate and chase around, begging for mercy and screaming for help, but they would rabbit on with each other in their own language, and then dispatch you to be hanged - that cupboard, chair, desk and sofa. With the other household objects looking on.

And Vassily Kashirin, sentenced to be hanged by the neck until

dead, began to see the whole thing as Toyland: his cell, the door with its peephole, the chiming of the wellwound clock, the intricately sculpted fortress building, and especially that mechanized marionette with a gun, stamping up and down the corridor, and all the others who stared at him scarily through the little window, and brought him food without talking. And what he was experiencing was not the fear of death - no, if anything he wanted to die. Death, in all its ageold, unfathomable mystery, was more susceptible to reason than this world, which had turned into something so savage and fantastic. Besides, death was somehow being steadily and completely extinguished in a crazy world of phantoms and puppets, and losing its enormous and mysterious significance as it also became a mechanical process and only for that reason something to be dreaded. Fetch and grab, take away, hang, pull down on the legs. Cut rope, haul down, cart away and bury.

A man has gone from the world.

In court, a spirit of comradeship had brought Kashirin to his senses, and just for a moment he had been able to see people again. They were sitting there, trying him and saying things to each other in human speech; they were also listening, and seemed to be taking things in. But at the meeting with his mother, with the horror of a man who is losing his reason and knows it, he had clearly sensed that this old woman in a black headscarf was nothing more than a cleverly constructed mechanical doll - one of those that can say 'Dada' or 'Mamma', only better made. He made an effort to talk to her, but he was thinking to himself, with a shudder, 'God in heaven! This is a doll. It's a mother doll. And that's a toy soldier, and there's a daddy doll at home - and this is a Vassily Kashirin doll.'

Any minute now, he felt sure, he would hear the whirr of a motor or the squeak of unoiled wheels. When his mother burst into tears, there was a momentary flash of humanity, but it vanished the moment she spoke, and he was nonplussed and horrified to see water coming from her doll's eyes. Later on, in his cell, when the horror became unbearable, Vassily Kashirin turned to prayer. From all that had passed for religion in his life as a young man in the tradesman's home headed by his father, only a nasty, bitter, disgusting aftertaste remained, and there was no faith in it. But at some time, probably in his early childhood, he had heard a short

sequence of words which had made him shiver with emotion and had stayed with him throughout his life as a breath of pure poetry. The words were about 'bringing joy to the afflicted'.

So it happened that in his darkest moments he would murmur to himself, 'Joy to the afflicted', without actually praying and with no real understanding, though this lifted his spirits and made him want to go up to some dear person and gently protest about things by saying, 'This life of ours . . . can you call it life? Oh, my dear girl, can you really call it life?'

Then he would suddenly get an urge to fool about, ruffling his hair, dropping down on one knee and offering his breast to be beaten, with a cry of 'Come on, strike me down!'

He never told anyone, not even his closest friends, about his 'Joy to the afflicted', and he seemed to be unaware of it himself, so deeply hidden was it inside him. He rarely brought it back to mind, and when he did it was with wary reluctance.

And now that all the horror of an insoluble mystery had come shockingly visible into his head and swamped him like a spring torrent rushing down a channel to the sea, he felt a sudden urge to pray. He wanted to get down on his knees, but he was too embarrassed to do so in front of the soldier, so he folded his arms across his chest and said in a whisper, 'Joy to the afflicted!'

And in a voice full of anguish and emotion, he repeated himself slowly and clearly: 'Joy to the afflicted, come unto me, give succour to Vaska Kashirin.'

Long ago, while still living it up as a firstyear student, before meeting Werner and joining the society, he had called himself, cockily and pathetically, Vaska Kashirin - and now he felt an urge to use that name again. But those few words, 'Joy to the afflicted!', still rang out with a deathly, hollow ring.

Something had stirred. It was as if a distant image of some gentle and sorrowful figure had come into view, only to fade away gently without lighting up the darkness of impending death. The clock chimed in the tower, dead on time. The soldier in the corridor made a rattling noise that could have come from a sword or gun, and then gave a prodigious yawn with juddering pauses.

'Joy to the afflicted! Why don't you speak? Haven't you got

anything to say to Vaska Kashirin?’

He gave a smile full of emotion, and waited. But there was only emptiness, inside and all around him. And the gentle and sorrowful figure did not come back. What did come back to him were needless and painful memories of lighted wax candles, a priest in his robes, a painted icon on the wall, and also the holy father, bending and unbending as he said his prayers and gave his bows, with one eye on Vaska to check that he was praying and not misbehaving. And it all became more ghastly than it had been before the prayer.

Everything had gone.

The madness crept on, unbearable. His mind was fading like the scattered embers of a dying campfire, and cooling like the corpse of a newly dead person with some residual warmth in the heart when the feet and hands have already gone stiff. Once again, with a rush of blood, the fading power of his thought told him that he, Vaska Kashirin, might be going out of his mind here and now, and might experience the kind of suffering for which there was no name, taking him to extremes of pain and agony the like of which no living being had ever known, that he could beat his head against the wall, gouge his own eyes out with a fingernail, say or shout anything that came into his head, weep and swear that he could not take any more of this - and it would mean nothing. Absolutely nothing.

And nothing is what ensued. There were legs down there with a mind and life of their own, still walking about and supporting his shaking, soaking body. There were hands with a mind of their own vainly trying to tighten the smock that kept falling open across his chest, and warm his shaking, soaking body. His body was shivering and freezing. There were eyes still looking. There was something akin to relief in this.

But there was still one shock of pure horror to come: when people walked into his cell. Not getting the message - that the time for his execution had come - he just saw people standing there, and he panicked, almost like a child.

‘Not going! Not going!’ he murmured inaudibly through deadened lips as he gently withdrew towards the back of the cell, as he had recoiled in childhood when his father had raised his hand.

‘Time to get on the road.’

They were saying things, walking about, giving him something.

He shut his eyes, swaying a little - and he took his time getting ready to go. It must have meant that his mind was beginning to come back to him when he asked an official for a cigarette. The man politely opened his cigarettcase with its decadent fancy patterning.

10. The Walls Come Tumbling Down

The unidentified prisoner known as Werner was a man who had grown weary of living and struggling. There had been a time when he had a great love of life, enjoying the theatre, literature and good company. Endowed with an excellent memory and strong willpower, he had studied several European languages in depth and could easily pass for a German, a Frenchman or an Englishman. He usually spoke German with a Bavarian accent, but he could switch at will and talk like a trueborn Berliner. He was a lover of fine clothes and a man of exquisite manners, the only member of his fraternity who dared to appear in high society ballrooms without risk of being recognized.

But long ago, imperceptibly to his comrades, he had become sardonically disaffected with people at some deep level of the spirit; it was a case of being weighed down by a fatal mixture of desperation and worldweariness. By nature more mathematician than poet, he had had no experience of inspiration or ecstasy, and with every passing minute he felt like a madman trying to square the circle by wading through puddles of human blood. The demon he fought against on a daily basis could not imbue him with self-respect; it was the usual entanglement of stupidity, foul play and falsehood, dirty tricks and filthy deception. The last straw, the thing that seemed to have broken his will to live once and for all, was when he murdered a provocateur on orders from the centre. He did the killing calmly, but after one glance at that dead human face of treachery, now at peace, though also pathetic to look at, he immediately lost all self-respect and belief in his cause. It wasn't a question of sudden remorse; he simply lost every last trace of self-esteem and the slightest interest in himself - he had become insignificant, a tedious irrelevancy. As a man of singleminded, unbreakable will, he stayed on in the organization, ostensibly unchanged, though his eyes had now taken on the glint of something cold and terrible. He said not a word to anyone.

He possessed one other sharply defined quality. Just as there

are some people who have never had a headache, so he was a man who had never known fear. And when other people were afraid of something, he looked on this without condemning them, but also without any particular sympathy, as if it was some kind of common ailment that he happened never to have suffered from. He did feel some pity towards his colleagues, especially Vasya Kashirin, but it was a frigid, almost officially sanctioned feeling, something that some of the judges were probably not unfamiliar with.

Werner had realized that execution is not just a matter of dying, but something more. Anyway, he decided to confront it calmly, as if it had no relevance, by living right up to the end as if nothing had happened and nothing was going to happen. This was the only means of expressing his lofty contempt for execution and preserving the last form of inalienable freedom - that of the spirit. Even in court - and this would have been almost unbelievable even to his colleagues, who were fully aware of his capacity for cool detachment and complete disdain - far from thinking about dying or living, he had been calmly working through a difficult game of chess, and this had held his closest and deepest powers of concentration. As a first-rate chessplayer, he had launched into this game on the first day of his imprisonment, and had kept it going without interruption. And when he was sentenced to death by hanging, not a single piece was moved on his imaginary board.

Even the fact that he would never be able to finish the game did not stop him, and he started the morning of the last day of his life on earth by going back to put right a rather unsuccessful ploy made the previous day. Squeezing his lowered hands between his knees, he stayed rigid in a sitting position for quite some time, then he got to his feet and began walking about, deep in thought. He had a strange way of walking. Tilting his upper body slightly forwards, he banged down sharply on his heels, so that even on the dry ground his steps rang out with an unmistakable clatter. Softly, only by breathing out, he whistled a little Italian arietta - it helped his thinking.

But this time, for some reason, things went wrong. With an uncomfortable feeling that he had committed a big mistake, even a terrible blunder, he went back on himself several times and checked his game almost from the start. There was no blunder, but the feeling of having made a mistake would not leave him; it grew

stronger and more irksome. Then he was struck by an unexpected and offensive idea: maybe the mistake was to use a game of chess to distract his mind from execution and thus protect himself against the fear of death that would seem to be inevitable for a condemned man?

‘Hm. Why would I do that?’ he responded coldly, and calmly folded the board away. And, with the same degree of close attention that he reserved for the game of chess, like an examination candidate facing a stiff test, he tried to take account of his horrific situation, from which there was no escape. He looked around the room, trying to leave nothing out, worked out how many hours were left before the execution, sketched out an approximate, though reasonably accurate, picture of the execution itself, and then shrugged his shoulders.

‘So what’s it all about?’ he asked of no one in particular, halfquestioningly. ‘That’s all there is to it. Where’s the fear in that?’

No, there was nothing to fear. And not only was there nothing to fear, something had been creeping up on him that seemed to be the opposite of what he stood for - a hazy but challenging sensation of enormous joy. And the stillundiscovered mistake no longer seemed so irksome or disappointing; it, too, spoke strongly of something good and quite unexpected, as if he had lost a close friend in death, only to find that he was still alive, sound in wind and limb, and rejoicing.

Werner gave another shrug, and took his own pulse. His heartbeat was up a little, but still strong and regular, a resonant force. Once again, like a new inmate, he took a close look at the walls, the bars, the chair fastened to the floor, and a sudden thought struck him. ‘Why am I feeling so easy and happy and free? Especially free? When I think about the execution tomorrow, it doesn’t seem to be there. When I look at the walls, they don’t seem to be there. And I feel so free it’s like being on the outside, newly released from a prison that I’ve been in all my life. What is it all about?’

His hands were beginning to tremble - a new experience for Werner. And his head was more and more filled with furious ideas. It was as if tongues of flame were leaping out inside his head, and the fire had been struggling to get out and shine all over a broad

nocturnal landscape that stretched out into the dark distance. And now it was on the outside, and the longreceding landscape was lit up and shining.

Gone was the enervating lassitude that had worn Werner down for the last two years; a clammy, deadweight serpent with tightshut eyes and a ghastly pinchedup mouth had fallen away from his heart. In the presence of death, a wonderful youthfulness was being restored to him with its spirit of play. It was something more than wonderful youthfulness. With one of those amazing flashes of spiritual insight that occur to people on rare occasions, raising them to the highest heights of consciousness, Werner suddenly saw life and death brought together, and he was stunned by the splendour of this undreamtof spectacle. It was like walking along the knifedge of the highest possible mountain range, seeing life on one side and death on the other in the form of two deep, gorgeous and gleaming seascapes merging at the horizon into a single expanse of infinite space.

‘What is this? What a heavenly vision!’ he said, speaking slowly and automatically raising himself and coming to attention as if he was in the presence of a supreme being. And all things - walls, time and space - were obliterated as he peered with piercing insight into the full depth and breadth of the life that he was leaving.

And life was suddenly different. No longer did he attempt to express what he had seen in words; there were no words in the sparse and meagre resources of human language. Gone for good was the tiny impulse of bitter unpleasantness that used to evoke in him a disdain for other people, and sometimes even a feeling of revulsion at the sight of a human face. It was like a man going up in a hotair balloon and watching the filthy rubbish of narrow streets disappear as his small town falls away, and ugliness turns into beauty.

Werner walked mechanically over to the table, and leant on it with his right hand. Proud and imperious by nature, he had never struck such a proud, liberated and imperious pose as this, never turned his neck in such a way, or adopted such a glare - because he had never before felt as liberated and imperious as he now did, here in prison just a few hours away from execution and death.

And people were suddenly different; they now looked all

pleasant and charming under his newly enlightened gaze. Soaring away beyond time, he could see clearly how young humanity was, only yesterday a beast howling in the forest; and the things that had seemed disgusting in people, horribly unforgivable, had turned into something rather nice - not unlike a toddler's inability to walk properly like an adult, or its babbling chatter filled with sparkling gems of wit, its amusing blunders, slips and painful bruises.

'My dear friends!' Werner gave a sudden, unexpected smile, and instantly lost all the authority of his pose, becoming a prisoner again, suffering the narrowness and discomfort of confinement, increasingly irritated by the intrusively searching eye that stood out against the flatness of the door. And there was something odd: almost instantly he had forgotten what he had been seeing with such sharpness and clarity. Odder still: he made no attempt to recall it. He simply shifted into an easier sitting position, disregarding his usual indifference to bodily discomfort, and with an uncharacteristically feeble and tender smile, nothing like the old Werner grin, he stared at the walls and bars. Then something else occurred that was so unlike Werner it had not happened before: he burst into tears.

'My dear comrades!' he whispered through bitter tears. 'My dear comrades!'

By what secret ways had he travelled from that feeling of pride and limitless freedom to this pathetic display of tenderness and passion? He did not know and didn't even wonder about it. And whether he was simply feeling sorry for those people, his dear comrades, or whether there was something else, something nobler and more impassioned, hidden behind his tears, even this was unknown to his heart, so suddenly resurrected and springlike.

'My dear comrades! Oh, my dear comrades!'

In this bitterly weeping figure, smiling through his tears, no one would have recognized the cold, aloof, worldweary, arrogant Werner - not the judges, nor his comrades, nor Werner himself.

11. On Their Way

Before the condemned prisoners were put into their carriages, all five were brought together in a large, cold room with a vaulted ceiling that looked like a disused office or an empty waitingroom. They were allowed to talk among themselves.

But the only one to take immediate advantage of this permission was Tanya Kovalchuk. The others were silently squeezing each other's hands, cold as ice or hot as fire - and silently avoiding eyecontact as they crowded together in an embarrassed little gang with blank faces. Now that they were together again, they were all rather ashamed of what they had been feeling when they were alone, and they were afraid to look at each other, not wanting to see or to display the various, peculiar and rather shameful things they had experienced, or suspected in themselves, as individuals.

But once a couple of glances had been exchanged, they started smiling at each other, and immediately everything felt as natural and easygoing as before; no change had occurred, and if something had occurred, the weight of it was shared between them so equally that it was barely noticeable to each individual. They all spoke and moved about awkwardly, in quick bursts and snatches, or else much too slowly, or too rapidly; sometimes words stuck in throats, and there was much repetition; some sentences were left unfinished or taken as understood, and nobody took any notice. They were all screwing up their eyes and staring at everyday objects with close attention as if they couldn't recognize them, like people used to wearing spectacles who had suddenly taken them off. All of them kept turning around and taking a sharp look behind them, as if someone at their back had called out with something to show them. But this too went unnoticed. Musya and Tanya Kovalchuk had burning cheeks and ears; Sergey had seemed rather pallid at first, but he soon came through it and began to look like his old self.

Vassily was the only one who attracted their attention. Even amongst these people he looked awful, and out of place. This

roused Werner to a mixture of sympathy and anxiety, and he spoke to Musya. 'What's wrong with him, Musechka? Is he . . . you know . . . ? We ought to go over and talk to him.'

Vassily gave them a vacant stare, staring at Werner as if he didn't recognize him, and then looking down.

'What have you done to your hair, Vasya, eh? Now, what's all this? Nothing to worry about, brother. Soon be over now. Got to tough it out. That's what we've got to do.'

Vassily did not speak. For a long time it seemed as if he wasn't going to say anything at all, but then a response came, a belated, lifeless sound from terribly far away, like the grave itself reacting to endless calls.

'I'm all right. I will tough it out.' And he repeated: 'I will tough it out.'

Werner was delighted to hear it. 'There you are. Good lad. That's the way.'

But he was met by a dark, leaden stare coming from the distant deeps, and an anguished thought flashed across his mind. What was his angle of vision? Where was he coming from when he said things? And, with the deepest sensitivity, he spoke out in sepulchral tones. 'Vasya, listen to me. I love you, very dearly.'

'I love you too.' His leaden answer quavered on the tongue.

Suddenly Musya took hold of Werner's hand, and spoke to him, overplaying her surprise, like an actress on the stage: 'What's this, Werner? You - talking about love? You've *never* talked about love to anybody. Suddenly you're all . . . you know . . . brighteyed and gentle. What's it all about?'

'What are you getting at?'

And Werner, also overplaying things like an actor, squeezed Musya's hand. 'Yes, I do feel love now. Don't tell on me, please. It's embarrassing. But I do feel love.'

Their eyes met and flashed with brightness while everything around them faded, the way that all other lights are dimmed in a sudden flash of lightning as the intense yellow flame casts a dark shadow on the ground.

‘Yes, yes,’ said Musya. ‘It’s all right, Werner.’

‘Yes, Musya,’ he said. ‘Yes, it is.’

Something had passed between them, something understood and firmly established. And Werner’s eyes were still flashing when he felt another rush of feeling and strode over to Sergey.

‘Seryozha!’

But it was Tanya Kovalchuk who responded. In a transport of delight and on the verge of tears from maternal pride, she snatched furiously at Sergey’s sleeve. ‘Werner,’ she said, ‘Listen to me. I’m in tears over him. Out of my mind. And he’s doing his exercises.’

‘The Müller system?’ said Werner with a smile.

Sergey frowned with embarrassment. ‘You can laugh, Werner, but I’m absolutely sure . . .’

They all shared a good laugh. Coming together like this, and gathering strength in the black fortress, they were steadily reverting to what they had been before, but they didn’t see this and thought nothing had changed. Suddenly Werner put a stop to their laughter and spoke to Sergey with some gravity.

‘You’re right, Seryozha. Quite right.’

‘No, you don’t understand,’ said Golovin, more cheerfully. ‘Of course, we . . .’

But at this point an announcement was made: it was time to get on the road. And the guards were kind enough to let them sit together in pairs as they chose. They were indeed kindness itself, almost too kind, either making a display of their humanity or else pretending they were not there at all, and everything was running itself. But they looked pale.

‘Musya, you go with him,’ said Werner, pointing to Vassily, who was standing there transfixed.

‘I get your meaning,’ Musya nodded. ‘What about you?’

‘Me? Tanya goes with Sergey, and you’re with Vasya . . . I’ll be on my own. That’s all right. I can cope with that. You know me.’

Once they were outside, the warm dampness of a dark night struck them, softly but sharply, straight in the face and eyes, taking

their breath away in a gentle, cleansing stream that swept right through their shivering bodies. It was hard to believe that this bewildering feeling came from nothing more than a spring breeze, warm and moist. It was a real spring night, astonishingly beautiful, with a scent of melting snow amid tinkling droplets in the boundless empty space. Tumbling showers of rapid raindrops busily chased each other down, pitterpattering in the close harmony of song until one of them lost the beat and the whole thing collapsed into the muddle of a happy fandango. After that, a big strong raindrop would set up a new beat, and off went the pitterpatter into another fast spring song, neatly and resonantly performed. And a pale glow from the electric lights shone down on the town, and the fortress roofs.

‘Ooh!’Sergey Golovin took a deep breath and held it, as if reluctant to let such lovely fresh air out of his lungs.

‘How long has the weather been like this?’ Werner wanted to know. ‘It’s just like spring.’

‘Only a couple of days.’ The response was obligingly polite. ‘But we still get bad frosts.’

One by one the dark carriages were brought up. Each of them accepted two passengers before trundling off into the darkness towards a lantern swinging at the gates. Each was surrounded by the grey silhouettes of guards, and the horses’ hooves rang out, clattering on the road surface or slithering through the wet snow.

Just as Werner bent down to get into his carriage, one of the guards made a casual observation: ‘Somebody else travelling with you.’

Werner was taken aback. ‘Where to? Where’s he going? What do you mean -somebody else?’

The guard said nothing. Sure enough, something small and still but obviously alive was squashed into a dark corner of the carriage, as he could see from an angled shaft of light from a lantern that picked out the glint of an open eye. In the process of getting into his seat, Werner bumped against somebody’s knee.

‘Sorry, my friend.’

There was no response. It was only when the carriage had

started to roll forward that he asked a question in halting Russian, with a stammer. 'Who . . . who are you . . . ?'

'My name is Werner. Sentenced to death by hanging for the attempted assassination of N.N. Who are you?'

'Er, Yanson. Not to hang me.'

Here they were, riding along a couple of hours from facing the huge, inscrutable mystery of passing over from life to death, and they had just met. Life and death were operating together in two simultaneous planes, but life was still life, down to the silliest laughable details.

'What did you do, Yanson?'

'Stabbed my boss. Killed him. For the money.'

To judge by his voice, Yanson seemed halfasleep.

Werner found his limp hand in the darkness and gave it a squeeze. Yanson extracted his hand just as feebly.

'Are you feeling scared?' asked Werner.

'I don't want.'

Neither of them spoke. Werner found the Estonian's hand a gain a nd g ave i t a s trong s queeze b etween h is own two dry, burninghot palms. It lay there, lifeless and stiff as a bit of board, and Yanson no longer tried to withdraw it.

It was cramped and stuffy in the carriage; there was a smell of soldiers' clothes, stale air, manure and sodden bootleather. A junior guard was sitting across from Werner, and his hot breath reeked of onions and cheap tobacco. But there were a few cracks through which pungent fresh air made its way into this stuffy little box on wheels, and this was more springlike than outside. The carriage lurched right and left, and even seemed to turn back on itself; sometimes it gave an impression of circling for hours on end without moving from one spot. To begin with, a bluish electric light shone in through the thick blinds which had been lowered over the windows, then suddenly, following one particularly sharp turn, it went slightly darker, this being the only means of guessing that they had turned off into the godforsaken streets of the outskirts and were getting close to the S— railway terminal. Now and again, at

sharp turns, Werner's bent knee, still living, bumped chummily against the guard's living bent knee, and execution was a hard thing to believe in.

'Where are we going?' Yanson suddenly asked.

His head was spinning a little from the constant twisting and turning of the dark box, and he felt slightly sick.

Werner gave him a answer, and squeezed the Estonian's hand all the harder. He felt like saying something particularly friendly and affectionate to this sleepy little man, and he felt a greater love for him than for anyone ever before.

'My dear friend! You don't look too comfortable sitting like that. Come a bit closer.'

Yanson was quiet for a moment, and then gave his response. 'No, thanks. I'm all right. You going to be hung?'

'Yes!' Werner answered in a surprisingly cheerful tone,

almost laughing, and he waved his hand casually, almost exaggeratedly relaxed, as if this was a laughing matter, some silly trick that nice people with a terrible sense of humour wanted to play on him.

'You married?' asked Yanson.

'Oh no. No wife for me. I'm on my own.'

'I'm not . . . not married, I mean,' said Yanson, correcting himself after a bit of thought.

By now, even Werner's head was beginning to swim. And as the minutes went by it seemed more and more as if they were on their way to some kind of celebration. It is a strange fact that almost all people on their way to execution have had this feeling; along with all the anguish and terror, they have a vague sense of enjoying the bizarre event that was about to take place. Reality runs away with fantasy, and death joins forces with life to create new visions. It seemed quite likely that bunting would have been put out for them.

'Here we are,' said Werner cheerily, looking up with new interest, when the carriage stopped, and he nipped out smartly. But Yanson was taking his time. Saying nothing, but holding onto things with a feeble grip, he refused to get out. When he took hold of a

handle, the guard had no trouble in loosening the lifeless fingers and prising his hand free; when he took hold of a corner, the door, one of the tall wheels, he was eased away from them by a guard who hardly had to exert himself. He hadn't really got hold of these things; the uncommunicative Yanson was simply sticking sleepily to anything that came to hand, and he was quickly and effortlessly pulled away. At last he was out and on his feet.

There was no bunting. It was nighttime,

and the station was dark, deserted and lifeless. It was too early for the passenger trains to be running, and the silent train that awaited these passengers needed neither bright lights nor ceremony. And suddenly Werner felt bored with the whole thing. Not troubled by fear, but bored out of his mind and wearied by a hugely oppressive sense of tedium which made him want to go away somewhere and lie down with his eyes tight shut, Werner stretched himself and gave a prodigious yawn. Yanson followed him by stretching and giving a series of quick, short yawns.

'Let's get it over and done with!' said Werner wearily. Yanson, with nothing to say, shrank into himself.

While the condemned prisoners were moving down the deserted platform, which had been cordoned off by soldiers, towards dimly lit carriages, Werner fetched up alongside Sergey Golovin, who pointed to one side and started talking, though only one thing was audible - the word 'lantern' - and even that was swallowed up in a great long and weary yawn.

'What do you mean?' asked Werner with an answering yawn.

'That lantern. The lamp inside - it's smoking,' said Sergey.

Werner turned and looked at it: sure enough, the lamp inside the lantern was giving off thick smoke, and the glass panels were blackening at the top.

'Yes, it is.'

And a sudden thought occurred to him. 'Why on earth should I be bothered if the lamp's smoking, when . . .' The same thing had evidently occurred to Sergey; he glanced at Werner, and looked away. But both of them had stopped yawning.

All seven were heading for the carriages, and only Yanson

needed to be taken by the arms. First, he had dragged his feet as if the soles of his shoes were sticking to the wooden platform, then he had bent his knees and hung in midair, held up by the guards, or dragged his legs like a drunk, with his socks scraping the boards. It took some time to get him in through the door, though he wasn't speaking.

Vassily Kashirin got along on his own, but only by vaguely copying his friends - what they did, he did. But as he stepped through onto the carriage floor, he stumbled, and the guard took his arm to steady him, at which Vassily shuddered and gave a great roar as he shoved the hand away. 'Aaargh!'

'What's up, Vasya?' said Werner, moving in quickly.

Vassily said nothing. He was shaking all over. The guard, embarrassed and rather offended, explained himself.

'I was only trying to help, but he . . .'

'Come on, Vasya, I'll give you a hand,' said Werner, trying to take his arm. But once again Vassily shoved the hand away, and his roar was even louder. 'Aaargh!'

'Vasya, it's me, Werner.'

'I know. Leave me alone. I can manage.' Still shaking, he got in on his own, and sat down in a corner of the carriage. Bending down towards Musya, Werner signalled with his eyes and spoke softly to her. 'What do you make of that?'

'Not good,' she answered just as softly. 'He's already dead. Werner, is death real?'

'I don't know, Musya. I don't think so,' said Werner, seriousminded and thoughtful.

'I thought you'd say that. But him? He wore me out in the carriage. Like riding with a corpse.'

'I don't know, Musya. Maybe death is real for some people. Just for a while. Then, afterwards, it won't be. Death's been real with me, but it isn't now.'

Musya's rather pallid cheeks flushed red. '*Been real* , Werner? Been?'

'It's been, and gone. Same for you.' There was a racket at the

carriage door. All banging heels, noisy breathing and reckless spitting, in came Gypsy Mike. He cast his eyes around, and stood his ground.

‘No room in here, guard!’ he shouted to the wornout guard who was watching him resentfully. ‘Give me some room, or I’m not going. You can hang me here on a lamppost. And that damn carriage, you bastards! Call that a carriage? Devil’s shit, that’s what it was!’

But then, suddenly, he lowered his head, stuck his neck out and walked in like that to be with the others. Framed by a wild shock of hair and beard, his piercing black eyes glared at them, on the brink of insanity. ‘Hello there, gentlemen! There we have it, then! Good morning, sir!’

Nudging Werner, he sat down across from him. Then, lowering his head into close proximity, he winked at him and flashed a hand across his neck. ‘You too, eh?’

‘Yes,’ said Werner with a smile.

‘All of ’em?’

‘All of ’em?’

‘Aha!’ Gypsy Mike gave a grin, and his eyes quickly probed them all, lingering for a while on Musya and Yanson. He winked again at Werner. ‘That minister?’

‘Yes. What about you?’

‘I, sir, am here on special business. No time for ministers!’

I, sir, am a villain, that’s what I am. A killer. Don’t you worry, sir. Come a bit closer. I’m not here in your company because I want to be. Plenty of room for us all in the world to come.’

Then, from under his tousled mass of hair, his wild eyes swept across them all in one swift, suspicious stare. They returned his look without comment, but seriously and with evident sympathy. He gave another grin and several times he tapped Werner on the knee. ‘There you have it, sir. Like in that song: “Mother oaktree, oh so green, make no sound for me . . .” ’

‘Why do you keep calling me *sir* , when . . . ?’

‘That’s right,’ agreed Gypsy Mike with some satisfaction.

‘How can you be a sir when you’re going to hang next to me? Now that man’s a sir,’ he continued, pointing to the silent guard. ‘But that one of your lot is no worse than us.’ His eyes had picked out Vassily. ‘Sir . . . you’re scared too, aren’t you, sir?’

‘Not too bad,’ came the answer, dragged out thickly from a stiff tongue.

‘What do you mean “not too bad”? Don’t be ashamed.

No need to be ashamed. Only a dog wags its tail and grins at you when it’s going to be hung, and you’re a man, aren’t you? And who’s that with the big long ears? Not one of yours, is he?’

His eyes kept darting about, and he was constantly slurping on sweet saliva as it welled up, and spitting it out. Yanson, who had squeezed himself into a rigid lump in the corner, slightly stirred the flaps on his fur cap, but he didn’t say anything.

‘Killed his boss.’

‘Good God!’ said Gypsy Mike in some surprise. ‘Do they really let blokes like him go around killing people?’

Gypsy Mike had been furtively eyeing Musya for some time, and now he suddenly rounded on her, staring hard and straight. ‘You, missy. How are you mixed up in this, missy? Look, she’s gone all pink, and she’s laughing. Look, she is, you know.’ He grabbed Werner by the knee, and his clutching fingers exerted a grip of iron. ‘Look at her. *Look* .’

Blushing a little and with a tiny smile of embarrassment, Musya stared straight into his piercing, halfcrazy eyes with their wild and wearily pleading look.

Nobody spoke.

The busy wheels drummed on, and the tiny carriages rocked on their narrow railway, going flat out. When the little engine came to a bend or a crossing, it gave a shrill, keen whistle, the driver not wanting to run over anybody. And it was barbarous to think that such a degree of routine human effort and efficiency should be applied to the hanging of people, and that the craziest deed on earth was being done in such a simple and rational manner. On went the carriages, with the people sitting there as they always do, travelling like normal travellers, waiting, as always, for the next

stop. 'This train will halt for five minutes.'

After that comes death - eternity - the great mystery.

12. Journey's End

On went the little carriages, flat out.

Sergey Golovin had lived for several years with his parents in a house on this very route; he had travelled it by day and night, and he knew it well. If he closed his eyes it was easy to imagine that he was now on his way home; he had stayed late with friends in town and had caught the last train.

'Not long now,' he said, opening his eyes and peering out through the uncommunicatively dark window and its protective grille.

Nobody stirred or responded; only Gypsy Mike did anything,

and he was spitting out gobbets of saliva. He began to give his eyes a free run of the carriage, taking in the walls and feeling at the windows, the doors, the soldiers.

'S cold,' said Vassily Kashirin through tight lips that seemed literally frozen. It came out as 'S coo—'

Tanya Kovalchuk was fumbling with something. 'Here's a scarf. Tie it around your neck. It's very warm.'

'Round his neck ? ' asked Sergey to everyone's surprise, and he was shocked by his own question.

But since everybody was thinking the same thing, nobody heard it, as if no one had spoken or they had all said the same thing at the same time.

'Never mind, Vasya. Wrap yourself up. Wrap up warm,'

was Werner's advice, then he turned to Yanson and spoke to him in a kindly voice. 'My dear friend, you must be feeling the cold.'

'Werner, maybe he wants a smoke. Listen, my friend, do you fancy a smoke?' asked Musya. 'We've got fags.'

'Oh, yes.'

‘Give him a cigarette, Seryozha,’ said Werner, perking up.

But Sergey was already getting one out. And they all looked on with affection as Yanson’s fingers accepted the cigarette, the match flared and a stream of deepblue smoke issued from Yanson’s mouth.

‘Oh, thanks,’ said Yanson. ‘That’s nice.’

‘Very funny thing,’ said Sergey.

‘What’s funny?’ asked Werner, turning towards him. ‘What’s funny about that?’

‘Well - just this cigarette.’ He was holding the cigarette,

an ordinary cigarette, in his ordinary, living fingers, and staring at it in amazement, as if he was transfixed with horror. And they all turned their eyes onto that thin little tube, watching as a ribbon of blue smoke curled up from the end to be blown away by their breath, and the ash built up and went dark. It went out.

‘It’s gone out,’ said Tanya.

‘Yes, it has.’

‘To hell with it!’ said Werner, scowling anxiously at Yanson, whose hand looked dead as it drooped down, still holding his cigarette. Suddenly Gypsy Mike whipped round and leaned across, bringing his face right up to Werner’s and rolling the whites of his eyes like a horse as he whispered to him. ‘Shall we get one of them guards, sir, eh? ’ave a little go?’

‘Don’t do that,’ said Werner, also in a whisper. ‘Just take what’s coming to you.’

‘What for? Bit of fun, ’avin’ a scrap, eh? I gives ’im one, ’e does me, and you don’t know when you’ve ’ad it. As if you wasn’t dead at all.’

‘No, don’t do it,’ said Werner, turning to Yanson. ‘Why aren’t you smoking, my friend?’

Suddenly Yanson’s flabby face crumpled pathetically. It was as if someone had pulled a string that worked his face, and his wrinkles had all crisscrossed each other. And he seemed to be halfasleep as he started whimpering, without shedding any tears, in a voice that was dry as dust, almost like playacting. ‘Don’t feel like smoking. Aargh! Aargh! Aargh! Nobody not to hang me. Aargh!

Aargh! Aargh!’

Things were going on around him. With tears streaming down her face, Tanya Kovalchuk stroked his sleeve, straightened the sagging flaps of his tattered cap and spoke to him. ‘My lovely little man! Please don’t cry, my dear little boy! I know how unhappy you are!’

Musya looked away. Gypsy Mike caught her eye and gave one of his grins. ‘Funny chap, his honour. Drinks tea with the rest of us, but he’s got a chill in his belly,’ he said with a bit of a laugh. But his own face had turned a blueblack colour, and it looked like castiron. His big yellow teeth were chattering.

Then the little carriages jolted and noticeably slowed down. Everybody except Yanson and Kashirin rose up in their seats, and then, just as quickly, sat back down again.

‘Our stop!’ said Sergey.

All the air seemed to have been sucked out of the carriage, it was so hard to breathe. Swelling hearts threatened to burst through the walls of their chests, blocking throats, thumping wildly and screaming from terror in voices coursing with blood. All eyes were cast down at the shuddering floor; all ears followed the sound of wheels going round and round, slower and slower, skidding, going round again, then - coming to a sudden stop.

The train had halted.

Then the dreamworld took over. Not that it was all that terrifying; it was a ghostworld, mindbendingly weird and alien, with the dreamer himself left out of things and only his bodiless shade moving about, speaking without sound and agonizing without agony. They were sleepwalking their way out of the carriage, forming up in pairs and drinking in the woodland air with all its special springtime freshness. Yanson was dumbly sleepwalking as he put up a show of feeble resistance, only to be forcibly ejected from the carriage without a word.

They dropped down from the little steps.

‘Are we walking it?’ someone asked, almost cheerily.

‘Not far to go,’ said someone else, just as cheerily.

Then they set off in a large, black group of silent people, walking through woodland down a badly maintained road in all the gentle springtime dampness. Bracing air blew at them fresh from the woods; it was slippery underfoot and when they ran into deeper snow, hands reached out instinctively for a companion. Heavy breathing came from the escorting guards, who were having a tough time struggling through nothing but deep snow. A voice spoke out angrily. 'They might have cleared the road. Fancy leaving us to muck about in this lot!'

Someone else put in an apologetic explanation. 'They did clear it, sir. Can't do nothing about the thaw, though.'

Consciousness was coming back, but only partly, in odd little bits and pieces. A moment's sensible thought confirmed it.

'That's right. They couldn't possibly have cleared the road.'

Then everything started to fade away again, leaving nothing but a sense of smell, the unbearably pungent aroma of air, woodland and melting snow, and the next moment everything stood out with unbelievable clarity - the woods, the night, the roadway, and the fact that they were on their way to being hanged - any minute now, straightaway. The snatches of whispered talk were strained and desultory.

'Soon be four o'clock.'

'I said we were leaving early.'

'Gets light at five.'

'Yes, it does. Ought to have . . .'

It was still dark when they stopped in an open space. Not far ahead was a thin patch of trees that could be seen through because it was winter, and there you could see two silent lanterns bobbing about. And the gallows.

'I've lost one of my galoshes,' said Sergey Golovin.

'You what?' said Werner, not getting his idea.

'I've lost one of my galoshes. It's cold.'

'Where's Vassily got to?'

'Don't know. Oh, that's him over there.'

It was Vassily, a dark, motionless figure.

‘What about Musya?’

‘I’m here. Is that you, Werner?’

They were now taking a good look around, though avoiding the place where the lanterns were bobbing about with a horrific meaning that was only too clear. To their left, the bare woods seemed to have thinned out, allowing a huge, smooth, white shape to stare through at them, and a wet wind to blow.

‘It’s the sea,’ said Sergey Golovin, sniffing the air and tasting it in his mouth. ‘That’s the sea.’

Musya’s response was sonorously poetic. ‘My love is wider than the open sea . . .’

‘What’s all that about, Musya?’

‘My love is wider than the open sea, unbounded by the shoreline of our lives . . .’

‘My love is wider than the open sea . . .’ Sergey repeated the words pensively, succumbing to the voice, the sounds, the words.

‘My love is wider than the open sea . . .’ Werner repeated them too, then suddenly a thrill of delight took him by surprise. ‘Muska, you’re still such a young thing!’

Close upon him, straight into Werner’s ear, came an urgent, gasping whisper from Gypsy Mike: ‘Sir, listen. Sir. Look at them woods, eh? What the hell is that? Them lanterns over there. See? Is that where they does the ’anging? What is it?’

Werner took a look. Gypsy Mike was in a desperate state, aware of his impending death.

‘We should start saying goodbye . . .’ said Tanya Kovalchuk.

‘Hang on, they’ve still got to read out the sentence,’ said Werner. ‘What’s happened to Yanson?’

Yanson was lying in the snow, and there were people nearby, seeing to him. There was a sudden strong whiff of ammonia.

‘What’s holding you up, doctor? Nearly ready?’ The question sounded impatient.

‘It’s all right. He’s only fainted. Wipe his ears with snow. Look, he’s coming round. You can start the reading.’

Light from a hidden lantern fell across a document held in white, ungloved hands. Document and hands were all a bit shaky, as was the voice.

‘Gentlemen, shall we do without the reading? I think you all know what it says. What do you think?’

‘Don’t read it,’ said Werner, answering for them all, and the little lantern went out.

They also refused the services of a priest, and a large, black silhouette slipped away silently into the depths of darkness. Dawn seemed to be coming up; the snow looked a little whiter than before, the bodies a little darker, as the woods thinned out, taking on a more ordinary, yet more pathetic, appearance.

‘Gentlemen, you must walk on in twos. Please pair off as you wish, but I must ask you to get a move on.’

Werner pointed to Yanson, who was back on his feet, supported by two guards. ‘I’ll go with him. Seryozha, you take Vassily. Off you go.’

‘Right.’

‘Are we going together, Musechka?’ asked Kovalchuk. ‘Come on. Give us a kiss.’

Kisses were rapidly exchanged. Gypsy Mike’s kiss was heavy - you could feel his teeth; Yanson’s was soft and limp, with his mouth halfopen - he didn’t seem to know what he was doing. When Sergey Golovin and Kashirin had taken a few steps, Kashirin came to a sudden stop and called out loud and clear, in a strange voice that didn’t belong to him: ‘Bye, comrades!’

‘Bye, comrades!’ came the answering call.

They walked off. It was now calm. The little lanterns through the trees had stopped bobbing about. They were expecting to hear a scream, a voice, some kind of noise - but it was just as calm up ahead and the little lanterns, now still, gave off a yellow gleam.

‘Oh, good God!’ came a wild, hoarse cry from one of them. They looked round. It was Gypsy Mike, still in his desperate

condition with death now upon him. 'They've started hanging them!'

They recoiled, and all was calm again. Gypsy Mike showed his desperation by clutching at the air. 'This isn't right! I ask you, gentlemen - me, all on my own? More fun with a bit of company, gentlemen. *It's not right !*'

He grabbed Werner by the arm, his fingers squeezing tight and then relaxing as if it was some sort of game. 'You, sir. My dear friend. Let me go with you. Please . . . Don't say no.'

Werner agonized over his reply. 'I can't, my friend. I'm with him.'

'Oh, my God! So, I'm on my own, am I? It's not right, is it? *Gentlemen !*'

Musya took a step forward, and spoke softly. 'Come on. You come with me.'

Gypsy Mike recoiled with a wild glare, rolling the whites of his eyes. 'You?'

'Yes.'

'Look at you . . . slip of a girl . . . aren't you scared? Might be better off on my own. Forget it.'

'No, I'm not scared.'

He gave his wide grin. 'Look at you . . . and I'm a real villain . . . you must be feeling queasy . . . If you are, I'd be better on my own. Won't hold it against you.'

Musya said nothing. In the thin light of early dawn, her face looked pale and mysterious. Then she went straight up to Gypsy Mike, put both hands around his neck and gave him a firm kiss on the lips. He took her by the shoulders with his fingers, pushed her away at arm's length, and gave her another shake. Then, slobbering out loud with emotion, he kissed her on the lips, nose and eyes.

'Come on, then!'

Suddenly the nearest soldier seemed to reel back, and his hands opened up, dropping his gun. But instead of bending down to pick it up, he stood still and hesitated for a moment, made a sharp turn and ran off like a blind man towards the woods and the untrodden

snow.

‘Where are you off to?’ whispered his fellow soldier, frightened. ‘Stop!’

But the first man kept on, wading silently through the deep snow. He must have tripped over something because then he fell facedown in the snow with his arms flailing. He just lay there.

‘Pick your gun up, birdbrain, or I’ll do it for you,’ said Gypsy Mike ominously. ‘Don’t you know what duty is?’

The little lanterns were busy again. Werner and Yanson were next in line.

‘Goodbye, sir,’ said Gypsy Mike in a loud voice. ‘We’ll know each other in the next world. Don’t ignore me when you see me. And bring me a drink of water. It’s hot where I’m going.’

‘Goodbye.’

‘I don’t want,’ said Yanson.

But Werner took him by the hand, and the Estonian managed a few steps on his own before ostentatiously coming to a halt and throwing himself down on the snow. They bent over him, pulled him to his feet and carried him along; he put up only a feeble struggle against the hands that were holding him. Why wasn’t he screaming? He had probably forgotten that he still had a voice.

Again the little lanterns with their yellow light stopped all movement.

‘Oh well, Musechka, that means I’m on my own,’ said Tanya Kovalchuk sadly. ‘We’ve lived together, but here we are . . .’

‘Tanechka, my dear friend . . .’

But Gypsy Mike made an emotional intervention. Holding Musya’s hand, as if he was frightened of her being taken away from him, he spoke quickly, spelling things out. ‘Oh miss, you can manage on your own. You’re a pure soul. You can go wherever you want without anybody else. Do you see? *I can’t*. I’m a villain . . . know what I mean? I can’t do it on my own. They’re going to say, “You’re a murderer - where do you think you’re off to?” I’ve done the lot - even horsestealing, for God’s sake. But going with her . . . well, it’s like being with a child. See what I mean?’

‘Yes, I do see. Go on then . . . Musechka, one last kiss . . .’

‘Yes, don’t forget the kissing,’ Gypsy Mike said, encouraging the two women. ‘It’s your thing. Got to say goodbye, and get it right.’

Musya and Gypsy Mike moved off together. She, the woman, proceeded with great care, holding her skirts off the ground as always; he, the man, kept tight hold of her, moving forward cautiously, feeling the way with his foot as he walked her to her death.

The lights had stopped moving. Tanya Kovalchuk was surrounded by empty silence. The soldiers kept quiet - grey figures in the soft, uncoloured light of early day.

‘I’m the only one left,’ said Tanya suddenly, with a sigh. ‘Seryozha’s dead. Werner’s dead, and Vassily. Only me left. Soldier boys, all soldier boys, and me on my own. Only me to go . . .’

The sun was coming up over the sea.

The bodies were carefully stowed in boxes. And driven away. With their elongated necks, savagely bulging eyes and swollen blue tongues protruding like ghastly, unidentifiable flowers from lips flecked with bloody foam, the corpses came cruising back along the road they had followed when they had walked there, still alive. And the springtime snow was just as soft and scented; and the springtime air was just as fresh and keen. One black thing stood out in the snow, wet and trampled - Sergey’s lost galosh.

And this was how people welcomed the rising sun.



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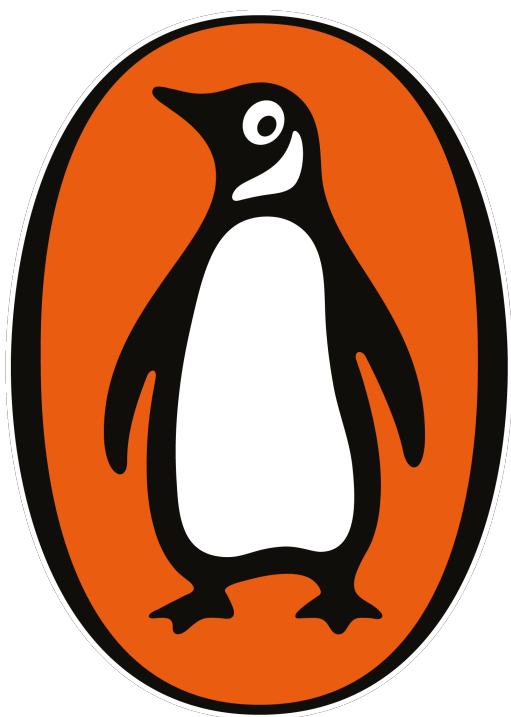
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正文目录

我为什么如此智慧

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我为什么能写出如此好书

Why I Am so Wise

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Why I Write Such Good Books

我为什么如此智慧

—

我的此在生命的幸福及其独一无二性，也许就在于它的厄运：用谜语形式来表达，作为我的父亲，我已经死了，而作为我的母亲，我还活着，而且将衰老。这种双重的来源，仿佛来自生命阶梯的最高一级和最低一级，既是颓废者又是开端——这一点，要是有什么意思的话，那就是说明了那种也许使我卓然超群的对于生命总体问题的中立性、无偏袒性。对于升起和没落的征兆，我具有一种比人们向来拥有的更为精细的嗅觉，在这方面我是卓越的教师——我知道两者，我就是这两者。——我父亲三十六岁就去世了，他柔弱、可亲而病恹恹的，就像一个注定要一味匆匆消逝的人——与其说他是生命本身，还不如说是一种对生命的善意回忆。在我父亲生命衰落的同一年，我的生命也开始衰落了：三十六岁时，我的生命力降到了最低点——我还活着，却看不到离我三步远的东西。当时——那是1879年——我辞去了在巴塞尔大学的教授职务，整个夏天就像一个幽灵般活着，住在圣莫里兹，冬天则住在瑙姆堡。那是我生命中最暗无天日的时光。那是我最低潮的时期，《漫游者及其影子》就是在此间写成的。无疑地，当时我认为自己就是幽灵了……下一个冬天，也就是我在热那亚的第一个冬天，差不多由一种血液和肌肉上的极度贫乏而引起的轻松愉快和超凡脱俗，使我创作了《曙光》一书。在我身上，精神的完全明亮和喜悦，乃至精神的繁茂兴旺，不仅与最深刻的生理虚弱一致，而且甚至与一种极端的痛苦感一致。持续三天的头疼连同非常艰辛的咳痰带来了种种折磨——置身其中，我拥有了一种卓越的辩证法家的清晰性，并且十分冷静地深思了各种事物，而在比较健康的情况下，我对于这些事物就不是一个善于攀登者，就不够精巧、不够冷静了。我的读者们也许知道，我何以把辩证法视为颓废的征兆，例如最著名的个案：苏格拉底的案例。所有对理智的病态干扰，甚至发烧引起的半昏迷状态，至今对我来说都是完全陌生的东西。对于它们的本性和频率，我唯有通过博学的途径才能加以了解。我的血液流得缓慢。从来没有人能够在我身上发现发烧现象。有一位医生，他在相当长一段时间里把我当作神经病患者来治疗，最后甚至说道：“不！您的神经没什么，我3自己倒是神经质了。”任何一种局部的退行性病变都是完全不可证实的，没有任何器质性的胃病，尽管由于全身疲惫，确实存在着胃部系统的极度衰弱。眼疾亦然，不时接近失明的危险，这只是结果而不是原因：以至于随着生命力的每一次增长，视力也重又改善

了。漫长的，过于漫长的岁月对我来说就意味着康复——遗憾的是，它也意味着复发、衰落，以及一种颓废的周期。尽管如此，我需要说明我对颓废问题是有经验的吗？我前前后后地解读了这些问题。即便那种把握和理解的艺术，那种对于细微差别的感触，那种“明察秋毫”的心理学，以及我通常独具的东西，都是在当时学会的，是那个时代真正的馈赠——那是一切都在其中变得精细化的时代，无论是观察本身还是一切观察的器官。从病人的角度出发去看比较健康的概念和价值，又反过来根据丰富生命的充盈和自信来探视颓废本能的隐秘工作——这乃是我最长久的训练，是我最本真的经验，如果说是某个方面的训练和经验，那我在这方面就是大师了。我现在已经胜券在握，我有能力转换视角：这是首要的原因，说明也许唯有对我来说，一种价值的重估竟是可能的。

二

因为，除了我是一个颓废者不说，我也是它的对立面。我为此提出的证据之一是，针对那些恶劣的状态，我总是本能地选择恰当的手段，而自在的颓废者总是选择对自己不利的手段。作为至高无上者，我是健康的；作为隐僻一隅，作为特性，我是颓废者。那种绝对的孤独和摆脱惯常情况和任务的力量，对我自身的强制力，不再照料自身，不进餐，不就医——这些都透露出对于急需之事的绝对的本能确信。我对自身负责，我使自己恢复健康：这方面的前提是——任何一个生理学家都会承认这一点——人们根本上是健康的。一个典型的病态之人是不会康复的，更不能自我康复了；相反，对一个典型的健康人来说，患病甚至可能是一种有力的兴奋剂，一种促使更丰富地生活的兴奋剂。现在，在我看来，那个漫长的疾病时期实际上就是这样：我仿佛重新发现了生命，也包括我自身，我品尝了一切美好的甚至微小的事物，那是别人不能轻易品尝到的——我从自己求健康的意志、生命意志中做出我的哲学……因为人们要注意：我生命力最低下的年头也就是我停止成为悲观主义者的时候：我自我恢复的本能不允许我有一种贫困和沮丧的哲学……人们到底要从哪里识别发育良好的状态呢？一个发育良好的人使我们的感官适意：他是由一块坚硬又柔润、芳香袭人的木头雕成的。他中意的是有益于他健康的東西；一旦超出了这个有益性尺度，他的乐意，他的快乐就终止了。他猜到了对付损害良药，他充分利用恶劣的偶然事件的好处；凡是不能置他于死地的，都能使他变得更强壮。他本能地从自己所见、所闻、所体验的一切中搜集自己的全部：他就是一个选择原则，他淘汰了许多东西。无论是与书本、人打交道，还是与自然风光打交道，他始终都在自己的团伙中：他通过选择、许可，信赖而有所尊重。他对于形形色色的刺激反应迟钝，带着那种由长期的谨慎和蓄意的骄傲养成的慢条斯理——他检验正在临近的刺激，他远不能直面这种刺激。他既不

相信“灾祸”，也不相信“罪责”：他能对付自己，也能对付他人，他善于遗忘——他十分强壮，足以使一切都必然 为他带来最佳的东西。——好吧，那我就是颓废者的对立面：因为，上面我描写的正是我自己。

三

拥有这样一位父亲，我视之为一大特权：我父亲曾经对农民们布道——因为他在阿尔滕堡宫生活了若干年，最后几年成了牧师——那些农民说，他看起来很像一位天使。——而由此我便触及了种族问题。我是一位纯正的波兰贵族，不掺点滴不良血统，是完全没有德国血统的。如果我要寻找自己最深刻的对立面，那无法估量的本能共性，那么，我总是发现我母亲和我妹妹——相信自己与这等暴民有亲属关系，这或许是对我自己神性的亵渎了。我从自己母亲和妹妹这边得到的待遇，直到眼下为止，都会引起我不可名状的恐惧：在此工作的是一台令人恐惧的完美机器，带着一种对于人们能够使我血淋淋受伤的時刻的可靠把握——在我至高的時刻里……因为这里没有任何抵御有毒害虫的力量……生理上的同时发生使得这样一种先定的不和谐成为可能……但我得承认，对于我真正深邃的 思想“永恒轮回”最深刻地抗辩和反驳的，始终是我母亲和妹妹。——不过，即便作为波兰人，我也是一个非同寻常的返祖现象。人们或许得后退几百年，方能纯粹本能地按照它所表现出来的样子，找到这个世上存在过的最高贵的种族。我反对今天被称为高贵的一切，一种绝对的出众高雅之感——我不会给予那个年轻的德国皇帝当我的马车夫的荣誉。有一种唯一的情形，在其中我会承认自己的同类——我怀着深深的感恩之心承认之。柯西玛·瓦格纳女士绝对是最高贵的人物；而且——毫无表示总归是过了 [1]——我要说，理查德·瓦格纳绝对是与我最近的人……剩下的就是沉默了……关于亲缘程度的全部流行概念都是一种无法超越的生理学上的荒谬。教皇今天还在与这种荒谬做交易呢。人们与自己的父母最不亲近，这或许是与自己的父母亲近的卑劣行径的极端标志。高等人物有自己无限深远的渊源，着眼于高等人物，不得不做最长久的收集、储存和积累。伟大的 个体乃是最老的个体：我理解不了，但恺撒可能是我的父亲——或者亚历山大，这个真正的狄奥尼索斯……就在我写下这些文字的当儿，刚好邮局给我捎来一个狄奥尼索斯的脑袋……

四

我从来都不了解这种对付我的艺术——这也要归功于我那无与伦比的父亲——即便在我看来这是具有重大价值的。我甚至从来不曾激起过人们对我的反感——不论看起来这是多么非基督教。人们不妨来

回地反复检查我的生活，除了那唯一的例外，人们在其中发现不了任何踪迹，可以表明有人曾对我心怀恶意——相反，也许可以发现过多善3意的踪迹……有些人让人人都大感麻烦，而我对于这些人的经验也毫无例外地向他们表露了好意；我能驯服每一头熊，我能使小丑们变得不失庄重。我在巴塞尔教育机构教授过高年级的希腊文，在那七 years 里，我未曾乘机对学生施加过什么处罚；在我这里，最懒惰的学生也变得勤奋了。我总能对付偶然事件；我必须能够即兴控制自己。无论何种乐器，不论它多么走调，哪怕可能像“人”这种乐器那样走调——倘若我不能成功地在它上面奏出某种动听的乐章，那么我一定是生病了。而且，我是多么经常地从这些“乐器”本身那里听说，它们还从未听过自己有这般声音……也许最美好的就属于那位不幸英年早逝的海因里希·冯·斯泰因了。有一次，根据小心取得的许可，此人在塞尔斯-马利亚待了三天，向每个人申明，他并不是因为恩加丁而来的。这位杰出的人物，以一位普鲁士容克地主的全部狂热的单纯和天真，陷入瓦格纳的泥潭中了（此外还有杜林 [2] 的泥潭！）。在这三天当中，他犹如经历了一场自由风暴的改造，就像一个人突然升上他的高空，振翅翱翔。当时我总是对他说，这是高山上的好空气带来的，人人都有此种感觉，要不然，我们不是白白地待在高于拜罗伊特 6000 英尺 [3] 的地方了嘛——但他却不愿意相信我的话……尽管如此，如果说人们对我做了一些大大小小的坏事，那么，个中原因并不是“意志”，至少不是恶意 [4]；而毋宁说，我抱怨的——我刚刚指出了这一点——乃是善意 [5]，那种给我的生命造成了不小祸害的善意。我的经验赋予我一种权利，让我从根本上怀疑所谓的“无私的”冲动，怀疑全部乐于助人的“博爱”。这种“博爱”在我看来本身就是虚弱，就是无能于抵抗刺激的个案——唯有在颓废者那里，同情才意味着一种德性。我谴责同情者，他们会轻易失掉对于间距的羞耻感、敬畏感和敏锐感，同情一转眼就会散发出群氓的气息，并且看似会与恶劣的举止混为一谈——这种同情之手有时可能径直灾难性地深入到一种伟大的命运之中，深入到一种饱受创伤的孤独之中，深入到一种对于深重罪责的优先权之中。对同情的克服，我把它当作高贵的德性：我曾经虚构了一种情形作为“查拉图斯特拉的诱惑”，在此情形中，一种尖厉的呼救声传到那里，同情犹如一种最终的罪恶向他袭来，想使他背弃自身。在这里保持主人地位，保持其崇高使命的纯洁性，摆脱十分低级和短视的原动力（它们是在所谓无私的行动中起作用的），这乃是查拉图斯特拉要经受的一种考验，也许是最后的考验——是他真正的力量证明……

还有在另一点上，我也只不过是父亲，可以说就是他过早去世后的生命的延续。如同每一个从来不曾同类中生活，并且对于“报复”概念就像对于“同等权利”概念一般充耳不闻的人，当我碰上一件小小的蠢事或者很大的蠢事时，我也一样不允许自己有任何防护

手段、任何保护措施——多么合理啊，也不允许有任何防卫、任何“辩护”。我的报复方式就是，尽可能快速地为这种愚蠢送上一种聪明：这样，人们兴许还能对之做一点弥补。用比喻方式来讲：为了摆脱一个辛酸的故事，我会送上一罐果子酱……有人一味要对我使坏，我会“报复”之，那是人们有把握的：我不久就会找到一个机会，向“作恶者”表示感谢（甚至对恶行表示感谢）——或者向他请求 某些东西，这可能比给予某些东西更友好……我也觉得，最粗野的语言、最粗野的书信，都比沉默更良性、更正派。那些保持沉默者，差不多总是缺乏心灵的精细和谦恭；沉默乃是一种抗辩，忍气吞声必然弄出一种坏性格——甚至会败坏胃口。一切沉默者都是消化不良的。——你会看到，我并不想贬低粗野，它绝对是最有人情味的反抗形式，在现代的柔弱化过程中，它是我们的首要德性之一。——如若有人足够粗野，那么，即便有不公和失当也是一种幸福。一个来到人间的上帝，根本上无非是要来行3不公的——不是承受惩罚，而是担当罪责，方才堪称神性。

六

摆脱怨恨，澄清怨恨——有谁知道即便在这个方面，我也应当多么感谢我那长期的疾病啊！问题并不那么简单：人们必须从力量出发，也从虚弱出发，才能对之有所体验。如若一定要提出某个对付疾病、对付虚弱的东西，那就是这样一点：在其中，一种真正的救治本能，也就是人身上的防御本能和战斗本能，会变得脆弱而松软。人们知道摆脱不了什么，人们知道对付不了什么，人们知道拒斥不了什么——一切皆会伤人。人和事紧紧纠缠，体验深深的刺痛，记忆是一道化脓的伤口。疾病本就是一种怨恨。——对此，患病者只有一剂良药，我称之为俄罗斯式的宿命论，那种毫无反抗的宿命论——一个俄罗斯士兵觉得远征太艰苦，最后就怀着这种宿命论想法躺在雪地里了，再也不接受、保存、吸收任何东西，竟再也没有任何反应了……这种宿命论并非始终只是赴死的勇气，其伟大的理性在最性命攸关的情况下具有保存生命的作用，那是新陈代谢的降低，是新陈代谢的减缓，是一种要求冬眠的意志。以这个逻辑继续往前走几步，就有了会在墓穴里躺上几个星期的苦行僧……因为当人们有所反应时，他会过快地精疲力竭，所以他再也不能反应了：这就是逻辑。而且，没有什么东西比怨恨情绪能更快地将人烧个精光。烦恼、病态的脆弱、无能于复仇、欲望、复仇的渴望、各式各样的荼毒——对于衰竭者来说，这确实是最不利的反应方式：神经力量的快速消耗，有害分泌物的病态提高，例如胆汁流入胃中，都是以此为条件的。怨恨乃是病者的禁物本身——是他的恶；遗憾的是，也是他极自然的癖好。——那个深邃的生理学家佛陀掌握了这一点。他的“宗教”，我们最好称之为养生学，才不至于把自己与像基督教这样可怜的事物混为一谈；这

种“宗教”的效果取决于对怨恨的战胜：使心灵摆脱怨恨——此乃走向康复的第一步。“以怨报怨，怨无尽头；以德报怨，怨始终止”，这是佛祖教义之始——并非道德如是说，而是生理学如是说。——由虚弱产生的怨恨对虚弱者本身损害最大——而在另一种情形下，前提是有一种丰裕的天性，这时候，怨恨就成了一种多余的情感，对这种情感的控制差不多就是精力丰裕的证明了。谁若知道我的哲学以何种严肃态度向复仇感和同情感宣战，乃至与“自由意志”学说做斗争——与基督教的斗争只不过是其中的一个个案而已——他就会理解，为什么我恰恰要在这里阐明个人的态度，我在实践中的本能可靠性。在颓废时期，我不允许自己有这些有害的情感；一旦生命又变得足够丰裕和高扬时，我还是不允许自己有这些情感，而是要把它们抑制起来。我上面讲过的“俄罗斯式的宿命论”，在我身上是这样表现出来的，即：多年以来，我顽强地固守那些偶然出现的几乎不堪忍受的环境、地点、居所和社交圈——这种做法胜于对它们的改变，胜于对它们的可变性的感受——胜于对它们的反抗……当时，凡在此宿命论方面干扰我的，粗暴地把我唤醒的，我都对之极其生气——实际上，这在每一次都是有致命危险的。——把自身当作一种天命，而不愿意“改变”自己——在此类状态下，这就是伟大的理性本身了。

七

另一件事就是战斗。按我的本性来讲，我是好战的。攻击乃是我的本能之一。能够成为敌人、成为敌人——这也许是以一种强壮的天性为前提的，无论如何，它都取决于每一种强壮的天性。强壮的天性需要反抗，因此它寻求反抗：侵略性的激情同样必然地属于强者，正如复仇感和同情感必然地属于弱者。举例来说，女人是有强烈报复欲的，这是由女人的虚弱所决定的，正如她对于外来困苦是十分敏感的。——攻击者的强壮是在他必需的敌对方中获得一种尺度的；每一种增长都是在对更强大的敌人——或者难题——的寻求中显露出来的，因为一个好战的哲学家也要向难题挑战，进行决斗。其使命并不是从根本上控制反抗和阻力，而是要战胜那些人，我们必须投入自己全部的力量、韧性和武艺才能制服的那些人——也就是战胜旗鼓相当的敌人……势均力敌——此乃正派的决斗的第一条件。当人们蔑视敌人时，就不可能开战；当人们发号施令，视某物比自己低下时，人们就不必开战了。——我的战斗实践可以概括为四个定律：第一，我只攻击那些胜利的东西——可能我会等待，直到它们获胜。第二，我只在找不到盟友、孤立无援的时候才攻击这些东西——在只会让自己出丑而大丢面子的时候才攻击这些东西……我从未公开采取一个不让自己出丑的步骤：这是我的公正行为的标准。第三，我从不搞人身攻击——我只把个人当作一个有力的放大镜，用它来弄清楚某个一般的，但潜滋暗长的、难以把握的危急状态。我就是这样来攻击大卫·

施特劳斯 [6] 的，更确切地讲，我攻击的是德国“教化”方面的一本老朽之书的成功——我当场揭穿了这种教化……我也是这样来攻击瓦格纳的，更准确地讲，我攻击的是我们“文化”的虚伪，我们“文化”的本能混杂，后者把精巧者与富有者、迟暮者与伟大者混为一谈。第四，我只攻击那些排除了任何个人差异、没有任何恶劣经验之背景的事物。相反，攻击在我这里乃是善意的证明，或许也是感恩的证明。我把我的名字与某个东西、某个人的名字联系起来，以此来表达我的尊重和赞扬：赞成抑或反对——这在我看来都是一样的。如果说我对基督教宣战，那是我有权这样做，因为在这个方面，我还未尝经历过不幸和阻碍——最严肃的基督徒也总是对我表示了友善。我本人绝对是基督教的死敌，我决不至于把千百年来厄运添加到个人身上。

八

我胆敢再指出自己天性中的最后一个特征么？这个特征使我在与他人打交道时麻烦不小、困难不少。我有一种完全不可名状的清洁本能的敏感，以至于我能在生理上感知到——嗅到——每个心灵的切近之处，或者——我该怎么来说呢？每个心灵最内在的东西，每个心灵的“内脏”……以此敏感，我就有了心理上的触角，借以触摸和掌握任何秘密：有些人物骨子里有许多隐蔽的污垢，也许是由坏血统决定的，但通过教育得到了掩饰，我几乎一接触就能把它们看清楚。如果说我正确进行了观察，那么，我的清洁感所不能忍受的这些人物，他们本身也会感受到我的厌恶的谨慎，而他们并没有因此变得芳香一些……正如我向来已经习惯了的——我对于自己的一种极端的纯净要求，乃是我的此在的前提条件，在不干净的情况下我会丧命的——可以说我不断地在水中，在某种完全透明、光亮的元素中游泳、沐浴和嬉戏。这就使得我在与他人的交往中受了不小的耐心考验；我的人性的不在于同情人的存在方式，而是在于忍受我对人的同情……我的人性的乃是一种持久的自我克制。——然而我需要孤独，也就是说，我需要康复、回归自我，需要呼吸一种自由而轻松活泼的空气……我的整部《查拉图斯特拉如是说》就是一首赞美孤独的酒神颂歌，或者，如果人们理解了我，就是一首赞美清洁的酒神颂歌……幸好它不是赞美纯粹的愚蠢的。——富有色彩感的人会把这本书称为金刚石般。——对人类、对“痞子”的厌恶，始终是我最大的危险……你们愿意来听听查拉图斯特拉谈论厌恶之解脱时所讲的话吗？

然则我出了事？我如何来解脱厌恶呢？谁使我的眼睛变得年轻了？我怎样飞到了那个高处，那个不再有流氓痞子坐在井泉旁的高处？

难道是我的厌恶本身为我提供了飞翔的翅膀和预感泉源的力量吗？真的，我必须飞到最高处，才能重新找到欢乐的源泉！

呵，弟兄们，我找到了它！在这里，在最高处，欢乐的源泉向我涌流！而且有一种生命，没有一个流氓痞子共饮之！

欢乐之泉呵，你几乎涌来得太猛烈！而且，因为你想要把杯子注满，你常常又把杯子倒空！

我还必须学会更谦卑地接近你：我的心太过猛烈地向你喷涌——

我的心啊，我的夏天就在我心上燃烧，这个短促、炎热、忧郁、极度快乐的夏天：我的夏天之心是多么渴望你的清凉！

我那春天踌躇的悲伤过去了！我那六月雪花的恶毒过去了！我已经完全成了夏天和夏天的正午！

一个至高的夏天，带着清凉的泉水和福乐的宁静：呵，我的朋友们，来吧，让这份宁静变得更福乐！

因为这就是我们的 高空和我们的家乡：对于所有不洁者及其渴望来说，我们在此居住得太高太陡峭了。

朋友们啊，只管把你们纯洁的眼光投向我那欢乐的源泉！它怎会因此变得浑浊呢？它当以它的 纯洁对你们微笑。

我们在未来树上建筑我们的窝巢，而鹰当为我们这些孤独者叼来食物！

真的，没有那些不洁者可以分享的食物！他们会误以为自己吞了火焰，烧了自己的嘴！

真的，我们在此根本没有为不洁者们准备住所！对于他们的肉体和精神来说，我们的幸福或许就是一个冰洞！

我们愿意像狂风一般生活在他们之上，与鹰为邻，与雪为邻，与太阳为邻——狂风就是这样生活的。

有朝一日，犹如一阵风，我还要吹到他们中间，以我的精神夺取他们精神的呼吸——我的未来就愿意如此。

真的，查拉图斯特拉乃是席卷一切低地的狂风；对于自己的敌人 and 所有吐唾沫者，他给出这样的忠告：“当心呵，不要逆风而唾！”……

[1] 德语原文为“ich sage kein Wort zu wenig”，意为“我不得不说，我必须承认”。（说明：书中脚注除特别标明之外，均为译者注。）

[2] 杜林（Eugen Dühring，1833-1921）：德国哲学家，柏林大

学讲师，因批评德国大学制度而被剥夺授课资格。恩格斯曾撰《反杜林论》，批判杜林的社会主义思想。

[3] 1英尺约等于0.3米。——编者注

[4] 此处“恶意”（der böse Wille）亦可译为“恶的意志”。

[5] 此处“善意”（der gute Wille）亦可译为“善的意志”。

[6] 大卫·施特劳斯（David Strauss，1808-1874）：德国哲学家、新教神学家、青年黑格尔派代表人物之一。以对基督教的批判而著名。著有《耶稣传》《基督教教义》《旧信仰与新信仰》等。尼采于1873年发表第一篇《不合时宜的考察》，“施特劳斯”成为批判对象。

我为什么如此聪明

—

——我为什么知道得多一些呢？我究竟为什么如此聪明？我从未思索过那些不成问题的问题——我未曾挥霍过自己。——例如，我不是根据经验来认识真正的宗教困难的。我完全没有觉察到在何种意义上我会是“有罪的”。同样的，我缺乏关于一种内疚或良心谴责的可靠标准：根据人们这方面所听说的东西，我觉得一种内疚并不是什么值得重视的东西……我不想事后对一种行动弃之不顾，我或许偏爱使坏的结局、结果从根本上摆脱价值问题。面对坏的结局，人们甚至太容易丧失掉对于所作所为的正确眼光：内疚在我看来是一种“坏眼光”。某个失败的东西，正因为它失败了，所以才更应该受到尊重——这更合乎我的道德观。——“上帝”“灵魂不朽”“拯救”“彼岸”，纯属我不予关注，也没有为之消耗过时间的概念，即便在我孩童时代也没有——也许在这方面我从来就不曾有足够的孩子气？——我完全没有把无神论认作结果，更没有把它认作事件：就我来说，它是由本能而来的，这不言而喻。我太好奇、太成问题、太傲慢，以至于不会让自己将就于一个粗野的答案。上帝是一个粗野的答案，是对我们思想家的一种不体贴——根本上甚至只是对我们的一种粗野的禁令：你们不该有思想！我感兴趣的是一个完全不同的问题，“人类的得救”更多地系于这个问题，而不是系于某种神学家的稀奇古怪：那就是营养问题。方便起见，人们可以这样来表述这个问题：“为了达到你力量的最大值，以及文艺复兴的理性意义上的德性、非伪善的德性的最大值，你应该如何进食呢？”——在这方面，我自己的经验糟糕至极；我感到诧异，这么迟才听说这个问题，这么迟才从此类经验中学会了“理性”。唯有我们一文不值的德国教养——它的“唯心主义”——才在某种程度上向我说明了，为什么我恰恰在这方面落伍到了“极点”。这种“教养”自始就教导我们彻底无视实在性，去追逐那些彻底成问题的所谓“理想的”目标，例如一种所谓的“古典教养”——仿佛从一开始就注定要把“古典的”和“德国的”在一个概念中统一起来！更有甚者，这效果有点搞笑——人们来设想一下一个“有古典教养的”莱比锡人吧！——实际上，直到我十分老成的年纪，我一直都吃得很不好——用道德说法，就是“无个人的”“忘我的”“无私的”，对厨师和其他基督徒同人无不益处。举例说，通过莱比锡的烹调，同时加上我最初对叔本华的研读（1865年），我十分严肃地否定了自己的“求生意志”。要达到营养不良的目的，同时还要把自己的肠胃败坏掉——在我看来，

莱比锡的烹调能令人惊奇地、出色地解决这个难题。（有人说在这方面，1866年出现了一个转折。）可是，一般德国烹调——莫非它不要负一点儿责任！饭前3汤，在十六世纪的意大利烹调书上，它还被叫作德意志风格 [7]；煮得烂熟的肉，做得又腻又稠的蔬菜；甜食蜕变为硬邦邦的镇纸！如若人们竟还算上老德国人，绝不只是老3德国人的简直野兽般的饭后狂饮需要，那么，人们也就能理解德国精神的起源了——源自郁闷的内脏……德国精神乃是一种消化障碍，它对付不了什么。——与德国的饮食相比，甚至与法国的饮食相比，英国的饮食乃是一种“向自然的回归”，亦即回归到原始吃法；但即便这种饮食也深深地违逆我自己的本能；在我看来，它是给了精神一双笨重的脚——英国女人的脚……最佳的烹调乃是皮埃蒙特的烹调。——酒精对我是有害的，一天一杯葡萄酒或啤酒就完全够了，就足以把我的生命搞成“苦海”——在慕尼黑生活着我的对跖者。假如说我明白这一点稍稍迟了些，那么，真正说来我从儿童时代起就对此有体验了。少年时我相信，喝酒与抽烟一样开始只是年轻男人的一种虚荣，后来就成了一种坏习惯。也许，这个酸涩的判断也要部分地归咎于瑙姆堡的葡萄酒。相信葡萄酒令人兴奋，那我必定是一个基督徒了，即是相信恰恰对我来说成为一种荒谬的东西。足够稀奇的是，小小几罐高度稀释的酒会使情绪极端变坏，而在这种可能情况下，如若喝的是烈3酒，那我就差不多会成为水手了。少年时代的我在这方面就有过勇猛表现。通宵写一篇拉丁文的长文，并且还要把它誊清一遍，在文笔方面满怀雄心，要模仿我的榜样撒路斯提乌斯 [8] 的严谨和简洁，把若干杯烈性的格罗格酒 [9] 泼向我的拉丁文；早在我做声誉卓著的舒尔普福塔中学学生时，这种做法就根本不会与我的生理相冲突，也许也不会与撒路斯提乌斯的生理相冲突——然而却有悖于声誉卓著的舒尔普福塔中学……后来，接近生命之半，我确实越来越严厉地反对任何“含酒精的”饮料：我，一个基于经验的反素食主义者，完全像使我发生转变的理查德·瓦格纳一样，不知道充分严肃地劝告所有较有才智的 [10] 人无条件地戒酒。有水3就够了……我偏爱那些地方，在那里，人们处处有机会从潺潺清泉里汲水（尼斯、都灵、塞尔斯）；一小瓶水伴随着我，犹如一只狗尾随着我。酒后吐真言（*In vino veritas*） [11]：看来，在这里关于“真理”的概念，我又与所有人大不相同了——在我这里，精神漂浮在水3上……我的道德观中还有若干个指示。一顿饱餐比一次小食更容易消化。整个胃都活动起来，这是良好消化的首要条件。人们必须知道自己胃的大小。基于同样的理由，要劝告大家勿吃费时的膳食，我称之为中断的献祭节，那种客饭上的膳食。——勿吃正餐间的零食，不喝咖啡：咖啡是令人阴郁的。茶3只有在早间才是有益的。少一点儿，但要浓；茶只要淡一点儿，就很有害，会使人整天病恹恹的。在这方面，人人都有自己的尺度，往往处于极狭隘和极细微的界限内。在一种让人十分厌烦的气候当中，不宜

一上来就喝茶，应该在喝茶前一个小时就开始喝一杯脱油的浓可可。——尽可能少坐3；别相信任何不是在野外、在自由运动中产生的思想，在这种思想中连肌肉也欢庆不起来。一切偏见皆来自内脏。——我已经说过一回，坐功乃是违逆圣灵的真正罪恶。

二

与营养问题紧密联系在一起的是地方 和气候 问题。没有人能随意地四海为家；而且，谁若必须完成那些向他全部精力挑战的伟大使命，那么，他在这方面甚至只有一个十分狭隘的选择。气候对于新陈代谢的影响，它的阻碍，它的加速，到了这样一个地步，以至于在地方和气候上的一个差错，不仅可能使人疏离于自己的使命，而且还可能对他隐瞒这种使命：他从来都看不到这种使命。在他身上从来都没有足够多的动物元气，让他获得那种涌入至高精神领域的自由，并且让人们认识到：这事 只有我能做到……一种还十分渺小的内脏惰性成了坏习惯后，就完全足以把一种天才变成某个平庸的东西，某个“德国式的东西”；光是德国的气候就足以使强壮的甚至英武的内脏沮丧不堪了，新陈代谢的速度与精神脚步3的灵活性或迟钝性密切相关；“精神”本身其实只是这种新陈代谢的方式之一。我们可以罗列出有卓越才智的人出现和出现过的地方，在那里诙谐、精巧、恶毒属于幸福，天才几乎都必然要以此为家：那些地方全都有一种特别干燥的空气。巴黎、普罗旺斯、佛罗伦萨、耶路撒冷、雅典——这些地名证明了某个东西：天才都取决于 干燥的空气，取决于清澈的天空——也就是说，取决于快速的新陈代谢，取决于总是一再能为自己输送大量的力甚至巨量的力的可能性。我还清楚地记得一种情况，一位生性优秀而自由的人物，只是由于缺乏气候方面的本能之精细，就变得褊狭、躲躲闪闪，变成了专家和牢骚满腹者。倘若不是疾病迫使我变得理性，迫使我去思索实在中的理性，那么，我自己最后也可能沦于这种情况中。如今，基于长期的训练，我能在自己身上解读出气候和气象起源的影响，就像从一个十分精细而可靠的仪器中解读出来；光是一次短途旅行，比如从都灵到米兰，我就能从自己的生理上推算出空气湿度的变化——我于是不无恐惧地想到这样一个可怕的事实，即：除了最近十年，那有生命危险的岁月，我的生命总是只在一些错误的、于我简直是禁地的地方度过的。瑙姆堡，舒尔普福塔，整个图林根，莱比锡，巴塞尔——许多地方都是我生理上的不祥之地。如果我对自己的整个童年和青年压根儿没有什么好的回忆，那么，在此提出所谓“道德的”原因或许是一种愚蠢——诸如无可争议地缺乏充足的社交：因为这种缺乏至今一仍其旧，但未曾阻碍我成为快乐而勇敢的。相反，生理方面的无知——那种该死的“唯心论” [12] ——是我生命中真正的厄运，是我生命中多余的和愚蠢的东西，从中长不出任何东西，对此没有任何平衡、任何抵消。根据这种“唯心论”的后果，我为

自己解释了一切失误，一切本能的大迷误和“谦逊”使我偏离了自己生命的使命，例如，我成了语文学家——为何不是至少做个医生或者别的某种启人眼目的东西呢？在巴塞尔时 [13]，我的全部精神食谱，包括白天的安排，是一种完全无意义的对超常精力的滥用，而没有以某种方式弥补消耗的力量，甚至也没有关于消耗和补偿的考虑。没有任何更精细的利己私心，没有某种命令式本能的任何保护，与任何人都等量齐观，那是一种“无私”，一种对自身与他人间距离的遗忘——这是我永远不能宽宥自己的。当我几乎走到终点时，或者说，因为我几乎走到了终点，我开始反思我生命中这种基本的非理性——那种“唯心论”。我的疾病才把我带向理性。

三

营养的选择，气候和地方的选择——第三条则是休养方式的选择，这一条是人们绝对不能弄错的。即使在这里，根据一种精神借以变得独特的程度，这种精神所被允许的东西，亦即对它来说有益的东西的界限，也是狭隘的，是相当狭隘的。就我的情形而言，一切阅读都是休养，因此都属于使我摆脱自己、让我漫游于陌生科学和陌生心灵之中的东西——属于我不再当真的东西。阅读恰恰使我从自己的严肃中得到休息。在我埋头工作的时候，人们在我这儿是看不到什么图书的：我要提防有人在我近处说话，抑或竟至于思考。而且这其实就是阅读了……人们真的已经观察到，在那种深度的张力中（孕育使精神，根本上就是使整个机体注定处于这种张力中），偶然事件和任何一种外来刺激都会产生过于猛烈的作用，过于深刻的“打击”？人们必须尽可能地回避偶然性和外来刺激；一种自我隔离属于精神孕育的头等的本能之聪明。我会允许一种异己的思想偷偷地翻过墙头吗？——而且这其实就是阅读了……在劳动和收获的季节之后，接着就是休养生息的时候了：来吧，你们这些惬意的书，你们这些富有才智的书，你们这些聪颖的书！——那是些德语书吗？……我必须回想半年前，当时我随手抓了一本书。那是一本什么书呢？——是维克多·布罗沙尔 [14] 的一项杰出研究，书名为《希腊怀疑论者》，在其中，我的《拉尔修》一文也得到了良好的利用。怀疑论者，乃是两面的甚至多面的哲学家族群当中唯一值得敬重的类型！通常我几乎总是乞灵于同一一些书，根本上量不在多，恰好对我来说是得到证明的书。阅读繁多杂乱，这也许不是我的风格——一个阅览室会使我生病的。爱好繁多而杂乱，也不是我的风格吧。我的本能中更多地包含着对新书的谨慎态度，甚至于敌视态度，而不是“宽容”、“宽宏大量”，以及别一种“博爱”……说到底，只有少量几个早年的法国人，是我总是一再要重提的：我只相信法国的教育，并把在欧洲通常被叫做“教育”的一切都看作误解，更不用说德国的教育了……我在德国碰到的少数几个具有高等教养的个案，全都有法国的渊源，特别是柯西玛·瓦格纳夫人，在

趣味和鉴赏力问题上绝对是我所知道的一流水准。……我不是读帕斯卡，而是爱3帕斯卡，作为基督教最有教益的牺牲品，他是被慢慢杀戮的，先是肉身，后是心理，这种最恐怖、无人道的残暴形式的全部逻辑；在精神上我带有蒙田式的恶作剧，谁知道呢？也许在身体上也有这种恶作剧；我的艺术鉴赏力为莫里哀、高乃依和拉辛等大家辩护，而对莎士比亚这样放荡的天才不免生出愤怒：这到底也并不排除，甚至最近的法国人在我看来也是一个有魅力的上流社会。我完全没有看出来，历史上有哪个世纪像在现在的巴黎一样，人们能淘出如此好奇又如此精明的心理学家，因为数量委实不小，我只好尝试性地列举若干，诸如保罗·布尔热、皮埃尔·洛蒂、吉普、美拉克、阿纳托尔·法朗士、朱尔·勒梅特利 [15] 等先生，或者为强调这个强大种族中的一员，我可以举出一位让我特别喜欢的地道的拉丁人，居伊·德·莫泊桑。私下里说说，我更喜欢这一代人，甚于他们伟大的导师，后者统统被德国哲学败坏掉了，例如丹纳先生，就是被黑格尔败坏掉的，致使他对于伟大人物和伟大时代产生了误解。德国所及之处，文化便受到败坏。战争才“拯救”了法国精神。……司汤达，那是我生命中最美好的偶然事件之一，因为在他身上划时代的一切东西都是偶然地被推到我这里的，而绝不是由人们推荐来的；

这个司汤达是完全不可估量的，以他那心理学家的先见之明，以他那对事实的把握能力，后者能让人想到最伟大事件的来临——根据爪子认出了拿破仑 [16]；最后，并非无关紧要的，作为诚实的无神论者，一个在法国难得的、几乎找不到的种类——普罗斯佩·梅里美的光荣。……也许我自己会嫉妒司汤达？他从我这里拿走了一个最美妙的无神论者的笑话，这笑话原本正是我会讲的：“上帝唯一的抱歉是他并不实存”。……不知在何处，我自己也说过：迄今为止对于人生此在的最大非难是什么？上帝也。……

四

海因里希·海涅给了我一个有关抒情诗人的至高概念。我在千百年来所有王国中徒劳地寻找一种既甜蜜又热烈的音乐。海涅具有那种神性的恶意，没有后者，我是不能设想完美之物的——我评价人类和种族的价值，所持的依据就是他们是否必然地懂得神与萨蒂尔不可分离。——还有，海涅是怎样运用德语的啊！有朝一日，人们终将说，海涅与我绝对是德国语言的头等艺术家——远远地超越了单纯的德国人用德语所做出的全部成就。——我必定与拜伦的曼弗雷德 [17] 极其相似：我在自己身上找到了所有这些深邃之处——我十三岁时就已经能读懂这本著作了。对于那些胆敢当着曼弗雷德的面讲出浮士德的人来说，我无话可说，只能冷眼以对了。德国人是无能于任何“伟大”概念的，舒曼就是一个明证。出于对这位甜腻腻的萨克森人的愤

怒，我专门为《曼弗雷德》谱写了一首相反的序曲，汉斯·冯·比洛 [18] 说过，他从未见过此等乐谱：此乃对欧忒耳珀 [19] 的强奸。——如果我要为莎士比亚寻找我的至高公式，那么，我找到的始终只是这个公式：他构想了恺撒这个类型。人们猜不出此类人物——人们或者就是此类人物，或者不是此类人物。这个伟大的诗人只能根据自己的实在性来创造——乃至到了这样一个地步，即他此后再也受不了自己的作品……当我瞧一眼自己的《查拉图斯特拉如是说》之后，我就会在房间里来回走上半小时，无法控制一种难以忍受的啜泣的痉挛。——我不知道还有什么读物比莎士比亚更令人心碎的了：一个人必须受过多少苦，才至于这样急着当丑角啊！——人们理解哈姆莱特吗？使人发疯的不是怀疑，而是确信……然则人们必须是深刻的，必须是深渊，必须是哲学家，才能有这般感受……我们全都害怕真理……而且我承认：我本能地确定和确信，培根勋爵乃是这种可怕至极的文学的始作俑者、自虐者：美国那些糊涂虫和平庸者的可怜饶舌与我有何相干？但为最强大的幻景实在性所需要的力量，不仅是与最强大的行动之力量、巨大行动之力量、犯罪之力量相合拍的——而且前者是以后者为前提的……我们长期对培根勋爵——从大的字面意义上讲，他是第一位实在论者——了解得不够，以至于不知道他都做了些什么，曾想做些什么，亲身经历了些什么……见鬼去吧，我的批评家先生们！假如我给自己的查拉图斯特拉取了个异样的名字，例如取理查德·瓦格纳之名，那么，恐怕两千年的洞察力也不足以猜出，《人性的，太人性的》的作者竟是查拉图斯特拉的幻影……

五

这里谈到我生命的康复问题，我有必要来说一句，以表达对那件绝对最深刻、最真挚地使我的生命康复的事体的感谢。这件事体毫无疑问就是我与理查德·瓦格纳的亲密交往。我的人际关系的其余部分都是低劣而廉价的；无论如何，我都不想把在特里普森 [20] 的日子从我的生命中抹去，那是信赖、明朗、高雅而意外的日子——有深刻瞬间的日子……我不知道其他人与瓦格纳在一起体验到了什么：我们的天空上从来没有飘过乌云。——而且由此我还要再次提到法国——对瓦格纳信徒以及那一伙人，我没有任何理由，而只剩轻蔑地撇一下嘴角了；那伙人以为，发现瓦格纳与他们相像，那就是尊敬瓦格纳了……正如我所说的那样，在我最深刻的本能中，我与一切德国的东西是格格不入的，以至于光是与某个德国人接近就会影响我的消化；我与瓦格纳的第一次接触也是我生命中的第一次畅快呼吸：我把他当作外国，当作对立面，当作对一切“德国德性”的切实抗议来感受和尊敬——我们曾在五十年代的泥淖之气中度过了童年，对于“德国的”这个概念来说，我们必然是悲观主义者；根本上我们只可能成为革命者——我们不会容许伪君子 甚嚣尘上的事物状态。这个伪君子今天是否

玩弄不同色彩，他是否穿上鲜红衣裳，着一身骑兵制服，在我都是完全无关紧要的……好吧！瓦格纳是一位革命者——他逃离了德国人……作为一个欧洲艺术家，人们除了在巴黎别无家园；在构成瓦格纳艺术之前提的全部五种艺术感觉中，那种精巧，那种对细微差异的感触，心理上的病态，是只有在巴黎才能找到的。在别的任何地方，人们都没有这样一种追问形式的激情，这样一种对舞台布置的严肃认真——此乃卓绝的巴黎式的严肃认真。在德国，人们对于存活在巴黎艺术家心灵中的宏大志向竟毫无概念。德国人是好心肠的——瓦格纳完全不是好心肠的……但关于瓦格纳归属何方，他与谁最有亲缘关系，我已经说得够充分的了（参见《善恶的彼岸》）：他属于法国的后期浪漫派，那种好高骛远和飞黄腾达的艺术家，诸如德拉克洛瓦 [21]，诸如柏辽兹 [22]，具有病态的实质，本质上不可救药，纯属表达上的狂热者，是彻头彻尾的技巧名家……到底谁是瓦格纳的头一个富有才智的追随者呢？是夏尔·波德莱尔 [23]，正是此人首先理解了德拉克洛瓦，那个让整整一代艺术家重新认识了自己的典型颓废者——也许他也是最后一个 [24]……我从来没有原谅瓦格纳的是什么呢？就是他屈尊俯就德国人——就是他成了德意志王国的了……德国所及之处，它就败坏了文化。 [25]

六

经过全面衡量后，我会说，倘若没有瓦格纳音乐，我大抵是挨不过青年时代的。因为我注定要成为德国人了。如果有人想摆脱一种难以忍受的压力，那他就必须吸大麻。好吧，我是必须有瓦格纳的。瓦格纳乃是对付一切德国因素的卓绝的抗毒药——也是毒药，这一点我是不会否认的……从我听到《特里斯坦》钢琴曲的那一刻起——真叫我佩服啊，比洛先生！——我就成了瓦格纳信徒了。瓦格纳早期的作品在我看来比较差劲——还太平庸，太“德国气”了……不过，我如今还在寻找一部作品，具有与《特里斯坦》一样惊险的魅力，一样可怕而甜蜜的无限性。我在所有艺术中寻找，却徒劳无功。听到《特里斯坦》的第一个音符，列奥纳多·达·芬奇的全部奇异性就失去了魔力。这部作品绝对是瓦格纳的无以复加的一部；以《名歌手》和《指环》，瓦格纳得以从前一作品中恢复过来了，变得更加健康——对于瓦格纳这样的人物，却是一种倒退……生逢其时，又恰好生活在德国人中间，成熟到足以对付这部作品——这一点，我把它视为头等幸事：在我身上，心理学家的好奇心扩展到了这步田地。对于这个从未病得足够厉害，足以适应这种“地狱欢乐”的人来说，世界是贫困的：要允许、差不多要禁止在这里动用一种神秘主义的套话。——我想，我比无论谁都更好地知道瓦格纳所能做到的惊人之举，那奇异而令人狂喜的五十重世界，除了瓦格纳没有人能飞向那儿；而且，我是足够强大的，足以把最可疑和最危险的东西转变为对我依然有益的东西，

从而让我变得更强大，我也把瓦格纳称为我生命中的大善人。我们俩是有亲缘关系的，那就是，我们遭受了深深的痛苦，包括相互间的伤害，比这个世纪人类所能遭受的更深重；这样一种亲缘关系将使我们的名字永远联系在一起；而且无疑地，在德国人中间，瓦格纳一直被误解了，我诚然也是这样，并将永远如此。——首先要有两百年的心理和艺术训练，我的日耳曼先生们！……然而这是人们无法弥补的。

七

——对于听力极其敏锐的人们，我还要来说一句话：从音乐中我到底想要什么。音乐要欢快而深沉，有如十月的一个午后。音乐要独特、狂放、温柔，像一个甜蜜的小女子，风流而妩媚……我决不会允许自己说，一个德国人能够知道音乐是什么。人们所谓的德国音乐家，特别是其中荦荦大者，都是些外国人，诸如斯拉夫人、克罗地亚人、意大利人、荷兰人——或者是犹太人；在别的情形下，属于强大种族的德国人，是绝种了的德国人，比如海因里希·许茨、巴赫和亨德尔。我自己始终还是波兰人，与肖邦相比，足以为音乐做出零星的贡献：基于三个理由，我把瓦格纳的《西格弗里德牧歌》排除在外，兴许也包括李斯特，后者在高贵的管弦乐音调方面超出了所有的音乐家；最后还有在阿尔卑斯山另一边成长起来的一切——这一边……我不会错失罗西尼，更不会错失我的南方音乐，我的威尼斯大师彼得·加斯特。而且，当我说阿尔卑斯山另一边时，我真正指的就是威尼斯。如果我要为音乐寻求另一个词，那么，我寻找的始终只是“威尼斯”一词。我不知道区分眼泪与音乐，但我懂得如何思考幸福，思考南方，不无恐惧的战栗。

不久前，在一个黑黝黝的夜里

我站在桥边。

从远处传来了歌声：

金色的水珠涌出

消失在颤动不已的水面。

游艇、灯光、音乐——

沉醉地融入暮色中……

我的灵魂，一曲弦乐，

被不可见地拨动，
暗自唱起一首游艇之歌，
因为缤纷的福乐而战栗。

——可有人聆听这首歌？…… [26]

八

在所有这一切当中——营养、地方、气候和休养的选择——起统率作用的乃是一种自我保存的本能，后者最清晰地表现为自我防卫的本能。不看许多事物，不听许多东西，不让许多东西靠近——这是头等聪明，是第一个证据，证明人们并不是一种偶然，而是一种必然。表示这种自卫本能的通用词语乃是鉴赏力。它的命令不仅在肯定成了一种“无私忘我”的地方要求说“不”，而且也要求尽可能地少说“不”。要离开、告别那些总是一再需要我们说“不”的东西。个中道理在于，防卫支出（即便还那么小）变成常规和习惯后，会引起一种超常的、完全多余的贫困化。我们的大支出是由最平常的小支出组成的。抵御、不让事物靠近，这是一种支出——对此人们可不要自欺欺人——一种为了消极的目的而被挥霍的力量。只有在不断的防卫需要中，我们才可能十分虚弱，再也不能保卫自己了。——假如我走出家门，发现置身于一座德国小城，而不是在安静而高雅的都灵，我的本能就必定会阻止自己去压制一切从这个庸俗而卑鄙的世界向他袭来的东西。抑或，我发现置身于一座德国大城市，这种人造的恶俗之地，在那儿什么也长不出来，在那儿每一个事物，好东西和坏东西，都是被带进来的。难道我必得由此成为一只刺猬吗？——然而，身上有刺乃是一种浪费，甚至是一种加倍的奢侈——如果人们能选择不要刺而要张开的双手的话……

另一种聪明和自我防卫就是要尽可能少做反应，要躲避那样一些形势和状况，在其中，人们注定要仿佛卸掉自己的“自由”、自己的原创力，变成一种单纯的反应剂。让我拿与书的交道做比喻吧。根本上只会“翻阅”书籍的学者——一个平庸的语文学家一天可以翻阅约两百本书——最终会完全丧失掉独立思考的能力。若他不翻阅，他就不会思考了。当他思考时，他是在应答一种刺激（一种读到的想法）——他最终还只是做出反应而已。学者把他的全部精力都放在肯定和否定上面，放在对已经被思考的东西的批判上面——他自己不再思考了……自我防卫的本能在他身上已经变得软弱无力了；在别的情形下，他是会抵触书籍的。学者——一种颓废者。——我曾亲见到这样一种情况：有天赋、富有而自由的人物在三十岁时就已经“因读书而蒙羞”，只还剩下一些需要摩擦才能产生火花——即“思想”——的火

柴。——天色破晓的大清早，一切皆清新，人的精力处于朝霞中，此时读书——我称之为恶习！

九

在这里，再也不能回避对“人如何成其所是”这个问题的真正回答了。而且，由此我就接触到了自我保存——自私自利——的艺术方面的杰作……因为假定使命、规定、使命之命运都明显超出了平均的标准，那么，或许就没有什么危险比看见自己负3此使命更大的了。人成其所是，前提是入压根儿就不知道人是什么。基于这个观点，即使是生命中的失误也有其本身的意义和价值，诸如暂时的歧途和邪路、迟疑不决、“谦逊”、在远离那唯一使命的各种任务上面挥霍掉的严肃认真。这里可能表达出一种伟大的聪明，甚至于是最高的聪明：凡在“认识你自己”（*nosce te ipsum*）或许会导致毁灭的药方的地方，自我遗忘、自我误解、自我缩小、自我狭隘化、自我平庸化就会变成理性本身。用道德说法来讲就是：博爱，为他人和他物而生活，可能是维持最强的自身性的保护法则。有一种例外，就是我反对自己的法则和信念而袒护“忘我”本能：在这里，这种本能是为自私自利、自我约束效力。——人们必须维持整个意识表层——意识乃是一种表层——的纯洁性，使之远离无论何种伟大的绝对命令。甚至要小心提防任何大话，任何伟大的姿态！真正的危险乃是本能过早地“理解自己”——此间，那种组织化的、能胜任统治的“理念”在深处不断生长起来——它开始发号施令，它慢慢地把我们从歧途和邪路上引回来；它为个别的品质和才能做准备，后者有朝一日将证明自己作为达到整体的手段是不可或缺的——在还没有透露某种有关主导使命、“目标”、“目的”、“意义”的东西之前，它就按顺序造就了全部效力的能力。——从这个方面来看，我的一生简直是十分美妙的。对于价值之重估的使命来说，也许需要更多的能力，甚于向来在某个个体身上集中起来的，尤其是，甚至需要那些对立的而非相互干扰和相互破坏的能力。能力的等级；距离感；分离而非相互为敌的艺术；不把任何东西混淆起来，不把任何东西“调和”起来；一种巨大的繁多但又不是混沌不堪——此乃我的本能的先决条件，是我的本能的隐秘工作和艺术家气质。我的本能的更高保护相当强烈地显示出来，以至于我甚至都猜度不了什么东西在我身上生长——有一天，我全部的能力突然成熟了，以其最终的完美性爆发出来了。我记不起来自己何时曾努力奋斗——无法证明在我的一生中有丝毫拼搏的痕迹，我是一种英雄本性的对立面。“意愿”什么，“追求”什么，盯着某个“目的”、某个“愿望”——基于我的经验，这些都是我所不知道的。即使在眼下这个时刻，我展望自己的将来——一种宽广的将来！——依然犹如展望平静的海面：没有任何渴望会在海面上泛起涟漪。我根本没想要某物改变自己；我本人也不想自己变得不一样。然而，我一直就是这样生活过

来的。我不曾有任何愿望。有谁人能在四十四岁之后说，他从来没有为荣誉、为女人和金钱奋斗过啊！——我不至于缺这些东西……所以，举例说，有一天我成了大学教授——此类事情我是从来都没有想过的，因为我当时还不到二十四岁。而在两年前，我有一天突然就做了语文学家：因为我的第一篇语文学论文（在任何意义上它都是我的开端）应我导师李彻尔 [27] 的要求，刊于他的《莱茵博物馆》杂志上。（李彻尔——我怀着敬意说到这个名字——他是我迄今见过的唯一天才的学者。他具有那种令人惬意的迂腐之气，此乃我们图林根人的特点，它甚至使一个德国人也变得讨人喜欢了——为了通达真理，我们甚至宁愿选择隐秘小径。以上面这番话，我完全没有低估我那位亲近的老乡，那个聪3明的利奥波德·冯·兰克 [28] ……）

十

在这里急需一种宏大的沉思。人们会问我，我到底为什么要来叙述这些微不足道的、以习惯的判断来说无关紧要的小事情；如果我注定要去担当伟大的使命，那么，我就愈加会因此伤害自己。答案是：这些微不足道的小事情——营养、地方、气候、休养、关于自私自利的全部决疑论辩——超出所有的概念，比迄今为止人们视为重要的一切还更重要。恰恰在这里，人们必须开始重新学习。人类以往严肃考量过的东西，甚至都不具有实在性，而是纯粹的想象虚构，严格说来，就是谎言，来自病态的、在深刻意义上有害的天性的坏本能——诸如“上帝”“灵魂”“德性”“罪”“彼岸”“真理”“永生”等所有概念……可是，人们却在其中寻求人类天性的伟大和“神性”……有关政治、社会制度、教育方面的所有问题，彻头彻尾都是被伪造出来的，因为人们把最有害的人物视为伟人——因为人们教人蔑视“微不足道的”小事情，就是说，蔑视生命本身中的基本事件……我们今天的文化是有高度歧义的……德国皇帝与教皇同流合污，仿佛教皇不是生命之死敌的代表似的！……今天建造起来的東西，三年后就不再存在了。——如果我对自己的衡量是根据我能够做什么，且不说是根据我背后出现的东西，一种颠覆，一种无与伦比的建构，那么，我就比任何一个凡人都更能要求享有“伟大”一词。如果我现在把自己与以往被尊为一流人物的人做一番比较，那么，个中差异是显而易见的。我根本就不把这些所谓的“一流人物”算作人——对我来说，他们是人类的渣滓，是病态和复仇本能的怪胎：他们纯属灾难性的、不可救药的、对生命进行报复的非人……我要成为他们的对立面：我的优先权在于拥有对健康本能之全部征兆的至高敏感。我身上没有任何病态的特性；即使在病重期间，我也没变成病态的；要在我的本性中找到一种狂热的特性，那是徒劳的。人们无法向我证明，在我生命中的任何时刻里有过一种狂妄或者悲怆的态度。姿态上的激情不属于伟大；谁竟需要故作姿态，他就是虚伪的……小心提防所有诗情画意的人啊！——当生活向

我要求最艰难的东西时，生活对我来说就变得轻松了，变得最轻松不过了。谁在今年秋天的七十天里看见我以一种对千秋万代负责的心情，不停地做着——或者示范着——头等重要、无人能模仿的大事，那么，他是感受不到我身上有任何紧张样子的，而倒是有一种充沛的活力和快乐。我从来没有吃得这样惬意过，我从来没有这样好睡过。——我不知道除了游戏，还能用别的什么法子去应对伟大的使命：此乃伟大之标志，是一个根本性的前提。最小的强制，阴沉沉的面色，某种拙劣的嗓音，全都是对一个人的抗议，更是对他的事业和作品的抗议！……人们不该厚脸皮……连忍受孤独也是一种抗议——我始终只忍受“繁复” [29] ……早先一个时候（早得有点荒唐了），七岁那年，我已经知道，我是永远达不到人类的话语的：可曾有人看见我为此而忧伤吗？——直到今天，我依然对每个人都同样地平易近人，我甚至对最低等的人们都怀有完全的敬意：总之，没有一点儿傲慢，没有一点儿隐秘的轻蔑。我蔑视谁，谁就会透露出他被我蔑视了：通过我单纯的此在，我激怒了体内流着坏血液的一切……我表示人类之伟大的公式是热爱命运：人们别无所愿，不愿前行，不愿后退，永远不。不要一味忍受必然性，更不要隐瞒之——所有理想主义在面对必然性时都不外乎是谎言——而是要热爱之……

[7] 原文为意大利文“alla tedesca”。

[8] 撒路斯提乌斯，全名为撒路斯提乌斯·克里斯波（Gaius Sallustius Crispus，公元前86-前35），古罗马历史学家，著有《喀提林阴谋》《朱古达战争》《历史》等。

[9] 格罗格酒（Grog）：掺热水的朗姆烈酒。

[10] 此处“较有才智的”与前句中的“含酒精的”为同一个词geistig。

[11] 拉丁短语，按字面直译为“酒中有真理”。

[12] 此处“唯心论”（idealismus）或可译为“理想主义”。

[13] 指尼采担任巴塞尔大学古典语文学教授的十年。

[14] 维克多·布罗沙尔（Victor Brochard，1884-1907）：法国哲学家，著有《希腊怀疑论者》等。

[15] 保罗·布尔热（Paul Bourget，1852-1935）：法国小说家和评论家。皮埃尔·洛蒂（Pierre Loti，1850-1923）：法国作家，以描写风光和景物著称。吉普（Gyp，1850-1932）：法国女作家。美拉克（Meilhac，1831-1897）：法国戏剧家。阿纳托尔·法朗士（Anatole France，1844-1924）：法国作家。朱尔·勒梅特尔

(Jules Lemaître , 1853-1914) : 法国小说家。

[16] 此处短语“ex ungue Napoleonem”仿照拉丁文习语“ex ungue leonem”，原意为“从爪子认出了狮子”，引申为“窥一斑而知全豹”。

[17] 曼弗雷德 (Manfred) 是拜伦作于1817年的同名诗剧中的主人公。

[18] 汉斯·冯·比洛 (Hans von Bülow , 1830-1894) : 德国指挥家、音乐教育家。

[19] 欧忒耳珀 (Euterpe) : 希腊神话中的音乐女神和抒情诗女神。

[20] 特里普森 (Tribtschen) : 瓦格纳在瑞士的住处，尼采一度经常拜访他。

[21] 德拉克洛瓦 (Delacroix , 1798-1863) : 法国著名画家，浪漫主义画派的主要代表。

[22] 柏辽兹 (Berlioz , 1803-1869) : 法国著名作曲家，法国浪漫主义音乐的主要代表，与雨果、德拉克洛瓦并称为“法国浪漫主义三杰”。

[23] 夏尔·波德莱尔 (Charles Baudelaire , 1821-1867) : 法国著名现代派诗人，象征主义的先驱人物，代表作有《恶之花》《巴黎的忧郁》等。

[24] 即最后一个富有才智的瓦格纳追随者。

[25] 此句引自上文第三节。

[26] 此节文字可参看《尼采反瓦格纳》之“间奏曲”。

[27] 李彻尔 (Ritschl , 1806-1876) : 德国古典语文学家，尼采在莱比锡大学学习时的导师。

[28] 利奥波德·冯·兰克 (Leopold von Ranke , 1795-1865) : 德国历史学家，著有《拉丁与条顿民族史》《宗教改革时期德意志史》等。

[29] 此处“繁复” (vielsamkeit) 与前句的“孤独” (einsamkeit) 相对。

我为什么能写出如此好书

—

我自己是一回事，我的著作是另一回事。——在这里，在谈论我的著作之前，我先要来说说这些著作何以得到理解或者得不到理解的问题。我如此漫不经心地做这件事，而这是以某种方式与此事合适的：因为根本还没有到谈论这个问题的时候。我自己的时代也尚未到来，有些人是死后才得以诞生的。——到某个时候，人们将不得不需要一些机构，人们在其中生活和说教就如同我理解的生活和说教一样；也许，甚至人们到那时也要开设专有的教席来阐释《查拉图斯特拉如是说》。可是，倘若我今天就指望人们来听取和接受我的真理，那或许是与我自己完全矛盾的：人们今天还不听取，人们今天还不懂接受我，这不仅是可理解的，而且在我看来本就是对的。我不愿被混为一谈，这也包括我不混淆自己。——再说一遍，在我的生活中，人们难以证明有什么“恶意”；连文字上的“恶意”，我也几乎举不出一个事例。相反，纯粹的蠢行却太多了……如果有人拿起我的一本书——我甚至假定他为此要脱掉鞋子，更不用说要脱掉靴子了——那么，在我看来，这就是人们能够向我表示的最稀罕的一个奖赏了……海因里希·冯·斯泰因博士有一次真诚地抱怨说，理解不了我的《查拉图斯特拉如是说》里的任何一句话，当时我就对他说，这就对了：弄懂了其中的六句话，也就是体验了其中的六句话，凡人就能提升到一个比“现代”人所能达到的更高的层次上了。有这种距离感的我，怎么可能指望我所认识的“现代人”来读我的书呢！我的成功刚好与叔本华的成功相反——我要说的是“我现在没有被阅读，将来也不会被阅读”（non legor, non legar）。——人们在否定我的著作时表现出来的天真无辜屡屡让我满足，我并不想低估这种满足感。还是在今年夏天，当时我也许能够以我重要的文学、太过重要的文学使其余的文学失去平衡，柏林大学的一位教授善意地暗示我，我得用另外一种形式：这种东西是没人读的。——最后，不是德国，而是瑞士，提供了两个极端的事例。维特曼博士 [30] 在《联邦报》上发表了一篇文章，是关于《善恶的彼岸》的，题为《尼采的一本危险的书》；还有，卡尔·施皮特勒先生 [31] 写的一篇关于我的书的总体报告，同样也发表在《联邦报》上面。这两篇文章乃是我一生中的极限——我要小心谨慎地说这个……举例来说，后者把我的《查拉图斯特拉如是说》当作“更高的风格尝试”，希望我今后也关心一下内容；维特曼博士则对我在努力取缔所有正派情感方面表现出来的勇气表示了敬重。——在

这里，通过一个偶然的小小诡计，每个句子都是顺理成章的，让我钦佩，但却是一种头足倒立的真理：根本上，人们什么也不用做，只要“重估”一切“价值”，就能以一种甚至值得注意的方式击中我的要害——用不着拿钉子钉进我的脑袋……我就越发要尝试一种说明了。——说到底，没有人能够从包括书本在内的事物中听到比他已经知道的更多的东西。凡是人们从自己的体验出发达不到的东西，人们是听不到的。现在让我们来想想一个极端的例子：一本书谈的是纯粹体验，后者完全处于一种常见的或者哪怕只是罕见的经验之可能性之外——这本书就是一种新的经验系列的第一语言。在这种情形下，干脆什么也听不到，由于听觉上的欺瞒，在什么也听不到的地方，就什么也不存在……这终究是我通常的经验吧，也可以说是我的经验的独特性。谁若以为已经理解了我的什么东西，他其实只是根据自己的形象编造了我的什么东西——当中不乏我的对立面，例如一个“理想主义者”；谁若对我毫无了解，他便会否认终究把我考虑在内了。——“超人”一词被用来表示一个至高的发育良好的类型，这种人对于“现代”人，对于“好”人，对于基督徒和其他的虚无主义者——该词出自查拉图斯特拉这个道德的毁灭者之口，成了一个十分令人深思的词语，几乎处处都完全无辜地被理解为那样一种价值，这种价值的对立面表现在查拉图斯特拉形象上，可以说表现为一个高等人的“理想主义”类型，半是“圣徒”，半是“天才”……因为这个词，另一个博学的、长角的畜生竟然怀疑我是达尔文主义者；甚至于在这个词中重又现出了那个违逆知识和意志的大骗子卡莱尔的“英雄崇拜”，那原是我深恶痛绝的。如若我低声细语地告诉某人，与其去寻找一个帕西法尔倒不如寻找一个恺撒·波尔查 [32]，那他是不会相信自己的耳朵的。——人们务必要原谅我，对于有关我的书的评论，尤其是报纸上的，我是没有任何好奇心的。我的朋友们、我的出版商是知道这一点的，他们不跟我谈论诸如此类的事。在某个特殊场合，我看见了关于我的一本书——《善恶的彼岸》——的全部指责；对此我或许得好好写一篇报道。《国民报》——普鲁士的一份报纸，为了告诉我的外国读者，恕我直言，我自己是只读《辩论报》的——极其严肃地把这本书理解为“时代的标志”，是地地道道的容克哲学，而对此，《十字报》[33] 只是缺乏勇气而已——人们该相信吗？……

二

上面是就德国人来说的：因为在别的地方，我到处都有读者——都是些出类拔萃的有识之士，都是些经受考验、受过高等地位和责任方面教育的人物；我的读者中甚至有真正的天才。在维也纳，在圣彼得堡，在斯德哥尔摩，在哥本哈根，在巴黎和纽约——到处都有人发现了我：而在欧洲的平原德国，我却没有被发现……而且，我承认，我更喜欢那些没有读过我的书的读者，他们既没有听说过我的名字，

也从来没有听说过“哲学”一词；但不论我走到哪儿，比如说在这儿，在都灵，人们一见到我，就都感到轻松愉快。迄今为止最让我得意的的事情是，那些市场上的老妇，她们在没有为我挑出最甜的葡萄之前是不会歇手的。到这步田地，人们就必定是哲学家了……不无道理地，人们把波兰人称为斯拉夫人中的法国人。一个迷人的俄国女子一刻都不会弄错我的归属。我做不到庄重严肃，我顶多会把这种庄重变成难堪……用德语思考，用德语感觉——我能做到一切，但这一点却超出了我的能力……我从前的老师李彻尔甚至于断言，我还像巴黎小说家一般来构思我的语文学文章——紧张得荒唐。即便在巴黎，人们也惊奇于“我所有的大胆和精细” [34] ——这是丹纳先生的说法——我担心，哪怕达到了酒神颂歌的最高形式，人们也会发现，我身上掺杂了那种永远不会变得愚蠢的——“德国式的”——精华，即精神……我别无所能。上帝助我啊！阿门。——我们全都知道，有些人甚至凭着经验就知道，长耳朵是什么意思。好吧，我敢断言我有着最短的耳朵。这一点甚至使女人们不无兴趣——我觉得，她们感觉我更好地理解了她们？……我是卓绝的反驴，因而是一个世界历史的怪物，——用希腊语来讲，而且不光是用希腊语来讲，我是敌基督者……

三

在某种程度上，我知道自己作为作家的特权；在个别情况下我也确信，习惯读我的著作是会“败坏”趣味和鉴赏力的。人们干脆再也受不了其他的书了，至少是受不了哲学书了。进入这样一个高贵而微妙世界，乃是一种无与伦比的荣誉——要做到这一点，绝不可能是一个德国人；说到底，这是人们一定已经获得的荣誉。但是，谁若通过意志的高度与我相近相类，他就能在这方面体验到学习的真正狂喜：因为我来自鸟儿从来都飞不到的高空，我知道还没有人误入其中的深渊。有人曾对我说，他对我的书爱不释手——我甚至打破了长夜的宁静……世上绝不会有更骄傲，同时也更精致的书了——它们在有些地方臻于地球的顶峰了，达到了犬儒主义的境界；人们必须同时用最温柔的手指和最勇敢的拳头来征服它们。任何脆弱的心灵都无缘于此，永远地，甚至连消化不良也不行：人们不能异想天开，人们必须有一个快乐的腹部。不光是心灵的贫困和褊狭使人不可能领会我的书，更要命的是内脏的怯懦、不洁、隐秘报复欲所造成的障碍：我说出的一个词语就能使人直面那些邪恶本能。在我的熟人当中有相当多的实验动物，在他们身上，我会感受到对我的著作的不同反应，那是一些富有教益的不同反应。谁若不想关心我的著作的内容，例如我的所谓朋友们，那就会成为“无个性的”：人们希望我有幸又走得“这么远”——也或许在腔调的更大明快方面有一个进步……这些恶习重重的“精灵”，“美好心灵”，彻头彻尾的骗子，他们绝对不知道怎样开始读这些书，因此他们就看不上这些书，这是所有“美好心灵”的美好逻辑。

我的熟人当中的这些笨牛蠢驴，恕我直言，就是纯粹的德国人，他们使我弄懂了，人们并非总是同意我的看法，但偶尔却是同意的，例如……甚至关于《查拉图斯特拉如是说》，我也听说过这样的话……同样地，人身上的任何“女性主义”，包括男人身上的“女性主义”，对我来说也是一种闭门羹：人们从来都不能进入这个大胆知识的迷宫。人们必须从来不顾惜自己，人们必须具有冷酷的习惯，方能在全然冷酷的真理当中感到愉快而明朗。如若要我设想一位完美读者的形象，那么总不外乎是一个有勇气和好奇心的怪物，此外还有某种坚韧、狡黠、谨慎的性格，一个天生的冒险家和发现者。最后，我不知道怎么来更好地言说，我根本上只跟谁说话，就像查拉图斯特拉所言：他只想跟谁叙述自己的谜团？

向你们，你们这些勇敢的探求者和冒险者，以及总是随狡猾的帆船在恐怖大海上航行的人啊——

向你们，你们这些沉醉于谜团者，欣喜于黄昏者，你们的灵魂被笛声引向每一个迷津——

因为你们不愿用胆怯的手摸索一根引线；而且，在你们能够猜解的地方，你们就仇视推断——

四

同时，我还要来约略说说自己的风格技巧。用符号（包括这种符号的速度）来传达一种状态，一种激情上的内在紧张——此即任何风格的意义；而且，鉴于我的内在状态的异乎寻常的多样性，在我这里也就有了多种风格可能性——那竟是一个人向来拥有过的最多样的风格技巧。任何优秀的风格，都要能真正传达某种内在状态，它通过符号，通过符号的速度，通过表情——所有周期性法则都是表情的艺术——概无错失。我的本能在这里是不会犯错的。——优秀的风格本身——那是一种纯粹的愚蠢，单纯的“唯心主义”，就好比“美本身”“善本身”“物本身”……此事总归还有一个前提假设，假设有听众存在——假设有这样一种人，他们能够产生同一种激情并且也配得上这种激情，假设并不缺乏我们可以对之传达自己的人们。——举例来说，我的查拉图斯特拉此间就还在寻找这种人——啊！他还得长久地寻找！——人们一定值得去倾听他……可直到那时，都不会有人能够把握我在其中运用的技巧：再也没有人运用过全新的、闻所未闻的、真正为此创造出来的艺术手段。有人说此类情况恰恰在德语中可能有，此种说法尚有待证明：我自己从前曾严厉地拒斥此说。在我之前，人们不知道能干些什么——说到底就是用语言能干些什么。——伟大韵律的技巧，周期性的伟大风格，以表达高贵的、超人的激情的一种巨大起落，这是我首先发明的；凭借一种酒神颂歌，好比《查拉

图斯特拉如是说》第三部 末节“七个印记” [35]，我就飞越以往所谓的诗歌千里之外了。

五

——我的著作中有一位无与伦比的心理学家 在发言，这也许是一位优秀的读者所达到的第一个见识——我应得的一个读者，他读我的书，就像优秀的老语文学家读贺拉斯的书一样。那些人人都能同意的句子，更不消说那些平凡的哲学家、道德家以及其他的笨蛋蠢货，在我看来都是幼稚的失误：例如那种信念，相信“不自私”与“自私”是对立面，而“自我”（ego）本身只是一种“更高的欺诈”，一种“理想”……既没有 自私的行为，也没有 不自私的行为：这两个概念在心理学上都是荒唐的。或者“人人都追求幸福”这个句子……或者“幸福是德性的报答”这个句子……又或者“痛苦与快乐是对立的”这样的句子……道德这个人类的妖精彻底地伪造了全部心理，把它们道德化了，臻于那种可怕的荒唐境地，以为爱情是某种“非自我、不自私的东西”……人们必须坚守自己，人们必须勇敢地独立自主，要不然人们就根本不可能爱。说到底，小女子们最清楚不过地知道这一点：她们对那些忘我的、纯客观的男人嗤之以鼻……附带插一句，我胆敢猜测自己是了解女人的吗？这是我的狄奥尼索斯嫁妆的一部分。谁知道呢？也许我就是永恒女性的第一位心理学家。她们全都爱我——这是一个老故事了：除了那些不幸的女人，那些不能生育的“被解放者”。——所幸我不愿意被人撕碎：完美的女人一旦恋爱，是会把人撕碎的……我知道这些可爱的狂野女人 [36]……啊！那是何等危险的、潜行的、隐秘的小小食肉动物！而与她们在一起，又是多么惬意呵！……一个力争报复的小女人或许会把命运本身撞倒。——女人要比男人凶恶无数倍，也比男人聪明无数倍；女人身上的善已然是一种蜕化形式了……尽管有种种所谓的“美好心灵”，但根本上还是存在着一种生理上的弊端，——我没有说全部，要不然我就会变成医学犬儒派 [37] 了。围绕平等权的斗争甚至就是一种疾病的征兆：每个医生都知道这一点。——的确，女人越是有女人味，就越是竭尽全力抵制一般权利：自然状态，两性间的永恒战争，确实绝对给予女人以头地位。——人们听到我给爱情下的定义了吗？这是值得一位哲学家来下的唯一定义。爱情——其手段是战争，其基础是两性间的殊死仇恨。——人们听见我关于如何治愈——“拯救”——女人这个问题的答案了吗？让她生个小孩。女人必须有小孩，而男人始终只是手段：查拉图斯特拉如是说。——“女性解放”——此乃失败 女人也即不孕女人对健全女人的本能仇恨——对“男人”的斗争始终只不过是手段、借口、策略。她们想通过抬高自己，成为“自在女人”，成为“高等女人”，成为女人中的“理想主义者”，由此来降低 女人的一般等级水平；为此，没有比人文中学教育、裤衩和政治上的投票畜生权利更可靠的手段了。根本上，获解

放者是“永恒女性”世界里的无政府主义者，是败类，她们最下作的本能就是复仇……极端恶毒的“理想主义”的整个种类——此外，这种“理想主义”也出现在男人身上，例如在易卜生“这个典型的老处女”那里——怀有毒害 性爱之自然本性的良心，以之为目标……而且，为了不让人怀疑我在这方面既正直又严格的信念，我还想根据自己反恶习的道德法典来传达一个定律：用恶习一词，我要与任何种类的反自然行为做斗争，或者如若人们喜欢漂亮辞令，那就是要与任何种类的理想主义做斗争。这个定律说的是：“贞洁之说教就是公然煽动反自然。任何一种对性生活的蔑视，任何用‘不洁’概念对性生活的玷污，本身都是对生命的犯罪，都是违反生命之神圣精神的真正罪恶。”

六

为了给出一个关于我之为心理学家的概念，且让我端出一门在《善恶的彼岸》中出现的古怪心理学——此外，我不允许人们对我此处描写的人物做任何推测。“心灵的天才，正如那伟大的隐秘者所具有的那样，诱惑者之神以及有良知的天生捕鼠者，其声音可以下达到每一个灵魂的深度世界里，他一言不发，一眼不看，在其中不会有一种引诱的顾盼和皱纹，其高超技艺也包括，他懂得表现——而且并不是表现为他所是的东西，而是表现为对跟随他的人来说更多的是一种强制力的东西，为的是愈来愈近地逼近他，愈来愈内在地、彻底地跟随他……心灵的天才，他使所有喧嚣和自满哑然失声，他教人服从，使粗野的灵魂平静下来，让它们品尝一种新的渴望——静静地躺着如一面镜子，使之映照出那深邃的天空……心灵的天才，他教会那鲁莽而急促的手变得踌躇，使之能更纤柔地去把握；他猜到隐蔽而被遗忘的财宝，在浑厚的冰层下面的点滴善良和甜蜜灵气，他是探寻长久地埋在深深泥沙之下的每一颗金子的魔杖……心灵的天才，跟他接触，每个人都可以满载而归，并非受了恩赐，得了惊喜，并非仿佛受了外来的财富而生出愉快或者沮丧之情，而是本身变得更富有，变得比从前更新鲜，洞开心扉，为一阵解冻的暖风所吹拂和窃听，也许更不可靠、更娇柔、更脆弱、更破碎，但却充满了无可名状的希望，充满了全新的意志和潮流，充满了全新的非意志和逆流……”

[30] 维特曼（V.Widmann，1842-1911）：瑞士作家、《联邦报》编辑。

[31] 卡尔·施皮特勒（Karl Spitteler，1845-1924）：瑞士诗人、小说家，1919年诺贝尔文学奖得主。

[32] 恺撒·波尔查（Cesare Borgia，1475-1507）：意大利文艺复兴时代的诸侯，瓦伦丁公爵，是教皇亚历山大六世与其情妇贾旦妮

之子。

[33] 《十字报》（*Kreuzzeitung*）：即《新普鲁士报》，因报头有醒目的黑十字而被称为《十字报》，1848-1939年在德国出版。

[34] 原文为法语“toutes mes audaces et finesses”。

[35] 参看尼采《查拉图斯特拉如是说》，中译本，孙周兴译，上海人民出版社，2009年，第295页以下。

[36] 此处“狂野女人”原文为Mänade，原义为酒神狄奥尼索斯的女祭司，转义为狂野女人。

[37] 此处“医学犬儒派”原文为medicynisch，意为“对医学愤世嫉俗的”。

‘Why do I know
a few *more* things?
Why am I so
clever altogether?

On this perfect day, when everything has become ripe and not only the grapes are growing brown, a ray of sunlight has fallen on to my life: I looked behind me, I looked before me, never have I seen so many and such good things together. Not in vain have I buried my forty- fourth year today, I was *entitled* to bury it – what there was of life in it is rescued, is immortal. The first book of the *Revaluation of all Values* , the *Songs of Zarathustra* , the *Twilight of the Idols*, my attempt to philosophize with a hammer – all of them gifts of this year, of its last quarter even! *How should I not be grateful to my whole life?* – And so I tell myself my life.

Why I Am so Wise

1

The fortunateness of my existence, its uniqueness perhaps, lies in its fatality: to express it in the form of a riddle, as my father I have already died, as my mother I still live and grow old. This twofold origin, as it were from the highest and the lowest rung of the ladder of life, at once *décadent* and *beginning* – this if anything explains that neutrality, that freedom from party in relation to the total problem of life which perhaps distinguishes me. I have a subtler sense for signs of ascent and decline than any man has ever had, I am the teacher *par excellence* in this matter – I know both, I am both. – My father died at the age of thirty- six: he was delicate, lovable and morbid, like a being destined to pay this world only a passing visit – a gracious reminder of life rather than life itself. In the same year in which his life declined mine too declined: in the thirty- sixth year of my life I arrived at the lowest point of my vitality – I still lived, but without being able to see three paces in front of me. At that time – it was 1879 – I relinquished my Basel professorship, lived through the summer like a shadow in St Moritz and the following winter, the most sunless of my life, *as a shadow* in Naumburg. This was my minimum: ‘The Wanderer and his Shadow’ came into existence during the course of it.

I undoubtedly knew all about shadows in those days ... In the following winter, the first winter I spent in Genoa, that sweetening and spiritualization which is virtually inseparable from an extreme poverty of blood and muscle produced ‘Daybreak’. The perfect brightness and cheerfulness, even exuberance of spirit reflected in the said work is in my case compatible not only with the profoundest physiological weakness, but even with an extremity of pain. In the midst of the torments which attended an uninterrupted three- day headache accompanied by the laborious vomiting of phlegm – I possessed a dialectical clarity *par excellence* and thought my way very cold- bloodedly through things for which when I am in better health I am not enough of a climber, not refined, not *cold*

enough. My readers perhaps know the extent to which I regard dialectics as a symptom of *décadence*, for example in the most famous case of all: in the case of Socrates. – All morbid disturbances of the intellect, even that semi- stupefaction consequent on fever, have remained to this day totally unfamiliar things to me, on their nature and frequency I had first to instruct myself by scholarly methods. My blood flows slowly. No one has ever been able to diagnose fever in me. A doctor who treated me for some time as a nervous case said at last: ‘No! there is nothing wrong with your nerves, it is only I who am nervous.’ Any kind of local degeneration absolutely undemonstrable; no organically originating stomach ailment, though there does exist, as a consequence of general exhaustion, a profound weakness of the gastric system. Condition of the eyes, sometimes approaching dangerously close to blindness, also only consequence, not causal: so that with every increase in vitality eyesight has also again improved. – Convalescence means with me a long, all too long succession of years – it also unfortunately means relapse, deterioration, periods of a kind of *décadence*. After all this do I need to say that in questions of *décadence* I am experienced? I have spelled it out forwards and backwards. Even that filigree art of grasping and comprehending in general, that finger for nuances, that psychology of ‘looking around the corner’ and whatever else characterizes me was learned only then, is the actual gift of that time in which everything in me became more subtle, observation itself together with all the organs of observation. To look from a morbid perspective towards *healthier* concepts and values, and again conversely to look down from the abundance and certainty of rich life into the secret labour of the instinct of *décadence* – that is what I have practised most, it has been my own particular field of experience, in this if in anything I am a master. I now have the skill and knowledge to *invert perspectives*: first reason why a ‘reevaluation of values’ is perhaps possible at all to me alone. –

2

Setting aside the fact that I am a *décadent*, I am also its antithesis. My proof of this is, among other things, that in combating my sick conditions I always instinctively chose the *right* means: while the *décadent* as such always chooses the means harmful to him. As summa summarum I was healthy, as corner, as

speciality I was *décadent* . That energy for absolute isolation and detachment from my accustomed circumstances, the way I compelled myself no longer to let myself be cared for, served, *doctored* – this betrayed an unconditional certainty of instinct as to *what* at that time was needful above all else. I took myself in hand, I myself made myself healthy again: the precondition for this – every physiologist will admit it – is that one is *fundamentally healthy* . A being who is typically morbid cannot become healthy, still less can he make himself healthy; conversely, for one who is typically healthy being sick can even be an energetic *stimulant* to life, to more life. Thus in fact does that long period of *sickness seem to me now* : I discovered life as it were anew, myself included, I tasted all good and even petty things in a way that others could not easily taste them – I made out of my will to health, to *life* , my philosophy ... For pay heed to this: it was in the years of my lowest vitality that I *ceased to be a pessimist*: the instinct for self- recovery *forbade* to me a philosophy of indigence and discouragement ... And in what does one really recognize that someone has *turned out well* ! In that a human being who has turned out well does our senses good: that he is carved out of wood at once hard, delicate and sweet- smelling. He has a taste only for what is beneficial to him; his pleasure, his joy ceases where the measure of what is beneficial is overstepped. He divines cures for injuries, he employs ill chances to his own advantage; what does not kill him makes him stronger. Out of everything he sees, hears, experiences he instinctively collects together *his sum* : he is a principle of selection, he rejects much. He is always in his company, whether he traffics with books, people or landscapes: he does honour when he *chooses* , when he admits, when he trusts. He reacts slowly to every kind of stimulus, with that slowness which a protracted caution and a willed pride have bred in him – he tests an approaching stimulus, he is far from going out to meet it. He believes in neither ‘misfortune’ nor in ‘guilt’: he knows how to *forget* – he is strong enough for everything to have to turn out for the best for him. Very well, I am the *opposite of a décadent* : for I have just described *myself* .

3

I consider the fact that I had such a father as a great privilege: the peasants he preached to – for, after he had lived for several years at the court of Altenburg, he was a preacher in his last years –

said that the angels must look like he did. And with this I touch on the question of race. I am a pure-blooded Polish nobleman, in whom there is no drop of bad blood, least of all German. When I look for my profoundest opposite, the incalculable pettiness of the instincts, I always find my mother and my sister – to be related to such *canaille* would be a blasphemy against my divinity. The treatment I have received from my mother and my sister, up to the present moment, fills me with inexpressible horror: there is an absolutely hellish machine at work here, operating with infallible certainty at the precise moment when I am most vulnerable – at my highest moments ... for then one needs all one's strength to counter such a poisonous viper ... physiological contiguity renders such a *disharmonia praestabilita* possible ... But I confess that the deepest objection to the 'Eternal Recurrence', my real idea from the abyss, is always my mother and my sister. – But even as a Pole I am a monstrous atavism. One would have to go back centuries to find this noblest of races that the earth has ever possessed in so instinctively pristine a degree as I present it. I have, against everything that is today called *noblesse*, a sovereign feeling of distinction – I wouldn't award to the young German Kaiser the honour of being my coachman. There is one single case where I acknowledge my equal – I recognize it with profound gratitude. Frau Cosima Wagner is by far the noblest nature; and, so that I shouldn't say one word too few, I say that Richard Wagner was by far the most closely related man to me ... The rest is silence ... All the prevalent notions of degrees of kinship are physiological nonsense in an unsurpassable measure. The Pope still deals today in this nonsense. One is least related to one's parents: it would be the most extreme sign of vulgarity to be related to one's parents. Higher natures have their origins infinitely farther back, and with them much had to be assembled, saved and hoarded. The great individuals are the oldest: I don't understand it, but Julius Caesar could be my father – or Alexander, this Dionysos incarnate ... At the very moment that I am writing this the post brings me a Dionysos-head.

4

I have never understood the art of arousing enmity towards myself – this too I owe to my incomparable father – even when it seemed to me very worthwhile to do so. However unchristian it

may seem, I am not even inimical towards myself, one may turn my life this way and that, one will only rarely, at bottom only once, discover signs that anyone has borne ill will towards me – perhaps, however, somewhat too many signs of *good will* ... My experiences even of those of whom everyone has had experiences speak without exception in their favour; I tame every bear, I even make buffoons mind their manners. During the seven years in which I taught Greek to the top form of the Basel grammar school I never once had occasion to mete out a punishment; the laziest were industrious when they were with me. I am always up to dealing with any chance event; I have to be unprepared if I am to be master of myself. Let the instrument be what it will, let it be as out of tune as only the instrument ‘man’ can become out of tune – I should have to be ill not to succeed in getting out of it something listenable. And how often have I heard from the ‘instruments’ themselves that they had never heard themselves sound so well ... Most beautifully perhaps from that Heinrich von Stein who died so unpardonably young and who, after cautiously obtaining permission, once appeared for three days at Sils- Maria, explaining to everyone that he had not come for the Engadin. This excellent man, who with the whole impetuous artlessness of a Prussian Junker had waded into the Wagnerian swamp (– and into the swamp of Dühring in addition!), was during those three days as if transported by a storm-wind of freedom, like one suddenly raised to his *own* heights and given wings. I kept telling him it was the result of the fine air up here, that everyone felt the same, that you could not stand 6,000 feet above Bayreuth and not notice it – but he would not believe me ... If, this notwithstanding, many great and petty misdeeds have been committed against me, it was not ‘will’, least of all ill will that was the cause of it: I could complain, rather – I have just suggested as much – of the good will which has caused me no little mischief in my life. My experiences give me a right to a general mistrust of the so- called ‘selfless’ drives, of the whole ‘love of one's neighbour’ which is always ready with deeds and advice. It counts with me as weakness, as a special case of the incapacity to withstand stimuli – it is only among *décadents* that *pity* is called a virtue. My reproach against those who practise pity is that shame, reverence, a delicate feeling for distance easily eludes them, that pity instantly smells of mob and is so like bad manners as to be mistaken for them – that the hands of pity can under certain circumstances intrude

downright destructively into a great destiny, into a solitariness where wounds are nursed, into a *privilege* for great guilt. I count the overcoming of pity among the *noble* virtues: I have, as 'Zarathustra's Temptation', invented a case in which a great cry of distress reaches him, in which pity like an ultimate sin seeks to attack him, to seduce him from allegiance to *himself*. To remain master here, here to keep the *elevation* of one's task clean of the many lower and more shortsighted drives which are active in so-called selfless actions, that is the test, the final test perhaps, which a Zarathustra has to pass – the actual *proof* of his strength ...

5

In yet another point I am merely my father once more and as it were the continuation of his life after an all too early death. Like anyone who has never lived among his equals and to whom the concept 'requital' is as inaccessible as is for instance the concept 'equal rights', I forbid myself in cases where a little or *very great* act of folly has been perpetrated against me any counter-measure, any protective measure – also, as is reasonable, any defence, any 'justification'. My kind of requital consists in sending after the piece of stupidity as quickly as possible a piece of sagacity: in that way one may perhaps overtake it. To speak in a metaphor: I dispatch a pot of jam to get rid of a *sour* affair ... Let anyone harm me in any way, I 'requite' it, you may be sure of that: as soon as I can I find an opportunity of expressing my thanks to the 'offender' (occasionally even for the offence) – or of *asking* him for something, which can be more courteous than giving something ... It also seems to me that the rudest word, the rudest letter are more good-natured, more honest than silence. Those who keep silent almost always lack subtlety and politeness of the heart; silence is an objection, swallowing down necessarily produces a bad character – it even ruins the stomach. All those given to silence are dyspeptic. – One will see that I would not like to see rudeness undervalued, it is the *most humane* form of contradiction by far and, in the midst of modern tendermindedness, one of our foremost virtues. – If one is rich enough, it is even fortunate to be in the wrong. A god come to earth ought to do nothing whatever but wrong: to take upon oneself, not the punishment, but the *guilt* – only that would be godlike.

Freedom from *ressentiment* , enlightenment over *ressentiment* – who knows the extent to which I ultimately owe thanks to my protracted sickness for this too! The problem is not exactly simple: one has to have experienced it from a state of strength and a state of weakness. If anything whatever has to be admitted against being sick, being weak, it is that in these conditions the actual curative instinct, that is to say the *defensive and offensive instinct* in man becomes soft. One does not know how to get free of anything, one does not know how to have done with anything, one does not know how to thrust back – everything hurts. Men and things come importunately close, events strike too deep, the memory is a festering wound. Being sick is i t s e l f a k i n d o f *ressentiment* . – Against this the invalid has only one great means of cure – I call it *Russian fatalism* , that fatalism without rebellion with which a Russian soldier for whom the campaign has become too much at last lies down in the snow. No longer to take anything at all, to receive anything, to take anything *into* oneself – no longer to react at all ... The great rationality of this fatalism, which is not always the courage to die but can be life- preservative under conditions highly dangerous to life, is reduction of the metabolism, making it slow down, a kind of will to hibernation. A couple of steps further in this logic and one has the fakir who sleeps for weeks on end in a grave ... Because one would use oneself up too quickly if one reacted at all, one no longer reacts: this is the logic. And nothing burns one up quicker than the affects of *ressentiment* . Vexation, morbid susceptibility, incapacity for revenge, the desire, the thirst for revenge, poison- brewing in any sense – for one who is exhausted this is certainly the most disadvantageous kind of reaction: it causes a rapid expenditure of nervous energy, a morbid accretion of excretions, for example of gall into the stomach. *Ressentiment* is the forbidden in *itself* for the invalid – *his* evil: unfortunately also his most natural inclination. – This was grasped by that profound physiologist Buddha. His ‘religion’, which one would do better to call *a system of hygiene* so as not to mix it up with such pitiable things as Christianity, makes its effect dependent on victory over *ressentiment* : to free the soul of that – first step to recovery. ‘Not by enmity is enmity ended, by friendship is enmity ended’: this stands at the beginning of Buddha's teaching – it is *not*

morality that speaks thus, it is physiology that speaks thus. – Ressentiment, born of weakness, to no one more harmful than to the weak man himself – in the opposite case, where a rich nature is the presupposition, a *superfluous* feeling to stay master of which is almost the proof of richness. He who knows the seriousness with which my philosophy has taken up the struggle against the feelings of vengefulness and vindictiveness even into the theory of ‘free will’ – my struggle against Christianity is only a special instance of it – will understand why it is precisely here that I throw the light on my personal bearing, my *sureness of instinct* in practice. In periods of *décadence* I forbade them to myself as harmful; as soon as life was again sufficiently rich and proud for them I forbade them to myself as *beneath* me. That ‘Russian fatalism’ of which I spoke came forward in my case in the form of clinging tenaciously for years on end to almost intolerable situations, places, residences, company, once chance had placed me in them – it was better than changing them, than *feeling* them as capable of being changed – than rebelling against them ... In those days I took it deadly amiss if I was disturbed in this fatalism, if I was forcibly awakened from it – and to do this was in fact every time a deadly dangerous thing. – To accept oneself as a fate, not to desire oneself ‘different’ – in such conditions this is *great rationality* itself.

7

War is another thing. I am by nature warlike. To attack is among my instincts. *To be able* to be an enemy, to be an enemy – that perhaps presupposes a strong nature, it is in any event a condition of every strong nature. It needs resistances, consequently it seeks resistances: the *aggressive* pathos belongs as necessarily to strength as the feeling of vengefulness and vindictiveness does to weakness. Woman, for example, is vengeful: that is conditioned by her weakness, just as is her susceptibility to others’ distress. – The strength of one who attacks has in the opposition he needs a kind of *gauge* ; every growth reveals itself in the seeking out of a powerful opponent – or problem: for a philosopher who is warlike also challenges problems to a duel. The undertaking is to master, not any resistances that happen to present themselves, but those against which one has to bring all one’s strength, suppleness and mastery of weapons – to master *equal* opponents ... Equality in face of the enemy – first presupposition of an *honest* duel. Where one despises

one *cannot* wage war; where one commands, where one sees something as beneath one, one has not to wage war. – My practice in warfare can be reduced to four propositions. Firstly: I attack only causes that are victorious – under certain circumstances I wait until they are victorious. Secondly: I attack only causes against which I would find no allies, where I stand alone – where I compromise only myself ... I have never taken a step in public which was not compromising: that is my criterion of right action. Thirdly: I never attack persons – I only employ the person as a strong magnifying glass with which one can make visible a general but furtive state of distress which is hard to get hold of. That was how I attacked David Strauss, more precisely the success with German ‘culture’ of a senile book – I thus caught that culture red-handed ... That was how I attacked Wagner, more precisely the falseness, the hybrid instincts of our ‘culture’ which confuses the artful with the rich, the late with the great. Fourthly: I attack only things where any kind of personal difference is excluded, where there is no background of bad experience. On the contrary, to attack is with me a proof of good will, under certain circumstances of gratitude. I do honour, I confer distinction when I associate my name with a cause, a person: for or against – that is in this regard a matter of indifference to me. If I wage war on Christianity I have a right to do so, because I have never experienced anything disagreeable or frustrating from that direction – the most serious Christians have always been well disposed towards me. I myself, an opponent of Christianity *de rigueur*, am far from bearing a grudge against the individual for what is the fatality of millennia. –

8

May I venture to indicate one last trait of my nature which creates for me no little difficulty in my relations with others? I possess a perfectly uncanny sensitivity of the instinct for cleanliness, so that I perceive physiologically – *smell* – the proximity or – what am I saying? – the innermost parts, the ‘entrails’, of every soul ... I have in this sensitivity psychological antennae with which I touch and take hold of every secret: all the *concealed* dirt at the bottom of many a nature, perhaps conditioned by bad blood but whitewashed by education, is known to me almost on first contact. If I have observed correctly, such natures unendurable to my sense of cleanliness for their part also sense the caution of my disgust:

they do not thereby become any sweeter- smelling ... As has always been customary with me – an extreme cleanliness in relation to me is a presupposition of my existence, I perish under unclean conditions – I swim and bathe and splash continually as it were in water, in any kind of perfectly transparent and glittering element. This makes traffic with people no small test of my patience; my humanity consists, *not* in feeling for and with man, but in *enduring* that I do feel for and with him ... My humanity is a continual self-overcoming. – But I have need of *solitude*, that is to say recovery, return to myself, the breath of a free light playful air ... My entire Zarathustra is a dithyramb on solitude or, if I have been understood, on *cleanliness* ... Fortunately not on *pure folly*. – He who has eyes for colours will call it diamond. – Disgust at mankind, at the ‘rabble’, has always been my greatest danger ... Do you want to hear the words in which Zarathustra speaks of *redemption* from disgust?

Yet what happened to me? How did I free myself from disgust? Who rejuvenated my eyes? How did I fly to the height where the rabble no longer sit at the well?

Did my disgust itself create wings and water- diving powers for me? Truly, I had to fly to the extremest height to find again the fountain of delight!

Oh, I have found it, my brothers! Here, in the extremest height, the fountain of delight gushes up for me! And here there is a life at which no rabble drinks with me!

You gush up almost too impetuously, fountain of delight! And in wanting to fill the cup, you often empty it again.

And I still have to learn to approach you more discreetly: my heart still flows towards you all too impetuously: – my heart, upon which my summer burns, a short, hot, melancholy, over- joyful summer: how my summer- heart longs for your coolness!

Gone is the lingering affliction of my spring! Gone the snowflakes of my malice in June! Summer have I become entirely, and summer- noonday –

– a summer at the extremest height with cold fountains and blissful stillness: oh come, my friends, that the stillness may become more blissful yet!

For this is our height and our home: we live too nobly and boldly here for all unclean men and their thirsts.

Only cast your pure eyes into the well of my delight, friends! You will not dim its sparkle! It shall laugh back at you with *its* purity.

We build our nest in the tree Future: eagles shall bring food to us solitaires in their beaks!

Truly, food in which no unclean men could join us! They would think they were eating fire and burn their mouths.

Truly, we do not prepare a home here for unclean men! Their bodies and their spirits would call our happiness a cave of ice!

So let us live above them like strong winds, neighbours of the eagles, neighbours of the snow, neighbours of the sun: that is how strong winds live.

And like a wind will I one day blow among them and with my spirit take away the breath of their spirit: thus my future will have it.

Truly, Zarathustra is a strong wind to all flatlands; and he offers this advice to his enemies and to all that spews and spits: take care not to spit against the wind! ...

Why I Am so Clever

1

Why do I know a few *more* things? Why am I so clever altogether? I have never reflected on questions that are none – I have not squandered myself. – I have, for example, no experience of actual *religious* difficulties. I am entirely at a loss to know to what extent I ought to have felt ‘sinful’. I likewise lack a reliable criterion of a pang of conscience: from what one hears of it, a pang of conscience does not seem to me anything respectable ... I should not like to leave an act in the lurch *afterwards*, I would as a matter of principle prefer to leave the evil outcome, the *consequences*, out of the question of values. When the outcome is evil one can easily lose the *true* eye for what one has done: a pang of conscience seems to me a kind of ‘*evil eye*’. To honour to oneself something that went wrong all the more *because* it went wrong – that rather would accord with my morality. – ‘God’, ‘immortality of the soul’, ‘redemption’, ‘the Beyond’, all of them concepts to which I have given no attention and no time, not even as a child – perhaps I was never childish enough for it? – I have absolutely no knowledge of atheism as an outcome of reasoning, still less as an event: with me it is obvious by instinct. I am too inquisitive, too *questionable*, too high spirited to rest content with a crude answer. God is a crude answer, a piece of indelicacy against us thinkers – fundamentally even a crude *prohibition* to us: you shall not think! ... I am interested in quite a different way in a question upon which the ‘salvation of mankind’ depends far more than it does upon any kind of quaint curiosity of the theologians: the question of *nutriment*. One can for convenience’ sake formulate it thus: ‘how to nourish yourself so as to attain your maximum of strength, of virtù in the Renaissance style, of moraline-free virtue?’ – My experiences here are as bad as they possibly could be; I am astonished that I heard this question so late, that I learned ‘reason’ from these experiences so late. Only the perfect worthlessness of our German education – its ‘idealism’ – can to some extent explain to me why on precisely this point I was backward to the point of holiness. This ‘education’ which from the

first teaches one to lose sight of *realities* so as to hunt after altogether problematic, so-called 'ideal' objectives, 'classical education' for example – as if it were not from the first an utterly fruitless undertaking to try to unite 'classical' and 'German' in one concept! It is, moreover, mirth-provoking – just think of a 'classically educated' Leipziger! – Until my very maturest years I did in fact eat *badly* – in the language of morals 'impersonally', 'selflessly', 'altruistically', for the salvation of cooks and other fellow Christians. With the aid of Leipzig cookery, for example, which accompanied my earliest study of Schopenhauer (1865), I very earnestly denied my 'will to live'. To ruin one's stomach so as to receive inadequate nutriment – the aforesaid cookery seems to me to solve this problem wonderfully well. (It is said that 1866 produced a change in this domain –.) But German cookery in general – what does it not have on its conscience! Soup *before* the meal (in Venetian cookery books of the sixteenth century still called *alla tedesca*) ; meat cooked to shreds, greasy and floury vegetables; the degeneration of puddings to paperweights! If one adds to this the downright bestial dinner-drinking habits of the ancient and by no means only the *ancient Germans* one will also understand the origin of the *German spirit* – disturbed intestines ... The German spirit is an indigestion, it can have done with nothing. – But to the *English* diet too, which compared with the Germans, even with the French, is a kind of 'return to nature', that is to say to cannibalism, my own instinct is profoundly opposed; it seems to me to give the spirit heavy feet – the feet of Englishwomen ... The best cookery is that of *Piedmont*. Alcoholic drinks are no good for me; a glass of wine or beer a day is quite enough to make life for me a 'Vale of Tears' – Munich is where my antipodes live. Granted I was a little late to grasp this – I *experienced* it really from childhood onwards. As a boy I believed wine-drinking to be, like tobaccosmoking, at first only a vanity of young men, later a habit. Perhaps the wine of Naumburg is in part to blame for this *austere* judgement. To believe that wine *makes cheerful* I would have to be a Christian, that is to say believe what is for precisely me an absurdity. Oddly enough, while I am put extremely out of sorts by *small*, much diluted doses of alcohol, I am almost turned into a sailor when it comes to *strong doses*. Even as a boy I showed how brave I was in this respect. To write a long Latin essay in a *single* night's sitting and then go on to make a fair copy of it, with the ambition in my pen to imitate in

severity and concision my model Sallust, and to pour a quantity of grog of the heaviest calibre over my Latin, was even when I was a pupil of venerable Schulpforta in no way opposed to my physiology, nor perhaps to that of Sallust – however much it might have been to venerable Schulpforta ... Later, towards the middle of life, I decided, to be sure, more and more strictly against any sort of ‘spirituous’ drink: an opponent of vegetarianism from experience, just like Richard Wagner, who converted me, I cannot advise all *more spiritual* natures too seriously to abstain from alcohol absolutely. Water suffices ... I prefer places in which there is everywhere opportunity to drink from flowing fountains (Nice, Turin, Sils); a small glass runs after me like a dog. *In vino veritas* : it seems that here too I am again at odds with all the world over the concept ‘truth’ – with me the spirit moves over the water ... A couple more signposts from my morality. A big meal is easier to digest than one too small. That the stomach comes into action as a whole, first precondition of a good digestion. One has to *know* the size of one's stomach. For the same reason those tedious meals should be avoided which I call interrupted sacrificial feasts, those at the *table d'hôte* . – No eating between meals, no coffee: coffee makes gloomy. *Tea* beneficial only in the morning. Little, but strong: tea very detrimental and sicklyng o'er the whole day if it is the slightest bit too weak. Each has here his own degree, often between the narrowest and most delicate limits. In a very *agaçant* climate it is inadvisable to start with tea: one should start an hour earlier with a cup of thick oil- free cocoa. – Sit as little as possible; credit no thought not born in the open air and while moving freely about – in which the muscles too do not hold a festival. All prejudices come from the intestines. – Assiduity – I have said it once before – the actual sin against the holy spirit. –

2

Most closely related to the question of nutriment is the question of *place* and *climate* . No one is free to live everywhere; and he who has great tasks to fulfil which challenge his entire strength has indeed in this matter a very narrow range of choice. The influence of climate on the *metabolism* , its slowing down, its speeding up, extends so far that a blunder in regard to place and climate can not only estrange anyone from his task but withhold it from him altogether: he never catches sight of it. His animalic *vigor*

never grows sufficiently great for him to attain to that freedom overflowing into the most spiritual domain where he knows: *that* I alone can do ... A never so infinitesimal sluggishness of the intestines grown into a bad habit completely suffices to transform a genius into something mediocre, something 'German'; the German climate alone is enough to discourage strong and even heroic intestines. The *tempo* of the metabolism stands in an exact relationship to the mobility or lameness of the *feet* of the spirit; the 'spirit' itself is indeed only a species of this metabolism. Make a list of the places where there are and have been gifted men, where wit, refinement, malice are a part of happiness, where genius has almost necessarily made its home: they all possess an excellent dry air. Paris, Provence, Florence, Jerusalem, Athens – these names prove something: that genius is *conditioned* by dry air, clear sky – that is to say by rapid metabolism, by the possibility of again and again supplying oneself with great, even tremendous quantities of energy. I have in mind a case in which a spirit which might have become significant and free became instead narrow, withdrawn, a grumpy specialist, merely through a lack of instinctive subtlety in choice of climate. And I myself could in the end have become this case if sickness had not compelled me to reason, to reflect on reason in reality. Now, when from long practice I read climatic and meteorological effects off from myself as from a very delicate and reliable instrument and even on a short journey, from Turin to Milan for instance, verify on myself physiologically the change in degrees of humidity, I recall with horror the *uncanny* fact that my life up to the last ten years, the years when my life was in danger, was spent nowhere but in wrong places downright *forbidden* to me. Naumburg, Schulpforta, Thuringia in general, Leipzig, Basel, Venice – so many ill-fated places for my physiology. If I have no welcome memories at all of my whole childhood and youth, it would be folly to attribute this to so-called 'moral' causes – the undeniable lack of *adequate* company, for instance: for this lack exists today as it has always existed without preventing me from being brave and cheerful. Ignorance in *physiologis* – accursed 'idealism' – is the real fatality in my life, the superfluous and stupid in it, something out of which nothing good grows, for which there is no compensation, no counter-reckoning. It is as a consequence of this 'idealism' that I elucidate to myself all the blunders, all the great deviations of instinct and 'modesties' which led me away from the *task of my life*, that I became a

philologist for example – why not at least a physician or something else that opens the eyes? In my time at Basel my entire spiritual diet, the division of the day included, was a perfectly senseless abuse of extraordinary powers without any kind of provision for covering this consumption, without even reflection on consumption and replacement. Any more subtle selfishness, any *protection* by a commanding instinct was lacking, it was an equating of oneself with everyone else, a piece of ‘selflessness’, a forgetting of one’s distance – something I shall never forgive myself. When I was almost done for, *because* I was almost done for, I began to reflect on this fundamental irrationality of my life – ‘idealism’. It was only sickness that brought me to reason.

3

Selectivity in nutriment; selectivity in climate and place; – the third thing in which one may at no cost commit a blunder is selectivity in *one’s kind of recreation*. Here too the degree to which a spirit is sui generis makes ever narrower the bounds of what is permitted, that is to say *useful* to him. In my case all reading is among my recreations: consequently among those things which free me from myself, which allow me to saunter among strange sciences and souls – which I no longer take seriously. It is precisely reading which helps me to recover from my seriousness. At times when I am deeply sunk in work you will see no books around me: I would guard against letting anyone speak or even think in my vicinity. And that is what reading would mean ... Has it really been noticed that in that state of profound tension to which pregnancy condemns the spirit and fundamentally the entire organism, any chance event, any kind of stimulus from without has too vehement an effect, ‘cuts’ too deeply? One has to avoid the chance event, the stimulus from without, as much as possible; a kind of self- walling- up is among the instinctual sagacities of spiritual pregnancy. Shall I allow a *strange* thought to climb secretly over the wall? – And that is what reading would mean ... The times of work and fruitfulness are followed by the time of recreation: come hither, you pleasant, you witty, you clever books! Will they be German books? ... I have to reckon back half a year to catch myself with a book in my hand. But what was it? – An excellent study by Victor Brochard, *les sceptiques Grecs*, in which my Laertiana are also well employed. The Sceptics, the only *honourable* type among the two- and five- fold

ambiguous philosophical crowd! ... Otherwise I take flight almost always to the same books, really a small number, those books which have *proved* themselves precisely to me. It does not perhaps lie in my nature to read much or many kinds of things: a reading room makes me ill. Neither does it lie in my nature to love much or many kinds of things. Caution, even hostility towards new books is rather part of my instinct than 'tolerance', '*largeur du coeur*' and other forms of 'neighbour love' ... It is really only a small number of older Frenchmen to whom I return again and again: I believe only in French culture and consider everything in Europe that calls itself 'culture' a misunderstanding, not to speak of German culture ... The few instances of high culture I have encountered in Germany have all been of French origin, above all Frau Cosima Wagner, by far the first voice I have heard in questions of taste. – That I do not read Pascal but love him, as the most instructive of all sacrifices to Christianity, slowly murdered first physically then psychologically, the whole logic of this most horrible form of inhuman cruelty; that I have something of Montaigne's wantonness in my spirit, who knows? perhaps also in my body; that my artist's taste defends the names Molière, Corneille and Racine, not without wrath, against a disorderly genius such as Shakespeare: this does not ultimately exclude my finding the most recent Frenchmen also charming company. I cannot at all conceive in which century of history one could haul together such inquisitive and at the same time such delicate psychologists as one can in contemporary Paris: I name as a sample – for their number is by no means small, Messrs Paul Bourget, Pierre Loti, Gyp, Meilhac, Anatole France, Jules Lemaitre, or to pick out one of the stronger race, a genuine Latin to whom I am especially attached, Guy de Maupassant. Between ourselves, I prefer this generation even to their great teachers, who have all been ruined by German philosophy (M. Taine for example by Hegel, whom he has to thank for this misunderstanding of great human beings and ages). As far as Germany extends it ruins culture. It was only the war that 'redeemed' the spirit in France ... Stendhal, one of the fairest accidents of my life – for whatever marks an epoch in my life has been brought to me by accident, never by a recommendation – is utterly invaluable with his anticipating psychologist's eye, with his grasp of facts which reminds one of the proximity of the greatest man of the factual (*ex ungue Napoleonem* –); finally not least as an honest atheist, a rare, almost

undiscoverable species in France – with all deference to *Prosper Mérimée* ... Perhaps I am even envious of Stendhal? He robbed me of the best atheist joke which precisely I could have made: ‘God's only excuse is that he does not exist’ ... I myself have said somewhere: what has hitherto been the greatest objection to existence? *God* ...

4

The highest conception of the lyric poet was given me by *Heinrich Heine*. I seek in vain in all the realms of millennia for an equally sweet and passionate music. He possesses that divine malice without which I cannot imagine perfection – I assess the value of people, of races according to how necessarily they are unable to separate the god from the satyr. – And how he employs German! It will one day be said that Heine and I have been by far the first artists of the German language – at an incalculable distance from everything which mere Germans have done with it. – I must be profoundly related to *Byron's* Manfred: I discovered all these abysses in myself – I was ripe for this work at thirteen. I have no words, only a look for those who dare to say the word Faust in the presence of Manfred. The Germans are *incapable* of any conception of greatness: proof Schumann. Expressly from wrath against this sugary Saxon, I composed a counter- overture to Manfred, of which Hans von Bülow said he had never seen the like on manuscript paper: it constituted a rape on Euterpe. – When I seek my highest formula for *Shakespeare* I find it always in that he conceived the type of Caesar. One cannot guess at things like this – one is it or one is not. The great poet creates *only* out of his own reality – to the point at which he is afterwards unable to endure his own work ... When I have taken a glance at my Zarathustra I walk up and down my room for half an hour unable to master an unendurable spasm of sobbing. – I know of no more heartrending reading than Shakespeare: what must a man have suffered to need to be a buffoon to this extent! – Is Hamlet *understood*? It is not doubt, it is *certainty* which makes mad ... But to feel in this way one must be profound, abyss, philosopher ... We all *fear* truth ... And, to confess it: I am instinctively certain that Lord Bacon is the originator, the self- tormentor of this uncanniest species of literature: what do I care about the pitiable chatter of American shallow- pates and muddle- heads? But the power for the mightiest reality of vision is not only compatible with the mightiest power for action, for the

monstrous in action, for crime – *it even presupposes* it ... We do not know nearly enough about Lord Bacon, the first realist in every great sense of the word, to know what he did, what he wanted, *what* he experienced within himself ... And the devil take it, my dear critics! Supposing I had baptized my Zarathustra with another name, for example with the name of Richard Wagner, the perspicuity of two millennia would not have sufficed to divine that the author of ‘Human, All Too Human’ is the visionary of Zarathustra ...

5

Here where I am speaking of the recreations of my life, I need to say a word to express my gratitude for that which of all things in it has refreshed me by far the most profoundly and cordially. This was without any doubt my intimate association with Richard Wagner. I offer all my other human relationships cheap; but at no price would I relinquish from my life the Tribschen days, those days of mutual confidences, of cheerfulness, of sublime incidents – *of profound* moments ... I do not know what others may have experienced with Wagner: over our sky no cloud ever passed. – And with that I return again to France – I cannot spare reasons, I can spare a mere curl of the lip for Wagnerians *et hoc genus omne* who believe they are doing honour to Wagner when they find him similar to *themselves* ... Constituted as I am, a stranger in my deepest instincts to everything German, so that the mere presence of a German hinders my digestion, my first contact with Wagner was also the first time in my life I ever drew a deep breath: I felt, I revered him as a being from *outside*, as the opposite, the incarnate protest against all ‘German virtues’. – We who were children in the swamp- air of the fifties are necessarily pessimists regarding the concept ‘German’; we cannot be anything but revolutionaries – we shall acquiesce in no state of things in which the *bigot* is on top. It is a matter of complete indifference to me if today he plays in different colours, if he dresses in scarlet and dons the uniform of a hussar ... Very well! Wagner was a revolutionary – he fled from the Germans ... As an artist one has no home in Europe except in Paris: the *délicatesse* in all five senses of art which Wagner's art presupposes, the fingers for nuances, the psychological morbidity, is to be found only in Paris. Nowhere else does there exist such a passion in questions of form, this seriousness in *mise en*

scène – it is the Parisian seriousness *par excellence* . There is in Germany absolutely no conception of the tremendous ambition which dwells in the soul of a Parisian artist. The German is good-natured – Wagner was by no means good-natured ... But I have already said sufficient (in ‘Beyond Good and Evil’ §256) as to where Wagner belongs, in whom he has his closest relatives: the French late romantics, that high-flying and yet exhilarating kind of artists such as Delacroix, such as Berlioz, with a *fond of* sickness, of incurability in their nature, sheer fanatics for *expression* , virtuosi through and through ... Who was the first *intelligent* adherent of Wagner? Charles Baudelaire, the same as was the first to understand Delacroix, that typical *décadent* in whom an entire race of artists recognized themselves – he was perhaps also the last ... What I have never forgiven Wagner? That he condescended to the Germans – that he became *reichsdeutsch* ... As far as Germany extends it ruins culture. –

6

All in all I could not have endured my youth without Wagnerian music. For I was *condemned* to Germans. If one wants to get free from an unendurable pressure one needs hashish. Very well, I needed Wagner. Wagner is the counter-poison to everything German *par excellence* – still poison, I do not dispute it ... From the moment there was a piano score of Tristan – my compliments, Herr von Bülow! – I was a Wagnerian. The earliest works of Wagner I saw as beneath me – still too common, too ‘German’ ... But I still today seek a work of a dangerous fascination, of a sweet and shuddery infinity equal to that of Tristan – I seek in all the arts in vain. All the strangenesses of Leonardo da Vinci lose their magic at the first note of Tristan. This work is altogether Wagner's *non plus ultra* ; he recuperated from it with the Meistersinger and the Ring. To become healthier – that is *retrogression* in the case of a nature such as Wagner ... I take it for a piece of good fortune of the first rank to have lived at the right time, and to have lived precisely among Germans, so as to be *ripe* for this work: my psychologist's inquisitiveness goes that far. The world is poor for him who has never been sick enough for this ‘voluptuousness of hell’: to employ a mystic's formula is permissible, almost obligatory, here. I think I know better than anyone what tremendous things Wagner was capable of, the fifty worlds of strange delights to which no one but

he had wings; and as I am strong enough to turn even the most questionable and most perilous things to my own advantage and thus to become stronger, I call Wagner the great benefactor of my life. That in which we are related, that we have suffered more profoundly, from one another also, than men of this century are capable of suffering, will eternally join our names together again and again; and as surely as Wagner is among Germans merely a misunderstanding, just as surely am I and always will be. – Two centuries of psychological and artistic discipline *first* , my Herr Germans! ... But one cannot catch up that amount. –

7

I shall say another word for the most select ears: what I really want from music. That it is cheerful and profound, like an afternoon in October. That it is individual, wanton, tender, a little sweet woman of lowness and charm ... I shall never admit that a German *could* know what music is. What one calls German musicians, the greatest above all, are *foreigners* , Slavs, Croats, Italians, Netherlanders – or Jews: otherwise Germans of the strong race, extinct Germans, like Heinrich Schütz, Bach and Handel. I myself am still sufficient of a Pole to exchange the rest of music for Chopin; for three reasons I exclude Wagner's Siegfried Idyll, perhaps also a few things by Liszt, who excels all other musicians in the nobility of his orchestral tone; finally all that has grown up beyond the Alps – *this side* ... I would not know how to get on without Rossini, even less without my south in music, the music of my Venetian *maestro Pietro Gasti* . And when I say beyond the Alps I am really saying only Venice. When I seek another word for music I never find any other word than Venice. I do not know how to distinguish between tears and music – I do not know how to think of happiness, of the *south* , without a shudder of faintheartedness.

Lately I stood at the bridge

in the brown night.

From afar there came a song:

a golden drop, it swelled

across the trembling surface.
Gondolas, lights, music –
drunken it swam out into the gloom ...
My soul, a stringed instrument,
touched by invisible hands
sang to itself in reply a gondola song,
and trembled with gaudy happiness.
– Was anyone listening?

8

In all this – in selection of nutriment, of place and climate, of recreation – there commands a *n i n s t i n c t o f s e l f p r e s e r v a t i o n* which manifests itself most unambiguously as an instinct for *self-defence*. Not to see many things, not to hear them, not to let them approach one – first piece of ingenuity, first proof that one is no accident but a necessity. The customary word for this self-defensive instinct is *taste*. Its imperative commands, not only to say No when Yes would be a piece of ‘selflessness’, but also to say No *as little as possible*. To separate oneself, to depart from that to which No would be required again and again. The rationale is that defensive expenditures, be they never so small, become a rule, a habit, lead to an extraordinary and perfectly superfluous impoverishment. Our *largest* expenditures are our most frequent small ones. Warding off, not letting come close, is an expenditure – one should not deceive oneself over this – a strength squandered on negative objectives. One can merely through the constant need to ward off become too weak any longer to defend oneself. – Suppose I were to step out of my house and discover, instead of calm and aristocratic Turin, the German provincial town: my instinct would have to blockade itself so as to push back all that pressed upon it from this flat and cowardly world. Or suppose I discovered the German metropolis, that builded vice where nothing grows, where every kind of thing, good and bad, is dragged in. Would I not in face of it have to become a *hedgehog*? – But to have spikes is an extravagance, a

double luxury even if one is free to have no spikes but open hands
...

Another form of sagacity and self- defence consists in *reacting as seldom as possible* and withdrawing from situations and relationships in which one would be condemned as it were to suspend one's 'freedom', one's initiative, and become a mere reagent. I take as a parable traffic with books. The scholar, who really does nothing but 'trundle' books – the philologist at a modest assessment about 200 a day – finally loses altogether the ability to think for himself. If he does not trundle he does not think. He *replies* to a stimulus (– a thought he has read) when he thinks – finally he does nothing but react. The scholar expends his entire strength in affirmation and denial, in criticizing what has already been thought – he himself no longer thinks ... The instinct for self- defence has in his case become soft; otherwise he would defend himself against books. The scholar – a *décadent* . – This I have seen with my own eyes: natures gifted, rich and free already in their thirties 'read to ruins', mere matches that have to be struck if they are to ignite – emit 'thoughts'. – Early in the morning at the break of day, in all the freshness and dawn of one's strength, to read a *book* – I call that vicious! –

9

At this point I can no longer avoid actually answering the question *how one becomes what one is* . And with that I touch on the masterpiece in the art of self- preservation – of selfishness ... For assuming that the task, the vocation, the *destiny* of the task exceeds the average measure by a significant degree, there would be no greater danger than to catch sight of oneself *with* this task. That one becomes what one is presupposes that one does not have the remotest idea what one is. From this point of view even the *blunders* of life – the temporary sidepaths and wrong turnings, the delays, the 'modesties', the seriousness squandered on tasks which lie outside the task – have their own meaning and value. They are an expression of a great sagacity, even the supreme sagacity: where *nosce te ipsum* would be the recipe for destruction, self-forgetfulness, *self- misunderstanding* , selfdiminution, -narrowing, -mediocratizing becomes reason itself. Expressed morally: love of one's neighbour, living for others and other things can be the

defensive measure for the preservation of the sternest selfishness. This is the exceptional case in which I, contrary to my rule and conviction, take the side of the 'selfless' drives: here they work in the service of *selfishness*, *self-cultivation*. – The entire surface of consciousness – consciousness is a surface – has to be kept clear of any of the great imperatives. Even the grand words, the grand attitudes must be guarded against! All of them represent a danger that the instinct will 'understand itself' too early —. In the meantime the organizing 'idea' destined to rule grows and grows in the depths – it begins to command, it slowly leads back from sidepaths and wrong turnings, it prepares *individual* qualities and abilities which will one day prove themselves indispensable as means to *achieving the whole* – it constructs the *ancillary* capacities one after the other before it gives any hint of the dominating task, of the 'goal', 'objective', 'meaning'. – Regarded from this side my life is simply wonderful. For the task of a *revaluation of values* more capacities perhaps were required than have dwelt together in one individual, above all antithetical capacities which however are not allowed to disturb or destroy one another. Order of rank among capacities; distance; the art of dividing without making inimical; mixing up nothing, 'reconciling' nothing; a tremendous multiplicity which is none the less the opposite of chaos – this has been the precondition, the protracted secret labour and artistic working of my instinct. The magnitude of its *higher protection* was shown in the fact I have at no time had the remotest idea what was growing within me – that all my abilities one day *leapt forth* suddenly ripe, in their final perfection. I cannot remember ever having taken any trouble – no trace of *struggle* can be discovered in my life, I am the opposite of an heroic nature. To 'want' something, to 'strive' after something, to have a 'goal', a 'wish' in view – I know none of this from experience. Even at this moment I look out upon my future – a *distant future* ! – as upon a smooth sea: it is ruffled by no desire. I do not want in the slightest that anything should become other than it is; I do not want myself to become other than I am ... But that is how I have always lived. I have harboured no desire. Someone who after his forty-fourth year can say he has never striven after *honours*, after *women*, after *money* ! – Not that I could not have had them ... Thus, for example, I one day became a university professor – I had never had the remotest thought of such a thing, for I was barely twenty-four years old. Thus two years earlier I was one day a

philologist: in the sense that my first philological work, my beginning in any sense, was requested by my teacher Ritschl for his 'Rheinisches Museum'. (*Ritschl* – I say it with respect – the only scholar gifted with genius whom I have encountered up to the present day. He was characterized by that pleasant depravity which distinguishes us Thuringians and which can render even a German sympathetic – to get to the truth we even prefer to go by secret paths. I should not with these words like to have in any way undervalued my close compatriot, the *sagacious Leopold von Ranke* ...)

10

I shall be asked why I have really narrated all these little things which according to the traditional judgement are matters of indifference: it will be said that in doing so I harm myself all the more if I am destined to fulfil great tasks. Answer: these little things – nutriment, place, climate, recreation, the whole casuistry of selfishness – are beyond all conception of greater importance than anything that has been considered of importance hitherto. It is precisely here that one has to begin to *learn anew*. Those things which mankind has hitherto pondered seriously are not even realities, merely imaginings, more strictly speaking lies from the bad instincts of sick, in the profoundest sense injurious natures – all the concepts 'God', 'soul', 'virtue', 'sin', 'the Beyond', 'truth', 'eternal life' ... But the greatness of human nature, its 'divinity', has been sought in them ... All questions of politics, the ordering of society, education have been falsified down to their foundations because the most injurious men have been taken for great men – because contempt has been taught for the 'little' things, which is to say for the fundamental affairs of life ... Now, when I compare myself with the men who have hitherto been honoured *as pre-eminent* men the distinction is palpable. I do not count these supposed 'pre-eminent men' as belonging to mankind at all – to me they are the refuse of mankind, abortive offspring of sickness and vengeful instincts: they are nothing but pernicious, fundamentally incurable monsters who take revenge on life ... I want to be the antithesis of this: it is my privilege to possess the highest subtlety for all the signs of healthy instincts. Every morbid trait is lacking in me; even in periods of severe illness I did not become morbid; a trait of fanaticism will be sought in vain in my nature. At no moment of my life can I be

shown to have adopted any kind of arrogant or pathetic posture. The pathos of attitudes does not belong to greatness; whoever needs attitudes at all is *false* ... Beware of all picturesque men! – Life has been easy for me, easiest when it demanded of me the most difficult things. Anyone who saw me during the seventy days of this autumn when I was uninterruptedly creating nothing but things of the first rank which no man will be able to do again or has done before, bearing a responsibility for all the coming millennia, will have noticed no trace of tension in me, but rather an overflowing freshness and cheerfulness. I never ate with greater relish, I never slept better. – I know of no other way of dealing with great tasks than that of *play* : this is, as a sign of greatness, an essential precondition. The slightest constraint, the gloomy mien, any kind of harsh note in the throat are all objections to a man, how much more to his work! ... One must have no nerves ... To *suffer* from solitude is likewise an objection – I have always suffered only from the ‘multitude’ ... At an absurdly early age, at the age of seven, I already knew that no human word would ever reach me: has anyone ever seen me sad on that account? – Still today I treat everyone with the same geniality, I am even full of consideration for the basest people: in all this there is not a grain of arrogance, of secret contempt. He whom I despise divines that I despise him: through my mere existence I enrage everything that has bad blood in its veins ... My formula for greatness in a human being is *amor fati* : that one wants nothing to be other than it is, not in the future, not in the past, not in all eternity. Not merely to endure that which happens of necessity, still less to dissemble it – all idealism is untruthfulness in the face of necessity – but to *love* it ...

Why I Write Such Good Books

1

I am one thing, my writings are another. – Here, before I speak of these writings themselves, I shall touch on the question of their being understood or *not* understood. I shall do so as perfunctorily as is fitting: for the time for this question has certainly not yet come. My time has not yet come, some are born posthumously. – One day or other institutions will be needed in which people live and teach as I understand living and teaching: perhaps even chairs for the interpretation of Zarathustra will be established. But it would be a complete contradiction of myself if I expected ears *and hands* for my truths already today: that I am not heard today, that no one today knows how to take from me, is not only comprehensible; it even seems to me right. I do not want to be taken for what I am not – and that requires that I do not take myself for what I am not. To say it again, little of ‘ill will’ can be shown in *my* life; neither would I be able to speak of barely a single case of ‘literary ill will’. On the other hand all too much of *pure folly* ! ... It seems to me that to take a book of mine into his hands is one of the rarest distinctions anyone can confer upon himself – I even assume he removes his shoes when he does so – not to speak of boots ... When Doctor Heinrich von Stein once honestly complained that he understood not one word of my Zarathustra, I told him that was quite in order: to have understood, that is to say *experienced* , six sentences of that book would raise one to a higher level of mortals than ‘modern’ man could attain to. How *could* I, with *this* feeling of distance, even want the ‘modern men’ I know – to read me! – My triumph is precisely the opposite of Schopenhauer's – I say ‘non *legor* , non *legar* ’ . – Not that I should like to underestimate the pleasure which the *innocence* in the rejection of my writings has given me. This very summer just gone, at a time when, with my own weighty, too heavily weighty literature, I was perhaps throwing all the rest of literature off its balance, a professor of Berlin University kindly gave me to understand that I ought really to avail myself of a different form: no one read stuff like mine. – In the end it was not

Germany but Switzerland which offered me the two extreme cases. An essay of Dr V. Widmann in the *Bund* on 'Beyond Good and Evil' under the title 'Nietzsche's Dangerous Book', and a general report on my books as a whole on the part of Herr Karl Spitteler, also in the *Bund*, constitute a maximum in my life – of what I take care not to say ... The latter, for example, dealt with my Zarathustra as *an advanced exercise in style*, with the request that I might later try to provide some content; Dr Widmann expressed his respect for the courage with which I strive to abolish all decent feelings. – Through a little trick of chance every sentence here was, with a consistency I had to admire, a truth stood on its head: remarkably enough, all one had to do was to 'revalue all values' in order to hit the nail on the head with regard to me – instead of hitting my head with a nail ... All the more reason for me to attempt an explanation. – Ultimately, no one can extract from things, books included, more than he already knows. What one has no access to through experience one has no ear for. Now let us imagine an extreme case: that a book speaks of nothing but events which lie outside the possibility of general or even of rare experience – that it is the first language for a new range of experiences. In this case simply nothing will be heard, with the acoustical illusion that where nothing is heard there is nothing ... This is in fact my average experience and, if you like, the *originality* of my experience. Whoever believed he had understood something of me had dressed up something out of me after his own image – not uncommonly an antithesis of me, for instance an 'idealist'; whoever had understood nothing of me denied that I came into consideration at all. – The word 'superman' to designate a type that has turned out supremely well, in antithesis to 'modern' men, to 'good' men, to Christians and other nihilists – a word which, in the mouth of a Zarathustra, the *destroyer* of morality, becomes a very thoughtful word – has almost everywhere been understood with perfect innocence in the sense of those values whose antithesis makes its appearance in the figure of Zarathustra: that is to say as an 'idealistic' type of higher species of man, half 'saint', half 'genius' ... Other learned cattle caused me on its account to be suspected of Darwinism; even the 'hero cult' of that great unconscious and involuntary counterfeiter Carlyle which I rejected so maliciously has been recognized in it. He into whose ear I whispered he ought to look around rather for a Cesare Borgia than for a Parsifal did not believe his ears. – That I am utterly incurious

about discussions of my books, especially by newspapers, will have to be forgiven me. My friends, my publishers know this and do not speak to me about such things. In a particular instance I once had a sight of all the sins that had been committed against a single book – it was ‘Beyond Good and Evil’; I could tell a pretty story about that. Would you believe it that the ‘Nationalzeitung’ – a Prussian newspaper, for my foreign readers – I myself read, if I may say so, only the Journal des Débats – could in all seriousness understand the book as a ‘sign of the times’, as the real genuine *Junker philosophy* for which the ‘Kreuzzeitung’ merely lacked the courage?

...

2

This was said for Germans: for I have readers everywhere else – nothing but *choice* intelligences of proved character brought up in high positions and duties; I have even real geniuses among my readers. In Vienna, in St Petersburg, in Stockholm, in Copenhagen, in Paris and New York – I have been discovered everywhere: I have not been in Europe's flatland Germany ... And to confess it, I rejoice even more over my non- readers, such as have never heard either my name or the word philosophy; but wherever I go, here in Turin for example, every face grows more cheerful and benevolent at the sight of me. What has flattered me the most is that old market-women take great pains to select together for me the sweetest of their grapes. That is *how far* one must be a philosopher ... It is not in vain that the Poles are called the French among the Slavs. A charming Russian lady would not mistake for a moment where I belong. I cannot succeed in becoming solemn, the most I can achieve is embarrassment ... To think German, to feel German – I can do everything, but that is beyond my powers ... My old teacher Ritschl went so far as to maintain that I conceived even my philological essays like a Parisian *romancier* – absurdly exciting. In Paris itself there is astonishment over ‘*toutes mes audaces et fineses*’ – the expression is Monsieur Taine's –; I fear that with me there is up to the highest forms of the dithyramb an admixture of that salt which never gets soggy – ‘German’ – *esprit* ... I cannot do otherwise, so help me God! Amen. – We all know, some even know from experience, what a longears is. Very well, I dare to assert that I possess the smallest ears. This is of no little interest to women – it seems to me they feel themselves better understood by me? ... I am

the anti- ass par excellence and therewith a world- historical monster – I am, in Greek and not only in Greek, the *Anti- Christ* ...

3

I know my privileges as a writer to some extent; in individual cases it has been put to me how greatly habituation to my writings ‘ruins’ taste. One can simply no longer endure other books, philosophical ones least of all. To enter this noble and delicate world is an incomparable distinction – to do so one absolutely must not be a German; it is in the end a distinction one has to have earned. But he who is related to me through *loftiness* of will experiences when he reads me real ecstasies of learning: for I come from heights no bird has ever soared to, I know abysses into which no foot has ever yet strayed. I have been told it is impossible to put a book of mine down – I even disturb the night's rest ... There is altogether no prouder and at the same time more exquisite kind of book than my books – they attain here and there the highest thing that can be attained on earth, cynicism; one needs the most delicate fingers as well as the bravest fists if one is to master them. Any infirmity of soul excludes one from them once and for all, any dyspepsia, even, does so: one must have no nerves, one must have a joyful belly. Not only does the poverty, the hole- andcorner air of a soul exclude it from them – cowardice, uncleanliness, secret revengefulness in the entrails does so far more: a word from me drives all bad instincts into the face. I have among my acquaintances several experimental animals on whom I bring home to myself the various, very instructively various reactions to my writings. Those who want to have nothing to do with their contents, my so- called friends for example, become ‘impersonal’: they congratulate me on having ‘done it’ again – progress is apparent, too, in a greater cheerfulness of tone ... The completely vicious ‘spirits’, the ‘beautiful souls’, the thoroughly and utterly mendacious have no idea at all what to do with these books – consequently they see the same as *beneath* them, the beautiful consistency of all ‘beautiful souls’. The horned cattle among my acquaintances, mere Germans if I may say so, give me to understand they are not always of my opinion, though they are sometimes ... I have heard this said even of Zarathustra ... Any ‘feminism’ in a person, or in a man, likewise closes the gates on me: one will never be able to enter this labyrinth of daring knowledge. One must never have spared oneself,

harshness must be among one's habits, if one is to be happy and cheerful among nothing but hard truths. When I picture a perfect reader, I always picture a monster of courage and curiosity, also something supple, cunning, cautious, a born adventurer and discoverer. Finally: I would not know how to say better to whom at bottom alone I speak than Zarathustra has said it: *to whom* alone does he want to narrate his riddle? To you, the bold venturers and adventurers, and whoever has embarked with cunning sails upon dreadful seas, to you who are intoxicated with riddles, who take pleasure in twilight, whose soul is lured with flutes to every treacherous abyss – for you do not desire to feel for a rope with cowardly hand; and where you can guess you hate to *calculate* ...

4

I shall at the same time also say a general word on my *art of style*. To *communicate* a state, an inner tension of pathos through signs, including the tempo of these signs – that is the meaning of every style; and considering that the multiplicity of inner states is in my case extraordinary, there exists in my case the possibility of many styles – altogether the most manifold art of style any man has ever had at his disposal. Every style is good which actually communicates an inner state, which makes no mistake as to the signs, the tempo of the signs, the *gestures* – all rules of phrasing are art of gesture. My instinct is here infallible. – Good style in *itself* – a piece of pure folly, mere 'idealism', on a par with the 'beautiful in *itself*', the 'good in *itself*', the 'thing in *itself*' ... Always presupposing there are ears – that there are those capable and worthy of a similar pathos, that those are not lacking to whom one *ought to* communicate oneself. – My Zarathustra for example is at present still looking for them – alas! he will have to look for a long time yet! One has to be *worthy* of assaying him ... And until then there will be no one who comprehends the art which has here been squandered: no one has ever had more of the new, the unheard-of, the really new- created in artistic means to squander. That such a thing was possible in the German language remained to be proved: I myself would previously have most hotly disputed it. Before me one did not know what can be done with the German language – what can be done with language as such. The art of *grand* rhythm, the *grand style* of phrasing, as the expression of a tremendous rise and fall of sublime, of superhuman passion, was first discovered by me;

with a dithyramb such as the last of the third Zarathustra, entitled 'The Seven Seals', I flew a thousand miles beyond that which has hitherto been called poesy.

5

That out of my writings there speaks a *psychologist* who has not his equal, that is perhaps the first thing a good reader will notice – a reader such as I deserve, who reads me as good old philologists read their Horace. The propositions over which everybody is in fundamental agreement – not to speak of everybody's philosophers, the moralists and other hollow- heads and cabbage- heads – appear with me as naive blunders: for example that belief that 'unegoistic' and 'egoistic' are antitheses, while the *ego* itself is merely a 'higher swindle', an 'ideal'. There are *neither* egoistic *nor* u negoistic a ctions: b oth c oncepts a re p sychologically nonsense. Or the proposition 'man strives after happiness' ... Or the proposition 'happiness is the reward of virtue' ... Or the proposition 'pleasure and displeasure are opposites' ... The Circe of mankind, morality, has falsified all *psychologica* to its very foundations – has moralized it – to the point of the frightful absurdity that love is supposed to be something 'unegoistic' ... One has to be set firmly upon *oneself*, one has to stand bravely upon one's own two legs, otherwise one *cannot* love at all. In the long run the little women *know* that all too well: they play the deuce with selfless, with merely objective men ... Dare I venture in addition to suggest that I know these little women? It is part of my Dionysian endowment. Who knows? perhaps I am the first psychologist of the eternal- womanly. They all love me – an old story: excepting the *abortive* women, the 'emancipated' who lack the stuff for children. – Happily I am not prepared to be torn to pieces: the complete woman tears to pieces when she loves ... I know these amiable maenads ... Ah, what a dangerous, creeping, subterranean little beast of prey it is! And so pleasant with it! ... A little woman chasing after her revenge would over- run fate itself. – The woman is unspeakably more wicked than the man, also cleverer; goodness in a woman is already a form of *degeneration* ... At the bottom of all so- called 'beautiful souls' there lies a physiological disadvantage – I shall not say all I could or I should become medicynical. The struggle for *equal* rights is even a symptom of sickness: every physician knows that. – The more a woman is a woman the more she defends herself tooth and nail against rights in general: for the

state of nature, the eternal *war* between the sexes puts her in a superior position by far. – Have there been ears for my definition of love? it is the only one worthy of a philosopher. Love – in its methods war, in its foundation the mortal hatred of the sexes. Has my answer been heard to the question how one cures – ‘redeems’ – a woman? One makes a child for her. The woman has need of children, the man is always only the means: thus spoke Zarathustra. – ‘Emancipation of woman’ – is the instinctive hatred of the woman who has turned *out ill*, that is to say is incapable of bearing, for her who has turned out well – the struggle against ‘man’ is always only means, subterfuge, tactic. When they elevate *themselves* as ‘woman in herself’, as ‘higher woman’, as ‘idealist’ woman, they want to lower the general level of rank of woman; no surer means for achieving that than grammar school education, trousers and the political rights of voting cattle. At bottom the emancipated are the *anarchists* i n t h e w o r l d o f t h e ‘eternal- womanly’, the under-privileged whose deepest instinct is revenge ... An entire species of the most malevolent ‘idealism’ – which, by the way, also occurs in men, for example in the case of Henrik Ibsen, that typical old maid – has the objective of *poisoning* the good conscience, the naturalness in sexual love ... And so as to leave no doubt as to my opinion in this matter, which is as honest as it is strict, I would like to impart one more clause of my moral code against *vice*: with the word vice I combat every sort of anti- nature or, if one likes beautiful words, idealism. The clause reads: ‘The preaching of chastity is a public incitement to anti- nature. Every expression of contempt for the sexual life, every befouling of it through the concept “impure”, is *the* crime against life – is the intrinsic sin against the holy spirit of life.’

6

To give an idea of me as a psychologist I take a curious piece of psychology which occurs in ‘Beyond Good and Evil’ – I forbid, by the way, any conjecture as to whom I am describing in this passage: ‘The genius of the heart as it is possessed by that great hidden one, the tempter god and born pried piper of consciences whose voice knows how to descend into the underworld of every soul, who says no word and gives no glance in which there lies no touch of enticement, to whose mastery belongs knowing how to seem – not what he is but what to those who follow him is one constraint *more*

to press ever closer to him, to follow him ever more inwardly and thoroughly ... The genius of the heart who makes everything loud and self- satisfied fall silent and teaches it to listen, who smooths rough souls and gives them a new desire to savour – the desire to lie still as a mirror, that the deep sky may mirror itself in them ... The genius of the heart who teaches the stupid and hasty hand to hesitate and grasp more delicately; who divines the hidden and forgotten treasure, the drop of goodness and sweet spirituality under thick and opaque ice, and is a divining- rod for every grain of gold which has lain long in the prison of much mud and sand ... The genius of the heart from whose touch everyone goes away richer, not favoured and surprised, not as if blessed and oppressed with the goods of others, but richer in himself, newer to himself than before, broken open, blown upon and sounded out by a thawing wind, more uncertain perhaps, more delicate, more fragile, more broken, but full of hopes that as yet have no names, full of new will and current, full of new ill will and counter current ...’



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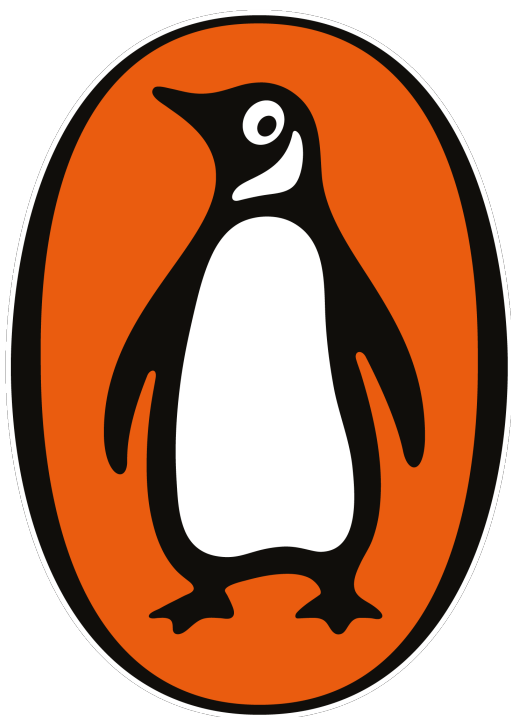
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“你这只优雅的鸟！”



PENGUIN
LITTLE BLACK
CLASSICS

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鸭子与袋鼠

鸭子对袋鼠说：

“天哪！你的跳跃可真行！

田野、河流你都能一跃而过，

就好像你永远都不会停！

这片脏池塘里无聊的生活就是我的一切，

我好想去看看外面的世界！

我多希望能像你一样跳起跳落！”

鸭子对袋鼠说。

“请载着我去兜风吧！”

鸭子对袋鼠说。

“我会乖乖坐着，只发出一种声音

‘嘎’，

一整天我都会这样做！

我们可以上天入地，去迪地和杰力波里，

跃过大海，踏过陆地——

带我去兜风吧！拜托拜托！”

鸭子对袋鼠说。

袋鼠对鸭子说：

“这你得让我想一想；

也许这件事会将幸运带给我，

除了一件事以外一切无妨，

那就是，如果你允许我直白地讲，

你的两只脚蹼又湿又凉，

很可能让风湿找上我！”

袋鼠说。

鸭子说：“当时我在石头上坐下，
深思熟虑了这件事，
我带来了四双精纺毛袜，
仿佛就是为我相连的脚蹼定制。
为了抵御寒风我带了一件斗篷，
我还会每天点一支雪茄，烟雾蒙蒙，
这一切都是因为我爱你这只袋鼠，
我真挚热烈的爱让一切都不辛苦！”

袋鼠说：“我已经准备好！

月光清冷的夜晚我们就出发；
但为了我的平衡，亲爱的鸭子，坐稳了别摔倒！
我尾巴的末端位置就是最佳！”
于是它们助跑起跳，
围着整个地球绕了三绕；
还有谁能比鸭子和袋鼠，有谁，
比鸭子和袋鼠更心满意足？

猫头鹰与猫

猫头鹰与猫出海航行，离开了陆地，
交通工具是一艘美丽的豆绿色小船，
行李是一些蜂蜜，和很多很多钱币，
被他们用五英镑的纸币裹成了一团。

猫头鹰抬头望着天上的星星，
伴着小小的吉他开始歌唱：
“哦可爱的小猫！哦小猫，我的爱情，
你看你多么漂亮，
漂亮，漂亮！

你看你多么漂亮！”

猫对猫头鹰说道：“你这只优雅的鸟！
你的歌声多么甜美动听！

让我们结婚吧！我们已经等了太久呀：
但我们没有戒指怎么行？”

他们扬帆向前，度过了一年零一天，
来到了参天大树生长的地方，
这里的森林深处，站着一只小猪，
一枚鼻环套在他的鼻尖上，
鼻尖上，
鼻尖上，
一枚鼻环套在他的鼻尖上。

“亲爱的小猪，你是否愿意我们拿一先令来换
你的鼻环？”小猪说：“我愿意。”

于是他们拿走了鼻环当作戒指，第二天就办好了婚事，

证婚人是一只住在山坡上的火鸡。
他们享用着肉末和切好的榲桲，
带着三尖头的叉匙是他们的餐具；
他们手拉着手，站在沙滩的尽头，
他们翩翩起舞，月色如玉，
月色如玉，
月色如玉，
他们翩翩起舞，月色如玉。

扫帚、铲子、拨火棍与钳子

扫帚和铲子，有拨火棍与钳子来陪同，
他们一起乘着马车把公园逛，
他们每个人都唱了一首歌，叮啊咚，
叮啊咚，
他们唱完就又回到了黑乎乎的地方。
拨火棍先生在马车里坐得挺拔，
钳子先生发出了响声哗啦哗啦，
铲子小姐一袭黑衣（别着胸花），
扫帚夫人身着蓝色（缎带斜搭）。
叮啊咚！叮啊咚！
他们都各自唱了一通！
“哦，铲子姑娘你多么漂亮！”拨火棍唱颂，
“你完美地俘获了我的心！
叮啊咚！叮啊咚！如果我的歌
让你满意认同，
我将喂你吃凉苹果馅饼！
当你铲起煤堆，声音清脆犹存，
你为我的生活带来了无比的惊喜！
你的鼻子亮闪闪！你的头颅圆滚滚！
你的身体苗条又充满活力！
叮啊咚！叮啊咚！
我的歌是否让你心动？”
“唉！扫帚夫人！”钳子在他的歌唱中叹息心痛，
“哦，是否因为我太瘦，

我的双腿又太长，显得与众不同——叮啊咚！

叮啊咚！

所以我在你心里什么地位也没有？

啊！最优雅美丽的尤物，当你将房间里的灰尘扫走，

啊！你为何不理睬我的哭诉！

你一定要如此残忍吗，你这只美丽的扫帚，

这是否因为你全身上下油漆遍布？

叮啊咚！叮啊咚！

你可真是大错特错，一点儿也不懂！”

扫帚夫人和铲子小姐一齐唱起：

“你们今天唱的都是些什么胡言乱语！”

铲子说：“我绝对要当啷一声敲醒你！”

扫帚说：“我要把你扫出去！”

于是马车夫以最快的速度往家中驶去，

因为他察觉到了他们的愤怒与痛苦；

但他们烧上了一壶水，于是过了一会儿，

他们又都重新将笑容展露。

叮啊咚！叮啊咚！

这就是我的歌的全部内容！

棉布馅饼

棉布馅饼，
小鸟飞行，
飞上棉布树，
他们的翅膀蓝得炫目，
他们唱着“嘀里嘟噜”！
直到他们飞向别处——
后来他们再也没有回到我的身边！
再也没有回到我的身边！
再也没有回到我的身边！
他们再也没有回到我的身边！
棉布果酱，
小鱼徜徉，
徜徉在乳酒冻的大海，
他将他的帽子拿起，
给比目鱼和鲱鱼行了个礼，
还有那只噼里啪啦的东西——
但是他再也没有回到我的身边！
再也没有回到我的身边！
再也没有回到我的身边！
他再也没有回到我的身边！
棉布禁令，
小老鼠奔跑不停，
赶着去参加茶话会，
吸溜吸溜，滴答滴答，

他们喝光了茶，
在茶杯里舞动踢踏——
但是他们再也没有回到我的身边！
再也没有回到我的身边！
再也没有回到我的身边！
他们再也没有回到我的身边！
棉布乐鼓，
蚂蚱出入，
还有蝴蝶、甲虫和蜜蜂，
大地被他们围绕，
一圈一圈嬉闹，
一起一落，一蹦一跳——
但是他们再也没有回到我的身边！
再也没有回到我的身边！
再也没有回到我的身边！
他们再也没有回到我的身边！

樟布利人

驶入大海，他们乘着漏筛，是的，
乘着漏筛，他们驶入了大海：
他们不顾朋友的劝言，
在冬日的一个早晨，狂风骤雨的一天，
乘着漏筛，他们驶入了大海！
漏筛在海上一圈一圈转着，
每个人都喊道：“你们会被淹死的！”
他们大声嚷道：“虽然我们的漏筛不大，
但我们一点儿都不在乎！我们一点儿都不怕！
我们要乘着漏筛，驶入大海！”
遥远又稀有，遥远又稀有，
樟布利人就从那样的地方来；
他们有着绿色的头，他们有着蓝色的手，
他们乘着漏筛，驶入了大海。
驶入大海，他们乘着漏筛，是的，
乘着漏筛，他们飞速劈开海水，
只有一块豆绿色的美丽布单，
用丝带系着当作船帆，
一只小小烟斗当作船桅；
看着他们驶离岸边的人们都说：
“哦，你知道，他们很快就会丧气失落！
因为天空又昏又暗，旅程又远又长，
不论如何，这都是错误一场，
他们怎能乘着漏筛如此快速地在海上飞！”

遥远又稀有，遥远又稀有，
樟布利人就从那样的地方来；
他们有着绿色的头，他们有着蓝色的手，
他们乘着漏筛，驶入了大海。
海水很快漫进了漏筛，是的，
海水很快漫进了漏筛；
为了不被海水浸湿，他们裹住了双脚，
用一张折叠整齐的粉纸来包，
再用别针将其固定下来。
他们躲在陶罐里迎接夜晚的降临，
他们各自都说：“我们多么聪明！
尽管天空又昏又暗，旅程又远又长，
但我们从不认为这是冲动或是错误一场，
我们就在漏筛里旋转着航海！”
遥远又稀有，遥远又稀有，
樟布利人就从那样的地方来；
他们有着绿色的头，他们有着蓝色的手，
他们乘着漏筛，驶入了大海。
一整晚他们都在海上漂荡；
当太阳下山回家，
伴着一只铜锣的悠悠音色，
他们吹着口哨哼出了一首月亮之歌，
漂流在群山棕色的阴影下。
“哦，意大利馅饼！我们快乐不已，
我们住在漏筛和陶罐里，
一整晚我们沐浴着清冷的月光，
扬着豆绿色的船帆，我们乘风破浪，
漂流在群山棕色的阴影下！”

遥远又稀有，遥远又稀有，
樟布利人就从那样的地方来；
他们有着绿色的头，他们有着蓝色的手，
他们乘着漏筛，驶入了大海。
他们驶入了西海，是的，
那里的陆地树林繁茂，
他们买了一只猫头鹰，一台实用的推车，
一磅大米，蔓越莓甜饼一个，
还有一窝银色的蜜蜂和蜂巢。
他们买了一头猪，几只绿色的寒鸦，
还有一只可爱的猴子，它拥有棒棒糖手爪，
还有四十瓶叮铃叮铃饮料
和无穷无尽的斯蒂尔顿奶酪。

遥远又稀有，遥远又稀有，
樟布利人就从那样的地方来；
他们有着绿色的头，他们有着蓝色的手，
他们乘着漏筛，驶入了大海。
二十年后，他们全员归来，
二十年或是更晚，
每个人都说：“瞧他们现在长得多高！
因为他们曾到过那片海，那个糟糕的地带，
还有波尔禅岭的群山！”
他们为他们的健康干杯，为他们献上了一顿盛宴，
把用美丽的酵母做成的饺子摆在了他们的面前；
每个人都说：“只要我们健在，
我们也要乘着漏筛去航海——
我们也要去波尔禅岭的群山！”
遥远又稀有，遥远又稀有，

樟布利人就从那样的地方来；
他们有着绿色的头，他们有着蓝色的手，
他们乘着漏筛，驶入了大海。

求爱的杨以邦以波

在科罗曼德半岛的海岸处，
未成熟的南瓜从空中飘落，
在树林的中央，
住着杨以邦以波。

两把旧椅子和半截蜡烛，
还有一只缺了把手的水壶——
这些便是他的全部家当，
在树林的中央，
这些便是他的全部家当，
它们属于杨以邦以波，
它们属于杨以邦以波。

一天，他散步在参天树林里，
未成熟的南瓜从空中飘落，
那里聚集了几块石礅，
杨以邦以波正好路过。

他听见有人说话，是一位女士，
对着一群雪白的杜金鸡说：
“这是叮当响的琼斯夫人！
坐在这片石礅上的果真
就是叮当响的琼斯夫人！”

杨以邦以波如是说，
杨以邦以波如是说。

“叮当响夫人！叮当响夫人你看！
你坐的地方有未成熟的南瓜从空中飘落，

你是否愿意嫁给我？”

杨以邦以波如是说。

“我受够了孤独的日子、无人陪伴，

在这片布满卵石的荒凉海滩——

我厌倦了这样的生活；

如果你愿意嫁给我，

平静便能降临我的生活！”

杨以邦以波如是说，

杨以邦以波如是说。

“这片科罗曼德半岛的海岸处，

是小虾和豆瓣菜的居所，

大虾又多又便宜得很，”

杨以邦以波如是说，

“你将拥有我的椅子和蜡烛，

还有我缺了把手的水壶！——

瞧瞧这片海翻滚之深

（丰富又便宜，这海里的鱼虾们）；

我的爱就和这片海一样深！”

杨以邦以波如是说，

杨以邦以波如是说。

叮当响夫人开始悲伤地讲起，

她的眼泪也开始掉落——

“你的求婚来得晚了一步，

这位先生，杨以邦以波！

我非常愿意成为你的妻子！”

（这时她开始不停地绞着手指。）

“但我在英国已经有了丈夫！

是的！你的求婚晚了一步，

我在英国已经有了丈夫，
这位先生，杨以邦以波！
这位先生，杨以邦以波！”
“琼斯先生，（亨德尔是他的称呼——
亨德尔·琼斯，他拥有自己的律师事务所。）
是他总乐于送来这些杜金鸡为我消愁，
这位先生，杨以邦以波！
留着吧，哦！留着你的椅子和蜡烛，
还有你缺了把手的水壶——
我只能成为你的朋友！
——如果我的琼斯先生再送来更多的杜金鸡，那时候
我会送给你三只，我的朋友！
这位先生，杨以邦以波！
这位先生，杨以邦以波！”
“尽管你的身体如此瘦小平凡，
尽管你的头比身体大得多得多，
尽管你的帽子随时会被风吹下，
这位先生，杨以邦以波！
虽然你头脑如此简单——
我依旧希望我能换
一种说法说出接下来的话！
能否请你离开，别再牵挂？
这就是我要说的话，
这位先生，杨以邦以波！
这位先生，杨以邦以波！”
走下默特尔湿滑的山坡，
未成熟的南瓜在空中飘摇，
向着那片平静无声的大海，

杨以邦以波飞也似的奔逃。
将哥特尔海湾越过，
那里趴着一只巨大的海龟，生气勃勃。
“你是我的避风港，”他说，“带我离开；
你将驮着我越过大海，
海龟，请你带我离开！”
杨以邦以波如是说，
杨以邦以波如是说。
在那片无声翻滚着的大海上，
海龟全速前进，风风火火；
紧紧抓着它的龟壳的
就是杨以邦以波。
他的样子充满脆弱与悲伤，
面对着波申日落群岛的方向，
海龟依旧稳稳地将他载着，
他则牢牢地抓着它的壳，
“叮当响的琼斯夫人，再见了！”
杨以邦以波如是说，
杨以邦以波如是说。
科罗曼德半岛的海岸处，
那位夫人再也不曾离开过；
在那片石礅上她哀悼着，
哀悼着杨以邦以波。
在科罗曼德半岛的海岸处，
对着他缺了把手的水壶，
她整日哭泣哀怨着；
在那片石礅上坐着的，
是对着杜金鸡的她在哀怨着，

为了杨以邦以波，
为了杨以邦以波。

斯库比皮皮

一天，斯库比皮皮出门了，
那时草是绿的，天是灰的，
斯库比皮皮坐了下来，
世界上所有的野兽都围了过来。
小猫、小狗，和袋鼠，
小羊、小牛，还有荷兰猪，
狼仰天呼号，马对地嘶鸣，
小猪厉声尖叫，驴子喊个不停，
当狮子开始咆哮怒吼，
那样的声音前所未有，
所有的野兽都踮起脚尖，
为了能看到斯库比皮皮一眼。
最后大家对狐狸说：“时至今日，
你是最睿智的野兽，你知道你是！
你快走到斯库比皮皮那里，
和他说‘请你介绍一下你自己！——
因为我们直到现在还在发愁，
你到底是鱼是虫，是鸟是兽’？”
斯库比皮皮随意地向四周一望，
用隆隆的声音开始歌唱：
“哩哩滴滴哩——滴滴哩哩滴——
我唯一的名字就是斯库比皮皮。”
斯库比皮皮站在树顶，离开陆地，
望见了遥远的杰力波里，

世界上所有的鸟儿都围了过来，
成群结队从空中飞来。
秃鹫、老鹰、公鸡和母鸡来报到，
还有鸵鸟、火鸡、沙锥和鹌鹑，
鹦鹉聒噪，乌鸦歌唱，
猫头鹰一言不发，摆出睿智的模样，
当孔雀开始尖叫，
整个世界变得无比吵闹。
所有的鸟儿都抖动着翅膀，
希望能将斯库比皮皮仔细地瞧。
最后大家对猫头鹰说：“时至今日，
你是最睿智的鸟儿——你知道你是！
你快飞到斯库比皮皮那里，
和他说‘请你介绍一下你自己！——
因为我们到现在还不曾知晓，
你到底是鱼是虫，是兽是鸟’？”
斯库比皮皮开心地向四周一望，
用轻快的声音开始歌唱：
“滴滴哩哩滴——哩哩滴滴哩——
我唯一的名字就是斯库比皮皮。”
斯库比皮皮钻进了大海，
就在杰力波里美丽的沙滩一带，
世界上所有的鱼儿都围了过来，
稀里哗啦地将海水劈开，
黍鲱、鲱鱼、比目鱼，
鲨鱼、鲭鱼和蓝色的鲭鱼，
——在扑腾，鼠海豚吐泡泡
——不知所措——

当鲸鱼喷出水柱。

所有的鱼儿都抖动着尾巴，
都把斯库比皮皮认真地观察。

最后大家对鲸鱼说：“时至今日，
你是最庞大的鱼儿——你知道你是！
你快游到斯库比皮皮那里，
和他说‘请你介绍一下你自己！
因为了解你是我们唯一的期许，
你到底是兽是虫，是鸟是鱼’？”

斯库比皮皮温柔地向四周一望，
用咕嘟咕嘟的声音开始歌唱：
“嘻嘻哩哩嘻——哩哩嘻嘻哩——
我唯一的名字就是斯库比皮皮。”

斯库比皮皮坐在树下乘凉，
就在杰力波里安静的海岸旁，
世界上所有的昆虫，
都围着斯库比皮皮旋转颤动。

甲壳虫和——紫色眼睛的
小飞虫还有嗡嗡叫的苍蝇，
蚂蚱、蝴蝶，还有蜘蛛爬行，
马蜂、蜜蜂，以及蓝色的蜻蜓，
当小飞虫开始哼哼
——像悲伤的鼓点一样跳动——

所有的昆虫都卷起了他们的长针，
对着斯库比皮皮看得出了神。

最后大家对蚂蚁说：“时至今日，
你是最睿智的昆虫，你知道你是！
你快溜到斯库比皮皮那里，

和他说‘请你介绍一下你自己！
因为我们不知道，我们也想不通，
你是兽是鱼，是鸟是虫’？”
斯库比皮皮快速地转身回望，
用窸窣窸窣的声音开始歌唱：
“唧唧唧唧——唧唧唧唧——
我唯一的名字就是斯库比皮皮。”
陆地上走的所有野兽
都围成一圈跳舞，手拉着手，
天空中飞的所有鸟类
都围成一圈旋转，来来回回，
杰力波里的所有鱼虾
都围成一圈游动，在那水下，
潜伏爬行的所有昆虫
都围成一圈振动，声音嗡嗡。
他们咆哮、歌唱、低语、叫喊，
直到声音将整个地球充满——
“滴滴哒哒滴！哒哒滴滴哒！
他唯一的名字就是斯库比皮皮。”

狂果王果的帽子

在咯吱树的上头，
坐着一只狂果王果，
但你看不见他的脸和头，
因为他的海狸帽子又宽又阔。
帽子共有三十一米长，
每一侧都有丝带和绷带飘扬，
装饰着铃铛、纽扣、圆环和花边，
这样一来谁也看不见他的脸，
看不见这只狂果王果兽。
狂果王果开始念叨，
他坐在咯吱树上自言自语——
“果酱、果冻还有面包；
这些食物最能让我满意！
但我住在咯吱树上越久，
我就越发觉得无聊难受。
很少有人到这里来，
搞得我的生活百无聊赖！”
说话的是这只狂果王果兽。
但有人来到了咯吱树旁逗留，
原来是金丝雀夫妇；
他们说：“你看看这里头，
从没有哪个地方比这更通透舒服。
我们能不能在你可爱的帽子里做窝？
狂果王果先生，拜托拜托！

哦，请让我们在这里定居筑巢，
什么材料都行，听你的就好，
尊敬的狂果王果兽！”
来到咯吱树的，还有许多其他鸟兽，
有野鹤、鸭子、猫头鹰；
还有蜗牛和大黄蜂在后，
青蛙和扭扭鸡也一起同行
（扭扭鸡的腿是一只螺旋钻）；
大家都说：“我们有一个小小的企求，
请让我们在你可爱的帽子里做窝——
狂果王果先生，拜托拜托！



尊敬的狂果王果兽！”
金色的松鸡也加入了队列之中，
还有那只珀勃，没有脚趾，
和一只奥林匹亚小熊，
还有那只阿冬，长着会发光的鼻子。
还有会吹笛子的蓝色狒狒，
来自图特的东方小牛也来相会，
还有阿特里的烂泥，比斯基的蝙蝠——
大家都来这顶可爱的帽子里住，
而帽子属于狂果王果兽。
狂果王果开始念叨，
他坐在咯吱树上喋喋不休——
“当所有这些生灵开始活动，
那声音该有多么令人渴求！”
到了晚上，桑葚色的月亮从云中展露，
他们随着蓝色狒狒的笛声跳舞，
在咯吱树宽大的绿叶上感受
最极致的快乐和享受，
与这只狂果王果兽。

斯瓦特的阿空德

谁，或是为何，或是哪个，或是什么，才是斯瓦特的阿空德？

他是高是矮，皮肤是黑是白？

他坐凳子、沙发还是要找一把椅子来

或者蹲着，

斯瓦特的阿空德？

他聪明还是愚蠢，是青年还是老翁？他的汤和咖啡是否要放到冰冷

还是要加热，

斯瓦特的阿空德？

他唱歌还是吹口哨，胡言乱语还是头头是道？他出国旅行是快马加鞭还是走路就到

或者小跑 着踩过车辙，

斯瓦特的阿空德？

他戴头巾、毡帽还是檐帽？

他睡软垫、大床还是地毯一条

或者婴儿床 更适合，

斯瓦特的阿空德？

如果碰到用花体字写信的情况，

他是否会给T画上一横、给I的头上

加点 一颗，

斯瓦特的阿空德？

他能否把信写得精简又清楚？

没有一丝油点、脏迹和污物

也不滴下斑斑墨色，

斯瓦特的阿空德？

他是否得到了人民真心的爱戴？

还是只要逮着机会他们就造反起义、为非作歹

在背后暗中谋策，

斯瓦特的阿空德？

如果他抓到了谋逆的人民，不管年老还是年轻，

他会将他们碎尸万段，处以绞刑

还是开枪 扫射，

斯瓦特的阿空德？

他的人民是否在路上和公园里抢劫掠夺？

甚至有时日子苦难，只能小偷小摸

最终成了绞刑架 上的空壳，

哦，斯瓦特的阿空德！

他是否会关注自己领土上人民的希冀？

还是他毫不在意

对公众的观点 漠然得透彻，

斯瓦特的阿空德？

他的臣民拿什么取悦他？

是用绘画，还是用谁最新的诗作

到底用什么 以作乐，

斯瓦特的阿空德？

如果夜晚他突然尖叫着惊醒，

他们是否会拿几块小蛋糕为他压惊

还是满满 一车，

斯瓦特的阿空德？

他最爱的食物是萝卜、茶叶还是牛肚？

条纹是否是他最欣赏的披肩纹路

还是圆点 更让他认可，

斯瓦特的阿空德？

他是否喜欢在船里平躺，
就像那位住在遥远小岛的女人一样

她叫莎洛特，
斯瓦特的阿空德？

他性格沉稳内敛，还是整日寻死觅活？
他的侍从是来自瑞士、瑞典还是俄国

或者来自苏格兰 的异乡客，
斯瓦特的阿空德？

他是喜欢在蓝色的平静大海旁歇脚，
还是在绿色的林间山洞里打鼾睡觉

抑或是巢穴 来得更悠然自得，
斯瓦特的阿空德？

他喝的淡啤酒是否用银质的罐子装？还是用碗？玻璃瓶？茶杯？
或者缸？

抑或是用锅 更解渴，
斯瓦特的阿空德？

他是否会用顶部镶金的烟斗对他的妻子打骂训斥，在她每每忘记
摘下熟过头了的醋栗

甚至腐烂 变色时，
斯瓦特的阿空德？

他和朋友进餐时，是否会戴一条白色的领带，整齐地打个蝴蝶
结，两端下垂向外

还是系成扣 就合格，
斯瓦特的阿空德？

他是否喜欢奶油，痛恨肉饼？
他直视太阳时是否会眨眼睛

还是坚决不眨，直直盯着，
斯瓦特的阿空德？

他是否会教他的臣民烘焙与烧烤？

他是否会航行在内陆湖中绕

驾着游艇，
斯瓦特的阿空德？

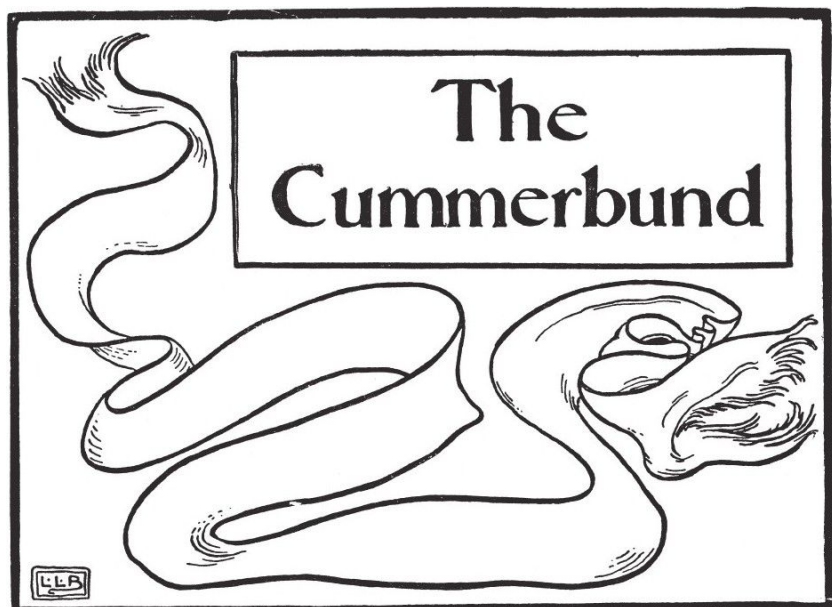
我想是否前无古人，后无来者，
知道谁，或是哪个，或是为何，或是什么

才是斯瓦特的阿空德！

腰封怪

一首印度诗 [1]

她坐在她的多比上，
望着傍晚西方天空的金星，
所有经过的普卡都说：
“天哪！你多么玉洁冰清！”
在她周围的树荫处，落叶飘摇，
旁边生长着高高的卡姆萨马，
还有张灯结彩的吉特姆噶
在蓝色的寇基上挂。
在她家下方，河流翻涌而过，
在河水温柔的呼噜声中，
河里长着金色鱼鳍的丘普拉西们，
成群结队地绕着圈游动。
向上望，远处最高的那棵树上，
绿色的阿丫们独自栖息，
整晚都能听见穆萨克的呜呜声，



腰封怪

音调无比悲戚。
紫色的怒拉们
将他们的树枝扔向遥远的地方，
银色的格里瓦拉们
在寂静中并排飞翔，
小比斯提们叽叽喳喳的叫声
在甜美的空气中飘浮，
怒气冲冲的詹盘时时呼号，
在他险恶的洞穴深处。
她坐在她的多比上，
听着尼麦克的低吟，
突然一声叫喊划破空气：
“腰封怪来临！”
她的逃跑全是徒劳——
怪物张开大口，凶猛愤怒，

在救兵赶来之前，
便将这位佳人吞下了肚。
人们连她的一根骨头都没找到，
便无法为她体面地下葬，
他们说：“她的命运太过悲惨！”
就连空气也表示同意：“举世无双。”
他们将她的多比钉在墙上，
就在她最后坐过的位置，
他们在下面写了几句话，
用黄色、蓝色和绿色的墨汁：
小心啊，佳人！佳人，小心！
不要深夜在外独坐暗处，
以免可怕的腰封怪到来，
将你囫囵一口吞下肚。

诗中出现的印地词语本意：

多比（Dobie）：洗衣工。

普卡（Punkah）：拉风，印度旧时悬挂于天花板用绳子拉动的布屏风扇。

卡姆萨马（Kamsamah）：厨师。

吉特姆噶（Kitmutgar）：侍者。

寇基（Tchoki）：警察局。

丘普拉西（Chuprassi）：信使。

阿丫（Ayah）：保姆。

穆萨克（Mussak）：水袋。

怒拉（Nullah）：水渠。

格里瓦拉（Goreewallah）：马倌。

比斯提（Bheestie）：运水的人或工具。

詹盘（Jampan）：轿子。

尼麦克（Nimmak）：盐。

[1] 作者为了增加诗的荒诞感并体现出这是一首“印度”诗，在诗中故意误用了许多印地词语。例如，多比（Dobie）在印地语中原本的意思是“洗衣工”，而作者在诗中使用这个词时，却让其看似有了“座位”的含义。作者本人是清楚地知道这些印地词语的本意的，而他却要故意将它们用在错误的语境下，这样，熟悉这些词语的读者能理解其中的荒诞，从而会心一笑，而不认识这些词语的读者则成功地被作者恶作剧了一番，让这首诗更添了几分诙谐和幽默。

老头的新衣

很久以前，苔丝国住着一位老头，
他自创了一身衣服，前所未有；
待到整套全部做好、完美无缺，
他打开了门，走上了街。
他的帽子是一块黑麦面包，
他的头刚好戴进中间的低凹；
他的衬衫由无数的死老鼠缝制，
它们的皮毛温暖、柔软又舒适；
他的内裤和鞋子是兔皮做的；
他裤袜的皮料却不知是来自谁了；
他的背心和长裤用排骨缝就；
他的纽扣是红枣和巧克力球；
他拿薄饼当外套，果酱镶边，
系束的腰带由一圈饼干相连；
为了抵御恶劣天气，他还披了一件大衣，
大衣用许多白菜叶子缝起。
他只走了几步，就听见巨大的响声传来，
那声音来自各种野兽、鸟类和小男孩；
只见，从城里四面八方的长街暗巷，
无数的野兽、鸟类和小男孩一拥而上。
两只奶牛和一只小牛吃掉了他的白菜大衣；
四只猩猩抢到了他的腰带，饼干瞬间化为空气；
三个小孩将他的薄饼外套吃掉了一半，
一只年老的公羊用他的燕尾服饱餐；

一群野狗开始撕咬，顷刻之间，
排骨背心和长裤就成了它们幼崽的消遣；
正当野狗们低声咆哮着啃噬排骨的时候，
十个小男孩偷走了衣服上的红枣和巧克力球。
老头试着逃跑回家，但一切都是徒劳，
因为前前后后几十头肥猪已经赶到；
它们从猪圈和茅舍夺门而出，
扯下了他的裤袜、鞋子，还有内裤；
这时，尖厉的叫声从屋顶传出，
跳下来的条纹猫、斑点猫、黑白灰猫数不胜数，
它们跳到他的肩上，弄掉了他的面包帽，
乌鸦、鸭子和母鸡混作一团，将帽子彻底干掉；



转眼之间，野猫们又冲向了他袖子的方位，
将他用死老鼠做的衬衫撕碎；
它们将衬衫吃得一干二净，发出一声号叫，
老头这才赤裸着全身往家里跑。
他将大门紧锁时对自己嘀咕：

“我永远不会再穿类似的衣服，
永远也不，永远也不，永远也不，永远也不！”

两位年迈的单身汉

两位年迈的单身汉在一个屋檐下同住；
一位捡到了一块松饼，一位抓到了一只老鼠。
捡到松饼的对抓到老鼠的说道：“这只老鼠
真是雪中送炭！因为家里都快让人没法住，
我们除了一小片柠檬和一茶匙蜂蜜以外什么也没有，
晚餐都不知道吃什么，我们也没有钱采购。
而如果我们一直不吃饭，
我们的牙齿和睫毛都会掉光，我们只会越来越瘦，
没法看。”

抓到老鼠的对捡到松饼的说道：
“我们可以煮了这只小老鼠，但我们要有点儿填料
才好！

如果我们有鼠尾草和洋葱该多美妙，
但不好说这些食材我们该去哪里找！”

两位年迈的单身汉赶紧跑进城中，
走来走去讨要鼠尾草和洋葱；
他们借到了两颗大洋葱，却没有鼠尾草，
商店、市集和所有的花园里都找不到。

但是有人说：“有一座山，就在北方的不远处，
在它垂直的紫色山顶上有一条小路；
在那里的乱石之间居住着一位年老的哲人 [\[2\]](#)，
他非常勤奋，整日研读着最最复杂的书本。”

“爬上山，趁他刻苦地坐着学习时，抓住他的脚指头！
把他拽下山来，切成无穷无尽的小碎肉！

然后把肉末和你的洋葱混合（洋葱也要切成碎末），
这样你的填料就做好了，味道可能非常不错。”

两位年迈的单身汉一刻也没有浪费，
立马爬上了几乎垂直的紫色峭壁，不知疲惫；
到了山顶，在乱石丛中的一个僻静之处，
他们看见了哲人，正在阅读一本巨大无比的书。

“这位勤奋的哲人！”他们大声喊道，

“书你已经读了不少！

我们想把你切成碎块，混合进我们的填料！”

但是年老的哲人平静地抬起了头，

将他手中巨大的书一举

冲着两位年迈的单身汉的光头准确地扔了过去；

二人撞在一起滚下了悬崖峭壁，

经过小路、田野或城镇时都没停止，

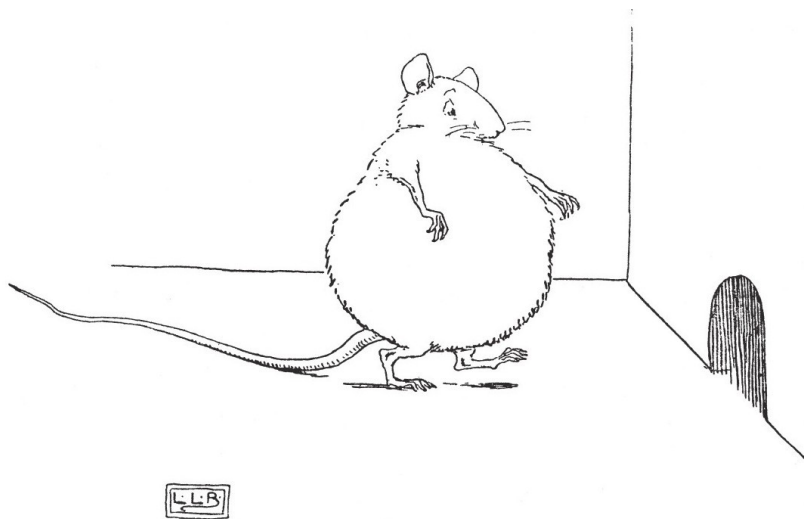
等他们滚到了家才发现（不仅填料没有拿到），

老鼠也已经逃跑，跑之前还将松饼也一并吃掉。

他们沉默地离开了家，

走出了曾经让他们开心的那扇门。

从那以后，便再也没有了这两位单身汉的新闻。



[2] 鼠尾草英文为sage，而sage这个词也有哲人的意思。

鼻子会发光的阿冬

可怕的黑夜与寂静
在广袤的格鲁布里安平原降临，
在无比漫长的冬夜里；
海浪愤怒地咆哮呼喊，
拍打着岩石嶙峋的海岸；
暴风雨前的乌云积聚在高耸的峭壁，
那是波尔禅岭的群山：
那时，在无限的黑暗和阴霾中，
似乎有一点星火在移动，
孤独地发出银色的光芒，
穿透了如炭一般黢黑的夜晚，
如一颗流星般奇异亮闪闪：
在这里和那里四处游荡，
一束触目惊心的亮光，形只影单。
那光慢慢地游移、暂停、鬼鬼祟祟，
又迅速地闪烁、惊现、跳跃起飞；
随着光芒继续向前行走，
光辉照射在了参天大树的枝头。
从礼堂、阳台和耸立的高塔上，
人们朝窗外的午夜时分张望，
跟随那无拘无束光芒的行踪，
人们喊道：“阿冬！阿冬！”
阿冬又一次游走在树林里！
阿冬！阿冬！

阿冬有着会发光的鼻子！”

许许多多年前，

阿冬终日开心快乐，

直到一位樟布利姑娘登上岸，

那天他坠入了爱河。

樟布利人们乘着漏筛到来，是的，

他们傍晚登陆的地点靠近泽莫里菲德，

矩形的牡蛎生长在海边，

光滑的石头泛着灰色。

树林里和山谷中传来回响，

是樟布利人们不分昼夜在歌唱：

遥远又稀有，遥远又稀有，

樟布利人就从那样的地方来；

他们有着绿色的头，他们有着蓝色的手，

他们乘着漏筛，驶入了大海。

那些日子是多么令人愉快！

樟布利人们还没有离开；

他们整晚围成一圈舞蹈，

被兴奋的阿冬吹奏的忧伤笛声围绕，

月光下、树荫里，都有他们的身影在。

几天几夜阿冬都在那里，

和美丽的樟布利女孩一起，

她有着天蓝色的双手，海绿色的发丝。

直到糟糕的那天早上，

樟布利人们乘着他们的漏筛起航，

阿冬被残忍地留在了岸边，

久久凝视着海与天的交界线，

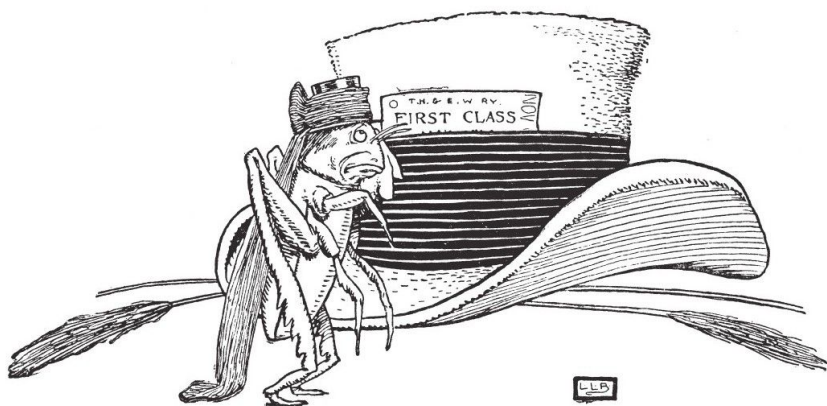
他疲惫的双眼在遥望
远方地平线上豆绿色的船帆，
在那长满青草的山坡上，他坐了一整天，
还在把樟布利人的那首歌唱念，
遥远又稀有，遥远又稀有，
樟布利人就从那样的地方来；
他们有着绿色的头，他们有着蓝色的手，
他们乘着漏筛，驶入了大海。
但当西方的天空挂上了落日，
阿冬边自言自语边慢慢站起：
“我曾经拥有的一点点理智，
现在也已经完全消失！”
从那天起他开始游荡
在湖边和森林里，沼泽和小山上，
边走边唱：“噢！有一个地方，在山谷或是平原，
我还能再见到我的樟布利女孩一面！
我将永远在湖边和岸边寻找，
直到我再次把我的樟布利女孩找到！”
从那以后他一直寻找着樟布利女孩，
仿佛银器发出的咯吱声从他的笛子中传来，
又因为夜里看不见，一切黑漆漆，
于是他收集了团格姆树的树皮，
它们生长的平原上鲜花烂漫。
他为自己编织了一只鼻子，令人惊叹，
那鼻子实在是无比怪异！
它又宽又大，被涂成了红色，
用绳子固定好，在脑后绑着。

里面中空的圆形空当，
有一盏点亮的灯在那里摆放，
再用结实的绷带缠绕，
把四周全部围好，
为了防止灯光被风吹灭熄掉；
四周还布满了小孔，这样才能
让光一束束地点亮黑夜的凄冷。
如今的每个夜晚，通宵达旦，
阿冬都在那一片片平原上游走寻探；
在黑猩猩和沙锥的哀号之上，
也许你能听到他的笛子在咯吱咯吱响，
他虽然一直在寻找，但寻找都是徒劳，
他徒劳地盼望着能再和樟布利女孩见到；
孤独又漫无目的，他整夜行走，
有着发光鼻子的阿冬哟！
从礼堂、阳台，和耸立的高塔上，
人们朝窗外的午夜时分张望，
跟随那闪耀流星的光辉，
穿过那苦闷的黑夜，
人们喊道：“每到这时他都在向前行走，
有着发光鼻子的阿冬哟！
在那边的平原上他在行走；
他走！
他走！
有着发光鼻子的阿冬哟！”

我叔叔阿尔利的一些往事

噢，我年迈的叔叔阿尔利！
坐上了一堆高高的麦粒，
夜晚的时光安谧寂静，
他紧挨着茂盛的灌木丛；
一只蟋蟀稳坐他的鼻头不动，
一张火车票藏在他的帽子中
（但他的鞋子还是系得太紧）。
很久以前，年轻的他挥霍无度，
最后他一无所有，只好整日漫步，
来到了遥远的提姆斯库山里。
在那里，每天的傍晚时分
他都在望着金色的落日下沉，
唱着：“圆球！你可真神！
我好想知道你是什么东西！”
和古老的米堤亚人和波斯人一样，
他总是能通过自己的力量，
在那片山上生存下来、克服困难；
有时靠教小孩子拼写字词，
或者大喊大叫就足矣，
或者偶尔卖卖东西，
比如“由此之故的尼哥底母药丸”。
后来，他在早上散步的途中
注意到黑莓灌木丛在动，
露出了一个东西，又白又方；

那是一张头等座的火车票，
他俯身去捡，刚一弯腰，
一只豆绿色的蟋蟀便助跑起跳，
落在了我叔叔的鼻子上。
从此以后，再也没有，噢！再也没有一天，
那只蟋蟀再也没有离开过他的身边，
清晨或傍晚，白昼或晚景；
它都像得了宝贝一样紧抓不放，
用欢快的声音高叫歌唱，
只为了我叔叔能开心地将烦恼遗忘
（但他的鞋子还是系得太紧）。
就这样又过了四十三个冬天，
直到他的鞋子都磨成了碎片，
他就在那片山上闲逛，
有时沉默，有时呼喊；
直到他来到了博利梅令山，
在那里，他的祖先曾经代代居住；
于是从那时起，他也便不再游荡。
我年迈的叔叔阿尔利，
在一小堆麦粒上咽了气，
一天晚上，人们为他下葬送殡；
地点就紧挨着那茂盛的灌木丛；
他的帽子和火车票也在其中，
他忠诚的蟋蟀也一起陪同
（但他的鞋子还是系得太紧）。



‘You elegant
fowl!’

The Duck and the Kangaroo

Said the Duck to the Kangaroo,
‘Good gracious! how you hop!
Over the fields and the water too,
As if you never would stop!
My life is a bore in this nasty pond,
And I long to go out in the world beyond!
I wish I could hop like you!’
Said the Duck to the Kangaroo.
‘Please give me a ride on your back!’
Said the Duck to the Kangaroo.
‘I would sit quite still, and say nothing but
"Quack,"
The whole of the long day through!
And we'd go to the Dee, and the Jelly Bo Lee,
Over the land, and over the sea; -
Please take me a ride! O do!’
Said the Duck to the Kangaroo.
Said the Kangaroo to the Duck,
‘This requires some little reflection;
Perhaps on the whole it might bring me luck,
And there seems but one objection,
Which is, if you'll let me speak so bold,
Your feet are unpleasantly wet and cold,
And would probably give me the roomatiz!’

said the Kangaroo.

Said the Duck, 'As I sate on the rocks,
I have thought over that completely,
And I bought four pairs of worsted socks
Which fit my web- feet neatly.

And to keep out the cold I've bought a cloak,
And every day a cigar I'll smoke,
All to follow my own dear true
Love of a Kangaroo!"

Said the Kangaroo, 'I'm ready!
All in the moonlight pale;
But to balance me well, dear Duck, sit steady!
And quite at the end of my tail!"

So away they went with a hop and a bound,
And they hopped the whole world three times round;
And who so happy, – O who,
As the Duck and the Kangaroo?

The Owl and the Pussy- cat

The Owl and the Pussy- cat went to sea
In a beautiful pea- green boat,
They took some honey, and plenty of money,
Wrapped up in a five- pound note.
The Owl looked up to the stars above,
And sang to a small guitar,
'O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love,
What a beautiful Pussy you are,
You are,
You are!
What a beautiful Pussy you are!'
Pussy said to the Owl, 'You elegant fowl!
How charmingly sweet you sing!
O let us be married! too long we have tarried:
But what shall we do for a ring?'
They sailed away, for a year and a day,
To the land where the Bong- tree grows,
And there in a wood a Piggy- wig stood,
With a ring at the end of his nose,
His nose,
His nose,
With a ring at the end of his nose.
'Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling
Your ring?' Said the Piggy, 'I will.'

So they took it away, and were married next day
By the Turkey who lives on the hill.
They dinèd on mince, and slices of quince,
Which they ate with a runcible spoon;
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
They danced by the light of the moon,
The moon,
The moon,
They danced by the light of the moon.

The Broom, the Shovel, the Poker, and the Tongs

The Broom and the Shovel, the Poker and Tongs,
They all took a drive in the Park,
And they each sang a song, Ding- a- dong,
Ding- a- dong,
Before they went back in the dark.
Mr Poker he sate quite upright in the coach,
Mr Tongs made a clatter and clash,
Miss Shovel was dressed all in black (with a brooch),
Mrs Broom was in blue (with a sash).
Ding- a- dong! Ding- a- dong!
And they all sang a song!
'Oh Shovel so lovely!' the Poker he sang,
'You have perfectly conquered my heart!
Ding- a- dong! Ding- a- dong! If you're pleased with my song,
I will feed you with cold apple tart!
When you scrape up the coals with a delicate sound,
You enrapture my life with delight!
Your nose is so shiny! your head is so round!
And your shape is so slender and bright!
Ding- a- dong! Ding- a- dong!
Ain't you pleased with my song?'
'Alas! Mrs Broom!' sighed the Tongs in his song,
'O is it because I'm so thin,

And my legs are so long – D ing- a-d ong!

Ding- a- dong!

That you don't care about me a pin?

Ah! fairest of creatures, when sweeping the room,

Ah! why don't you heed my complaint!

Must you needs be so cruel, you beautiful Broom,

Because you are covered with paint?

Ding- a- dong! Ding- a- dong!

You are certainly wrong!"

Mrs Broom and Miss Shovel together they sang,

'What nonsense you're singing to- day!'

Said the Shovel, 'I'll certainly hit you a bang!'

Said the Broom, 'And I'll sweep you away!'

So the Coachman drove homeward as fast as he could,

Perceiving their anger with pain;

But they put on the kettle, and little by little,

They all became happy again.

Ding- a- dong! Ding- a- dong!

There's an end of my song!

Calico Pie

Calico Pie,
The little birds fly
Down to the calico tree,
Their wings were blue,
And they sang ' Tilly- loo!'
Till away they flew, -
And they never came back to me!
They never came back!
They never came back!
They never came back to me!
Calico Jam,
The little Fish swam,
Over the syllabub sea,
He took off his hat,
To the Sole and the Sprat,
And the Willeby- wat, -
But he never came back to me!
He never came back!
He never came back!
He never came back to me!
Calico Ban,
The little Mice ran,
To be ready in time for tea,
Flippity flup,

They drank it all up,
And danced in the cup, -
But they never came back to me!
They never came back!
They never came back!
They never came back to me!
Calico Drum,
The Grasshoppers come,
The Butterfly, Beetle, and Bee,
Over the ground,
Around and round,
With a hop and a bound, -
But they never came back!
They never came back!
They never came back!
They never came back to me!

The Jumblies

They went to sea in a Sieve, they did,
In a Sieve they went to sea:
In spite of all their friends could say,
On a winter's morn, on a stormy day,
In a Sieve they went to sea!
And when the Sieve turned round and round,
And every one cried, 'You'll all be drowned!'
They called aloud, 'Our Sieve ain't big,
But we don't care a button! we don't care a fig!
In a Sieve we'll go to sea!'
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.
They sailed away in a Sieve, they did,
In a Sieve they sailed so fast,
With only a beautiful pea- green veil
Tied with a riband by way of a sail,
To a small tobacco- pipe mast;
And every one said, who saw them go,
'O won't they be soon upset, you know!
For the sky is dark, and the voyage is long,
And happen what may, it's extremely wrong
In a Sieve to sail so fast!'

Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.
The water it soon came in, it did,
The water it soon came in;
So to keep them dry, they wrapped their feet
In a pinky paper all folded neat,
And they fastened it down with a pin.
And they passed the night in a crockery- jar,
And each of them said, 'How wise we are!
Though the sky be dark, and the voyage be long,
Yet we never can think we were rash or wrong,
While round in our Sieve we spin!'
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.
And all night long they sailed away;
And when the sun went down,
They whistled and warbled a moony song
To the echoing sound of a coppery gong,
In the shade of the mountains brown.
'O Timballo! How happy we are,
When we live in a Sieve and a crockery- jar,
And all night long in the moonlight pale,
We sail away with a pea- green sail,
In the shade of the mountains brown!'

Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumbles live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.
They sailed to the Western Sea, they did,
To a land all covered with trees,
And they bought an Owl, and a useful Cart,
And a pound of Rice, and a Cranberry Tart,
And a hive of silvery Bees.
And they bought a Pig, and some green Jack- daws,
And a lovely Monkey with lollipop paws,
And forty bottles of Ring- Bo- Ree,
And no end of Stilton Cheese.

Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumbles live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.
And in twenty years they all came back,
In twenty years or more,
And every one said, 'How tall they've grown!
For they've been to the Lakes, and the Terrible Zone,
And the hills of the Chankly Bore!'
And they drank their health, and gave them a feast
Of dumplings made of beautiful yeast;
And every one said, 'If we only live,
We too will go to sea in a Sieve, -
To the hills of the Chankly Bore!'
Far and few, far and few,

Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

The Courtship of the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò

On the Coast of Coromandel
Where the early pumpkins blow,
In the middle of the woods
Lived the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò.
Two old chairs, and half a candle, -
One old jug without a handle, -
These were all his worldly goods,
In the middle of the woods,
These were all the worldly goods,
Of the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò,
Of the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò.
Once, among the Bong- trees walking
Where the early pumpkins blow,
To a little heap of stones
Came the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò.
There he heard a Lady talking,
To some milk- white Hens of Dorking, -
' 'Tis the Lady Jingly Jones!
On that little heap of stones
Sits the Lady Jingly Jones!
Said the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò,
Said the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò.
'Lady Jingly! Lady Jingly!
Sitting where the pumpkins blow,

Will you come and be my wife?'
Said the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò.
'I am tired of living singly, -
On this coast so wild and shingly, -
I'm a- weary of my life;
If you'll come and be my wife,
Quite serene would be my life!' -
Said the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò,
Said the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò.
'On this Coast of Coromandel,
Shrimps and watercresses grow,
Prawns are plentiful and cheap,'
Said the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò.
'You shall have my chairs and candle,
And my jug without a handle! -
Gaze upon the rolling deep
(Fish is plentiful and cheap;)
As the sea, my love is deep!'
Said the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò,
Said the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò.
Lady Jingly answered sadly,
And her tears began to flow, -
'Your proposal comes too late,
Mr Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò!
I would be your wife most gladly!'
(Here she twirled her fingers madly,)
'But in England I've a mate!
Yes! you've asked me far too late,

For in England I've a mate,
Mr Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò!
Mr Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò!
'Mr Jones – (his name is Handel, -
Handel Jones, Esquire, & Co.)
Dorking fowls delights to send,
Mr Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò!
Keep, oh! keep your chairs and candle,
And your jug without a handle, -
I can merely be your friend!
- Should my Jones more Dorkings send,
I will give you three, my friend!
Mr Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò!
Mr Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò!
'Though you've such a tiny body,
And your head so large doth grow, -
Though your hat may blow away,
Mr Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò!
Though you're such a Hoddy Doddy -
Yet I wished that I could modify
the words I needs must say!
Will you please to go away?
That is all I have to say -
Mr Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò!
Mr Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò!
Down the slippery slopes of Myrtle,
Where the early pumpkins blow,
To the calm and silent sea

Fled the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò.
There, beyond the Bay of Gurtle,
Lay a large and lively Turtle; -
'You're the Cove,' he said, 'for me;
On your back beyond the sea,
Turtle, you shall carry me!'
Said the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò,
Said the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò.
Through the silent- roaring ocean
Did the Turtle swiftly go;
Holding fast upon his shell
Rode the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò.
With a sad primæval motion
Towards the sunset isles of Boshen
Still the Turtle bore him well.
Holding fast upon his shell,
'Lady Jingly Jones, farewell!'
Said the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò,
Said the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò.
From the Coast of Coromandel,
Did that Lady never go;
On that heap of stones she mourns
For the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò.
On that Coast of Coromandel,
In his jug without a handle,
Still she weeps, and daily moans;
On that little heap of stones
To her Dorking Hens she moans,

For the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò,
For the Yonghy- Bonghy- Bò.

The Scroobious Pip

The Scroobious Pip went out one day
When the grass was green, and the sky was gray,
Then all the beasts in the world came round
When the Scroobious Pip sate down on the ground.
The Cats and the Dog and the Kangaroo,
The Sheep and the Cow and the Guinea Pig too -
The Wolf he howled, the Horse he neighed,
The little Pig squeaked and the Donkey brayed,
And when the Lion began to roar
There never was heard such a noise before,
And every beast he stood on the tip
Of his toes to look at the Scroobious Pip.
At last they said to the Fox – 'By far
You're the wisest beast – you know you are!
Go close to the Scroobious Pip and say,
"Tell us all about yourself we pray! -
For as yet we can't make out in the least
If you're Fish or Insect, or Bird or Beast." '
The Scroobious Pip looked vaguely round
And sang these words with a rumbling sound -
'Chippetty Flip – Flippetty Chip -
My only name is the Scroobious Pip.'
The Scroobious Pip from the top of a tree
Saw the distant Jellybol^{ēē}, -

And all the birds in the world came there,
Flying in crowds all through the air.
The Vulture and Eagle – the Cock and the Hen,
The Ostrich, the Turkey, the Snipe and Wren,
The Parrot chattered, the Blackbird sung,
And the Owl looked wise but held his tongue,
And when the Peacock began to scream,
The hullabaloo was quite extreme.
And every bird he fluttered the tip
Of his wing as he stared at the Scroobious Pip.
At last they said to the Owl, – ‘By far
You're wisest Bird – you know you are!
Fly close to the Scroobious Pip and say,
"Explain all about yourself we pray! -
For as yet we have neither seen nor heard
If you're Fish or Insect, Beast or Bird!" '
The Scroobious Pip looked gaily round
And sang these words with a chirpy sound -
‘Flippetty chip – Chippetty flip -
My only name is the Scroobious Pip.'
The Scroobious Pip went into the sea
By the beautiful shore of the Jellybol $\overline{ee}$ -
All the Fish in the world swam round
With a splashy squashy spluttery sound,
The Sprat, the Herring, the Turbot too,
The Shark, the Sole, and the Mackerel blue,
The ----- spluttered, the Porpoise puffed
---- Flounder -----

And when the Whale began to spout -

And every Fish he shook the tip
Of his tail as he gazed on the Scroobious Pip.
At last they said to the Whale – ‘By far
You're the biggest Fish – you know you are!
Swim close to the Scroobious Pip and say,
"Tell us all about yourself we pray! -
For to know from yourself is our only wish -
Are you Beast or Insect, Bird or Fish?" '
The Scroobious Pip looked softly round
And sang these words with a liquid sound -
‘Plifatty flip – Pliffity flip -
My only name is the Scroobious Pip.'
The Scroobious Pip sate under a tree
By the silent shores of the Jellybol $\overline{ee}$,
All the Insects in all the world
About the Scroobious Pip fluttered and twirled.
Beetles and ----- with purple eyes
Gnats and buzztilential Flies -
Grasshoppers, Butterflies, Spiders too,
Wasps and Bees and Dragonfly blue,
And when the Gnats began to hum
----- bounced like a dismal drum -
And every insect curled the tip
Of his snout, and looked at the Scroobious Pip.
At last they said the Ant, – ‘By far
You're the wisest Insect – you know you are!

Creep close to the Scroobious Pip and say,
"Tell us all about yourself we pray! -
For we can't find out, and we can't tell why -
If you're Beast or Fish or a Bird or a Fly. -" '
The Scroobious Pip turned quickly round
And sang these words with a whistly sound -
'Wizziby wip – wizziby wip -
My only name is the Scroobious Pip.'
Then all the Beasts that walk on the ground
Danced in a circle round and round,
And all the Birds that fly in the air
Flew round and round in a circle there,
And all the Fish in the Jellybolee —
Swam in a circle about the sea,
And all the Insects that creep or go
Buzzed in a circle to and fro -
And they roared and sang and whistled and cried
Till the noise was heard from side to side -
'Chippetty Tip! Chippetty Tip!
Its only name is the Scroobious Pip.'

The Quangle Wangle's Hat

On the top of the Crumpetty Tree
The Quangle Wangle sat,
But his face you could not see,
On account of his Beaver Hat.
For his Hat was a hundred and two feet wide,
With ribbons and bibbons on every side,
And bells, and buttons, and loops, and lace,
So that nobody ever could see the face
Of the Quangle Wangle Quee.
The Quangle Wangle said
To himself on the Crumpetty Tree, -
'Jam; and jelly; and bread;
Are the best of food for me!
But the longer I live on this Crumpetty Tree,
The plainer than ever it seems to me
That very few people come this way
And that life on the whole is far from gay!'
Said the Quangle Wangle Quee.



But there came to the Crumpetty Tree,
Mr and Mrs Canary;
And they said, – 'Did ever you see
Any spot so charmingly airy?
May we build a nest on your lovely Hat?
Mr Quangle Wangle, grant us that!
O please let us come and build a nest
Of whatever material suits you best,
Mr Quangle Wangle Quee!'
And besides, to the Crumpetty Tree
Came the Stork, the Duck, and the Owl;
The Snail, and the Bumble- Bee,

The Frog, and the Fimble Fowl;
(The Fimble Fowl, with a Corkscrew leg;)
And all of them said, – 'We humbly beg,
We may build our homes on your lovely Hat, -
Mr Quangle Wangle, grant us that!
Mr Quangle Wangle Quee!'
And the Golden Grouse came there,
And the Pobble who has no toes, -
And the small Olympian bear, -
And the Dong with a luminous nose.
And the Blue Baboon, who played the flute, -
And the Orient Calf from the Land of Tute, -
And the Attery Squash, and the Bisky Bat, -
All came and built on the lovely Hat
Of the Quangle Wangle Quee.
And the Quangle Wangle said
To himself on the Crumpetty Tree, -
'When all these creatures move
What a wonderful noise there'll be!'
And at night by the light of the Mulberry moon
They danced to the Flute of the Blue Baboon,
On the broad green leaves of the Crumpetty Tree,
And all were as happy as happy could be,
With the Quangle Wangle Quee.

The Akond of Swat

Who, or why, or which, or what, Is the Akond of SWAT?

Is he tall or short, or dark or fair?

Does he sit on a stool or a sofa or chair

or SQUAT,

The Akond of Swat?

Is he wise or foolish, young or old?

Does he drink his soup and his coffee cold

or HOT,

The Akond of Swat?

Does he sing or whistle, jabber or talk,

And when riding abroad does he gallop or walk

or TROT,

The Akond of Swat?

Does he wear a turban, a fez, or a hat?

Does he sleep on a mattress, a bed, or a mat

or a COT,

The Akond of Swat?

When he writes a copy in round- hand size,

Does he cross his T's and finish his I's

with a DOT,

The Akond of Swat?

Can he write a letter concisely clear

Without a speck or a smudge or smear

or BLOT,

The Akond of Swat?

Do his people like him extremely well?

Or do they, whenever they can, rebel

or PLOT,

At the Akond of Swat?

If he catches them then, either old or young,

Does he have them chopped in pieces or hung

or SHOT,

The Akond of Swat?

Do his people prig in the lanes or park?

Or even at times, when days are dark

GAROTTE,

O the Akond of Swat!

Does he study the wants of his own dominion?

Or doesn't he care for public opinion

a JOT,

The Akond of Swat?

To amuse his mind do his people show him

Pictures, or anyone's last new poem

or WHAT,

For the Akond of Swat?

At night if he suddenly screams and wakes,

Do they bring him only a few small cakes

or a LOT,

For the Akond of Swat?

Does he live on turnips, tea, or tripe?

Does he like his shawl to be marked with a stripe

or a DOT,

The Akond of Swat?

Does he like to lie on his back in a boat
Like the lady who lived in that isle remote,

SHALOTT,

The Akond of Swat

Is he quiet, or always making a fuss?
Is his steward a Swiss or a Swede or a Russ

or a SCOT,

The Akond of Swat?

Does he like to sit by the calm blue wave?
Or to sleep and snore in a dark green cave

or a GROTT,

The Akond of Swat?

Does he drink small beer from a silver jug?
Or a bowl? or a glass? or a cup? or a mug?

or a POT,

The Akond of Swat?

Does he beat his wife with a gold- topped pipe,
When she lets the gooseberries grow too ripe

or ROT,

The Akond of Swat?

Does he wear a white tie when he dines with friends,
And tie it neat in a bow with ends

or a KNOT,

The Akond of Swat?

Does he like new cream, and hate mince- pies?
When he looks at the sun does he wink his eyes

or NOT,

The Akond of Swat?

Does he teach his subjects to roast and bake?

Does he sail about on an inland lake

in a YACHT,

The Akond of Swat?

Someone, or nobody, knows I wot

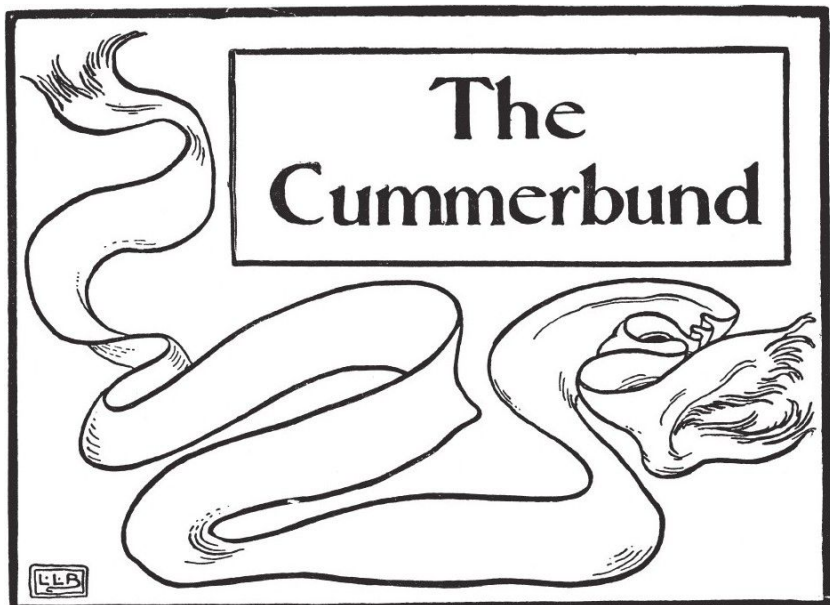
Who or which or why or what

Is the Akond of Swat!

The Cummerbund

An Indian Poem

She sate upon her Dobie,
To watch the Evening Star,
And all the Punkahs as they passed,
Cried, 'My! how fair you are!'
Around her bower, with quivering leaves,
The tall Kamsamahs grew,
And Kitmutgars in wild festoons
Hung down from Tchokis blue.
Below her home the river rolled
With soft meloobious sound,
Where golden- finned Chuprassies swam,
In myriads circling round.
Above, on tallest trees remote,
Green Ayahs perched alone,
And all night long the Mussak moan'd
Its melancholy tone.
And where the purple Nullahs threw
Their branches far and wide, -



The silvery Goreewallahs flew
In silence, side by side, -
The little Bheesties' twittering cry
Rose on the flagrant air,
And oft the angry Jampan howled
Deep in his hateful lair.
She sate upon her Dobie, -
She heard the Nimmak hum, -
When all at once a cry arose, -
'The Cumberbund is come!'
In vain she fled: – with open jaws
The angry monster followed,
And so, (before assistance came,)
That Lady Fair was swallowed.
They sought in vain for even a bone

Respectfully to bury, -
They said, – ‘Hers was a dreadful fate!’
(And Echo answered ‘Very.’)
They nailed her Dobie to the wall,
Where last her form was seen,
And underneath they wrote these words,
In yellow, blue, and green: -
‘Beware, ye Fair! Ye Fair, beware!
Nor sit out late at night, -
Lest horrid Cummerbunds should come,
And swallow you outright.’

The New Vestments

There lived an old man in the Kingdom of Tess,
Who invented a purely original dress;
And when it was perfectly made and complete,
He opened the door, and walked into the street.
By way of a hat, he'd a loaf of Brown Bread,
In the middle of which he inserted his head; -
His Shirt was made up of no end of dead Mice,
The warmth of whose skins was quite fluffy and nice; -
His Drawers were of Rabbit- skins; – so were his Shoes; -
His Stockings were skins, – but it is not known whose; -
His Waistcoat and Trowsers were made of Pork Chops; -
His Buttons were Jujubes, and Chocolate Drops; -
His Coat was all Pancakes with Jam for a border,
And a girdle of Biscuits to keep it in order;
And he wore over all, as a screen from bad weather,
A Cloak of green Cabbage- leaves stitched all together.
He had walked a short way, when he heard a great noise,
Of all sorts of Beasticles, Birdlings, and Boys; -
And from every long street and dark lane in the town
Beasts, Birdles, and Boys in a tumult rushed down.
Two Cows and a Calf ate his Cabbage- leaf Cloak; -
Four Apes seized his Girdle, which vanished like smoke; -
Three Kids ate up half of his Pancaky Coat, -
And the tails were devour'd by an ancient He Goat; -

An army of Dogs in a twinkling tore *up* his
Pork Waistcoat and Trowsers to give to their Puppies; -
And while they were growling, and mumbling the Chops,
Ten Boys prigged the Jujubes and Chocolate Drops. -
He tried to run back to his house, but in vain,
For Scores of fat Pigs came again and again; -
They rushed out of stables and hovels and doors, -
They tore off his Stockings, his Shoes, and his Drawers; -



And now from the housetops with screechings descend,
Striped, spotted, white, black, and gray Cats without end,
They jumped on his shoulders and knocked off his hat, -
When Crows, Ducks, and Hens made a mincemeat of that; -
They speedily flew at this sleeves in a trice,

And utterly tore up his Shirt of dead Mice; -
They swallowed the last of his Shirt with a squall, -
Whereon he ran home with no clothes on at all.
And he said to himself as he bolted the door,
'I will not wear a similar dress any more,
Any more, any more, any more, never more!'

The Two Old Bachelors

Two old Bachelors were living in one house;

One caught a Muffin, the other caught a Mouse.

Said he who caught the Muffin to him who caught the Mouse, -

'This happens just in time! For we've nothing in the house,

Save a tiny slice of lemon and a teaspoonful of honey,

And what to do for dinner – since we haven't any money?

And what can we expect if we haven't any dinner,

But to lose our teeth and eyelashes and keep on growing thinner?'

Said he who caught the Mouse to him who caught the Muffin, -

'We might cook this little Mouse, if we only had some Stuffin'!

If we had but Sage and Onion we could do extremely well,

But how to get that Stuffin' it is difficult to tell!' -

Those two old Bachelors ran quickly to the town

And asked for Sage and Onions as they wandered up and down;

They borrowed two large Onions, but no Sage was to be found

In the Shops, or in the Market, or in all the Gardens round.

But someone said, – 'A hill there is, a little to the north,

And to its purpledicular top a narrow way leads forth; -

And there among the rugged rocks abides an ancient Sage, -

An earnest Man, who reads all day a most perplexing page.

'Climb up, and seize him by the toes! – all studious as he sits, -

And pull him down, – and chop him into endless little bits!

Then mix him with your Onion, (cut up likewise into Scraps,) -

When your Stuffin' will be ready – and very good: perhaps.'

Those two old Bachelors without loss of time
The nearly purpledicular crags at once began to climb;
And at the top, among the rocks, all seated in a nook,
They saw that Sage, a- reading of a most enormous book.

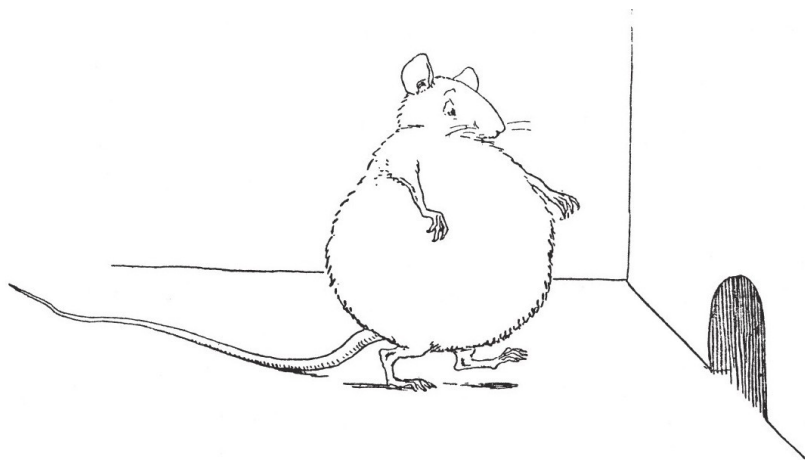
'You earnest Sage!' aloud they cried, 'your book you've read
enough in! -

We wish to chop you into bits to mix you into Stuffin'!' -
But that old Sage looked calmly up, and with his awful book,
At those two Bachelors' bald heads a certain aim he took; -
And over crag and precipice they rolled promiscuous down, -
At once they rolled, and never stopped in lane or field or town,

And when they reached their house, they found
(beside their want of Stuffin')

The Mouse had fled; - and, previously, had eaten up the
Muffin.

They left their home in silence by the once convivial door.
And from that hour those Bachelors were never heard of more.



The Dong with a Luminous Nose

When awful darkness and silence reign
Over the great Gromboolian plain,
Through the long, long wintry nights; -
When the angry breakers roar
As they beat on the rocky shore; -
When Storm- clouds brood on the towering heights
Of the Hills of the Chankly Bore: -
Then, through the vast and gloomy dark,
There moves what seems a fiery spark,
A lonely spark with silvery rays
Piercing the coal- black night, -
A Meteor strange and bright: -
Hither and thither the vision strays,
A single lurid light.
Slowly it wanders, – pauses, – creeps, -
Anon it sparkles, – flashes and leaps;
And ever as onward it gleaming goes
A light on the Bong- tree stems it throws.
And those who watch at that midnight hour
From Hall or Terrace, or lofty Tower,
Cry, as the wild light passes along, -
'The Dong! – the Dong!
The wandering Dong through the forest goes!
The Dong! the Dong!

The Dong with a luminous Nose!

Long years ago

The Dong was happy and gay,

Till he fell in love with a Jumbly Girl

Who came to those shores one day.

For the Jumblies came in a sieve, they did, -

Landing at eve near the Zemmerly Fidd

Where the Oblong Oysters grow,

And the rocks are smooth and gray.

And all the woods and the valleys rang

With the Chorus they daily and nightly sang, -

'Far and few, far and few,

Are the lands where the Jumblies live;

Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,

And they went to sea in a sieve.'

Happily, happily passed those days!

While the cheerful Jumblies staid;

They danced in circlets all night long,

To the plaintive pipe of the lively Dong,

In moonlight, shine, or shade.

For day and night he was always there

By the side of the Jumbly Girl so fair,

With her sky- blue hands, and her sea- green hair.

Till the morning came of that hateful day

When the Jumblies sailed in their sieve away,

And the Dong was left on the cruel shore

Gazing – gazing for evermore, -

Ever keeping his weary eyes on

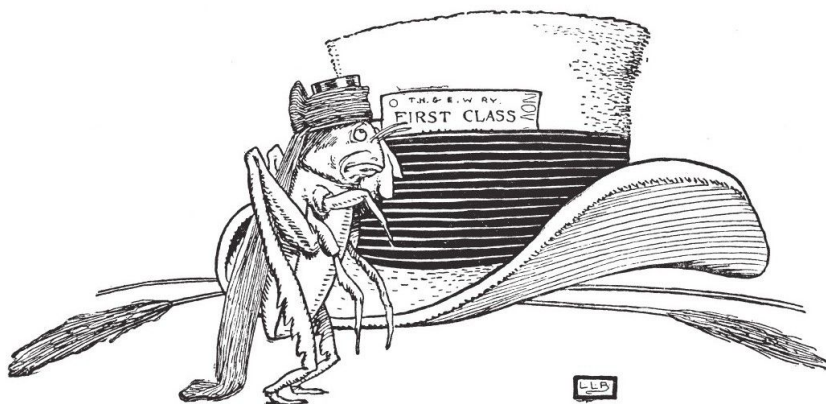
That pea- green sail on the far horizon, -
Singing the Jumbly Chorus still
As he sate all day on the grassy hill, -
*'Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a sieve.'*
But when the sun was low in the West,
The Dong arose and said; -
- 'What little sense I once possessed
Has quite gone out of my head!' -
And since that day he wanders still
By lake and forest, marsh and hill,
Singing – 'O somewhere, in valley or plain
Might I find my Jumbly Girl again!
For ever I'll seek by lake and shore
Till I find my Jumbly Girl once more!'
Playing a pipe with silvery squeaks,
Since then his Jumbly Girl he seeks,
And because by night he could not see,
He gathered the bark of the Twangum Tree
On the flowery plain that grows.
And he wove him a wondrous Nose, -
A Nose as strange as a Nose could be!
Of vast proportions and painted red,
And tied with cords to the back of his head.
- In a hollow rounded space it ended
With a luminous Lamp within suspended,

All fenced about
With a bandage stout
To prevent the wind from blowing it out; -
And with holes all round to send the light,
In gleaming rays on the dismal light.
And now each night, and all night long,
Over those plains still roams the Dong;
And above the wail of the Chimp and Snipe
You may hear the squeak of his plaintive pipe
While ever he seeks, but seeks in vain
To meet with his Jumbly Girl again;
Lonely and wild – all night he goes, -
The Dong with a luminous Nose!
And all who watch at the midnight hour,
From Hall or Terrace, or lofty Tower,
Cry, as they trace the Meteor bright,
Moving along through the dreary night, -
'This is the hour when forth he goes,
The Dong with a luminous Nose!
Yonder – over the plain he goes;
He goes!
He goes;
The Dong with a luminous Nose!'

Some Incidents in the Life of my Uncle Arly

O my agèd Uncle Arly! -
Sitting on a heap of Barley
All the silent hours of night, -
Close beside a leafy thicket: -
On his nose there was a Cricket, -
In his hat a Railway Ticket; -
(But his shoes were far too tight.)
Long ago, in youth, he squander'd
All his goods away, and wander'd
To the Timskoop Hills afar.
There, on golden sunsets blazing
Every evening found him gazing, -
Singing, – 'Orb! you're quite amazing!
How I wonder what you are!'
Like the ancient Medes and Persians,
Always by his own exertions
He subsisted on those hills; -
Whiles, – by teaching children spelling, -
Or at times by merely yelling, -
Or at intervals by selling
'Propter's Nicodemus Pills'.
Later, in his morning rambles
He perceived the moving brambles

Something square and white disclose; -
'Twas a First- class Railway- Ticket
But in stooping down to pick it
Off the ground, – a pea- green Cricket
Settled on my uncle's Nose.
Never – never more, – oh! never,
Did that Cricket leave him ever, -
Dawn or evening, day or night; -
Clinging as a constant treasure, -
Chirping with a cheerful measure, -
Wholly to my uncle's pleasure, -
(Though his shoes were far too tight.)
So, for three- and- forty winters,
Till his shoes were worn to splinters,
All those hills he wander'd o'er, -
Sometimes silent; – sometimes yelling; -
Till he came to Borly- Melling,
Near his old ancestral dwelling; -
- And he wander'd thence no more.
On a little heap of Barley
Died my aged Uncle Arly,
And they buried him one night; -
Close beside the leafy thicket; -
There, – his hat and Railway Ticket; -
There, – his ever faithful Cricket; -
(But his shoes were far too tight.)





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